



## Gautam Adani indicted in U.S. over charges of bribery, securities fraud

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) has issued a five-count criminal indictment of Gautam Adani, chairman of the Adani Group, and several of his business associates.

The charges in the indictment unsealed by the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of New York late on November 20 include promising more than \$ 250 million in bribes to Indian government officials in order to secure solar power purchase contracts for Adani Green Energy and Azure Power from Solar Energy Corporation of India (SECI), a company of the Union Ministry of New and Renewable Energy, whose mission is to increase use of renewable energy in India, conspiracies to commit securities and

wire fraud, and orchestrating "a multi-billion-dollar scheme" to defraud U.S. investors and global financial institutions by giving "false and misleading statements". The indictment of the Department of Justice (DoJ) constitutes a criminal case.

The U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) in a parallel move, has also charged Mr. Gautam Adani and Sagar Adani (the former's nephew and head of Adani Green Energy), along with Cyril Cabanes, a top executive of Azure Power Global Ltd. (a New Delhi-headquartered renewable energy company that used to be listed on the New York Stock Exchange), with a massive bribery scheme involving Adani Green and Azure Power. The SEC's complaints were filed in the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of New York. The SEC's is a civil complaint, and if proved, could result in a "permanent injunction, a civil penalty, and an officer and director bar".

Under the U.S.'s Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, 1977 (FCPA), it is unlawful to make payments to foreign government officials in a bid to obtain or retain business. It is also a criminal offence to raise money by misleading investors about key corporate governance practices, which this case concerns compliance with the FCPA.

The indictment also charges the defendants with obstructing a Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) probe by falsely denying their participation in the bribery scheme to FBI agents. Mr. Sagar Adani came to know of the FBI investigation, as well the people under the FBI scanner when, in March 2023, FBI agents in the U.S. served him a copy of a search warrant and took possession of his electronic devices. It is unlawful to obstruct federal investigations by giving false information and destroying evidence such as electronic communications. It is also a separate offence to hide the authorisation of bribery practices in company annual reports. The defendants have been charged with offences on all these counts.

### Withdraws bond issue

The Adani Group denied the allegations of the U.S. Department of Justice and the SEC, terming them "baseless". Adani Green Energy Ltd. reacting to the news of the indictment withdrew a proposed \$ 600 million bond issue. Shares of Adani Group companies lost about \$ 27 billion in market value in the domestic markets, led by an over 23 % decline in its flagship, Adani Enterprises Ltd. This was the steepest drop in its share value since February 2023, when it was hit by allegations of misdemeanour and corporate malfeasance levelled by U.S.-based Hindenberg Research.

### What does the indictment say?

The indictment concerns the actions of the defendants between 2020 and 2024. The defendants are Mr. Gautam Adani; Mr. Sagar Adani, Executive Director of Adani Green Energy; Vineet S Jain, former CEO of Adani Green Energy; Ranjit Gupta, former CEO of Azure Power Global; Mr. Cyril Cabanes, a former managing director at CDPQ, a Canadian

pension fund which is also a majority stockholder of Azure Power; Saurabh Agarwal, former managing director of CDPQ India; Deepak Malhotra, former executive of CDPQ, and Rupesh Agarwal, former CEO of Azure Power.

The search warrant clearly “identified offences, individuals and entities under investigation” and mentioned the violations of the FCPA, securities fraud, wire fraud and related conspiracies involving Mr. Gautam Adani and Adani Green Energy. And yet, subsequently, Gautam and Sagar caused others to make false and misleading statements regarding their awareness and knowledge of the United States government’s investigation and its subjects, which enabled them to raise a dollar-denominated syndicate loan of \$ 1.36 billion for Adani Green.

### Unable to find buyers

The U.S. DoJ indictment has alleged that the Adanis resorted to a bribery scheme because the SECI was unable to find buyers among State distribution companies (discoms) for the Adanis’ solar power, whose price was above market rates. But many State discoms did subsequently sign sale agreements with the SECI to buy more expensive renewable power from the Adani Energy.

The indictment notes that “following the promise of bribes to Indian government officials...between July 2021 and February 2022, electricity distribution companies for the States and regions of Odisha, Jammu and Kashmir, Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh entered into PSAs [Power Sale Agreements] with the SECI”.

Further, “Andhra Pradesh’s electricity distribution companies entered into a PSA with the SECI on or about December 1, 2021 after which the State agreed to purchase approximately seven gigawatts of solar power, by far the largest amount of any Indian State or region.”

## Consensus on new climate finance goal remains elusive

### ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

**CONTEXT:** Developed and developing nations are far from agreeing New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) on climate finance in the draft text, a day before this round of UN climate talks are scheduled to end in Baku.

The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) refers to money provided by developed countries to help developing nations transition away from fossil fuels and curb greenhouse gas emissions. The New Collective Quantified Goal (NCQG) made available as grants or low-cost loans from 2025 till 2035 to all developing countries will help meet their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and buffer against existing threats of climate change and compensate for climate damage that has already taken place. Developed countries have transferred \$ 115 billion in 2021-22 — though developing nations say the target has not been met.

As per the Paris Agreement, a new target above \$ 100 billion must be agreed upon by 2025. Climate finance technically includes every dollar that is even remotely connected to some aspect of ‘climate’ and therefore includes profit-making business investments as well. The global climate finance flows in 2021-2022 increased by 63 % compared to 2019-2020, reaching an annual average of \$ 1.3 trillion.

## CAQM’s submissions in Supreme Court ignore increase in paddy burnt area in Punjab, Haryana

### ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT



**CONTEXT:** The Union Government-constituted Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) had information that the ‘burnt area’ of paddy fields in Punjab and Haryana increased and many farmers were burning stubble after satellites passed over the area to avoid detection.

According to data of both the Punjab government and the Centre, the ‘burnt area’ of paddy fields in Punjab and Haryana increased in 2023 compared with previous years. Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) — a statutory body has informed the Supreme Court repeatedly over the past couple of years about “significant reduction” in stubble burning incidents, the increase in burnt area

last year suggests that the actual number of stubble burning incidents could be higher than the official count.

On January 29, 2024, the CAQM wrote to the National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC), which comes under ISRO, to develop a 'standard protocol' for estimating burnt area under paddy, as per official documents.

Satellite timings

The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) data shared with the Supreme Court show farm fires in Punjab and Haryana decreasing in 2023 by 26.5 % and 37.09 % over the 2022 figures. As per CAQM data for Haryana, farm fires fell by 67 % in 2023 compared with 2021.

Punjab government data, however, show that during the same period, the burnt area increased to 19.1 lakh hectares from 15.4 lakh hectares — an increase of 24 %. Similarly, data for Punjab calculated by the Central government's Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) showed a 15.03 % increase in burnt area from 21.03 lakh hectares to 24.2 lakh hectares. While IARI data for Haryana is not available for 2022, the burnt area increased to 8.3 lakh hectares in 2023 from 3.5 lakh hectares in 2021, an increase of 137 %.

The Minutes of the Meeting (MoM) of the first sitting of the committee formed for estimating burnt area under paddy on March 7, 2024 noted the farmers in Haryana receiving the information regarding the timing of satellite passes and carrying out the burning activity after the pass. The Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas (CAQM) in seven affidavits or reports submitted to the Supreme Court from August 31 to November 16 this year did not refer to the increase in paddy burnt area or the concerns raised at the March 7 meeting. The MoM and the data on increase in paddy area burnt have not yet been made available in the public domain by the CAQM.

## World should embrace Buddhist doctrines to resolve conflicts: Rajnath

### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Chinese counterpart Dong Jun met at the conclave of the 10-nation ASEAN grouping and some of its dialogue partners, held in Vientiane, the capital city of Laos in Vientiane, Laos on Thursday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh at a regional security conclave in Laos on Thursday encouraged the world to embrace Buddhist doctrines to find solutions to the ongoing conflicts and challenges to the international order.

India has always advocated and adopted dialogue-based solutions to resolving complex international issues and its approach to a wide range of international

challenges from border disputes to trade agreements, he told an audience of his counterparts from a number of countries, including China's Defence Minister Dong Jun. The Defence Minister made the remarks.

The Buddhist doctrines of peaceful co-existence are embraced more closely by all with the world increasingly getting polarised into blocks and camps, leading to increasing strain on the established world order, adding that an open dialogue promotes sustainable relationships.



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## India to host global meet of cooperatives in Delhi from Nov. 25

### ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT

**CONTEXT:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the 'United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2025' at the conference scheduled to be held from November 25 to 30.

India is all set to host the global conference of the International Cooperative Alliance (ICA) next week in Delhi. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will launch the 'United Nations International Year of Cooperatives 2025' at the conference on Monday. The International Cooperative Alliance (ICA), the premier body for global cooperative movement, with the initiative of IFFCO, the ICA General Assembly and Global Cooperative Conference will be hosted by India. The theme of the event would be 'Cooperatives Build Prosperity of All', and the sub-themes would be – Enabling Policy and Entrepreneurial Ecosystems; Nurturing Purposeful Leadership to Create Prosperity for All; Reaffirming The Cooperative Identity; Shaping the Future: Towards Realising Prosperity for all in 21st Century.

Bhutan Prime Minister Dasho Tshering Tobgay and Fiji Deputy Prime Minister Manoa Kamikamica will also attend the event as esteemed guests. Union Cooperation Minister Amit Shah will chair the inaugural session of the conference as chief guest.

#### Will Pak. participate?

Of all cooperatives globally, 25 % were in India and the event would give an opportunity to showcase the might of Indian cooperatives. The event would be carbon-neutral and 10,000 peepal trees had been planted across the country.

## Rock-cut footprints, human figure dating back to Megalithic period unearthed at Kerala's Kanhirapoil

### HISTORY, ART & CULTURE



**CONTEXT:** Archaeologists discovered 24 pairs of prehistoric footprints and a human figure dating back to the Megalithic period have been found carved into rock on private property at Kanhirapoil in Madikkai grama panchayat of Kerala.

The carvings, made with iron tools, include footprints varying in size from six to 10 inches, suggesting representations of both children and adults. At the end of the footprints, a human figure has been intricately etched, accompanied by four circular pits around it. The footprints represent souls of dead people and have been carved out to honour them. All the footprints are pointing towards the west.

These carvings bear similarities to prehistoric rock art found in Avalakki Pera in Udupi district in Karnataka.

Notably, this discovery aligns with earlier findings in north Kerala, including a temple decoration at Erikulam Valiyapara in Kasaragod, a running tiger near Bangalam Government Higher Secondary School in Neeleswaram, human figures in Cheemeni Ariyittapara, bull figures at Ettukudukka in Kannur, and the celebrated carvings at Edakkal Caves in Wayanad. The 2,000-year-old rock art sheds light on the lives and artistic expressions of early inhabitants of Madikkai grama panchayat and Kerala as a whole. These carvings and artefacts found here have long been attributed to the Megalithic period, indicating a shared cultural heritage in prehistoric north Kerala. The discovery reinforces the historical significance of the area and invites further exploration into the region's ancient past.

# WE AIM TO INSPIRE YOU

# U.S. Department of Justice seeks to break up Google

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS



**CONTEXT:** The U.S. Department of Justice calls for sweeping punishments that would include a sale of Google's industry-leading Chrome web browser and impose restrictions to prevent Android from favouring its own search engine.

The U.S. Department of Justice proposed break up Google to prevent the company from continuing to squash competition through its dominant search engine after a court found it had maintained an abusive monopoly over the past decade. A sale of Chrome "will permanently stop Google's control of this critical search access point and allow rival search engines the ability to access the browser that for many users is a gateway to the Internet. Although regulators stopped short of demanding Google sell Android too, they asserted the judge should make it clear the company could still be required to divest its smartphone operating system if its oversight committee continues to see evidence of misconduct.

The broad scope of the recommended penalties underscores

how severely regulators operating under President Joe Biden's administration believe Google should be punished following an August ruling by U.S. District Judge Amit Mehta that branded the company as a monopolist. The Justice Department decision-makers who will inherit the case after President-elect Donald Trump takes office next year might not be as strident. The Washington D.C. court hearings on Google's punishment are scheduled to begin in April and Judge Mehta is aiming to issue his final decision before Labour Day.

# Children make up 40 % of displaced in Myanmar, says UN

## INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

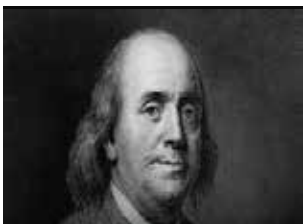
**CONTEXT:** The UN agency for children noted children making up nearly 40 % of the more than 3.4 million people in Myanmar displaced by civil war and climate change-driven extreme weather.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since the military deposed Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government in 2021 and launched a crackdown that sparked an armed uprising against the junta's rule. The Southeast Asian nation was also battered by Typhoon Yagi in September, triggering major floods that killed more than 400 people and forced hundreds of thousands from their homes.

Over 3.4 million people have been displaced across the country, nearly 40% of whom are children. The junta is battling widespread armed opposition to its 2021 coup, and its soldiers have been accused of bloody rampages and using air and artillery strikes to punish civilian communities.

### 'Devastating impact'

The fighting, as well as severe climate events like Typhoon Yagi, have had a "devastating impact" on children, leaving them displaced, vulnerable to violence and cut off from health care and education. At least 650 children have been killed or wounded in violence in the country this year. The increasing use of deadly weapons in civilian areas, including airstrikes and landmines hitting homes, hospitals, and schools, has severely restricted the already limited safe spaces for children, robbing them of their right to security".



*"If you invest more in your education, then you are likely to get more interest in it."*

*—Benjamin Franklin*

# India needs an environmental health regulatory agency

## ECOLOGY & ENVIRONMENT

**CONTEXT:** India will push for ambitious climate mitigation financing from developed nations, as a global voice for developing countries. At the same time, pollutants in our air, water and land continue to pose grave health risks. According to the Emissions Gap Report 2024 from the United Nations Environment Programme, India has seen over 6 % more greenhouse gas emissions than the previous year. The undeniable interdependencies between climate, environment, health, and the economy, though capacities to address these issues holistically are limited with India continuing to experience rapid economic growth. It is time for India to establish an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency (EHRA), which could lead to more comprehensive and cohesive environmental governance that focuses simultaneously on pollution control and health risk mitigation.

### The urgency of integration

There are profound and immediate environmental health challenges to address in India. Numerous epidemiological studies conducted across multiple States and rural and urban populations have uncovered the detrimental health effects of exposure to air, water and soil pollutants, which include a wide range of non-communicable diseases. For example, exposure to air pollution, PM2.5 in particular, is now known to be associated with respiratory, cardiovascular and metabolic diseases, pregnancy outcomes, child growth and development and even mental health disorders. This poses risks to the most vulnerable populations, such as children, the elderly, and financially poor groups.

India's current environmental governance model needs to be more integrated with health building on efforts of the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC). The CPCB focuses on pollution control, while the MoEFCC handles broader environmental policies, and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW) undertakes integrated disease surveillance and management. There is a disconnect between environmental monitoring, health impact assessments, and emissions control, given little to no data flow across these Ministries.

A centralised agency such as an EHRA could integrate environmental and health data, allowing policymakers to track, regulate, and mitigate these impacts effectively, with much-needed inter-disciplinarity. There are examples to inspire us: the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Germany's Federal Environment Agency (UBA), and Japan's Ministry of the Environment (MOE) provide robust frameworks that bridge environmental management with public health protection.

The EPA's approach covers a lot of ground — it regulates air and water quality, manages waste, and controls toxic substances while relying on integrated science assessments that include health together with vigorous enforcement. Germany's UBA focuses on environmental policy, managing air, water and waste regulations while championing sustainable energy and climate initiatives. Japan's MOE tackles pollution, chemical safety, and ecosystem protection. It collaborates with health and science agencies to monitor environmental health, enforce pollution controls, and address urban pollution and radiation issues.

The explicit integration of environment and health is part of the routine operational framework at these global agencies. Having an agency such as an EHRA in place could help India formulate a unified response to all types of pollution, advocate cumulative accountability mechanisms and collaborate with international bodies to negotiate for and adopt best practices that simultaneously address health and environment.

### A data-driven, evidence-based framework

Effective regulation is built upon reliable and context-specific data. In this context, significant global funding is invested in environmental health effects research to establish a robust evidence base for policies. Even though organisations such as the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) provide essential support for environmental health research, their impact is somewhat limited without a central body to bring together and translate this data into practical policies.

An EHRA would enable India to adopt an evidence-informed and science-driven regulatory framework, commissioning studies specific to the nation's unique environmental health challenges, such as poor air quality, vector-borne diseases, effects of persistent organic chemicals and heavy metal exposures in the context of changing land-use patterns and the consequences of climate change on health systems. Integrating health impact assessments (HIAs) into all significant projects, such as urban development and infrastructure planning, would allow decision-makers to understand and mitigate health risks before they escalate.

Contrary to concerns that environmental regulation may impede economic growth, an EHRA could promote

sustainable practices that drive innovation, create green jobs, and support long-term financial resilience. For instance, the U.S. EPA has shown that its presence and work do not hinder economic growth but spur investments in renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and pollution prevention while also increasing life expectancy.

India's economic trajectory need not be at odds with environmental health. An incentivised energy transition and public health campaigns around environmental health could encourage enterprises to transition to cleaner technologies. An EHRA can develop policy instruments that will help the nation align environmental health objectives with economic policies, which in turn would promote sustainable development that benefits the environment, public health, and the economy at the same time.

Involving the public is essential for the success of environmental health initiatives. In India, an EHRA could be critical in educating citizens on environmental health risks and empowering communities to advocate cleaner air, water, and healthier living conditions. Citizen initiatives and the role of non-governmental organisations are pivotal, given the need for accountability to start bottom-up, from the local bodies and panchayat levels. The role of communicators and journalists is crucial in highlighting and supporting these initiatives.

India has signed the Paris Agreement and has committed to the Sustainable Development Goals. An EHRA would be instrumental in helping India meet these commitments by aligning national policies with global standards. It would also contribute to collective efforts to tackle climate and health challenges including addressing transboundary issues.

Environmental health issues vary significantly across India's regions, so we must move from a one-size-fits-all approach and localise interventions. An EHRA could work closely with State and municipal governments to ensure the development and enforcement of policies that are tailored to environmental solutions for the unique needs of each area. By developing a granular national platform for monitoring and accountability, India could track health outcomes in detail, leading to more effective and timely responses to local needs

### **Building accountability**

Establishing an EHRA in India would not be without challenges, from bureaucratic inertia to resistance from industry stakeholders wary of regulation. However, clear frameworks for inter-ministerial coordination, measurable objectives, and cross-sectoral cooperation could help overcome these barriers. An EHRA should be operationally independent, guided by scientific expertise, and empowered to enforce policies that prioritise public health.

India's recent successes in meeting renewable energy targets highlight the nation's capacity for ambitious, systemic change. An EHRA could build on these achievements to strengthen India's governance of its environmental health crisis by framing pollution control as both a public health imperative and an economic opportunity.

## **A bilateral investment treaty with a 'bit' of change**

### **ECONOMICS & DEVELOPMENT**

**CONTEXT:** The bilateral investment treaty (BIT) between India and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) was signed earlier this year recently made public will replace the 2014 India-UAE investment treaty. It reveals India's latest investment treaty practice and might elucidate India's ongoing negotiations with the United Kingdom and the European Union. A typical BIT should accomplish two objectives.

### **Departures from the Model**

Though India adopted a Model BIT in 2015, it has barely managed to sign a handful of BITs based on this model. Intriguingly, the India-UAE BIT departs from the Model BIT on some significant issues.

First, it provides that a foreign investor must exhaust local remedies for at least three years before bringing an ISDS claim. This period in the Model BIT and subsequent BITs that India signed with countries such as Belarus and Kyrgyzstan is five years. Several countries lament that five years is too long. Given the overstretched Indian judicial system, it is unlikely that a foreign investor's legal dispute with the state would be resolved in five years. It seems India has taken these concerns on board and softened its stand. This gives foreign investors quicker access to ISDS, thus, bringing the pendulum somewhat back to the pole of investment protection. A shorter waiting period to invoke ISDS does not mean that India is exposing itself to treaty claims, as asserted by some. The function of investment treaties is to safeguard foreign investment from sovereign regulatory abuse. As long as India does not indulge in regulatory abuse it need not worry about ISDS claims.

Second, the definition of investment in the India-UAE BIT states that for an enterprise to qualify as an investment, and thus be eligible for treaty protection, it should possess key economic characteristics such as a commitment of capital, profit expectation, and risk assumption. The criterion that the investment should, in addition, be significant for the

development of the host state, which is present in the Model BIT, has been done away with. This is a welcome development clarifying the jurisdictional question. Several ISDS tribunals have held that proving foreign investment is significant for the development of the host state, is an inherently value-laden exercise. Thus, by removing this subjective element from the definition of investment, India and the UAE have reduced arbitral discretion. At any rate, when a lawfully created enterprise satisfies other key economic investment characteristics, it is presumably significant for the host state's development.

### **Greater clarity**

Third, Article 4 of the India-UAE BIT, which talks of 'treatment of investments', specifically lists when state action will amount to a treaty violation such as when there is a denial of justice or when there is a fundamental breach of due process in dealing with investment. These grounds are mentioned in a similar provision in the Model BIT. However, in the Model BIT, these grounds are linked to customary international law (CIL) whereas in Article 4 of the India-UAE BIT, there is no reference to CIL. The content of CIL concerning various aspects of foreign investment is not settled. Thus, a reference to CIL in the treaty, as numerous ISDS cases show, gives too much discretion to these tribunals. Consequently, Article 4 brings greater clarity for states and investors and curbs arbitral discretion.

### **A continuity**

Notwithstanding some departures, the India-UAE BIT establishes a continuity of India's investment treaty practice. For instance, the India-UAE BIT, like the Model, does not contain the most favoured nation (MFN) provision, which is a core non-discrimination standard in international economic relations. Likewise, state action on taxation is outside the scope of the India-UAE BIT. Thus, arguably, a foreign investor cannot challenge tax measures even if they are abusive. This maximises the state's regulatory power at the cost of investment protection. Like the Model BIT, Article 14.6(i) of the India-UAE BIT bars the jurisdiction of an ISDS tribunal to review the 'merits' of a domestic court decision. Arguably, 'merits' means that ISDS tribunals should not act as a court of appeal. However, 'merits' can also have an alternative interpretation.

Since the investor will bring an ISDS claim on the same issue adjudicated by the domestic court, the state can plausibly argue that the case is on the 'merits' of the domestic court decision. This might impede the tribunal's ability to hear the case. On some issues, the India-UAE BIT goes beyond the Model. For instance, it specifically disallows third-party funding and the unavailability of ISDS if an allegation of fraud or corruption is made against the investor.

One does not know whether the departures from the Model BIT signify India's change of heart or are specific to the UAE. Developed countries would be pleased with India's softening of the five-year domestic litigation requirement. However, they would remain concerned about India's continued stand of excluding MFN and taxation issues from the BIT's ambit.

### **Ending the tragedy**

The adage "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results" holds true for Manipur. It has been more than a year and a half since ethnic violence erupted between the Meitei and Kuki-Zo communities in the State. The initial clashes resulted in scores of deaths, and, since then, parts of the State, many of which are under the effective control of security forces, have witnessed sporadic but intense incidents of violence. Despite this, there has been little effort toward peace or reconciliation. Even areas such as Jiribam, which initially escaped the violence, are now engulfed in conflict, as recent events have shown. The situation in Manipur is no longer just about identifying who triggered the violence or what administrative steps are needed to stop it. The violence has spiralled to the point where ethnic divisions have become entrenched in the social fabric of the State. Every act of violence now leads to calls for retribution against entire communities, from both the Meitei and Kuki-Zo sides. Armed non-state actors, some of whom are openly or covertly supported by elected representatives, seem to control the situation, while civil society groups are marginalised.

This descent into chaos in one of India's most culturally rich and diverse border States has unfolded rapidly under the watch of an incompetent and indifferent government, which has failed to take responsibility or implement any meaningful solutions. Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and his cabinet have long lost credibility due to their mishandling of the crisis. The Union government, too, shares the blame for allowing the situation to persist. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has remained largely silent on the issue, while Union Home Minister Amit Shah has avoided taking any decisive action to address the crisis, presumably to avoid upsetting the political balance in the State. The role of security forces, while important, cannot be the sole solution to an ethnic conflict of this nature. What is required is political will and the ability to advance meaningful dialogue that can bring the community representatives closer to finding a compromise. The NPP's withdrawal of support from the government signals a growing recognition that the current leadership is not capable of addressing the crisis. It is now clear that a leadership change is necessary to chart a new course for Manipur. A political solution can be based only on consensus and compromise and these are impossible with a government headed by a partisan politician who is hoping to benefit from a polarisation of people on communal lines.





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