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Assam's defence industry debut: Can Rangia emerge as a new manufacturing hub for the Northeast?

A new facility aims to produce components for military infrastructure, counter-drone systems and protective technologies. But investment, employment and production targets remain unclear

GUWAHATI

Assam's entry into defence manufacturing could open a new chapter in the industrial development of the Northeast. An integrated manufacturing facility coming up in Rangia, developed by Speed4 Defence Systems Pvt Ltd, is expected to produce a range of components and structures for applications across the defence sector.The project is significant not merely because it marks Assam's entry into a new industrial segment, but also because it could help expand India's defence manufacturing footprint beyond its traditional industrial centres.The proposed Integrated Defence Manufacturing and Advanced Technology Facility will bring three manufacturing operations under one roof: continuous PIR/PU insulated panels, precast concrete structures and steel fabrication.

According to the company's project details, these products could serve a range of defence-related requirements,



including counter-drone systems, blast protection, military infrastructure, defence engineering, mobility, aerospace and aviation manufacturing, ballistic protection, surveillance and electronic systems.

The initial focus, however, appears to be on manufacturing components and infrastructure-related products rather than complete weapons systems. The company has not yet disclosed details of any specific defence equipment that may be manufactured at the facility in the future.Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has described the development as a step towards advancing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Look East' vision and the Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative.

In a post on X, Sarma declared, "Desh ke dushman, take note! Assam has entered defence manufacturing."

He also hinted at the possibility of expanding production beyond components in the coming years.For Assam, the facility could have implications beyond the defence sector. If the project develops as planned, it may generate opportunities for local suppliers, construction-related businesses, technical workers and skilled manpower. It could also encourage the development of an industrial ecosystem linked to India's defence and security requirements.The location is another important consideration. With the Northeast's strategic significance and continuing infrastructure requirements, the development of defence-linked manufacturing capabilities in Assam could strengthen the region's industrial relevance.

However, several critical details remain undisclosed. The company has not announced the project's total investment, proposed production capacity, construction timeline or expected employment generation. It is also unclear how much of the manufacturing and supply chain will involve local businesses.

The Rangia project therefore represents an important beginning, but its larger economic significance will depend on execution. Whether it can turn Assam into a meaningful defence manufacturing destination will ultimately be determined by the scale of production, technology development, local participation and employment opportunities it generates.The company and the State government have not yet made public details of the project's total investment, production capacity, construction timeline or expected employment generation.

The scale of the facility's contribution to Assam's industrial economy will therefore depend on its eventual production capabilities, investment and integration with the wider defence manufacturing supply chain.

PERSPECTIVE

Hate speech can take many different forms.

Class 2 student dies after falling into drain on way to school

HAILAKANDI

The death of Nazneen Nehar Laskar has triggered anger in Swapanpur, with residents alleging that the absence of a bridge or safe crossing has put schoolchildren at risk.

Hailakandi, November 25: A Class 2 student died after allegedly falling into a drain while on her way to school in Assam's Hailakandi district, triggering local outrage over the lack of a safe crossing facility.

The deceased has been identified as Nazneen Nehar Laskar, a resident of Kumarpara in Swapanpur.

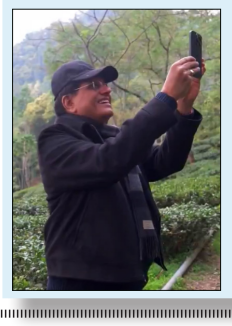
According to local residents, the child fell into the drain while travelling to school. The circumstances leading to the incident were not immediately clear.

The tragedy has brought attention to the absence of a bridge or proper crossing over the drain. Residents said the route is difficult and potentially dangerous, particularly for young children who use it to reach school.

Locals have expressed anger over the lack of basic infrastructure and renewed their demand for a safe crossing facility to prevent similar incidents.

The incident has also raised questions about the safety of everyday routes used by school-going children in the area. Residents are seeking urgent intervention from the authorities to address the hazard.

WHO SAID WHAT



Steeped in history, brewing possibilities for the future...MAKAIBARI is truly something special

~ Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce & Industry

Missing BSF Jawan's body found in Kushiyara, questions remain over border operation



SILCHAR

The body of Border Security Force (BSF) constable K. Venu, who went missing during a border operation in Assam, was recovered from the Kushiyara River near Steamerghat in Sribhumi district on Wednesday morning, November 25.

Venu had disappeared on Sunday night while pursuing suspected cattle smugglers along the India-Bangladesh border. His recovery, two days after he went missing, has brought an end to the search operation but left several questions unanswered about the circumstances leading to his death.According to preliminary reports, Venu was part of a BSF team conducting an operation to intercept suspected cattle smugglers near the river. During the pursuit, four to five suspected smugglers reportedly entered the river after noticing the presence of security personnel.

Head Constable Jitendra Yadav, who was accompanying Venu, managed to swim back to the riverbank. Venu, however, could not be traced following the incident.

Initially, authorities suspected that the constable had drowned in the river. However, the possibility of abduction also emerged amid concerns that suspected Bangladeshi smugglers might have taken him across the international border. The uncertainty intensified after reports of a possible cross-border abduction surfaced. Bangladesh's border security force subsequently stated that it had no information indicating that the missing BSF personnel was present in its territory.

The recovery of Venu's body from the Kushiyara River has now raised fresh questions about the sequence of events during the operation. It remains unclear whether he drowned while pursuing the suspects or was abducted and subsequently killed.

The exact cause and circumstances of his death are yet to be officially established. Further details are awaited as authorities continue to examine the incident.

Assam Police deploys 130 commandos in new specialised response unit

GUWAHATI

Assam Police has operationalised a 130-member Smart Response Unit (SRU), comprising two specialised commando formations designed to strengthen the force's capacity to respond to security challenges in urban and forested areas.

Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced the launch of the unit on November 24 while attending the passing-out parade at the Lachit Borphukan Police Academy in Dergaon, Golaghat district, on the occasion of Lachit Diwas.

The SRU has been divided into an Urban Intervention Unit and a Jungle Intervention Unit, each comprising 65 commandos. Both formations include 52 male and 13 female personnel, Sarma said.The commandos were selected through a screening process and subsequently given specialised training and advanced equipment to prepare them for operations in demanding environments. The selection exercise began in March 2025, with 160 volunteers undergoing a month-long assessment before the shortlisted candidates proceeded to specialised training.Both units have been established under the Lachit Borphukan Police Academy. Their separate operational focus is intended to improve the force's preparedness for intervention in densely populated urban settings as well as difficult forest terrain.The announcement coincided with the passing-out parade of 1,653 Unarmed Branch constables and eight Sub-Inspector (Communication) cadets, who completed their training and formally joined the police force. The newly trained personnel received instruction in case handling, newly enacted criminal laws, forensic science, information technology and intelligence gathering, among other areas of modern policing.With the addition of the SRU, Assam Police is seeking to expand its specialised response capacity alongside the recruitment and training of personnel for regular policing duties.

Manipur Governor briefs President on state security, suspected liquor deaths



IMPHAL

Manipur Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla met President Droupadi Murmu at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday and briefed her on the prevailing situation in the State, amid a suspected spurious liquor outbreak that has left at least 17 people dead and 81 others hospitalised.

The President's Office confirmed the meeting through a post on its official X account. However, details of the Governor's briefing on the security situation and the liquor-related deaths were not immediately made public.

The suspected liquor outbreak, reported since November 18, has triggered a major public health response in Manipur. The affected patients were admitted to four hospitals in Imphal, with 11 reportedly requiring intensive care.

Health authorities have screened more than 1,230 people in connection with the incident. Of them, 813 have been discharged, while medical monitoring and treatment of other affected individuals are continuing.

The police have arrested nine people, including two women, in connection with the suspected illicit liquor supply. Excise officials have also seized around 5,000 litres of suspected illicit alcohol.

The State government has constituted a high-level inquiry committee headed by Principal Secretary R.K. Dinesh Singh to investigate the incident and establish the circumstances behind the deaths and hospitalisations.

To determine the nature and composition of the suspected liquor, samples have been sent to the National Food Laboratory in Kolkata, besides forensic and public health laboratories in Imphal. The findings are expected to help establish whether toxic or prohibited substances were responsible for the outbreak.

The investigation and laboratory examinations are underway as authorities continue to monitor the situation and trace those allegedly involved in the supply of the suspected spurious liquor.

Fake Aadhaar, PAN cards emerge as new tools in Assam's cybercrime network

GUWAHATI

Cyber fraudsters in Assam are increasingly using Chinese mobile applications to generate fake Aadhaar and PAN cards, enabling them to open bank accounts and cheat unsuspecting people, police sources have warned.

According to police sources, these applications have been used to manipulate identity documents and create fraudulent credentials that help cybercriminals establish bank accounts for illegal transactions. Security agencies have reportedly blocked three such applications, although it remains unclear whether other similar apps are still being used.

The growing misuse of Aadhaar and PAN details has added another dimension to cybercrime in the state, particularly as these documents are routinely required for banking and other financial services.

Police have also flagged the emergence of unauthorised Aadhaar enrolment centres in remote areas. One such illegal centre was recently sealed after it was allegedly found to have issued fake Aadhaar cards to around 2,000 people. Officials have also detected instances



of operators providing Aadhaar cards without properly verifying applicants' details.

In a recent case, a journalist was allegedly cheated by cybercriminals, following which Barpeta Police arrested a suspect. The incident has once again highlighted the vulnerability of individuals whose personal and financial information falls into the hands of fraudsters.

SIM verification and banking security under scrutiny

Police have also raised concerns over lapses in the verification of documents submitted for obtaining mobile SIM cards. Distributors have been advised to conduct proper checks before issuing connections.

However, officials acknowledge that detecting sophisticated fake identity documents remains a challenge. More than 50,000 SIM cards have reportedly been deactivated following verification-related lapses.Investigators have also identified links between cybercriminals operating in Assam and networks in other states, including West Bengal, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

According to police sources, money collected through fraudulent transactions is frequently transferred to accounts or networks outside Assam soon after the crimes, making financial tracking and recovery more difficult.

Police caution against suspicious links and calls

Apart from document forgery, police have identified careless handling of digital information as a major factor contributing to cyber fraud.

Many victims are reportedly tricked into clicking unfamiliar links or responding to fraudulent telephone calls. Criminals posing as representatives of banks and other institutions allegedly persuade people to disclose banking credentials and other sensitive information.

Police have cautioned people against sharing bank details, passwords, OTPs and other confidential information with unknown callers or through suspicious websites and links.

The emerging pattern points to a wider cybercrime network involving identity theft, fraudulent documentation, unauthorised bank accounts and inter-state money transfers. Strengthening identity verification and public awareness, police believe, will be essential to preventing such financial crimes.

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OMAN: INDIA'S STRATEGIC GATEWAY TO THE GULF

Beyond centuries-old maritime ties, the India-Oman trade pact offers New Delhi an opportunity to expand exports, reduce trade imbalances and strengthen its economic and strategic presence in a region vital to energy security and global commerce.

India's engagement with the Gulf is entering a more consequential phase, and Oman is emerging as one of its most important partners. At a time when geopolitical uncertainties, energy security concerns and shifting global trade patterns are reshaping international relationships, New Delhi cannot afford to view Muscat merely as another trading partner. Oman represents a strategic gateway connecting India with the Arabian Peninsula, the wider Middle East and vital international maritime routes.

The significance of this relationship lies in the combination of history, geography, economic opportunity and mutual trust. Few countries in the Gulf enjoy such a long-standing maritime and commercial relationship with India. Yet the challenge today is to transform that historical goodwill into a modern partnership capable of delivering tangible economic and strategic benefits.

The India-Oman Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), which came into force on June 1, 2026, provides an important opportunity to achieve that objective.

The agreement marks a substantial expansion of market access. Oman has offered zero-duty access on 98.08 per cent of its tariff lines, covering 99.38 per cent of Indian exports by value. Before the agreement, only 15.3 per cent of Indian exports entered the Omani market without customs duties, while goods worth approximately $3.64 billion faced a five per cent tariff.

This change could significantly improve the competitiveness of Indian products, particularly textiles, engineering goods, pharmaceuticals, gems and jewellery, processed food and automobiles. Equally important is Oman's decision to open 127 services sub-sectors to Indian providers, creating opportunities beyond conventional merchandise trade.

However, signing a trade agreement is only the beginning. Its success will depend on how effectively Indian businesses, particularly small and medium enterprises, utilise the new opportunities. Complicated procedures, limited market information and logistical constraints can prevent exporters from benefiting fully even when tariff barriers are removed. The proposed review mechanism between the two countries must therefore focus on resolving practical difficulties rather than merely evaluating trade figures.

Correcting the imbalance in trade

The economic case for closer engagement becomes clearer when the existing trade relationship is examined. Bilateral trade reached $11.19 billion in 2025-26, but India's exports stood at around $4 billion, while imports exceeded $7 billion, largely because of hydrocarbon purchases.

This imbalance highlights both the strength and the limitations of the relationship. India's energy requirements make Oman an important supplier, but excessive dependence on a narrow range of commodities can leave bilateral trade vulnerable to fluctuations in international energy prices.

The CEPA offers an opportunity to broaden the economic relationship. India must use preferential access to increase exports of manufactured goods, pharmaceuticals, technology-based services, food products and industrial equipment. A more diversified trade structure would benefit both countries by creating stronger commercial interdependence.

For India, this is particularly important as it seeks to expand its manufacturing base and establish alternative markets amid growing uncertainty in global supply chains.

Geography makes Oman indispensable

Oman's importance, however, extends well beyond trade statistics. Its geographical position near the Strait of Hormuz gives it considerable strategic significance in the movement of global energy supplies and maritime commerce.

The narrow waterway connects the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Any disruption in this region can have immediate consequences for oil prices, shipping costs and the economic stability of energy-importing countries, including India.

Oman's location outside the Persian Gulf, combined with its access to the Arabian Sea, makes it particularly relevant to India's maritime calculations. The Sultanate can serve as an important partner in maintaining secure sea routes, strengthening maritime cooperation and promoting regional stability.

At a time when geopolitical rivalries are increasingly influencing commercial shipping and energy flows, India's relationship with Muscat provides an avenue for constructive engagement without unnecessary strategic confrontation.

New Delhi must therefore look beyond immediate commercial gains and deepen cooperation in maritime security, port connectivity, logistics and regional infrastructure.

The human foundation of the partnership

Perhaps the strongest foundation of India-Oman relations remains its people-to-people connection.

Nearly 677,000 Indians live in Oman, including around 520,000 working on employment visas. They are employed across healthcare, engineering, education, construction, finance, retail and other sectors. More than 6,000 Indian establishments operate in the Sultanate, while remittances sent home are estimated at approximately $2 billion annually.

These figures represent more than an expatriate workforce. They reflect decades of social and economic integration between the two countries.

Indian professionals and workers have contributed significantly to Oman's development, while the Sultanate has provided employment, business opportunities and a welcoming environment for successive generations of Indians. Some Indian merchant families have maintained commercial links with Muscat for nearly two centuries.

This human connection gives the relationship a degree of continuity that cannot be created through diplomatic agreements alone. Protecting the welfare, rights and professional interests of Indian workers must remain a central component of New Delhi's engagement with Oman.

The CEPA should also be used to facilitate greater professional mobility, expand educational cooperation and encourage investment partnerships involving Indian businesses and the expatriate community.

The symbolic voyage of INSV Kaundinya from Porbandar to Muscat in January 2026 offered a reminder of how deeply the two societies have been connected through maritime commerce. The traditional wooden vessel, constructed using ancient shipbuilding techniques and modelled on historical Indian designs, retraced a route once travelled by traders using the seasonal monsoon winds.

Such historical connections matter because they provide a foundation of trust. But contemporary diplomacy must be judged by its ability to translate that goodwill into economic resilience and strategic cooperation.

India must also recognise that competition for influence and investment in the Gulf is intensifying. Countries across the region are diversifying their economies, investing in logistics, technology, manufacturing and renewable energy. Oman is pursuing its own economic transformation, creating opportunities for Indian investment and technological collaboration.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

You can destroy your now by worrying about tomorrow.
- Janis Joplin

Bangladesh's Post-Uprising Crisis: The Battle for Political Legitimacy Remains Unresolved



COL. GURU SADAY BATABYAL (RETD)

Revolutions often succeed in dismantling an existing political order but struggle to establish a stable and legitimate alternative. Bangladesh is confronting precisely this dilemma nearly two years after the 2024 mass uprising ended Sheikh Hasina's 15-year rule.

What began as a student-led movement against political repression, governance failures and questions surrounding electoral credibility has evolved into a much wider contest over power, national identity and the future direction of the country. The central question is no longer simply who replaced the former government, but whether the emerging political arrangement enjoys sufficient public legitimacy to govern.

The developments since the uprising suggest that Bangladesh has yet to find a broadly accepted political settlement.

Political exclusion threatens democratic renewal

One of the most consequential developments during the transition under Muhammad Yunus has been the decision to ban Awami League activities and suspend the party's electoral participation pending legal proceedings against its leadership.

Supporters of the move argue that accountability for alleged abuses and violence during Hasina's tenure is essential to rebuilding public confidence in democratic institutions. However, the distinction between prosecuting alleged wrongdoing and excluding an entire political organisation remains fundamental.

Democracy requires accountability, but it also depends on political competition. When legal and administrative measures are perceived as instruments for removing a major political force from the electoral arena, questions arise about the impartiality of the transition itself.

The Awami League is not an ordinary political organisation in Bangladesh's history. Its role in the Liberation War and the formation of the country gives it a distinctive place in the national political landscape. Millions of citizens continue to associate with its political legacy, irrespective of their views on Sheikh Hasina's years in power.

Individual leaders must face investigation and judicial proceedings wherever credible allegations exist. But the political identity of millions cannot simply be erased through administrative decisions.

History repeatedly demonstrates that political constituencies do not disappear through prohibition. Exclusion often pushes political activity beyond institutional channels, creating conditions for confrontation and instability.

When political rivalry moves to the streets

The growing incidents of arson, bomb attacks, political clashes and intimidation point to the dangers of an increasingly polarised political environment.

The challenge is particularly serious when rival groups begin viewing one another not as legitimate political competitors but as enemies whose presence must be eliminated.

The destruction of Dhanmondi 32, attacks on Liberation War memorials and damage to symbols associated with Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman have added another dimension to the crisis.

These incidents are not merely disputes over public property or political symbolism. They reflect a deeper struggle over how Bangladesh remembers its past and defines its national identity.

For many citizens, the Liberation War remains the foundation of the country's political existence. Attempts to dismantle or erase its associated historical symbols risk turning national memory into another arena of political confrontation.

The subsequent attacks on figures and institutions associated with the post-uprising administration, including the reported attack on Muhammad Yunus's ancestral home, have further exposed the growing cycle of retaliation.

Although responsibility for individual incidents must be established through investigation, competing perceptions of victimhood are increasingly shaping political behaviour. One side's assertion of justice is often viewed by the other as political revenge.

Such a cycle makes reconciliation considerably more difficult.



Has Bangladesh moved beyond Sheikh Hasina?

The unresolved future of Sheikh Hasina remains another major factor in the country's political uncertainty.

Living in India since leaving Bangladesh, Hasina continues to influence political calculations despite her absence from the country. Speculation surrounding her possible return energises her supporters while generating concern among political opponents.

Her political future has therefore become closely linked to the legitimacy of the post-2024 arrangement.

The more fundamental question, however, is whether Bangladesh has genuinely moved beyond the Awami League as a political force or whether the party continues to command substantial support among sections of the population.

That question cannot be settled through political declarations, bans or street mobilisation. Ultimately, it requires a credible democratic process through which citizens can express their preferences.

The inability to establish such a process risks prolonging uncertainty and creating further opportunities for political confrontation.

Geopolitical concerns cannot replace domestic solutions

Bangladesh's strategic location and its importance to regional connectivity, security and trade ensure that developments within the country attract considerable international attention.

India, in particular, has significant interests in Bangladesh's political stability, given their shared border, economic links and security concerns. Other regional and global powers also have reasons to closely monitor the country's transition.

Allegations of foreign involvement in the political changes, however, remain unproven and should not be treated as established explanations for the crisis.

The primary source of Bangladesh's instability lies in its unresolved domestic political contest. External influence may become a subject of political debate, but it cannot explain away the fundamental questions surrounding democratic representation, institutional credibility and the rule of law.

A sustainable political settlement must emerge from within Bangladesh.

The road to legitimacy lies through elections

The greatest challenge before Bangladesh is to convert the political energy of the 2024 uprising into durable democratic institutions.

If the movement was genuinely intended to establish a more accountable and democratic political system, its success must eventually be measured by the institutions it creates rather than merely by the government it removed.

Independent investigations, impartial judicial proceedings and due process must form the foundation of accountability for alleged abuses. At the same time, political competition must remain open to all forces willing to operate within the constitutional framework and comply with the law.

The eventual restoration of political space for the Awami League, subject to legal requirements and due process, deserves consideration as part of a wider democratic settlement. Equally important is the need for a credible, competitive and internationally scrutinised election.

An election alone will not resolve every historical grievance or settle the debate over Hasina's political legacy. Nor will it automatically restore trust between deeply divided political constituencies. But a genuinely competitive electoral process would provide the strongest available mechanism for determining where public support lies.The electorate, rather than political organisations, street movements or administrative authorities, must have the final say in deciding who governs.Bangladesh also needs to rebuild confidence in its institutions, protect historical sites and ensure that political differences do not translate into violence against individuals or communities.

The 2024 uprising created an opportunity for Bangladesh to renew its democratic foundations. That opportunity remains, but it is being tested by political exclusion, competing historical narratives and the absence of a settlement accepted across the political spectrum.

The country cannot build a stable future by permanently marginalising major political constituencies, just as it cannot achieve reconciliation by overlooking alleged abuses committed under the previous administration.

Justice and political inclusion are not mutually exclusive. Both are necessary for a functioning democracy.

The defining test of Bangladesh's post-uprising leadership will therefore be its willingness to accept political competition, strengthen independent institutions and allow the people to determine the country's future through credible elections.

The question is no longer how the old political order collapsed. It is whether the new one has enough confidence in its own democratic credentials to face the verdict of the electorate.

Until that happens, Bangladesh's transition will remain incomplete. The revolution of 2024 may have changed the government, but its promise of democratic renewal remains unfulfilled.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

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Kashi embraces the divine magic of Dev Deepawali as 11 lakh diyas illuminate its 84 sacred ghats capturing the city's divine splendour and timeless spiritual essence.
DevDeepawali
- MyGovIndia



Assam faces possible transport shutdown from November 26 as operators issue ultimatum

All Assam Motor Transport Association sets November 25 deadline for the government to address grievances over vehicle safety devices, fitness testing facilities and parking infrastructure, warning of an indefinite statewide strike.

GUWAHATI

Commercial transport services across Assam could come to a halt from November 26 as the All Assam Motor Transport Association (AAMTA) has threatened an indefinite shutdown if the state government fails to address its demands by Wednesday, November 25.

The association announced the proposed agitation at a press conference on Tuesday, alleging irregularities in the Transport Department's implementation of vehicle safety regulations and highlighting infrastructure gaps affecting commercial vehicle owners and drivers.

At the centre of the dispute are the installation of speed limiting devices (SLDs), vehicle location tracking devices (VLTDs) and arrangements for vehicle fitness testing. The association claimed that the existing system has created unnecessary difficulties for transport operators.

One of its major objections concerns the limited availability of centres for installing speed limiting devices. According to the association, Guwahati has only one installation centre, operated by a single agency, leaving vehicle owners with limited options.

It has urged the government to authorise multiple agencies to install the devices, arguing that greater competition and wider



availability would make the process more accessible to commercial vehicle operators.

The association has also raised concerns over inadequate vehicle fitness testing facilities across the state. It alleged that sufficient infrastructure has not been developed to meet the requirements of commercial vehicles undergoing mandatory fitness assessments.The absence of designated parking facilities for commercial vehicles has emerged as another major grievance. The transport body claimed that Guwahati and several other parts of Assam lack adequate parking infrastructure, adding to the operational difficulties of vehicle owners and drivers.

The association maintained that these issues, along with inconsistencies in the functioning of the Transport Department, have increased the burden on the transport sector.

It has given the state government until November 25 to respond to its demands, warning that commercial transport operations will be suspended indefinitely from the following day if no satisfactory action is taken.Although the association has not specified the complete scope of the proposed shutdown, the threatened agitation could disrupt commercial transport services across Assam, depending on the participation of vehicle operators.

The government's response to the demands is awaited.

Mizoram plans Rs.4.15-crore Bru hostel, Lalduhoma calls for youth-led fight against drugs

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

AIZAWL: Mizoram Chief Minister Lalduhoma has urged Bru youth to take an active role in fighting drug abuse, strengthening social harmony and contributing to the state's development, while announcing infrastructure initiatives aimed at improving educational and economic opportunities for the community.

Addressing the first general assembly of the Young Bru Association (YBA) at Thaidawr in Mamit district on November 24, the chief minister described the organisation as an emerging platform for volunteerism, social responsibility and community welfare.

Established in 2023, the YBA should work as a force for unity rather than division, Lalduhoma said. He also called upon the organisation to strengthen its cooperation with the Central Young Mizo Association (CYMA) and other social organisations.

Emphasising solidarity among Zo communities, the chief minister said student and youth organisations had an important responsibility in promoting brotherhood and preserving social cohesion.

A major announcement at the gathering concerned the construction of a Bru student hostel at Tanhril, on the western outskirts of Aizawl. The three-storey facility is being built at an estimated cost of ?4.15 crore under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI) scheme. The project, which will include dormitory facilities, is targeted for completion by February 2027.

Lalduhoma said the government was committed to improving opportunities for linguistic minorities and ensuring their participation in the state's development.

He also laid the foundation stone for a YBA library at Thaidawr and announced plans to establish a health clinic and construct an association building in the village.

Turning to the growing challenge of substance abuse, the chief minister urged Bru youth leaders to intensify awareness campaigns and work towards preventing addic-

Two killed in dumper collision on NH-27 in Cachar, highway blocked over driver's arrest demand

SILCHAR

Two persons were killed after a dumper truck allegedly ran them over on National Highway-27 at Bandarkhal in Assam's Cachar district on Tuesday night, November 24, triggering protests and a road blockade by local residents.

The deceased have been identified as Moha Mukim (26) and Dehiran Suchiang (56), both residents of Bandarkhal. The accident reportedly took place around 10 pm when the dumper, travelling from Silchar towards Haflong, hit the two men. Both died on the spot.

According to local accounts, the dumper had stopped at a tyre repair shop in Bandarkhal to get one of its tyres fixed. The accident occurred shortly after the vehicle resumed its journey towards Haflong. The driver allegedly fled without stopping after hitting the victims.

Family members said the two men had stepped out to purchase eggs for dinner when the speeding vehicle struck them.

The deaths triggered anger among residents and family members, who gathered at the accident site and blocked NH-27. They demanded that the vehicle be traced and its driver arrested immediately. Protesters also refused to allow the bodies to be removed until their demands were addressed.

The blockade resulted in hundreds of vehicles being stranded on both sides of the highway, disrupting traffic along the busy Silchar-Haflong route.

Police personnel from Borkhola Police Station subsequently reached the spot and held discussions with the protesters to restore normalcy. Police later managed to clear one side of the highway, allowing vehicles to move and partially easing the congestion.

The incident has once again brought road safety concerns on NH-27 into focus, particularly over the movement of heavy vehicles and allegations of reckless driving.

Duliajan triple murder: Two accused injured in police firing during recovery operation

GUWAHATI

Police say the accused attempted to escape and attacked personnel while being taken to recover the weapon allegedly used in the killing; two constables also sustained injuries.

Two men arrested in connection with the murder of three members of a family in Assam's Duliajan were injured in police firing after they allegedly attempted to escape from custody during a weapon recovery operation on Tuesday, November 24.

The accused, identified as Raju Das and Amir Das, sustained bullet injuries during the confrontation and were subsequently shifted to Assam Medical College and Hospital (AMCH) in Dibrugarh for treatment.

According to preliminary information, a police team had taken the two accused to a location to recover the hammer allegedly used in the



triple murder. During the operation, the men reportedly attempted to flee and attacked the personnel accompanying them, prompting the police to open fire.

Two police constables, Manoj Lahon and Nitul Saikia, also sustained injuries during the confrontation. Their medical condition was not immediately known.

The incident comes amid the investigation into the killing of three members of a family - a father, mother and their daughter - inside their residence in Duliajan. The murders had triggered widespread concern in the locality.

Investigators suspect that Raju Das, who had reportedly been living as a tenant in the family's house for nearly seven years, carried out the killings with the assistance of Amir Das.

Preliminary findings also point towards financial distress linked to online gambling as a possible motive. Raju Das allegedly accumulated substantial debts through online gambling and is suspected of having planned the murders to rob the family and repay his creditors.

However, the suspected motive and the precise circumstances surrounding the killings remain subject to further investigation.

Police are continuing their probe into the triple murder, while further details regarding the recovery operation and the condition of the injured accused and personnel are awaited.

Kuki-Naga leaders seek Christmas truce in Manipur, agree to fresh peace dialogue

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

IMPHAL: In a significant move towards reconciliation in violence-hit Manipur, Kuki and Naga community leaders have called for a Christmas truce and agreed to pursue a broader peace process to address the issues driving tensions between the two communities.

The understanding was reached during a three-day Kuki-Naga Prayer and Peace Summit organised by the Forum for Naga Reconciliation (FNR) in Kolkata from November 22 to 24. Representatives of church bodies and civil society organisations from both communities participated in the meeting.

In a statement following the summit, the FNR said the participants had engaged in open and respectful discussions, acknowledging the suffering experienced by both communities. They agreed on the need to move beyond fear, hostility and violence through sustained dialogue.The proposed Christmas truce has been identified as an immediate confidence-building measure to prevent further violence, protect affected families and create a conducive atmosphere for reconciliation.

The Forum appealed to all groups to observe the proposed truce in both letter and spirit, stressing that lasting peace would require political and moral courage, patience and the involvement of a wider range of stakeholders.

The summit also expressed concern over inflammatory statements, unverified information and provocative social media campaigns, which participants said were deepening divisions."The lies, rumours, hatred and propaganda are instilling more animosity and polarisation. This must end immediately," the FNR stated.The participating organisations urged members of both communities to take collective responsibility for the peace initiative and remain vigilant against attempts by vested interests or external actors to derail reconciliation efforts.

Kuki representatives included the Kuki Christian Churches Manipur, Kuki Baptist Churches Manipur, Kuki Inpi Manipur, Kuki Christian Leaders' Forum, Kuki Baptist Association Nagaland and Kuki Christian Church Nagaland.

The Naga side was represented by the Naga Christian Forum Manipur, Naga Peoples' Initiative for Peace Manipur, Fellowship of Naga Baptist Association and United Naga Council.As part of the understanding, the leaders agreed to organise another round of inclusive discussions involving a wider range of stakeholders before Christmas 2026. The proposed meeting will seek to strengthen mutual trust, expand participation and establish a common agenda for further negotiations.

The latest peace initiative comes against the backdrop of escalating Kuki-Naga tensions in Manipur since February 2026. Clashes between the two communities have reportedly claimed 72 lives, according to the information cited in reports on the summit.

The tensions are unfolding amid the wider ethnic conflict between Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities that erupted in May 2023.

Figures presented in the Manipur Assembly in September indicated that more than 300 people had been killed and 49 remained missing since the outbreak of the broader violence. Around 60,000 people were displaced, with approximately 24,000 still living in relief camps.

The proposed Christmas truce and the planned round of dialogue will therefore be closely watched as efforts to prevent further violence and rebuild relations between the Kuki and Naga communities gain momentum.

Manipur opens four new PNB branches, CM seeks wider credit access for women entrepreneurs

KRC TIMES NEWS DESK

IMPHAL: Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh has called for greater institutional credit support for women-led self-help groups (SHGs), highlighting their potential to strengthen rural livelihoods and expand grassroots entrepreneurship.

The chief minister made the appeal on Tuesday while inaugurating four new branches of Punjab National Bank (PNB) across the state.

Singh, who also holds the Finance portfolio, inaugurated the Mantripukhri branch at Khabam Lamkhai in Imphal East district. Three other branches, located at Pallel in Kakching, Champhai in Kangpokpi and Damkan Bazar in Churachandpur, were inaugurated virtually.

Addressing the gathering, Singh urged banks to extend easier access to institutional loans for women-led micro-enterprises, particularly those operating through self-help groups.

Pointing to the repayment record of SHGs in Manipur, he said the loan default rate among such groups in the state stood at around 2 per cent, considerably below the national average of 5 per cent.

The chief minister said stronger financial support could help women expand income-generating activities in sectors such as horticulture, fisheries, handloom and handicrafts.

He also linked improved access to banking services with the state's target of increasing the number of Lakhpati Didis from approximately 26,000 to one lakh by 2029.

The Lakhpati Didi initiative focuses on helping women associated with self-help groups develop sustainable livelihoods and achieve greater financial independence.

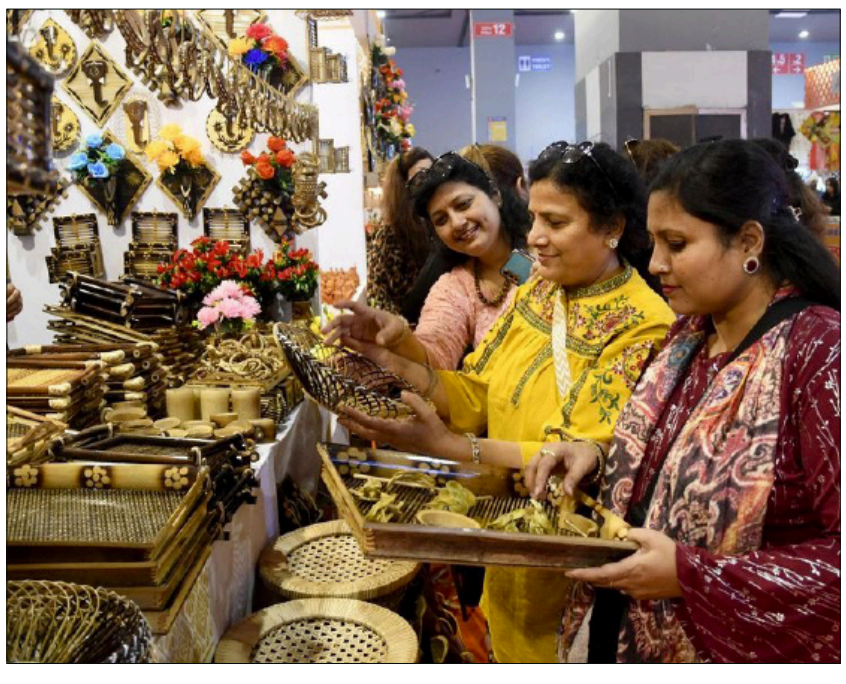
Singh also highlighted Punjab National Bank's expansion in the state and its role in supporting women-led livelihood initiatives.

The opening of the four branches is expected to improve access to formal banking services in their respective areas. The chief minister urged financial institutions to strengthen their engagement with rural communities and ensure that credit reaches small entrepreneurs and women-led enterprises.

The emphasis on SHG financing comes as Manipur seeks to widen livelihood opportunities and strengthen women's participation in the state's economic activities.

52 Assam MSMEs take indigenous products to national, global markets at Delhi trade fair

From tea and bamboo crafts to eri-muga silk and traditional mask-making, Assam's diverse products and emerging enterprises are drawing attention at the 45th India International Trade Fair in New Delhi.



NEW DELHI

Assam is using the 45th India International Trade Fair (IITF) as a platform to take its indigenous products and entrepreneurial ventures to wider markets, with 52 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) from the State participating in the event.

The fair, being held at Bharat Mandapam from November 14 to 27 under the theme 'Vikas Aur Virasat', has brought together traditional industries, start-ups and young innovators from Assam to showcase their products and explore business opportunities.

The Assam Pavilion features a wide range of locally made products, including Assam tea, bamboo and cane crafts, traditional jewellery, agarwood, handloom and textiles, terracotta items, cosmetics, medicinal products and traditional wine. The participation reflects the diversity of the State's small-scale industries and their potential to reach buyers beyond regional markets.

For the participating enterprises, the fair offers an opportunity to interact with prospective buyers, traders and visitors, while building product visibility and exploring avenues for business expansion.

The presence of emerging start-ups and young innovators has added a contemporary dimension to the showcase, bringing newer business ideas alongside Assam's established traditional crafts.

Five government departments and State agencies - Tourism, Horticulture, ARTFED, AGMC and ASRLM - have also set up dedicated stalls to present their initiatives and products.

Live demonstrations of eri and muga silk reeling and traditional mask-making from Majuli have emerged as major attractions. These displays are offering visitors a closer look at Assam's distinctive artisanal skills and cultural traditions.

At the Assam Day celebration on Monday evening, Industries, Commerce and Public Enterprises Minister Bimal Borah highlighted the State's growing economic significance, describing Assam as the 'Growth Engine of Eastern India'. He also underlined its strategic position as a gateway to Southeast Asia and the Indo-Pacific region.

The participation of 52 MSMEs, alongside government agencies and start-ups, places the spotlight on Assam's efforts to connect its traditional strengths with expanding commercial opportunities.

Quest!

People who are risk-takers when they are young, tend to take more risks as they get older, according to research.



NATIONAL

NCP(SP)-BJP alliance rumours unsettle MVA as Congress seeks clarity from Sharad Pawar



MUMBAI

Speculation over Sharad Pawar's NCP(SP) possibly joining the BJP-led NDA has triggered fresh political tensions within the Opposition.

Congress leaders are seeking clarity from NCP(SP) chief Sharad Pawar and his daughter, Supriya Sule, on the party's future political alignment.

The growing uncertainty has also caused unease within the NCP(SP), with party functionaries expressing concern that contradictory reports about a possible rapprochement with the BJP are demoralising grassroots workers and damaging the organisation.

Congress leaders have indicated that they have no objection if the Pawar-led party wishes to join hands with the BJP. However, they have insisted that its leadership must make its intentions clear rather than keep alliance partners guessing.

"If Sharad Pawar leaves the Maha Vikas Aghadi, then we are more than happy because we need strong opposition, not the opposition that hand in glove with establishment and secretly working alignment. This is not the time to do such politics but it is time to take clear stand against the BJP. If NCP SP leaves, the Congress will get more political space and new faces will also emerge," said a senior Congress leader who requested anonymity.

Some Congress leaders have reportedly conveyed that if the Pawars have decided to join the BJP-led NDA, they wish them good luck. However, they have stressed that such a significant political decision should not be shrouded in ambiguity, particularly when the three parties are part of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) in Maharashtra.

The controversy has also exposed unease within the NCP(SP), where party leaders appear increasingly concerned about the impact of repeated reports suggesting a possible shift in political equations.

Vikas Lawande, NCP(SP) Maharashtra spokesperson and convenor, has publicly objected to contradictory reports attributed to unnamed sources, saying they are creating confusion among party workers and office-bearers. In a strongly worded statement, he said, "We keep seeing contradictory reports about our party, NCP(SP), attributed to sources. But this harms the party organisation, because its foundation is its workers and office-bearers."

Lawande said the continuous flow of confusing reports was slowing the work of the party's loyal workers and leaving them disheartened. He urged all members of the party's core committee to take serious note of the damage being caused to the organisation.

Questioning the source of the reports, Lawande used a political metaphor to suggest that the party must identify those responsible for planting such stories. "We need to find the Shukracharya in the well; we need to identify who is planting these reports," he said.

Lawande also sought to reaffirm the party's ideological commitment to Sharad Pawar, asserting that its leadership and workers remained firmly behind the veteran politician. "In fact, we are all committed to the ideology of respected Sharad Pawar. We have complete faith in him," he said.

India condemns Houthi attack on Riyadh tower that injured 11, including two Indians



NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday strongly condemned the Houthi attack on a tower in Saudi Arabia's Riyadh, which injured 11 people, including two Indian nationals, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

The Ministry called for an immediate cessation of attacks targeting civilian, economic and energy infrastructure in Saudi Arabia, while reaffirming India's solidarity with the Kingdom amid escalating regional tensions.

In an official statement, the MEA said, "We strongly condemn the attack on one of the towers of the financial district in Riyadh on November 24 as well as the continued attacks targeting civilian, economic and energy infrastructure in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia."

Confirming that two Indian nationals were among those injured, the Ministry said the Indian Embassy in Riyadh was extending all possible assistance to the victims and their families.

"Two Indians are among those injured in the attack on Riyadh financial district. The Embassy of India in Riyadh is providing all possible assistance to the injured and their families," the statement added.

The MEA further said such attacks endangered civilian lives, violated Saudi Arabia's sovereignty and undermined regional security and stability.

"These attacks seriously endanger civilian lives, violate the sovereignty of Saudi Arabia, and undermine regional security and stability. We call for immediate cessation of such attacks," it said.

Reaffirming India's support for Riyadh, the Ministry said, "We also reiterate our firm solidarity with the people and Government of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reaffirm our unwavering support to the Kingdom in safeguarding its sovereignty, territorial integrity, and the security and safety of its citizens and residents. We earnestly hope that peace and normalcy will return to the region at the earliest."

The condemnation comes after Saudi Arabia's General Directorate of Civil Defence confirmed that 11 people were injured when one of the towers of the Financial Centre in Riyadh was targeted in what it described as a terrorist attack carried out by Yemen's Houthi militia.

According to the Saudi Civil Defence, those injured included two Saudi nationals, two Indians, three Nepalese nationals and four Egyptian nationals.

In a statement on X, the authority said emergency response teams immediately reached the location and implemented the necessary procedures to protect lives and property. The official spokesperson of the Saudi-led coalition also confirmed that a Financial Centre tower had been targeted, describing the incident as a "cowardly terrorist attack". The spokesperson said relevant authorities were conducting an on-site investigation. The incident comes amid escalating tensions between Saudi Arabia and Yemen's Houthi authorities following allegations of Saudi-led coalition airstrikes on telecommunications infrastructure in Yemen's Al-Hudaydah Governorate. In a statement posted on Telegram on Monday, Yemen's Houthi-controlled Ministry of Communications and Information Technology alleged that coalition aircraft targeted telecommunications buildings, workers' accommodation and a mosque in the governorate.

The ministry claimed that 17 workers were killed and 11 others injured in the strikes, according to an initial toll. It further alleged that several telecommunications facilities were destroyed, disrupting internet and communication services across multiple districts.

INTERNATIONAL

US planning to hike tariffs against India, China and 14 other countries: Report



WASHINGTON

The United States is planning to raise tariffs on China, India and 14 other economies as early as this week, arguing that they have supported excess industrial production that has hurt American companies, the Wall Street Journal reported on Tuesday.

US Trade Representative (USTR) Jamieson Greer is expected to unveil the findings of an investigation his office launched on March 11 into industrial subsidies in the 16 economies under Section 301 of the 1974 Trade Act, which allows the president to impose tariffs after determining that a country has engaged in unfair trade practices.

Greer has said subsidies and other forms of government support have created excess industrial capacity in the targeted economies, allowing their companies to flood global markets with cheaper goods and undermine US producers, the WSJ reported.

The proposed tariffs are expected to cover most products exported from the targeted economies, although some industrial goods, including steel, aluminium and automobiles, could be excluded as they are already subject to tariffs imposed under separate national security provisions, according to the report.

The final tariff rates remain unclear. However, the levies are likely to be imposed on top of tariffs arising from a separate US investigation into forced labour in foreign supply chains, completed in July.

That investigation provided the basis for tariffs of between 10 and 12.5 per cent on dozens of trading partners, including all 16 economies covered by the industrial overcapacity probe.

Countries that struck trade agreements with the Trump administration, including Japan, the European Union and South Korea, are likely to face overall tariff rates of 15 per cent or lower, while countries such as India and Vietnam could face higher rates, depending on the terms of their agreements with Washington, the WSJ reported, citing people familiar with the plans.

China is likely to face higher tariffs than many other economies, the report said, citing US officials who have described its subsidies as particularly extensive and disruptive to the global economy.

The administration could also include provisions allowing it to raise tariffs further if industrial overcapacity worsens or countries fail to make policy changes during future negotiations with Washington, according to the report.

USTR declined to comment on the proposed announcement, while the White House did not respond to requests for comment, the WSJ reported.

India and the US are negotiating an interim bilateral trade agreement after the framework they had finalised in February went back to the drawing board, following the United States Supreme Court's decision to strike down tariffs imposed last year under the Emergency Economic Powers Act.

India is seeking lower tariffs on its exports to the US than those faced by competing economies such as Bangladesh, Vietnam and Cambodia.

North Korea demands closure of Switzerland's new diplomatic office and orders diplomat to leave



SEOUL

North Korea on Wednesday demanded the closure of Switzerland's new diplomatic office in Pyongyang and ordered the senior diplomat heading it to leave the country within 48 hours.

A day earlier, Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, threatened to close the office and condemned Switzerland for imposing sanctions on a youth camp in eastern North Korea over its alleged role in the transfer of children from Russia-occupied areas of Ukraine.

The Korean Central News Agency said a senior Foreign Ministry official summoned Astier Sylvain, who heads the Swiss diplomatic office that opened in Pyongyang last month, and handed him a notice demanding the office's closure and his departure, in protest of the Swiss sanctions on the Songdowon International Children's Camp in Wonsan. The report said the ministry declared Sylvain persona non grata.

Kim Yo Jong, one of Pyongyang's top foreign policy officials, described the Swiss sanctions as an "open hostile act" and a infringement of the North's sovereignty in her statement Tuesday. She claimed that the Songdowon International Children's Camp in the coastal city of Wonsan supported "legitimate" cooperation between North Korea and Russia but didn't directly address Western accusations that some Ukrainian children abducted by Russian forces were sent there to be reeducated.

North Korea has closely aligned with Russia over the war in Ukraine, sending thousands of troops and large shipments of weapons in recent years to support Russian President Vladimir Putin's full-scale invasion, possibly in exchange for aid and military technology transfers. Strengthened ties with Moscow and Beijing have been key drivers of Kim Jong Un's increasingly assertive foreign policy as he looks to break further out of isolation and position North Korea as part of a united front against Washington.

Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis traveled to North Korea in late October as Switzerland opened a diplomatic office in Pyongyang and held talks with senior North Korean officials, including Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui, on "promoting dialogue and cooperation," KCNA said at the time.

In adding the Songdowon camp earlier this month to its broader sanctions related to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Swiss authorities said the camp participates in programs involving the transfer of Ukrainian children from Russia-occupied territories to North Korea and exposes them to propaganda and activities designed to promote pro-Russia narratives.

The United Kingdom in May and the European Union in September imposed similar sanctions on the Songdowon camp, freezing its assets and prohibiting financial transactions with the facility. The practical impact of those measures is unclear given North Korea's limited financial ties with European countries.

Switzerland established diplomatic relations with North Korea in 1974 and is one of the few Western countries to maintain dialogue with the country.

The Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation opened a "cooperation office" in Pyongyang in 1997 that mostly focused on humanitarian programs, but the office closed in March 2020 as North Korea shut its borders during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Swiss government had said the new diplomatic office in Pyongyang, which reports to the Swiss Embassy in Beijing, would help strengthen direct contacts with North Korean officials and promote dialogue.

The Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs said Tuesday the country aimed to "maintain channels of dialogue" despite differences with other governments. "The reopening of the office is independent of our sanctions policy, whether with regard to UN sanctions related to North Korea's nuclear program or EU sanctions adopted by Switzerland in the context of Russia's war against Ukraine," it said in the statement to The Associated Press.

Manipur Crisis Worsening, Common People Suffering Most: R.K. Meghen



Describing the ongoing crisis in Manipur as a situation that is getting "from bad to worse", R.K. Meghen, a respected public figure in Manipur, has expressed concern over the continued violence, the growing division among communities and the collapse of economic activities in the state.

Speaking in an interview on the programme It Matters (hosted by KRC Time's Biswadeep Gupta), Meghen said the prolonged conflict had caused immense suffering among ordinary people, with civilians bearing the greatest burden of the violence.

Reflecting on the developments over the past three and a half years, he alleged that armed Kuki groups had initially targeted Meiteis and later extended their attacks towards Naga communities. He strongly condemned the killing of innocent civilians, describing such incidents as crimes against humanity.

He said the loss of lives during armed confrontations was one aspect of the conflict, but the brutal killing of unarmed civilians was something that every civilised society should condemn in the strongest terms.

Meghen also expressed concern that the demand for a separate administration could eventually undermine the historical and territorial integrity of Manipur. He said the state's foundation had been built on peaceful coexistence and the collective development of different ethnic communities.

According to him, the present situation was particularly disturbing because such widespread ethnic divisions had not been witnessed in Manipur's recorded history.

Questioning the pattern of violence, he said the targeting of Meiteis and subsequently Nagas pointed towards an underlying strategy. He also raised concerns over allegations of support from certain central forces to armed Kuki groups operating under the Suspension of Operations (SoO) agreement. He referred to videos and photographs that had reportedly surfaced during the initial phase of the violence and called for serious examination of such allegations.

He further questioned the effectiveness of the security arrangements in the hill areas and expressed concern that armed groups were allegedly moving freely and targeting civilians.

On the role of the Central Government, Meghen said that despite the deployment of a large number of Central Armed Police Forces, including CRPF and BSF personnel, a determined effort to bring the violence under control was not clearly visible.

He observed that ordinary people across the state were asking two simple questions: why they had to suffer so much and when the crisis would finally end.

Responding to this concern, Meghen said people needed to raise their demands with a united voice rather than remain divided. He maintained that in a democracy, a strong and collective public voice was necessary to make the government take people's grievances seriously.

Discussing the economic consequences of the prolonged conflict, Meghen said Manipur's economy had suffered a severe setback, with money circulation declining and small businesses struggling to survive.

He particularly criticised frequent total shutdowns, pointing out that such protests affected daily wage earners, small vendors and people belonging to the economically weaker sections.

He appealed to organisations and protesters to explore alternative forms of agitation that could put pressure on the government without causing further hardship to ordinary citizens.

Meghen also observed that peaceful demonstrations and sit-in protests had increasingly failed to attract an effective response from the authorities. He felt that the government's indifferent attitude had contributed to the continuation of shutdowns and other forms of protest.

Appreciating a recent peaceful protest in which women, including mothers carrying infants, participated, he said the disciplined and non-violent nature of the demonstration reflected the peaceful character of Meitei society.

He said the authorities needed to understand the history, civilisation and social philosophy of Manipur while dealing with the crisis. According to him, violence had no place in the traditional philosophy of Meitei civilisation, except in the context of defending one's land.

On the question of political leadership, Meghen refrained from personally criticising any individual but said the present crisis was the accumulated result of developments over the past 75 years.

He said Manipur had long needed a comprehensive vision and policy to ensure peaceful coexistence and equal development among all communities, including smaller ethnic groups.

He stressed that development policies must address the specific needs of hill communities, particularly in healthcare, education and other basic services.

Pointing to the poor healthcare infrastructure in remote hill areas, he said even today women facing labour complications at night sometimes struggle to reach the nearest medical facility. He described such a situation as unacceptable in the 21st century.

Meghen also identified corruption and the misuse of political power as major factors contributing to the state's problems. He argued that liberal democracy loses its true purpose when elected representatives treat politics as a business for personal gain.

Throughout the interview, he emphasised that the common people of Manipur should not become the ultimate victims of political failures, armed violence and prolonged uncertainty.

He called for a collective approach that would restore peace, protect the lives of civilians and rebuild trust among the different communities of the state.

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