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Manipur Assembly vacancies rise to three after BJP MLA Kunjakeswor Singh's death

Patsoi joins Tadubi and Thanlon as vacant constituencies, leaving three of the 60 Assembly seats without elected representatives

IMPHAL

The death of BJP MLA Sapam Kunjakeswor Singh has increased the number of vacant seats in the Manipur Legislative Assembly to three, with the Patsoi constituency becoming the latest to fall vacant.

The other two vacant constituencies are Tadubi in Senapati district and Thanlon in Pherzawl district. With Patsoi joining the list, three of the 60 seats in the state Assembly are currently without elected representatives.

Kunjakeswor Singh died on November 20. In a bulletin issued on Monday, the Secretary of the Manipur Legislative Assembly formally declared the 19-Patsoi seat vacant with effect from the date of his death.

Singh was a member of the 12th Manipur Legislative Assembly and represented Patsoi in Imphal West district.

He first entered the Assembly in 2007 after winning the Patsoi seat as an Independent candidate. In 2022, he was re-elected from the constituency on a BJP ticket.



The Tadubi seat has remained vacant since January 18, 2025, following the death of National People's Party (NPP) leader N Kayisii.

Kayisii served as the Manipur NPP president from March 2021 until his death. He also held the portfolios of Tribal and Hill Areas and Fisheries in the state government from 2017 to 2020.

The Thanlon constituency in Pherzawl district fell vacant following the death of BJP MLA Vungzagin Valte on February 20, 2026.

A three-time legislator from Thanlon, Valte was initially elected on a Congress ticket before joining the BJP in 2017. He served as a Cabinet minister between 2017 and 2022, handling Transport, Tribal Affairs and Hills, and General Administration.

After the 2022 Assembly elections, Valte served as chief adviser to then Chief Minister N Biren Singh on tribal affairs.

The vacancies come in an Assembly where the BJP emerged as the largest party in the 2022 elections, winning 32 of the 60 seats. The NPP secured seven seats, while the Congress and Naga People's Front won five each. The Kuki People's Alliance won two seats, with Independents securing three.

With three constituencies now vacant following the deaths of their sitting MLAs, attention is likely to turn to the Election Commission's next steps regarding by-elections to fill the vacancies.

PERSPECTIVE

Even the nicest people have their limits.

New Rs 22-Crore Assam House Opens in Delhi to Support State Visitors

NEW DELHI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday inaugurated the newly constructed Assam House in Dwarka, New Delhi, a Rs 22-crore facility designed to provide accommodation to people from the state visiting the national capital for medical treatment, education, official assignments and other purposes.

Located in Sector 13, near the ISKCON Temple and Arunachal Sadan, the facility is expected to ease accommodation-related difficulties for visitors from Assam, particularly those travelling to Delhi for healthcare and educational needs.

The new Assam House has 21 guest rooms and two dedicated VIP suites. It also includes two dormitories, a conference room and a restaurant, providing accommodation and other essential facilities under one roof.

Assam Minister Keshab Mahanta, who holds the General Administration portfolio, attended the inauguration ceremony along with other dignitaries.

The facility is intended to serve as a dedicated accommodation centre for people from Assam visiting Delhi for various purposes. Its opening is expected to strengthen the state's support infrastructure for residents who need to travel to the national capital.

The project adds to Assam's administrative and residential facilities outside the state, with a particular focus on making visits to Delhi more convenient for its people.

WHO SAID WHAT



For the first time, introduced one-time financial assistance for Anganwadi workers and helpers after retirement, recognising their service and contribution to the sector

AJANTA NEOG
Assam Minister for Women and Child Developmen

SILCHAR CHILD ABUSE CASE: Investigating officer suspended after family alleges police inaction



SILCHAR

A case involving the alleged repeated sexual abuse of a nine-year-old girl in Silchar has raised serious questions over the initial police response, with the investigating officer concerned reportedly suspended following intervention by the Cachar Senior Superintendent of Police.

The family has accused a person known to them, identified as Rahul Roy alias Raju, of exploiting the child's trust and familiarity to subject her to repeated sexual abuse.

According to the family, the girl addressed the accused as 'Papa', and they alleged that he took advantage of this relationship to abuse the minor.

The family lodged a written complaint at Rangirkhari Police Station on November 11, 2026. However, they alleged that the police failed to take appropriate action at the initial stage, despite the seriousness and repeated nature of the allegations.

The alleged delay in the investigation prompted the family to raise the matter with senior police authorities. Following the intervention of the Senior Superintendent of Police, the investigating officer handling the case was reportedly suspended.

The suspension has brought the police response under scrutiny, particularly over the alleged delay between the filing of the complaint and the subsequent action.

Questions have also been raised about the steps taken against the accused and whether the delay affected the collection and preservation of crucial evidence.

The family has demanded a thorough and impartial investigation, along with accountability for the alleged lapses in the initial handling of the complaint.

The identity of the minor has been withheld to protect her privacy.

BSF Jawan Missing in Barak River During Pursuit of Suspected Smugglers in Assam

SILCHAR

A Border Security Force (BSF) jawan went missing after reportedly falling into the Barak River while pursuing suspected buffalo smugglers along the India-Bangladesh international border in Assam's Cachar district.

The incident occurred at Harinagar in the Katigorah area during a night patrol. The missing jawan has been identified as K Venu, a native of Andhra Pradesh, according to preliminary reports.

Sources said a BSF patrol team noticed suspicious activity along the river route, with a group allegedly attempting to smuggle buffaloes across the border into Bangladesh.

Venu reportedly moved to intercept the suspected smugglers. However, during the pursuit, he is believed to have slipped and fallen into the Barak River, after which he went missing.

Following the incident, the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) launched a search operation in the river to locate the jawan. His whereabouts remained unknown at the time of filing this report.

Senior BSF officials also reached the spot and coordinated with the rescue teams as the search operation continued.

The incident took place along a sensitive stretch of the India-Bangladesh border, where security personnel maintain regular surveillance to prevent cross-border smuggling and other illegal activities.

Further details about the circumstances surrounding the incident are awaited.

Assam Plans Rs 600-Crore AssamSAT Mission, Targets 66% Savings on Satellite Data

GUWAHATI

Assam is planning a Rs 600-crore Earth observation satellite constellation under the proposed AssamSAT initiative, with Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma projecting substantial savings in satellite data procurement and new opportunities for technology-driven governance.

The proposed project is expected to reduce the state's dependence on commercial satellite data providers while strengthening its capacity to monitor floods, river erosion, agricultural conditions and environmental changes.

In a post on X, Sarma said Assam currently spends around Rs 1,775 crore over five years to procure satellite data from commercial providers.

In comparison, the proposed AssamSAT project is estimated to cost Rs 600 crore over the same period. According to the projections shared by the Chief Minister, the initiative could reduce data procurement expenditure by nearly 66 per cent.

The government also expects the project to generate revenue through the supply of satellite data and related services. Sarma projected potential revenue of around Rs 900 crore over five years.

Flood forecasting and Brahmaputra erosion monitoring

One of the key applications of AssamSAT is expected to be disaster management, particularly flood monitoring and forecasting.

Satellite-based observation could help authorities identify inundated areas, assess vulnerable locations and monitor changing flood conditions more effectively.

The technology is also expected to strengthen surveillance of erosion along the Brahmaputra, allowing officials to track shifting riverbanks and identify areas facing risks to settlements, agricultural land and infrastructure.

Applications beyond disaster management

The proposed satellite constellation is expected to support several other sectors, including digital agriculture, crop assessment, urban planning, forest conservation and wetland monitoring.

It could also help authorities track urban expansion, identify ecological changes and improve mapping of border areas.

According to Sarma, the initiative is intended to bring space technology into practical governance, enabling more informed decision-making and faster responses to emergencies.

The project is targeted for launch in 2027 and is being projected as a long-term investment in Assam's technological infrastructure and self-reliance.

However, details regarding the number of satellites, technical specifications, launch arrangements and the proposed revenue model are yet to be outlined in detail.

The projected savings and revenue will ultimately depend on the project's implementation, operational capabilities and the commercial use of the data generated.

Rice-Centred Diets Put Northeast Mothers and Infants at Risk of Vitamin B1 Deficiency: Study

Nearly 20% of pregnant and breastfeeding women surveyed in Assam's Barak Valley and adjoining Tripura found deficient; researchers call for dietary diversification and targeted nutritional intervention

GUWAHATI

A diet dominated by polished white rice may be leaving thousands of women in parts of Northeast India vulnerable to an overlooked nutritional deficiency, with new research highlighting the growing risk of Vitamin B1 deficiency among pregnant women, nursing mothers and infants.

A community-based study covering 120 villages across Assam's Barak Valley and adjoining districts of Tripura has found that nearly one in five pregnant and breastfeeding women surveyed had biochemical or functional thiamine deficiency. More concerningly, almost one in 10 showed severe functional impairment, raising questions about the nutritional quality of everyday diets in the region.

The findings, based on research conducted during 2023-24, underline how food habits, economic limitations and inadequate dietary diversity can create serious health risks even when maternal healthcare services are available.



Researchers identified the heavy dependence on polished white rice as one of the major factors behind the deficiency. Although rice remains the principal source of daily calories for most participants, the study found that foods containing significant amounts of thiamine, including green leafy vegetables, legumes and nuts, were consumed far less frequently.

Fish was the most commonly consumed animal-source food. However, eggs, poultry, meat, dairy products and fruits featured only occasionally in the diets of many women.

This imbalance between high carbohydrate consumption and limited nutritional diversity is particularly concerning during pregnancy and breastfeeding, when women's requirements for essential vitamins and minerals increase.

Thiamine, commonly known as Vitamin B1, plays an essential role in converting food into energy and maintaining normal nervous system function. Its deficiency can lead to beriberi, a potentially serious disorder. In infants and pregnant women, severe deficiency can have particularly damaging consequences.

One of the major concerns highlighted by the researchers is that the deficiency frequently remains hidden. Early symptoms may not be clinically obvious, meaning women with inadequate thiamine levels could remain undiagnosed until more serious complications develop.

The researchers cautioned that the prevalence of subclinical deficiency suggests the actual nutritional burden may be substantially greater than the number of clinically identified beriberi cases.

The findings also bring attention to the relationship between poverty and nutritional vulnerability. Limited household resources and restricted access to diverse foods can force families to depend heavily on inexpensive staple foods, even when these provide insufficient quantities of essential micronutrients.

Polished rice itself is an important part of the problem. The milling and polishing process removes much of the thiamine naturally present in the outer layers of the grain. Communities relying almost entirely on polished rice, without adequate dietary alternatives, therefore face a greater risk of Vitamin B1 deficiency.Published in the Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, the multi-institutional study is among India's largest community-based investigations examining both biochemical and functional thiamine status among pregnant and lactating women.

The researchers have called for Vitamin B1 deficiency to receive greater attention in India's maternal and child nutrition programmes, particularly in vulnerable communities across the Northeast.

Among the suggested interventions are targeted thiamine supplementation, prenatal multiple-micronutrient supplements containing Vitamin B1, greater awareness of nutritionally balanced diets and the promotion of food diversification. Population-level food fortification could also be considered as a longer-term intervention.

The study points to a broader challenge for public health authorities: improving access to hospitals, antenatal check-ups and institutional deliveries may not be sufficient to address maternal and infant health risks if the nutritional quality of everyday food remains neglected.

For rice-dependent communities in the Northeast, the question is no longer simply whether families have enough food, but whether their daily meals provide the essential nutrients needed to protect mothers and ensure healthy infant development.

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ROHINGYA GENOCIDE VERDICT

The International Court of Justice has delivered a historic judgment holding Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya. However, translating this legal victory into justice, accountability and the safe return of displaced people remains a formidable challenge.

The International Court of Justice (ICJ) has delivered a landmark judgment in the long struggle for justice for the Rohingya, bringing renewed international attention to one of the gravest humanitarian crises of recent times. The November 19 verdict, holding Myanmar responsible for genocide against the Rohingya community, marks a defining moment in international law. Yet, while the ruling establishes legal accountability, the more difficult question is whether it can bring meaningful changes to the lives of hundreds of thousands of victims still struggling for survival.

For nearly a decade, Myanmar's military leadership maintained that its operations in northern Rakhine during 2016-17 were legitimate counter-insurgency measures. The international court's findings have now dealt a serious blow to that defence. By a majority of nine to six, the ICJ concluded that Myanmar committed genocide against the Rohingya, citing mass killings, widespread sexual violence, extreme violence against children, measures intended to prevent births and the systematic destruction of villages.

The court also found that genocidal intent was the only reasonable inference from the evidence before it. This finding is particularly significant because it moves the Rohingya tragedy beyond competing political narratives and establishes state responsibility through a judicial process.

The judgment requires Myanmar to prevent further violations, prosecute those responsible, ensure that such crimes are not repeated and provide appropriate reparation. These obligations include creating conditions for the safe, voluntary and dignified return of Rohingya refugees, restoring property, locating missing persons and rehabilitating survivors. Although the question of compensation remains to be determined, the legal significance of the ruling is already substantial. However, a judicial verdict does not automatically translate into justice on the ground. The ICJ does not possess an independent enforcement mechanism capable of compelling a military regime to implement its decisions. Its effectiveness will depend considerably on international diplomatic pressure, political engagement and the willingness of governments to translate legal obligations into concrete action.Myanmar's present political and security situation makes this challenge even more complicated. Min Aung Hlaing, who commanded the military operations in 2017, now occupies the presidency after a tightly controlled electoral process. Meanwhile, Rakhine State has undergone a significant shift in territorial control, with the Arakan Army controlling large parts of the region. Reports of forced labour, detention and forced recruitment involving Rohingya under both military and non-state authorities raise further concerns about the community's security.The humanitarian consequences remain devastating. Around 520,000 Rohingya are estimated to remain inside Myanmar, many living under severe restrictions, while nearly 1.2 million are sheltering in Bangladesh's Cox's Bazar refugee camps. Funding shortages and reductions in humanitarian assistance have added to the difficulties faced by displaced families. For a population that has endured years of persecution, displacement and statelessness, the prospect of returning home remains distant. The ICJ verdict, nevertheless, has the potential to reshape the international response. It strengthens the legal basis for demanding accountability and makes it more difficult for Myanmar's authorities to dismiss allegations of genocide as politically motivated accusations. It also places greater responsibility on countries maintaining diplomatic and economic relations with Naypyidaw to consider the consequences of their engagement.For India, the judgment presents a particularly delicate diplomatic challenge. New Delhi has strategic and economic interests in Myanmar, especially through the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project, which connects India's northeastern region with Myanmar's Rakhine coast through the Sittwe port. Stability in the region is essential for India's connectivity ambitions and its wider engagement with Southeast Asia.At the same time, India is a party to the Genocide Convention and has a responsibility to uphold the broader principles of international law. Approximately 40,000 Rohingya are believed to be living in India, although their legal status and circumstances vary. Some have faced detention and the threat of deportation.The ICJ judgment makes the question of their future particularly sensitive. Returning Rohingya refugees to a country that the court has held responsible for genocide against their community raises serious concerns about their safety and the principle of non-refoulement. India's approach will therefore be closely examined, both domestically and internationally.New Delhi does not necessarily have to choose between strategic interests and humanitarian considerations. It can use its diplomatic channels to encourage Myanmar's compliance with the court's judgment, engage relevant authorities and influential actors in Rakhine to secure protection for civilians, and work with Bangladesh and international organisations to strengthen humanitarian assistance for refugees.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak."
- Sun Tzu

The Freebie Economy: Political Promises, Mounting Debt and the Cost to India's Future



S.DUTTA

The growing competition among political parties to offer free electricity, consumer goods and loan waivers is raising concerns over fiscal discipline, employment generation and the long-term sustainability of India's economic growth.

The politics of free benefits has become an increasingly prominent feature of India's electoral landscape. From free electricity and farm loan waivers to household appliances, laptops and subsidised pilgrimages, political parties are competing to offer increasingly attractive benefits to voters. What is presented as social welfare, however, raises a larger question: how much can governments distribute without undermining their financial stability and development priorities?

Welfare spending is an essential responsibility of a democratic government. Free or affordable education, accessible healthcare, food security and social protection for vulnerable communities are important instruments for reducing inequality. Such expenditure can strengthen human capital and create opportunities for people who otherwise remain excluded from economic progress.

The problem arises when welfare policies become electoral instruments rather than components of a clearly defined development strategy. Distributing consumer goods and providing unlimited subsidies without assessing their long-term financial implications can place considerable pressure on public finances. The distinction between genuine social protection and politically motivated giveaways therefore deserves greater attention.

The growing culture of competitive populism is not restricted to regional political parties. National parties, including the BJP and Congress, have also relied on welfare promises and direct benefits to strengthen their electoral appeal. As a result, the debate is no longer about which political party offers more benefits, but whether governments are adequately accounting for the costs of their commitments.

The growing pressure on state finances

The financial consequences of populist spending are particularly visible in several Indian states. A Reserve Bank of India assessment has identified Bihar, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan and West Bengal among states facing significant fiscal stress, taking into account their debt-to-GSDP positions and other financial vulnerabilities.

The debt figures cited for 2021-22 were particularly concerning. Punjab's debt-to-GSDP ratio stood at 53.3 per cent, followed by Rajasthan at 39.8 per cent, West Bengal at 38.8 per cent, Kerala at 38.3 per cent and Andhra Pradesh at 32.4 per cent. These figures highlighted the growing gap between state borrowing and economic output.

High public debt cannot be attributed exclusively to freebies. Interest payments, salaries, pensions, infrastructure expenditure, revenue constraints and other structural factors also contribute to fiscal pressure. Nevertheless, expanding subsidies and recurring electoral commitments can make the situation more difficult, particularly when state revenues fail to grow at the same pace.

Another concern is the growing reliance on off-budget borrowing. Some state governments use public-sector enterprises and other government-linked entities to raise funds, with future government revenues or guarantees supporting these liabilities. Such arrangements can make the immediate budgetary position appear healthier than the underlying financial reality.

Ultimately, these obligations do not disappear. They return to the public exchequer in the form of repayment commitments, interest payments or additional financial support. Greater transparency in accounting for such liabilities is therefore essential.

Punjab offers an important example of the challenges involved. Despite its substantial debt burden, the state continues to maintain significant electricity subsidies. The Aam Aadmi Party government introduced its promise of 600 units of free electricity per billing cycle from July 2022, with a large number of households subsequently benefiting from the scheme. While the measure provides immediate relief to consumers, its long-term financial implications need to be assessed alongside the state's revenue position and other development priorities.

The central issue is not whether poor households should receive assistance, but whether such assistance can be sustained without compromising investment in infrastructure, education, healthcare and employment generation.

Lessons from Latin America's economic experience

India's growing dependence on electoral welfare promises also brings to mind the economic experience of several Latin American countries.

During much of the twentieth century, populist governments in the region expanded public spending to address inequality and build political support among working-class populations. Leaders such as Brazil's Getúlio Vargas and Argentina's Juan Perón became prominent figures in this political and economic landscape.

However, in several countries, prolonged fiscal expansion, weak revenue mobilisation and excessive dependence on public borrowing contributed to serious economic instability. By the 1980s, parts of Latin America were struggling with mounting fiscal deficits, unsustainable debt and high inflation.

The period became widely known as the region's 'Lost Decade'. Economic growth slowed sharply, inflation eroded household savings and poverty increased. Brazil, Argentina and Mexico experienced different combinations of these difficulties, demonstrating how prolonged macroeconomic imbalances can undermine the very welfare objectives governments seek to achieve.

India's economic circumstances are different, and the Latin American experience should not be treated as a direct prediction of India's future. Nevertheless, it offers an important lesson: welfare commitments that are not supported by sustainable revenues and productive economic activity can eventually become a burden on the people they are intended to help.

Fiscal discipline and social protection are not necessarily competing objectives. The challenge is to ensure that welfare expenditure contributes to long-term economic resilience rather than creating permanent financial liabilities.

Employment generation must remain the priority

One of the most important concerns surrounding the freebie debate is the question of employment. Direct financial assistance and subsidies can provide immediate relief to economically vulnerable households, but they cannot substitute for stable employment and opportunities for income generation.

A government that focuses excessively on distributing benefits without creating adequate employment opportunities risks perpetuating economic dependence. Young people need quality education, vocational training, industrial opportunities and access to markets. Farmers require better infrastructure, technology, irrigation and reliable market linkages. Small businesses need affordable credit and a predictable policy environment.

Public expenditure should therefore prioritise investments that expand the productive capacity of the economy. Infrastructure development, healthcare, education, agricultural modernisation and industrial growth generate benefits that extend beyond individual households.

This does not mean that every subsidy is economically wasteful. Targeted assistance can improve productivity and consumption, particularly among poorer sections of society. The distinction lies in whether a scheme addresses a clearly identified social or economic need and whether its benefits justify its cost.

The need for accountability and fiscal transparency

The growing competition over welfare promises also raises questions about political accountability. Electoral victories give governments the authority to implement policies, but they do not remove their responsibility to manage public money prudently.

Before announcing expensive schemes, governments should disclose their estimated costs, funding arrangements and long-term implications. Independent fiscal assessments, transparent budgetary reporting and regular performance audits can help voters understand the actual price of political promises.

The judiciary, constitutional institutions, auditors, economists and the media also have important roles in strengthening public scrutiny. The objective should not be to discourage legitimate welfare spending but to ensure that public resources are used efficiently and that governments remain accountable for their financial decisions.

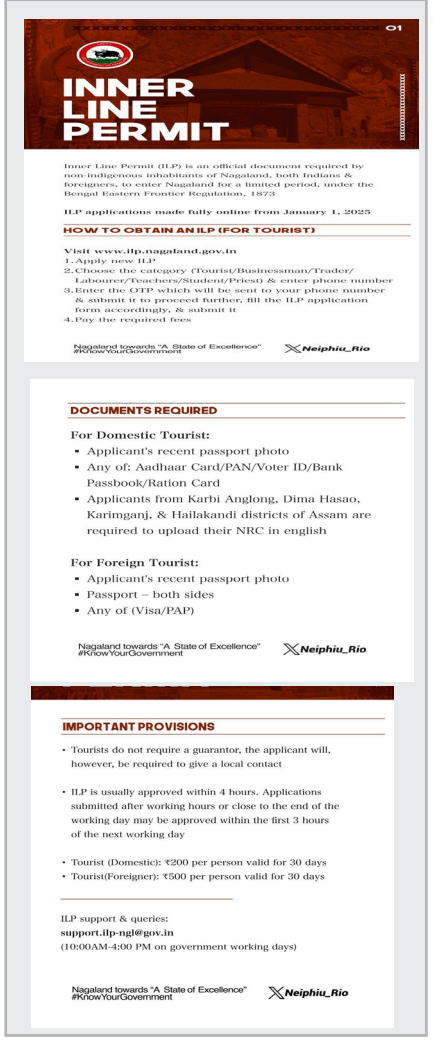
A stronger framework for monitoring state guarantees, public-sector borrowing and contingent liabilities would also help prevent governments from concealing the real cost of their commitments.

India's development ambitions require sustained investment, sound public finances and a capable workforce. Governments cannot build a competitive economy merely by expanding consumption subsidies. Nor can fiscal prudence become an excuse for withdrawing essential support from vulnerable citizens.

The real challenge is to strike a balance between immediate social protection and long-term economic development. Welfare policies must empower people to become economically secure, rather than leave governments trapped in an endless cycle of electoral promises and borrowing.

Ultimately, the success of a government should not be measured by the number of free benefits it announces before an election. It should be judged by the quality of public services it delivers, the employment opportunities it creates, the strength of its economy and the financial stability it leaves for the next generation.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS



Silchar Flyover Row Reaches PMO as Lawyer Seeks Clarity on Proposed Curtailment

Advocate Dharmananda Deb questions reported reduction of the 3.5-km elevated corridor to two short stretches; seeks details of approvals, technical reviews and Rs 147-crore land acquisition

SILCHAR

The controversy over the proposed reduction in the length of Silchar's elevated corridor has reached the Prime Minister's Office, with a local advocate seeking clarification on whether the reported change has received the necessary administrative and technical approvals.

In a representation dated November 20, advocate Dharmananda Deb questioned reports that the originally proposed 3.5-km flyover could be reduced to two separate stretches measuring approximately 542 metres and 500 metres.

Deb has asked the PMO to clarify whether the 3.5-km project, which he said had received Assam Cabinet approval, remains the officially sanctioned plan and whether any competent authority has formally approved a change in its scope.

The representation follows a review meeting held on November 20 to discuss possible modifications to the proposed elevated corridor.

At the centre of the advocate's concerns is also the reported allocation of Rs 147 crore for land acquisition. He has sought a detailed account of the land acquired so far, compensation disbursed to landowners and the proposed utilisation of the acquired land if the original project is significantly scaled down.

He has also questioned what would happen to public funds already committed to the land acquisition process if the proposed reduction goes ahead.

"Silchar does not seek assurances. Silchar seeks transparency, accountability and the infrastructure development promised to its people," Deb said in his memorandum.

The advocate has further sought clarification on whether residents, landowners and other affected stakeholders were consulted or given an opportunity to submit objections before any decision on the project's revised scope was considered.

His representation also seeks details of the technical assessments undertaken for the original project, including soil investigations, traffic studies and evaluations of alternative routes. According to Deb, any substantial alteration to a major infrastructure project should be supported by appropriate technical assessments and formal administrative clearances.

He argued that discussions at a review meeting or public announcements alone cannot substitute the prescribed procedures for modifying an approved project.

The issue has raised questions about the future of the elevated corridor, which was proposed to address traffic congestion in Silchar. The reported plan to replace the longer stretch with two relatively short sections has prompted concerns over whether the revised proposal would meet the original project's objectives.

Deb has sent copies of his representation to Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari and Assam Cabinet Minister Krishnendu Paul, seeking their attention and necessary action.

The PMO has been requested to clarify the status of the original project, the authority behind the proposed changes and the accountability framework governing the land acquisition and expenditure.

The representation places the focus on a larger question: whether Silchar will receive the infrastructure project originally promised or a substantially reduced version, and whether the process of any such change will be made transparent to the public.

Manipur Spurious Liquor Death Toll Climbs to 17; Samples Sent to Kolkata for Testing

IMPHAL

The death toll in the suspected spurious liquor incident in Manipur has risen to 17, prompting the state government to send samples of locally produced liquor to a laboratory in Kolkata for testing.

Six people have been arrested in connection with the incident, while investigations are underway to identify others allegedly involved in the production and distribution of the suspected adulterated liquor.

State government spokesperson and MLA Thokchom Radheshyam Singh announced the developments at a press conference at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Imphal on Sunday.

He said samples had been sent to the National Food Laboratory (NFL) in Kolkata, besides the Forensic Science Laboratory and the State Public Health Laboratory in Imphal, for examination.The government has also constituted a high-level inquiry committee headed by Principal Secretary R.K. Dinesh. The panel has been directed to submit its report within one month.According to the spokesperson, enforcement agencies have seized around 4,600 litres of illicit liquor during ongoing raids across the state.Meanwhile, the health situation remains a major concern, with 228 people currently admitted to different hospitals in Imphal after 1,130 individuals underwent medical screening.Government spokesperson and MLA Dr Sapam Ranjan Singh said 38 of the hospitalised patients were undergoing dialysis.The affected patients are receiving treatment at the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), Jawaharlal Nehru Institute of Medical Sciences (JNIMS), Shija Hospitals and Research Institute, and Babina Hospital.Dr Singh said many people had approached hospitals for screening out of concern following the incident.The government has warned of strict action against those involved in the illegal manufacture, storage and sale of liquor and appealed to the public to share information about such activities.

Sonowal Accuses Congress of Misleading Public, Targets Rahul Gandhi Over Alleged Anti-India Links

DIBRUGARH

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Sunday accused the Congress and its allies of spreading misinformation through what he described as baseless allegations against the Election Commission and the Supreme Court.

He also targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, alleging that the opposition party had aligned itself with forces working against India's national interests.

Addressing a gathering in Dibrugarh, Sonowal criticised the Congress's political approach and accused it of attempting to create public distrust towards constitutional institutions.

The Union Minister claimed that conscious citizens were rejecting what he termed the Congress's politics of misinformation and supporting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of transforming India into a developed nation by 2047.

Referring to the government's development agenda, Sonowal said the principles of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' and an Atmanirbhar Bharat were aimed at ensuring inclusive growth and wider public participation in the country's progress.He described the journey towards 2047 as particularly important for the younger generation, including students, arguing that the present generation had a responsibility to build a stronger and more developed India.Sonowal said people under Modi's leadership had pledged to contribute towards making India one of the world's most powerful and developed nations.He also accused Rahul Gandhi and the Congress of pursuing divisive politics and associating with forces that, according to him, sought to weaken the country.

39 CAPF companies to guard Tripura civic polls on November 27, security cover planned for 704 booths

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

AGARTALA: Tripura will deploy 39 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) across 16 urban local bodies to ensure security during the municipal elections scheduled for November 27. The deployment will cover 704 polling stations, including 439 under the Agartala Municipal Corporation (AMC).

State Election Commissioner P.K. Chakravarti said on Saturday that 25 additional CAPF companies would arrive in the state within the next two to three days. Fourteen companies are already available for election-related security arrangements.

According to Chakravarti, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs informed the state government on Friday about the additional deployment.

The final security arrangements will be worked out by the State Election Commission in coordination with Police Headquarters, the Director General of Police and the Inspector General of Police (Law and Order). The deployment plan is expected to be finalised by Sunday.

Election preparedness reviewed

The State Election Commission has completed review meetings in four districts-Sepahijala, South Tripura, Gomati and West Tripura-to assess preparations for the civic polls.

Returning officers, assistant returning officers, superintendents of police, sub-divisional police officers and sector officers attended the meetings.

Chakravarti said the commission reviewed the responsibilities of election officials and the progress of preparations. Officials were directed to address any shortcomings within the stipulated timeframe.

Similar review meetings will be held in the remaining districts over the next two to three days, with district magistrates, police superintendents and other election officials participating.

Voting for election personnel underway

Voting for personnel assigned to election duties began on Saturday and will continue on Sunday. Facilitation centres have been established at 16 locations across the subdivisions under the supervision of returning officers.

Presiding officers, polling officers, Group D employees and police personnel deployed for election work can exercise their franchise through the election-duty voting facility.

The commission has also issued public notices to inform voters about the arrangements.

Electoral rolls to be updated

The State Election Commission has instructed returning officers to identify voters who are absent, have shifted residence or are deceased and update their status in the ward-wise and polling station-wise electoral rolls.

The municipal electoral rolls have been prepared on the basis of the Assembly electoral rolls. The updated records will also include details of officials who cast their votes through the election-duty facility on November 21 and 22.

The revised rolls will subsequently be handed over to presiding officers.

No home voting facility for elderly voters

On the demand for home voting facilities for elderly voters and persons with disabilities, Chakravarti said the existing Tripura municipal election rules did not provide for such an arrangement.

He noted that the Election Commission of India introduced home voting for voters aged 85 years and above in 2024, but a corresponding provision has not yet been incorporated into the state's municipal election rules.

Assam Sees Sharp Rise in Juvenile Cases, 1,217 New Files in Six Months

GUWAHATI

Assam has witnessed a sharp rise in cases involving children in conflict with law, with Juvenile Justice Boards (JJBs) across the State registering 1,217 fresh cases between April and September 2026 - the highest half-year figure in the past five years.The six-month total, averaging more than 200 new cases every month, has nearly matched the 1,265 cases registered during the entire 2023-24 financial year. The surge has also pushed the overall pendency to a record 2,201 cases as of September, despite an increase in the number of cases disposed of by the boards.

Official data covering April 2022 to September 2026 points to a sustained rise in juvenile cases after a brief decline in 2023-24. Child rights activists have expressed concern that the trend reflects a wider social challenge that cannot be addressed



through policing and judicial action alone.

"This is a serious concern not just from the law and order point of view but society as a whole," a child rights activist said, referring to the rising number of cases.

A police source said children were increasingly being drawn into offences involving digital platforms and cybercrime, substance abuse, drug peddling and sexual offences.

The figures show that Assam registered 1,586 fresh cases in 2022-23, while the boards disposed of 1,206, leaving 1,975 cases pending at the end of the year.

The following year brought a modest improvement. Fresh registrations fell to 1,265 in 2023-24, while 1,276 cases were disposed of, reducing the backlog marginally to 1,964.

The downward trend, however, did not last. In 2024-25, fresh cases rose to 1,560. Although the boards disposed of 1,537 cases - their highest full-year disposal figure during the period - pendency increased to 1,987.

The situation worsened in 2025-26, when 1,603 new cases were registered against 1,510 disposals, taking the backlog to 2,080.

The latest six-month figures indicate a further acceleration. Between April and September 2026, the JJBs disposed of 1,096 cases but received 1,217 new ones. The difference added another 121 cases to the pending list, taking the total to 2,201.

Overall, 7,231 fresh cases were registered across the four-and-a-half-year period, compared with 6,625 disposals.

A member of a Juvenile Justice Board pointed out that proceedings involving children are expected to be completed expeditiously under the Juvenile Justice Act, ideally within four months, so that they can receive appropriate counselling and rehabilitation support.

Prolonged proceedings, the member said, can disrupt children's education and expose them to social stigma while they wait for their cases to be resolved.

Child rights workers argue that improving disposal rates, though necessary, will not address the factors drawing children into the criminal justice system. They have called for stronger school-based support, family counselling and community-level intervention to identify vulnerable children before they become involved in offences.

BJP Works Round the Year, Congress and CPI(M) Surface Only During Polls: Manik Saha

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

AGARTALA: Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha on Sunday accused the Congress and the CPI(M) of approaching people primarily during elections, asserting that the BJP remains engaged in development and public service throughout the year.

Speaking in Agartala, Saha said the BJP's political activities were not limited to election campaigns and claimed that the party worked 365 days a year.

Highlighting the development of the Agartala Municipal Corporation, the Chief Minister said the city had 51 wards, each with its own set of challenges. He acknowledged that several issues remained but praised the elected representatives and the Mayor for their work over the past five years.

Saha said Agartala had undergone a significant transformation, adding that visitors from outside the state were increasingly appreciating the city's appearance and cleanliness.

He also referred to the municipal corporation's national-level recognition in the area of cleanliness and transparency, crediting the achievements to the efforts of public representatives.

Taking a swipe at the CPI(M), the Chief Minister dismissed criticism over the BJP government's development record. In a sarcastic remark, he suggested that those unable to see the changes taking place should get their cataracts treated.

Saha maintained that development had no caste, creed or religious identity and said the government remained committed to working for all sections of society.

Turning to the political contest ahead, he said the BJP would approach voters with its development record and the transparency of its administration.He added that the performance of municipal corporations, municipalities and Nagar Panchayats would form part of the party's campaign narrative.

The Chief Minister further claimed that neither the Congress nor the CPI(M) posed a significant challenge to the BJP, arguing that both parties had already been tested in government.

According to Saha, the BJP's principal challenge was to improve upon its own performance rather than focus on its political opponents.

Manipur's Amur Falcon Alang Completes 5,700-km Non-Stop Flight to Somalia in 101 Hours

Satellite-tracking programme in Tamenglong captures remarkable migration across the Arabian Sea, offering fresh insights into the endurance and movement of the migratory raptor

IMPHAL

An Amur falcon named Alang, satellite-tagged in Manipur's Tamenglong district, has completed an extraordinary non-stop flight of around 5,700 km from India to Somalia in 101 hours, providing scientists with valuable data on one of the most remarkable bird migrations.

The female falcon reached Somalia at around 5.30 am on November 21 after crossing the Arabian Sea as part of its annual southward migration to Africa.

Alang is among three Amur falcons fitted with satellite transmitters at Chiuluan village in Tamenglong on November 11, 2025, under a tracking initiative aimed at understanding the species' migratory routes and strengthening conservation efforts.

Dr Suresh Kumar of the Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun, who has been monitoring the birds, confirmed Alang's arrival in Somalia along with Kh Hitler, former Divisional Forest Officer of Tamenglong.

"Alang has arrived in Somalia at 5.30 am on November 21, having covered 5,700



km flying non-stop for 101 hours, while Apapang has covered 4,100 km so far, flying non-stop for 95 hours," Dr Kumar said.

The other two tagged birds are Apapang, an adult male, and Ahu, a female. The birds were named after a roosting site and two rivers in Tamenglong district. Ahu, however, lost satellite contact during its migration in Somalia last year.

Alang and Apapang began their onward journey towards Africa on November 17 after spending nearly 25 days at their stopover site in Chiuluan. Both had returned to their Tamenglong roosting site on October 22 this year after completing their annual migration across 23 countries in Asia and Africa.

The latest tracking data highlights the extraordinary endurance and navigational abilities of Amur falcons, small migratory birds of prey known for undertaking long-distance journeys between their breeding and wintering grounds.

The birds breed in southeast Russia and northeast China during summer before travelling south towards Africa. Their annual migration covers approximately 20,000 km, making it one of the longest journeys undertaken by any raptor.

During the southward journey, the falcons pass through parts of Asia before reaching northeast India, particularly Manipur and Nagaland, in October. The region serves as a crucial stopover, where they feed on insects and accumulate energy reserves before undertaking the demanding flight across the Arabian Sea.

They generally leave northeast India in November and spend the winter in southern Africa before beginning their return migration in April and May, travelling through Afghanistan and East Asia.The satellite-tagging initiative was first launched by the Tamenglong Forest Division in November 2018. The programme has since helped researchers gather information about migration routes, stopover locations and the movement of individual birds across international boundaries.Locally known as Akhuaipuina (Taomuanpui), Amur falcons are protected under Schedule I of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972. Their seasonal arrival in northeast India has also made conservation of their roosting sites a priority for forest authorities and local communities.Alang's successful journey to Somalia underscores the scientific value of satellite tracking in understanding migratory behaviour and identifying the international habitats that need protection to ensure the survival of the species.

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NATIONAL

Every HPV vaccine dose a step towards protecting girls from cervical cancer: PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed the achievement of administering more than one crore doses of the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine under India's nationwide vaccination campaign, saying every dose was a step towards protecting girls from cervical cancer.

Describing the milestone as a significant step in preventive healthcare, Modi said the campaign would help ensure a healthier future for girls. He also commended the stakeholders whose efforts had contributed to the achievement.

"A significant milestone in our journey towards preventive healthcare. Every dose is a step towards protecting girls from cervical cancer and ensuring a healthier future for them," he said in a post on X. India crossed the one-crore mark in less than nine months after launching the nationwide HPV vaccination campaign on February 28, 2026. According to the Union Health Ministry, the programme has covered nearly 87 per cent of the identified annual target of approximately 1.15 crore to 1.2 crore 14-year-old girls.

Uttar Pradesh leads the country with more than 29.33 lakh girls vaccinated, followed by Bihar with 13.70 lakh and Gujarat with 7.75 lakh. Six states — Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar — have achieved 100 per cent coverage of their identified target populations, the ministry said.

Launched by Modi from Ajmer in Rajasthan, the campaign offers free, voluntary, single-dose HPV vaccination to 14-year-old girls at designated government health facilities across the country. Parental consent is mandatory for vaccination.

The vaccine used in the national programme is Gardasil-4, which protects against four types of HPV, including types 16 and 18, responsible for a significant proportion of cervical cancer cases. It also protects against HPV types 6 and 11, which cause most cases of genital warts.



PM Modi, Nepal PM Balen Shah hold bilateral talks; aid package, rail connectivity on agenda



NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart Balendra Shah held bilateral talks at Hyderabad House in New Delhi on Monday, with discussions focusing on strengthening economic ties, expanding connectivity and boosting cooperation in energy, infrastructure and investment.

The meeting, part of Shah's first bilateral foreign visit since taking office in March, is aimed at providing fresh momentum to India-Nepal relations and identifying new areas of cooperation.

The two leaders are also discussing key regional and international issues of mutual interest. Trade, hydropower, cross-border transportation, rail and air connectivity, and infrastructure development are among the key areas on the agenda.

The two sides are expected to exchange agreements and understandings covering education, healthcare, agriculture, sports, disaster management and human resource development. A broader economic vision document outlining priority areas for long-term cooperation is also on the agenda.



A key highlight of the visit is expected to be the virtual inauguration of the Saryu-Kamala Express, a new passenger train service linking Ayodhya Cantonment in Uttar Pradesh with Janakpur Dham in Nepal.

The leaders are also expected to inaugurate an integrated check post at Banbasa in Uttarakhand and lay the foundation stones for new development projects.

Financial assistance for Nepal's post-flood reconstruction is another significant item on the agenda. India is discussing a development assistance package of up to $2 billion to support reconstruction following the devastating floods in August, which caused extensive damage to infrastructure and claimed lives.

The two sides are also looking at expanding cooperation in hydropower and cross-border energy trade.

The visit will also include a Nepal-India Business Forum, aimed at facilitating investment and strengthening commercial ties. Nepal's Finance Minister Swarnim Wagle is part of the delegation, alongside Foreign Minister Shishir Khanal and Chief Adviser Kumar Byanjankar. A business delegation is also accompanying the visiting prime minister.

Earlier on Monday, Shah paid floral tribute to Mahatma Gandhi at Raj Ghat and signed the visitors' book. He was accorded a ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan on his arrival in India on Sunday and subsequently met External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar.

Shah is also scheduled to call on President Droupadi Murmu before concluding his two-day state visit.

The visit comes amid efforts by the two neighbours to expand economic and strategic engagement. India remains Nepal's largest trade and investment partner, with cooperation spanning energy, infrastructure, trade and cross-border connectivity.

INTERNATIONAL

US panel recommends India channel for Dalai Lama succession planning, warns of China challenge



WASHINGTON

A US Congressional panel has recommended establishing a senior-level channel with India to coordinate contingency planning for the succession of the 14th Dalai Lama, warning that China could turn the process into an international contest over legitimacy.

The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, in a report to the US Congress, made a strong pitch to recognise the Gaden Phodrang Trust as the sole legitimate authority to identify and recognise the successor to the 14th Dalai Lama. The report by the bipartisan Commission said China was likely to use coercive tools to shape the outcome of the succession process.

It said that the US Congress should make it a policy not to recognise any successor to the Dalai Lama selected or installed by China.

"To carry out this policy and ensure US government readiness for the Dalai Lama's succession, Congress should direct the Secretary of State to...establish a senior-level channel with the Government of India for succession contingency planning, including intelligence sharing on Chinese influence operations," the report said.

It also asked the US Secretary of State to lead an internal interagency tabletop exercise on succession scenarios, with participation by the National Security Advisor, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Secretary of Defence.

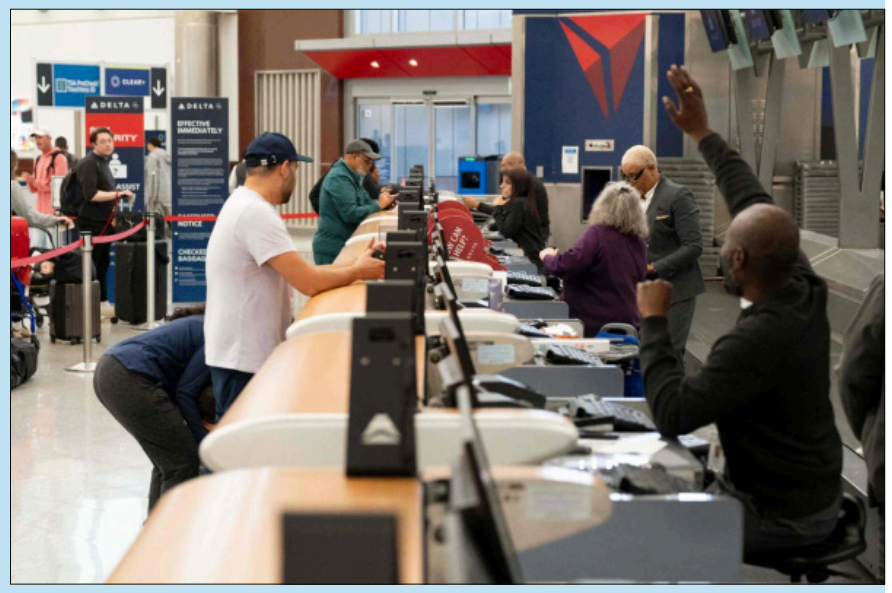
The commission also asked the US secretary of state to conduct Track 1.5 and Track 2 dialogues and tabletop exercises with Indian counterparts on the political and security implications of succession scenarios.

The Commission also wanted the US to coordinate with allies and partners on a diplomatic response that denies international legitimacy to any successor selected by China.

It also wanted the US to Counter succession-related influence operations by strengthening the Central Tibetan Administration's cybersecurity and resilience against China's cyber and artificial intelligence (AI)-enabled disinformation campaigns.

Set up by the Dalai Lama in 2011, the Gaden Phodrang trust will have the sole authority to recognise his future reincarnation.

Automation system problem at Delta causes flight delays as Americans travel for Thanksgiving



WASHINGTON

Over 1,000 Delta flights were delayed Sunday after an automated system that calculates an aircraft's weight malfunctioned during a busy time for travel ahead of the Thanksgiving holiday.

The airline said Sunday morning that its teams were using manual workarounds to get flights off the ground while they sought to restore the automation system that ensures an aircraft isn't too heavy to fly. Hours later, Delta said that system was once again working, though flights were still not back to normal.

The airline said it was helping passengers who needed hotel rooms or meals but hoped to have all the delayed flights in the air by the end of the day. On Sunday morning, the Federal Aviation Administration issued about an hourlong ground stop to some flights into Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, which is Delta's hub and one of the busiest airports in the world.

Complying with the weight and balance limits of an aircraft is critical to flight safety, according to an FAA document, and going above the limit can compromise the structural integrity of the aircraft.

The agency said on X that the delays weren't related to FAA air traffic systems.

Earlier this month, a malfunction in the FAA's network led to the longest nationwide ground stop in 25 years. The stop lasted for more than four hours, and carriers canceled and delayed swaths of flights as they worked to recover. Just days after that, United Airlines saw its own system outage — forcing it to delay departing flights. The Delta delays come as Americans have been encountering a growing number of problems with technology that are increasingly disrupting their lives. And the disruptions came just days before the Thanksgiving holiday, the busiest travel season in the United States.

As of Sunday evening, the flight-tracking website FlightAware said 58%, or about 2,000, of Delta's flights were delayed; it wasn't immediately clear how many of those involved flights into or out of the Atlanta airport.

FlightAware said that about 58% of flights out of the Atlanta airport were delayed while about 50% of flights destined for the airport were delayed. The vast majority of flights at the Atlanta airport are operated by Delta.

Delta said about 70% of the delays and cancellations noted by FlightAware were connected to the automation issue and the rest were because of inclement weather.

By mid-afternoon Delta was apologizing for the delays, and said it was rebooking customers and providing meals and hotel rooms where needed, and offering refunds if a flight was canceled. According to FlightAware, 3% of the airline's flights were canceled.

THE PLATINUM JUBILEE OF BODO SAHITYA SABHA. Seventy-Five Years of Linguistic Renaissance, Intellectual Awakening, Literary Excellence and Cultural Self-Assertion

16 November 1952 – 16 November 2026
"A Historic Milestone in the Intellectual and Cultural Journey of the Bodo People."

PRAMOD BORO



The Platinum Jubilee of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha is far more than the commemoration of an institution completing seventy-five years of existence. It is a celebration of an extraordinary civilisational journey—a testament to the resilience of a language, the intellectual awakening of a people, the preservation of an indigenous heritage and the enduring human aspiration for dignity, recognition and self-expression.It is an occasion to reflect upon the historical odyssey of one of the oldest indigenous linguistic communities of Northeast India, whose language, cultural traditions and collective consciousness have endured through successive generations, historical transitions and sociopolitical transformations, over a period of time.

For the Bodo people, language is the living repository of collective memory, the custodian of ancestral wisdom, the embodiment of cultural consciousness and the spiritual continuum connecting the past, the present and the future. The establishment of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha on 16 November 1952, at Basugaon, therefore represented a defining moment in the modern history of the Bodo people. It transformed a dispersed aspiration for linguistic preservation and recognition into an organised intellectual and literary movement and provided an institutional foundation for the systematic cultivation of Bodo language, the enrichment of its literature and cultural elements and the advancement of mother-tongue education.

The Historical Roots of Bodo Language and Civilisation

Bodo belongs to the Tibeto-Burman branch of the Sino-Tibetan language family and constitutes an important linguistic heritage of the Brahmaputra Valley and the wider Northeast Indian region.

Long before the emergence of modern literary institutions and printing technology, Bodo society possessed an extensive and vibrant oral literary heritage. Folk narratives, Bathou prayers, Bwisagu songs, legends, proverbs, riddles, folktales, traditional performances and indigenous knowledge systems served as vital instruments of intergenerational transmission.

The early twentieth century witnessed a significant intellectual awakening among educated Bodo youths. The establishment of the Bodo Chatra Sanmilani in 1919 reflected the community's growing consciousness regarding education, social reform, linguistic identity and collective advancement and marked the awakening of a broader historical transformation.

The Bibar and Alongbar Eras: The Dawn of Modern Bodo Literature.

The evolution of modern Bodo literature cannot be adequately understood without acknowledging the formative contributions of the Bibar and Alongbar eras.The publication of Bibar in 1924 constituted a landmark in the emergence of modern written Bodo literature. It provided an important literary platform for aspiring writers, intellectuals and socially conscious individuals to articulate their thoughts in their mother tongue and stimulate critical engagement with questions of social reform, education, cultural identity and community advancement.Subsequently, the publication of Alongbar in 1938 marked another significant milestone in the expansion of Bodo literary expression. Among the pioneering personalities associated with this literary awakening were Modaram Brahma, Satish Chandra Basumatary, Rupnath Brahma, Ishan Chandra Muchahary and Pramad Chandra Brahma, among others.

The Birth of Bodo Sahitya Sabha: An Institutional Renaissanceand the Struggle for Mother-Tongue Education

The establishment of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha on 16 November 1952 was one of the most consequential developments in the modern history of the Bodo community.The historic gathering at Basugaon brought together visionary individuals who recognised that the preservation and advancement of Bodo language required a dedicated, organised and enduring literary institution.Late Jaybhadra Hagjer became the first President, while late Sonaram Thaosen assumed the responsibility of the first General Secretary. Satish Chandra Basumatary also made important contributions to the formation and early organisational development of the Sabha.

Through sustained endeavours, the Bodo Sahitya Sabha emerged as the principal literary institution representing the linguistic and literary aspirations of the Bodo-speaking population and ushered in a period of institutional renaissance.

Among the most enduring contributions of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha was its determined struggle for the introduction and expansion of mother-tongue education.

A historic breakthrough was finally achieved on 18 May 1963, when the then Chief Minister of Assam, Bimala Prasad Chaliha,introduced Bodo as a medium of instruction at the lower-primary level in selected Bodo-dominated areas.In 1968, Bodo was extended as a medium of instruction to the secondary level, creating new possibilities for students to pursue formal education through their mother tongue.

The Script Movement: A Saga of Sacrifice, Conviction and Linguistic Determination

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Bodo was written using different scripts, including Roman, Assamese and Bengali. With the expansion of formal education and literary activities, the question of adopting a common and standardised writing system acquired increasing importance.

The Bodo Sahitya Sabha undertook extensive deliberations to determine an appropriate script capable of sustaining the long-term development of the language.During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Roman script emerged as an important demand among certain sections withthe introduction of the Roman-script primer Bithorai in 1974 further intensifying the debate.

What followed was a period of agitation, confrontation and profound sacrifice. The script movement of 1974–75 occupies an indelible place in the collective historical consciousness of the Bodo people. Following discussions with the Government of India and the intervention of the then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, the Devanagari script was accepted by the Bodo Sahitya Sabha at its 16th annual conference held at Dhing on 25 April 1975. This decision established Devanagari as the standard script for the formal development of Bodo education and literature.

Constitutional Recognition: From a Regional Linguistic Movement to National Recognition

The transformation of Bodo from a regional indigenous language into one of India's constitutionally recognised languages represents an extraordinary chapter in the democratic history of linguistic recognition.A significant milestone was achieved in 1985, when the Assam Official Language (Amendment) Act provided for the use of Bodo as an Associate Official Language for specified official purposes in areas having a substantial Bodo population.

The most consequential constitutional achievement came in December 2003, when Bodo was included in the Eighth Schedule of the Constitution of India through the 92nd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2003 that placed Bodo, along with Dogri, Maithili and Santhali in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution of India. This recognition brought Bodo language into the broader constitutional framework of India's linguistic plurality.

The Literary Renaissance and the Emergence of Bodo Intellectual Scholarship

Over the decades, Bodo literature has witnessed a remarkable expansion in both its thematic breadth and literary sophistication.Poetry, novels, short stories, drama, literary criticism, children's literature, folklore, translation, research publications and academic discourse have progressively enriched its literary universe.

The development of standardised orthography, grammar, dictionaries, scientific terminology and literary journals has strengthened the language's expressive capacity and its ability to engage with contemporary intellectual developments.

National literary recognition has further enhanced the visibility of Bodo literature.

TheSahitya Akademi began recognising Bodo literature through its annual awards in 2005. Since then, several Bodo writers have received this prestigious national distinction for their literary contributions.

Among the recognised writers are:

- Mangal Singh Hazowary, 2005.
- Katindra Swargiary, 2006.
- Janil Kumar Brahma, 2007.
- Bidyasagar Narzary, 2008.
- Manoranjan Lahary, 2009.
- Aurobindo Uzir, 2010.
- Premananda Mosahary — Sahitya Akademi Award, 2011.
- Guneswar Musahary, 2012.
- Anil Kumar Boro — Sahitya Akademi Award, 2013.
- Urkhao Gwra Brahma, 2014.
- Brajendra Kumar Brahma — Sahitya Akademi Award, 2015.
- Anjali Narzary, 2016.
- Rita Boro — Sahitya Akademi Award, 2017.
- Rituraj Basumatary, 2018.
- Phukan Chandra Basumatary — Sahitya Akademi Award, 2019.
- Dharanidhar Owari — Sahitya Akademi Award, 2020.
- Mwdai Gahai, 2021.
- Rashmi Choudhury, 2022.
- Nandeswar Daimari, 2023.
- Aron Raja, 2024.
- Sahaisuli Brahma, 2025.

The conferment of the Padma Shri upon Mangal Singh Hazowary in 2021 and Professor Anil Kumar Boro in 2025 constituted another moment of immense pride for the Bodo literary fraternity.Their contributions have helped bring the intellectual and cultural heritage of the community to wider national and international attention.

Contemporary Challenges: Transforming Recognition into Intellectual and Institutional StrengthThe future trajectory of development of the Bodo language must be founded upon a comprehensive and forward-looking intellectual agenda.

First, strengthening mother-tongue education.

Bodo-medium educational institutions require adequately trained teachers, updated textbooks, contemporary pedagogical resources, digital learning materials and a coherent academic framework. The quality of mother-tongue education must be strengthened at every stage, from early childhood to higher education.

Second, expanding the frontiers of higher education and research.

Bodo must progressively evolve as a language of advanced scholarship and specialised knowledge. Greater emphasis should be placed on scientific research, technology, economics, medicine, law, environmental studies and contemporary social sciences.

Third, embracing the digital and technological revolution.

The future of linguistic survival will increasingly be determined by the ability of languages to participate in the digital ecosystem.We must accelerate the development of Unicode-based resources, digital dictionaries, electronic archives, speech-recognition systems, machine-translation applications, artificial intelligence tools and online educational platforms in Bodo.

Fourth, promoting translation and international literary exchange.

The finest works of Bodo poetry, fiction, folklore and research must find their way into Assamese, Hindi, English and other international languages.Equally important is the translation of world literature into Bodo so that its readers can engage with the universal intellectual and creative heritage of humanity.

Fifth, creating a supportive literary ecosystem. Emerging writers, poets, researchers, journalists, translators and independent publishers require institutional encouragement, fellowships, research grants, literary awards and opportunities to participate in national and international literary forums.

Sixth, preserving linguistic plurality within the community.

The dialectal richness, oral traditions, regional expressions and indigenous knowledge systems of the Bodo-speaking population must be systematically documented and preserved.

Seventh, making literature responsive to contemporary civilisation.

Modern Bodo literature must engage with the pressing questions of our time, including climate change, indigenous rights, gender equality, social justice, democratic values, peace, human dignity, migration, employment and technological transformation.

The Larger Responsibility Towards India's Linguistic and Cultural Pluralism

As we commemorate the Platinum Jubilee, our reflections must extend beyond the boundaries of our own linguistic community.

India represents one of the world's most extraordinary reservoirs of linguistic, cultural and civilisational diversity. Its historical strength lies in the coexistence of numerous languages, dialects, indigenous knowledge systems and cultural traditions.

Although the Eighth Schedule recognises 22 languages, many other regional and indigenous languages across different parts of the country continue to require greater institutional encouragement, educational opportunities and technological support.

The future of India's linguistic diversity must alsobe evaluated by the extent to which smaller linguistic communities are empowered to preserve, develop and transmit their mother tongues to future generations.

The Bodo experience offers important lessons that a historically marginalised linguistic community can secure constitutional recognition and contribute meaningfully to the national literary heritage.

Our Civilizational Responsibility A Vision for the Next Twenty-Five Years: Towards the Centenary in 2052

On this historic occasion, I offer my profound reverence and heartfelt gratitude to every individual who contributed to the preservation, enrichment and advancement of Bodo language and literature.I pay my respectful homage to the founding leaders, particularly Jaybhadra Hagjer and Sonaram Thaosen; the pioneering literary personalities; the teachers who introduced Bodo into classrooms; the writers and poets who enriched its literary corpus; the scholars who developed its grammar and terminology; the publishers who brought literature to readers; and the martyrs who made sacrifices over time.

As we look towards the centenary of the Bodo Sahitya Sabha in 2052, we must articulate an ambitious yet achievable vision for the next twenty-five years.

We must, therefore, work towards establishing:

- A world-class Bodo literary and cultural archive.
- A comprehensive digital Bodo dictionary and linguistic database.
- An advanced centre for translation and comparative literature.
- A dedicated institute for indigenous language research.
- A strong national and international network of Bodo scholars.
- A sustainable ecosystem for young writers, researchers and publishers.
- A digital knowledge repository preserving the oral and written heritage of the Bodo people.

Let us all, on this historic occasion, pledge to make the next twenty-five years a period of unprecedented literary creativity, academic excellence, technological advancement and cultural renaissance that contributes to the universal treasury of human knowledge, imagination and wisdom.

Long live Bodo language and literature.

Long live the spirit of linguistic diversity and cultural coexistence.

Long live the enduring legacy of Bodo Sahitya Sabha.

Jai Boro Thunlai. Jai Boro Harimu. Jai Peaceful Bodoland.



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