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**PERSPECTIVE**

**Stick to the plan, not your mood**

**Ranjeet Kumar Dass Unanimously Elected Speaker of 16th Assam Legislative Assembly**

**GUWAHATI**  
Senior BJP leader Ranjeet Kumar Dass was unanimously elected Speaker of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly on Wednesday, marking his second term in the constitutional post. Pro tem Speaker Chandra Mohan Patowary informed the House that three nominations had been submitted in support of Dass and that no other candidate had filed nomination papers for the position.

"As there is no other nomination, I declare Ranjeet Kumar Dass as the Speaker of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly," Patowary announced in the House.

Dass had previously served as Speaker in 2016 after the Bharatiya Janata Party formed its first government in Assam.

His return to the Speaker's chair follows a long political career that also included serving as a cabinet minister during the first term of Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma between 2021 and 2026.

Representing the Bhowanipur-Sorbhog constituency, Dass has been elected to the Assam Assembly for four consecutive terms since 2011. He has also held key organisational positions within the BJP, including serving as president of the party's Assam unit.

Congratulating Dass on his election, Sarma said the Assembly would greatly benefit from his experience and understanding of legislative functioning.

In a post on X, the chief minister described Dass's journey as one emerging from a humble background and highlighted his contributions across journalism, public service and politics.

**WHO SAID WHAT**



**Earth is Tiny. The Future is Space. ~ Elon Musk, American Entrepreneur**

**PM Modi Presents Manipur's Shirui Lily stole, Assam's Eri Silk Stoles to Italy PM Meloni**



**NEW DELHI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi presented handcrafted stoles inspired by Manipur's iconic Shirui Lily and Assam's traditional Eri silk to Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni during their interaction, highlighting India's rich textile heritage and cultural symbolism through diplomacy.

The Shirui Lily silk stole, inspired by Manipur's rare state flower, drew attention to the Northeast's indigenous artistry and traditions. The Shirui Lily grows exclusively on the Shirui Kashong Peak in Manipur's Ukhrul



district and is deeply revered by the Tangkhul Naga community as a symbol of purity, identity and cultural pride.

Featuring the flower's distinctive pale pinkish-white, bell-shaped bloom, the handwoven stole reflected the folklore and craftsmanship of the Tangkhul people while showcasing the intricate textile traditions of Northeast India.

Beyond its regional significance, the gift also carried a broader cultural resonance linking India and Italy. The lily has long held symbolic importance

in Italian culture, often representing purity, grace and artistic refinement and featuring prominently in Renaissance art and architecture.

Alongside the Shirui Lily stole, Modi also gifted Meloni an Eri silk stole, spotlighting Assam's celebrated handloom legacy and sustainable textile practices.

Often referred to as Assam's "peace silk," Eri silk is known for its soft texture, warmth and eco-friendly production process. Unlike conventional silk, Eri silk is produced without harming the silkworm, making it one of the world's most ethically produced natural fibres. Widely used in traditional Assamese garments and handwoven fabrics, Eri silk is valued for its durability, thermal properties and breathable, moisture-absorbing qualities, helping it gain recognition beyond the Northeast and international appreciation for sustainable fashion.

Officials said the exchange reflected more than a diplomatic courtesy, serving as a form of cultural storytelling that celebrated India's handloom heritage while underscoring shared values of tradition, craftsmanship and sustainability between India and Italy.

**Nitin Gadkari Reviews 4,178 Km of National Highway Projects in Assam, Calls for Faster Execution**



**GUWAHATI**

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday reviewed the progress and maintenance quality of National Highway projects spanning 4,178 kilometres across Assam and directed officials to expedite execution while ensuring higher construction standards.

According to an official statement, the high-level review meeting was initiated following feedback and concerns regarding highway conditions and project implementation received through media reports and social media platforms.

During the meeting, Gadkari emphasised the need to accelerate on-ground execution of ongoing projects and strengthen quality monitoring mechanisms to improve road durability and

overall riding comfort. The Union minister also instructed officials to adopt modern construction technologies and engineering practices aimed at enhancing the long-term performance of highway infrastructure and reducing recurring maintenance issues. With the monsoon season approaching, Gadkari stressed the importance of advance preparedness measures to minimise disruptions and ensure commuter safety along critical highway stretches across the state.

Officials were directed to prioritise strengthening drainage systems, carrying out slope protection works and setting up rapid response mechanisms to tackle possible weather-related disruptions during the monsoon. The review assumes significance as multiple National Highway expansion and connectivity projects are currently underway in Assam as part of broader efforts to improve road infrastructure and regional connectivity in the Northeast. The Centre has been focusing on upgrading highway networks in Assam to improve transportation efficiency, boost trade and enhance connectivity between remote regions and major urban centres.

**Union Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi Reviews Development Projects in Nagaland's Longleng**

**KOHIMA**

Union Minister for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Jitan Ram Manjhi on Wednesday stressed the need for effective implementation of MSME and centrally sponsored schemes while reviewing developmental activities in Nagaland's Longleng district.

Addressing officials from various departments during a review meeting, Manjhi urged officers to work in coordination to ensure welfare schemes and development programmes reach people at the grassroots level and contribute to the district's economic growth.

The meeting was chaired by Longleng Deputy Commissioner and District Planning and Development Board (DPDB) vice-chairman W. Manpai Phom and attended by district officials along with members of the visiting central team. Officials from different departments presented updates on ongoing projects, achievements, challenges and areas requiring additional support and coordination.

During the interaction, members of the central team said the review exercise was being conducted under the directives of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to assess developmental progress and ground realities in the district. They said findings and feedback collected during the visit would be compiled and submitted to the Prime Minister's Office and relevant Union ministries for further action.

Later, Longleng MLA and DPDB chairman A. Pongshi Phom thanked the visiting delegation for engaging with district officials and the public, stating that the visit would further strengthen development initiatives in the district.

He appreciated the Centre's efforts in implementing schemes aimed at improving infrastructure, livelihoods, economic opportunities and public welfare, adding that inclusive development was gradually reaching remote areas.

Highlighting the impact of centrally sponsored schemes, Pongshi Phom said programmes in sectors such as agriculture, health, education, rural development, solar energy, industries, electricity and social welfare were contributing to improved living standards in Longleng.

He also pointed to the role of the Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) in helping youths start businesses and generate employment opportunities. In addition, he said the Nagaland government's Chief Minister's Micro Finance Initiative had provided significant support to private enterprises and rural livelihoods.

During the meeting, officials were directed to furnish detailed information on the implementation and current status of centrally sponsored schemes in the district. Discussions were also held on whether Longleng falls under the Aspirational District Programme. After the review, Manjhi appreciated the efforts of the district administration and various departments in implementing welfare and development schemes and called for stronger inter-departmental coordination to ensure timely execution of projects. Later in the day, the Union minister held another review meeting with state officials of the National Small Industries Corporation, Khadi and Village Industries Commission, Coir Board and MSME-Development and Facilitation Office at the Police Guest House.

**Security Forces Recover IEDs, Arms Near Indo-Myanmar Border in Manipur**

**IMPHAL**

Joint security forces have recovered improvised explosive devices (IEDs), firearms and communication equipment during a search operation near the Indo-Myanmar border in Manipur's Tengenoual district, officials said on Thursday.

The operation was carried out jointly by the Indian Army, the Assam Rifles and the Manipur Police following specific intelligence inputs about the movement of suspected anti-social elements near Border Pillars 72 and 73 under Moreh Police Station.

Officials said the search operation was conducted with the assistance of a sniffer dog team. During the operation, security personnel recovered one self-loading rifle (SLR), a 9 mm pistol along with a magazine, four radio communication sets, one charger and four improvised explosive devices.

The recovered IEDs were later destroyed at the site following standard safety protocols, officials added.

The latest recovery comes just days after the arrest of three alleged insurgents near Border Pillars 77 and 79 under the same police station jurisdiction.

According to security sources, the arrested individuals were identified as Wangthoi Nahakpam alias Lingtel (20), Nanaoba Nandeibam alias Angou (19), and Malem Oinam alias Manithoiba (20). They were apprehended on May 18 during another security operation in the border region.

Police said all seized items and the arrested persons were handed over to the concerned police station for further legal proceedings.

**Himanta Biswa Sarma Takes Oath as MLA on Opening Day of Assam Assembly Session**



**GUWAHATI**

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Thursday took oath as a member of the 16th Assam Legislative Assembly on the opening day of the new Assembly session.

The oath was administered by Protem Speaker Chandra Mohan Patowary, with Sarma taking the oath in Assamese.

As proceedings began, Patowary informed members that legislators could take oath in any recognised language of their choice and submit copies to the Assembly office.

MLAs from different political parties later took oath in Assamese, Bengali, Bodo and Sanskrit, reflecting the linguistic diversity of the Assembly.

The swearing-in ceremony followed the NDA's return to power in Assam with a decisive mandate in the recently concluded Assembly elections.

The alliance comprising the Bharatiya Janata Party, Asom Gana Parishad and Bodoland People's Front secured 102 seats in the 126-member Assembly.

The BJP emerged as the single largest party with 82 seats, while the AGP and BPF won 10 seats each.

In the opposition benches, the Indian National Congress secured 19 seats, while Rajgor Dal won two seats. The All India United Democratic Front and All India Trinamool Congress won two and one seat respectively.

**Manipur Scientist Dr Sanjukta RajKumari Wins Best Poster Award at Global Food Safety Symposium**

**IMPHAL**

Dr. Sanjukta RajKumari, a researcher from Manipur, has won the Best Poster Award at the prestigious 2026 International Symposium on Shiga Toxin-producing Escherichia coli, one of the world's leading scientific conferences on foodborne bacterial pathogens.

The symposium was held in Aberdeen from May 10 to 13 and brought together more than 400 scientists, clinicians and public health experts from 25 countries.

Participants included representatives from globally recognised institutions such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the United States Department of Agriculture, University of Cambridge, the Roslin Institute and Italy's National Institute of Health.

Dr RajKumari received the award for her research poster titled "Temporal pangenome dynamics and function-



al diversity of Escherichia coli O26 in a cattle farm."

Her research explored how Shiga toxin-producing Escherichia coli (STEC) strains evolve and adapt over time in livestock environments through changes in their genetic composition.

Experts said the study has significant implications for global food safety and public health, particularly in understanding the evolution and transmission of dangerous foodborne pathogens.

STEC is considered a highly harmful group of bacteria capable of causing severe foodborne illnesses. While many E. coli strains are harmless, STEC infections can lead to bloody diarrhoea and life-threatening complications such as Hemolytic Uremic Syndrome, which may cause kidney failure, especially among children and elderly people.

Health experts say STEC infections are commonly associated with contam-

inated food, unsafe drinking water and direct contact with livestock. Preventive measures include proper cooking of meat, maintaining hygiene after handling animals, avoiding unpasteurised dairy products and ensuring access to safe drinking water.

Dr RajKumari currently serves as a Senior Scientist at the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA), an executive agency under the UK Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. She is also a core member of the Eta Northeast Women's Network.

Congratulating her on the achievement, Yumnam Khemchand described Dr RajKumari as a "distinguished daughter of Manipur" and said her accomplishment reflected scientific excellence with global significance.

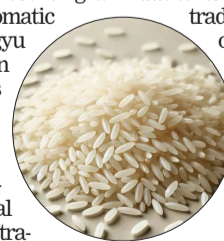
He said her success would inspire young people in Manipur to pursue knowledge and excellence while highlighting the growing contribution of scientists from Northeast India to the international scientific community.

**Assam's Joha Rice Gains Global Recognition**

**GUWAHATI**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has brought Assam's indigenous agricultural heritage into the international spotlight by presenting a sample of the state's aromatic Joha rice to Qu Dongyu

during his recent foreign visit. The gesture was highlighted by Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who said the presentation reflected the growing global recognition of Assam's traditional produce and cultural identity. In a post on X, Sarma described Joha rice as a "small grain scented rice variety unique to Assam" known for its distinct aroma and deep cultural significance in the state. Joha rice is an indigenous aromatic rice variety cultivated in several parts of Assam and remains a staple in Assamese households, particularly during festivals and traditional feasts. Unlike long-grain aromatic rice varieties, Joha is smaller in size and valued for its fragrance,



soft texture and rich taste. Agricultural experts have often identified Joha rice as one of Assam's key geographical and cultural assets due to its unique flavour profile and traditional cultivation methods.

The rice variety has also attracted attention in niche and premium food markets, where demand for indigenous and organically cultivated products has been steadily increasing.

Sarma said the symbolic gift to the FAO chief reflected "the rising influence of Assam on the world stage" and underscored the Prime Minister's efforts to promote the state's heritage, indigenous crops and traditional products during international engagements. The presentation is also being viewed as part of broader efforts to showcase Northeast India's agricultural diversity and expand global awareness of region-specific produce with cultural and economic significance.



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## INDIA AND ITALY IN THE INDO-MEDITERRANEAN CENTURY

The evolving partnership between India and Italy reflects far more than the strengthening of bilateral ties between two friendly nations. It signals the emergence of a new geopolitical and economic architecture linking the Indo-Pacific and the Mediterranean - a strategic space increasingly being described as the "Indo-Mediterranean." In an era marked by geopolitical uncertainty, technological transformation and economic realignment, the growing convergence between New Delhi and Rome carries significance not only for the two countries, but also for Europe, Asia and the wider Global South.

The relationship between India and Italy has undergone a remarkable transformation in recent years. What was once a largely conventional diplomatic engagement has now matured into a broad-based strategic partnership rooted in shared democratic values, economic complementarities and a common commitment to multipolarity and strategic autonomy.

At the political level, the chemistry between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni has injected visible momentum into bilateral ties. More importantly, however, institutional cooperation between the two nations has deepened across sectors ranging from defence and technology to energy and infrastructure.

This partnership comes at a crucial global moment. The world order is being reshaped by technological disruption, supply chain reconfiguration, climate pressures and intensifying strategic competition. Countries are increasingly seeking trusted partnerships that combine economic resilience with political reliability. India and Italy appear well positioned to offer each other exactly that.

The economic logic behind the partnership is compelling. Italy remains one of Europe's manufacturing and industrial powerhouses, renowned globally for design excellence, precision engineering and advanced industrial capabilities. India, on the other hand, represents one of the world's fastest-growing major economies, powered by a vast market, demographic strength, engineering talent and an increasingly vibrant start-up ecosystem.

The synergy between "Made in Italy" and "Make in India" therefore has immense strategic potential. The proposed India-European Union Free Trade Agreement could further accelerate this process by opening new avenues for investment, technology transfer and integrated supply chains.

The ambition to push bilateral trade beyond \$100 billion by 2029 is realistic if both countries sustain momentum in sectors such as defence manufacturing, clean energy, machinery, automotive components, pharmaceuticals, textiles, agri-business and tourism. The growing presence of Indian companies in Italy and Italian industries in India already reflects rising business confidence.

Yet the most consequential dimension of the partnership may well be technological cooperation.

The 21st century will be defined by leadership in areas such as artificial intelligence, quantum computing, advanced manufacturing, cybersecurity, semiconductors and critical minerals. India's digital scale and innovation ecosystem, combined with Italy's industrial sophistication and research infrastructure, create the possibility of genuine co-creation rather than merely transactional cooperation.

Particularly noteworthy is the shared emphasis on human-centred technology and ethical artificial intelligence. At a time when concerns are mounting globally over algorithmic manipulation, surveillance capitalism and the misuse of AI in democratic processes, India and Italy are advocating a more balanced approach.

India's concept of "MANAV" - placing humans at the centre of technology - and Italy's "algor-ethics" philosophy rooted in European humanist traditions reflect an important attempt to ensure that technological progress strengthens rather than weakens human dignity and democratic freedoms.

This vision also has strong implications for the Global South. India's digital public infrastructure model, which has already drawn attention internationally, offers scalable and affordable solutions for inclusive governance. Coupled with Italian expertise in industrial systems and ethical regulatory frameworks, the partnership could help create more equitable digital ecosystems for developing nations.

Equally significant is the growing cooperation in defence and strategic security. Both India and Italy recognise that economic prosperity depends fundamentally on secure trade routes, resilient supply chains and stable geopolitical environments. Maritime security in the Indian Ocean, Mediterranean and adjoining sea lanes is increasingly interconnected.

This explains the strategic importance of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC), which seeks to establish a modern network of transport, logistics, energy and digital connectivity linking India with Europe through West Asia. Italy's geographic position as a gateway to Europe and India's centrality in the Indo-Pacific naturally align within this vision.

If successfully implemented, IMEC could become one of the defining infrastructure projects of the coming decades, reducing logistical dependence on traditional chokepoints while reshaping patterns of global trade and connectivity.

Energy cooperation is another pillar with long-term implications. India's aggressive push towards renewable energy and green hydrogen production aligns closely with Italy's advanced expertise in renewable infrastructure and energy technologies. Collaboration in solar power, hydrogen systems, smart grids and resilient infrastructure could become central to Europe's wider clean energy transition.

Joint participation in initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure and Global Biofuels Alliance further demonstrates the convergence of priorities between the two countries.

Importantly, the India-Italy partnership is not confined merely to economics or geopolitics. It is also deeply civilisational in character.

India's philosophical traditions rooted in "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - the world as one family - and Italy's Renaissance-era humanist traditions both place strong emphasis on human dignity, cultural exchange and social harmony. In a world increasingly fractured by nationalism, conflict and technological alienation, these shared civilisational values provide a softer but equally important foundation for cooperation.

However, the success of this strategic partnership will depend on implementation. Grand declarations must translate into sustained institutional coordination, faster investment flows, technological collaboration and stronger people-to-people exchanges. Bureaucratic delays, regulatory barriers and geopolitical instability in surrounding regions could otherwise slow momentum.

Nevertheless, the direction is unmistakable. India and Italy are no longer merely engaging as bilateral partners; they are positioning themselves as important stakeholders in shaping the future of an interconnected Indo-Mediterranean order.

As global power centres continue to shift eastward and traditional alliances undergo redefinition, partnerships based on strategic trust, democratic values and economic complementarity will become increasingly valuable. The India-Italy relationship offers precisely such a framework.

The emerging Indo-Mediterranean century may still be in its formative stage, but New Delhi and Rome appear determined to ensure they help shape its foundations together.

# DECODING MODI'S APPEAL A NATIONAL ECONOMIC SHIELD DURING GLOBAL CRISIS

## PM MODI'S BIG APPEAL TO EVERY INDIAN

### AMID GLOBAL CRISIS: 14 DOS & DON'TS FOR A STRONGER INDIA

1 <b>WORK FROM HOME</b> wherever possible	8 <b>FARMERS: REDUCE CHEMICAL FERTILIZER USAGE</b> Adopt natural & sustainable farming
2 <b>REDUCE PETROL &amp; DIESEL</b> Use public transport, carpool, prefer EVs	9 <b>PROMOTE SOLAR-POWERED FARMING</b> Use solar pumps, save diesel & electricity
3 <b>AVOID NON-ESSENTIAL FOREIGN TRAVEL</b> Explore India, spend in India	10 <b>PRACTICE SUSTAINABLE LIVING</b> Responsible living is patriotism
4 <b>STOP BUYING NON-ESSENTIAL GOLD FOR 1 YEAR</b> Help save foreign exchange	11 <b>PREFER ONLINE MEETINGS OVER PHYSICAL TRAVEL</b> Save time, fuel & resources
5 <b>BUY MADE-IN-INDIA PRODUCTS</b> Support Indian industry	12 <b>AVOID WASTEFUL SPENDING</b> Be a responsible consumer
6 <b>SHIFT GOODS TRANSPORT TO RAILWAYS</b> More efficient, less fuel use	13 <b>TOURISM: CHOOSE INDIA</b> Strengthen local economy, create jobs
7 <b>REDUCE EDIBLE OIL CONSUMPTION</b> Cut import dependency	14 <b>SAVE FOREIGN EXCHANGE, STRENGTHEN INDIA</b> Every small step counts

**TOGETHER, LET'S BUILD A STRONGER, SELF-RELIANT, AND RESILIENT INDIA**

**APPEAL FOR ECONOMIC DISCIPLINE AMID GLOBAL UNCERTAINTY**

GLOBAL TENSIONS | RISING OIL PRICES | IMPORT PRESSURE | FOREX CHALLENGES

### SUNNY DUA

At a time when wars and conflicts in West Asia are disturbing global markets, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has appealed to Indians to adopt certain temporary lifestyle changes for one year in order to protect the country's economy and conserve precious foreign exchange reserves. For many people, these suggestions may appear simple or even complex, rather burdened but behind every appeal lies a deep economic concern connected with rising oil prices, global instability, inflation, pressure on the Indian rupee, and the increasing cost of imports.

India is one of the world's largest importers of crude oil and also imports large quantities of gold. Whenever international conflict increases oil prices or disrupts trade routes, countries like India face direct economic pressure. The Prime Minister's message is essentially a call for collective national responsibility asking citizens to contribute not through sacrifice on battlefields, but through disciplined economic behaviour in daily life.

Why West Asia conflict impacts India?

India depends heavily on imports for crude oil. Most of this oil comes from West Asian countries. When wars or conflicts erupt in the region global crude oil prices rise sharply, shipping and supply chains become uncertain, transportation costs increase, inflation rises and India has to spend more dollars to buy fuel. This creates pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves, the pool of dollars and foreign currency that the country keeps for imports, trade stability, and economic security.

If reserves decline rapidly, the rupee weakens, imported goods become expensive, petrol and diesel prices can rise, inflation affects common households and economic growth slows down. That is why Modi's appeals are aimed at reducing unnecessary foreign exchange outflow and making India economically stronger during uncertain global times. Let's study these one by one:

**Avoid buying gold for one year**

One of the most significant appeals made by Narendra Modi was to avoid purchasing gold for one year in view of the ongoing global economic uncertainty and instability caused by conflicts in West Asia. India is among the world's largest importers of gold, and every year billions of dollars leave the country for gold imports. At a time when rising crude oil prices are already increasing India's import burden, excessive spending on imported gold can place additional pressure on the nation's foreign exchange reserves and weaken the rupee.

The Prime Minister's appeal is aimed at conserving foreign currency during a sensitive economic phase. India requires strong foreign exchange reserves to pay for essential imports like crude oil, maintain trade stability and protect the economy from global shocks. If citizens collectively reduce gold purchases even for a year, the country can save billions of dollars that would otherwise flow out of the economy. These savings can help India maintain stronger reserves and reduce financial pressure during international uncertainty.

Economists believe that if people adhere to this appeal, the impact can be significant. Stronger foreign reserves can help stabilize the rupee, control inflation and protect the economy from external economic pressures. In this

sense, postponing luxury purchases like gold for one year is being viewed not merely as financial restraint, but as a form of economic patriotism where ordinary citizens contribute towards strengthening the nation during challenging global conditions.

Reduce unnecessary foreign travel

Another important appeal made by Narendra Modi was to reduce unnecessary foreign travel for some time in view of the ongoing global economic uncertainty. Foreign travel involves substantial spending of dollars on hotels, shopping, transport, food and tourism-related activities abroad. At a time when India is already facing increased import costs due to rising crude oil prices and global instability caused by conflicts in West Asia, excessive foreign expenditure can place additional pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves.

The Prime Minister's appeal is aimed at conserving foreign currency and reducing avoidable dollar outflow during a sensitive economic period. India requires strong foreign exchange reserves to manage imports, stabilize the rupee and maintain economic balance amid international disruptions. If millions of Indians temporarily reduce non-essential foreign vacations and overseas spending, a significant amount of foreign currency can remain within the country instead of flowing abroad.

Economists believe that if citizens choose domestic destinations over foreign travel even for one year, the impact can be beneficial on multiple levels. More money will circulate within India, domestic tourism will receive a boost and local businesses such as hotels, transport operators, restaurants and handicraft sectors will benefit. At the same time, foreign exchange reserves will remain better protected, helping India maintain economic stability during challenging global conditions. In many ways, choosing to travel within India for a year can become both an economic and national contribution.

Use public transport, carpooling and electric vehicles (EVs)

One of the strongest and most practical appeals made by Narendra Modi was for citizens to reduce petrol and diesel consumption by increasingly using public transport, carpooling and electric vehicles (EVs). India imports a major portion of its crude oil requirements from abroad, particularly from West Asian countries. Whenever conflict or instability erupts in that region, international crude oil prices rise sharply, directly increasing India's fuel import bill. Higher oil prices mean India has to spend more dollars on importing petrol and diesel, putting additional pressure on the country's foreign exchange reserves and the overall economy.

The Prime Minister's appeal is therefore aimed at reducing unnecessary fuel consumption at a time when global economic conditions remain uncertain. By encouraging people to use metros, buses, shared transport systems and EVs, the government is attempting to lower national fuel demand and reduce dependence on expensive imported oil. Every litre of fuel saved means fewer dollars leaving the country. In a nation of more than a billion people, even small behavioural changes adopted collectively can create a massive economic impact. Reduced fuel consumption can help India control its import expenditure and better withstand the effects of rising

global oil prices caused by international conflicts.

Economists believe that if citizens seriously adopt these measures, the benefits will extend beyond economic savings alone. Lower fuel consumption would reduce India's oil import burden, conserve foreign exchange reserves and help stabilize the economy during periods of global uncertainty. At the same time, increased use of public transport and EVs would reduce air pollution, ease traffic congestion and improve urban mobility in major cities. What may appear to be a small personal adjustment such as taking the metro, sharing rides or shifting to electric mobility can collectively save the nation enormous amounts of money and strengthen India's economic resilience in difficult times.

Encourage work from home and virtual meetings

Narendra Modi also appealed to companies, institutions and offices to encourage work-from-home systems and virtual meetings wherever possible in order to reduce unnecessary fuel consumption during a period of global economic uncertainty. The Prime Minister's appeal comes at a time when rising crude oil prices, triggered by conflict and instability in West Asia, are increasing the financial burden on oil-importing countries like India. Every day, millions of people commute to offices using personal vehicles, taxis and public transport, consuming enormous quantities of petrol and diesel. This daily movement, while essential in many sectors, also contributes significantly to India's fuel demand and import expenditure.

The reasoning behind Modi's appeal is rooted in simple economic logic: reduced travel directly translates into lower fuel consumption. If companies adopt hybrid work models, virtual meetings and remote working systems even partially, the cumulative reduction in daily commuting across major cities can be substantial. Fewer vehicles on roads would mean reduced consumption of imported fuel, lower traffic congestion and less pressure on India's foreign exchange reserves, which are used heavily for crude oil imports. In the backdrop of rising global energy prices, conserving fuel has become not merely an environmental concern, but an important economic necessity as well.

Support "Made in India" products

Narendra Modi also emphasized the importance of strengthening domestic manufacturing and encouraging citizens to support "Made in India" products at a time when the global economy is facing uncertainty due to conflicts and rising international tensions. The Prime Minister's appeal is rooted in the belief that excessive dependence on imported goods increases the outflow of foreign currency and weakens economic self-reliance. Whenever India imports products from foreign markets, large amounts of dollars leave the country. During periods of global instability, when foreign exchange reserves are already under pressure because of rising oil import bills, reducing avoidable imports becomes economically important. Supporting Indian industries, therefore, is not merely a matter of business preference, but a step towards strengthening the national economy.

The reasoning behind Modi's appeal is closely linked to long-term economic resilience. If citizens consciously choose Indian-made products over imported alternatives wherever possible,

domestic industries receive greater support, production within the country increases and employment opportunities expand. Increased demand for local goods strengthens small businesses, manufacturers, traders and start-ups, while simultaneously reducing India's dependence on foreign markets. Economists believe that a stronger domestic manufacturing ecosystem can help India better withstand global disruptions and build a more self-reliant economy capable of sustaining itself during difficult international conditions. Every Indian product purchased contributes towards keeping money circulating within the country instead of flowing abroad.

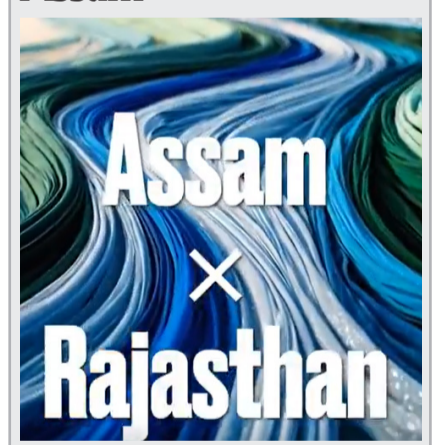
If millions of Indians collective-

### DIGITAL WAR OF WORDS

## When East meets West!

**@MDoNER\_India** has launched an inter-regional handloom initiative to develop a premium Kota-Eri fabric.

**The blend will**  
 ■ Preserve traditional weaving techniques  
 ■ Create sustainable livelihoods for artisans  
 ■ Strengthen India's handloom heritage through value-addition & skill exchange  
 ~ Dr. Himanta Biswa Sarma, CM Assam



ly reduce unnecessary spending on imported goods, conserve fuel, avoid wasteful foreign exchange expenditure and support local industries even for one year, the cumulative impact can be enormous. India can maintain stronger foreign exchange reserves, reduce pressure on the rupee, control inflation and strengthen its economic resilience. In many ways, the message reflects a modern form of patriotism where national service is expressed not only through words and slogans, but through disciplined and responsible choices made in everyday life for the larger good of the country.

Why these appeals matter?

The Prime Minister's appeals are not aimed at creating fear or panic. They are precautionary economic measures designed to prepare India against the impact of global instability caused by wars and international conflicts. India, despite being one of the world's fastest-growing economies, is not completely insulated from these international developments. That is why the government is encouraging citizens to contribute through responsible economic behaviour for one year.

(The writer is senior journalist)

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

**There are no shortcuts to any place worth going. - Beverly Sills**

# Assam Govt Enforces Austerity Measures, Cuts Fuel Spending and Departmental Expenditure

GUWAHATI

The Government of Assam has announced a series of austerity measures, including a 20 per cent reduction in fuel expenditure and a 10 per cent cut in departmental spending, amid concerns arising from the ongoing crisis in West Asia.

The measures were issued through an executive order titled "Advisory on Austerity Measures" by Finance Commissioner and Secretary Jayant Narlikar on Monday. Under the directive, all government departments and district administrations have been instructed to reduce revenue and establishment expenditure by 10 per cent during the current financial year. However, expenditures related to salaries, pensions, debt repay-



ment and charged expenditure have been exempted from the cuts. The order also mandated a 20 per cent reduction in spending on Petrol, Oil and Lubricants (POL) during the financial year.

"In the interest of administrative propriety and in view of the national appeal arising from the prevailing crisis in West Asia, the government considers it necessary to enforce additional measures of fiscal prudence and economy," the order stated.

As part of the government's green mobility initiative, departments have been directed to prioritise electric vehicles while hiring vehicles for official use.

The government has also encouraged the use of public transport, carpooling and electric vehicles to reduce fuel consumption.

According to the order, the Transport Department will separately issue notifications regarding incentives for electric vehicle purchases and the expansion of EV

charging infrastructure across the state. The Department of Housing and Urban Affairs has been directed to begin transitioning municipal public transport systems towards non-fossil fuel alternatives over the next 12 months.

The Guwahati Municipal Corporation has also been tasked with gradually moving towards a fully green public transport system.

The government further instructed departments to enhance revenue generation and conduct energy audits to minimise electricity wastage.

Municipal bodies have been asked to reduce unnecessary power consumption, including the wasteful use of street lighting.

The order stated that the prevailing situation requires "height-

ened administrative readiness and national solidarity", making strict compliance with the austerity directives necessary until further notice.

The government has also decided to defer foreign visits by ministers and government officials for the next six months, except in cases involving national or strategic interests, education, medical emergencies or visits to immediate family members residing abroad.

Such visits will require prior approval from Himanta Biswa Sarma.

Additionally, all departments have been instructed to route revenue-generating activities exclusively through the Electronic Government Receipt Accounting System platform to strengthen financial monitoring and transparency.

## 'Made in Assam' Semiconductor Production to Begin Soon at Tata's Jagiroad Facility: Himanta Biswa Sarma

GUWAHATI

Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday said semiconductor chip production would begin soon at the Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test facility being developed at Jagiroad, marking the rollout of "Made in Assam" semiconductor products. The Chief Minister visited the under-construction Tata Semiconductor Assembly and Test (TSAT) plant in Jagiroad to review the progress of the project, which is being seen as a major milestone in Assam's industrial and technological expansion. According to the Chief Minister's Office, Sarma inspected the ongoing construction work and directed officials and project representatives to ensure the timely completion of the facility.

Describing the semiconductor plant as a landmark initiative for both Assam and India's semiconductor ambitions, Sarma said the facility would have the capacity to manufacture up to 48 million semiconductor chips per day.

The chips are expected to cater to sectors such as automobiles, telecommunications, consumer electronics and artificial intelligence-driven technologies. Sarma said the project holds strategic importance as semiconductors form the backbone of modern technology and global supply chains. He added that the facility would position Assam at the centre of India's push for technological self-reliance and advanced manufacturing under the "Make in India" and "Make in Assam" initiatives. The Chief Minister also said the project would generate thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities, promote the growth of ancillary industries and help create a skilled technology workforce in the Northeast.

## BJP Training Drive Aims to Build Dedicated Grassroots Karyakartas: Patton

WOKHA

Bharatiya Janata Party's organisational training initiatives are aimed at strengthening the party structure, deepening ideological understanding and preparing committed karyakartas to serve society more effectively.

Patton made the remarks while attending the District Level Training Programme under the Pandit Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Prashikshan Mahabhiyan 2026 organised by the Bharatiya Janata Party at Riphym village in Wokha district. Addressing the inaugural session, the Deputy Chief Minister said such programmes were important for equipping party workers with greater clarity, discipline and commitment towards public service. He said the initiative seeks to strengthen the BJP's organisational foundation while promoting ideological awareness and responsibility among party karyakartas. "The initiative reflects our commit-

ment towards strengthening the organisation, deepening ideological understanding and preparing dedicated karyakartas to serve society better," Patton said. The Deputy Chief Minister also highlighted the developmental progress achieved under the leadership of Narendra Modi, stating that the BJP remained committed to nation-building, good governance, inclusive development and public service. According to Patton, programmes such as the Prashikshan Mahabhiyan play a crucial role in preparing party workers to engage more effectively with the public and contribute meaningfully towards governance and social development. The event was attended by P Bashangchang, Advisors Kropol Vitsu and K Konngam Konyak, BJP Nagaland president Benjamin Yephthom, state secretary P M Ghosh, BJP town councillors from Wokha and party workers from different districts.

## Meghalaya Reaffirms Commitment to Assam Border Talks After Fresh Tension in Lapangap

SHILLONG

The Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government has reiterated its commitment to resolving the long-pending border dispute with Assam through dialogue and mutual understanding following fresh tensions in the Lapangap area along the inter-state border.

Meghalaya Cabinet Minister and government spokesperson Wailadniki Shylla said on Tuesday that incidents of tension in the disputed region were not new and similar flare-ups had occurred in the past as well.

Fresh unrest surfaced in Lapangap after local farmers were allegedly prevented from cultivating paddy fields they claimed to have farmed for generations.

Following the incident, the Meghalaya government deployed a large contingent of Meghalaya Police personnel, including commandos, to maintain law and order in the border village.

Several organisations, including the Federation of Khasi Jain-



tia and Garo People and the Khasi Students' Union West Jaintia Hills unit, criticised the government over the unresolved border issue and accused authorities of failing to find a permanent solution.

Representatives of the organisations also alleged that they were obstructed by Assam Police personnel while attempting to visit the affected area in solidarity with local farmers.

Earlier, residents of Lapangap, including villagers, women, elders and farmers, staged a pro-

test march to the Secretariat and submitted a memorandum to the Meghalaya government seeking immediate intervention to safeguard their rights, livelihoods and security.

Addressing reporters, Shylla said six out of the 12 areas of difference between Meghalaya and Assam had already been resolved during the first phase of border talks under the MDA government.

"From the day we started negotiations with the Assam government, our commitment has been

to completely resolve all the 12 areas of difference," he said.

The minister added that negotiations over the latest situation in Lapangap were continuing, with Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police from both states remaining in close contact to prevent further escalation.

However, Shylla expressed concern over the approach of the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council, alleging that verbal agreements reached during discussions often changed within hours, complicating negotiations.

He also said discussions on the border issue had slowed temporarily due to elections in Assam but expressed optimism that talks would resume after the formation of the new government in the state.

The Meghalaya government reiterated that it believes a reasonable and lasting solution to the border dispute can be achieved through sustained dialogue and cooperation between the two neighbouring states.

## Pema Khandu, Amit Shah Review Strategic Infrastructure Projects in Arunachal Pradesh

NEW DELHI

Pema Khandu met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi to review the progress of several projects of national and strategic importance currently underway in Arunachal Pradesh.

According to officials, the meeting focused on key infrastructure and development initiatives being implemented in the frontier state, which shares international borders with China, Bhutan and Myanmar.

Following the meeting, Khandu expressed gratitude to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and the Union Government for their "unwavering support and continued commitment" towards the development of Arunachal Pradesh.

Among the major projects discussed were the proposed 1,748-km



Frontier Highway along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), the Trans Arunachal Highway and multiple hydropower projects aimed at strengthening India's renewable energy capacity.

The state government has also been working closely with the Ministry of Home Affairs on stra-

tegic infrastructure development, road connectivity in remote border districts and the expansion of telecommunications networks in sensitive frontier regions.

Officials said the ongoing projects are expected to significantly improve connectivity, strengthen border infrastruc-

ture, enhance strategic preparedness and boost economic development in the northeastern state. The Frontier Highway project, regarded as one of the most ambitious infrastructure initiatives in the region, is expected to connect remote border villages and improve mobility in areas located close to the India-China border. The meeting also reviewed the implementation status of other projects being carried out under various central schemes aimed at improving transport, energy and communication infrastructure across Arunachal Pradesh.

Khandu reiterated the state government's commitment to working closely with the Centre to accelerate infrastructure development and strengthen connectivity in border areas.

## AASU Calls Statewide Protest in Assam Over Soaring Prices of Essential Commodities



GUWAHATI

The All Assam Students' Union has announced statewide protests on May 22 against the rising prices of essential commodities and fuel across Assam. AASU president Utpal Sarma said the sharp increase in the prices of daily essentials was placing an unbearable financial burden on common people and accused the authorities of failing to effectively control inflation.

In a message shared on social media, Sarma said prices of essential goods were "burning high" and warned that public protests had become unavoidable in the absence of meaningful government intervention.

According to the student organisation, demonstrations will be organised across different districts of Assam demanding immediate steps to reduce the prices of food items, fuel and other daily necessities.

AASU stated that the prices of several household commodities, including rice, pulses, edible oils, sugar, vegetables, fruits and dry fruits,

have increased significantly in recent weeks in markets across the state. The organisation also highlighted that rising fuel prices have further worsened the situation by increasing transportation and supply costs, leading to higher market prices of essential goods. AASU said the continued rise in living expenses was severely affecting ordinary families, students and economically weaker sections who are struggling to manage daily household costs amid inflationary pressure. The student body maintained that despite growing public concern, effective measures to control price rise have not been visible, prompting the decision to launch statewide protests.

The demonstrations scheduled for May 22 are expected to witness participation from AASU units and members across the state.

The announcement comes amid broader public anxiety over inflation and the rising cost of living following recent increases in fuel prices linked to developments in West Asia and global market conditions.

## Assam Assembly Session Begins, UCC Bill Set to Dominate Proceedings



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GUWAHATI

The 16th session of the Assam Legislative Assembly will begin on May 21, with the election of a new Speaker and the proposed introduction of the Uni-

form Civil Code (UCC) Bill expected to dominate the four-day sitting.

Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday outlined the schedule of the session, which will continue till May 26, excluding Saturday and Sunday, and indicated that the government was prepared to move ahead with key legislative business, including the much-debated UCC Bill.

"Tomorrow marks the beginning of the Assembly session and the new Speaker of the House will be elected first. Following that, we will move ahead with important legislative matters, including the Uniform Civil Code Bill," Sarma told reporters.

Reiterating the BJP-led government's commitment to implementing the UCC, the Chief Minister said the legislation was part of the promises made before the Assembly elections and would now be formally introduced in the House.

"We had made a commitment earlier that once we returned to power, we would bring the Uniform Civil Code in the first Assembly session. We are now moving ahead in that direction and the Bill will be introduced during this session," he said.

The proposed legislation is expected to trigger intense debate both inside and outside the Assembly.

While the government has maintained that the UCC seeks to establish equal civil laws for all citizens irre-

spective of religion, Opposition parties and several social organisations have raised concerns over its possible impact on personal laws, customs and community-specific practices.

However, the Chief Minister did not disclose details of the proposed legislation, with the state government yet to make the draft Bill public.

Sarma also expressed confidence about the passage of the Bill, signalling that the government was politically prepared for what is likely to become one of the most closely watched legislative exercises in recent years.

Apart from the UCC Bill, the Assembly session is also expected to provide clarity on a possible expansion of the state cabinet.

Hinting at a reshuffle and induction of new ministers, the Chief Minister said the exercise was likely to take place in the first week of June after the conclusion of the Assembly session.

"Regarding cabinet expansion, it is likely to happen in the first week of June after the Assembly session. The process will happen gradually," he said.

The upcoming session assumes political significance as it marks the first major legislative sitting after the BJP-led alliance returned to power in Assam, with the proposed UCC legislation expected to emerge as the centrepiece of the government's new term agenda.

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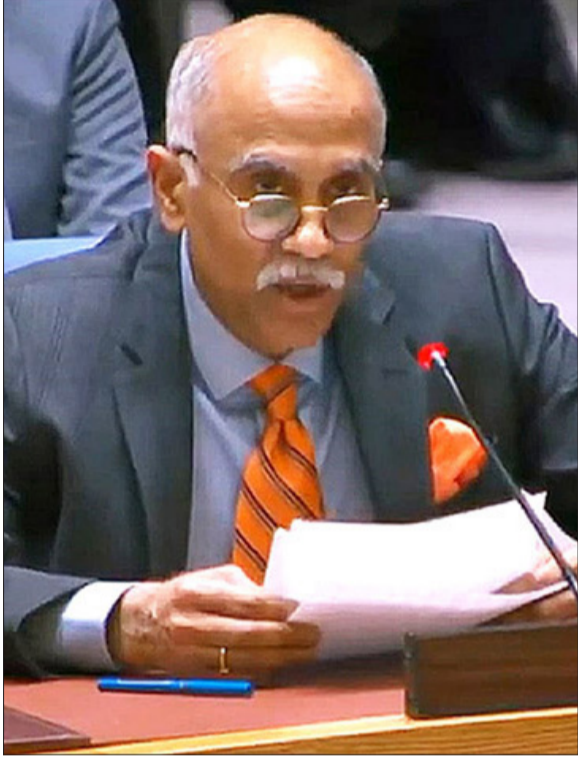
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## India slams Pakistan at UN, says 'heinous acts' no surprise from country bombing its own people



in Kabul during Ramzan, claiming that Pakistan had targeted the Omid Addiction Treatment Hospital in March, resulting in civilian casualties.

Quoting UN estimates, he said the strike killed 269 civilians and injured 122 others, adding that the facility could not have been considered a legitimate military target.

"It is hypocritical to espouse high principles of international law while targeting innocent civilians in the dark," Parvathani said, adding that the strikes had taken place after evening tarawih prayers.

He further cited UN estimates indicating that more than 94,000 people had been displaced by cross-border violence in Afghanistan, and said such actions reflected Pakistan's repeated attempts to "externalise internal failures".

Drawing a historical parallel, Parvathani referred to Operation Searchlight in 1971, accusing Pakistan of carrying out systematic violence in former East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

India also reiterated concerns over cross-border terrorism, asserting that countries sponsoring or sheltering terror groups must be held accountable. "No cause or grievance can justify deliberate attacks against civilians," Parvathani said, while underscoring the need to regulate the use of drones, artificial intelligence and autonomous systems in conflict situations in accordance with international law.

He also said civilian protection could not rely solely on humanitarian responses and called for a comprehensive approach to addressing violence aimed at achieving political objectives, including terrorism.

the UN, Harish Parvathani, said it was "ironic" that Pakistan, with long-tainted record of genocidal acts", had sought to comment on matters that were internal to India.

Parvathani referred to estimates by the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, which documented around 750 civilian deaths and injuries in Afghanistan during the first three months of 2026 due to cross-border violence allegedly involving Pakistani military forces.

According to UNAMA estimates cited by India, 94 of 95 civilian casualty incidents were attributed to Pakistani security personnel.

The Indian envoy also referred to an alleged air strike

NEW DELHI

India slammed Pakistan at the United Nations Security Council, accusing it of carrying out cross-border attacks on Afghan civilians and describing such actions as consistent with a country that "bombs its own people" and engages in "systematic genocide".

The remarks came after Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, raised the issue of Jammu and Kashmir during the annual open debate on the protection of civilians in armed conflict, held under China's presidency of the Council for May.

Responding strongly, India's Permanent Representative to

## 'No Ebola case, India prepared for challenge': Ministry reviews measures



NEW DELHI

Even as WHO warned that suspected cases and deaths due to Ebola may rise further, India on Wednesday said there is no reported case of the viral disease in the country so far.

Chairing a high-level review meeting to assess preparedness and response measures regard-

ing Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava advised states and UTs "to ensure readiness at all levels".

India quickly swung into action after the World Health Organization (WHO) on Sunday declared an Ebola outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda a "public

health emergency of international concern".

Officials said India remains fully vigilant and prepared to respond swiftly to any emerging situation. "India has already pressed into service proactive preventive measures and has also enhanced surveillance and preparedness," official sources said. "The government of India

has proactively strengthened surveillance and preparedness measures across the country as an abundant precaution," they added.

During the meeting, the union health secretary said that detailed SOPs covering pre-arrival and post-arrival screening, quarantine protocols, case management, referral mechanisms, and laboratory testing have already been shared with all states and UTs.

Srivastava also emphasised the importance of coordinated surveillance, timely reporting, and preparedness of designated health facilities.

"All concerned ministries and departments have also been sensitised and are undertaking appropriate preventive and surveillance measures in coordination with the Health Ministry," the officials said.

"India has prior experience in handling such situations effectively, including during the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Africa, when similar precautionary measures were implemented successfully," they added.

"Citizens are advised to not panic, while continuing to follow official advisories and updates issued by health authorities," the official added.

There have been 600 suspected cases of Ebola and 139 suspected deaths due to the outbreak, the WHO said on Wednesday. So far, 51 cases have been confirmed in Congo, which reported the first case, and two in Uganda.

WHO chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Wednesday said that the outbreak of the Bundibugyo species of Ebola was likely to have started "a couple of months ago".

## INTERNATIONAL

### NATO would survive a US withdrawal. But what kind of alliance would it become?



LONDON

As NATO counts down to its annual summit in Turkey in July, the alliance is facing perhaps the biggest challenge in its history — what a potential future without the United States, or US security guarantees, would look like.

In recent weeks, the Trump administration has taken a series of steps widely interpreted in European capitals as retaliation for allies' reluctance to more strongly support the US position in the Iran war. It has announced the withdrawal of 5,000 troops out of Germany, halted the deployment of 4,000 troops to Poland and even reportedly considered moves to suspend Spain from the alliance.

Europe was already uneasy about Washington's broader strategic intentions. Increasingly, NATO allies are realising they can no longer depend on the United States for their security and will have to shoulder far greater responsibility themselves.

At a NATO defence minister meeting in February, the US under secretary of defence for policy, Elbridge Colby, introduced the idea of "NATO 3.0". This would entail Europeans assuming a much larger

role in conventional deterrence. The US, meanwhile, would prioritise strategic competition with China and supporting European security more selectively and from greater distance.

At the same time, the White House has reportedly been pushing to roll back decades of NATO's mission expansion and keep Ukraine and NATO's four Indo-Pacific partners (Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand) out of the annual summit in July.

This reflects a broader transformation in US strategic thinking. NATO is no longer viewed as a political community and a pillar of the liberal international order. Increasingly, it is seen as a narrower military arrangement whose value depends on whether Europeans can shoulder more of the burden themselves and remain compliant with Trump's agenda.

In this new paradigm, the United States is not simply asking European allies to spend more. It is telling Europe to do more with less American hardware, a looser political alignment, and fewer guarantees.

Plus, there's a deeper problem: the erosion of trust within the alliance and the assumptions that have underpinned

NATO's deterrence posture for decades.

The result is a "Europeanised NATO" emerging by necessity rather than design. What such an alliance would actually look like remains unclear.

One thing is certain: one single country won't simply replace the United States as alliance leader. No European power possesses the capabilities, resources or political legitimacy to fill that role alone. Instead, leadership will likely come from the most capable states acting together.

That trend is already visible in "Europe's multilateral moment". The E3 group (Britain, France and Germany) and newer E5 coalition (with Italy and Poland), for example, have begun accelerating coordination among Europe's leading military powers.

These arrangements are not alternatives to NATO. Rather, they may become the mechanisms through which a stronger European focus inside NATO is organised.

But this is where the uncertainties begin. A more Europeanised NATO is far from guaranteed to become a more cohesive NATO. The alliance has long struggled with the strategic cacophony of its 32 members, driven by divergent threat perceptions, regional priorities and strategic cultures. As American leadership recedes, those differences may become even sharper and harder to manage.

A more Europeanised alliance is, at least initially, likely to narrow its focus on collective defence and deterrence to counter Russia's militarism and its ongoing war against Ukraine.

The broader agenda that expanded after the Cold War to include crisis management and cooperative security may increasingly become secondary. This included efforts to address global security challenges (such as supporting capacity building in countries affected by violent conflict), counter-terrorism operations, and enhancing energy and maritime security.

Yet, many NATO allies, particularly those on NATO's southern flank, continue to argue that crisis management and cooperative security must remain core alliance functions. For countries facing instability across North Africa and the Middle East, migration pressures, terrorism and maritime insecurity, NATO cannot be concerned only with Russia.

NATO's cooperative security partnerships in the Indo-Pacific are also increasingly important, even though they are no longer openly supported by the US administration.

Cooperation with Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand (known as the IP4) has emerged as perhaps NATO's most promising cooperative-security framework, precisely because it strengthens the alliance's core deterrence mission.

Unlike newer earlier partnership initiatives, this is tied directly to defence-industrial cooperation, technological resilience, security of supply chains for defence-critical materials, and strategic signalling.

The "new NATO" is by no means a settled compact. It is an alliance caught between competing visions, profoundly uncertain political commitments from erstwhile supporters, and unresolved strategic questions.

Europe is moving towards greater responsibility for its security, but without a clear consensus on what greater strategic autonomy ultimately means.

The central question facing NATO today is not whether the alliance survives. It almost certainly will in some form, as one should never underestimate the binding power of bureaucracies. The real question is what kind of alliance emerges and how credible it remains. Will it be a narrower military pact laser-focused on continental defence? Or a broader political-security community capable of managing the full spectrum of crises affecting Europe?

## US lost 42 aircraft, including fighter jets, MQ-9 Reaper drones in Iran war, says report



TEHRAN

At least 42 US aircraft, including fighter jets and drones, were lost or damaged during Operation Epic Fury launched on February 28 against Iran, according to an official report by the Congressional Research Service (CRS).

The report said the number of aircraft damaged or destroyed may be revised due to factors such as classification, ongoing combat activity and attribution.

The reported losses and damage include four F-15E Strike Eagle fighter jets, one F-35A Lightning II fighter air-

craft, one A-10 Thunderbolt II ground-attack aircraft, seven KC-135 Stratotanker aerial refuelling aircraft, one E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control system (AWACS) aircraft, two MC-130J Commando II special operations aircraft, one HH-60W Jolly Green II helicopter, 24 MQ-9 Reaper drones and one MQ-4C Triton drone.

The CRS, which provides policy and legal analysis to the US Congress and its committees, said it compiled the data by reviewing news reports and statements issued by the Department of Defence and the US Central Command.

The report comes amid growing scrutiny of the financial costs of military operations in Iran. During a hearing of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on May 12, Acting Pentagon Comptroller James W. Hurst III said the estimated cost of operations had risen sharply.

"A lot of that increase comes from having a refined estimate on repair or replacement costs for equipment," he said.

According to Hurst, the Department of Defense's cost estimate for military operations in Iran has increased to \$29 billion.

## The Prime Minister's Seven Appeals: A Needonomics Framework for Responsible Citizenship

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**NATION FIRST**  
**PM MODI'S 7 APPEALS**

- Prioritize Work From Home** wherever possible
- Avoid buying gold** for one year
- Reduce petrol & diesel consumption; use metro/public transport**
- Cut down the use of cooking oil**
- Reduce dependence on chemical fertilizers and move toward natural farming**
- Use fewer foreign-branded products and adopt Swadeshi**
- Avoid foreign travel** for one year

PROF. M.M. GOEL

The recent appeals made by Prime Minister's Narendra Modi to the nation regarding economic self-reliance, civic responsibility, and disciplined public conduct deserve serious attention and thoughtful reflection. At a time when geopolitical tensions in West Asia are generating uncertainty in global energy markets, trade flows, and economic stability, the Prime Minister's emphasis on national preparedness, restraint, and collective responsibility is both timely and statesman-like.

The Needonomics School of Thought (NST), a Kurukshetra-based think tank, strongly supports the call for disciplined public participation and "civic Satyagraha" in response to emerging global challenges. Such an appeal is

and vulnerable global economy. India today confronts a complex international environment marked by fluctuating crude oil prices, supply-chain disruptions, inflationary pressures, and strategic uncertainties. Under such circumstances, economic resilience cannot be achieved solely through government policies, fiscal measures, or monetary interventions. National strength also depends upon the conscious participation of citizens through responsible behavior, moderation in consumption, and commitment to collective national priorities.

The Needonomics School of Thought advocates the principle of "Needo-consumption," which emphasizes mindful, judicious, and righteous use of goods, services, and natural resources. Needonomics clearly distinguishes between

unnecessary imports reflects not merely economic prudence but also patriotic responsibility. Excessive and wasteful consumption weakens national resilience, increases dependence on imports, and places avoidable pressure on foreign exchange reserves and public finances. A society guided by moderation and necessity develops stronger foundations for long-term sustainability, self-reliance, and economic discipline.

Equally important is the Prime Minister's appeal urging citizens to remain alert, aware, and awake to the seriousness of evolving global developments. Democracies function effectively only when citizens move beyond passive expectation and become active participants in national responsibility. Civic awareness, disciplined consumption, and energy conservation should not be viewed merely as temporary responses to crisis situations. They must become enduring habits for building a resilient, responsible, and mature nation.

India's civilizational ethos has always emphasized restraint, balance, simplicity, and ethical living. The philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi regarding simplicity, self-discipline, and moral responsibility remains profoundly relevant even in the contemporary global economy. The concept of "civic Satyagraha" can therefore emerge as a powerful moral instrument for promoting responsible citizenship, reducing wasteful lifestyles, conserving national resources, and strengthening social unity during challenging times.

The present global uncertainty should also be viewed as an opportunity for accelerating long-term structural reforms in renewable energy, public transport systems, local manufacturing, rural self-reliance, and sustainable production practices. Economic self-reliance does not imply isolationism or disengagement from the global economy. Rather, it signifies the ability of a nation to withstand external shocks with confidence, balance, adaptability, and internal strength.

Needonomics further emphasizes that true development lies not in unlimited consumption but

in balanced well-being. A nation becomes genuinely strong when its citizens voluntarily practice moderation, conserve resources, avoid extravagance, and place collective welfare above narrow individual indulgence. Sustainable prosperity emerges not from reckless accumulation but from disciplined and ethical living.

The Prime Minister's seven appeals should therefore be viewed not merely as policy suggestions but as the foundation of a broader national ethical framework for responsible citizenship in uncertain times. If sincerely embraced by society, these principles can strengthen India's economic stability, reduce external vulnerabilities, and promote a culture of disciplined and sustainable development.

The Needonomics School of Thought believes that crises often provide opportunities for moral awakening and institutional reform. The present moment calls for unity, awareness, restraint, and constructive public participation. Citizens, industries, educational institutions, local governments, and civil society organizations all have important roles to play in strengthening national resilience.

India has repeatedly demonstrated its ability to overcome difficult challenges through collective wisdom, discipline, and social solidarity. With responsible leadership and conscious citizenship, the country can successfully navigate present global uncertainties and emerge stronger, more self-reliant, and more sustainable in the years ahead.

The message underlying the Prime Minister's appeals is ultimately a call for national character-building. Economic resilience is not merely an outcome of production and consumption statistics; it is equally the result of ethical conduct, civic discipline, and social responsibility. A nation that learns to balance aspiration with restraint and growth with sustainability creates a durable foundation for long-term peace, prosperity, and collective well-being.

Prof. M.M. Goel, Propounder, Needonomics & Former Vice-Chancellor



not merely administrative advice; rather, it reflects a deeper moral and national necessity in an increasingly interdependent

genuine human needs and excessive, wasteful, or status-driven consumption. In periods of international uncertainty and economic stress, this distinction becomes even more significant for maintaining national economic stability and social balance.

The Prime Minister's appeal for fuel conservation and reduction in

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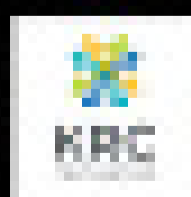


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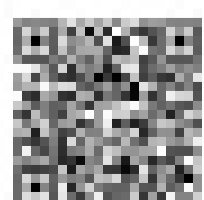


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