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**PERSPECTIVE**  
Strangers can become best friends just as easy as best friends can become strangers.

## Akhil Gogoi Targets CM in Open Letter Over 'Secret Killings', BJP Candidate Choice

**GUWAHATI**  
Akhil Gogoi has issued a sharply worded open letter to Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, levelling serious allegations over the state's past 'secret killings' and questioning the ruling party's choice of candidate in Sivasagar.

In the letter dated April 28, the Rajjor Dal leader accused the Chief Minister of "misleading the Assamese people" and raised concerns over what he described as the revival of troubling political associations linked to the violent phase of the late 1990s and early 2000s. Gogoi objected to remarks allegedly made by the Chief Minister during the 2026 election campaign, where he was referred to as "Chitragupta." He termed the comment "disturbing" and politically motivated, claiming it was used to defend BJP candidate Jayanta Hazarika, contesting from Sivasagar. Invoking the memory of the 'secret killings' era, Gogoi wrote that the period continues to evoke fear and concern among the people of Assam. He described it as a time marked by alleged targeted violence, stating that "innocent blood turned everything red," leaving a lasting scar on society.

The Rajjor Dal chief made grave allegations against Hazarika, claiming that, based on past reports and local accounts, he was "involved in at least 68 murder cases," while adding that the number could be higher. He cited specific incidents, including the killing of a family in Mahmora in 1999 and other alleged acts of violence in the region, to underline what he termed the "barbaric nature" of that period.

**WHO SAID WHAT**



**We had urged the opposition leaders not to abuse PM Narendra Modi ji ~**

**Kiren Rijju, Minister of Parliamentary Affairs and Minister of Minority Affairs**

**SILCHAR/ GUWAHATI**

A spell of intense pre-monsoon weather is set to impact large parts of Assam, with the India Meteorological Department forecasting thunderstorms, lightning, heavy to very heavy rainfall, and gusty winds over the coming days. The warning has prompted state authorities to activate emergency response mechanisms and issue public advisories, particularly for vulnerable districts in the Barak Valley and the state's largest city.

According to the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, isolated locations in Barak Valley districts - Cachar, Dima Hasao, Hailakandi and Sribhumi - are likely to witness intense rainfall episodes accompanied by wind speeds of 50-60 kmph. Such conditions raise the risk of tree uprooting, damage to weak structures, and disruption to power and communication lines.

The IMD has also predicted intermittent spells of rainfall in Guwahati over the next two to three



days, with the possibility of brief but intense downpours during peak hours, potentially affecting daily life

and urban mobility. Officials warned that the evolving weather pattern could lead to

**ACCORDING TO THE ASSAM STATE DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY, ISOLATED LOCATIONS IN BARAK VALLEY DISTRICTS - CACHAR, DIMA HASAO, HAILAKANDI AND SRIBHUMI - ARE LIKELY TO WITNESS INTENSE RAINFALL EPISODES ACCOMPANIED BY WIND SPEEDS OF 50-60 KMPH**

waterlogging in low-lying urban pockets, traffic congestion, and slower vehicular movement on key routes. In hill districts and landslide-prone areas, particularly parts of Dima Hasao, there is an elevated risk of localized landslides due to saturated soil conditions.

In response, district administrations across affected regions have been placed on high alert, with disaster response teams, including local

emergency services, kept on standby. Authorities are closely monitoring river levels, drainage systems, and vulnerable hillside zones to mitigate any emerging threats.

ASDMA has urged residents across Barak Valley and Guwahati to remain vigilant and strictly adhere to safety advisories. Daily commuters and long-distance travellers have been advised to plan their schedules carefully, avoid unnecessary movement during heavy rainfall, and stay updated through official weather bulletins.

Residents in flood-prone and hillside areas have been specifically cautioned to watch for early warning signs such as rising water levels, soil movement, or cracks on slopes, and to be prepared for swift evacuation if required.

With the state entering a critical phase of seasonal transition, authorities have emphasised preparedness and public cooperation as key to minimising the impact of the anticipated adverse weather conditions.

## Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand Inaugurates Development Projects, Community Hall in Langthabal



**IMPHAL**

Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand, Minister for Municipal Administration, Housing and Urban Development (MAHUD), attended the inauguration of development projects in Langthabal Assembly Constituency held at Naorem Leikai Community Hall.

Manipur CM Yumnam Khemchand Inaugurates Development Projects, Community Hall in Langthabal

The programme was attended by Losii Dikho, Deputy Chief Minister of Manipur, and Karam Shyam Singh, MLA of Langthabal Assembly Constituency, along with other dignitaries. Speaking at the event, CM Khemchand reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring improved infrastructure, essential services and inclusive development so that every household benefits from development initiatives. He also interacted with res-

idents of Langthabal and appreciated their enthusiasm and aspirations for progress. During the programme, the CM also inaugurated the Chingkhong Community Hall at Narankonjin Mayai Leikai in Langthabal Assembly Constituency and dedicated the facility to the people. The community hall is expected to serve as a space for social, cultural and religious gatherings, strengthening community engagement and unity.

Officials said such infrastructure initiatives reflect the government's continued focus on grassroots development and improving public facilities across the state.

Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand also appreciated the proactive leadership of MLA Karam Shyam Singh in facilitating development projects for the constituency and reiterated the government's resolve to build a stronger, more progressive and prosperous Manipur.

## Manipur Government Issues Media Advisory Amid Unrest, Warns Against Fake and Inflammatory Content

**IMPHAL**

The government of Manipur has issued a fresh advisory to electronic, digital, and social media platforms, urging responsible dissemination of information and warning of strict action against the circulation of unverified or provocative content amid ongoing unrest. In an order released by the Commissioner (Home), authorities expressed concern over the spread of misleading and inflammatory material, including content allegedly linked to banned or unauthorised groups. The government cautioned that such content could incite panic and disrupt public order. Referring to the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, the advisory directs digital publishers and intermediaries to exercise due diligence in preventing the spread of fake news, deepfakes, and manipulated media. Platforms have been specifically instructed not to host, publish, or amplify unlawful content, including calls for bandhs, threats, or activities that may disturb normal life. Authorities also emphasised adherence to the prescribed Code of Ethics, highlighting the need for accuracy, fairness, and respect for sovereignty and public order. Media organisations were cautioned against publishing sensational or misleading content, including exaggerated headlines or captions that could inflame tensions.

The advisory further mandates that platforms establish effective grievance redressal mechanisms and cooperate fully with law enforcement agencies when required. Officials warned that failure to comply with the directives could attract action under the Information Technology Act, 2008, including the possible withdrawal of safe-harbour protections granted to intermediaries. The move comes as authorities intensify efforts to curb misinformation and maintain stability in the state during a sensitive period.

## Manipur Plans Major Recruitment Drive to Fill 8,000+ Home Department Vacancies Ahead of 2027 Polls



**IMPHAL**

The Manipur government is preparing a large-scale recruitment drive to fill more than 8,000 vacant posts in the Home Department, in a move aimed at strengthening security infrastructure ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections.

Officials said approximately 8,110 vacancies have been identified across multiple wings as of April 2026. The proposed recruitment includes around 2,900 positions in the Manipur Police, 3,000 in the Manipur Rifles, and about 1,000 in the Village Defence Force (VDF).

Additional vacancies span specialised units, including 450

posts in Police Wireless, 200 in the CID-Special Branch, 180 in the Jail Department, and 230 in Fire Services.

Separately, the Office of the Commissioner of Excise has initiated recruitment for over 358 contractual posts as of March 2026. These include positions such as inspectors, sub-inspectors, constables, lower division clerks, and drivers.

The recruitment push comes against the backdrop of continued unrest in the state following prolonged violence through 2025 and early 2026, prompting the government to bolster its internal security apparatus.

Authorities are also considering raising a new Women's Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) after receiving approval from the Centre. At present, the state has an estimated 40,000 personnel across its security forces, including nearly 9,000 VDF members.

State Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam recently noted that 88 out of 272 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) deployed in the state have been withdrawn for election duties in West Bengal, with another 15 companies slated for withdrawal.

The Assembly elections in Manipur are scheduled for February 2027, with the proposed recruitment expected to play a key role in reinforcing law and order mechanisms in the run-up to the polls.

## Tight Security, Multi-Layered Arrangements in Place for High-Stakes May 4 Vote Count in Cachar

**Among the constituencies, Katigorah is expected to take the longest to conclude counting due to its higher number of polling stations. Officials indicated that the constituency will require up to 21 rounds of counting.**



**SILCHAR**

The stage is set for the crucial counting of votes for the 2026 Assembly elections in Cachar district, with authorities completing elaborate preparations amid heightened anticipation ahead of May 4.

According to district officials, counting will commence at 8 am, beginning with postal ballots, followed by Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) votes from 8:30 am. All seven Assembly constituencies in the district will undergo counting simultaneously across designated centres.

To streamline the process, 14 count-

ing tables have been arranged at each centre. Special provisions have also been made for postal ballots, with each table equipped to handle more than 500 ballots, depending on the volume received.

Among the constituencies, Katigorah is expected to take the longest to conclude counting due to its higher number of polling stations. Officials indicated that the constituency will require up to 21 rounds

of counting. Overall, counting across centres is projected to be completed in an average of 16 to 17 rounds.

District Magistrate Ayush Garg stated that the administration expects the entire exercise to conclude within 10 to 11 hours.

In the lead-up to the counting day, the administration has conducted meetings with all contesting candidates to brief them on counting protocols and address procedural queries, ensuring transparency in the process.

Security has been significantly reinforced, particularly at the counting centre located at the Inter-State Bus Terminus (ISBT) in Silchar. A heavy deployment of police personnel will be in place to maintain law and order.

More than 700 government officials have been assigned to oversee the counting process, while the total manpower deployed, including security personnel, is expected to reach approximately 1,200. This includes around 500 police personnel tasked with ensuring a smooth and peaceful counting operation.

## Tripura to Launch First Phase of Census 2027 from July 17 with Digital Enumeration

**AGARTALA**

The first phase of Census of India 2027 will commence in Tripura on July 17 and continue till August 31, officials announced on Tuesday.

Director of Census Operations Ratan Biswas said the exercise will be conducted in two stages. The initial phase, from July 17 to July 31, will allow residents to opt for self-enumeration, followed by the second phase from August 1 to August 31, during which enumerators will visit households for house listing and data collection.

The 45-day exercise will engage nearly 11,000 enumerators and supervisors across the state to complete the first stage of enumeration.

To streamline preparations, a state-level review meeting was held at Pragma Bhavan in Agar-

tala, attended by senior officials, including District Magistrates from all eight districts.

Officials said District Magistrates will act as Principal Census Officers in their respective districts, supported by Additional District Magistrates and Sub-Divisional Magistrates over-seeing the process.

In a significant shift from previous exercises, the Census 2027 operations will be conducted entirely in digital mode. Enumerators will use mobile devices to collect data, which will be uploaded directly to a central server in real time, eliminating the need for paperwork and manual signatures.

Authorities said the transition to digital enumeration is aimed at improving efficiency, accuracy, and transparency in the nationwide census process.



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## US' GREAT GAMBLE

Iran has taken on two of the preeminent military powers of the world and still come out as more than also-ran in the fight. In fact, if anything, its resilience and retaliatory strikes on Israel, Gulf countries and on the US assets in and around Gulf region has shown that wars are not won with the cutting edge war fighting technologies and resource rich militaries alone. A little bit of character and pride in country's values is also needed. When a country collectively decides to fight it out not that it has to because there is a war thrust on it, but because the adversary is hell bent on berating its civilizational heritage and wiping it out from the face of the earth, the writing on the wall for the adversary is too clear to be missed. When the battle becomes existential, the character of a nation comes to the fore and the clarion call from the powers that be to rally around the flag becomes more than a rallying cry, deriving its sustenance from the perceived greatness of a nation; it's millennia old history. The war whoop becomes a holy gospel for the people of the country and in some cases even for those who until then may not have even made up their minds.

Before 27th Feb when the first bombs dropped on Tehran, Iran was reportedly faced with some measure of dissension from within. There were reports that some sections of people hostile to the establishment demonstrated on the streets beginning in late December 2025 and continuing into early 2026. These demonstrations were met with a violent crackdown by security forces. Some media reports indicated that thousands of people were killed, with over 2,000 deaths reported by the Human Rights Activists News Agency by mid-January. Protests took the shape of street demonstrations, nightly rooftop chants, and defiance of restrictions despite intense security presence and internet shutdowns. Before the heavy hand of the Iran's Basij militia squashed these demonstrations, the agitators even urged the US president, Donald J Trump to intervene and liberate Iran from IRGC. After reports of deadly force against protesters hit the international media headlines, Trump threatened to intervene, stating in early January that if Iran killed peaceful protesters, the U.S. would come to their rescue, famously tweeting that the U.S. was "locked and loaded and ready to go". On January 13, Trump even directly addressed Iranian demonstrators, telling them "Help is on its way" and urging them to "take over your institutions". Even Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on Iranian citizens to overthrow the Tehran regime during a televised address dedicated to the joint military operation against Iran launched by Israel and the US on 28th Feb.

"In the coming days, we intend to do everything we can to give the Iranian people the opportunity to gain freedom, so I am once again addressing the Iranian people and saying: do not sit idly by, very soon the moment will come when you must take to the streets to finish the job and overthrow the totalitarian regime," Netanyahu said in a speech broadcast on Israeli TV. Help did arrive, but it was too little too late. By then the protesters had paid with their lives. There have not been reports of any mass protests in Iran ever since. Since IRGC has made Iran net blind, there may be a possibility that some dissensions may have happened, but curbed immediately. Be that as it may, it does not appear that any protest against IRGC has been able to reach the critical threshold where it could become a nuisance for the IRGC and, as a result, throw spanner in its war plans. Remember, IRGC has had its hands full any way on the war front. For the most part, it has been running around the country to save itself and its assets from the continuous US-Israeli bombing until the ceasefire intervened. Furthermore, IRGC controlled Basij militia has also not had a free run to really go around bullying the anti IRGC people into submission. With its leader assassinated, its cadres for the most part have been busy avoiding bombs that kept raining on them until a few weeks ago. This then raises a question: why have the anti-establishment sections in Iran not so much as even tried to rally their supporters and ramp up protestations across Iran? If they could do so when IRGC leaders were alive and in control and when Tehran had unfettered control of power levers, why have they not been able to raise a banner of revolt against the IRGC? They did it when IRGC death squads were more likely to hunt them down and kill them. In contrast, odds on them being persecuted on a scale comparable to that before Feb 28 were low by all imaginable calculations.

There would have been another added benefit of anti IRGC or establishment chaos on the streets of Tehran and elsewhere now when there is understandably considerable disarray in the ranks of IRGC and the political establishment. It would have emboldened both Trump and Netanyahu to press ahead with the kinetic campaign. It is less likely that Trump would have announced the ceasefire and begun parleys with Tehran if civil strife within Iran had been all too visible. To Trump's dismay, he did not get what he came looking for in Iran, upending in many ways predominantly the rationale for war against Iran. There is a widespread view that Tehran was not bending over backwards to seek cessation of hostilities with the US and Israel although by all measures it has suffered immense death and destruction in the now paused air campaign. Trump's hands in many ways have been forced by the resilience and counter action shown by Tehran and inexplicable absence of anti establishment cries on the streets of Iran. The logic that partially guided the initiation of war against Iran (the other strand of logic being denuclearising Iran) would have only got buttressed by a series of protests against the Tehran establishment during the war. For Trump, therefore, it couldn't have more bitterly humiliating as he finds that his prognosis on quick Venezuela type operation in Iran has been bereft of vacuity. The two week ceasefire announced on April 8 has been indefinitely extended by Trump on April 21-22. Trump's extended the ceasefire hoping that Tehran will submit a plan to end the war permanently. But he wants the war to end on his terms, based on his 15 point formula. He is not willing to consider Tehran's counter plan of 10 point programme. In the meantime while guns have fallen silent and skies over Tehran and in Gulf and Israel are calm, Trump has laid a siege on Strait of Hormuz with the objective of choking Iran's economy. Economic blockade is an act of war and Tehran's made its position on it very clear. First round of talks in Islamabad has failed as Tehran refused to agree to one sided concessions. Having burnt his fingers in air campaign, Trump now thinks that Tehran can be forced to cut a deal with an economic blockade. His first assumption as regards internal dissension acting as a fifth columnist in Iran has miserably failed.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

Only by cutting through the darkness of ignorance can we truly imagine the majesty of tolerance.

- Artis Lewis

# LEE JAE-MYUNG VISITS INDIA TURNS SLOGAN TO SUPPLY CHAIN"



PROF. D.K. GIRI

When South Korean President Lee Jae-Myung landed in New Delhi on April 19, 2026, it wasn't just another photo-op at Rashtrapati Bhavan. It was the third time he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi met in 12 months, but the first time as the head of state on Indian soil. The timing is significant.

This is the first South Korean state visit to India in eight years, and the quickest by any Seoul President after taking office. That urgency tells us one thing: the India-Korea "Special Strategic Partnership," announced in 2015, is finally getting a deadline. The Middle East is burning, the Strait of Hormuz is effectively closed, and both democracies have decided they can't afford to keep their ties stuck in the CEPA (Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement)-2010 - era.

In geopolitics both democracies face one chokepoint problem. President Lee was blunt on X before boarding the plane: "Amidst ongoing supply chain instability and a global economic crisis stemming from the aftermath of the Middle East conflict, the Republic of Korea and India are emerging as increasingly vital strategic partners."

The inference of the above statement is that Iran lost its Supreme Leader to U.S.-Israeli strikes on Feb 28, Tehran is fractured, and Korean tankers can't get through Hormuz. Korea imports 70 per cent of its crude through that strait. India, meanwhile, needs to de-risk Chinese inputs and find trusted partners for critical tech. Both need each other's geography.

So the summit wasn't about culture. It was about chokepoints. National Security Adviser Wi Sung-lac said it plainly: the leaders would "maintain close coordination on energy supply chains amid rapidly shifting global dynamics". One expects India to leverage its Iranian Chabahar port and East African routes, while Korea brings maritime insurance, LNG ship tech, and its Hyundai/Hanwha shipyards.

In economic terms Shipbuilding, Chips, and the 'Make in India' approach converged during this visit. The MEA brief for the talks reads like an industrial policy wishlist: "shipbuilding, trade, investments, AI, semiconductors, critical and emerging technologies". Four of those are where Korea is top-3 globally and India is most hungry.

In Shipbuilding, this was "at the top of India's industrial agenda". India has 7,500 km of coastline but only 1 per cent of global shipbuilding. Korea has 30 per cent. With Hormuz risky, India wants LNG carriers and warships built locally. Korea wants orders to keep its yards running as Chinese competition bites. These concerns resulted in an MOU signed on Monday. Now, let us watch for a Hyundai Heavy Industries JV in Gujarat or Odisha.

In semiconductors and AI, Samsung and SK Hynix need a China+1 fab base. India needs their IP to make its \$10-billion

Semicon India mission real. Lee's team signalled that AI and chips were core deliverables. For India, this is the bridge from "assembly" to "design." For Korea, it's market access to 1.4 billion digital consumers.

In trade, bilateral trade hit \$25.1 billion in 2024 and was \$21.5 billion for Jan-Oct 2025. That's stagnant. CEPA needs an upgrade. Business forums in Delhi saw both sides push for "new opportunities". We can expect services, digital trade, and defence exports to enter CEPA 2.0 talks.

The defence angle was quiet, but real. No BrahMos-style headlines, but Wi Sung-lac listed "defence" as a strategic sector for "a new chapter". Korea is now a top-10 arms exporter. India wants K9 Vajra artillery tech, ship engines, and submarine collaboration. Korea wants India's Russian legacy market and Indo-Pacific naval access.

But the subtext here is, both countries are hedging. Trump's America is unpredictable, China is assertive, and the Middle East is volatile. A Seoul-Delhi defence industrial corridor — from Vizag to Busan — gives both the strategic autonomy. Various bilateral mechanisms already exist for "defence industrial cooperation". This visit funds them.

On the people track, CEOs, students, and the 'Kimchi-Curry' soft power are on top priority. Lee didn't just meet Modi. He laid a wreath at Gandhi's memorial, attended a business conclave, and met the Korean diaspora. First Lady Kim Hea Kyung was alongside. President Murmu hosted the state dinner.

Why it matters! India-Korea ties have always been elite-driven — Hyundai, LG, Samsung. But the next phase needs SMEs, students, and startups. Korea's population is aging; India's is young. Education visas, joint R&D in AI, and cultural familiarity will decide if this is transactional or transformational. Lee calling the summit a "turning

point" only makes sense if 25-year-olds in Pune and Pohang start building together.

The Vietnam link shows Lee's 'Global South' play and India's role in it. Lee flew straight to Hanoi after Delhi. That's not accidental. Wi called this trip part of Lee's "global South strategy" to "diversify supply chains and markets". India is the anchor of that strategy. If Korea can plug into India's manufacturing and Vietnam's critical minerals, it creates a non-China supply web for chips, batteries, and ships.

For Delhi, that's a win. It positions India not just as Korea's market, but as Korea's gateway to the Global South and ASEAN. The India-Korea-Vietnam triangle mirrors the Quad's economic logic, minus the military baggage.

What this visit actually changes? There could be three takeaways for Indo-Korean ties. Takeaway 1: From Trade to Trust. For 15 years, India-Korea was about Hyundai cars and CEPA tariffs. After Hormuz and the Middle East war, it's about energy security and war-proofing supply chains. That's a strategic shift. You don't share shipbuilding IP unless you trust the partner for 30 years.

Takeaway 2: From Bilateral to Networked. Lee's India visit was leg-1 of an India-Vietnam tour focused on "critical minerals" and "energy supply chains". India isn't the destination; it's the hub. We can expect Seoul to route more of its Indo-Pacific policy through Delhi.

Takeaway 3: From Intent to Investment. The test of this visit is the MOU signing ceremony and the business forum. If Hyundai Heavy, Samsung, and SK announce India capex by July, Lee's "turning point" claim holds. If not, we're back to 2018 communiqués.

In conclusion, the 'special' in strategic should be noted. "Special Strategic Partnership" has been diplomatic boilerplate since 2015. Lee Jae-Myung's three-day visit in April 2026 finally put machinery

behind the metaphor. Hormuz forced the issue; economics will sustain it.

For India, Korea is the rare partner that brings capital, technology, and no border dispute. For Korea, India is the rare democracy with scale, youth, and a navy that can sail from Hormuz to Malacca. The two leaders have now met thrice. The next meeting should be at a shipyard opening, not a summit. That's when we'll know the Korean kimchi (a foundational staple in Korean cuisine) has really met the Indian curry.

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**"The reality is we're building super-intelligent AI, hyper-intelligent, more intelligent than we can comprehend**

**It's like raising a super-genius child that you know is going to be much smarter than you**

**You can instill good values in how you raise that child: philanthropic values, good morals, honest, productive**

**Controlling it at the end of the day I don't think we'll be able to**

**The best we can do is make sure it's raised well" ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur**



# Severe Storm Hits Tripura, Over 1,500 Houses Damaged Across Eight Districts

## TRIPURA RAMPES UP RELIEF AND RESTORATION AFTER DEVASTATING NOR'WESTER, SAYS CM MANIK SAHA

### AGARTALA

A powerful storm accompanied by heavy rainfall battered Tripura on Tuesday, damaging more than 1,500 houses across all eight districts and leaving at least two people injured, officials said.

According to the State Emergency Operation Centre in Agartala, a total of 1,534 houses were affected in the extreme weather event. Of these, 76 houses were completely destroyed, 195 suffered severe damage, and 1,263 were partially damaged.

Unakoti district emerged as the worst-hit area, reporting damage to 518 houses, including 26 that were fully destroyed, 33 severely affected, and 459 partially damaged.

The storm triggered widespread disruption across the state, uprooting trees, damaging infrastructure, and affecting power supply. Officials said at least 129 electric poles were damaged, leading to outages in several areas.

District-wise figures indicated that



136 houses were damaged in North Tripura district, 272 in Dhalai district, 250 in Sepahijala district, 37 in West Tripura district, 85 in Khowai district, and 236 in South Tripura district. No house damage was reported from Gomati district, although two people sustained injuries after a tree fell on them.

Several roads were blocked due to fallen trees, officials said, adding that clearance operations have been completed in some areas while restoration work is ongoing in others.

Despite the heavy rainfall, authorities confirmed that all rivers in the state are currently flowing below the danger mark. However, significant rainfall was recorded in multiple locations, with Kamalpur subdivision in Dhalai district receiving the highest at 159 mm.

State authorities and disaster response teams are continuing relief and restoration efforts while closely monitoring the situation amid forecasts of further adverse weather conditions.

The Tripura government has

launched an intensive, state-wide response to address the widespread damage caused by a powerful nor'wester, with Chief Minister Manik Saha affirming that authorities are working "on a war footing" to restore normalcy and assist affected residents.

The severe thunderstorm, accompanied by heavy rainfall and strong gusty winds, swept across multiple districts, leaving a trail of destruction in its wake. Homes were damaged, trees uprooted, and critical infrastructure including electricity poles, transformers, and overhead wires suffered extensive disruption.

Officials said the impact has been particularly severe in rural and semi-urban areas, where fragile housing structures bore the brunt of the storm. Power outages were reported from several locations as the electrical network sustained significant damage.

Addressing the situation, the Chief Minister noted that district administrations have been mobilised to respond

swiftly. "Heavy storms and rain have damaged houses and power infrastructure in many parts of the state. District magistrates are already taking all necessary measures," he said.

Reiterating the government's commitment, Saha assured that relief and restoration efforts are being carried out in full force. "The state government is working all out to manage the situation and is determined to extend every possible assistance to those affected," he added.

Meanwhile, authorities have issued a red alert in parts of the state, warning of continued severe weather activity. The alert indicates the likelihood of intense thunderstorms, heavy rainfall, and strong winds over the coming days, raising concerns about further disruptions.

Disaster management teams and local officials remain on high alert, urging residents to exercise caution and adhere to safety advisories as Tripura braces for potential additional impact.

## Tipra Motha Chief Meets Tripura Governor to Push for TTAADC Reforms

### AGARTALA

Pradyot Kishor Manikya Debbarma, founder of the Tipra Motha Party, met Indrasena Reddy Nallu to discuss key reforms for the Tripura Tribal Areas Autonomous District Council, focusing on governance and development in tribal regions of Tripura.

In a statement shared on social media, Debbarma said he briefed the Governor on measures required to strengthen and revamp the functioning of the district council. He also



raised pending constitutional demands, noting that provisions granted to other autonomous councils in the Northeast are yet to be extended to Tripura.

Seeking the Governor's intervention, Debbarma underscored the importance of the office as the custodian of Sixth Schedule areas. "It was a pleasure interacting with him, and I requested his intervention in several matters," he said.

The meeting comes in the backdrop of the recently concluded TTAADC elections held on April 12, with results announced on April 17. The Tipra Motha Party secured a decisive mandate, winning 24 out of 28 seats, while the Bharatiya Janata Party won the remaining four. The discussions are being viewed as significant for shaping the administrative and constitutional roadmap for tribal governance in the state, particularly in the context of long-standing demands for greater autonomy and institutional strengthening of the council.

## 51 kg Opium Seized Along NH-37 in Manipur's Jiribam, Two Arrested



### JIRIBAM

Security forces seized a large consignment of suspected opium weighing approximately 51 kilograms and detained two individuals during an operation along National Highway-37 in Manipur's Jiribam district, officials said.

The interception took place on April 27 at Leingangpokpi village under Jiribam Police Station when personnel conducting routine checks stopped a Tata truck suspected of transporting contraband. A thorough search of the vehicle led

to the recovery of two carton boxes containing the opium.

The arrested individuals have been identified as Sukhvinder Singh (30), a resident of Punjab, and Sandeep Singh Tilno (41), hailing from Uttar Pradesh.

Officials said the seizure was made during intensified security checks along the highway, which is considered a crucial transit route. In addition to the narcotics, the truck used for transportation and three mobile phones found in the possession of the accused were also seized.

## Shillong Court Grants Bail to Prime Accused Sonam Raghuvanshi in Raja Raghuvanshi Murder Case

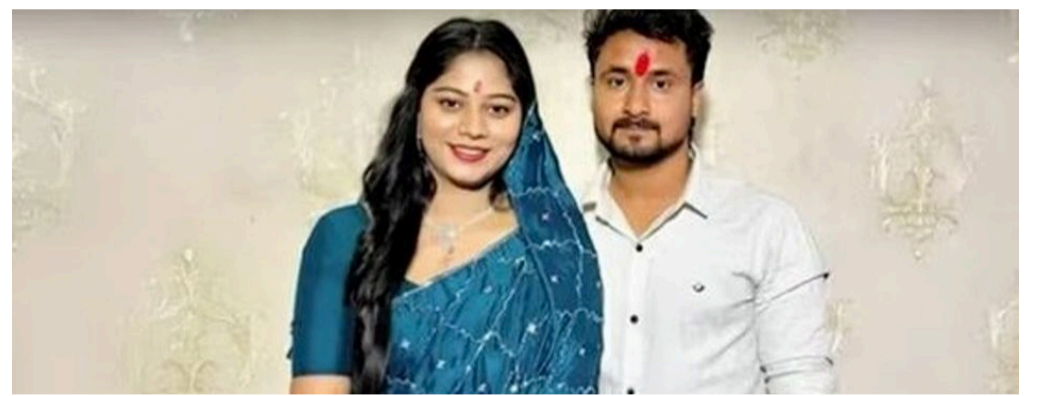
### SHILLONG

A court in Shillong on Tuesday granted bail to Sonam Raghuvanshi, the prime accused in the murder of her husband Raja Raghuvanshi, bringing a significant development in a case that has drawn attention in Madhya Pradesh and the Northeast.

Sonam, who had been lodged in a Shillong jail for several months, secured relief after her bail plea was heard for the fourth time. Earlier, the court had rejected her applications on three separate occasions before allowing the plea on Tuesday.

The development was confirmed by the victim's brother, Vipin Raghuvanshi, who expressed concern over the decision, terming it a setback in the family's pursuit of justice.

The case relates to the alleged murder of Raja Raghuvanshi, a transport businessman from Indore, in which his



wife has been named as the principal accused. Investigators had earlier arrested multiple individuals in connection with the case, including Sonam and her alleged accomplices.

Among the co-accused, Lokendra Singh Tomar, Balbir Ahirwar and Shilom James have already been granted bail. However, another accused, Raj Kushwaha,

continues to remain in judicial custody.

According to officials, Raja Raghuvanshi went missing on May 23 last year during a honeymoon trip to Meghalaya. His mutilated body was later recovered on June 2 near a waterfall in the Sohra area of East Khasi Hills district, triggering a high-profile investigation.

Police subsequently arrested Sonam and several others,

including an individual identified as her alleged boyfriend, in connection with the murder.

Responding to the latest development, East Khasi Hills Superintendent of Police Vivek Syiem said that while the accused has been granted bail, the legal process remains ongoing.

"The accused has been granted bail by the court.

## 'Chiprang', 'Gaddar' Not BJP Culture, Indiscipline Will Invite Action: Assam BJP Chief Dilip Saikia

### GUWAHATI

Dilip Saikia, president of the Bharatiya Janata Party's Assam unit and MP from Darrang-Udalguri, on Tuesday cautioned party members against using derogatory language, stating that terms such as "Chiprang" and "Gaddar" have no place in the party's culture.

In a statement issued through party spokesperson Ranjib Kumar Sarmah from the state headquarters, Atal Bihari Vajpayee Bhawan, Saikia urged party leaders, candidates, and office-bearers to maintain decorum, particularly on social media platforms such as Facebook.

He said it had come to the party's notice that some individuals associated with the organisation were expressing anger online using inappropriate language, which he described as inconsistent with the party's values and organisational



discipline.

Saikia emphasised that social media should not be used to vent resentment in a manner that under-

mines the party's public image. He called upon all karyakartas to exercise restraint, uphold dignity, and adhere to established norms of

conduct.

Issuing a stern warning, the state BJP chief said discipline within the party is non-negotiable and any deviation from the code of conduct would invite strict action.

On the political front, Saikia expressed confidence that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance would secure a "historic and unprecedented" victory in the 2026 elections.

He pointed to the high turnout of indigenous voters during polling on April 9 as an indication of strong public support, adding that voters had endorsed the continuation of the development agenda under Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma.

According to Saikia, the enthusiasm witnessed during the elections is expected to translate into improved electoral performance, enabling the alliance to secure more seats in the state.

## Kuki CSO Alleges Foiled Attack on Village in Manipur's Ukhrul, Claims Exchange of Fire



### UKHRUL

The Kuki CSO Working Committee on Tuesday alleged that an attempted attack on a Kuki village in Ukhrul district was foiled after village volunteers intercepted suspected militants during a patrol.

In a press statement, the committee said credible local inputs had indicated the presence of suspected Tangkhul militant elements along the Kampa Mol (Mount Compass) ridges—an area described as shared cultivated land used by Kuki villages including Yaolen Chepu, Mongkot Chepu, Lamlai Chingpei, and Mulam.

Acting on the inputs, village volunteers reportedly launched a preventive patrol in nearby forested areas to ensure the safety of residents amid what the organisation described as repeated threats and incursions.

According to the committee, the volunteers encountered suspected armed individuals during the patrol, leading to an exchange of fire at around 11:10 am on Tuesday. The group claimed the alleged attack attempt was successfully thwarted.

The organisation also expressed concern over what it termed continued intimidation of Kuki villages, stating that such incidents contradict broader narratives calling for peace even as tensions persist on the ground.

Reiterating its position, the committee said the Kuki community remains committed to peaceful coexistence and mutual respect but would continue to defend its land and people against any perceived aggression.

There was no immediate confirmation of the incident from police or district authorities at the time of filing this report.

# Indian Army to host 11 nations for multilateral exercise Pragati in Meghalaya

### RI BHOI

The Indian Army is set to host military delegations from 11 friendly foreign countries for the inaugural edition of the multilateral military exercise Pragati at the Foreign Training Node in Umroi, Meghalaya.

The exercise is aimed at strengthening defence cooperation, enhancing interoperability and building mutual trust among participating nations.

In a post on X, ADG PI - Indian Army wrote, "Prepared to Prevail. The Indian Army is set to host military delegations from 11 Friendly Foreign Countries for the inaugural edition of Multilateral Military Exercise #PRAGATI at the Foreign Training Node, Umroi, Meghalaya."

"The exercise reinforces defence cooperation, enhances interoperability and strengthens mutual trust. PRAGATI (Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region) symbolises a shared commitment to collective security, regional stability and collaborative growth," the post added.

Meanwhile, the Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Tuesday visited his alma mater, Sainik School Rewa, to honour the institution that shaped his



military career.

During the visit, the COAS laid a wreath at the school memorial and reviewed a Guard of Honour, urging the next generation of leaders to serve the nation with integrity and dedication.

In a post on X, the Indian Army wrote, "In a moment of pride and deep nostalgia, Indian Army chief General Upendra

Dwivedi visited his alma mater Sainik School Rewa, where his journey of discipline, courage and leadership first began. The COAS laid a wreath at the school memorial, reviewed a Guard of Honour by the cadets and commended the faculty and cadets for upholding the finest traditions of the institution."

"Walking once again through the

corridors that shaped his character, the COAS shared his memories and inspired young cadets to lead with integrity, serve with dedication and uphold an unwavering commitment to the nation. The visit stood as a tribute to mentorship, gratitude, and the enduring legacy of Sainik Schools as the cradle of India's future leaders."

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# No place for double standards, terror epicentres no longer immune: Rajnath Singh at SCO



NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday declared that "terrorism epicentres are no longer immune to justifiable punishment" and asserted there could be "no place for double standards" in combating terror, as he addressed the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' Meeting in Bishkek in the presence of Pakistan Defence Minister Khawaja Asif. Using the regional security forum to underline India's position on cross-border terrorism, Singh said SCO members must act firmly against nations, entities and networks that "abet, shelter and provide safe havens to terrorists." According to a government statement issued after his address, he said state-sponsored cross-border terrorism targeting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations cannot be ignored. "Operation Sindoor demonstrated India's firm resolve that

terrorism epicentres are no longer immune to justifiable punishment," Singh said, placing India's military response and diplomatic messaging on the same page at a multilateral platform that includes both Pakistan and China. Without naming Pakistan directly, Singh said "terrorism has no nationality and no theology" and stressed that the credibility of regional groupings like the SCO would depend on consistency, not selective responses. His remarks also came against the backdrop of last year's SCO defence ministers' meeting in Qingdao, China, where India had refused to sign the joint communiqué after its concerns on terrorism were not adequately reflected. It was learnt then that New Delhi objected to the omission of the Pahalgam terror attack from the final text even as references seem closer to Pakistan's concerns, including Balochistan, remained. India subsequently made clear that the document

did not sufficiently reflect its core concerns on terrorism. At Qingdao, Singh had also stated that connectivity and economic cooperation initiatives must respect sovereignty and territorial integrity, a formulation widely seen as a reference to India's objections to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Ahead of the SCO proceedings on Tuesday, Singh held bilateral talks on the sidelines with Chinese Defence Minister Admiral Dong Jun, an interaction closely watched after India and China completed disengagement at Depsang and Demchok last year. While the breakthrough eased immediate military tensions and was followed by renewed diplomatic engagement, New Delhi has continued to maintain that broader normalisation in ties will depend on sustained peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

# India urges early restoration of safe passage through Strait of Hormuz at UNSC amid west Asia crisis

NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing West Asia crisis, India has called for the immediate restoration of safe and unimpeded maritime passage through the Strait of Hormuz, warning that any disruption to vital waterways carries serious consequences for the global economy, energy flows, and humanitarian supply chains.

Addressing a United Nations Security Council (UNSC) open debate on 'The Safety and Protection of Waterways in the Maritime Domain', India's Charge d'affaires to the UN, Ambassador Yojna Patel, underscored that maritime security remains central to global stability and economic prosperity.

"As a major trading nation, India strongly deplores the recent targeting of commercial shipping through the Strait of Hormuz and the endangerment of innocent civilian crew members. Such actions have resulted in the tragic loss of precious lives of Indian seafarers and are unacceptable," Patel said. India reiterated that freedom of navigation through the strategic waterway must be upheld in line with international law.

"India remains deeply concerned about the safety and welfare of its seafarers. Any disruption, obstruction or purported closure of vital waterways has direct consequences for global economy, energy and humanitarian supply chains," she added.

India's Charge d'affaires to the UN, Ambassador Yojna Patel.

The remarks come against the backdrop of escalating tensions in the region, which have severely affected shipping through the Strait, a key oil transit route connecting the Persian Gulf with global markets. India, one of the top three suppliers of seafarers globally, contributes about 13% of the world's maritime workforce.

Ambassador Yojna Patel stressed that safeguarding seafarers, ensuring uninterrupted ship-



ping, and maintaining energy and humanitarian supply chains must remain priorities. "India aims to maintain secure waterways for the long-term global peace and inclusive growth," she said.

Highlighting immediate concerns, India called for steps to ensure safe navigation, continuity of supply chains, improved maritime situational awareness, and better communication mechanisms for seafarers. It also pointed to measures such as a 24/7 helpline established by the Directorate General of Shipping, which has handled thousands of calls and emails from seafarers worldwide.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, in his address, described the situation as a test of the international order.

He noted that disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz have significantly impacted global energy security, trade, and food supplies. "Let ships pass. No tolls. No discrimination. Let trade resume. Let the global economy breathe," Guterres said, urging all parties involved to ensure the reopening of the corridor. He also highlighted the plight of seafarers, noting that tens of thousands remain stranded at sea amid mounting risks. "These men and women are not parties to any conflict. They are civilian workers keeping the world supplied. Their safety, their well-being, and their rights must be protected - at all times, and in all waters," he said.

Drawing parallels with the Black Sea Initiative during the Ukraine conflict, Guterres sug-

gested that coordinated international efforts could help restore safe passage in the Strait.

According to the UN Trade and Development (UNCTAD), activity in the Strait has nearly come to a standstill, with ship transits plunging sharply in recent weeks.

The disruption is already affecting global oil and gas supplies and has begun to ripple across transport and logistics systems worldwide.

Reaffirming its position, India emphasised its commitment to a free, open, and rules-based maritime order in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), warning that threats to key maritime routes have far-reaching implications for international peace and security.

# INTERNATIONAL

## West Asia conflict: Iran says US is no longer in a position to 'dictate' terms to other independent nations



TEHRAN

Iran's defence ministry spokesman Reza Talaei-Nik said that the United States was no longer in a position to 'dictate' what other countries should do, as Washington weighed a new proposal from Tehran on unblocking the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has effectively sealed off the strategic waterway since early in the war with the United States and Israel, sending shockwaves through global energy markets and putting the strait at the centre of negotiations to end the conflict.

According to a state TV, Reza Talaei-Nik highlighted that Washington should accept that it must abandon its illegal and irrational demands.

While a ceasefire has halted the fighting between Iran, the US and Israel, talks on bringing a permanent conclusion to the conflict have been inconclusive. The proposal being considered in Washington would reported-



ly reopen the Strait of Hormuz - a vital conduit for global oil and gas shipments - as broader negotiations on the war continue.

Talaei-Nik, speaking ahead of a Shanghai Cooperation Organisation defence ministers' meeting, said Iran

was also ready to share its defensive military capabilities with independent countries, especially the member states of the SCO.

A woman walks past an anti-U.S. mural painted on the wall of the former U.S. embassy mocking Iran and United

States talks, in Tehran, Iran, Saturday, April 25, 2026.

Grateful for Russia's 'solid, strong positions' in support of Iran, says Araghchi after meeting Putin

Meanwhile, the Trump administration seemed unlikely Tuesday to accept Iran's offer to end the war and reopen the Strait of Hormuz if the US lifts its blockade on the country.

The proposal would postpone discussions on the Islamic Republic's nuclear program, something that US Secretary of State Marco Rubio appeared to rule out in a Fox News interview on Monday.

"We have to ensure that any deal that is made, any agreement that is made, is one that definitively prevents them from sprinting towards a nuclear weapon at any point," he said of the proposal, which was delivered to the US by Pakistan.

The White House said US President Donald Trump's national security team discussed the offer and Trump would

address it later.

The offer emerged Monday as Iran Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Russia, which has long been a key backer of Tehran. It was unclear what, if any, assistance Moscow might offer now.

## Ukraine says it shot down 33,000 Russian drones in March, a monthly record



KYIV

Ukraine used interceptor systems to shoot down more than 33,000 Russian drones of various types in March, a record monthly figure since Moscow launched its all-out invasion more than four years ago, Ukraine's defense minister claimed.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's domestically developed long-range attack drones struck a Russian oil refinery and terminal on the Black Sea for the third time in less than two weeks, prompting the evacuation of local people as a precautionary measure.

Ukraine has developed cutting-edge and battle-tested drone technology that has proved essential in holding back Russia's bigger army and has drawn military interest from around the world.

Interceptor drones as part of a comprehensive air defense system are now being sought by Middle East and Gulf countries amid the Iran war, according to

Ukrainian officials.

Ukraine is scaling up supplies of interceptor drones to thwart Russian aerial attacks, and its military has introduced a new command within the air force to boost the country's capabilities, Defense Minister Mykhailo Fedorov said in a post on Telegram late Monday.

Ukraine's offensive capabilities have also improved, with the Defense Ministry saying Tuesday that the country's forces have more than doubled the range of their deep-strike capabilities since Russia's February 2022 invasion.

At that time, Ukrainian forces were able to hit military targets about 630 kilometers (400 miles) away, it said. They are now striking targets as far as roughly 1,750 kilometers (1,100 miles) behind enemy lines, the ministry said in a statement.

That improvement has allowed Ukraine to hit Russian oil installations that provide crucial revenue for Moscow's war effort. It has also targeted manufacturing plants that sup-

ply Russia's armed forces.

Ukraine struck a Russian oil refinery at the Black Sea port of Tuapse for the third time this month in a coordinated operation involving multiple branches of the country's defense and security services, Ukraine's Unmanned Systems Forces said Tuesday.

The two strikes earlier this month destroyed 24 oil storage tanks and damaged four others, it said.

Independent verification of the claims was not possible.

People who live near the Tuapse refinery were being evacuated Tuesday, Krasnodar Gov. Veniamin Kondratyev said. He didn't provide any details about how many people were being evacuated or for how long.

The Russian Defense Ministry said Tuesday its air defenses overnight intercepted 186 Ukrainian drones over Russian regions, the annexed Crimea and the Black and the Azov seas.

In the Belgorod region on the border with Ukraine, three people were killed and three more were wounded in a drone attack, Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov said.

Russian drone attacks on Ukraine, meanwhile, killed three civilians and wounded five others, Ukrainian authorities said.

Two people were killed in the city of Chuhuiv in the north-eastern Kharkiv region, according to the head of the regional military administration Oleh Syniehubov.

A 40-year-old man died and five other men sustained injuries in Kryvyi Rih, the home town of Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy.

Another Russian attack on Konotop, in Ukraine's northern Sumy region, knocked out the city's power and water supply.

## Can It Change the System of Governance?



**T**he election process has concluded, and all eyes are now fixed on May 4, the day of counting. The contest in West Bengal has been particularly intense, marked by fierce political rivalry between the All India Trinamool Congress (TMC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Allegations have surfaced regarding the use of muscle power and attempts to influence the electoral environment. However, the presence of central forces such as the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) has been seen as a stabilizing factor in maintaining order during voting.

At this stage, it remains difficult to predict the outcome with certainty. While some analysts suggest that the BJP may significantly improve upon its previous tally of 77 seats, both parties have expressed confidence in securing a majority. The final verdict will only be clear once the results are declared. Even in the event of reduced numbers, a return to power for the TMC would still indicate substantial electoral support, even if it falls short of its previous performance.

Under Mamata Banerjee's leadership, the party has effectively cultivated a culture of local strongmen (often referred to as "dadas"). Issues such as industrial decline, rising debt, and high unemployment present a grim picture of governance. However, Mamata's welfare model provides immediate relief and masks deeper structural economic problems. Initiatives like the Lakshmir Bhandar scheme, the Banglar Yuva Sathi scheme, and the Krishak Bandhu scheme have extended her political patronage. Mamata has been adept at playing a dual role-projecting concern for the poor and marginalized on one hand, while allegations of corruption persist on the other. There have been persistent discussions around alleged corruption in the current administration, with accusations extending beyond local strongmen to include bureaucratic support. It is worth recalling that the Supreme Court recently remarked that no Chief Minister can interfere in an ongoing investigation or endanger democracy, as was seen in the case involving obstruction during raids at the PAC (Public Accounts Committee) premises. The bench of Justice Prashant Kumar Mishra and Justice N. V. Anjaria observed:

"No Chief Minister of any state can obstruct an ongoing investigation, endanger democracy, and then claim that it is a dispute between the state and the Centre. This act has been carried out by a person who, by chance, is the Chief Minister, and is putting the entire democratic



process at risk."

Referring to earlier judgments, the bench further remarked that no one could have imagined a situation where a sitting Chief Minister would forcibly enter the office of another agency. Justice Mishra added that even the framers of the Constitution could not have anticipated such "barbaric and undemocratic conduct" by a Chief Minister. Reports suggested that the action was intended to prevent the ED from seizing documents that could expose corrupt practices.

Some analysts believe that if the TMC returns to power with a reduced majority, it may adopt an even more aggressive approach. This could create a dangerous situation, as it might resort to various strategies to influence upcoming municipal elections, including encouraging strongmen to use violence. At least in West Bengal and other eastern states, the level of political awareness remains quite low, primarily due to the lack of comparative data to evaluate the performance of political parties, their promises, and the use of public funds. For instance, the Bengal government has filed numerous cases in the Supreme Court and spent large sums on top lawyers to challenge High Court rulings. Questions arise as to how public money can be spent at will, and why every case against the state must be taken to the Supreme Court. Is there no mechanism to prevent states from approaching the Supreme Court arbitrarily and spending crores of rupees? The fact that public awareness remains low does not reflect well on our democratic system. Politicians often exploit this gap for personal gain. There are differing views on whether marginalized communities possess the capacity for critical thinking or

can effectively participate in decision-making processes. While the poor are primarily concerned with basic needs-employment, food, shelter, and healthcare-they are also conscious of their freedoms and assert their rights to meet essential demands. However, policymakers and decision-makers often ignore ground realities and genuine needs.

In recent elections, the issue of capitalist exploitation has not received much traction. A recent World Tracker India 2026 report claimed that the richest 1% in India controls 40% of the country's wealth, while the top 10% controls nearly 60% of national income, whereas half the population survives on just 15%. The World Inequality Lab has described India as one of the most unequal countries in the world-even more unequal than during British rule. Unfortunately, inequality is rising rapidly, yet politicians rarely address this issue in their campaigns.

For effective governance, good administration is essential not only at the state level but also in local self-governance. It is unfortunate that in many panchayats, especially where education levels are low, conditions remain poor. Teacher recruitment is often not based on merit, and healthcare systems in villages and sub-divisions are in a dire state. Clearly, such conditions are not prevalent in states like Tamil Nadu, Kerala, or other southern states.

Change is urgently needed, and there are several ways to bring it about. One of the most important steps is to involve educated youth in political parties. Additionally, the authoritarian mindset within political organizations must change, and decisions should be made collectively by at least a small group of leaders at the top. Parties like the BJP or CPM, which are cadre-based, have systems where decisions are taken collectively rather than by a single individual, as is often perceived in the case of the TMC.

While citizens expect effective governance from both the Centre and the states, the most crucial priority should be addressing the needs of the poorest sections of society. Continuous improvements in rural infrastructure are necessary, but these efforts are often undermined when a large portion of allocated funds-sometimes as much as 50-60% in places like West Bengal-is allegedly siphoned off by party workers. Such practices not only erode public trust but also prevent benefits from reaching the poor.

Ultimately, whether better days will come depends on how effectively governments ensure accountability, curb corruption, and deliver tangible outcomes to those at the margins.

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