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Bilas Inn Shooting: Prime Accused Ghanakanta Gogoi Killed in Police Firing in Sivasagar

SSP Papari Chetia says Gogoi, wanted in six cases, tried to snatch a service revolver while being taken to recover weapons; one police personnel seriously injured in the scuffle

SIVASAGAR

Ghanakanta Gogoi, prime accused in the October 26 Bilas Inn shooting in Guwahati that left five people dead, was killed in police firing near Phulpanisiga in Sivasagar district early Wednesday after allegedly attempting to escape custody and snatch a police officer's service revolver. The incident occurred around 3.10 am near Rongmon Dhaba, under Gorisagar police station, while a police team was taking him from Guwahati to recover weapons allegedly linked to the case. One police personnel was seriously injured in the ensuing struggle and another sustained minor injuries.

Sivasagar Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Papari Chetia said Gogoi had offered to lead the police team to a location in Gorisagar to recover weapons. During the journey, he allegedly attempted to flee and tried to snatch an officer's service revolver, triggering a scuffle.



According to Chetia, three rounds were fired from the officer's service revolver during the struggle, leaving one police personnel seriously injured. The injured officer was admitted to Gauhati Medical College and Hospital (GMCH) for treatment.

The officer-in-charge of Sivasagar Sadar Police Station, who was accompanying the team, subsequently fired his service weapon to overpower Gogoi and prevent his escape. Gogoi sustained bullet injuries and was taken to hospital, where he was declared brought dead, the SSP said.

The police vehicle was also hit during the exchange of fire. Chetia clarified that the second injured officer had sustained minor injuries but had not suffered any bullet wounds.

Describing Gogoi as a trained shooter with considerable experience in handling firearms, the SSP said the police had taken precautions while transporting him. She added that he was wanted in six cases.

The police team had obtained a production warrant from a Guwahati court on Tuesday night to bring Gogoi to Sivasagar in connection with an alleged loan fraud case registered at Sivasagar Sadar Police Station.

According to the SSP, Gogoi had allegedly secured a loan from Punjab National Bank (PNB) to purchase an excavator by submitting forged documents. After scrutinising the documents, the bank lodged a complaint, leading to the registration of the case.

Gogoi was arrested within an hour of the October 26 shooting at Hotel Bilas Inn in Guwahati's Ulubari area. The attack claimed five lives, including those of four members of a family associated with the hotel, while another person was injured.

He had subsequently been sent to judicial custody after police did not seek further remand. His death in Sivasagar comes as investigations into the hotel shooting and the other cases against him were underway.

PERSPECTIVE

Be a first rate version of yourself, not a second-rate version of someone else.

Meghalaya reshuffles cabinet, Paul Lyngdoh gets tourism and social welfare



SHILLONG

The Meghalaya government reshuffled cabinet portfolios, assigning tourism, social welfare, and arts and culture to newly inducted minister Paul Lyngdoh.

The revised allocation, notified by the personnel department with immediate effect, was issued following an order by the Governor on the recommendation of Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma.

Under the reshuffle, Timothy D Shira has been given charge of agriculture and farmers welfare, power, and water resources.

Senior BJP leader and Laban MLA Sanbor Shullai has been assigned animal husbandry and veterinary, fisheries, taxation, legal metrology, and printing and stationery.

Lyngdoh took oath as a cabinet minister on Monday after joining the ruling National People's Party (NPP) last week. He had quit his parent party, the United Democratic Party (UDP), along with two other MLAs, reducing the regional party's strength in the Assembly to one.

The political realignment followed the defection of eight other UDP MLAs to the BJP last month, further weakening the regional party's presence in the state legislature.

WHO SAID WHAT



The #AssamCabinet has approved a Defence Manufacturing Park at Jagiroad, spanning nearly 6000 bighas. With a focus on attracting anchor investors, Assam is positioning itself to contribute to India's growing defence production ecosystem

~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM, Assam

Manipur Sexual Violence Case: SC Directs CBI to Ensure Third Victim Testifies in Guwahati Trial

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to ensure the appearance of the third victim in the May 2023 Manipur sexual violence case before the special trial court in Guwahati for recording her testimony on the dates fixed by the court. The direction, issued on November 3 by a bench headed by Chief Justice Surya Kant, comes amid concerns over delays in the trial and the need to complete the examination of key victim-witnesses before the apex court takes up the pending bail-related proceedings involving the accused.A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V. Mohana noted that the case involved three victims apart from the complainant. While one of the victims has already been cross-examined, the testimony of the second victim is currently being recorded.

Directing the CBI to facilitate the appearance of the remaining victim, the bench said she should depose before the special trial court on November 13, 16 and 19. The Supreme Court has scheduled the next hearing in the matter after November 19.

At the outset of the proceedings, Additional Solicitor General Raja Thakare, appearing for the CBI, informed the court that the trial was progressing in accordance with the directions issued by the apex court.

However, senior advocate Shadan Farasat, representing accused Yumlembam Jiban Singh, raised concerns over the pace of the proceedings. He submitted that the trial had been delayed for various reasons despite the Supreme Court's earlier directions. Singh has approached the court seeking bail.

The case relates to the horrific incident of May 4, 2023, during the ethnic violence in Manipur, when a mob allegedly stripped and paraded three Kuki-Zo women naked in Thoubal district. Two of the women were also allegedly gang-raped. The father and brother of one of the victims were reportedly killed during the incident.

The case triggered nationwide outrage after a video showing the women being paraded surfaced on social media in July 2023, drawing widespread condemnation and renewed attention to the breakdown of law and order during the ethnic conflict in the state.

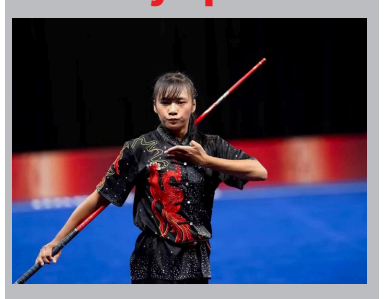
The Supreme Court is currently hearing separate petitions filed by the CBI seeking cancellation of bail granted to two accused and challenging the denial of bail to another accused in connection with the case. The examination of the victim-witnesses has emerged as a significant aspect of the proceedings, particularly in view of the agency's concerns about the possible impact of the accused remaining out on bail.

The CBI had earlier expressed apprehension that the release of the accused could influence the willingness of witnesses to testify. The agency had informed the apex court that the victims were sexually assaulted, paraded and video-recorded, and that the trial had already commenced.

On October 5, the Supreme Court had directed the CBI and the special trial court to ensure the appearance and examination of two key victim-witnesses on October 7, 9 and 28. It had also called upon all parties to cooperate with the trial proceedings.

The bench had indicated that it would be appropriate to consider the pending bail petitions after the examination of the two victim-witnesses. The latest direction to secure the testimony of the third victim is expected to facilitate further progress in the trial before the next round of hearings.

Manipur's Lanchenbi Chanu wins historic wushu bronze at Youth Olympics



IMPHAL

The 17-year-old becomes the first Indian athlete to win a wushu medal at the Youth Olympic Games, finishing third in the women's Changquan combined event in Dakar.Manipur's Rajkumari Lanchenbi Chanu scripted history on November 3, becoming the first Indian athlete to win a wushu medal at the Youth Olympic Games with a bronze in the women's Changquan combined event in Dakar. Chanu secured the bronze with a combined score of 18.039 points, finishing behind Egypt's Sondos Sonbol, who won gold with 18.660 points, and Venezuela's Valeria Frannerys Dudamel, who claimed silver with 18.199 points.

The Indian athlete delivered a strong performance across both disciplines, finishing second in Changquan with 9.316 points and third in Gunshu with 8.723 points.Her achievement marks a significant milestone for Indian wushu, with Chanu becoming the country's first medallist in the sport at the Youth Olympic Games.India has now won one silver and two bronze medals at the Dakar Youth Olympics.On Monday, teenager Khushbu Rajakbhai secured silver in judo, becoming only the second Indian judoka to reach the Youth Olympics podium.

Gaurav Gogoi alleges corruption, says Himanta Biswa Sarma will 'end up in jail'



GUWAHATI

Assam Congress president Gaurav Gogoi on Wednesday launched a sharp attack on Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging corruption and warning that the BJP leader could face legal consequences if the Congress comes to power at the Centre.

In a post on X, Gogoi claimed that Sarma was apprehensive about a possible Congress government at the Centre and said allegations against the Chief Minister would be brought into the public domain."The long list of crimes that he has buried will be uncovered and put in public domain. He knows that he will end up in jail for his crimes and corruption," Gogoi wrote.

The Congress leader, who is also the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, also criticised the Assam government's decision to allow the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) to recover an accumulated power purchase cost of Rs 155.59 crore from consumers over five months. Describing the additional burden as the Chief Minister's "Diwali gift" to the people, Gogoi alleged that the government was passing the cost of its financial decisions on to ordinary households.He questioned the government's spending priorities, arguing that funds were readily available for beneficiary schemes and political campaigns, while consumers were being asked to bear higher electricity costs.Gogoi also raised concerns over Assam's growing debt and questioned the financial implications of the state's 3,200 MW power purchase agreement with Adani Power.Citing an investigative report, he claimed that provisions in the agreement could expose APDCL to substantial liabilities if surplus power generation resulted in losses. He estimated the potential financial burden at Rs 12,566 crore over five years.The Congress leader accused the BJP government of favouring corporate interests while shifting financial risks to consumers.Questioning the development claims made by the Chief Minister, Gogoi said the rising electricity costs and the state's financial liabilities raised doubts about the government's model of development.

"Is this the Assam development model that Himanta Biswa Sarma has been widely advertising and dazzling everyone with through dancing AI videos?" he asked.

The allegations come amid a political debate over electricity costs and the state's financial commitments. The Chief Minister and the BJP have not responded to Gogoi's latest remarks in the material provided.

Assam Plans Five Ropeway Projects, Proposes 51:49 Centre-State Development Authority

GUWAHATI

The Assam government has proposed setting up a joint Ropeway Development Authority with the Centre to execute five ropeway projects across the state, including a direct connection between Kamakhya Railway Station and Maa Kamakhya Devalaya in Guwahati and a proposed route linking Ganganagar with Bhuban Pahar in Barak Valley. Announcing the plan after the state Cabinet meeting on November 3, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said the proposed authority would be jointly owned by the Centre and the Assam government, with the Union government holding a 51 per cent stake and the state retaining 49 per cent. The initiative aims to improve connectivity to important religious and tourist destinations while exploring ropeways as an alternative mode of transport in areas where conventional road connectivity may be challenging.

The proposed authority will oversee the development of five ropeway corridors in different parts of Assam. The projects have been identified with a focus on religious tourism, scenic destinations and urban transport connectivity.



One of the key projects will connect Kamakhya Railway Station directly with Maa Kamakhya Devalaya, providing pilgrims and tourists with an alternative route to the hilltop shrine. Another proposed corridor will link Khanapara with Guwahati Railway Station, offering an additional transport option between two important locations in the state capital.

In the Barak Valley, the government has proposed a ropeway connecting Ganganagar with Bhuban Pahar, an important religious and tourist destination in Cachar district. The project is expected to improve access to the hilltop site and facilitate movement of pilgrims and visitors.

Two other projects have been proposed in the hill and northern parts of the state. In Dima Hasao district, the planned ropeway will connect Hempeupet Peak with the Jatinga Bird Watching Point, a destination known for its natural landscape and bird-related tourism. In Sonitpur district, another corridor will link Agnigarh with Bhairab Mandir.

According to the proposed arrangement, the joint authority will be responsible for taking forward the five projects, with the Centre and the state government participating through their respective equity stakes.

The ropeway initiative is part of the Assam government's broader effort to strengthen tourism infrastructure and improve access to destinations with religious, cultural and ecological significance. If implemented, the projects could provide alternative connectivity in hilly terrain, reduce dependence on road transport along selected routes and create fresh opportunities for tourism-related activities.

However, the projects will require further planning, technical assessment, financial arrangements and implementation clearances before construction can begin. The proposed joint authority is expected to provide the institutional framework for coordinating the projects between the Centre and the state.

Manipur: Suspected militants fire at vehicles on Imphal-Ukhrul road, no casualties

IMPHAL

Suspected armed militants allegedly opened fire on passenger vehicles and a goods-laden truck along the Imphal-Ukhrul road in Manipur on Wednesday afternoon, triggering panic among commuters. No casualties have been reported.The incident took place around 4.45 pm near TM Kasom village in Ukhrul district, when several vehicles, including a passenger Winger, were travelling from Imphal towards Ukhrul, according to sources.

The vehicles had reportedly been escorted by security personnel up to Litan before the escort withdrew. The convoy subsequently came under fire near TM Kasom village.

The firing reportedly continued for nearly 10 minutes, forcing passengers to take cover. Suspected militants allegedly used sophisticated firearms to target the moving vehicles.

All occupants reportedly escaped without physical injuries. However, the incident left commuters shaken and raised fresh concerns over the security of civilians travelling along the route.

A passenger who recounted the incident on social media alleged that the vehicles came under fire shortly after their security escort stopped at Litan.

According to the passenger, the driver of their Winger took cover in the narrow space between two trucks before managing to drive away as the firing continued.The passenger also questioned the security arrangements along the route, alleging that personnel stationed nearby did not take adequate measures to protect civilians during the attack.The incident has also raised concerns over the movement of essential goods and the safety of people who depend on the road for their daily activities.

The latest firing comes amid continuing concerns over security along the Imphal-Ukhrul road, particularly around TM Kasom village.

On April 18, two Tangkhul Naga civilians were killed in an armed ambush along National Highway-202 near the village.

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MUIZZU'S PAKISTAN VISIT

The Maldives must balance its expanding engagement with Pakistan against its longstanding strategic partnership with India, while any meaningful revival of SAARC will depend on addressing the region's unresolved security concerns.

Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's three-day visit to Pakistan has brought South Asia's fragile regional diplomacy back into focus. The first visit by a Maldivian President to Pakistan in 11 years was intended to strengthen bilateral relations and widen cooperation across several sectors. The signing of 20 memoranda of understanding (MoUs) reflects the ambition on both sides to deepen economic and institutional ties. Yet the visit acquired a wider geopolitical dimension with Muizzu's call for reviving the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).

The appeal for regional cooperation is welcome. South Asia remains one of the least integrated regions in the world, despite shared borders, cultural connections and common developmental challenges. However, the revival of regional institutions cannot be achieved through diplomatic statements alone. It requires political trust, sustained engagement and, above all, a willingness to confront the disputes that have repeatedly obstructed cooperation.

The economic agreements signed during Muizzu's visit offer an immediate test of the two countries' intentions. Both sides have agreed to raise bilateral trade from $13.9 million to $200 million within two years. The 20 MoUs cover areas such as health, education, information technology, agriculture, tourism and professional training. These sectors offer scope for mutually beneficial exchanges, particularly if the agreements are followed by concrete projects and institutional mechanisms.

But the number of agreements signed should not be mistaken for their success. Trade targets are meaningful only when supported by stronger commercial links, investment, connectivity and regular engagement between businesses. The real test will be whether the proposed cooperation delivers measurable benefits to ordinary citizens.

The security dimension of the visit deserves closer attention. The Maldives occupies a strategically important position in the Indian Ocean, close to major international shipping lanes and energy routes. Maritime surveillance, coastal security, law enforcement and the prevention of illegal activities at sea are therefore central to its national interests. Pakistan's interest in expanding defence and maritime cooperation with Male must be viewed against this strategic backdrop.

For India, developments in the Maldives carry particular significance. The two countries share geographical proximity and long-standing security interests in the Indian Ocean. India has played an important role in the Maldives through defence training, maritime surveillance, capacity-building, disaster response and other forms of assistance. Stability in the island nation is closely linked to the security of India's wider maritime neighbourhood.

Consequently, New Delhi will naturally monitor the expansion of Pakistan's defence and maritime engagement with Male. However, it would be premature to interpret every diplomatic initiative by the Maldives as a strategic move against India. The Maldives, like any sovereign country, has the right to diversify its international partnerships and pursue its national interests. Its foreign policy should be assessed through its actual decisions and long-term strategic conduct, rather than through the optics of individual visits.

For Muizzu, the challenge is to maintain a balanced foreign policy without allowing external partnerships to become sources of regional tension. The Maldives benefits from constructive relations with both India and Pakistan, but its strategic location also places a special responsibility on its leadership to ensure that bilateral engagements contribute to stability in the Indian Ocean.

The more consequential aspect of the Pakistan visit, however, was Muizzu's call to revive SAARC. Established in 1985, the organisation was conceived as a platform for regional cooperation in economic development, social progress and cultural exchange. Its eight members-India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, the Maldives and Afghanistan-share many challenges that do not respect national boundaries.

Poverty, unemployment, public health, climate change, energy security, food security and disaster management are among the areas where regional coordination could make a substantial difference. Cooperation in these fields is not merely a diplomatic aspiration; it is a practical necessity for a region exposed to common economic and environmental vulnerabilities.

Yet SAARC has remained largely paralysed for years. Its last summit was held in Kathmandu in November 2014. The summit scheduled to take place in Islamabad in 2016 was called off amid escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. No summit has been held since. The prolonged inactivity has exposed the organisation's vulnerability to bilateral political disputes and the absence of a minimum consensus among its members.

The central obstacle remains the deep mistrust between India and Pakistan, particularly over cross-border terrorism. India has consistently maintained that terrorism emanating from Pakistani territory makes normal political and economic engagement difficult. Repeated security crises have eroded confidence and made it increasingly difficult to sustain regional initiatives.

Pakistan cannot expect regional cooperation to progress while these concerns remain unaddressed. At the same time, the burden of reviving SAARC cannot be placed on one member alone. All participating countries must demonstrate a willingness to create an environment in which dialogue can continue despite political differences. Any credible effort must recognise that security concerns are not peripheral to regional cooperation; they are fundamental to it.

Muizzu's call for SAARC's revival would therefore have greater significance if accompanied by a clear recognition of the political and security realities that have prevented the organisation from functioning. An appeal for partnership must go beyond general expressions of goodwill. It must also acknowledge the need to build trust and address the sources of persistent regional tension.

That does not mean South Asia should abandon the idea of regional cooperation until every dispute is resolved. There is considerable scope for practical collaboration in public health, education, climate resilience, disaster management and trade. Countries can pursue limited, issue-based cooperation even when broader political relations remain strained.

Alternative regional platforms such as the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) and the Bangladesh-Bhutan-India-Nepal (BBIN) initiative have provided avenues for connectivity and economic engagement. These arrangements have their own importance, but they cannot entirely substitute for SAARC's wider geographical and institutional reach. A functioning regional organisation remains desirable, provided its members are prepared to make it meaningful.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"Men can starve from a lack of self-realization as much as they can from a lack of bread." ~ Richard Wright

PUTIN'S IRAN GAMBIT: RUSSIA'S STRATEGIC STAKES IN A CHANGING MIDDLE EAST



A.ROBERT

Moscow wants to preserve Tehran as a strategic partner, expand its diplomatic influence and protect its regional interests-but the war also presents conflicting economic incentives and exposes the limits of Russian power.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's October 27 meetings with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Qatar's Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani offered an insight into Moscow's calculations over the conflict involving Iran. Russia is seeking to retain its influence in the Middle East, protect its strategic partnership with Tehran and position itself as an important diplomatic player in efforts to end the confrontation. Yet its ambitions are constrained by competing economic interests, regional rivalries and the growing involvement of other mediators.

The meetings did not produce any publicly announced breakthrough in peace negotiations. Nevertheless, they highlighted a central dilemma for the Kremlin: Russia has a strategic interest in preventing Iran's decisive geopolitical defeat, even as the conflict creates short-term economic opportunities for Russian energy exporters.

Moscow's approach is therefore more complex than simply supporting Iran or opposing a US-led regional order. Putin's priority appears to be ensuring that Iran emerges from the confrontation sufficiently stable and independent to remain a valuable Russian partner.

Preserving a strategic partnership

Russia and Iran formalised their strategic relationship through a treaty signed in 2025, covering political, economic and security cooperation. Although the agreement does not constitute a mutual-defence pact, it has strengthened the institutional foundations of their partnership.

For Moscow, Iran occupies an important position in its broader geopolitical calculations. A political collapse in Tehran, particularly if followed by the emergence of a government closely aligned with Washington, could seriously weaken Russia's influence in the Middle East. Such a development would potentially strengthen American strategic leverage in a region where Moscow has invested considerable diplomatic and economic resources.

Consequently, preventing Iran's decisive strategic defeat may be more important to the Kremlin than ensuring an outright Iranian victory.

A weakened but politically stable Iran, retaining its independence and continuing its cooperation with Moscow, could still serve Russian interests. By contrast, an Iran emerging from the conflict increasingly dependent on Washington would represent a significant setback for the Kremlin.

This does not necessarily mean Russia is committed to preserving Iran's existing political system under every circumstance. Moscow's deeper concern may be the country's future strategic orientation. The nature of Iran's political arrangements matters, but its relationship with the major international powers could matter even more to Russia.

There are, however, limits to Moscow's influence. Maintaining close relations with Tehran does not give Putin the power to determine Iran's political or military future. That will depend primarily on developments inside Iran, the balance of military power, decisions taken in Washington and the positions adopted by other regional countries.

The energy paradox

The conflict has also created a complicated economic equation for Russia.

Any disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy transit routes, can push international oil prices higher. Such an increase may benefit Russian exporters, particularly at a time when Moscow remains under pressure from Western sanctions and restrictions on its energy trade.

However, prolonged instability carries substantial risks. Disruption to shipping, uncertainty in energy markets, declining investment and slower global economic growth could eventually damage demand for energy. A prolonged conflict could therefore generate short-term financial gains while creating longer-term economic costs.

Peace, too, presents challenges for Russian energy interests. If international sanctions on Iran were substantially eased, Tehran could gradually expand oil exports, attract foreign investment and strengthen its position in global energy markets. This could increase competition for Russian exporters.

The actual impact would depend on Iran's ability to restore production capacity, secure investment, access markets and overcome infrastructure constraints.

There is no sufficient public evidence to conclude that Moscow is deliberately seeking to prolong the conflict to benefit from higher oil prices or to restrict Iranian exports to protect its own market share. Such assumptions oversimplify Russia's calculations.

The more plausible assessment is that Moscow is attempting to balance immediate economic opportunities against the strategic risks of prolonged regional instability. Russia may benefit from higher energy prices, but it also needs a functioning regional economic environment and a stable Iran capable of sustaining their partnership.

Diplomatic access does not guarantee influence

Putin's meeting with Pezeshkian demonstrated that Moscow continues to enjoy direct access to Iran's political leadership. The Russian President acknowledged that the two leaders had discussed the regional crisis privately and expressed hope for a positive outcome.

Pezeshkian, for his part, argued that regional countries should be able to resolve their problems without depending on the United States. Both leaders emphasised the importance of closer cooperation.

Putin also said bilateral trade had increased by 10.4 per cent during the first eight months of 2026. He confirmed that construction work at Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant was continuing.

These developments underline the durability of the Russia-Iran relationship. But diplomatic engagement should not be confused with the ability to dictate the terms of a settlement. Neither leader publicly announced a new ceasefire proposal or an agreed negotiating framework during the meeting.

Russia can communicate with Tehran, convey proposals and potentially help identify areas of compromise. Yet diplomatic access becomes genuine leverage only when it changes the calculations of the parties involved or helps produce an agreement that would otherwise remain out of reach.

Moscow's relationship with Iran could make it a useful intermediary. At the same time, its close association with Tehran may generate suspicion in Washington about the neutrality of any Russian initiative. Russia's own war against Ukraine further complicates its claim to be a constructive peacemaker, even though mediation does not always require complete impartiality.

Qatar and Pakistan emerge as important intermediaries

Russia is not the only country seeking a diplomatic role in the conflict. Qatar and Pakistan have emerged as important intermediaries, while Saudi Arabia and Turkey also possess regional influence and strategic interests that could shape the eventual outcome.

Putin's separate meeting with Qatar's Emir highlighted the importance of these diplomatic channels. The Russian President referred to the Islamabad Memorandum, reached with Qatari and Pakistani mediation, as a possible basis for advancing negotiations over the Iranian crisis.

Qatar has experience facilitating communication between Washington and Tehran. On October 25, it presented Iran with a draft proposal intended to end the war. An official briefed on the negotiations said Tehran was considering the proposal. However, a senior Iranian official reportedly described the ideas as unacceptable and disputed that they constituted a formal offer.

The differing accounts illustrate the gap between diplomatic activity and actual progress towards peace. Mediators can establish communication channels, prepare proposals and encourage negotiations, but they cannot guarantee that the parties will accept the terms.

Russia could cooperate with Qatar and Pakistan in pursuing a settlement. Alternatively, competition for diplomatic recognition and influence could complicate coordination among the intermediaries.

For Moscow, the challenge is to demonstrate that its involvement can contribute something beyond the diplomatic access already available to other regional players.

Can Putin shape the post-war order?

Putin's Iran policy ultimately reflects an attempt to manage several competing objectives. Russia wants to preserve Tehran as a strategic partner, prevent the emergence of a regional order dominated by Washington and strengthen its own international standing. At the same time, it must navigate the economic consequences of a conflict that could either benefit or damage its energy interests, depending on how events unfold.

These objectives do not always complement one another. Iran may accept compromises that Moscow does not favour, reject proposals supported by Russia or emerge from the conflict with its capacity for strategic cooperation severely weakened.

The future of the relationship will also depend on how Tehran assesses its own security requirements. Iran is unlikely to subordinate its national interests entirely to Moscow's geopolitical calculations. The partnership may be strategically valuable to both sides, but their interests are not necessarily identical.

The real test of Putin's strategy, therefore, will not be the number of high-level meetings he holds or the diplomatic declarations issued after them. It will be whether Russia can help secure an outcome that reduces hostilities, preserves Iran's strategic independence and safeguards Moscow's position in the Middle East.

Putin may not necessarily need Iran to defeat the United States. What Russia needs is an Iran that emerges from the confrontation without falling decisively into Washington's strategic orbit.

But that outcome is far from guaranteed. Moscow can maintain diplomatic channels, offer political support and seek to influence negotiations. It cannot assume that Tehran will follow its preferences or that other regional powers will accept a Russian-led settlement.

For now, Putin's Iran gambit remains a strategic calculation rather than a diplomatic success. Russia has reasons to remain engaged, but whether it can convert its relationship with Tehran into decisive influence over the region's future remains an open question.



DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

Near Tripura's Boxanagar, a violent mob attacked BSF personnel after an anti-smuggling operation, injuring three jawans, including a Company Commander, and attempting to snatch their weapons. Eight people have been arrested and an FIR registered.

Porous borders and unchecked infiltration threaten national security. SIR is essential to protect electoral integrity. Draw your own conclusions on why Rahul Gandhi and his comrades oppose it!
~ Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)



Assam Power Tariff Hike to Be Rolled Back After Five Months, Says Himanta Biswa Sarma



GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma assured electricity consumers that the recently announced power tariff hike would be withdrawn once the Assam Power Distribution Company Limited (APDCL) recovers its accumulated losses, maintaining that the increase is a temporary measure and will not continue beyond five months.

Speaking to reporters at Vajpayee Bhawan, Sarma said the revised rates, which came into effect this month following approval from the Assam Electricity Regulatory Commission (AERC), were intended to help the power utility recover additional expenditure arising from higher electricity procurement costs.

"When we recover the losses, it would be withdrawn. The way it has been projected that it would be a big hike, it's not like that. I am saying, it won't be over five paise," the Chief Minister said.

Explaining the reasons behind the adjustment, Sarma linked the additional burden on consumers to rising power procurement costs amid the ongoing geopolitical tensions in West Asia and higher international oil prices.

"When oil prices go up, we have to buy power at increased rates. Because of West Asia turmoil, oil prices have gone up. Till yesterday, it was Rs 115 per barrel," he said, arguing that increased procurement costs had made the tariff adjustment necessary.

The revision is aimed at recovering accumulated Fuel and Power Purchase Price Adjustment Surcharge (FPPPAS) dues of approximately Rs 156 crore, excluding supplementary bills. The outstanding amount arose from variations in electricity purchase costs during the five-month period from April to August 2026.

APDCL had approached the AERC seeking permission to recover the accumulated surcharge through a staggered five-month schedule, beginning November 2026 and continuing until March 2027.

The approved adjustment, however, varies across consumer categories.

Domestic consumers and those under the Jeevandhara category with sanctioned loads below 30 kW will face an increase of Rs 0.05 per unit. Other low-tension consumer categories will see an increase of around Rs 0.30 per unit.

High-tension consumers with sanctioned loads exceeding 20 kW will also face an additional charge of Rs 0.30 per unit.

Sarma maintained that the revision should not be viewed as a permanent increase in electricity tariffs, reiterating that the additional charge would be withdrawn after APDCL recovers the outstanding amount.

The five-month recovery exercise comes amid concerns over rising household and business expenses. The Chief Minister's assurance is intended to address consumer apprehensions, although the actual rollback will depend on the recovery of the accumulated surcharge by the power utility.

Nine Arrested After Attack on BSF Personnel in Tripura; Weapons Allegedly Snatched

AGARTALA:

Nine people, including six men and three women, have been arrested in connection with an attack on Border Security Force (BSF) personnel at Ashabari in Tripura's Sepahijala district, Superintendent of Police Bijoy Debbarma said on Tuesday.

The incident occurred around 9 am on November 2 when BSF personnel deployed along the international border were conducting routine patrols and spotted a suspected attempt to smuggle ganja, according to the police.

Debbarma said the situation turned violent after the personnel challenged those allegedly involved in the smuggling attempt. A scuffle broke out, during which the suspected smugglers allegedly pelted stones at the BSF personnel and attempted to assault them. The force subsequently seized a consignment of ganja suspected to have been intended for smuggling.

Those involved initially fled the spot but later returned with additional people and allegedly attempted to block the road. The confrontation escalated when a BSF Assistant Commandant, who was proceeding towards the area with other personnel, was attacked. The assailants also allegedly snatched weapons from the security personnel.

Two BSF constables and the Assistant Commandant sustained serious injuries in the assault. Police and BSF personnel later reached the spot, rescued the injured personnel and shifted them to a hospital for treatment.

Condemning the incident, SP Debbarma described the attack on security personnel as shameful and said a case had been registered. Police conducted an overnight operation and arrested nine people in connection with the violence.

"The attack carried out by some villagers against those who ensure the nation's security is absolutely shameful, and we condemn it. A case has already been registered, and following an operation conducted overnight, we have arrested a total of nine individuals. They will be produced in court today," he said.

ECI Approves Polling Station Restructuring in Manipur Ahead of 2027 Electoral Roll Revision

IMPHAL

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has approved the rationalisation of polling stations across Manipur ahead of the Special Summary Revision (SSR) of electoral rolls, scheduled with January 1, 2027, as the qualifying date.

The approval was conveyed through an ECI letter, No. 64/MR/2026-ERS-II, dated November 2, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Arun Kumar Sinha said.

As part of the exercise, 38 existing polling stations have been bifurcated to improve voter management and ease logistical arrangements. With this adjustment, the total number of polling stations in Manipur has increased to 3,079.

The restructuring is intended to ensure that no polling station has more than 1,200 electors.

In a separate measure, 39 polling stations housed in dilapidated or permanently demolished buildings have been shifted to safer and more suitable premises.

The rationalisation exercise has also resulted in the deletion of one polling station-55/2-Doltang under the 55-Tipaimukh (ST) Assembly Constituency. The electors enrolled at the station have been merged with the neighbouring 55/1-Chingmun polling station.

The revised polling station arrangements, including the updated locations, will be incorporated into the Draft Electoral Roll scheduled for publication on November 12, 2026, ahead of the 2027 Special Summary Revision.

Kangpokpi Alleged Looting: Chingdai Committee Gives Security Forces 24-Hour Deadline to Return Property

IMPHAL

The Chingdai Area Core Committee (CACCO) has issued a 24-hour ultimatum to Manipur Police, CRPF and CoBRA personnel, demanding the return of household belongings, livestock and cash allegedly taken during a combing operation at S. Phailengkot village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district on October 20.

The committee, which represents the Chingdai area under the Saikul subdivision, alleged that security personnel removed several household items and valuables during the operation conducted in the early hours of October 20.

According to CACCO, the missing belongings include solar lamps, solar batteries, curved knives, traditional daos, power banks, mobile phone chargers, chickens and ducks. The committee also alleged that Rs 40,000 in cash was taken from residents.



Condemning the alleged incident, CACCO accused the personnel concerned of using the combing operation as a cover for looting and robbery. It also questioned the role of the commanding officer, alleging that adequate steps were not taken to prevent such misconduct by personnel under his command.

The committee has demanded the immediate return of all the allegedly taken property and money, setting November 4 as the deadline for compliance.

CACCO warned that failure to meet its demand would compel it to lodge a First Information Report (FIR) against the personnel allegedly involved, their commanding officer, and the CRPF, CoBRA and Manipur Police.

"Respect civilians' hard-earned money and property," the committee said, holding the personnel concerned and their commander accountable for the alleged incident.

The allegations have raised concerns over civilian property and accountability during security operations in the conflict-affected Kangpokpi district. However, the allegations against the security personnel remain to be independently established.

Tripura Education Department Takes School Outreach Drive to Homes of Irregular Students

AGARTALA

In a bid to improve school attendance and prevent students from dropping out of the education system, Tripura's Directorate of Elementary Education has extended its inspection drive beyond classrooms, reaching out directly to the homes of children with irregular attendance.

As part of the initiative, a team led by Deputy Director Oyindrila Majumder, along with Officers on Special Duty (OSDs) of the Directorate, conducted a surprise inspection of Karaimura Higher Basic School in Charilam on Monday.

During the visit, the officials assessed the overall academic environment, classroom teaching, Mid-Day Meal arrangements and student attendance. They appreciated the standard of teaching and acknowledged the commitment and dedication of the teachers.

The school's kitchen garden, developed under the initiative of headmistress Basana Rani Das, also received special appreciation. Officials noted that such activities can contribute to children's overall development while making the school environment more engaging.



A key part of the inspection was the department's effort to bring irregular students back into the classroom. Majumder, accompanied by officers Abhijit Samajpati, Jatan Debbarma and Pankaj Dalal, and Inspector of Schools Uttam Kumar Dutta, visited the homes of seven students whose attendance had been inconsistent and who had reportedly missed examinations as well.

During the visits, the officials interacted with the students and their parents, explaining the importance of regular school attendance and urging guardians to take greater responsibility for ensuring continuity in their children's education.

The initiative is aimed at identifying the reasons behind irregular attendance and addressing the problem through direct engagement with families. Rather than relying solely on attendance records and routine school inspections, the department is seeking to involve parents in efforts to keep children connected to the education system.

According to officials, the students and their parents responded positively to the outreach programme and assured the team that they would make efforts to ensure regular attendance.

The inspection team also reviewed teaching practices in the nursery section and among children covered under the NIPUN Tripura programme.

Officials took note of the use of teacher-developed Teaching-Learning Materials (TLM), designed according to children's age groups, learning needs and levels of understanding. These materials are being used to make classroom activities more interactive and encourage learning through participation and practical experiences.

The use of age-appropriate teaching materials is particularly important in strengthening foundational literacy and numeracy among young learners. Such classroom practices are intended to make learning more accessible and sustain children's interest in education.

The department's outreach drive highlights the importance of coordination among teachers, parents and education officials in tackling absenteeism. The broader objective is to ensure that children not only enrol in schools but also attend regularly, continue their studies and receive uninterrupted opportunities to learn and develop.

Supreme Court Seeks Centre, Assam's Response to Oil India's Drilling Plan Beneath Dibru-Saikhowa

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court sought responses from the Centre and the Assam government on Oil India Limited's petition challenging the rejection of its proposal to extract hydrocarbons beneath Dibru-Saikhowa National Park in Assam through Extended Reach Drilling (ERD).A bench comprising Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justices Joymalya Bagchi and V Mohana took up the matter after senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for Oil India, highlighted the urgency of the company's request, saying the rejection of the proposal had stalled its exploration plans in the area.Oil India has challenged the refusal to grant approval for the use of 0.069 hectares of forest land in Tinsukia district for the proposed drilling project. The company maintains that the drilling infrastructure would be established outside the national park, with wells extending underground to reach hydrocarbon deposits beneath the protected area.Explaining the technology, Dwivedi argued that Extended Reach Drilling was fundamentally different from conventional mining. According to the company, the technique would allow drilling from a location outside the park, with the well extending horizontally underground to reach deposits at depths of around 3,500 to 4,000 metres.

He also submitted that the area adjoining the national park was estimated to contain nearly three per cent of India's total hydrocarbon reserves. The company maintained that the proposed method would not adversely affect the park's flora and fauna.The bench indicated that it could examine the possibility of permitting the exploration after considering relevant research and development reports from the concerned authorities, including the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change. The matter is scheduled to be taken up after November 17.At the centre of the dispute is the rejection of Oil India's proposal by the Forest Advisory Committee and the subsequent decision of the Environment Ministry.

The company has argued that the authorities wrongly applied the Supreme Court's April 26, 2023, order prohibiting mining activities within national parks and wildlife sanctuaries and within one kilometre of their boundaries.Oil India has also relied on earlier Supreme Court orders passed in 2017, which permitted the company, subject to specified conditions and safeguards, to extract hydrocarbons beneath Dibru-Saikhowa through Extended Reach Drilling.The company has pointed out that the Standing Committee of the National Board for Wildlife had recommended its proposal and that the Supreme Court subsequently allowed underground extraction, subject to compliance with environmental and wildlife protection conditions.

Siang Dam Project: Assam Congress Seeks Independent Study, Flags Downstream Flood Risks



GUWAHATI

The Assam Congress has urged the Centre to commission an independent assessment of the potential downstream impact of the proposed Siang Upper Multipurpose Project (SUMP) in Arunachal Pradesh, raising concerns over flood risks, water security and the livelihoods of communities in Assam.

In a letter dated October 29 to Union Jal Shakti Minister C.R. Patil, Congress deputy leader in the Lok Sabha Gaurav Gogoi stressed that the Siang River, a major component of the Brahmaputra basin, sustains Assam's agricultural economy, riverine ecosystems and the livelihoods of thousands of people.

He argued that any major intervention in the river's flow regime must be preceded by a comprehensive assessment of its downstream consequences, along with transparency and formal consultation with Assam.

While acknowledging that the proposed project is being positioned as a strategic response to China's proposed mega-dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo, Gogoi maintained that Assam's interests must receive equal consideration.

He cautioned that the project's stated objectives of maintaining year-round water flows and moderating floods should not be treated as assured outcomes without independent scientific assessment.

Gogoi pointed to the region's vulnerability to extreme rainfall, landslides and glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), arguing that large-scale interventions in the river system could have far-reaching consequences for downstream areas.

Drawing parallels with concerns surrounding the Lower Subansiri Hydroelectric Project, he referred to issues such as sudden water releases, riverbank erosion, flooding and losses to downstream livelihoods.

He also cited a 2025 study documenting community concerns over flooding, declining fisheries and agricultural losses, saying such experiences highlighted the importance of independent assessments, transparent monitoring and meaningful participation of affected communities.

The Congress leader further referred to the 2013 Cumulative Impact and Carrying Capacity Study of the Siang Sub-Basin, including downstream impacts.

The study had identified potential ecological and livelihood consequences of earlier proposed projects on the Siang.Among the concerns highlighted was the possible impact of daily winter water releases on riverine areas, including Kobo Chapori in Assam.Although the 2013 study did not examine the Siang Upper Multipurpose Project in its present form, Gogoi argued that its findings underlined the need for a fresh and comprehensive assessment of the proposed project's downstream implications.

He has sought clarification from the Union ministry on whether the Assam government was formally consulted during the project's planning process. He has also called for the disclosure of relevant project assessments and hydrological studies to enable informed public scrutiny.

Recalling the position taken by former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi, he pointed out that the former chief minister had demanded formal consultation with Assam before major dam projects were undertaken in Arunachal Pradesh in 2014.

In 2015, Tarun Gogoi had also withheld support for the proposed Middle Siang project until its benefits to local communities could be demonstrated.

Meanwhile, opposition to the proposed SUMP has intensified in Arunachal Pradesh, particularly in Siang and Upper Siang districts.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu on Monday assured residents, especially members of the Adi community, that no final decision on the project would be taken without public consultation and consent.

The assurance came amid protests against the proposed project, with a 36-hour bandh disrupting normal life in Upper Siang district.

Acknowledging concerns over ancestral land, homes, livelihoods and the Siang River, which the Adi community reveres as Aane Siang, Khandu said the government would address public apprehensions through dialogue, transparency and meaningful consultation.

He maintained that the government would move forward only after taking into account the aspirations and interests of the affected people.

The proposed project has thus emerged as a point of concern not only for communities in Arunachal Pradesh but also for downstream stakeholders in Assam. While its strategic significance is being linked to developments upstream of the Brahmaputra, questions over environmental safety, flood management, rehabilitation and the rights of affected communities remain central to the debate.

Quest!

More than 1,000 different languages are spoken on the continent of Africa.



NATIONAL

Ready for special Parliament session on SIR: Shah



NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday said the government is ready to convene a special session of Parliament to hold discussions on Special Intensive Revision of the electoral roll and challenged the Opposition to join the debate.

He accused the Congress of supporting Naxalism and alleged that party leader Rahul Gandhi had backed the Maoists' unconstitutional 'Janatana Sarkar' and recently "mocked Parliament by staging a fake Parliament".

Addressing the concluding session and State Investiture Ceremony (Rajya Alankaran Samaroh) of Chhattisgarh Rajyotsava 2026 as the chief guest, Shah noted that a popular adage once described the state as a "rich land inhabited by poor people." Over the next decade, through the concerted leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai, Chhattisgarh's rich soil will be matched by affluent, thriving citizens, he said.

Shah asserted that Chhattisgarh has transitioned out of an atmosphere of fear and Maoist violence, setting course on a new trajectory of peace, development, and shared prosperity.

Highlighting the sustained campaign against Left-Wing Extremism (LWE), Shah commended the courage of central security forces, the state police, and the cooperation of local populations in Bastar.

"While Atal Ji created Chhattisgarh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is shaping and nurturing its growth," he stated.

Turning to economic potential, the Union Home Minister remarked that the return of peace will unlock vast tourism avenues across Bastar and southern Chhattisgarh. Sites such as Chitrakote Falls, Tirathgarh, Kanger Valley National Park, and the historic Bastar Dussehra carry immense international appeal, with tourism expansion poised to generate local employment, open global markets for tribal handicrafts, and stimulate the rural economy, he said.

Reflecting upon the state's 26-year development arc, Shah noted that the state's annual budget has surged 30-fold, per capita income has grown 17-fold, and Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) has grown nearly 25-fold since statehood, accompanied by a climb in literacy from 55 percent to 80 percent.

CM Sai, expressing gratitude to the Union Home Minister, observed that Shah's operational deadline of March 31, 2026 against outlawed Maoists. Sai noted that with roadblocks removed, infrastructure development, healthcare, rural road networks, and welfare schemes are moving forward at unprecedented speed to align with the Viksit Bharat 2047 blueprint.

Accusing the Congress of consistently supporting Naxalism, he referred to a statement purportedly made by then Union Home Minister P Chidambaram in 2010, claiming that Maoists were not required to surrender their weapons but should stop violence.

Targeting Rahul Gandhi, Shah alleged that Congress leaders had supported the Maoists' parallel 'Janatana Sarkar', which had its own home minister, chief minister and finance minister, despite having no constitutional authority.

"Rahul Gandhi supported a fake 'Janatana Sarkar', unconstitutional governments and has now made a mockery of Parliament by staging a 'fake' Parliament.

"By conducting a 'mock' parliament, he staged a charade of a discussion. I want to tell Rahul-ji that the Narendra Modi government is prepared to discuss every single issue," he added.

EC Assures Previously Enrolled Voters of No Prosecution for Seeking Inclusion in SIR Rolls Through Form 6



NEW DELHI

The Election Commission (EC) on Tuesday clarified that voters whose names are missing from the draft electoral rolls prepared under the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise can submit Form 6 to seek inclusion in the final voters' list, even if they were enrolled earlier, assuring that such applications would not, by themselves, amount to a false declaration or invite prosecution under the Representation of the People Act, 1950. The clarification is expected to address concerns among voters whose names have been deleted from the draft rolls and who have been hesitant to apply for inclusion, fearing that the declaration required in Form 6 could expose them to legal action.

In a letter to all state chief electoral officers, the EC said it had received reports that some previously enrolled voters were reluctant to submit Form 6 because the form requires applicants to declare that they are seeking inclusion in the electoral rolls for the first time.

The Commission said such voters apprehended that submitting the form despite their previous enrolment could amount to making a false declaration and render them liable for prosecution under Section 31 of the Representation of the People Act, 1950.

The EC clarified that voters whose names do not figure in the draft SIR rolls can submit Form 6 to seek fresh inclusion in the final electoral roll, irrespective of whether they had been enrolled earlier.

It also made clear that the submission of Form 6 by a previously enrolled voter whose name has been deleted from the draft rolls would not, by itself, constitute a false declaration.

An Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) cannot initiate action under Section 31 of the Act merely because an elector who figured in an earlier electoral roll submits Form 6 during or after the SIR exercise, the Commission said.

The EC, however, underlined that the protection would not extend to cases where an elector is already enrolled elsewhere or has made an unlawful or false declaration. Such circumstances could attract action under the relevant provisions of the law.

Citing the Delhi High Court's October 14 judgment, the Commission said the apprehension that previously enrolled voters could face prosecution merely for submitting Form 6 was misplaced.

The clarification comes amid concerns over the deletion of names during the SIR exercise and the process for seeking inclusion in the final electoral rolls. The declaration requirement in Form 6 had reportedly created uncertainty among voters who had been enrolled in earlier electoral rolls but found their names missing from the draft list.

The EC's clarification is aimed at removing that uncertainty and ensuring that eligible voters can apply for inclusion without fearing prosecution solely because they were enrolled in the past.

The Commission has reiterated that previous enrolment does not prevent an elector from submitting Form 6 if their name is missing from the draft SIR rolls. Applications will, however, remain subject to the prescribed electoral registration process.

INTERNATIONAL

Democrats win US House in growing midterms wave AGAINST TRUMP



WASHINGTON

Democrats won the House and were within reach of taking over the Senate in a rapidly building midterms wave Tuesday projected to sweep Republicans aside and deliver a stinging repudiation of Donald Trump's bruising presidency.

CNN and CNBC projected a Democratic House majority, giving the opposition the power to block Trump's legislative agenda and launch sweeping investigations of his administration during the final two years of his presidency.

The elections were a nationwide verdict on Trump's turbulent second term, with discontent over living costs, tariffs and the US war against Iran -- which has driven fuel prices sharply higher -- weighing on Republicans as his approval ratings languish near record lows.

In one of the night's biggest shocks, Democratic pediatrician Annie Andrews defeated Darline Graham in South Carolina, according to media projections.

Graham was supported by Trump and had been appointed to replace her brother, longtime Republican senator Lindsey Graham, after his death in July. Democrats had not won a Senate election in the deeply conservative southern state since 1998.

The victory followed another Republican Senate loss in North Carolina, where popular former governor Roy Cooper defeated a candidate handpicked by Trump.

Democrats also held crucial Senate seats in Georgia, where rising party star Jon Ossoff won reelection, and New Hampshire, where Chris Pappas became the first openly gay man elected to the chamber.

Republicans entered election day with a 53-47 Senate majority, leaving Democrats needing four net gains to take control. With two Republican seats already flipped, the battle for the upper chamber remained unresolved.

House results offered further evidence of the scale of the Republican setback, with Democratic gains extending deep into normally conservative territory.

In a closely watched bellwether, Democrat J.D. Ford ousted Republican congresswoman Victoria Spartz in Indiana, capturing a district Trump won by 17 percentage points in 2024.

Political analysts had identified an upset in the district as an early warning that Democrats could be heading for a so-called "blue wave."

The party also flipped a Republican-held House seat in North Carolina, while results in Florida suggested that redrawn electoral boundaries were failing to deliver the gains Republicans had expected.

In Georgia, Democratic former Atlanta mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms won the governorship, becoming the first Black woman elected governor in US history and ending 24 years of Republican control.

Even Republican success came after scares in unusually tight results. Trump-backed Byron Donalds won Florida's governorship, becoming the state's first Black governor, while Republican Ashley Moody retained a Senate seat.

Ossoff hailed the Democratic victories as a rejection of Trump's "depravity, corruption and incompetence."

North Korea launches unidentified projectile toward the sea: South Korea



SEOUL

North Korea launched an unidentified projectile toward the sea on Wednesday, South Korea's military said, adding to a recent series of provocative weapons demonstrations by Pyongyang.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the launch happened off North Korea's east coast but gave no further details, including what type of weapon was fired.

In recent weeks, North Korea has ramped up its weapons tests in a likely bid to increase its leverage in potential diplomacy with the U.S. after President Donald Trump expressed his desire to restore diplomacy with Kim Jong Un.

The latest launch also came a day after North Korea denied involvement in the recent cryptocurrency heist at Binance, dismissing as "a trite provocation" a US announcement that North Korean hackers were behind the incident.

Binance, the world's biggest cryptocurrency exchange, said Friday that hackers stole more than $6 billion in what appears to be the largest cryptocurrency heist on record. The FBI later said the theft was orchestrated by North Korean hackers, attributing the attack to a hacking group known as TraderTraitor, which was also behind a $1.5 billion hack of the Bybit exchange last year.

On Wednesday, Kim Yo Jong, the influential sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, issued another statement criticizing the FBI announcement, saying Pyongyang views it as "an extension of Washington's invariable hostile policy toward" North Korea.

"It is our clear stand that we have no need to sit face to face with such unreliable and hostile persons," she said. "The choice for peace includes dialogue of course, but this is not surely equated with national interests for us."

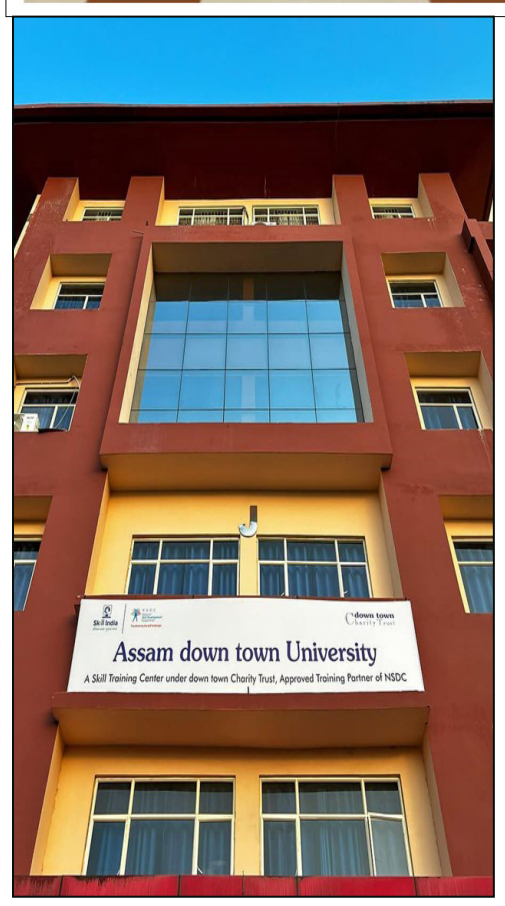
North Korea's recent weapons tests include a submarine-launched ballistic missile, hypersonic missiles, attack drones and cluster bombs designed to be carried by ballistic missiles. Pyongyang said Tuesday that it tested a new cluster warhead for strategic cruise missiles the previous day, claiming it could destroy an area of 5 to 6 hectares (12 to 15 acres) with "high-density power."

Tensions between the two Koreas have also deepened since mine blasts at their border in September wounded three South Korean soldiers. Seoul accused North Korea of burying the mines south of the military demarcation line and demanded an apology. Pyongyang has denied responsibility for the explosions and warned of retaliation if provoked.

North Korea later threatened to resume propaganda loudspeaker broadcasts and place new weapons systems along the border.

Assam down town University Celebrates National Unity Day with Cultural Display of Unity in Diversity





KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

GUWAHATI:

Assam down town University celebrated National Unity Day 2026 with patriotic fervour, marking the 151st birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, popularly known as the Iron Man of India on October 31.The programme was jointly organised by the Faculty of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation (FPAR) and the AdtU Dance Club. It highlighted the importance of national integration, cultural diversity and collective harmony.

The celebration began with a Run for Unity on the university campus, in which students, faculty members and staff from different states and communities participated. The event symbolised togetherness and solidarity among people from diverse backgrounds.

Prof. (Dr.) Robin Gogoi, Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, delivered an address on national unity, integrity and the role of young people in strengthening the country's social and cultural foundations.

Drawing a comparison between Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Chaolung Sukapha, the founder of the Ahom kingdom, Prof. Gogoi said Patel united around 560 princely states after British rule, while Sukapha brought together local communities and the sons of the soil to establish his kingdom and shape a greater Assamese society.

The programme also featured a multi-state diversity dance performance, in which students showcased India's rich cultural heritage through traditional dance forms, music and artistic expressions.

A cultural ramp walk followed, with participants representing the traditional attire, ethnic identities and customs of different Indian states. The presentation highlighted the country's cultural diversity and reinforced the message of unity.

The celebration concluded with the administration of the National Unity Day Pledge, with participants reaffirming their commitment to protecting the unity, integrity and security of the nation.

Delivering the vote of thanks, Dr Shalaka Baidya (PT), Assistant Professor, Faculty of Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation and Convenor of the AdtU Dance Club, thanked the university administration, dignitaries, faculty members, organising teams and students for their support and participation.The celebration served as a reminder that India's strength lies in its diversity and that mutual respect, cultural understanding and national solidarity are essential for building a united and harmonious society.

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