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:: THE HEADLINES ::

- Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio underscores need for resilient infrastructure to sustain state's rapid urbanization
- National Testing Agency to conduct only competitive entrance tests, exclude recruitment exams from 2025
- BJP to bring Uniform Civil Code in every state under its rule, says Home Minister Amit Shah
- Fourth Nagaland State Finance Commission seeks public opinion on measures to boost finances of municipalities

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Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has underscored the need for resilient infrastructure to sustain the state's rapid urbanization. He said, urban centers serve as the engine of economic growth. Mr. Rio said this yesterday at the inaugural of the upgraded Dimapur Town Hall. He noted that Nagaland recorded the highest urban population growth in the country, with a 66.7 percent rate. He highlighted the importance of balanced urban and rural development to ensure economic prosperity. Mr. Rio said the Dimapur Town Hall has been successfully upgraded to meet modern standards, blending tradition with contemporary needs, involving durable and sustainable materials. He noted, the sustainable upgrade reduces greenhouse gas emissions compared to building a new structure.

Mr. Rio reaffirmed the state Government's commitment to building sustainable infrastructure, particularly in transportation, railways, and marketplaces, to improve accessibility and quality of life. The Chief Minister also called for

responsible management of public assets and urged the public to maintain civic sense in preserving the facility.

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Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan has said that the National Testing Agency (NTA) will conduct only competitive entrance tests for admission to educational institutions from next year and will not hold any recruitment exams. Addressing a press conference in New Delhi, he said the idea is to conduct error-free exams and fix accountability. Mr Pradhan said the education and health ministries are deliberating on whether to conduct the medical entrance exam NEET-UG in pen-and-paper mode or online mode. He said the detailed modalities for NEET-UG are likely to be announced in two to three weeks. He said that CUET-UG will continue to be held once a year. The Education Minister shared recommendations of a committee headed by former ISRO chairman K Radhakrishnan for the smooth and fair conduct of exams and strengthening of NTA.

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Union Home Minister Amit Shah has said that the BJP will bring a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in every state under its rule as the party did in Uttarakhand. Concluding the discussion in the Rajya Sabha on the 75 years of adoption of the Constitution, Mr Shah launched a scathing attack on the Congress for failing to implement the UCC across the country. The Home Minister accused the Congress of appeasement politics and asked the party to clarify why there should not be a common law for every religion in a secular nation.

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The Fourth Nagaland State Finance Commission has solicited suggestions from the public on measures to strengthen finances of Municipalities and Town Councils. Here is a report...

The Commission was set up in October to make recommendations on financial matters tied to Municipalities. These include distribution between the State and Municipalities of the net proceed of taxes, duties, tolls and fees leviable by the State; grant-in-aid to Municipalities from the Consolidated Fund of the State;

Rates of taxes, tolls and fees that may be raised by Municipalities; and any other measure to improve the financial position of Municipalities.)

The Commission has asked interested individuals, Institutions and organisations to submit their suggestions and views by 31st of March, 2025, through post addressed to the Member Secretary, Fourth Nagaland State Finance Commission, Directorate of Treasuries and Accounts, or email to fourthfincom2024@gmail.com.

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Nagaland's lone MP in the Rajya Sabha, S. Phangnon Konyak said the constitution is leading the way as the country moves forward with the vision towards Viksit Bharat. Ms. Konyak had presided over discussions in Parliament on the 'Glorious Journey of 75 years of the Constitution of India' during the last two days. Taking to X, the MP said it was a privilege and honour to be on the Chair on the momentous occasion.

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Centre has released 16 lakh rupees for Nagaland under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM) Scheme in the current year upto November. In a written reply in Lok Sabha, Minister of New and Renewable Energy, Pralhad Joshi said, so far 4,388 crore rupees have been sanctioned for all the states. PM-KUSUM aims to subsidize farmers to install solar irrigation pumps for cultivation, make cutting-edge technology available, and provide sources for de-dieselized irrigation to the agricultural sector.

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A total of 190 projects spanning three thousand 856 kilometers and sanctioned cost 81 thousand 540 crore rupees are under construction on National Highways in the North Eastern Region. This was informed by Union Minister of Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari in a written reply in Rajya Sabha today. He said, all the under-construction works are scheduled to be completed by September 2028. Mr. Gadkari said a total of 19 thousand 338 crore rupees has been allocated for National Highway works in the North Eastern Region during the Financial Year 2024-25.

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Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy has said that the Government has given special emphasis on cultural development and unity along with infrastructure development, economic development and agriculture. He said that the languages of the country are an important base for the nation's unity and cultural history. Speaking of the three-language formula in the National Education Policy 2020, the Minister said that it will add more flexibility for the students and encourage common people to use the regional languages in education and employment. Mr Reddy added that India has 121 prominent languages and nearly 1600 dialects, and it is the only country which has given classical language status to 11 languages.

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With the aim to support local healthcare facilities, Assam Rifles in collaboration with Christian Institute of Health Sciences and Research, Dimapur yesterday organised a voluntary blood donation camp at Unit Hospital in Medziphema. A total of 77 combatants participated in the camp, contributing to a vital cause. These donation drives are essential in addressing local shortages, particularly during emergencies, ensuring that healthcare facilities are equipped to manage critical situations. It may be mentioned that Assam Rifles has consistently been at the forefront of various healthcare initiatives in the region, including medical camps and blood donation drives, reaffirming its commitment to the well-being of the local community.

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