

THE HEADLINES ::

- **Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio says Hornbill Festival 2025 set new benchmarks; credits Naga people for success**
- **Nagaland hosts Malta Country Partner Roundtable to strengthen cultural and academic ties**
- **Rajya Sabha takes up discussion on Election Reforms**
- **Dr. T. Ao National Junior Girls Football Championship kicks off grand finale tonight**



Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio extended his heartfelt congratulations on the successful conclusion of the 26th Hornbill Festival and thanked everyone who contributed to its success. In a message to Tourism Minister Temjen Imna Along, he said this year's festival set new benchmarks in scale and global engagement. Despite unprecedented challenges from prolonged monsoon rains and natural calamities, the Chief Minister lauded the organising teams for delivering what he called a 'world-class event.' He said, the wide-ranging participation of partners countries and state, reflects the festival's growing international profile. However, Mr Rio reiterated concerns over the Protected Area Permit regime, saying it continues to restrict tourism despite Nagaland's peaceful environment. The Chief Minister credited tribal hohos, church organisations, government departments, event managers and private entrepreneurs, calling the Hornbill Festival a 'people's festival' rooted in the Naga cultural pride. Mr Rio also highlighted the expansion of Hornbill Festival to six districts, including the Konyak Heritage Centre in Mon, as a major step in broadening community participation and tourism growth. He also noted the contributions of Country Partners and IDAN-led platforms such as international roundtables and investment meets, as well as the efforts of TaFMA. The Chief Minister thanked all stakeholders and citizens, saying the success of the Hornbill Festival 2025 belongs to the people of Nagaland.



Nagaland today hosted the Malta Country Partner Roundtable, exploring collaborations in music, arts, education, and youth engagement. Chairing the meet, IDAN Chairman Abu Metha highlighted Nagaland's cultural vibrancy and global music engagements. Malta's High Commissioner to India, Reuben Gauci, drew parallels between Malta's colonial past and Naga history, and emphasized shared experiences that foster cultural understanding. He also pointed to Malta's rich academic heritage, welcoming potential collaboration with Nagaland University. Professor Norbert, from the visiting Maltese delegation, commended the originality of Naga writers and expressed interest in facilitating academic exchanges, author residencies, and cultural partnerships. The discussions also covered opportunities in hospitality sector and emerging creative industries.



The 26th edition of Hornbill Festival recorded a total footfall of Two Lakh 14 Thousand, 493 visitors during its 10-day celebrations. According to the Tourism Department, the festival drew Two Thousand 528 foreign visitors, 56 Thousand 431 domestic tourists, and One Lakh 55 Thousand 534 local attendees from within Nagaland. On the final day alone, the festival saw a total of 33 Thousand 535 visitors, comprising 262 international guests, Eight Thousand 479 domestic tourists, and 24 Thousand 739 local visitors.

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The Rajya Sabha took up discussion on Election Reforms today. Initiating the discussion, Congress MP Ajay Maken raised questions over the Election Commission, and said the Commission must restore its credibility, cautioning that a loss of credibility could weaken democratic institutions. Participating in the discussion, BJP leader Sudhanshu Trivedi said, India is the mother of democracy. He said electoral bonds have brought transparency in the electoral system. Dola Sen of TMC said, her party is not against electoral reforms, but it is against electoral rolls which are made by erasing the people. DMK's NR Elango alleged that the country do not have a fool-proof election system, and that EVM is causing the most problems. Sanjay Singh of AAP alleged that the intention of the SIR is not to purify the voter list but to delete voters, adding that Election Commission does not have the power to conduct SIR. The discussion remained inconclusive. Later the House adjourned for the day to meet again tomorrow.

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The Naga Students' Federation (NSF), under the aegis of the North East Students' Organization (NESO), joined other Northeast states in observing Black Day today against the Citizenship Amendment Act. The rally at Naga Solidarity Park in Kohima was attended by NSF officials, seniors, and officials from the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union, AAPSU. Speaking at the event, NESO Secretary General, Mutsikhoyo Yhobu, said the Black Day marks the passage of the CAA in 2019, which the Northeast community has opposed, citing threats to the rights and identity of indigenous people. He urged concerted efforts across the region to oppose the Act. Meanwhile, NSF President Mteisuding reaffirmed the federation's commitment for the rights of the indigenous people.

Meanwhile, AAPSU Vice President (Protocol), Nabam Gandhi called out the Government of India for failing to assess the social and economic impact of the Act on the Northeast. The event concluded with participants hoisting black flags and burning CAA documents to express their dissent.

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In a step toward strategic international collaboration, Nagaland University (NU) engaged with the Bangladesh Assistant High Commission, Zikrul Hasan Fahad, to discuss shared academic opportunities. At an interactive session yesterday, at the NU Kohima Campus, Pro Vice-Chancellor Prof. N. Venuh, reaffirmed the University's commitment to international collaboration in science, engineering, and technology. Dean, School of Engineering & Technology, Prof. Sujata Dash outlined potential areas of collaboration with Bangladeshi institutions, including joint research projects, student and faculty exchanges, internships, collaborative Master's programme in Disaster Management, and joint workshops and seminars. Meanwhile, Mr. Fahad appreciated the University's proactive approach and expressed support for establishing academic linkages across these areas.

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The grand finale of the Dr. T. Ao National Junior Girls Football Championship (Tier-II) is underway at Chümoukedima Football Stadium, with Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra battling for the title. Earlier, addressing the closing ceremony, Advisor Youth Resources and Sports, S Keoshu Yimchunger lauded the championship for providing a platform for young talent to grow, learn, and shine.

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And, in weather, India Meteorological Department has forecast dense fog during morning hours in isolated areas of Nagaland till the 16th of December. Otherwise, dry weather is expected across all districts throughout the period.

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