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**Gauhati High Court Stays POSH Committee Notice to GMCH Principal Pending Hearing**

**GUWAHATI**  
The Gauhati High Court has granted interim relief to Achyut Baishya, Principal of Gauhati Medical College and Hospital, by staying a notice issued by a Local Committee under the POSH Act directing him to appear in connection with a sexual harassment inquiry.

Baishya moved the High Court challenging the notice issued by the chairperson of the Local Committee constituted under the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, contending that the proceedings initiated against him were not legally maintainable.

In his writ petition filed against the Assam government and six departments, Baishya argued that since GMCH already has an Internal Complaints Committee (ICC) in place, any complaint under the POSH Act ought to have been referred to the ICC instead of the Local Committee.

The petition also questioned the maintainability of the complaint on the ground that the allegations relate to incidents that allegedly took place between November 2022 and July 2025 and were therefore barred by limitation under Section 9 of the POSH Act.

During the hearing, senior counsel appearing for the petitioner argued that the complaint had not been filed within the statutory time period prescribed under the law. The counsel also cited a Supreme Court judgment in support of the contention that complaints under the Act must be lodged within a stipulated time from the date of the alleged incident.

**WHO SAID WHAT**

**The people's blessings are the truest strength of democracy and the noblest source of public resolve.**  
~ Narendra Modi, PM

# Shillong Literary Festival 2026 Delhi Prelude Opens at Bikaner House Ahead of Main Meghalaya Event

**NEW DELHI**

The Delhi prelude to the Shillong Literary Festival 2026 opened on Friday at Bikaner House, bringing together prominent voices from literature, cinema, journalism, governance and the arts ahead of the main festival scheduled to be held in Shillong from November 12 to 14.

Organised by the Department of Tourism, Government of Meghalaya, the two-day event aims to showcase Meghalaya's literary and cultural traditions while expanding the national footprint of the state's creative ecosystem.

The festival also seeks to strengthen culture-driven tourism, encourage local talent and position Meghalaya as a growing centre for literature, music, arts and creative dialogue.

One of the key highlights of the opening day was a conversation between Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma and senior journalist Shekhar Gupta. The discussion focused on leadership, governance, youth aspirations, culture and the changing identity of the Northeast.

The conversation also touched upon Meghalaya's efforts to promote its creative economy and develop year-round

# Manipur Home Minister Visits Kamjong After Border Attack; 21 Civilians Allegedly Missing

**IMPHAL**

Manipur Home Minister Govindas Konthoujam on Saturday visited the violence-hit villages of Kamjong district where at least 21 civilians are alleged to have gone missing following a coordinated militant attack near the India-Myanmar border earlier this week.

The attack, which took place on May 7, targeted the remote villages of Wanglee, Namli and Z Choro along the sensitive border belt in Kamjong district. Several people were injured, houses were set ablaze and panic spread across the region after armed assailants reportedly stormed the settlements.

During his visit, the Home Minister interacted with villagers, local representatives and security officials to assess the ground situation and review security arrangements in the affected areas.

Speaking to reporters, Konthoujam said the government was treating the incident with utmost seriousness and that possible lapses in security deployment were being



examined.

"The government is always concerned about the protection of people and their property. There may have been certain security lapses and those are being looked into so that such incidents do not happen again," he said.

On allegations that the assault involved cross-border militants and amounted to foreign aggression, the minister said no official report con-

firmed such claims had yet been submitted to the government.

"If evidence of foreign aggression is established, the matter will be taken up with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs and the Defence Ministry," he added.

Konthoujam also stressed the need to expedite border fencing to curb infiltration and illegal cross-border movement. He said the fencing exercise was being car-

ried out on a "war footing" and that the completion target had been advanced from 2029 to 2028.

The minister, accompanied by other MLAs, also visited a shelter camp at Namlee village where hundreds of Myanmar nationals displaced by the ongoing conflict and political instability in Myanmar are currently taking refuge.

Sources said more than 1,000 Myanmar nationals have taken shelter in different parts of Kamjong district after crossing into border areas amid continuing unrest in the neighbouring country.

Local leaders alleged that militants based across the Myanmar border were responsible for the attack.

Machinmi Shinglai, Vice Chairman of Leimashen Chingsang, claimed that a combined group of Myanmar-based People's Defence Force (PDF) militants and KNIB militants carried out the assault on the villages.

"We were not expecting such an incident. According to information from villagers, a combination of

Myanmar-based PDF militants and KNIB militants attacked the villages," he alleged.

Shinglai further claimed that around 21 civilians were abducted during the violence and that there has been no information regarding their whereabouts so far.

"Among the missing is also a Tangkhul woman identified as Alisa from Tangpat village who was staying at Namli market," he said.

He also pointed to the lack of adequate security infrastructure in the area, stating that the nearest police station at Kasom Khullen is located nearly 25 to 30 kilometres away, while the Namli police outpost allegedly had no personnel deployed during the incident.

"We request immediate deployment of state security forces. People here feel safer with the state forces and stronger protection is urgently needed," he added.

Meanwhile, security forces have intensified combing, surveillance and domination operations across the surrounding border areas following the attack.

# Gaurav Gogoi Takes Responsibility for Assam Congress Defeat, Calls Poll Verdict "Extremely Disappointing"



**GUWAHATI**

any organisational restructuring and political strategy going forward.

"The results of the recent Assembly polls are extremely disappointing. I have said it before that I take full responsibility for it," Gogoi said.

The Congress MP stated that the party has already initiated an internal review process to assess the reasons behind its electoral setback in the 2026 Assembly elections.

According to him, consultations are being held with former MLAs, defeated candidates and newly elected legislators to gather feedback from the grassroots level and evaluate shortcomings in the party's campaign and organisational structure.

Gogoi said the leadership has also begun discussions with district-level functionaries and senior party leaders as part of a broader introspection exercise. "We would be trying to identify the real reasons which can explain this particular 2026 result over the next month," he said.

The remarks come amid growing introspection within the Indian National Congress following its heavy defeat in the Assam Assembly elections, where the BJP-led NDA retained power with a decisive mandate.

# Missing Teenager Found Dead in Manipur's Kakching District

**IMPHAL**



A 15-year-old boy who had been missing for nearly a week was found dead at a secluded forested location in Manipur's Kakching district, officials said on Friday.

The body was recovered from a forest area near Idega at Sora under Kakching Police Station on Thursday afternoon.

According to family members, the teenager, a resident of Thoubal district, had been staying with relatives in Sora. He reportedly left the house on May 1 and had remained untraceable since then.

Locals later discovered the body and alerted authorities, following which a team of Manipur Police along with forensic experts rushed to the spot and carried out a preliminary examination.

Police have registered a case of unnatural death and initiated further inquiry into the incident.

However, family members reportedly informed police that they do not intend to lodge a formal complaint. The body was later handed over to the family for the last rites after completion of necessary procedures.

# Northeast Panchayats Shine at National Panchayat Awards 2025, Assam Wins Three Honours

**NEW DELHI**

Panchayats from the Northeast registered a strong presence in the National Panchayat Awards 2025 announced by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, with Assam, Tripura, Mizoram and Sikkim securing national recognition across multiple categories for excellence in grassroots governance and rural development.

A total of 42 panchayats from 17 states and Union Territories have been selected for this year's awards, which recognise outstanding performance in areas such as sustainable development, sanitation, infrastructure, public service delivery and local governance. The awards ceremony will be held in New Delhi on June 3.

Assam emerged as one of the top performers from the region, bagging three national honours. New Napaam Gaon Panchayat was named the country's Best Gram Panchayat under the Nanaji Deshmukh Sarvottam Panchayat Satat Vikas Puraskar 2025 and will receive a cash award of Rs 1.5 crore.

In another major achievement for the state, Jumarmur Gaon Panchayat secured second place in the Clean and Green Panchayat category under the Deen Dayal Upadhyay Panchayat Satat Vikas

Puraskar 2025, while Hoogrijan Gaon Panchayat was awarded second rank in the Self-Sufficient Infrastructure category.

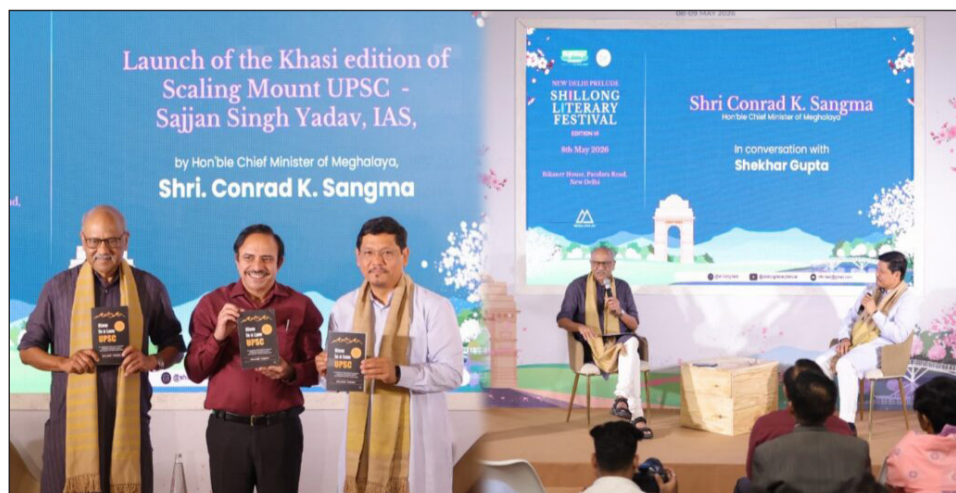
Tripura also recorded a strong performance, with Sepahijala being adjudged the country's Best District Panchayat and winning the top prize of Rs 5 crore.

Among the thematic category winners from the state, Kanchanbari secured first place in the Healthy Panchayat category, while Baikunthapur received recognition in the Women-Friendly Panchayat category.

From Mizoram, Kawrthah North won first prize in the Clean and Green Panchayat category, while Gyalshing Omchong from Sikkim secured third place in the Poverty-Free and Enhanced Livelihoods category.

The Ministry said the awards are aimed at encouraging and incentivising panchayats for exemplary work in local governance, sustainability, community participation and inclusive rural development under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan.

The strong showing by Northeastern states in this year's awards has been viewed as a significant boost for grassroots governance initiatives and rural transformation efforts across the region.



cultural events in the state.

Gupta praised the Shillong Literary Festival, describing it as one of the most distinctive literary gatherings in the country in terms of atmosphere, setting and audience engagement.

Speaking about the festival's evolution, Sangma said the initiative began on a

modest scale and has gradually developed into a recognised national calendar event.

"We started off small. Now we are seeing it grow. It has become a calendar event; and more importantly it is known throughout the country," he said, adding that the Delhi prelude was intended to introduce the festival to wider audiences

across India.

He further expressed hope that the event would eventually grow into an internationally recognised literary festival.

The Chief Minister also outlined the state government's broader vision centred on entrepreneurship, sustainable tourism, education reforms and the expansion of Meghalaya's creative economy.

Delivering the welcome address, Vijay Kumar D., Commissioner and Secretary of the state tourism department, said the festival has emerged as a platform celebrating the stories, literature, cinema and cultural identity of Meghalaya and the wider Northeast.

Referring to Shillong's cultural identity, he noted that the city transforms into a vibrant cultural destination during the cherry blossom season in November, recalling author Vikram Seth describing Shillong as the "Kyoto of the West" during his visit to the festival in 2024.

The inaugural sessions also highlighted cinema from the Northeast, featuring filmmakers Dominic Sangma and Pradip Kurbah in conversation with Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Suparna Sharma.

The speakers discussed the challenges and opportunities facing independent filmmakers from the region and praised Hello Meghalaya for providing a platform to showcase and monetise regional films.

The evening concluded with a special literary performance by veteran actor Naseeruddin Shah, who presented readings from *Beastly Tales from Here and There* along with selected works of American writer James Thurber.

The programme also featured readings from Khasi and Garo literary classics by scholars and writers, celebrating the linguistic and cultural heritage of the region.

The second day of the festival will include discussions on Northeast literature, ecology, food, translation and identity, with participation from noted personalities including Shobhaa De, Priyadarshini Raje Scindia, Sanjoy Hazarika, Namita Gokhale and Patricia Mukhina.

The opening day concluded with musical performances under the Chief Minister's Meghalaya Grassroots Music Program, turning the venue into a celebration of Meghalaya's music and cultural identity.



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## BIG PAN INDIA CONSOLIDATION OF BJP

The results of the five assembly elections available on Monday May 4 give unmistakable signs of further consolidation of the BJP pan India and fresh setbacks for the opposition INDIA Bloc. Two stalwarts of the opposition Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal and M. K. Stalin in Tamil Nadu have been defeated. While in Bengal the BJP victory is overwhelming, in Tamil Nadu, it is the new entrant Tamil film star Vijay of TVK who has emerged as the leading player in the DMK's electoral map by displacing the ruling DMK to the second position, thereby indicating the arrival of the third Dravidian party in the bipolar Tamil Nadu politics.

A close analysis reveals that the BJP has consolidated its continuing gains in Assam, has made inroads in Kerala by getting three seats in the assembly for the first time, has unseated the TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee in Bengal and is benefitting from the displacement of M K Stalin. BJP can very well play its political game in Tamil Nadu through its NDA led by AIADMK which has got third position after TVK and DMK. That way, BJP is getting a big opportunity to enter Tamil Nadu politics in a big way by fishing in troubled waters since it is up to TVK supremo Vijay whom he will choose for ministry formation.

As regards the Congress, the party led UDF has got back Kerala in 2026 assembly elections. It was expected as the earlier local polls in January this year already showed the dominating trend of the Congress. It is a normal party changing in Kerala. The CPI(M) led LDF has been defeated but its organisational base is intact and the party along with the CPI is in a position to fight and get back power in the next elections. But the worry for the Congress and the Left in Kerala should be that BJP is on an upswing in the state. After getting one seat in 2024 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP has got three seats in the assembly, as the latest trends show. The BJP is expected to make a big push in Kerala as a part of its southern offensive to increase its strength considerably before 2029 Lok Sabha polls. The Congress fought in Bengal in all 294 seats with the objective of strengthening its own independent base. Though the party has done very poorly, the voting percentage will show the extent of the party presence in all constituencies. That will help the Party to assess its political strategy in the coming days to fight the ruling BJP government in the state of West Bengal. In Assam, the Congress has got around 25/26 seats as against BJP's 98 as the trend shows. This was expected as the Congress high command failed miserably in forming a proper united front in Assam till the last moment. The BJP had its communalisation strategy and that worked. In Tamil Nadu, the Congress is dependent on DMK. The outcome was not expected. Some state Congress leaders even wanted to talk to Vijay before the polls. It will be seen whether the Congress sticks to DMK or resort to some rethinking about alliance. For BJP, the most ambitious achievement has been the ousting of the TMC government after its 15 years of rule in Bengal. BJP high command did everything to realise its goal to win over Bonga after Anga and Kalinga – that is Bihar Odisha. Both the Prime Minister and Home Minister spent many days in Bengal for meetings, roadshows and strategy sessions. In the election history of India, in no other state, such a large scale transfer of officials took place and many of these were done on the basis of the list supplied by the BJP leaders. Both TMC government as also the party were under seize by the entire central government machinery before and during the elections.

Apart from incumbency, this central agencies role also played a significant role in the defeat of the TMC in the elections. Once the full details of voting figures come, it will be easier to analyse, but it is apparent that the extensive deletion of the voters under SIR adversely affected the TMC. The TMC's own election machinery which made use of bogus voters in the last two elections, could not get dividends as a result of extensive patrolling and checking of the booths by the central forces. Certainly, there was a major consolidation of Hindu voters but that does not justify the rout of TMC in its South Bengal strongholds. Voting figures may show that there was some significant diversion of Muslim voters to the BJP candidates.

For TMC leadership, especially Mamata Banerjee, the challenge is massive. TMC's latest strength of below 100 as against nearly double its figure by BJP, along with the BJP state leadership determined to cripple the TMC machinery may create serious internal tussles in Bengal in the post election days. The central forces are stationed for the next 60 days but there impartiality is under doubt. TMC has to sort out series of its own problems in the backdrop of this defeat. How Mamata Banerjee deals with all these issues, that is to be watched. As regards the state CPI(M), the Party has got one seat, as the trends show. The Party contested 195 seats on its own. So far till 3 PM, the voting trends show that the CPI(M) got 4.23 per cent of the votes. It may go up finally but that also can never cross 6 per cent. That way, there has been little turnaround in the last five years in terms of percentage. But some young candidates have shown promise. The CPI(M) has to make a thorough review of the results, assess the real factors and prepare the organization for a harder battle against the BJP run new government. The battle lines have been changed. Taking into account the political environment, the Left has to collaborate with the TMC in the coming months to fight the BJP which will be more authoritarian in Bengal. INDIA Bloc has to convene immediately its meeting of the partners to review the election results and formulate a viable strategy for fighting the BJP and the Narendra Modi government. All the INDIA Bloc parties have been humbled by the massive power of the BJP and the central agencies. So they have to sort out their ego problem and join hands for the battle against the NDA and the Modi government. There are twists and turns in the country's politics. This post assembly election is also such a bad turn for INDIA Bloc just as the post Lok Sabha election period was a bad patch temporarily for the BJP. The leaders of INDIA Bloc have to think that time is running out. If they do not join hands and fight the saffron with all determination, India as a nation, will be in peril.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

**“It's better to look ahead and prepare than to look back and regret.” - Jackie Joyner-Kersey**

# SOMNATH AND BHARAT'S UNCONQUERABLE SPIRIT!



NARENDRA MODI

At the start of 2026, I had gone to Somnath for the Somnath Swabhiman Parv, marking a thousand years since the first attack on the Somnath Temple. Now, I will be back in Somnath on 11th May to mark 75 years since the inauguration of the restored Temple by the then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad. In less than half a year, it is a privilege to be attending two important milestones relating to Somnath and its journey from ruin to renewal or what we describe as from Vidhvans to Srijan.

Somnath gives us a civilisational message. The vast sea before it evokes timelessness. The waves tell us...that no matter how fierce the storms are or how turbulent the tides are, one can always rise again with dignity and strength. The waves return to the shore, as though reminding every generation that the spirit of the people can never be subdued for long.

Our ancient scriptures say that a Pradakshina of the divine Prabhava (Somnath) is equal to a Pradakshina of the whole earth itself! While people have come here to pray, they have also experienced the remarkable continuity of a civilisation whose flame could never be extinguished. Empires rose and fell, tides changed, history moved through conquest and upheaval, yet Somnath continued to endure in our consciousness.

It is time to remember the countless greats who stood firm in the face of tyranny. There were Lakulisha and Soma Sarman, who transformed Prabhava into a great centre of philosophy. Chakravarti Maharaja Dharasena IV of Vallabhi built the Second Temple there centuries ago. Bhima Deva, Jayapala and Anandapala will always be remembered for defending civilisational honour against invasions. It is said that Raja Bhoja too helped with the reconstruction. Karna Deva and Siddharaja Jayasimha played a vital role in restoring Gujarat's political and cultural strength. Bhava Brihaspati, Kumarapala Solanki and the Pashupata Acharyas rebuilt and sustained the shrine as a great centre of worship and learning. Vishaladeva Vaghela and Tripurantaka protected its intellectual and spiritual traditions. Mahipaladeva and Ra Khangar were instrumental in reviving worship after destruction. Punyashlok Ahilyabai Holkar, whose 300th birth centenary is being marked, ensured the continuity of devotion in the most difficult of times. There were the Gaekwads of Baroda, who safeguarded the rights of pilgrims. And of course, our soil is blessed to have nurtured brave personalities like Veer Hamirji Gohil and Veer Vegdaji Bhil, whose sacrifice and courage have become a part of Somnath's living memory.

In the 1940s, when the spirit of freedom swept across India and the foundations of a new republic were being laid under the leadership of

towering figures like Sardar Patel, one thing continued to trouble him deeply...the condition of Somnath. On 13th November 1947, during Diwali time, he stood next to the dilapidated ruins of the temple with sea-water in his hands and said, "On this auspicious day of the (Gujarati) New Year, we have decided that Somnath should be reconstructed. You, people of Saurashtra, should do your best. This is a holy task in which all should participate." On one clarion call of Sardar Patel, it was not only the people of Gujarat but also the people of the whole of India that responded enthusiastically.

Unfortunately, fate did not allow Sardar Patel to witness the fulfilment of the dream he had so passionately championed. Before the restored Somnath Temple could open its doors to devotees, he had departed from this world. Yet, his impact continued to be felt over the sacred shores of Prabhas Patan. His vision was championed by Shri KM Munshi, ably supported by the Jamsaheb of Nawanager. In 1951, when the Temple was complete, it was decided to call the President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad, for the ceremony. Overcoming strong objections from the then Prime Minister Pandit Nehru, Dr. Prasad graced the ceremony, thus making it even more special and historic.

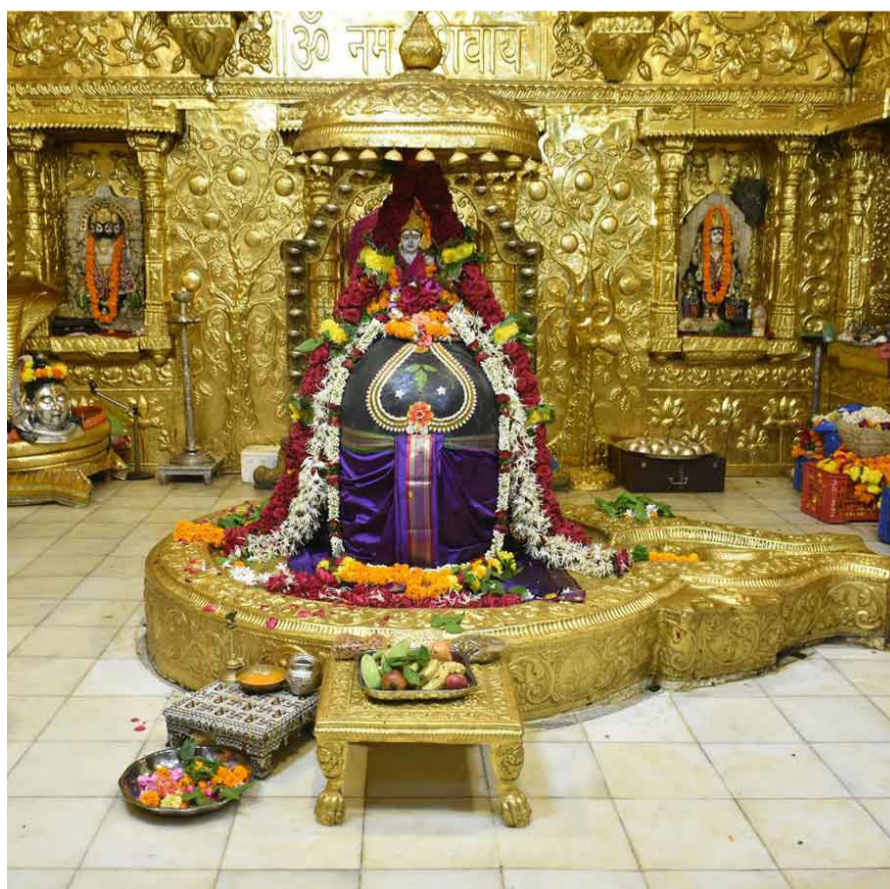
My mind also goes back to October 2001, when I had just taken over as Chief Minister. On 31st October 2001, the Jayanti of Sardar Patel,

Temple opened its doors. It also coincided with the 125th birth anniversary celebrations of Sardar Patel. The then Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the then Home Minister Shri LK Advani attended the programme.

During his speech on 11th May 1951, Dr. Rajendra Prasad said that the Somnath Temple proclaims to the world that anything with unparalleled faith and love cannot be destroyed. He expressed hope that this Temple will live in the hearts of people. He also said that the restoration of the Temple was a fulfilment of Sardar Patel's dream, but taking that spirit forward, it is important that we restore prosperity to the lives of people. These are important and inspiring messages he gave.

This is the path we have been walking for over a decade. I consider it my good fortune that, inspired by the principle of 'Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi', from Somnath to Kashi, Kamakhya to Kedarnath, Ayodhya to Ujjain, Trimbakeswar to Srisailem, our team has had the opportunity to equip our spiritual centres with the latest facilities while at the same time preserving their traditional character. This, along with efforts to improve connectivity, ensures more people can visit them. It boosts the local economy, secures livelihoods and deepens the spirit of 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat.'

The struggles and sacrifices of those who laid down their lives to



the Gujarat Government had the honour of organising a programme to mark 50 years since the Somnath

protect Somnath and those who rebuilt it time and again will never be forgotten. Countless individu-

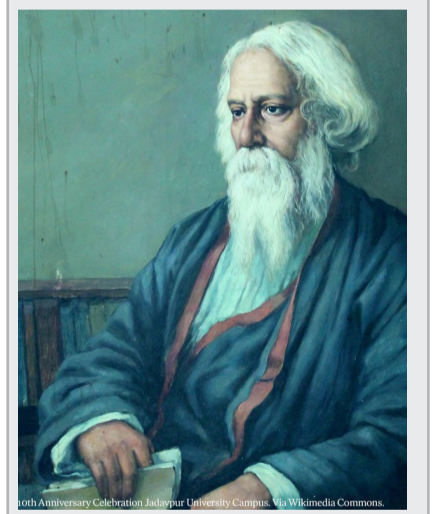
als from different corners of India contributed to restoring its glory. They saw every part of Bharat as sacred, bound together by a sense

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

**“I slept and dreamt that life was joy. I awoke and saw that life was service. I acted and behold, service was joy.”**

**Literature laureate Rabindranath Tagore dedicated his life to poetry, art and music, composing the Indian national anthem and the national anthem of Bangladesh.**

~ The Nobel Prize



of oneness that transcended geography. In a world often marked by divisions, this spirit of unity is more relevant than ever. Somnath will continue to stand tall in all its glory because the sense of unity and shared civilisational consciousness lives on in the hearts of every Indian.

As a tribute to this, remembering the extraordinary courage of a thousand years, there will be special Pujas at Somnath for the next thousand days. It is gladdening to see several people donating for these Pujas as well.

I urge my fellow Indians to travel to Somnath in this special time. When you stand on the shores of Somnath, let its ancient echoes speak to you. You will not only be overwhelmed by devotion but will also feel the strong pulse of a civilisational spirit that refuses to fade, that is unbroken and unyielding. You will experience Bharat's unconquerable spirit and understand why, despite every effort, our culture remained undefeated and you will have the opportunity to behold the vision of eternal triumph. It will surely be unforgettable.

Jai Somnath.  
(The author is the Prime Minister of India and is also the Chairman of the Shree Somnath Trust)

# “BJP or NDA in Purvanchal, Uttar Purvanchal from tomorrow”: Assam CM Sarma hails West Bengal oath-taking ceremony



GUWAHATI

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that the West Bengal swearing-in ceremony on May 9 would be attended by Chief Ministers from 21 states along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Speaking to reporters, Sarma highlighted that from tomorrow onwards, every state except Jharkhand from the Eastern and North-Eastern region would be led by the BJP or the NDA.

“Tomorrow the BJP government will take oath in West Bengal, and I will return back to Guwahati after taking part in the swearing-in ceremony... Tomorrow will be a victory day, and the Prime Minister, Union Minister

and Chief Ministers of 21 states will be present tomorrow. From tomorrow, the Chief Ministers of the BJP and the NDA will be in the entire region of Purvanchal and Uttar Purvanchal. Excluding Jharkhand, every state of Purvanchal and Uttar Purvanchal will be under the BJP or NDA rule... From tomorrow, the law & order situation in West Bengal will come to normalcy after the formation of the BJP government.”

BJP Legislative Party leader Suvendu Adhikari was elected the BJP Legislative Party Leader for the party in West Bengal, paving the way for him to become the first BJP Chief Minister in the history of the state. The announcement was made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who is serving as the Central Observer for the elec-

tion of the legislative party leader, after chairing a party meeting in Kolkata on Friday.

Adhikari is scheduled to take the oath on Saturday, coinciding with the birth anniversary of Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore.

Shifting his focus to his own state, Sarma also announced that a BJP Legislative Party will take place on May 10, following which a delegation will meet the Governor Lakshman Prasad Acharya to formally stake claim to form the government, leading to an oath-taking ceremony on May 12.

Sarma said that the Legislature Party will be attended by BJP leader JP Nadda and Haryana CM Nayab Singh Saini as Central Observers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be present for the oath-taking ceremony.

“On 10th, the BJP Legislative Party will meet in the presence of our Central Observer JP Nadda and Nayab Singh Saini... Once the leader is selected, it will be ratified by the NDA Legislative Party... Once the formalities are over, the Legislative Party will select a delegation which will meet the Governor and stake a claim to form the government. Once the Governor extends an invitation, the process of government formation will start immediately. On 12th May, at 11 AM, in the presence of PM Narendra Modi and other guests, the new government will take oath,” he said.

A day earlier, Sarma reviewed the arrangements for the swearing-in ceremony of the NDA 3.0 government at the Khanapara Veterinary Field in Guwahati.

## Assam Police Bust Alleged Telecom Tower Theft Network, Arrest 10 in Guwahati Operation

GUWAHATI

Assam Police arrested 10 alleged members of an organised crime network during a late-night operation in Guwahati, uncovering a suspected racket linked to telecom tower thefts, planned decoities, godown loot and highway-style hijacking operations across the state.

The operation was carried out by a team from Basistha Police Station in Khanapara and at Hotel Royal Inn, police said.

During the crackdown, investigators recovered and seized an air gun, a stolen Ericsson RRU-Huaxun telecom tower equipment unit, four vehicles and motorcycles, 11 mobile phones and several specialised tools allegedly used for cutting, dismantling and executing theft operations.

According to police, the gang had allegedly been operating across Guwahati and multiple districts of Assam, with several accused reportedly having prior involvement in organised criminal activities.

The arrested individuals were identified as Bipul Ali alias Boro (27), Ramjan Ali alias Dudula (27), Piro Ali alias Gaji Ali (35), Nasir Ali (21), Asadur Rahman alias Soni (23) and Sahidul Ali (27), all residents of Khandakarpara in Bhella under Barpeta district.

The remaining accused were identified as Abdul Basit alias Dangor (28) of Bhella in Barpeta district, Maktul Husain alias Xoru (25) of Tamulpur, Mohammad Ali alias Sahil (45) of Barpeta and Samsul Ali (29) of Sarthebari in Barpeta district.

Police said the seized materials included two C-clamps, three water pump pliers, an Allen key set, iron pipes, diagonal pliers, a lineman plier, six double-sided wrenches, rubber gloves, a hacksaw, steel ring spanner, screwdriver, hacksaw blades and a knife.

## ANCSU Warns of Agitation Over Delay in Kohima Science College Girls' Hostel Project

KOHIMA

The All Nagaland College Students' Union (ANCSU) on Friday warned the Nagaland government of launching an agitation if the prolonged delay in the construction of a proposed girls' hostel at Kohima Science College is not resolved within a week. Addressing the media in Kohima, ANCSU president Kivika Yeptho alleged that the state government's failure to utilise Rs 3.53 crore sanctioned by REC Limited under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative has jeopardised the project. According to the student body, the proposal for the hostel was submitted in 2022 through the Investment and Development Authority of Nagaland (IDAN), following which the project received approval in 2023. The first instalment of Rs 1.5 crore was reportedly released in April that year. However, the construction failed to begin after authorities proposed upgrading the facility into an “international standard”

hostel, leading to a revised project estimate of nearly Rs 6 crore, the union claimed. ANCSU alleged that despite three years having passed since the release of the initial funds, the sanctioned amount remains unutilised. The union further claimed that REC Limited has initiated steps to seek a refund owing to the expiry of the project timeline. Raising concerns over transparency, the students' body said no detailed blueprint or infrastructure plan for the revised project had been shared with the student community.

The union noted that female students at Kohima Science College are currently dependent on a lone 100-bed hostel, resulting in severe accommodation constraints.

Demanding immediate commencement of the project, ANCSU urged the government and the departments concerned to take urgent measures to safeguard the sanctioned funds and address the accommodation needs of female students.

## Dharmendra Pradhan Reviews Higher Education Expansion in Northeast

AGARTALA

Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday said he held a productive meeting with Ahmed Javed to discuss issues related to higher education and institutional development in the Northeast region. According to Pradhan, the discussions focused on strengthening higher education institutions, promoting academic excellence and enhancing the institutional capacity of universities across the Northeast. Describing Tripura University as one of the premier central universities in the region, the Union minister said the institution has a crucial role in advancing quality education, research, innovation and human resource development.

Pradhan further stated that the university's contribution would be vital in achieving the



vision of “Viksit Bharat 2047”, the Centre's long-term goal of transforming India into a developed nation through inclusive growth and educational advancement. The meeting also

underlined the need for collaborative efforts to strengthen educational infrastructure and expand academic and research opportunities for students across the Northeastern states.

The discussions come amid continued efforts by the Centre to improve access to quality higher education and promote institutional growth in the Northeast region.

## Tripura Board Announces 2026 Results; Madhyamik Pass Rate Rises to 84.18%, HS at 79.33%

AGARTALA

The Tripura Board of Secondary Education on Thursday officially declared the results of the 2026 Madhyamik, Higher Secondary, Alim and Fazil examinations during a press conference held at the board office in Agartala.

TBSE president Dhananjay Gan Chowdhury announced the results in the presence of board secretary Joydeep Bhattacharya and other officials.

According to the board, the Madhyamik examination recorded an overall pass percentage of 84.18 per cent this year, while the Higher Secondary examination registered a pass rate of 79.33 per cent.

Chowdhury said the Madhyamik examinations were conducted between February 26 and March 24, while the Higher Secondary examinations were held from February 25



to March 30. Evaluation of answer scripts began on April 6 and concluded on April 27.

A total of 32,184 students appeared for the Madhyamik examination, of whom 27,094 cleared the test successfully. In the Higher Secondary examination, 26,502 students appeared and 21,024 passed.

Among subdivisions, Karbook emerged as the top performer in the Madhyamik examination with a pass percentage of 97.91 per cent, followed by Jampuijala at 97.48 per cent and Udaipur at 91.61 per cent. Gandacherra recorded the lowest pass percentage at 68.81 per cent.

The board also stated that 271 schools achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in the Madhyamik examination. In the Alim examination, considered equivalent to Madhyamik, 141 students appeared and 128 passed, resulting in a success rate of 90.56 per cent. Similarly, in the Fazil examination, equivalent to Higher Secondary, 79 out of 84 students cleared the examination, recording a pass percentage of 94.04 per cent.

For the Higher Secondary examination, Jampuijala subdivision topped the state with a pass rate of 98.16 per cent. Belonia recorded 90.19 per cent, while Kanchanpur secured

90.05 per cent. Gandacherra again registered the lowest performance at 56.85 per cent.

The board said 62 schools achieved a 100 per cent pass rate in the Higher Secondary examination.

Addressing the media, Bhattacharya said the merit list would not be published immediately this year. He stated that the top 10 merit list would be released only after completion of the review process and declaration of the “Bachar Bachao” supplementary examination results.

He further informed that students would be able to collect their mark sheets from their respective schools within seven to eight days.

Students seeking review of their answer scripts have been asked to submit applications within seven days, while schools have been directed to forward the applications to the board office within ten days.

## Nagaland Study Reveals Wide Income Inequality Across Districts



KOHIMA

A recent study on income disparity in Nagaland has highlighted sharp economic inequality across the state, with the overall Gini coefficient recorded at 0.46, reflecting a considerable divide between high-income and low-income households.

The report was released by Sentyangar Imchen at the Nagaland Civil Secretariat on Thursday.

Conducted under the Centre's Support for Statistical Strengthening Sub-scheme of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, the study was carried out in collaboration with University of Hyderabad.

According to the report, rural Nagaland registered a Gini coefficient of 0.42, while urban areas recorded a slightly higher figure of 0.44, indicating that income inequality is prevalent across both rural and urban

populations with only a marginal variation.

The field survey was conducted between October and December 2024 and covered income-related data for the 2024 calendar year.

Researchers surveyed 4,396 households statewide, including 1,315 households across 60 urban wards and 3,080 households from 140 villages in rural areas.

The findings revealed a highly uneven distribution of income. The bottom 50 per cent of households account for only about 18 per cent of the total income generated in the state, while the top 5 per cent receive nearly 21 per cent of the gross income.

The disparity was also evident in monthly earnings. The top 5 per cent of households recorded an average monthly income of Rs 71,028, whereas the bottom 50 per cent earned an average of just Rs 1,639 per month. Among districts, Longleng emerged as the district with the highest income inequality, recording a Gini coefficient of 0.492. Phek reported the lowest level of inequality at 0.366.

In rural areas, Longleng again registered the highest inequality with a coefficient of 0.456, while Zunheboto recorded the lowest rural disparity at 0.330.

Urban Longleng also topped the list in urban income inequality with a Gini coefficient of 0.509, whereas Zunheboto recorded the lowest urban inequality at 0.359.

## NHPC Commissions Fourth Unit of Subansiri Lower Project, Operational Capacity Reaches 1,000 MW

GUWAHATI

State-run NHPC has commenced commercial operations of the fourth 250 MW unit of the Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project, taking the project's total operational capacity to 1,000 MW - half of its planned 2,000 MW generation target.

According to an official statement issued by NHPC, the fourth unit began commercial operation at midnight on May 8, adding 250 MW of clean energy to the national grid.

The Subansiri Lower Hydroelectric Project, designed as an 8x250 MW facility on the Subansiri river, is one of the largest hydropower projects in the Northeast. The remaining four units are expected to be commissioned in phases within the targeted timelines.

Construction of the project began in January 2005 after forest clearance was granted in October 2004. However, work remained suspended between December 2011 and October 2019 following widespread protests in Assam over concerns relating to dam safety, downstream impact and ecological risks.



After legal challenges before the National Green Tribunal were resolved, construction resumed on October 15, 2019, with several design modifications incorporated into the project.

Initially scheduled for completion by December 2012, the project witnessed significant delays and cost escalation. The estimated project cost rose from Rs 6,285 crore in 2002 to nearly Rs 27,000 crore at completion.

A.N. Mohammed, consultant for the project, said the hydropower project had been implemented in line with statutory norms and government guidelines with emphasis on environmental protection, safety and socioeconomic welfare.

He stated that the project underwent extensive scientific studies and regulatory reviews to address environmental, geological and social concerns associated with the Subansiri-Brahmaputra river system.

According to Mohammed, the project design incorporates enhanced seismic safety measures, sediment management systems and year-round environmental flow releases to maintain downstream river ecology. He added that flood moderation measures had also been integrated to improve downstream safety during monsoon periods.

Addressing concerns over displacement, Mohammed said no habitation would be submerged by the

project and that affected agricultural land was being compensated under the Arunachal Pradesh Rehabilitation and Resettlement Policy.

He further said compensatory afforestation was being carried out in degraded forest areas of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh through CAMPA funds. Riverbank protection works, real-time flood forecasting systems and early warning mechanisms have also been established to strengthen downstream safeguards, he added.

NHPC Chairman and Managing Director Bhupender Gupta thanked the Union Ministry of Power and the governments of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh for their support in executing the project.

Gupta said the successful commissioning reflected NHPC's technical expertise and would contribute significantly to India's clean energy goals and long-term energy security.

Apart from power generation, NHPC stated that investments have also been made in local community development through initiatives in education, healthcare, drinking water supply, livelihood support and skill development in project-affected areas of Assam and Arunachal Pradesh.

The company added that electricity generated from the project would be shared among beneficiary states, with host states receiving free power benefits under existing policy provisions.

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## Abhishek Banerjee alleges poll irregularities in Bengal; accuses EC of 'partisan conduct'



KOLKATA

Questioning the credibility of the electoral process in the West Bengal Assembly polls, senior TMC leader Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday accused the Election Commission of acting in a "partisan" manner and alleged large-scale irregularities during the elections won by the BJP.

In his first social media post after the declaration of results, Banerjee said the TMC would continue to be a "strong, vocal and uncompromising opposition" both in West Bengal and at the Centre.

"Throughout this entire process, we witnessed what we believe was deeply partisan conduct by several government agencies as well as the Election Commission of India," Banerjee said in a post on X.

"Democratic institutions that are meant to function impartially appeared compromised, raising serious

concerns about the fairness, credibility and transparency of the electoral process in West Bengal," the Diamond Harbour MP wrote.

Stating that the TMC fought an extremely difficult election where "nearly 30 lakh genuine voters were allegedly disenfranchised from the electoral rolls," he said, "I will stand shoulder to shoulder with every Trinamool worker and supporter in this fight to ensure that truth prevails and that both governments now work genuinely in the interests of the people of West Bengal."

Banerjee also alleged a mismatch of control units and irregularities in the handling and movement of EVMs used in the polls.

"Several disturbing incidents have left millions of people questioning whether the true mandate of the people has been respected," he said.

The TMC national general secretary demanded the release of CCTV footage from

counting centres and a transparent count of VVPAT slips.

Stating that democracy can only survive when electoral institutions inspire trust and confidence among citizens, he said, "Unfortunately, what we have witnessed has deeply shaken that trust."

"Reports of post-poll violence, attacks on party offices, intimidation of our party workers and threats against supporters are deeply alarming and unacceptable in a democratic society. Many dedicated Trinamool workers and supporters who fought tirelessly on the ground have allegedly faced targeted attacks and have been forced to flee their homes out of fear and insecurity," he wrote.

"No political worker in a democracy should ever have to choose between their safety and their political beliefs," Banerjee stated.

The BJP had similarly alleged attacks on its workers after the 2021 West Bengal assembly elections, following which the Calcutta High Court ordered a CBI probe into the violence.

Banerjee said the TMC would continue its fight for "democracy, constitutional values and the rights and dignity of the people" under the leadership of Mamata Banerjee.

Urging party workers to remain united, he said anyone facing intimidation or violence should contact him directly.

"I will do everything within my capacity to ensure their safety and security and pursue every available legal and democratic remedy," the TMC MP said.

## Suvendu Adhikari sworn in as West Bengal's first BJP CM

KOLKATA

BJP's Suvendu Adhikari has been sworn in as the Chief Minister of West Bengal, marking the beginning of a new political era for the state.

Governor RN Ravi administered the oath of office and secrecy to Adhikari at a grand ceremony held at Kolkata's Brigade Parade Grounds in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union ministers, chief ministers of NDA-ruled states and senior BJP leaders.

BJP legislators Dilip Ghosh, Agnimitra Paul, Ashok Kirtania, Nisith Pramanik and Kshudiram Tudu were also sworn in as state ministers.

Earlier in the day, Adhikari described the occasion as the fulfilment of the "dreams of our founding fathers."

"A historic dawn for West Bengal indeed. It is a moment of profound pride and jubilation to welcome visionary Leader PM Narendra Modi Ji to the City of Joy. Today, as we witness the swearing-in ceremony of the first-ever BJP government in West Bengal since Independence, we fulfil the dreams of our founding fathers," Adhikari wrote in a post on X.

"Today marks the end of decades of misrule and the beginning of a double-engine era of development, peace, and prosperity. The era of 'Sonar Bangla' officially begins," he said.

Adhikari was elected as the leader of the BJP legislature party in West Bengal on Friday, paving the way for him to become the first BJP chief minister of the state. The announcement was made by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the presence of newly elected BJP MLAs and senior party leaders.

BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari takes the oath, as he becomes West Bengal's Chief Minister, at Brigade Parade Ground in Kolkata, West Bengal.

Thousands of BJP supporters from across the country and abroad, including from north



Bengal and neighbouring states such as Jharkhand, poured into Kolkata on Saturday to witness the ceremony.

Groups of supporters carrying BJP flags and saffron banners gathered at different points across the city since morning before moving towards the venue amid chants of "Jai Shri Ram" and slogans hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Adhikari.

"It is a historic day. We have come to witness West Bengal getting independence from the clutches of the TMC," a BJP supporter who travelled from Jharkhand said while marching towards the venue with a group of party workers.

A middle-aged man clad in dhobi-pyjama said he had arrived from Canada to witness the historic occasion in person.

The sprawling Brigade Parade Grounds were a festive look with folk performances and devotional music setting the tone for the swearing-in ceremony.

Traditional Chhou dance troupes and tribal dance performances entertained the gathering as supporters continued to stream into the venue.

The backdrop of the main stage showcased West Bengal's cultural heritage, featuring depictions of Dakshineswar temple, Goddess Durga and other traditional motifs asso-

ciated with the state's identity. Supporters arrived beating drums and dancing in celebration, with many treating the occasion as a political festival marking a change of guard in the state.

Adding a local flavour to the event, packets of 'jhal muri' were distributed among supporters at the venue.

The popular Bengali snack had recently gone viral after Modi tasted 'jhal muri' at a roadside shop in Jhargram following an election rally during the campaign trail.

The BJP secured 207 seats in the 294-member Assembly, ending the Trinamool Congress 15-year rule in the state.

## INTERNATIONAL

### Russia, Ukraine trade major attacks ahead of Kremlin's WWII celebrations

MOSCOW

Russia and Ukraine launched major attacks on each other on Friday, with a two-day unilateral ceasefire that Moscow had declared around its World War II commemorations appearing to be in tatters.

"On the Russian side, there was not even a token attempt to cease fire on the front," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said, as Ukraine's air force reported downing 56 drones in the last hours.

"As we did over the past 24 hours, Ukraine will respond in kind today as well," Zelensky wrote on X.

Russia lobbied "more than 850 strikes with drones of various types" along with more than 140 strikes on Kyiv's frontline positions, Zelensky said.

Russia's defence ministry said it had downed 264 Ukrainian drones overnight, the first hours of the Kremlin's unilateral two-day ceasefire.

Ukraine had blasted Russia's temporary truce as a propaganda measure to protect the victory parade on May 9 -- one of the most important patriotic events for Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Hours before Russia's ceasefire began, Zelensky warned allies of Russia against attending the parade.

"We have also received messages from some states close to Russia, saying that their representatives plan to be in Moscow... A strange desire... these days. We do not recommend it," Zelensky said.

"They want from Ukraine a permit to hold their parade so that they can go out onto the square safely for one hour once a year, and then go on killing," the Ukrainian leader added.



Zelensky had earlier proposed a counter-truce from May 6 that had gone unheeded.

With Moscow doubling down on its attacks on Ukraine in the last days, Kyiv has struck back.

The Russian defence ministry had, in turn, urged residents and diplomats to leave Kyiv, threatening a potential retaliatory strike in case of a Ukrainian attack during its ceasefire.

"We remind the civilian population of Kyiv and staff at foreign diplomatic missions once again of the need to leave the city in good time," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Britain's foreign office said Moscow's threats were "unwarranted, irresponsible and completely unjustified", adding that any attack on a diplomatic mission would be a further escalation in the war.

German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl told Bloomberg TV that Berlin will not pull its embassy staff

out from Kyiv.

Zelensky will also stay "in Kyiv" over the weekend, a senior source close to the Ukrainian president told AFP on condition of anonymity.

During the truce, Russia's defence ministry said it would "completely" halt fire along the frontline and stop long-range strikes on military infrastructure. If Ukraine did not follow suit, Moscow would respond "in kind", the ministry said.

Russia marks World War II Victory Day each year on May 9 with a massive military parade through Red Square. Putin has made memory of the war a central narrative of his 25-year rule and invoked it to justify his invasion of Ukraine. In recent weeks, Kyiv, which has expanded its drone capabilities, has stepped up strikes on Moscow and deep inside Russia, hitting targets hundreds of miles from Ukraine.

The attacks have created unease in Russia ahead of the parade, normally a grand show of force displaying tanks and missiles, which marks the Soviet victory over Nazi Germany. Moscow has said it will omit military hardware from the procession for the first time in almost 20 years. The number of foreign guests has also shrunk -- only the leaders of Belarus, Malaysia and Laos will attend, alongside leaders of two Russia-backed Georgian breakaway republics not recognised by the UN, according to the Kremlin. Moscow has also started intermittent city-wide internet shutdowns lasting until Saturday. Talks on ending what has spiralled into Europe's worst conflict since World War II have shown little progress and have been sidelined by the Iran conflict. Moscow is demanding that Ukraine withdraw from four regions it claims as its own -- terms seen as unacceptable to Kyiv.

## Alarmed ASEAN leaders discuss a crisis plan to mitigate backlash from Middle East war



CEBU

Southeast Asian leaders met in an annual summit Friday under intense pressure to mitigate the impact on their people and economies from the Iran war, which one top minister said, "should not have occurred in the first place."

The alarm by the heads of state of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations is underscored by their decision to focus discussions on a contingency plan to ensure their fast-growing region, which imports most of its oil and gas from the Middle East, will have stable fuel and food supplies.

The Philippines is hosting the summit on the central island province of Cebu. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the summit to be stripped of the traditional pomp and pageantry in keeping with the economic headwinds worldwide.

A key dilemma of the ASEAN leaders is how to carry out large-scale evacuations from the Middle East, where more than a million of their citizens work and live, if widespread hostilities flare up again.

Several Southeast Asian citizens have been killed since the United States and Israel

launched military strikes on Feb. 28 against Iran. The hostilities have continued sporadically despite a month-old ceasefire, especially in the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

A draft of a joint declaration by the leaders which outlines a contingency plan and which was seen by The Associated Press, called on the regional bloc's 11 state members to share information and strengthen coordination with international organizations "to ensure the safety and welfare of ASEAN nationals in affected areas."

Known for their conservative and careful rhetoric, top delegates to the ASEAN summit avoided blunt expressions of their disappointment over the continuing hostilities, but Thailand's foreign minister, Sihasak Phuangketkeow, was more emphatic and called for the current ceasefire between the U.S. and Iran to be indefinitely extended and the safe passage of ships through the Strait of Hormuz assured.

"This war should not have occurred in the first place," Sihasak told AP in a brief interview and added that all ASEAN states were alarmed. "We don't know what the objectives are right?"

"The peace talks seem to be moving but we want the war

to end," Sihasak said.

ASEAN's contingency plan calls for actions including the ratification possibly this year of an agreement that will pave the way for coordinated emergency fuel sharing, planning a regional power grid, diversifying the region's sources of crude oil, promoting the use of electric vehicles and studying the use of new technologies, including civilian nuclear energy.

Despite the focus on the Middle East and their shortened summit to cut costs, the leaders will take up major regional flash points, including the South China Sea territorial disputes involving Beijing, a five-year civil war in Myanmar and a recent border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia.

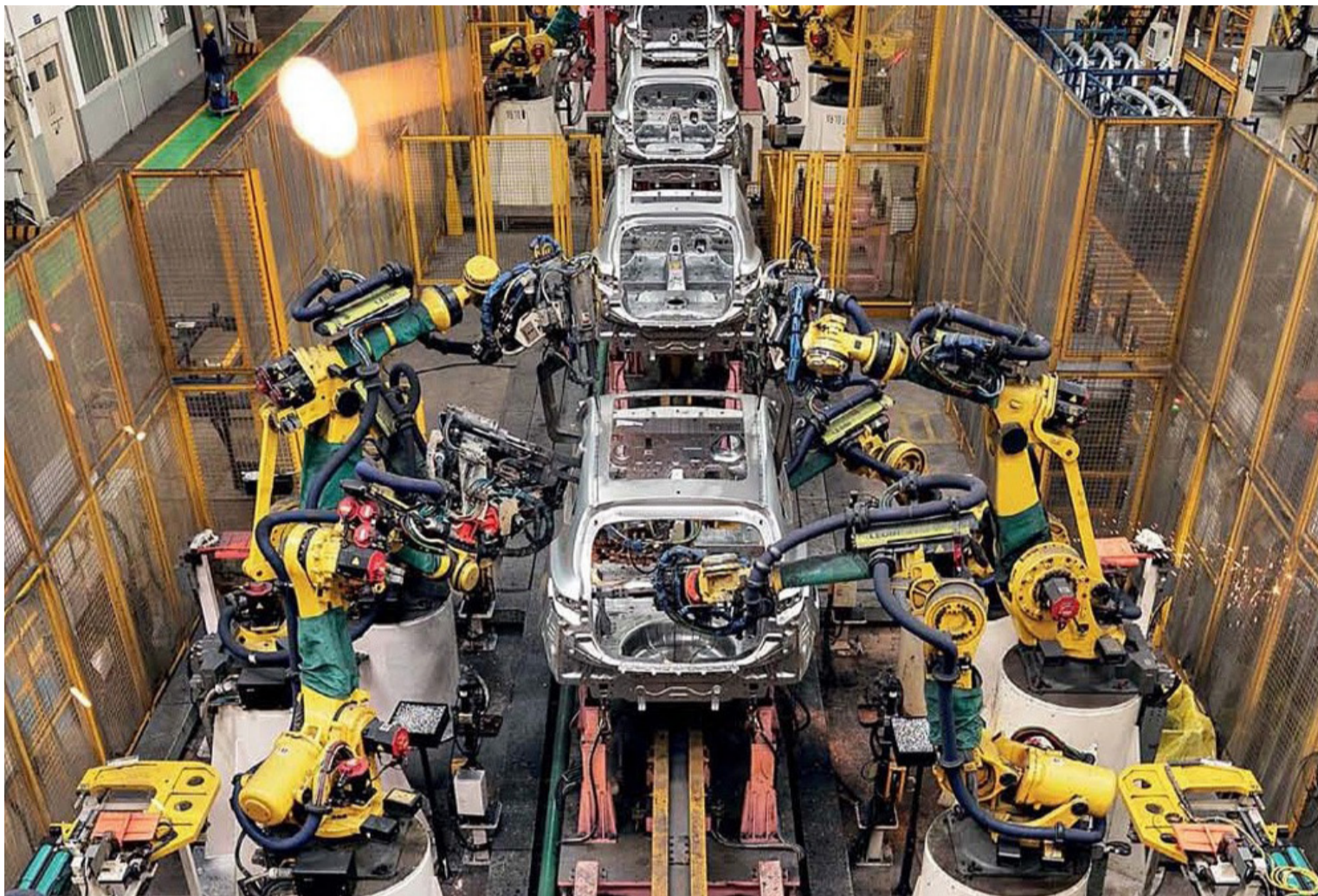
In a separate statement by the leaders on maritime issues that will be made public after the summit, they pledged to "endeavour to conclude the negotiation of an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea."

Negotiations on the proposed non-aggression pact by the ASEAN and China have dragged on for more than a decade as increasingly tense confrontations intensified in recent years, particularly between Chinese and Philippine coast guard and naval forces.

That has stoked criticisms of ASEAN as an ineffective "talk shop," where leaders show up each year in their native shirts and pose for a group handshake to project unity despite deep divisions.

ASEAN members Brunei, Malaysia, Vietnam and the Philippines are involved in the decades-long territorial standoffs in the South China Sea. The other members of the regional bloc are Cambodia, East Timor, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Singapore and Thailand.

# Boosting Manufacturing Remains India's Biggest Economic Challenge



**T**he Bharatiya Janata Party's strong electoral performance in states such as West Bengal, Assam and Puducherry has increased pressure on the Centre to deliver stronger economic results, particularly in manufacturing, employment generation and investment. Against this backdrop, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's recent emphasis on strengthening domestic manufacturing and reducing import dependence has gained renewed significance.

The Finance Minister believes that India can accelerate economic growth by leveraging strong domestic demand and household consumption. She has urged Indian industry to step forward and manufacture products that are still being heavily imported, especially intermediate industrial goods and technology-intensive components.

Her remarks come at a time of growing global economic uncertainty. Economists have warned that weak monsoon conditions and the possible impact of El Niño could adversely affect rural incomes, agricultural output and consumer spending. As a result, experts argue that the government must move beyond short-term demand management and adopt a long-term industrial strategy aimed at strengthening domestic manufacturing capabilities.

According to analysts, one of India's biggest structural weaknesses continues to be the slow growth of its manufacturing sector. India's share in global manufacturing remains below 3 per cent, while China commands nearly 30 per cent. Although the government's Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes were launched to strengthen domestic industry, much of the investment has remained concentrated in assembly operations rather than full-scale manufacturing. In many sectors, raw materials and key components continue to be imported from China. As a result, India's exports are rising alongside a corresponding increase in imports, exposing the limited depth of domestic industrial capacity. This dependence is particularly visible in sectors such as electronics, machinery, batteries, solar modules, pharmaceutical ingredients and specialty chemicals. A report by trade research body GTRI observed that China has

effectively become an integral part of India's industrial supply chain. From electronic parts to renewable energy equipment and pharmaceutical inputs, India still lacks adequate alternative sources in several strategic sectors. This growing dependence has also created a strategic contradiction for India. On one hand, New Delhi seeks to counter China's geopolitical influence in the Indo-Pacific region; on the other, Indian

industry remains deeply dependent on Chinese manufacturing ecosystems. Consequently, the political narrative of "Atmanirbhar Bharat" or self-reliant India continues to face major practical hurdles. Concerns are also mounting over foreign investment trends. Foreign investors have withdrawn substantial amounts from Indian equity markets during the first four months of the current calendar year. Rising crude oil prices due to tensions in West Asia and tighter monetary policies by the US Federal Reserve have weakened investor confidence globally. The impact is now being felt on the Indian rupee, which has continued to depreciate against the US dollar. The weaker currency

has increased the cost of imports, especially crude oil, natural gas, fertilisers and industrial raw materials, thereby placing additional strain on the economy.



has increased the cost of imports, especially crude oil, natural gas, fertilisers and industrial raw materials, thereby placing additional strain on the economy.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has also warned that India faces rising risks from high inflation, widening fiscal and external deficits, and slowing economic growth. Any prolonged disruption in energy and fertiliser supplies could further weaken economic stability. Economic experts argue that India's manufacturing slowdown is linked not only to limited technological advancement but also to the inability to achieve economies of scale. Many domestic products are still unable to compete with imported goods in terms of both price and quality. As a result, Indian industry has struggled to establish globally competitive manufacturing ecosystems. At the same time, recent partnerships with foreign companies and fresh industrial investments have provided some optimism. Analysts believe that stronger focus on technology, innovation, research, skilled manpower and long-term industrial planning could gradually transform the sector.

India's economic challenges are also closely tied to its diplomatic balancing act. Maintaining energy ties with Iran while preserving relations with Western powers has become increasingly important. Similarly, despite geopolitical competition with China, India continues to require stable economic and trade relations with Beijing because of its heavy industrial dependence. Experts say India's biggest challenge now lies in converting political ambition into real economic capability. In the years ahead, slogans and political messaging alone will not be enough; sustainable manufacturing growth and industrial competitiveness will determine the country's long-term economic strength.

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