

Evening News Script

1920 hrs

16th March 2025

∴∴THE HEADLINES∴∴

1. Prime Minister Narendra Modi describes criticism as soul of democracy
2. Union Home Minister Amit Shah reviews implementation of three new criminal laws across northeast
3. Ministry of Development of North East Region sets up five-member task force to boost investment in region
4. And, NCB seizes 88 crore rupees methamphetamine; 4 arrested in Imphal and Guwahati zones

<><><><><><>

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has described criticism as the essence of democracy. In a three-hour podcast conversation with Lex Fridman released this evening, Mr Modi shared insights on governance, development, global affairs, and India's progress. He emphasized that he welcomes criticism, firmly believing that it is the soul of democracy.

Prime Minister Modi also said that every attempt to foster peace with Pakistan was met with hostility and betrayal, but and hoped for improving bilateral ties. Fridman termed it one of the most powerful conversations of his life. Responding on X, Prime Minister Modi called it a fascinating conversation', and share that they covered diverse topics such as his childhood, years in the Himalayas and the journey in public life.

<><><><><><>

Union Home Minister Amit Shah today took stock of the implementation of three new criminal laws across the northeast. The meeting is being attended by Chief

Ministers of seven northeast states, including Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio. As the President's rule is imposed in Manipur, its Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla took part in the meeting. It is also being participated by DGPs and chief secretaries of several northeastern states. Each of the eight states is making presentations to update the union home minister on the implementation of Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. During the meeting, Mr Shah released a book, titled 'New Criminal Laws: Standard Operating Procedures and Rules', prepared by the Assam CID and published by the Assam government.

<><><><><><>

The Ministry of Development of North East Region (DoNER) has set up a five-member task force to boost investment in the northeastern states with Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha as convener. Other members include DoNER Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Chief Ministers Conrad K. Sangma of Meghalaya, Neiphiu Rio of Nagaland, and Prem Singh Tamang of Sikkim. The task force will assess the existing investment ecosystem in the Northeast, and develop a strategic roadmap to position the region as a preferred investment destination for agriculture, tourism, logistics, IT, renewable energy, and other priority sectors. It will also identify high-potential sectors and areas, and suggest strategies to attract investments, particularly through public-private partnerships. The task force will submit its report within six months.

<><><><><><>

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has seized a consignment of methamphetamine tablets worth 88 crore rupees and arrested four members of an international drug cartel in the Imphal and Guwahati zones. Lauding the efforts, Union Home Minister Amit Shah affirmed that there will be no mercy for drug cartels. During an operation on March 13, the NCB team recovered over 102 kilograms of Methamphetamine tablets from Imphal Zone and around 8 kilograms from Guwahati Zone. The Home Ministry said further investigation is underway.

<><><><><><>

Nominations for the Padma Awards-2026 to be announced on the occasion of Republic Day next year have started. The last date for nominations for Padma Awards is 31st July. The nominations and recommendations for Padma Awards will only be received online on the Rashtriya Puraskar Portal at www.awards.gov.in. The Padma Awards include Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri, the highest civilian awards of the country.

<><><><><><>

The Department of Social Welfare received a total of 184 cases of violence against women under Sakhi One Stop Centre between April and November last year. According to the department's annual administrative report 2024-25, the highest number of cases involved domestic violence, and abandoned or distressed women, with 56 each. Others included 31 cases related to missing, abduction or runaway, 10 cases of cybercrime, eight of rape, seven of sexual offence, four of trafficking, and three involving child sexual abuse. Among the districts, Dimapur recorded the most cases with 72, while Mon and Zunheboto had the fewest with six cases each. Further, the department received a total of 1,792 calls on the 181-Women Helpline, with 103 of those being effective calls.

<><><><><><>

Union Minister for Railways, Information and Broadcasting, and Information Technology Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that the 410-meter-long Hyperloop test tube at IIT Chennai is the longest Hyperloop test facility in Asia and will soon become the world's longest. He shared this information while posting a video on social media of a live demonstration he witnessed during his visit to the Hyperloop testing facility at IIT Madras Discovery Campus yesterday. The minister expressed confidence that India will soon be ready for Hyperloop transportation, as the technology, which is currently under development, has yielded promising results in the tests conducted so far.

<><><><><><>

Prime Minister of New Zealand Christopher Luxon arrived in New Delhi this afternoon on a five day visit to India. He is accompanied by a high-level delegation, including Ministers, senior officials, businesses, media and members of the Indian diaspora community. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold talks with his New Zealand counterpart tomorrow, covering various aspects of India-New Zealand relations. Mr Luxon will attend the inaugural session of the 10th Raisina Dialogue-2025 as Chief Guest and deliver the Keynote Address. He will also call on President Droupadi Murmu at the Rashtrapati Bhawan.

<><><><><><>

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the 10th edition of Raisina Dialogue 2025 in New Delhi tomorrow. The theme this year is "Kālachakra - People, Peace and Planet". During the three day event, decision makers and

thought leaders of the world will engage over six thematic pillars, including Politics Interrupted: Shifting Sands and Rising Tides; Resolving the Green Trilemma: Who, Where, and How, and Digital Planet: Agents, Agencies and Absences. The 10th Raisina Dialogue will witness participation of representatives from about 125 countries.

<><><><><><>

The India Meteorological Department has forecast scattered to fairly widespread light or moderate rainfall over Nagaland and the other Northeastern states during the next few days. This is expected to be accompanied by thunderstorm, lightning, hail and gusty winds, the weather body said. In the last 24 hours, maximum temperatures were above normal by upto 3 degree Celsius at isolated places over Nagaland and its adjoining states.

<><><><><><>