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**PERSPECTIVE**  
It's life. It's interesting. It's fun. - Bob Ross

**Assam HS results on April 28, announces CM Himanta Biswa Sarma**



GUWAHATI

The Assam Higher Secondary Education Council will declare the Class 12 (Higher Secondary) examination results on April 28, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced on Thursday.

In a post on X, the Chief Minister confirmed the result date and extended his best wishes to students who appeared for the examinations this year.

The announcement brings clarity for thousands of students across Assam awaiting their Higher Secondary results.

Students will be able to check their scores on the official websites of the Assam Higher Secondary Education Council once the results are declared.

**WHO SAID WHAT**

**Lotus is set to bloom in Bengal. ~ Amit Shah, Union Minister**

## Teacher misconduct cases rise in Assam; 35% linked to sexual abuse, sparking safety concerns

GUWAHATI

A growing number of cases involving teacher misconduct in Assam has raised serious concerns over student safety, with official records indicating that nearly 35 per cent of reported incidents are linked to sexual abuse.

Between 2023 and 2026, at least 30 cases of inappropriate behaviour by teachers have been recorded across the state. These range from verbal intimidation to sexual harassment, with cases of sexual misconduct prosecuted under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. Around 30 per cent of the cases involve verbal abuse, while the rest relate to coercion or misuse of authority within classrooms.

Experts caution that the actual scale of the problem may be far greater, as many incidents go unreported or are resolved informally by school authorities and parents without legal intervention.

The issue has come into sharper focus following a recent case at a school in Silchar, where a senior teacher has been accused of verbal abuse, physical assault, and coercing students to join private tuition classes. The allegations also include psychological intimidation, reportedly referencing a past student suicide case to



threaten pupils.

Taking cognisance of the matter, the National Human Rights Commission has directed the Assam Education Department, along with district authorities in Cachar, to submit an Action Taken Report.

The latest incident adds to a series of cases reported in recent years. In 2022, multiple teachers in districts such as Kamrup, Pathsala and Morigaon faced action over alleged sexual misconduct involving minors. In September 2024, a teacher in Dhubri district was arrested under POCSO for attempted sexual harassment, triggering protests. Similar cases have also been reported in Cachar and Guwahati, including allegations of molestation and verbal abuse.

More recently, a private tutor in

## KHONGJOM DAY OBSERVED WITH SOLEMN TRIBUTES Manipur Governor calls for integrity and communal harmony

IMPHAL

Manipur on Thursday marked Khongjom Day with solemnity and reverence at the Khongjom War Memorial in Khebaching, Thoubal district, commemorating the martyrs of the historic Anglo-Manipur War of 1891.

Governor Ajay Kumar Bhalla and Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh attended the observance as chief guest and president of the function respectively, leading the gathering in paying floral tributes at the memorial.

The ceremony featured a Guard of Honour, General Salute, Reverse Arms, and the sounding of the Last Post, followed by a two-minute silence. Floral tributes were also laid at the statue of Paona Brajabashi, accompanied by a gun salute. Ritual offerings (tarpan) were conducted at the Khongjom River, while dignitaries paid hom-



age through Sankirtana.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Bhalla described Khongjom Day as a reminder of the courage and sacrifice of Manipuri warriors who fought against British forces. Referring to the Battle of Khongjom as a symbol of honour and patriotism, he noted that the warriors chose resistance de-

spite being outnumbered and poorly equipped.

He said the occasion was not only for remembrance but also reflection, urging citizens to uphold unity, resilience and responsibility in preserving peace. The Governor called for adherence to integrity in public life, communal harmony, respect for the rule of law, and commitment to inclusive development.

Chief Minister Singh, in his address, said the people of Manipur take pride in the bravery displayed during the 1891 conflict. He recalled the contributions of leaders such as Kulachandra Singh, Tikendrajit Singh, Paona Brajabashi, Chongtha Mia and Chinglensana, stating that their sacrifices safeguarded the sovereignty and integrity of the state.

The Chief Minister also expressed grief over the Tronglaobi incident and said the government had held discussions with the Joint Action Committee and affected families, extending assistance. Acknowledging ongoing protests across the state, he appealed to the public to avoid actions that could disrupt development or deepen divisions.

He further thanked citizens for ensuring the smooth observance of

Khongjom Day despite prevailing tensions.

The programme commenced with Sankirtana by artistes of the Manipur State Kala Akademi, followed by the national song performed by artistes of Shri Shri Bal Mukunda Dev Music College and the national anthem by the 1st Battalion Manipur Rifles Band.

An opening song titled "Manipur Sheitharol" was presented by Khumanthem Sundari Devi and her troupe. Cultural performances included Khongjom Parva and a stage play "Paona" staged by Rup Mahal Theatre.

Among those present were Deputy Chief Minister Losii Dikho, Home Minister Govindas Konhoujam, Art and Culture Minister Kh. Loken Singh, legislators, senior civil, police and army officials, and members of the public.

## Imphal Sit-in Flags Rising Violence as Shutdown Paralyzes Life Across Manipur



IMPHAL

Members of Apunba Chingmeirong staged a sit-in protest in Imphal on Tuesday, voicing concern over escalating violence in Manipur and urging immediate government intervention to restore order.

Protesters demanded stringent action against alleged militant groups linked to recent attacks and called for justice for victims, including children. They also pressed for accountability in cases involving security forces, stressing the need for transparent investigations.

Participants highlighted the urgency of safeguarding civilians and preventing further bloodshed, appealing to authorities to take decisive steps to stabilise the situation and reinforce security arrangements in vulnerable areas.

The demonstration comes amid a five-day total shutdown across several districts, which entered its fourth day

on April 22, severely disrupting daily life. Markets, schools and transport services remained largely shut, with deserted roads reflecting the scale of the bandh.

The shutdown was called in protest against the recent Tronglaobi bomb attack, which left two children dead and their mother injured, intensifying public anger and grief.

Despite the shutdown, limited activity was observed at Khwairamband Ima Market, one of the state's commercial centres, where a small number of women vendors resumed selling essential goods, citing economic compulsions.

Vendors said the prolonged disruption had placed daily wage earners under severe strain, forcing many to balance solidarity with protest actions against the need to sustain livelihoods. Some described the situation as a difficult trade-off between collective resistance and economic survival.

Anita, a vendor with over a decade of experience at the market, said she had consistently supported public movements but was compelled to reopen her stall due to financial pressures.

"Now I am selling goods out of necessity. My support remains with the people protesting, but it has become difficult to manage daily needs," she said, echoing concerns shared by many in the trading community.

The continuing shutdown and protests underline growing public pressure on the government to address security concerns and bring a swift resolution to the ongoing crisis.

## Manipur Expands UAPA Enforcement, Empowers Lower-Rank Police for Arrests and Searches

IMPHAL

The Manipur government has expanded policing powers under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (UAPA), authorising a wider pool of personnel to carry out arrests, searches and seizures across the state with immediate effect.

A Home Department notification issued on April 22 designates the Administrative Secretary (Home) as the "Designated Authority" under Section 43A of the Act, enabling action in cases related to unlawful and anti-national activities. In a significant move to widen enforcement, the order empowers all police personnel not below the rank of Head Constable or Havildar, in both civil and armed wings, to exercise these powers on behalf of the Designated Authority.

Officials authorised under the notification may carry out arrests or searches if they have "reason to believe" that an offence under the Act has been committed or is likely to be committed. The powers also extend to cases involving suspected possession of evidence or property linked to unlawful activities.

The directive allows searches of buildings, vehicles and other premises at any time, including during the night, and permits seizure of documents or assets considered relevant to investigations.

Authorities said the move is aimed at strengthening enforcement of the law and enhancing the operational response of security agencies amid prevailing security concerns. The order will remain in force until further notice.

The notification has been circulated to key administrative and law enforcement offices, including the Governor's Secretariat, the Chief Secretary, the Director General of Police and district-level officials.

The decision marks a tightening of the state's enforcement framework under anti-terror provisions, as the government seeks to bolster its response to ongoing security challenges.

## Landslides Hit Silchar-Haflong Highway After Heavy Rain, Traffic Disrupted in Dima Hasao



GUWAHATI

Incessant rainfall triggered multiple landslides along the Silchar-Haflong National Highway on Wednesday, disrupting traffic and underscoring the fragility of the ?? route ahead of the monsoon season.

Officials said the first landslide occurred at Dalaichung, between Jatinga and Harangajao, after continuous rainfall loosened soil from adjoining hillsides, sending debris onto the roadway. Vehicular movement was temporarily suspended before authorities cleared the stretch and restored traffic later in the afternoon.

However, fresh rainfall in the evening triggered another landslide at the same location. Falling trees further blocked the highway, once again halting traffic. Restoration work was launched with assistance from local residents.

The repeated disruptions come amid ongoing infrastructure upgrades on the corridor. A 25-km

four-lane stretch between Jatinga and Harangajao is currently under construction as part of the Silchar-Saurashtra East-West Corridor project. However, work on two railway overbridges at Dalaichung remains incomplete, delaying full operationalisation.

Earlier, on April 14, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) had indicated that even partial opening of a two-lane section would not be possible before June due to pending over-bridge construction.

Meanwhile, residents of Dalaichung village have reported damage to agricultural land, plantations and homes, attributing the losses to ongoing construction activities. Alleging lack of compensation from NHAI, locals have halted construction work since Tuesday.

Authorities said efforts are ongoing to restore normal traffic flow, but recurring landslides have heightened concerns over commuter safety and preparedness along the route as the monsoon approaches.

## BJP Mahila Morcha stages protest in Guwahati over Women's Reservation Bill, targets opposition

GUWAHATI

The women's wing of the Bharatiya Janata Party staged a massive protest in Guwahati on Thursday, targeting the Congress-led opposition over its stance on the proposed Women's Reservation Bill. Organised by the BJP Mahila Morcha, the demonstration saw thousands of women take to the streets, with the rally commencing from the Khanapara Veterinary Field.

Participants said the protest was aimed at opposing what they described as an "anti-women" position adopted by the Congress-led INDIA Alliance on the reservation issue.

Addressing the gathering, BJP state secretary Dilip Saikia alleged that the Congress had historically failed to take adequate steps for women's empowerment. He contrasted this with initiatives undertaken under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, claiming that significant progress had been made in recent

years. "Thousands of women have come out today to claim their rights and protest against the opposition for opposing the reservation Bill," Saikia said.

Several participants echoed similar sentiments, asserting that women had mobilised in large numbers to demand greater political representation. Some protesters also alleged that the Congress continued to favour male dominance in politics.

The demonstration comes in the backdrop of the defeat of a Constitution Amendment Bill in the Lok Sabha on April 17. The proposed legislation sought to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures from 2029 and included provisions to increase the strength of the Lok Sabha to 816 seats following a delimitation exercise.

The Bill failed to secure the required two-thirds majority, with 298 members voting in favour and 230 opposing it out of 528 members present and voting.



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## RENTABLE MEDIATOR IN THE IRAN-US TALKS

**A**s Islamabad hosts this significant diplomatic event, experienced observers remind us that beneath the formal talks, there's a carefully planned dance, one that's aimed not just at peace, but at managing the timing carefully.

Why Pakistan? It's a question that has puzzled diplomats from Cairo to Ankara ever since it was announced that Islamabad would host and mediate high-stakes negotiations between Iran and the United States. The choice breaks away from the usual diplomatic expectations. Pakistan isn't a major regional power in the traditional sense, nor does it have the long-standing neutrality of countries like Egypt or the strong institutional presence of Turkey. Instead, the truth is that what Pakistan provides is something more practical: plausible deniability and political flexibility.

The choice of Islamabad marks a thoughtful shift from usual patterns. Unlike traditional mediators such as Egypt, Qatar, Oman and Turkey, which each have their own agendas, influence, and audiences to answer to, Pakistan offers a different kind of support. Currently, Pakistan is navigating complex economic challenges tied to the IMF and balancing the competing interests of Washington and Beijing, making it a dependable partner. In terms of realpolitik, it acts as a "rentable" venue, an ideal space where the U.S. can pursue its goals without risking too much of its own reputation.

According to most reports, the Sharif government entered into this arrangement fully cognizant of its subordinate role. Evidence indicates that Islamabad has operated in close coordination with Washington, with its diplomatic stance reflecting American preferences, thereby demonstrating less independent judgment and more adherence to the structural pressures of a state reliant on financial assurances. For Pakistan, this arrangement provides a rare opportunity for geopolitical visibility; for the United States, it serves as a strategic buffer. Should the negotiations conclude without success, the resulting fallout can be attributed to the host country's inability to facilitate discussions, rather than a failure of American policy.

When you look beyond the official announcements and well-rehearsed handshakes, what's left of the Islamabad process is often seen by analysts as a "logistic pause", a kind of diplomatic breathing room created more to support military and economic goals rather than to genuinely reach the resolution it's supposed to aim for.

For Iran, the interval is invaluable. Months of sustained pressure have depleted capabilities and morale. The pause allows for recuperation, reorganisation, and, according to multiple intelligence assessments, re-armament. Reports from the region indicate that while delegations exchange proposals in Islamabad's conference rooms, China has been supplying Tehran with advanced materiel, man-portable air-defence systems (MANPADS), precision-guided munitions, and satellite intelligence that would meaningfully enhance Iran's battlefield situational awareness in any future confrontation.

Washington's motivations, though differently packaged, are no less transactional. The Trump administration faces a domestic economy under mounting inflationary strain. Oil price stability is not a luxury of foreign policy; it is a political necessity. A genuine rapprochement with Iran would complicate the administration's relationship with its most consistent regional ally, Israel, and inflame powerful domestic constituencies. The talks, in this reading, offer the aesthetic of progress without the substance.

The Strait of Hormuz is a crucial factor in these negotiations, as about one-fifth of the world's oil supply passes through this narrow strait between Oman and Iran. According to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), the Strait is recognised as an international waterway, meaning its passage can't be legally blocked by territorial claims. However, Iran's close proximity to the Strait has historically been its most powerful strategic advantage.

Tehran has considered the idea of taking control over transit, whether by adding fees, conducting inspections, or even restricting passage, as a way to negotiate. While international law under UNCLOS makes such claims difficult to win in courts, legality and actual ability are different things. Iran has the means to mine the Strait, use autonomous watercraft loaded with explosives, and disrupt traffic in ways that could cause chaos in oil markets. The United States has enough naval and special operations capabilities to stop these threats, but the real question is the cost in money, lives, and the ripple effect on the global economy, of taking action.

Iran's primary objective is the unfreezing of approximately \$120 billion in assets currently held in reserve, as well as the dismantling of the comprehensive sanctions framework that has impeded its economic development for over a decade. The Strait functions not as a demand but as a strategic bargaining instrument, employed to remind the United States of the considerable stakes involved should diplomatic negotiations falter.

Even the most hopeful outlook on our current process reveals a challenging truth. Its scope is unprecedented and possibly even daunting. The 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, the last significant agreement between the P5+1 and Iran, focused on just one set of issues related to nuclear enrichment and had taken two entire years to negotiate. Today, the Islamabad agenda covers more than twenty different areas: ballistic missile development, regional proxy networks, steps toward Iran's normalisation within the Gulf's diplomatic landscape, and the future oversight of Iranian nuclear infrastructure by the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The wide scope of this agenda has even led seasoned diplomats to wonder privately whether the talks are truly meant to succeed. The arrival of a massive 300-person American delegation, an impressive logistical feat, has actually intensified this scepticism. Rumours suggest that many in the delegation are more interested in exploring business opportunities after sanctions are eased-like rebuilding Iran's energy facilities, bridges, and roads-rather than negotiating peace. In this view, commercial interests seem to be leading the way before diplomatic efforts.

What a Deal Might Look Like and Why It Won't Come

There is a credible off-ramp available, at least in theory. Iran's civilian nuclear programme, carefully overseen by the IAEA, provides a pathway that could be seen as separate from weapons development. Joining the Abraham Accords, the normalisation deals that have reshaped the Arab world's diplomatic landscape, would be a remarkable shift in Iran's regional position. The outline of an agreement is clear to those willing to see it.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

When you live for a strong purpose, then hard work isn't an option. It's a necessity.

- Steve Pavlina

# “POWER, NUCLEAR POLITICS, AND SELECTIVE FEAR: FROM KOREA TO HORMUZ”



COL. (DR.) ASHWANI KUMAR, MID, VSM (RETD.)

Wars are seldom fought on the battlefield alone. They are equally shaped by perception, power hierarchies, and the selective application of global norms. The ongoing confrontation involving the United States, Iran, and Israel has once again exposed a fundamental reality of modern geopolitics, rules are rarely uniform, and responses are rarely equal.

At the heart of this crisis lies not merely military confrontation, but a deeper contest over nuclear legitimacy, strategic comfort, and global



influence.

The Question of Nuclear Selectivity. The United States has taken an assertive stance against Iran's nuclear programme targeting enrichment capabilities and maintaining sustained pressure. Yet this raises a fundamental question, is Iran's nuclear capability truly a global threat, or a geopolitical concern shaped by perception?

Iran possesses uranium enrichment capability, but this does not equate to a deployed nuclear arsenal. In contrast, several nations already possess operational nuclear weapons. Yet the intensity of global response differs sharply.

The issue, therefore, is not merely capability but who controls it, and how they are perceived.

Fear in global politics is not uniform, it is selective.

Strategic Comfort and Unequal Standards.

The global nuclear order operates on implicit hierarchies. Some states are considered predictable and manageable, while others are treated as disruptive.

This explains why, Iran's nuclear activity invites pressure.

Pakistan's nuclear arsenal does not trigger similar urgency.

This disparity reflects strategic comfort, not universal principle.

Such selective standards weaken global credibility and reinforce the perception that rules are shaped by power, not equality.

Economic Shock: Who Pays the Price?

Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz triggered sharp fluctuations in global oil prices, affecting economies across continents.

This raises an unavoidable question.

Who pays for this instability?

It is not the decision-makers, but ordinary citizens worldwide, through,

Rising fuel prices  
Inflation,  
Economic uncertainty,



And yet, a larger question remains.

Who will compensate the world for these disruptions?

The answer is stark, No one.

Global geopolitics does not function on compensation, it operates on consequence.

Who Will Question America?

The question of accountability inevitably turns toward the United States. As the dominant military and financial power, its actions shape both conflict and consequence.

But who, in practical terms, can question America?

International institutions lack enforcement power.

Despite overwhelming military strength,

Victory remained elusive.

The conflict stabilised into a stalemate.

Peace was replaced by armistice.

The war did not end, it froze.

Military power ensured control, but not resolution.

Echoes in the Present Crisis.

The current Iran-US-Israel confrontation reflects similar patterns:

No clearly defined end-state

Controlled escalation without closure

Strategic positioning replacing decisive conflict

Like Korea, the situation risks evolving into a long-term managed tension.

The Rise of Managed Conflict.

Modern warfare is increasingly characterised by,

Pressure without invasion,

Control without occupation,

Conflict without conclusion.

This model avoids the costs of full-scale war, but creates a new challenge,

conflicts that persist without resolution.

India's Strategic Perspective.

For India, the implications are immediate.

Energy flows, trade routes, and economic stability remain closely tied to developments in Hormuz.

India must respond through the following:-

Security Measures,



Allies are strategically aligned. Rivals lack unified leverage.

The global system itself is deeply intertwined with American influence.

Power, therefore, often operates without immediate accountability.

However, this does not imply absence of consequence. Pressure emerges indirectly, through global opinion, economic shifts, and long-term strategic realignments.

Will Americans Ask the Question?

If the world cannot directly question, history suggests that the United States eventually questions itself.

From past conflicts, domestic scrutiny has emerged when,

Wars prolong,

Costs escalate,

Objectives remain unclear.

If the current conflict leads to sustained economic or military strain, the American public may ask:

What is the end-state and at what cost?

Lessons from the Korean War

A historical parallel can be drawn from the Korean War.

Strengthening maritime capabilities,

Securing supply chains,

Strategic Positioning,

Maintaining diplomatic balance,

Enhancing economic resilience.

India's strength lies in navigating complexity without being drawn into conflict.

To sum up: Power Without Resolution.

From Korea to Hormuz, history offers a consistent lesson, Wars driven by power may shape events but only clarity can conclude them.

The United States can exert dominance.

Iran can endure.

Israel can sustain pressure.

Yet none of these guarantee resolution.

Until clarity emerges, the world will continue to bear the cost of conflicts it neither starts nor controls.

Author's Note.

History rarely repeats itself in identical form, but its patterns endure. The Korean War demonstrated how conflicts can stabilise without resolution, creating long-term geopolitical fault lines.

Today, similar dynamics are

visible in the Gulf. The challenge before global powers is not merely to manage conflict, but to ensure that temporary stability does not become permanent uncertainty.

In a world defined by selective responses and shifting alliances, the pursuit of lasting peace requires not just strength but consistency, clarity, and strategic foresight.

About the Author.

DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

#EarthDay is a reminder of the fragility of our world.

But we know what must be done:

End our addiction to fossil fuels.

Accelerate the renewables

revolution.

Protect & restore

nature.

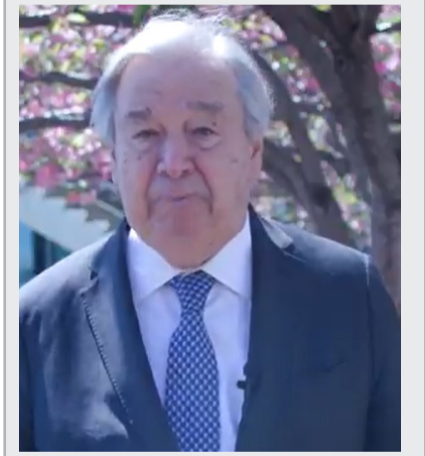
Deliver climate

justice for the most

vulnerable.

Let's #ActNow – for people & planet.

~ Antonio Guterres,  
UN, Secretary  
General



Col. (Dr.) Ashwani Kumar, MiD, VSM (Retd.) is a highly decorated Army veteran, twice honoured by the President of India, with extensive experience across operations, intelligence, and military education. A participant in the Indian Peace Keeping Force, he has firsthand exposure to complex peace enforcement and counter-insurgency operations. He has served in an elite military intelligence organisation and held assignments abroad, offering deep insight into global security dynamics. As Head of Department at a premier military training establishment, he played a key role in shaping military leadership and doctrine. His writings reflect a rare blend of combat experience, strategic insight, and academic depth, providing authoritative perspectives on contemporary geopolitical and security issues.

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## Tear Gas Fired as Imphal East Rally Over Civilian Killings Turns Confrontational

IMPHAL

A protest rally held over recent civilian deaths escalated into a confrontation with security forces in Manipur's Imphal East district on Wednesday, prompting police to use tear gas to disperse demonstrators amid heightened tensions in the valley.

According to officials and local sources, the rally began at Kongba and moved towards Wangkhei, covering nearly five kilometres. Tensions flared when a section of protesters attempted to push the march further towards Konung Mamang. Security personnel, citing law and order concerns, blocked the procession at Wangkhei.

The standoff soon led to a brief scuffle between demonstrators and security forces. Police responded by firing mul-



multiple rounds of tear gas shells to bring the situation under control. Authorities said there were no immediate reports of serious injuries. The protest comes against the backdrop of continuing unrest following the Tronglaobi bomb attack, with fresh demonstrations reported across several parts of the valley on Wednesday. Residents noted that both protest rallies and the use of crowd-control measures have become increasingly frequent in recent weeks.

Participants in the rally voiced anger over the prevailing security situation and called for urgent steps to restore normalcy. Some demonstrators alleged that the response from the Centre has been inadequate, demanding more decisive intervention to address the ongoing

conflict.

Protesters also raised broader concerns, including allegations of illegal immigration, and called for an update of the National Register of Citizens before the next census exercise.

Meanwhile, All Manipur United Clubs' Organisation (AMUCO) president Sorokhaibam Sanjoy criticised the handling of the situation, urging greater public mobilisation. He warned that the law and order situation in the state continues to deteriorate and called for collective action to press for accountability.

Manipur remains on edge, with authorities maintaining restrictions in sensitive areas and closely monitoring developments to prevent further escalation.

### Tripura Student's Death: Father Alleges Police Lapses as Key Accused Remains Absconding

DEHRADUN

The father of 24-year-old Tripura student Anjel Chakma, who died following an alleged racial assault in Uttarakhand's Dehradun, has accused the police of negligence, claiming the main accused remains at large more than four months after the incident.

Tarun Prasad Chakma, a head constable with the Border Security Force (BSF), said his son was attacked on December 9, 2025, in the Selaqui area after objecting to racial slurs directed at him and his younger brother. Anjel Chakma succumbed to his injuries on December 26.

Alleging lapses in the investigation, Chakma said there has been little visible progress in tracking down the prime accused. "It has been months, but there is no active police operation. The main accused is believed to be in Nepal, and there is no clarity on his whereabouts," he said.

He further claimed that the First Information Report (FIR) in the case was registered only after the intervention of a Member of Parliament, raising concerns over delays in the initial response. The grieving father also alleged possible collusion between local authorities and the accused.

The prime suspect, identified as Yagyaraj Awasthi, a resident of Nepal's Kanchanpur district, is believed to have fled across the border soon after the incident. Police have so far arrested five of the six accused, including two minors.

Officials said a lookout circular (LOC) was issued in January, and a Blue Corner notice has been initiated to trace the absconding accused internationally. The process to secure a Red Corner notice is also underway.

Chakma, currently posted in Tripura's Siphajjala district, described his son as a promising student who had secured an MBA placement with an annual package of Rs 12 lakh and was set to begin his internship on December 27.

### Nagaland Women's Body Condemns Daylight Gunpoint Robbery in Dimapur



DIMAPUR

The Naga Women Hoho Dimapur has strongly condemned a daylight gunpoint robbery involving a woman in Dimapur, terming the incident "highly disturbing" and a threat to public safety.

In a statement issued on Tuesday, the Naga Women Hoho Dimapur referred to the April 13 incident, in which a woman was allegedly robbed at gunpoint near her residence, and said such acts undermine the collective sense of security in society.

The organisation noted that Dimapur and Nagaland have

long been regarded as relatively safe spaces for women, making the brazen nature of the crime particularly alarming.

Calling for swift action, the Naga Women Hoho Dimapur urged authorities to take immediate and decisive steps to identify and apprehend those responsible. It also pressed law enforcement agencies to intensify patrolling, strengthen security arrangements, and ensure timely and fair justice.

The group further appealed to citizens to remain vigilant and actively cooperate with authorities in maintaining law and order, stressing the importance of community participation in ensuring neighbourhood safety.

Expressing solidarity with the victim and her family, the Naga Women Hoho Dimapur reaffirmed its commitment to advocating for the safety, dignity, and rights of women across Nagaland.

### Manipur CM Invites COCOMI for Talks Amid Khongjom Day Boycott Row

IMPHAL

Yumnam Khemchand Singh has invited leaders of the Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI) for talks, seeking a resolution amid tensions over a boycott call linked to the upcoming Khongjom Day observance.

The development follows a review meeting chaired by the Chief Minister with legislators of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the state Secretariat on Wednesday, where progress of developmental projects and strategies for timely implementation were discussed.

Officials said the outreach to COCOMI comes in the wake of a ban imposed by the organisation's women's wing on the Chief Minister, his council of ministers and BJP leaders from attending Khongjom Day events scheduled for April 23.

COCOMI Women's Wing convener Wahengbam Luwan-



gleima alleged that elected representatives were backing Kuki militant groups and called on the public to prevent what she termed "puppet politicians" from participating in the commemoration.

In response, the Chief Minister extended an invitation for dialogue, emphasising the need for a peaceful resolution. In a social media post, he said the government was working to address developmental challenges

through coordinated efforts and reaffirmed its commitment to advancing the state's growth in line with the vision of Narendra Modi for a "Viksit Manipur" and "Viksit Bharat @ 2047".

The ruling NDA coalition in Manipur is led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which secured a majority in the 2022 Assembly elections. The alliance also includes support from the Naga People's Front, National People's Party and independent legislators.

The BJP initially won 32 seats in the 60-member Assembly and later increased its strength to 37 following the merger of five Janata Dal (United) MLAs in 2022, consolidating its position as the dominant partner in the ruling coalition.

The invitation for talks signals an attempt by the government to ease tensions with civil society groups amid a sensitive political and security climate in the state.

### Storm Devastates Cachar School Campus, Classes Halted for 1,000 Students

SILCHAR

Nearly 1,000 students of Morley Higher Secondary School in Assam's Cachar district were forced out of classrooms on Wednesday after a powerful overnight storm left the campus severely damaged, prompting authorities to suspend academic activities.

The storm, accompanied by heavy rainfall on Tuesday night, battered the school's temporary infrastructure, destroying 12 classrooms along with the administrative office and other essential facilities. When students arrived on campus the following morning, they were met with scenes of extensive destruction, with debris scattered across the premises and no safe space available for conducting classes.

School authorities described the damage as "complete and crippling," noting that the makeshift arrange-



ments—already under strain—could not withstand the intensity of the weather. "We had been operating with limited resources after the original building was demolished for new construction. Now even that temporary setup has been rendered unusable," a teacher said.

The original school structure had earlier been dismantled to make

way for a new building under the Rural Infrastructure Development Fund (RIDF) 2023-24 scheme. In the interim, classes were being conducted in temporary facilities, which have now been destroyed.

The sudden suspension of classes triggered disappointment among students, many of whom had gathered at the school hoping for a normal

day. However, with the campus rendered unsafe, authorities had little choice but to call off academic activities.

Inspector of Schools Mithun Johari said the district administration is working to restore normalcy at the earliest. "The school caters to nearly 1,000 students. Our immediate priority is to arrange an alternative space so that classes can resume within the next two days," he said.

Officials are currently exploring nearby schools and community halls as temporary venues to accommodate students. The disruption has raised concerns among parents and guardians, particularly as academic schedules remain under pressure.

Authorities have assured that swift remedial measures are being put in place, even as the incident underscores the vulnerability of temporary educational infrastructure in the face of extreme weather.

### NEIF Organiser's Bail Hearing Progresses; Co-Accused Told to Refile Plea



GUWAHATI

Special fast-track court heard the fresh bail application of North East India Festival (NEIF) organiser Shyamkanu Mahanta, a key accused in the death case of Assamese cultural icon Zubeen Garg, while directing co-accused Siddharth Sharma to refile his petition after procedural lapses.

Court proceedings during the day focused solely on Mahanta's plea, with the bench noting errors in the affidavit submitted on behalf of Sharma and asking his counsel to submit a corrected application.

According to members of the prosecution team, Mahanta's counsel presented arguments in favour of bail during the first half of the hearing, following which the government advocate was set to oppose the plea. The court was also scheduled to take up arguments related to the framing of charges later in the day, with the possibility of the order being reserved.

Senior advocate Pran Borah appeared on behalf of Mahanta, while Rajdeep Banerjee joined proceedings via video conferencing. Prosecutors indicated that the change

in legal representation could reflect a renewed push from the family to secure bail at this stage of the trial.

Outside the courtroom, Mahanta's wife, Anita Deka Mahanta, strongly defended her husband, asserting that he had been "wrongly jailed" for the past seven months. She maintained that the case had been mischaracterised and insisted on his innocence.

"My husband is innocent. An injustice has been done to him," she said, adding that the incident had been described as an accident in other jurisdictions with strict legal systems.

She also rejected allegations linking Mahanta to a yacht party connected to the case, claiming he had no knowledge of the event and was attending a meeting around 50 kilometres away at the time. According to her, the late Zubeen Garg had travelled abroad voluntarily to promote Assamese culture and was not acting under any compulsion.

Mahanta, who had earlier withdrawn a previous bail plea, has moved the court again at a crucial juncture, as the trial continues on a day-to-day basis.

### Stomach Illness Scare Eases as Salganga Reports 83 Cases, No Severe Outcomes

SILCHAR

Fears of a possible outbreak in Assam's Cachar district subsided after authorities confirmed that a recent spike in stomach-related illnesses in the Salganga locality has been contained, with a total of 83 cases reported and no serious complications.

The sudden rise in cases earlier this week had triggered concern among residents in the Udharbond constituency, where multiple households reported symptoms such as diarrhoea, vomiting, and abdominal pain. The clustering of cases raised suspicions of a common source of infection, with many initially pointing to potential contamination in the drinking water supply.

Responding swiftly, the district administration and health department launched an extensive field operation. Medical teams were deployed across the affected area, carrying out door-to-door surveillance, distributing medicines, and advising residents on hygiene and safe drinking practices.

Cachar Joint Director of Health Services, Dr Sumona Naiding, said authorities adopted a proactive approach



to prevent escalation. "Medical teams are actively surveying the locality and providing treatment on the spot. We are taking all necessary precautions," she stated.

Officials confirmed that the situation has stabilised, with no fresh or ac-

tive cases reported in the last two days. Cachar Deputy Commissioner Aayush Garg said the peak of the illness was observed between April 18 and 19.

"The total number of confirmed cases reached 83 by Monday night, including additional cases identified through inten-

sified surveillance under the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme," Garg said. He noted that several affected individuals had initially remained at home without reporting symptoms, necessitating expanded monitoring efforts.

Authorities also clarified that none of the cases required hospitalisation. Around 16 individuals sought outpatient care and have since recovered, while no casualties have been reported.

As part of containment measures, disinfection drives were conducted across the affected panchayat areas. Water samples from local supply sources were tested, with chemical analysis showing no signs of contamination so far. However, microbial testing is still underway to determine any underlying cause.

"The water supply plants were our primary focus during the initial investigation. So far, no irregularities have been detected," Garg said.

With water contamination yet to be confirmed, officials are also exploring the possibility of a food-borne source, particularly in light of recent local festivities that may have led to temporary lapses in hygiene.

Reassuring residents, the administration urged calm and emphasised that preventive measures remain in place. Authorities said findings from the ongoing microbial analysis will be shared once available, as efforts continue to identify the exact source of the illness.

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## 'Festival of Democracy, Not Fear': Mamata accuses BJP of using state machinery to influence Bengal polls



KOLKATA

Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday voiced strong objections to the deployment of central armed forces during the ongoing Assembly elections in West Bengal, alleging that the BJP-led Union government was using state machinery to influence the democratic process.

Addressing a rally in North 24 Parganas district, the Chief Minister claimed that multiple central forces—including the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), and Border Security Force (BSF)—had been deployed in large numbers for election duty, along with other central institutions such as the railways.

Describing the scale of deployment as "unprecedented," Banerjee said nearly 200,000 central personnel had been brought into the state. She questioned whether the move was intended to intimidate voters and political opponents. "Elections are a festival of democracy, not for violence," she said, urging her supporters to file FIRs in case of

any alleged harassment.

Taking aim at the BJP, Banerjee challenged the party's show of strength, asking whether "armoured vehicles or the people" held greater power, while asserting that she remained unfazed by the developments. She also responded to recent remarks by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, saying warnings of strict action should only follow an electoral mandate.

The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chief further alleged that sections of the state police were acting in favour of the BJP, claiming they were no longer functioning impartially. She called on civil servants, including IAS and IPS officers, to uphold neutrality during the electoral process. Referring to a recent clash between TMC and BJP workers in Ekbalpore, Kolkata, Banerjee accused the police of selectively targeting her party members and questioned the absence of action against BJP candidate Rakesh Singh. She also claimed that authorities had prepared a list of around 1,000 TMC leaders and workers for possible arrest ahead of polling. Warning of public backlash, she said any such

action would trigger widespread protests.

Raising concerns about voter roll revisions, Banerjee alleged that large-scale deletions could pave the way for exclusionary measures such as the National Register of Citizens (NRC), potentially affecting millions. She urged voters not to support the BJP, claiming such policies could lead to deportations if implemented.

The Chief Minister also appealed to residents scheduled for the Haj pilgrimage to cast their votes before departure, assuring them that the state's Haj Committee would manage arrangements.

Accusing the BJP of mobilising migrant workers to influence voting, Banerjee further alleged that restrictions imposed by the Election Commission of India—including limits on motorbike movement—were creating an atmosphere of fear. She also criticised what she described as the BJP's extensive campaign resources, claiming the party had deployed "100 aircraft and several hundred helicopters" in the state, but would disappear after the elections.

## Gyanesh Kumar is the 'logical discrepancy, national shame': Kapil Sibal slams CEC over 'abuse of power' in Bengal

NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP and former law minister Kapil Sibal on Wednesday slammed Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar, calling him a "national shame" and accusing him of working for the BJP and trying to facilitate their win in the West Bengal Assembly elections.

Addressing a press conference at New Delhi, a day before West Bengal's 152 constituencies are scheduled to go to the polls on Thursday, Sibal questioned the use of the 'logical discrepancy' category during the controversial Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise by the Election Commission.

Sibal alleged the category was being used by the ECI to disenfranchise voters in Bengal, adding that CEC Gyanesh Kumar was the "logical discrepancy" in this country.

"They did not use this in Maharashtra and Haryana but are using it in West Bengal," he said.

"They are using the logical discrepancy argument to disenfranchise voters, meaning if there is a less than 15-year gap between the voter and his/her father, his/her name is deleted, if there is more than 50 years difference, the name is deleted. And all this is done through AI," Sibal said.

Coming down heavily on the CEC, Sibal claimed nothing he says is "logical" and called him a "national shame." "His discrepancy is stamped all over West Bengal. It is a shame that we have an election commissioner of this nature. It is an absolute national shame. It is also a national shame that nobody is doing anything about it," Sibal said.

Accusing the CEC of being in cahoots with the BJP, Sibal said Kumar's "vocation" is to make sure that the BJP somehow wins the election in West Bengal.

Sibal also questioned the massive deployment of security personnel for the Bengal polls.

"It is shocking. It seems there is a state of emergency in West Bengal outside the Constitution of India. In this emergency, 2,400 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been placed there, which means 2.4 lakh CAPF personnel that comes to one CAPF person for every 100 people,"



Sibal said.

It seems the CAPF and the Election Commission, not the BJP, are fighting this election, Sibal said, terming it a "gross abuse of state machinery".

"These many CAPF personnel would not be there in Jammu and Kashmir. And all this is happening while violence is going on in Manipur. What is happening to our country?" the senior advocate asked.

"Everybody is quiet, no institution is responding. Do we expect the chief election commissioner (Gyanesh Kumar) to respond. They are the ones who are fighting the elections for the BJP," Sibal alleged.

He also alleged that special trains were being arranged to bring people to West Bengal to vote in the elections.

"Parties contest elections, not the government. But here the government is fighting the election. As many as 5,000 people from Gujarat are being taken to West Bengal in special trains.

"Those who wanted to go home were baton-charged, while a special train was run to take BJP people to Bengal," the

Rajya Sabha MP alleged.

If the Railways is taking BJP people to West Bengal, it is a straight forward violation of the Model Code of Conduct, Sibal said.

Referring to certain controversial statements by senior BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari and Home Minister Amit Shah in the poll-bound state, Sibal said the kind of speeches they are making is unbelievable.

"There is a woman (Mamata Banerjee) standing against you and you have put the entire strength of the country. This is very dangerous for democracy," Sibal said. He also alleged that the entire official strength of the country is being used to destabilise the environment in West Bengal.

"Where does the CEC get these powers from? As many as 483 officers have been transferred. Nobody in this country has unlimited power," Sibal said.

Asked about the outcome of the Bengal polls, Sibal said as per the feedback that is coming in, Mamata Banerjee would emerge victorious despite all of BJP's efforts.

Taking a dig at Yogi Adityanath for reportedly attributing a quote by Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to Swami Vivekanand, Sibal said the Uttar Pradesh chief minister has no idea about history and the Constitution as he only knows about bulldozers and other such things.

West Bengal is set to vote in the first phase on Thursday amid an increasingly polarised battle in which issues such as corruption and jobs have ceded space to identity, citizenship and the controversy over deleted names from electoral rolls. The opening round of the two-phase election covers 152 of the state's 294 seats - including all 54 in north Bengal's eight districts and several in Murshidabad, Nadia, Birbhum and Hooghly. The first phase could determine whether the BJP can still rely on north Bengal as its principal gateway to power or whether the Trinamool Congress has managed to regain lost ground.

The second phase of elections would take place on April 29 and the results would be declared on May 4.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Israel FM calls on Lebanon to 'work together' with Israel against Hezbollah

JERUSALEM

Israel's foreign minister on Wednesday urged Beirut to make joint efforts with Israel to counter the Lebanese armed group Hezbollah, ahead of talks between the countries set to resume in Washington.

"Tomorrow the direct talks between Israel and Lebanon will resume in Washington DC. I call on the government of Lebanon -- let's work together against the terror state that Hezbollah built in your territory," Gideon Saar said in a speech to diplomats at a function marking Israel's 78th Independence Day.

"This cooperation is needed by you even more than by us. It requires moral clarity and the courage to take risks. But there is no real alternative for ensuring a future of peace for you and for us."

Israel and Lebanon, which have no diplomatic relations, will hold fresh talks in Washington on Thursday, a State Department official told AFP.

Israel conducted huge airstrikes across Lebanon and invaded the south after Hezbollah entered the Middle East war in support of its backer Iran on March 2.

Despite a truce which began on Friday, Israeli soldiers are still active in south Lebanon, with Defence Minister Israel Katz saying last week they would use "full force" if threatened.

Under the truce terms, Israel says it reserves the right to act against "planned, imminent or ongoing attacks".

Earlier on Wednesday, the Israeli military said its troops killed two "terrorists who violated the ceasefire understandings" in the area of Saluki in southern Lebanon a day earlier.

The pair had "crossed the forward defence line and approached soldiers, posing an immediate threat", the military said, adding that its air force later

struck and eliminated them.

An Israeli airstrike also killed one person and wounded two in Lebanon's Bekaa region on Wednesday, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency.

The Israeli military has established a so-called "Yellow Line" in south Lebanon near the border, where its forces are operating despite the ceasefire.

On Tuesday, it said Hezbollah launched rockets towards soldiers stationed in south Lebanon and that the military struck the launcher in response.

It also said it had intercepted a drone fired from Lebanon before it crossed into Israeli territory.

Hezbollah said it had launched an attack on northern Israel in retaliation for what it said were Israeli ceasefire violations, the first such claim since the truce began.

Saar, in his speech on Wednesday, reiterated that Israel does not have any "serious disagreements" with Lebanon.

"Unfortunately, Lebanon is a failed state, a state that is de facto under Iranian occupation through Hezbollah," he said.

"The obstacle to peace and normalisation between the (two) countries is one -- Hezbollah."

The Pentagon on social media described the Tifani as "stateless" despite it being a Botswana-flagged vessel.

"As we have made clear, we will pursue global maritime enforcement efforts to disrupt illicit networks and interdict sanctioned vessels providing material support to Iran -- anywhere they operate," the Pentagon announcement said, echoing previous statements from Trump administration officials. "International waters are not a refuge for sanctioned vessels."

Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the

Joint Chiefs of Staff, said last week that the enforcement actions would extend beyond Iranian waters and the area under control of U.S. Central Command.

U.S. forces in other areas of responsibility, he told reporters at the Pentagon, "will actively pursue any Iranian-flagged vessel or any vessel attempting to provide material support to Iran." He specifically pointed to operations in the Pacific and said the U.S. would target vessels that left before the blockade began outside the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway for energy and other shipments.

The military also detailed an expansive list of goods that it considers contraband, declaring that it will board, search and seize them from merchant vessels "regardless of location." A notice published Thursday says any "goods that are destined for an enemy and that may be susceptible to use in armed conflict" are "subject to capture at any place beyond neutral territory."

The U.S. military's actions against Iranian-linked vessels, namely the attack over the weekend on the cargo ship named the Tauska, have raised questions about the two-week ceasefire.

The U.S. and Iran are operating in "an awkward space where the law doesn't give you a clean yes-or-no answer" on whether the ceasefire was violated, said Jason Chuah, a law professor at the City University of London and the Maritime Institute of Malaysia.

"The United States seems to take the line that the conflict never fully switched off -- that is there is still a state of armed conflict," Chuah said. "By saying that, it can keep doing things like enforcing a blockade and even using limited force at sea."

But Iran is treating the ceasefire as a pause on all hostile acts, Chuah

said. Iran's joint military command has called the armed boarding an act of piracy and a violation of the ceasefire.

The U.S. earlier had instituted a blockade against sanctioned oil tankers linked to Venezuela but had never fired on those vessels.

Blockades and even limited attacks on vessels can be lawful in wartime, with merchant vessels becoming legitimate targets if they contribute to military actions, carry contraband or are incorporated into enemy logistics, Chuah said.

It's harder to prove that a ship such as the Tauska is realistically contributing to military action against the U.S., Chuah said.

"The whole dispute really turns on a deceptively simple question: Did the ceasefire actually suspend the right to use force?" Chuah said. "If it did, then firing on vessels or seizing them is very hard to square with the United Nations Charter."

Mark Cancian, a retired Marine colonel and a senior defense adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said a violation is up for interpretation because there were no defined terms.

"Trump announced it. The Iranians agreed. But there's no formal agreement," Cancian said. "So whether it broke the ceasefire or not depends on your perspective. ... Nothing was written down."

Michael O'Hanlon, a defense and foreign policy analyst at the Brookings Institution, said the U.S. did not violate the ceasefire because it was limited to bombing Iran, not the blockade.

"We agreed to stop dropping bombs on them, and that's the basic thing they wanted," O'Hanlon said, adding that the U.S. still had to enforce the blockade "if you're going to make it mean anything."

## Iran seizes third container ship in Hormuz after Trump extends ceasefire indefinitely



WASHINGTON

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Wednesday seized three ships attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz as US President Donald Trump extended a temporary ceasefire between both countries.

The IRGC in a statement earlier in the day confirmed the seizure of two ships.

"The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps naval force this morning identified and stopped in the Strait of Hormuz two violating ships," the Guards said in a statement.

"The two offending ships... were seized by the IRGC's naval forces and directed to the Iranian coast."

They identified one ship as "MSC-FRANCESCA", which they said belonged "to the Zionist regime" in reference to Israel, and the other as "EPAMINONDAS", which they said was "tampering with navigation systems and jeopardising maritime security."

Iranian media including the Nour News, Fars and Mehr news agencies later reported IRGC's naval forces have attacked a third vessel called the Euphoria. They said the vessel had become "stranded" on the Iranian coast, without elaborating.

The attacks came after US President Donald Trump said the country has indefinitely extend the ceasefire with Iran, which had been due to expire on Wednesday, to give Tehran time to come up with a "unified proposal" ahead of possible negotiations. Iran has offered

no formal acknowledgment of Trump's ceasefire extension.

The British military's United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said the first attack happened around 7:55 am in the strait and targeted a container ship. The UKMTO said a Guard gunboat did not hail the ship before firing and added that the incident took place 15 nautical miles northeast of Oman and all the crew were safe.

"The master of a container ship reported that the vessel was approached by one IRGC gunboat... that then fired upon the vessel, which has caused heavy damage to the bridge. No fires or environmental impact reported," it said.

Iran did not immediately acknowledge the assault. However, Iran's Nour News reported that the Guard only opened fire on the ship after it had "ignored the warnings of the Iranian armed forces".

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency described the attack as Iran "lawfully enforcing" its control over the Strait of Hormuz. The attack comes after the US seized an Iranian container ship after shooting it this past weekend and boarded an oil tanker associated with Iran's oil trade in the Indian Ocean.

A boat sails past a tanker anchored in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Qeshm Island, Iran, Saturday, April 18, 2026.

Pak PM thanks Trump as he cites Islamabad's request for Iran ceasefire extension; Vance visit called off

Meanwhile, US President Donald Trump said Tuesday that Iran was "collapsing financially" over the closure of the vital Strait of Hormuz.

"Iran is collapsing financially! They want the Strait of Hormuz opened immediately," he wrote on Truth Social, adding that the Islamic republic was "starving for cash."

Trump posted earlier that Tehran said it supported the closure of the strait to "save face" under the US blockade of Iranian ports.

Earlier on Tuesday, Trump extended the two-week truce with Iran indefinitely and credited a request from mediator Pakistan and stressed the need to give Iran's "fractured" leadership time to form a proposal. However, he said the US blockade of Iran's ports -- a sticking point for Tehran -- would continue.

Trump had previously indicated he would not extend the ceasefire and had warned of a resumption of bombing when it expired. "I have... directed our Military to continue the Blockade and, in all other respects, remain ready and able, and will therefore extend the Ceasefire until such time as their (Iran's) proposal is submitted," he wrote on social media.

Ahead of Trump's eleventh-hour intervention, it had been unclear exactly when the original ceasefire would expire, with Pakistan indicating it would end at 2350 GMT Tuesday. This moment came and went with no reports of new military activity by Iran, which had said the ceasefire would end at 0000 GMT. Iran made no immediate public comment in response to Trump's announcement.

The fate of peace talks hosted by Pakistan was hanging in the balance following Trump's announcement.

A White House official confirmed that Vice President JD Vance would not travel to Pakistan for talks Tuesday as previously planned, pending the submission of an Iranian proposal.

## ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SOURCES FOR AGRICULTURE



**A**griculture is highly dependent on energy for irrigation, machinery operation, processing, storage, and transportation. Traditionally, this energy has been derived from fossil fuels such as diesel and coal, which contribute significantly to greenhouse gas emissions and climate change. Renewable energy sources provide a sustainable alternative by reducing environmental impacts, improving farm productivity, and strengthening rural livelihoods. With rapid technological advancements and decreasing costs, renewable energy is increasingly integrated into agricultural systems worldwide. The major renewable energy sources used in agriculture include solar, biomass, hydropower, wind, and hydrogen energy.

**Solar Energy**  
Solar energy is the most widely used and fastest-growing renewable energy source in agriculture. Photovoltaic (PV) modules convert sunlight into electricity, which can power irrigation pumps, lighting systems, greenhouse climate control, and farm machinery. Solar-powered irrigation systems are especially beneficial in remote areas where grid electricity is unavailable.

**Solar Water Pumping**  
Solar photovoltaic water pumping systems are one of the simplest and most effective applications. These systems consist of a PV array and a motor-pump set that draws water from wells, rivers, ponds, or canals. They are widely used for irrigation, livestock watering, and domestic purposes.

**Solar Agri-voltaics**  
Agri-voltaic systems combine solar power generation with crop cultivation on the same land. Solar panels are installed above or alongside crops, allowing farming activities to continue underneath. This dual-use approach improves land-use efficiency, enhances farmer income, and promotes environmental sustainability.

**Solar Drying**  
Solar dryers are used to dry agricultural and horticultural products such as fruits, vegetables, spices, and herbs. Compared to traditional open drying, solar dryers reduce contamination, improve product quality, and shorten drying time. Various types include:

**Mixed-mode solar dryers**  
Solar biomass hybrid dryers  
Portable solar dryers  
Solar tunnel dryers  
These technologies are particularly useful in hilly and remote regions.

ularly useful in hilly and remote regions.

**Solar Cooking**  
Solar cookers use sunlight for cooking, reducing dependence on LPG, kerosene, and firewood. Box-type solar cookers are widely used and can prepare meals for small families. They help conserve energy and reduce indoor air pollution.

**Solar Water Heating**  
Solar water heaters consist of collectors and storage tanks that use sunlight to heat water. They are widely used in households, institutions, and industries. These systems can save significant electricity and reduce carbon emissions while providing hot water for daily use.

**Biomass Energy**  
Biomass energy is derived from organic materials such as crop residues, animal waste, and agricultural by-products. It can be converted into biogas, biofuels, and bioenergy for various agricultural applications. Biomass energy is particularly important in countries like India, where agricultural residues are abundant.

Technologies developed for biomass utilization include:  
Biochar production units  
Pyrolyzers for bio-oil generation  
Improved biomass cookstoves  
These technologies help in converting agricultural waste into valuable energy while reducing environmental pollution and stubble burning.

**Biogas Technology**  
Biogas is produced through anaerobic digestion of organic materials such as cattle dung, crop residues, food waste, and sewage. The resulting gas mainly contains methane and carbon dioxide and can be used for cooking, heating, lighting, and electricity generation.

A typical biogas plant provides sufficient gas for a small family and produces a byproduct called digested slurry, which is an excellent organic fertilizer. It improves soil fertility, enhances microbial activity, and reduces dependency on chemical fertilizers.

**Types of Biogas Plants**  
Floating Drum Type: KVIC model, Pragati model, Ganesh model, and ARTI plant  
Fixed Dome Type: Janata model, Deenbandhu model, and ferro-cement plants

Government initiatives such as the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) provide financial support for biogas installations.

**Biomass Gasification**  
Biomass gasification is a thermochemical process that converts solid biomass into a combustible gas known as producer gas or syngas. This gas can be used for electricity generation, heating, and industrial applications.

Producer gas typically contains carbon monoxide, hydrogen, methane, carbon dioxide, and nitrogen. It

has a moderate calorific value and can replace conventional fossil fuels in many applications.

**Types of Gasifiers**  
Updraft Gasifier: High efficiency but produces more tar  
Downdraft Gasifier: Produces cleaner gas suitable for engines  
Cross-draft Gasifier: Suitable for small-scale applications

**Fluidized Bed Gasifier:** Ensures uniform temperature and efficient conversion  
**Gasification** is an environmentally friendly technology that helps utilize agricultural residues efficiently.

**Hydropower**  
Hydropower is a reliable and versatile renewable energy source, especially in water-rich and hilly regions. Small, micro, and pico hydropower systems can generate electricity from flowing water in streams and rivers.

In agriculture, hydropower supports irrigation, water storage, and climate resilience. It reduces dependence on diesel pumps and unreliable grid electricity, lowering operational costs. Hydropower also strengthens

the energy-water-food nexus by ensuring reliable water supply for crops.

For smallholder farmers, micro hydropower systems offer a cost-effective and low-maintenance solution that enhances productivity and sustainability.

**Wind Energy**  
Wind energy is another important renewable source that can be used in agriculture, particularly in regions with consistent wind flow. Small wind turbines can power irrigation pumps, ventilate greenhouses, and operate farm equipment.

Wind energy reduces dependence on fossil fuels and provides a reliable energy source in remote areas. Unlike solar energy, wind energy can operate both day and night, making it suitable for continuous agricultural operations.

As technology becomes more affordable and efficient, wind energy is expected to play a greater role in modern farming systems.

**Hydrogen Energy**  
Hydrogen energy represents a promising future solution for sustainable agriculture. Green hydrogen, produced using renewable energy, can be used for fertilizer production, fuel for machinery, and energy storage.

Hydrogen can store excess energy generated from solar and wind sources, addressing the issue of intermittency. It can also be produced from agricultural residues, converting waste into valuable energy.

The use of hydrogen can significantly reduce the carbon footprint of agriculture, particularly in energy-intensive processes such as fertilizer production. With advancements in technology, hydrogen energy has the potential to transform agricultural systems and improve energy security.

**Conclusion**  
Renewable energy plays a crucial role in transforming agriculture into a more sustainable and environmentally friendly system. Solar, biomass, hydropower, wind, and hydrogen energy provide clean, reliable, and cost-effective solutions for agricultural operations.

The integration of renewable energy technologies reduces greenhouse gas emissions, improves farm productivity, and enhances rural development. It also provides resilience against rising energy costs and climate change.

With supportive government policies, technological advancements, and increasing awareness, renewable energy is expected to become a central component of future agricultural systems. The adoption of these technologies will not only ensure sustainable farming but also contribute to global efforts in combating climate change.

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Ministry of Culture  
Government of India



**North East Zone Cultural Centre (NEZCC),  
Dimapur**



Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India

*Presents*

# 1<sup>ST</sup> EDITION - NE TRIBAL FEST

## UTTAR-POORV JANJATIYA BASANT UTSAV – 2026

### 19-23 APRIL 2026

Art | Craft | Cuisine

11:00 a.m. Onwards

Music | Dance | Band | Choir

06:00 p.m. Onwards

**BIHU NACH COMPETITION: 19<sup>TH</sup> & 23<sup>RD</sup> APRIL 2026**

**📍 NEZCC SHILPGRAM, PANJABARI, GUWAHATI**

