

# March to Manipur CM's house foiled; 22 injured

**The Hindu Bureau**

GUWAHATI

More than 20 people were injured after protesters attempting to march to the official residence of Manipur Chief Minister Yumnam Khemchand Singh clashed with security personnel on Saturday.

The protesters were seeking the arrest of those involved in the April 7 bomb attack that killed two children in Bishnupur district's Tronglaobi.

The protesters took out processions from four directions in a bid to converge at the Chief Minister's bungalow in the Babupara area of the State's capital, Imphal. The security personnel thwarted their march in the Khurai Lamlong area of Imphal East district, about two km from the Chief Minister's residence.

The security personnel dispersed hundreds of protesters, mobilised by the Imphal Valley-based Coordinating Committee on Manipur Integrity (COCOMI), by firing tear gas shells when they tried to



**Rapid response:** Security forces dispersing protesters during a COCOMI rally in Imphal on Saturday. ANI

break through the security barricades. Eyewitnesses said at least 22 people, injured in the clash, were admitted to a hospital.

The protest march was the outcome of the April 25 deadline set by COCOMI, a conglomerate of Meitei civil society organisations, for the State government to arrest all those involved in the April 7 bomb attack. COCOMI had earlier announced the boycott of the ruling BJP.

The protesters, however, managed to hold a rally near the iconic Kangla Fort, where the COCOMI leaders addressed the people. Later, the authorities allowed some leaders of

the organisation to meet the Chief Minister and submit a memorandum to him.

The organisation asked the State government if it would impress upon the Centre to stop the ongoing "proxy war" and ensure justice in the recent violent incidents. It also demanded a judicial probe into the incident of firing by the personnel of a central force, which led to the death of three protesters in Bishnupur. The killing of the two children, including an infant, had triggered the protest.

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# March to Manipur CM's house foiled; 22 injured

Two more people were injured in the restive Ukhrul district when an armoured vehicle of a paramilitary force rammed the barricades put up by locals at Talui village. People in the Naga-majority district have been protesting the inaction against Kuki armed groups allegedly behind attacks on Naga civilians.

The Working Committee of Tangkhul Naga Long, an apex community-based organisation, stated that the condition of one of the injured was critical. The village women had set up the barricades to frisk vehicles in the light of the ongoing Kuki-Naga violence in parts of the district.

Another Naga organisation, the Voice of the Naga Youth, accused the paramilitary Assam Rifles of assisting, shielding, transporting, and providing military uniforms to the Kuki extremists who attacked Naga villagers near Mullam village in Ukhrul district on Friday.

# AAP to seek disqualification of its MPs who defected to BJP; calls move 'illegal'

**Jaideep Deo Bhanj**

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Saturday said it would seek the disqualification of its seven Rajya Sabha members who broke away from the party, calling the “move unconstitutional and illegal”.

Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh said he would write to the Rajya Sabha Chairman, citing the Tenth Schedule and demanding termination of their membership, arguing that even



Sanjay Singh

a two-thirds split holds no legal validity under the anti-defection law.

“The anti-defection law clearly states that no form of split is permissible in the Assembly, Rajya Sabha, or

the Lok Sabha. It has no legal recognition, and this has also been clearly established in the Shiv Sena case,” he said.

On Friday, Raghav Chadha, MP, said that more than two-thirds of the AAP MPs had quit the party and would merge with the BJP by exercising the provisions of the Constitution. AAP earlier had a strength of 10 MPs in the Rajya Sabha, of which three remain now.

Mr. Singh said their defection was “entirely illegal, incorrect, unconstitutional, and against

parliamentary rules”.

Senior AAP leader Saurbh Bharadwaj said the party was going through a difficult time after losing power in the national capital, its leaders being jailed, and ED raids. “In such circumstances, some people are bound to leave,” Mr. Bharadwaj said.

He added that AAP was built by ordinary workers and remains a party of ordinary workers.

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# Israel flies out 240 from Mizoram amid war scare

**Kallol Bhattacharjee**

NEW DELHI

The Government of India's advisory about the security situation in Israel, amid the ongoing war in West Asia, came into focus on Thursday when Israel flew around 240 individuals from Mizoram to Tel Aviv as part of its 'Operation Wings of Dawn'.

Though members of the Bnei Menashe community have been taken to Israel on earlier occasions, this is the first time that such a large number of them are being flown against the



**Fresh start:** A member of the Bnei Menashe community reacts upon arrival at Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv on April 23. AFP

backdrop of the regional war in West Asia. Operation Wings of Dawn, sanctioned by Israeli Prime Mi-

nister Benjamin Netanyahu, aims to fly members of the Bnei Menashe community from

Northeast India to Israel.

The Jewish Agency for Israel (JAFI) said Thursday's flight from New Delhi carried the first of three batches of individuals from the Bnei Menashe community, which is generally found in Churachandpur of Manipur and in areas along the India-Myanmar border in Mizoram.

In a statement, JAFI said, "The flight that landed today included dozens of young families, who will initially move into absorption centres in Nof HaGalil, where they will also reunite with relatives who

made 'aliyah' in previous years." The total number of such individuals is expected to be around 600, it added.

In response to *The Hindu's* questions, an official maintained that India did not provide any help to facilitate the flight and said, "India's responsibility is to ensure that our citizens are not human-trafficked while travelling abroad and that apart, we cannot stop anyone from undertaking legal migration."

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# Israel flies out 240 from Mizoram amid war scare

Official sources said that while India's advisory on the prevailing security risk in Israel exists, Israeli agencies managed to proceed with the operation, as it is a religious process that they have established.

Members of the Bnei Menashe have also been taken to Israel in multiple batches over the previous two decades.

According to *The Jerusalem Post* report, the new arrivals would be settled in Kiryat Yam, a suburb near Haifa. The group arrived at Ben Gurion Airport under an initiative spearheaded by the Aliyah and Integration Ministry and JAFI. They are expected to be settled in the northern part of Israel, which has been in recent months targeted by Hezbollah. The rest of the community members are expected to leave in the coming days.

Operation Wings of Dawn is the result of a decision made by Mr. Netanyahu, Minister of Aliyah and Integration, Ofir Sofer and Minister of Finance Bezalel Smotrich to complete the immigration of the rest of the Bnei Menashe community from Mizoram and Manipur.

# U.S. sanctions waiver on Chabahar ends

With Washington ruling out an extension of the sanctions waiver on Iranian oil, India faces a choice between continuing its role at Chabahar port and risking penalties or scaling back; officials say a transfer of the IPGL subsidiary's stake to an Iranian firm is being explored to navigate sanctions

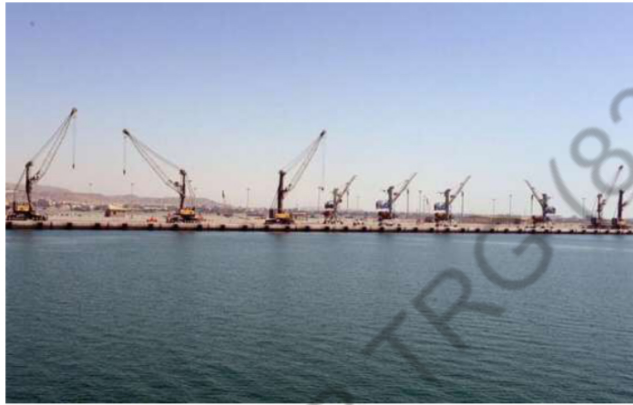
**Suhasini Haidar**  
NEW DELHI

As the U.S. sanctions waiver for Iran's Chabahar port ends on Sunday, the government faces a major test in strategic autonomy, as it may have to choose between exiting the 23-year-old port project or facing American sanctions.

Officials of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) have been holding talks with U.S. counterparts on the issue since October 2025, when Washington extended the waiver for six months until April 26, 2026, to give India time to "wind down" the project. Given the U.S.-Iran war and a series of U.S. measures targeting Iran under the U.S. Treasury's "Operation Economic Fury", officials said they were not hopeful of another extension.

On Friday, U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent made it clear that Washington would not extend the waiver of sanctions on the purchase of Iranian oil that expired on April 19.

"Not the Iranian [sanctions]," Mr. Bessent said, according to the Associated Press. "We have the blockade, and there's no



In 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had travelled to Tehran and signed a trilateral agreement among India, Iran and Afghanistan to operationalise the Chabahar route. FILE PHOTO

oil coming out." "And we think in the next two, three days, they're going to have to start shuttering production, which will be very bad for their wells," he said, outlining the U.S. strategy to squeeze Iran's heavily sanctioned economy further.

As a result, the government has been exploring a number of other options to minimise its exposure to American sanctions. Since November 2025, the government has withdrawn all its personnel from Chabahar, prepaid its invest-

ment commitment of \$120 million, and is now considering transferring its stake in the Shahid Beheshti Terminal at Chabahar to an Iranian company, leaving the option of returning at a later date.

## Transfer of stake

On Saturday, an official confirmed that the transfer of the stake owned by India Ports Global Chabahar Free Zone (IPGCFZ), a wholly owned subsidiary of India Ports Global Limited (IPGL), to a local company was under discus-

sion, but had not been effected yet.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, former Ambassador to Iran Gaddam Dharmendra called the plan to transfer India's stake a "tactical workaround", given "increasingly difficult and chaotic U.S. decisions" impacting India-Iran ties.

"In enlisting a local partner, [India is] not actually exiting a strategic project but safeguarding India's interests on a project of tremendous long-term importance. It's equally important that the

Iranians should know that we remain vested in this critical bilateral project," he added, pointing out that India's other regional infrastructure project IMEC (India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor) is also unlikely to "take shape any time soon", given the fractures within the Gulf countries, enhancing Chabahar's importance.

Although the original Chabahar port agreement between India and Iran was signed in 2003, U.S. sanctions have consistently slowed down progress on the major connectivity project from India through Iran to Afghanistan and Central Asia, while circumventing transit hurdles from Pakistan.

In 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to Tehran and signed a trilateral agreement among India, Iran and Afghanistan to operationalise the Chabahar route with ambitions to develop the port, as well as a road project and railway line from Chabahar-Zahedan over the Afghan border.

In 2018, the U.S. agreed to a "carve-out" exception for India to use the route to send food and aid to Afghanistan, but subsequently changed policy, mount-

ing pressure on India to curtail ties with Iran, including oil imports, trade, and the Chabahar port. In 2019, the U.S. introduced sanctions to curb steel trade as well, which disrupted India's plans to provide rolling stock (coaches), tracks, switching and signalling equipment, and after several delays, Iran dropped India from the railway project. In May 2024, the government tried to re-energise the project, signing a 10-year agreement with the Iranian government to develop the port.

However, on February 4, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump issued the National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPM-2) that mandated the U.S. Secretary of State to "modify or rescind sanctions waivers, particularly those that provide Iran any degree of economic or financial relief, including those related to Iran's Chabahar port project".

The order made it clear, long before the war in West Asia began, that Washington expected New Delhi to shut down its involvement in the Chabahar project, which was decades in the making, and is now at a dead end.

# U.S. envoys not to travel to Pakistan, says Trump

The decision comes after Iran's Foreign Minister wraps up a visit to Islamabad, meeting Pakistan's leadership, thanking them for their efforts; Pak. stresses importance of dialogue and diplomacy

**Agence France-Presse**  
ISLAMABAD/TEHRAN

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Saturday he had ordered his envoys not to travel to Pakistan to continue talks with Iranian officials on ending the war.

"I just cancelled the trip of my representatives going to Islamabad, Pakistan, to meet with the Iranians. Too much time wasted on travelling, too much work! Besides, there is tremendous infighting and confusion within their "leadership." Also, we have all the cards, they have none! If they want to talk, all they have to do is call!", Mr. Trump wrote on Truth Social.

The decision came as Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi wrapped up a visit to Islamabad.

**'Principled positions'**  
Mr. Araghchi met Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakis-



**Peace mission:** Iran Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi meeting Pakistan Army Chief Asim Munir in Islamabad on Saturday. AP

tan's Army Chief and a key figure in the mediation effort, as well as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Mr. Araghchi, according to an Iranian statement, thanked Pakistan for its efforts but "explained our country's principled positions regarding the latest developments related to the ceasefire and the complete end of the imposed war against Iran".

Mr. Dar posted on social

media that the meeting with the Iranian delegation lasted around two hours and Pakistan emphasised "the importance of dialogue and diplomacy".

Iranian state media later reported that Mr. Araghchi had left Islamabad. It said Islamabad would serve as a bridge to "convey" Iranian proposals.

An Iranian spokesman said Mr. Araghchi would travel to Oman and Russia to discuss efforts to end the

war, which was launched against Iran by Israel and the U.S. on February 28. Iran's military, meanwhile, remained defiant.

In a statement carried by state media, the military's central command said that if "the invading U.S. military continues blockading, banditry, and piracy in the region, they should be certain that they will face a response from Iran's powerful armed forces".

Since the last round of talks, efforts to bring the two sides back to the table have hit an impasse, with Iran refusing to participate as long as a U.S. naval blockade remains in place. Iran has imposed a de facto blockade of its own on the Strait of Hormuz, allowing only a trickle of ships to pass through the waterway, throwing global energy markets into turmoil.

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# **U.S. envoys not to travel to Pakistan, says Trump**

Oil prices slid on Friday amid hopes that fresh peace talks would see an end to Tehran's disruption of trade through the strait.

European Council President Antonio Costa said the strait "must immediately reopen without restrictions and without tolling". "This is vital for the entire world," Mr. Costa said.

On Thursday, Mr. Trump announced a three-week ceasefire extension in Lebanon and spoke in glowing terms of peace prospects for the country after meeting with Israeli and Lebanese envoys.

But Mohammed Raad, the head of the parliamentary bloc for Hezbollah, urged the Lebanese government to withdraw from direct talks with Israel and warned that a lasting peace deal of the kind sought by Mr. Trump "will in no way enjoy Lebanese national consensus".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has vowed to destroy Hezbollah, said: "We have started a process to reach a historic peace between Israel and Lebanon, and it's clear to us that Hezbollah is trying to sabotage this."

Despite the ceasefire, Lebanon's health ministry said Israeli strikes on Saturday in the Nabatieh district of the south of the country had killed four people.

ISRAELI MILITARY WARNS LEBANESE RESIDENTS TO AVOID LITANI RIVER AMID FIGHTING WITH HEZBOLLAH

# Four killed in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon days after ceasefire extension

Associated Press  
Islamabad, April 25

FOUR PEOPLE were killed on Saturday in Israeli strikes on southern Lebanon, Lebanon's state news agency reported, while the Israeli military said Hezbollah had fired rockets at Israel, the latest challenges to a tenuous, recently extended ceasefire.

The ceasefire agreed between Israel and Lebanon has led to a significant reduction in hostilities, but Israel and Iran-backed militant group Hezbollah have continued to clash in southern Lebanon, where Israel has kept soldiers in the self-declared buffer zone.

The Israeli military said on Saturday that it had struck loaded rocket launchers belonging to Hezbollah in three locations in southern Lebanon overnight and targeted several Hezbollah fighters in separate strikes. It said later in the day that it had struck facilities used by Hezbollah's elite Radwan forces in southern Lebanon.

It was unclear whether the deaths reported by the state news agency were linked to those Israeli strikes.

The Israeli military restated its warning for Lebanese resi-



Smoke rises in Lebanon after an explosion, as seen from the Israeli side of the Lebanon border in northern Israel on Saturday. REUTERS

dents not to approach the Litani River area in southern Lebanon while it battles Hezbollah.

It said it had intercepted a suspicious aerial target within the area its forces are presently occupying, and that two rockets were fired by Hezbollah into northern Israel, one of which was intercepted.

There were no reports of casualties. Responding to the extension, Hezbollah lawmaker Ali

Fayyad said "it is essential to point out that the ceasefire is meaningless in light of Israel's insistence on hostile acts, including assassinations, shelling, and gunfire" and its demolition of villages and towns in the south. "Every Israeli attack ... gives the resistance the right to a proportionate response," he added.

Hezbollah is not a party to the ceasefire agreement, and has

strongly objected to Lebanon's face-to-face contacts with Israel.

The April 16 agreement does not require Israeli troops to withdraw from the belt of southern Lebanon seized during the war. The zone extends 5 to 10 km (3 to 6 miles) into Lebanon.

Israel says the buffer zone aims to protect northern Israel from attacks by Hezbollah, which fired hundreds of rockets at Israel during the war.

## UN says Israel strikes, Hezbollah rockets may violate international law

Reuters  
Geneva, April 25

THE UN human rights office said on Friday it has documented patterns of attacks on civilians in populated areas and residential buildings in Lebanon and Israel that may amount to serious violations of international humanitarian law.

The report covers the first three weeks of the latest escalation, which began after Hezbollah launched attacks on Israel on March 2, prompting Israel to respond with a large-scale military offensive.

Since then, nearly 2,500 people have been killed in Lebanon, according to Lebanese authorities, amid widespread displacement and heavy damage to civilian infrastructure. US President Donald Trump on Thursday announced a three-week extension to a ceasefire.

The Israeli military and Hezbollah did not immediately respond to Reuters requests for

comment about the report. The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights documented several cases in which Israeli strikes hit, and in some instances destroyed, multi-storey residential buildings, killing entire families in Lebanon, which may constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law, OHCHR spokesperson Thameen Al-Khreetan said.

The report cited the example of an Israeli strike on March 8 that hit a multi-storey residential building in the town of Sir el-Gharbiyeh, in the Nabatiyeh governorate. The strike killed at least 13 civilians inside the building, including five women, five men, two boys and a girl.

The office said incidents such as this raised concerns about compliance with the principles of distinction, proportionality and precautions in attack under international humanitarian law.

# U.S. slaps sanctions on China-based refinery, shippers over Iran oil trade

Washington targets Hengli Petrochemical and 40 firms, vessels for helping Tehran sell oil: Beijing buys more than 80% of Iran's shipped oil; sanctions aim to restrict Iran's oil exports; experts say targeting Chinese banks would have greater effect

Reuters

WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump's administration said on Friday it imposed sanctions on an independent "teapot" refinery in China for buying billions of dollars' worth of Iranian oil, as Washington and Tehran head into another round of peace talks over the weekend.

The Treasury Department targeted Hengli Petrochemical (Dalian) Refinery, which it said is one of Iran's largest customers of crude oil and petroleum products. The department's Office of Foreign Assets Control said it also im-



**Crude cut-off:** Hengli Petrochemical's refinery complex at Changxing island in Dalian, Liaoning province, China. REUTERS

posed sanctions on about 40 shipping companies and vessels that operate as part of Iran's shadow fleet.

China has earlier said it opposes "illegal" unilateral sanctions. The Trump administration last year im-

posed sanctions on teapots Hebei Xinhai Chemical Group, Shandong Shouguang Luqing Petrochemical, and Shandong Shengxing Chemical.

It created hurdles for the refiners, including diffi-

culties receiving crude and having to sell products under different names. Teapots account for a quarter of Chinese refinery capacity, operate with narrow and sometimes negative margins, and have been squeezed by tepid domestic demand.

The U.S. sanctions, which block U.S. assets of those designated and prevent Americans from doing business with them, have deterred some larger independent refiners from buying Iranian oil. China buys more than 80% of Iran's shipped oil, 2025 data from analytics firm Kpler showed.

Sanctions experts have long said, however, that

the independent refineries are somewhat immune to the full effect of U.S. sanctions as they have little exposure to the U.S. financial system. Imposing sanctions on China's banks that help facilitate the purchases would have a larger effect on purchases of Iranian oil, they say.

**'Financial stranglehold'** U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said Washington is imposing a "financial stranglehold" on the Iranian government.

"Treasury will continue to constrict the network of vessels, intermediaries, and buyers Iran relies on to move its oil to global markets," Mr. Bessent said.

## LONDON

### Downing Street says sovereignty of Falklands Islands rest with the U.K.



AP

A spokesperson for Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands rests with Britain, after a Pentagon memo mullied reviewing the U.S. position on the region as punishment for Britain's stance on the Iran war. Britain and Argentina fought a war in 1982 after Argentina made a failed bid to take the islands. REUTERS

## BANGKOK

### Chinese Foreign Minister meets Myanmar President, renews ties



AP

China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi met Min Aung Hlaing, the leader of Myanmar's military-backed government in a move aimed at strengthening Beijing's ties in Southeast Asia. Mr. Wang's visit to capital Naypyitaw comes after the junta chief was sworn in as President on April 10. AP

# Skyroot Aerospace flags off Vikram-1, India's first private orbital launch soon

Express News Service  
New Delhi, April 25

IN A major boost to India's space industry, Skyroot Aerospace is likely to become the first private company to launch an orbital space rocket. On Saturday, Skyroot flagged off the payload fairing for its Vikram-1 rocket in Hyderabad, with the launch of the rocket slated for later this year. The payload fairing — the upper nose cone of the launch vehicle that houses the satellites — is now headed for India's only spaceport in Sriharikota, where it will be integrated with the rest of the launch vehicle.

"We completed the most critical testing of Vikram-1 and are excited to begin integration and launch campaign activities next week at the spaceport towards this historic launch," said Naga Bharath Daka, co-founder and COO, Skyroot Aerospace. Launch campaign is the period



Telangana CM Revanth Reddy flags off payload fairing for Skyroot Aerospace's Vikram-1 rocket, in Sriharikota on Saturday. ANI

before a launch when the vehicle is integrated, tested and prepared. Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy, also present at the flag-off event, said that it was a key milestone in the state's pursuit of becoming a global leader in the aerospace sector.

Telangana is among a hand-

ful states with their own space policy — the first step towards creating space manufacturing hubs, such as the launch vehicle hub in Tamil Nadu and a satellite hub in Gujarat. The launch of India's first privately manufactured PSLV (polar satellite launch vehicle) — ISRO's

workhorse launcher — is also likely to take place this year.

Among Skyroot's many small launch vehicle projects, Vikram-1 is a multi-stage launch vehicle with solid and liquid fuel-based engines designed for launching satellites weighing up to 350 kg to low earth orbit. The low earth orbit is the region of space from 160 km to 2,000 km above the surface of Earth. The number of satellites being launched in this region has skyrocketed in recent years, with many being the Starlink communication satellites.

Vikram-1 is different as the rocket is made of carbon composite instead of metals, and houses a 3D-printed indigenously made engine — making its manufacturing and assembly easier, quicker and cheaper. The launch vehicle has been named to honour Dr Vikram Sarabhai, considered to be the father of the Indian space programme.