

When Assam electorates record impressive polling turnout



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Nava Thakuria 13 April 2026 29863 views

After Assam, Keralam and Puducherry (union territory), the State legislative assembly elections are knocking at the doors of Tamil Nadu and West Bengal in the second half of April 2026. Meanwhile, the millions of voters have shown an extraordinary commitment to electoral politics as they participated in the largely peaceful single-phase assembly polls on 9 April recording a high voters' turnout. Assam recorded 85.96% voter participation in 126 assembly seats, where Puducherry showcased over 90% voting in 30 constituencies followed by Keralam (140 seats) with nearly 80% turnout.

Assam's 2.50 crore electorates (including 1.25 crore female voters and 6.4 lakh first-timers) have sealed the fates of 722 candidates representing different political parties and independent contenders in the electronic voting machines which were set in 31,490 polling stations across 35 districts. Tamil Nadu now prepares for single-phase polling on 23 April and West Bengal readied for voting in two phases (23 and 29 April). The outcome of all polls including the bye-elections held in Karnataka's Bagalkot and Davanagere South seats, Nagaland's Koridang and Tripura's Dharmanagar constituency will be available on 4 May.

According to the Election Commission of India, a large number of assembly constituencies in Assam namely Parbatjhora, Golakganj, Gauripur, Dhubri, Birsing Jarua, Bilasipara, Mankachar, Jaleshwar, Goalpara West, Goalpara East, Abhayapuri, Srijangram, Bongaigaon, Mandia, Chenga, Pakabetbari, Chamaria, Barkhetri, Nalbari, Dalgaon, Laharighat, Dhing, Rupahihat and Samaguri recorded over 90% polling. However, the urban localities under Kamrup and Kamrup (metropolitan) districts reported a slightly lower turnout (around 80% in Dimoria, Dispur, Guwahati Central, Jalukbari and New Guwahati seats). Earlier, Assam witnessed a significant voters' response in 2016 (84.72%), which defeated the Congress government in Dispur and paved the way for a new found alliance led by Bharatiya Janata Party.

With high voters' participation, the political observers in the region put two completely opposite predictions, where one group is favouring the return of the BJP-led government and the other one has been weighing for the Indian National Congress-led opposition alliance. A sizable population of Assam openly supported the saffron alliance citing the reasons for improved safety-security scenario, sustainable development and impartial welfare initiatives for the entire population. An aggressive campaign by incumbent chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, adding colours to it by subsequent presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah with other senior BJP leaders in election rallies, is projected to encourage more voters to reach the polling booths.

Moreover, the pertinent issues including anti-influx measures, implementing a number of peace accords, wide ranging development and public welfare initiatives might have attracted the attention of indigenous population. Assam government's flagship direct benefit transfer scheme Orunodoi offers a monthly financial assistance of Rs 1250, deposited in bank accounts of eligible women, where the scheme today covers nearly 40 lakh beneficiaries across the State. Just a few days prior to the poll schedule was announced, the government transferred Rs 9,000 to each Orunodoi beneficiary (comprising four months of monthly deposits along with a Bohag/Rongali Bihu gift in cash).

A large group of analysts argue that the larger participation of voters indicated the confidence in the ruling government and so they term it as a pro-incumbency wave. They also pointed out that the mainstream Assamese voters usually show reluctance for participating in any electoral process (compared to the Bangladesh/East Pakistan origin Muslim population living in Assam since the days of independence), but this time they came together to elect their representatives keeping an eye to the future of the next generation.

Additionally, the special review of voters list prior to the polls where the names of non-existent voters (due to death or girls marrying outside the constituency) and an increased awareness among common electorates also contributed in enhancing the voter turnout visibly. The women, many of whom remain beneficiaries of various government-sponsored welfare schemes in the last few years, exceeded their male counterparts. Records indicate that Assam women voters were lagging behind the male electorates in 2011 assembly polls, whereas they made it to equal share in 2016 and in the last two elections (2021 and 2026), the female voters slightly surpassed the male contributions.

The other group has tried to establish the scenario in favour of the opposition parties citing the reasons of a decade long anti-incumbency, continued atrocities against the religious minority voters and personal corruption and mismanagement of government funds by CM Sarma and his family. Assam Congress chief Gaurav Gogoi termed the unprecedented voter turnout in polls was in favour of change. The deputy-leader of the oppositions in Lok Sabha also came out vocal against Sarma precisely after his party senior Pawan Khera made sensational public allegations against Sarma's family. Just three days before the polling date, Khera organized a press conference in New Delhi (and later in Guwahati also) to claim that the CM's wife Riniki Bhuyan possesses multiple passports and unaccounted assets in foreign lands. Gogoi opined that since Khera's press conference (which invited court notices to him and later compelled to approach Telangana High Court for temporary relief), Sarma appeared panicked and he was making abusive public statements as well as intimidating remarks against some media personnel.

Gogoi was seconded by political leaders belonging to the Congress-led alliance like Asom Jatiya Parishad, Rajbor Dal, etc. However, once a trusted ally to the Congress, All India United Democratic Front went to polls solo in this election. BJP Assam president Dilip Saikia expressed confidence that the saffron party-led National Democratic Alliance would do better this time. Terming the exceptional voter turnout in a peaceful ambience as pro-BJP, the saffron leader argued that the NDA would easily cross 75 (total score in 2021 assembly election) this year. Asom Gana Parishad president Atul Bora also predicted to win over 90 seats for the NDA, where his party fielded candidates in 26 constituencies, Bodoland People's Front nominees fought in 11 and the BJP in 89 constituencies.

Jorhat constituency attracted the media attention as the sitting BJP legislator Hitendra Nath Goswami and his competitor Congress Parliamentarian Gogoi have shown retrained campaigning with no personal attacks. CM Sarma however criticized the Congress for bringing up the issue of Zubeen Garg's mysterious death in Singapore last year for the political campaign anticipating electoral gains. The Congress manifesto promised to facilitate justice for Zubeen within 100 days if voted to power. Zubeen's widow Garima Saikia Garg and close relatives had earlier appealed to all political parties for not politicizing his untimely death for electoral gains. While casting votes in Guwahati, Garima repeated her call after expressing confidence in the trials currently going on in local court.

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BY NAVA THAKURIA

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