

THE HEADLINES:

- Nagaland Assembly sees heated discussion on Vande Mataram
- Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio proposed Select Committee of State Assembly to review use of Vande Mataram
- MLA Achumbemo Kikon raises concerns over racial discrimination against Northeast people
- POCSO Court, Dimapur sentences man to life for murder of teenage girl

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The second day of the Eighth Session of the 14th Nagaland Legislative Assembly saw intense deliberations during Question Hour and discussions on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address. During Zero Hour, MLA Achumbemo Kikon raised concerns over racial discrimination against Northeast people and renewed his call to address human-elephant conflict through large-scale jatropa cultivation. Secretary-in-Charge Khruohituonuo Rio informed the House of the Governor's assent to three key Bills, including the Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (Validation) Bill, 2025, The Nagaland Flood Plain Zoning Bill, 2025 and The Nagaland State Finance Commission Bill, 2025. The use of Vande Mataram dominated debate, with members citing Article 371A protections. Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio proposed a Select Committee to review the matter. The Motion of Thanks was later adopted by voice vote, and the House adjourned till March 9.

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Members of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly today voiced strong objections to the playing of the National Song Vande Mataram on the first day of the 8th Assembly Session, citing concerns under Article 371(A) of the Constitution. Initiating the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's Address, MLA Kuzholuzo Nienu termed the inclusion of Vande Mataram in the state Assembly proceedings as 'absolutely unnecessary.' He argued that the song, which references a Hindu goddess, could conflict with secular principles in a Christian-majority state like Nagaland. Limaonen Chang of RPI-Athawale and NPF MLA P. Longon echoed similar sentiments. Mr Longon said he feels the song is being imposed upon members, and urged the House to invoke Article 371(A) and

formally decide on its inclusion in future Assembly sessions. Defending the song, Minister Temjen Imna Along highlighted its historical context, particularly during India's independence struggle. He emphasized that secularism includes respecting beliefs of all communities, and urged respect for the song as a national symbol.

MLA Achumbemo disagreed with Mr Along's argument, and said imposition of the National Song violates the fundamental rights and duties of citizens. He urged the House to take a clear stand against this imposition.

MLAs Dr Neisato Mero, Dr Tseilhoutuo Rhutso, T N Manen and Jwenga Tep also echoed resentment over the inclusion of Vande Mataram.

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Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has suggested that a Select Committee of the State Assembly review the use of Vande Mataram. In his remarks during the discussion on the Motion of Thanks to the Governor's address today, the Chief Minister described the matter as sensitive and of national significance.

Mr Rio said, all views expressed by members are respected, adding that democratic deliberation reflects the nation's foundation of freedom of expression. Emphasising that India's strength lies in its diversity, he said the constitutional position of the National Song must be understood within the framework of fundamental rights, secularism and constitutional morality. Referring to the executive order from the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding the National Song, the Chief Minister said such directives must be examined in light of Nagaland's special constitutional safeguards.

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Member of the Nagaland Legislative Assembly, Achumbemo Kikon today raised strong concerns over incidents of racial discrimination faced by people from the Northeast in mainland India. Speaking during the Zero Hour in the ongoing Assembly session, Mr Kikon described the issue as a serious concern, particularly for a regional political party like the Naga People's Front. He asserted that citizens from the Northeast are equal and integral members of India's progress and strengthening of democracy.

The MLA stressed that discrimination against people from the region cannot be tolerated in a democracy country.

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The Fast Track Special Court under the POCSO Act in Dimapur has sentenced Yilobemo Mozhui to life imprisonment for the 2020 murder of a 17-year-old girl. The judgement was pronounced yesterday. According to press note by the Dimapur Police, the victim's body was found on October 22, 2020, at St. Clare Higher Secondary School ground in Kachari Gaon, Phevima. Women Police Station Dimapur registered the case and carried out a detailed investigation. Police said, after collecting evidence, charges were filed under relevant sections of the IPC and the POCSO Act. Following a thorough trial, the Special Court held that the prosecution had proven the charge beyond reasonable doubt, and delivered the verdict.

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that India continues to be a beacon of hope for the world with its strong economy. He said, rapid economic development has become the cornerstone for realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat. The Prime Minister was addressing a post-budget webinar on the theme Sustaining and Strengthening Economic Growth this morning.

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Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has extended warm greetings to all celebrating Holi. In a social media post, he said the Festival of Colours marks the arrival of spring and the victory of good over evil. Mr Rio hoped that its spirit of unity, goodwill, and harmony would bring joy, renew friendships, and strengthen bonds of togetherness among everyone.

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The Nagaland Government Teacher Association (NGTA) of the 2010 and 2013 batches, today temporarily suspended their ongoing protest following consultations with two apex students body. The teachers, numbering around 2,293, have been agitating below the Directorate of School Education in Kohima for four days to press their demands over the inclusion of their salary components in the State Non-Plan. Speaking to the media, NGTA 2010 & 2013 President Peihau and NGTA Dimapur Unit President Alemkala said, the unresolved issues will now be taken up at higher platforms by the Naga Students' Federation and the Eastern Nagaland Students' Federation.

The teachers reiterated that the protest has only been temporarily suspended, and the movement will continue until the state government addresses their long-standing demands.

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