

PM Narendra Modi-led BJP has been called into doubt as the opposition presented a no-confidence resolution in parliament on July 26, 2023."

At the Glance:

On July 26, 2023, Gaurav Gogoi, a member of the opposition parties in India's parliament, presented a motion of no confidence against Prime Minister Narendra Modi's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). A no-trust vote is called in order to overthrow the government. It enables the opposition to call the government's majority and ability to rule into question, and if passed, the administration is forced to resign. PM Narendra Modi comfortably passed this motion based on the BJP's occupancy of the Lok Sabha seat on August 10, 2023. However, he faced a similar challenge in 2018 as well. Even then, he had the backing of 330 MPs. So the real issue is why should parties bother if these motions are never meant to succeed.

What is happening in India:

Manipur, a mountainous state in northeastern India that borders Myanmar and is located east of Bangladesh, is a crucial factor in why this motion was approved at the first place.

As the two main tribes, the majority Meitei and the minority Kuki, fight for control over territory and influence, ethnic violence has thrown the small Indian state of Manipur into what many have labeled "a state of civil war." Since the start of the violence in May, there have been at least 130 fatalities and 400 injuries. Over competing claims to their homelands and contrasting religious beliefs, Meitei and Kuki groups have been at war with one another for decades. The Frontier Manipur's editor, Dhiren A Sadokpam, claims that this time, the fighting is solely motivated by ethnicity rather than religion. Some Indian scholars have suggested that what is happening in Manipur is ethnic cleansing.

Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi said that the motion was "necessary" to break PM Modi's "silence" on the issue of violence in Manipur. The resolution was carried with the backing of 50 Lok Sabha members, the bare minimum required. When the proposal was challenged, the opposition insisted that Prime Minister Modi answer

three questions. The first question was why PM Modi had not visited Manipur during this critical time. Second, why did it take approximately 80 days for him (PM Modi) to address the matter, and just for 30 seconds? Third, as elections approached, he changed chief ministers in Gujarat, Uttarakhand, and Tripura several times for political reasons. Why not now in Manipur?

The Prime Minister's delayed response and lack of urgency to address the Manipur crisis indicates, lack of accountability and inadequate compassionate leadership. This was the key reason why the opposition party presented the no-confidence resolution in the first place. During his statement, Gaurav Gogoi stated, "We are compelled to bring the No-Confidence Motion." This was never about numbers; it was always about justice for Manipur." This comment implies that the loss of the opposition's no-confidence vote by the Lok Sabha was not unexpected, given BJP's strong majority in the legislature. Congress-led coalition INDIA said that they utilized this strategy to get Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make a remark on the Manipur problem because when a no-confidence vote is launched, the PM is obligated by law to speak.

Since Independence, there has been 28 no confidence resolutions submitted in India, but none have ever succeeded. All 28 of them have failed. So, why do parties bother proposing no-confidence motions?

This is because, in India, No Confidence Motions are about checks, not threats. When such a motion is introduced, MPs can debate any problem in the country. Debates preceding no-confidence votes allow the public to examine the government's flaws and failings. This educates people and makes them politically aware.

What is in for you:

The discussion about the Manipur issue and claims of insufficient action by Prime Minister Modi enlightened citizens across India. It raised public awareness and scrutiny of the government's conduct. For Indian citizens, this motion affirmed their constitutionally protected freedom to challenge leaders.

The hardening of ethnic identities and fault lines in Manipur may enhance animosity and hostility toward Kukis in Myanmar as well. There are fears that armed Kuki terrorist groups from Manipur would attempt to expand their base into Myanmar in order to conduct attacks on Meiteis. This might further destabilize the Myanmar-India border area. Frequent no-confidence motions and the resulting government instability may reflect political unpredictability, making India a doubtful economic and strategic partner in the eyes of the United States, the United Kingdom, and other Western countries.

Countries negotiating or implementing Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) with India must account for the likelihood of rapid government collapses or policy reversals as a result of such movements. Other western nations that are looking to India for crucial agreements in areas such as trade, defense procurement, technology sharing, and climate change collaboration may be delayed if the Indian government has different priorities.

What happens next:

The no-confidence motion may have failed as predicted, but it was successful in drawing attention to Manipur's turbulent condition and placing the BJP administration under scrutiny. In an effort to put an end to the new wave of violence, the Indian government has sent 40,000 soldiers, paramilitary personnel, and police to the region. So far, it has rejected tribal leader's requests to establish their direct control.

To keep the Manipur situation in the spotlight, opposition parties might continue to impose parliamentary pressure on the administration through questions, debates, and protests. Meanwhile, the BJP will strive to retain its political dominance and prevent threats such as the no-confidence vote from destabilizing its government. With critical state elections approaching, political squabbling between the BJP and the opposition is set to heat up. In the upcoming months, the government's capacity to rule and effectively manage coalitions in the face of constant politicking will be put to the test.