

## Evening News Script

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### :: THE HEADLINES ::

- Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Thai counterpart hold bilateral talks; ink six agreements
- Rajya Sabha takes up Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 for consideration and passing
- Nagaland among top five states with declining forest cover
- Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton continues push for responsive administration with surprise checkings

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India and Thailand today signed six agreements for cooperation in various fields including IT, maritime, MSME, handicraft and handloom sectors. The agreements were exchanged following bilateral talks between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Thai counterpart Paetongtarn Shinawatra at Bangkok. They reviewed the progress of the entire gamut of bilateral relations, discussed ways to further enhance India-Thailand partnership and exchanged views on regional and multilateral issues. In his joint statement following the talks, Mr Modi announced the decision to elevate India-Thailand relationship to a Strategic Partnership. He underlined that Thailand has a special place in India's 'Act East' policy and Indo-Pacific vision. Mr Modi said they discussed establishing a 'strategic dialogue' between security agencies of both nations.

Mr Modi said that during the talks, both sides emphasized cooperation in the fields of tourism, culture and education between North-East India and Thailand. Prime Minister Modi expressed condolences on behalf of the people of India for the loss of life in the recent earthquake and wished a speedy recovery for the injured. Upon his arrival in Thailand, Mr Modi received ceremonial guard of honour. He is on two-day visit to Thailand to participate in the 6th BIMSTEC Summit to be held tomorrow.

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The Rajya Sabha has taken up Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2025 for consideration and passing. Moving the bill, Minority Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju said that the bill has been brought after a detailed consultation with the stakeholders as well as in the Joint Parliamentary Committee. He urged the opposition parties to support this bill. Rejecting the opposition's allegations, he said, only Muslim can get the benefit of Waqf and it is not correct that any non-Muslim will interfere in the management of Waqf properties. He highlighted that the bill is intended to ensure better management of Waqf properties and not to interfere in the religious practice of Muslim.

Participating in the discussion, Dr. Syed Naseer Hussain of Congress said that this bill been brought with the intention of communal polarisation. Mohd Nadimul Haque of TMC said, the bill is against the fundamental rights of the people. He alleged that the identity of Waqf is weakened in the name of reforms.

Meanwhile, Tiruchi Siva of DMK and Sanjay Singh of Aam Aadmi Party termed the bill unconstitutional. The Lok Sabha passed the Bill last night.

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Nagaland is among the top five states in the country that has seen a decline in forest cover over the last four years, Minister of State for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Kirti Vardhan Singh informed Rajya Sabha today. According to the India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2023, Nagaland's forest cover stood at 12,222.47 square kilometer. This marks a decrease from 12,274.36 square kilometer in ISFR 2021 and 12,486 square kilometer in ISFR 2019, placing Nagaland third in the list. Four Northeast states featured in the top five for the most declines in forest cover. Arunachal Pradesh topped the list, while Manipur and Meghalaya ranked 4th and 5th, respectively.

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As part of the ongoing surprise inspection drive, Deputy Chief Minister Y Patton conducted checks today at the Departments of Personnel & Administrative Reforms, Social Welfare, Evaluation, Economics, and Planning at the Civil Secretariat in Kohima. The inspection is aimed at ensuring accountability, discipline within government offices, and taking note of instances of absenteeism. Mr Patton emphasized that the government will continue to take firm and consistent steps to build a more responsive and responsible administration for the people of Nagaland. He was accompanied by Home Commissioner Vyas R, ADGP Renjamo Kikon, Special Secretary Limasunep Jamir, Home Secretary Orenthung Lotha and others.

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The Civil Administration Works Division (CAWD), today inspected the ongoing construction of the Deputy Commissioner's Office Complex in Tuensang. After the inspection, Assistant Chief Engineer Sungtiba Amer expressed satisfaction with the progress, noting that the work is proceeding in line with the Detailed Project Report norms. He informed that the construction is expected to be completed within the current financial year. This inspection is part of the CAWD's ongoing efforts to monitor projects under the General Administration Department across various districts. Later, CAWD officials also visited the construction site of Tuensang's first-

ever Village Guard Commandant Office. While commending the contractors' efforts, Mr Amer urged them to expedite the construction to ensure the smooth functioning of the Village Guard Headquarters at the earliest.

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The Lok Sabha adopted a Statutory Resolution confirming imposition of President's Rule in Manipur. The House today held a brief discussion on the resolution in which Shashi Tharoor of Congress, Lalji Verma of SP and others raised the issue of violence in the State and the hardships faced by the people there. In his response, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that the government is making all out efforts to restore normalcy in Manipur. He said, after the imposition of President's rule in the state, the government held meetings with the two groups.

Mr Shah said, the first priority of the government is to bring peace in Manipur.

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The Directorate of Higher Education has notified that forms for New Hostel Registrations will be issued from 7th to 25th of April. Individuals interested in running hostels for Post Matric Students may collect the forms from the Scholarship Section of the department, and the last date of form submission is April 30. The Directorate also directed registered hostels that are due for renewal to renew on time, failing which, they shall be considered null and void. Meanwhile, the office noted that Hostel Eligibility Certificates are issued only to facilitate hostel forms for Post Matric Students residing in the Hostels under the Scholarship guidelines, and cautioned against any misuse of Hostel Certificates.

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