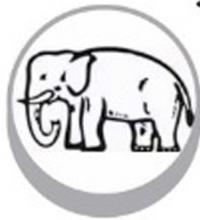


আসাম আয়েন আফাব

ASSAM

ASSAM LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY

# ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS SURVEY TRACKER POLL -1



**PEOPLES PULSE**  
*an ear to the ground*



**ASSAM**  
**ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS SURVEY -2026**  
**(TRACKER POLL -1)**

**15<sup>th</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025**



## METHODOLOGY

Assam is primarily a multi-ethnic, multi-linguistic state which is fastly becoming bi-polar in political terms. It has 126 assembly seats and 14 Lok Sabha seats. Out of the ACs- 19 are reserved for ST and 9 are reserved for the SC. Further, out of the 14 PCs, 2 are reserved for the ST and 1 reserved for the SCs.

**Peoples Pulse** Research Organization specializing in fieldwork based political and electoral research undertook a 45 days long field study in poll bound Assam state following a Purposive Stratified Random Sampling Model. The first Tracker poll survey report was compiled and prepared by Dr.Rajan Pandey, Political Analyst, Director Peoples pulse research organization.

**Peoples Pulse** research scholars covered four Regions, Upper Assam, Barak Valley, and Middle Assam & Lower Assam travelling over 5000 kilometers across Assam State covering all the five administrative Divisions. 35 districts of the state to understand the Mood of the people at the ground level. This was done from 15<sup>th</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025, about 4 months before the schedule for Assam Assembly elections.

Peoples Pulse research scholars formed themselves into four groups consisting of four researchers in each group, consisting of 20 Research Scholars. Each group spent three to four days covering all the blocks in each Assembly constituency in the region assigned to them to study the mood. One group toured the entire state to study the overall mood in the state and understand the general issues that are playing on the mind of the voter.

Further, one researcher from each group conducted Face-to-Face interviews with respondents based on a structured questionnaire. In this manner **40-45** samples were collected from each Assembly constituency. **5,000** samples were collected from the entire state. The Sample reflects the situation on the ground in terms of caste, religion, community and age as they exist on the field. Gender was given equal representation.

Further other three Researchers conducted the Mood Survey based on open-ended free-wheeling conversations with respondents to elicit their views on a host of issues interspersed with the question related to the specific study. The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling and employing a qualitative inferential method. Our researchers met with various sections of the people and understood their views on different issues and political parties through social listening.

The Research Team concentrated on the questions of the Problems or grievances of the people which may have a bearing on the forthcoming Assembly Elections in Assam, the perceptions of the people towards the governance of NDA, led by Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, the perception of the people towards the main opposition party Congress. The Research Team also gathered people's opinions on other parties like AGP, BPF, AIUDF, RAaijor Dal, AJP, UPPL, CPI(M) & others Parties.



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The Conversations were free and frank without any inhibitions, obstructions and promptings and the Research Team could elicit views of the people on the ground in realistic manner. All the respondents were courteous towards the team and more than willing to answer questions. The Research Team also spoke to a couple of political observers including journalists and Political scientists to cross check facts and figures and get an overall macro view to locate the micro level views expressed by the people in a perspective.

The study was intense wherein on an average **15-20** groups were interviewed per day with an average time span of **25-30** minutes with each group.

This is the first study report of the ground level ahead of the **2026 Assam** Assembly elections. One more studies would be conducted in February or March 2026 before the Assembly Elections by People's Pulse Research Organization.





**Total ACs : 126 (19 ST, 9 SC)**

**Total PCs : 14 (2 ST, 1 SC)**

**Total Districts : 35**

<u>Lower Assam division (Guwahati)</u>	<u>North Assam division (Tezpur)</u>	<u>Upper Assam division (Jorhat)</u>	<u>Central Assam division (Nagaon)</u>	<u>Barak Valley division (Silchar)</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Baksa</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bajali</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Barpeta</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Bongaigaon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Chirang</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Dhubri</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Goalpara</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Kamrup</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Kamrup Metropolitan</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Kokrajhar</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Nalbari</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">South Salmara- Mankachar</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tamulpur</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Biswanath</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Darrang</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sonitpur</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Udalguri</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Charaideo</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Dhemaji</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Dibrugarh</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Golaghat</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Jorhat</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Lakhimpur</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Majuli</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Sivasagar</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Tinsukia</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Dima Hasao</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hojai</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Morigaon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Nagaon</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Karbi Anglong</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">West Karbi Anglong</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Cachar</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Hailakandi</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Karimganj</a></li> </ul>

**Total Administrative Divisions : 5 (Barak Valley, Central Assam, Lower Assam, North Assam,  
Upper Assam)**

**Regions : 4 (Upper Assam, Barak Valley, Middle Assam and Lower Assam)**

## Major Regions in Assam

Assam is divided into 4 main sub regions- Upper Assam, Lower Assam, Middle Assam and the Barak Valley.

**Upper Assam:** Upper Assam comprises of districts like Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Sibsagar, Golaghat etc on the south bank and Dhemaji, Lakhimpur, Sonitpur on the north bank of Brahmaputra river. Tea Tribes, Ahoms, Tribal communities like Misings, Deoris, Sonowal Kacharis and ethnic Assamese are the main communities of this region and it has 40 plus seat in the assembly while 4 Lok Sabha seats are in this region. Muslim voters are quite less in the region and it enjoys a sense of cultural superiority over other regions of the state.

**Middle Assam:** Districts like Nagaon, Hojai, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Darrang, Morigaon etc fall under this region. Further, Bodo dominated district like Udaguri also come under it. This region has significant urban population and Muslim voters besides Bengalis, Tiwas and ethnic Assamese are also in good numbers in this region. When compared to upper Assam, Tea tribes are comparatively less here but still influential in some pockets.

**Lower Assam:** This region falls on the borders of West Bengal, Bhutan and Meghalaya. Districts like Goalpara, Salmara, Dhubri, Bongaigaon, Barpeta, Bajali Guwahati (Kamrup Rural and Urban), Nalbari etc fall under this region while three other districts of Bodoland Territorial Region like Kokrajhar, Baksa and Chirang are also in this region. Bodos, Muslims, Rabhas, Bengalis and ethnic Assamese voters are the most dominant communities here. There are 3 Lok Sabha seats in this region and significant number of assembly constituencies.

**Barak Valley:** The Barak valley is named after the Barak river and consists of 3 districts namely Cachar (commonly called Silchar), Hailakandi and Karimganj districts. The region is separated from mainland Assam by the North Cachar Autonomous Hill District or Dima Hasao and borders Bangladesh on the west, Tripura on South West, Mizoram in the south and Manipur in the east. Since the road link via Dima Hasao doesn't remain operational throughout the year due to frequent landslides, people prefer to reach it via Meghalaya.

The region has very strong sub-regional sentiment due to various reasons. Firstly, bad road connectivity adds to a sense of alienation. Secondly, it is predominantly populated by Bengali speaking Hindus and Muslims and had close affinity with undivided Bengal during pre-independence days. There are 2 Lok Sabha seats in this region and 13 assembly seats.

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## BJP Heading for a Hat-Trick in Assam...

### NDA likely to touch 90 seats mark; opposition in disarray; AIUDF and UPPL fighting for political survival!

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is poised to score a hat-trick in the upcoming Assam Assembly elections. According to a first round of survey (Tracker Poll) conducted by People's Pulse Research Organization in Assam. According to the survey conducted by Peoples Pulse Research Organization BJP would emerge as the single largest party with 69-74 seats in the 126 member in the Assam Assembly and cross halfway mark for forming the Government. As per the survey the ruling BJP is holding its ground.

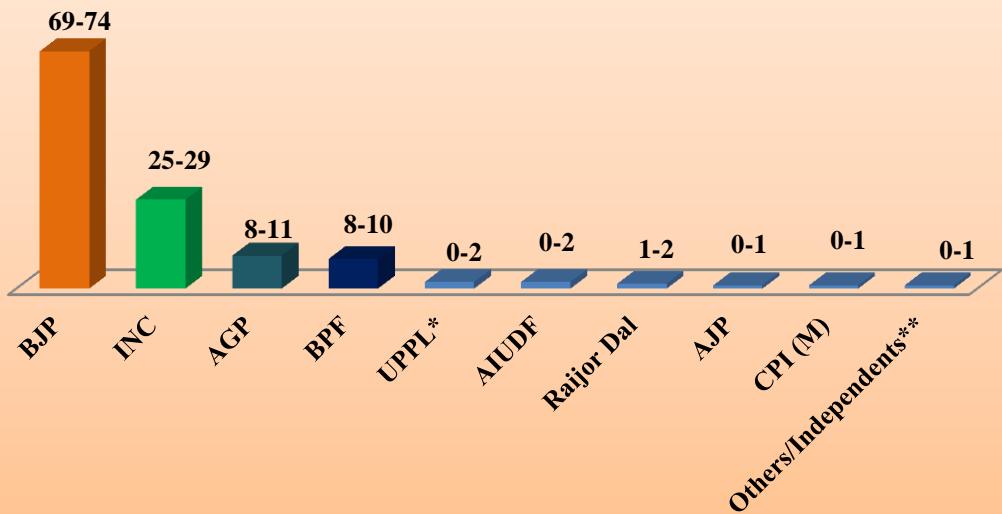
The first Tracker poll was conducted in Assam from 15<sup>th</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2025. Second round of Tracker Poll will be conducted in Assam after the announcement of the election schedule in February or March – 2026. The first Tracker poll survey report was compiled and prepared by Dr.Rajan Pandey, Political Analyst, Director Peoples pulse research organization.

Peoples Pulse survey indicates that the NDA alliance could win around 90 seats in the ensuing Assam Assembly elections in 2026. According to the first round of survey (Tracker Poll-1) BJP is set to retain power by getting 69-74 seats. The main opposition Party Congress would get 25-29 seats. As per the survey AGP 8-11, BPF 8-10, AIUDF 0-2, Raijor Dal 1-2, UPPL 0-2, AJP 0-1, CPI(M) 0-1 and Independents 0-1 seats.

## Projected Seats

S. No	Party	Seats Projection
1	BJP	69-74
2	INC	25-29
3	AGP	8-11
4	BPF	8-10
5	UPPL*	0-2
6	AIUDF	0-2
7	Raijor Dal	1-2
8	AJP	0-1
9	CPI (M)	0-1
10	Others/Independents**	0-1

## Seat Projection



- \* *UPPL is trying hard to join NDA but as of now BJP, AGP and BPF are only alliance partners in the NDA*
- \* *Others include every other outfit left out including Jai Bharat Party which has a slight chance at Majbhat AC of Udaguri*

The Assam Legislative Assembly has 126 seats, and a party or alliance needs 64 seats to form the government. The People's Pulse survey clearly suggests that the BJP has a strong chance of forming the government on its own for the third consecutive time in Assam. The Congress party, according to the survey, is likely to remain confined to the role of the opposition.

Historically, the Congress party had once won three consecutive terms in Assam. Now, the BJP appears to be on a similar trajectory, with the survey predicting a BJP victory in the March–April 2026 Assembly elections.

According to the survey (Tracker Poll -1) conducted by People's Pulse research organization the ruling BJP may get 39% vote share. The main opposition party Congress may get 37 % vote share. The difference in the vote share between the ruling BJP and the Congress is 2 percent. To help put this aspect in perspective; particularly in as smaller state like Assam even a difference of 2 percent vote share can make a dramatic difference.

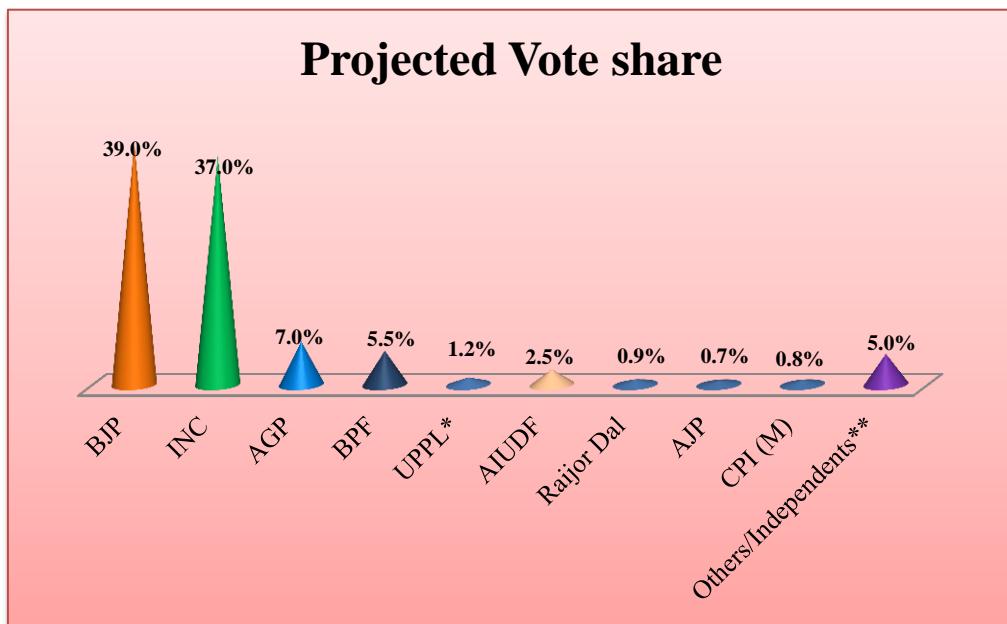
As per the survey the following political parties may get AGP 7%, BPF 6%, UPPL 1.2%, AIUDF 2.5% and Others 7.3% vote share.

The Congress party is expected to see an increase in its vote share due to weakening of AIUDF, whose voters are shifting to it as witnessed in 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

However, despite the increase in vote share, the Congress party is not likely to convert this gain into wins in proportionate manner due to a number of factors like delimitation, bigger social alliance of NDA, weak alliance partners etc.

### Projected Vote share

S. No	Party	Projected Vote share
1	BJP	39.0%
2	INC	37.0%
3	AGP	7.0%
4	BPF	5.5%
5	UPPL*	1.2%
6	AIUDF	2.5%
7	Rajior Dal	0.9%
8	AJP	0.7%
9	CPI (M)	0.8%
10	Others/Independents**	5.0%



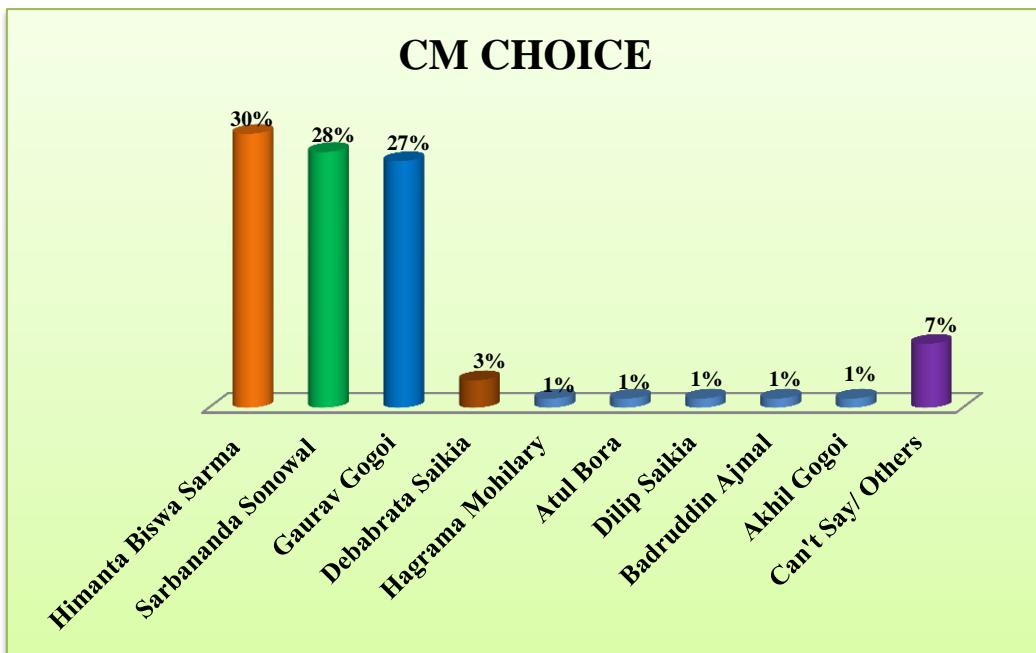


When respondents were asked who they preferred as the next Chief Minister, the incumbent Mr. Himanta Biswa Sarma (30 %) got emerged in the lead. However, his margin over former Chief Minister Mr. Sarbananda Sonowal (28%) is narrow. Assam Congress President and Member of Parliament Mr.Gaurav Gogoi (27%) stands in third place.

The survey highlights an interesting trend: while Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi enjoys noticeable personal popularity and poses a strong challenge in the chief ministerial race, the Congress party as a whole does not appear to be receiving comparable public support.

## CM Choice

Himanta Biswa Sarma	30%
Sarbananda Sonowal	28%
Gaurav Gogoi	27%
Debabrata Saikia	3%
Hagrama Mohilary	1%
Atul Bora	1%
Dilip Saikia	1%
Badruddin Ajmal	1%
Akhil Gogoi	1%
Can't Say/ Others	7%



- When asked the respondents which party is better for the development of Assam 48% said it was the BJP, Congress 38%.
- When asked which party likely to form the Government in Assam state 55% said it was BJP and 40% said it would be the Congress.
- When asked should the BJP will be given another chance in Assam 55% said Yes, 45 said No.
- BJP (NDA allies) is enjoying clear edge in all parameters of the survey (Tracker Poll-1) conducted by Peoples pulse research Organization. The first Tracker Poll showed that the BJP (NDA allies) is leading over the other parties uniformly on all parameters, namely development, welfare, community preference, CM Choice, party preference, across age and Gender.

Peoples pulse research organization, survey(Tracker Poll-1) found out that the NDA in general and BJP in particular are not just politically holding on to their vote base- as evident from the victories in various elections held since the 2021 assembly elections (e.g. Autonomous Councils, Panchayat elections, Municipal elections, various by-elections and the Lok Sabha Elections 2024), but also increasing influence in newer pockets and communities. Congress on the other hand has improved only marginally and the major gain is among the AIUDF voter base in Barak Valley and Lower Assam. The AIUDF is in free fall since the loss in 2024 Lok Sabha and this time too, its prospects seem doomed. BJP allies like AGP are fully dependent on the support of their saffron ally and their support base is constantly being eaten by the BJP. Due to this, AGP might do well in alliance with BJP but if it dares to go solo, it would experience a political catastrophe.

Another previous ally UPPL, which performed poorly in the recent BTAD elections, no longer has support among the Bodo voters in BTAD region due to unfulfillment of expectations. The old Bodo party BPF- led by Hangrama Mohilary regained lost support and after their decisive win in the BTAD elections, BJP has brought it back in the NDA family. As of now, the BJP-BPF alliance is likely to sweep the ACs falling under BTAD region.

Smaller parties like Raijor Dal and Asam Jatiya Parishad are struggling to make any impact and the survey found that their influence is actually static, with individual leaders having pockets of support at only few places. Most of the other ST communities of the state be it Mising, Deori, Rabha, Karbi, Dimasa or smaller communities like Lalung, Moran, Matak etc are more inclined towards the NDA.

One surprising finding of the survey was that Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma is not as popular on the ground as he is projected to be. Among the Tribals across the state, a significant number of people consider ex CM Sarbanand Sonowal to be better CM. According to a sizable number of voters across communities in upper Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma is not a *Bhadra Manuh* (decent person), and creates unnecessary controversies and conflicts among people. His actions during the Bharad Jodo Nyay Yatra- where he threatened civil servants of dire consequences if Yatra becomes a success, and his attacks on teachers and intellectuals have further created a bad image for him among these sections. A large number of respondents across Assam talked of him being involved in corruption, during the survey. However, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has covered up the gap in popularity with Sarbanand Sonowal by reaching out to women voters. The survey found that even among the tribal voters, if the male voters like Sonowal, the female voters express their support towards Himanta Biswa Sarma.

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Another finding was the free fall of AIUDF among Muslim voters (especially Bengali speaking Muslims in Barak Valley and lower Assam). His bonhomie with Himanta Biswa Sarma is now a point of general discussion among Muslim voters in even the remotest locations of the state. Muslim voters across the state said that Badruddin Ajmal is just a businessman interested in protecting his empire and only Congress can give a tough fight to BJP.

The Tea Tribes of Assam- which shifted en masse towards BJP since 2016 assembly elections are showing some signs of unrest in select pockets, around the issue of ST status and land pattas. While the tea tribe voters are happy with various schemes of BJP like roads and schools in garden areas and increase in wages, the non-fulfilment of residential patta promise to garden workers is a major cause of anger. However, it is limited to few pockets and if BJP plays it well, it could mitigate that anger and continue enjoying their electoral support and the opposition Congress no longer has strong Tea Tribe leaders barring few, who could bring them towards the party.

The Ahom voters of upper Assam are no longer angry with BJP and barring parts of Shivasagar and Jorhat, they have started inclining towards the BJP in other districts like Charaideo, Golaghat, Dibrugarh etc. The popularity of Gaurav Gogoi- who is being seen as a future leader of the community across districts, was a factor till the Lok Sabha but lack of clear steps to link the community with him has led to fizzling out of that enthusiasm and opportunity.

Further, the Delimitation of constituencies done in 2023 has significantly redrawn political boundaries and majorly altered the political equations in the state. The intention of this delimitation was to consolidate BJP in the state for both Lok Sabha and assembly elections. To do this, the exercise followed two strategies. Firstly, it either eliminated, changed reservation or severely redrew the boundaries of seats from where Congress leaders were winning. Secondly, it consolidated Muslim votes on few seats to control the influence of Muslim voters on fewer seats. Due to this, while a large number of Congress leaders have lost winning chances on their seats, the influence of Muslim voters has also come down significantly in the state.

**Major Players:** BJP emerged as the biggest party in Assam and could currently boast to have base among all communities. The Congress is second biggest but its support among Tribal voters, Hindu Bengalis, Tea Tribes and caste Assamese Hindu voters is constantly on decline. Bodo People's Front (BPF) was and is, the major player and claimant of Bodo votes though its influence is limited to five districts of Bodoland. The new claimant of Bodo votes- United People's Party Liberal (UPPL) which ran the Bodoland Territorial Council in alliance with BJP after 2020 elections is currently in freefall as evident from its performance in 2025 BTAD elections. The AGP had support base across communities except the Bengalis previously but now it has weakened beyond recognition and is at the mercy of alliance partner BJP for limited political benefits.

Asom Jatiya Parishad of Lurinjyoti Gogoi and Raijor Dal of Akhil Gogoi are trying to fill the void left by weakening of AGP but currently seem far too incapable to do so. The AIUDF has base primarily among Bengali speaking Muslims in lower and middle Assam and the Barak valley, but its hold has shrunk to a great extent and it may not fare well this time in assembly elections, alike the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.



The left parties have very small pockets of influence and may not be able to do anything at their own but CPI M may retain its Sorbhog seat if the alliance with Congress continues.

### **Major Communities and Political Orientation:**

Caste Assamese are mostly comprised of various castes including Brahmins, Deka, Kalita, Rajkhowa etc classified under the general category. Majority of caste Assamese voters are siding with BJP while some are divided between Congress and other smaller regional players. Ahoms- classified under OBC are a major player in Assam and though initially they were the only influential Hindu community of the state which was predominantly not with BJP but Congress, now even they are shifting towards the BJP in most of the places. Other OBC communities like Boras are mainly inclined towards BJP but some sections favour Congress due to OBC leaders like Bhupen Bora who was the Ex. PCC chief. The Koch-Rajbongshis are also divided though greater number of them are inclined towards the BJP. Hindu Bengalis are aggressively backing BJP also after its consistent backing of the CAA. Muslims constitute around 30% of Assam's population and are divided among various communities like Goriya-Moriya, Deshi, Bhatia etc. Majority of Muslim voters favour Congress and had there been no alliance between Congress and AIUDF, the later would have lost a sizable chunk of Muslim votes much before 2024 Lok Sabha. However, the 2021 alliance disproportionately favoured the AIUDF. It was wise of Congress to have broken it up and now Muslims across regions and sub communities are backing the Congress.

Among the tribals, Bodos are the biggest lot and Bodos in BTAD areas are primarily inclined towards BPF which swept the recent council elections; UPPL's influence has diminished and Congress is a marginal player there. BJP however has gained support among the Bodos due to persistent efforts. Bodos outside Bodoland primarily vote the BJP while a smaller section also votes Congress. Misings are the biggest tribal community in upper Assam and currently majority Mising voters seem inclined towards BJP, with old Mising leaders of Congress like Bharat Narah losing most of the influence. Similarly, Karbis, Dimasas, Tiwas, Rabhas, Deoris, Sonowal Kacharis and Thengals are also more inclined towards the BJP, as are other OBC communities like Moran, Matak, Chutiyas etc. Congress is likely to get only minority share of votes from these communities.

Also called TGL (Tea Garden Labourers) and Bagani, Tea tribes are the people who were brought in as plantation labourers by the Britishers from areas like Jharkhand, Chattisgarh, Odisha and parts of UP-Bihar in 19<sup>th</sup> century. They are around 17% of the state's population and influence around 35 to 40 seats in the state. Earlier they were committed Congress voters but slowly BJP made inroads into the community in a systematic manner. When BJP came to power, it promised three things to the community: ST status, daily wage increase and land pattas on the land on which their houses are made.

Most of the tea tribe people are registered as ST in their home state Jharkhand but in Assam they are registered as OBCs. They have been demanding ST status and BJP promised it will include them in ST list but failed to do that till now. Similarly, most of the Tea Tribes live in and around Tea Gardens where the land is owned by the garden owners.

Though they have been living in those places since centuries, they don't have land records or patta of that land and are thus technically landless. BJP promised it will give land pattas to them, but the Bagani voters have not received them. Lastly, BJP promised to increase wage of tea tribe workers but the workers are demanding a bigger increase.

However, BJP's poaching on tea tribe leaders, extension of welfare policies like subsidized rice, opening of Bank accounts, transfer of cash in those accounts, scholarship for meritorious Tea Tribe students, construction of roads in garden areas etc have made the party win the confidence of Tea Tribe community. So despite flip flop on these 3 demands, BJP still commands majority support among the tea tribe community, though there are some challenges in getting whole hearted support of Bagani voters this time if patta and ST status demands remain unfulfilled.

### **Prevailing Political Scenario:**

The BJP came to power in Assam after 2016 Assembly Elections because of three main reasons- anti-incumbency of three successive Congress led governments, defection of a range of influential local leaders to BJP under leadership of ex Congress minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, and division of minority votes between AIUDF of Badruddin Ajmal and Congress on crucial seats. The euphoric victory of BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha and its continued interest and investment in north east to gain political ground played an additional role. Since then, BJP has done a lot of things to stabilise its hold in Assam, though some of its initiatives like CAA have also created disenchantment.

For example, to make its reach go beyond the Hindi speaking and Hindutva oriented voters, BJP focussed on social engineering, specifically with different Tribal communities of Assam. While also exploiting the anti-Muslim, especially anti-Bengali-speaking-Muslim sentiment of Tribal communities which has historic roots in anti-immigration politics of Assam, BJP also wooed Tribal voters with welfare measures. So, Tea Tribes of Assam got a range of schemes- from opening of bank accounts and depositing of Rs 6000 by government at the time of opening, to infrastructure development in their areas, scholarships for students from the community etc. All these prompted the Tea Tribes to switch en-mass to BJP.

Similarly, it showered a lot of benefits on other communities and tribals too; the declaration of formation of Autonomous Council for Koch-Rajbongshi, Moran and Motok communities could be considered some such measures. The signing of accord with Bodo organisations in 2020 is another example. However, it's promise to give ST status to six communities, including the Tea Tribes is not fulfilled yet. But central schemes like PM Kisan Nidhi and state government schemes like Orunoday, Nijut Moina etc to provide cash to the needy have also created a 'beneficiary class' that is politically aligned with BJP. All these developments have made BJP more rooted than previously in Assam and that will be its biggest strength in 2024 too.

The biggest requirement for ensuring a government's loss is building up of a popular narrative against it. Surprisingly that has been lacking in Assam. The only moment it appeared recently was during the protests after the death of Assam's icon Zubeen Garg but that moment seems to have fizzled out.

Overall, the NDA alliance seems to be having a clear edge in Assam and is likely to increase its seat tally from 2021 elections.

## Region wise Political Scenario

**Barak Valley:** Barak valley region comprising Cachar, Hailakandi and Karimganj districts had 15 assembly constituencies but in new delimitation the number of ACs has been reduced to 13. Following the delimitation exercise, the number of Assembly constituencies in the region has been reduced from 15 to 13, with boundary restructuring leading to a redistribution of minority populations and a clearer demographic sorting across seats. Due to this, the number of seats where Muslim voters were decisive has come down.

In a number of seats like Silchar, Lakhipur, Udharbond, Dholai and Ram Krishna Nagar, alignment of voters towards BJP outweigh candidate specific dissatisfaction. Minority dominated constituencies such as Sonai and Karimganj South, while electorally consolidated, are fewer in number and remain the primary zones of opposition strength.

The broader political mood suggests a clear advantage for the Bharatiya Janata Party led alliance across the valley. Based on current ground sentiment, organisational reach, and post delimitation arithmetic, the ruling alliance is well positioned in approximately 8 to 10 of the 13 Assembly constituencies. Cachar district alone, which accounts for seven of the thirteen seats, is likely to contribute a substantial portion of this advantage, with only one seat showing chances for the opposition.

Hailakandi district shows a transition. While earlier elections saw strong performance by AIUDF, the survey showed that AIUDF has significantly lost its support base here by now. The newly formed Algapur-Katlicherra constituency and the Hailakandi seat itself show divided voter sentiment, and while minority voters are now shifting to Congress, the Hindu voters remain aligned with BJP. In Karimganj district, North Karimganj and Ram Krishna Nagar appear aligned with the ruling alliance, while Patharkandi remains competitive but leans marginally towards pro-incumbency. Karimganj South continues to be the most reliable opposition seat due to reinforced minority concentration.

Overall, the survey based assessment suggests that Barak Valley is moving into the 2026 elections with reduced uncertainty compared to previous elections as the contest is likely to remain between BJP and Congress, with AIUDF becoming a distant third. Delimitation has narrowed the field of contestation and concentrated political competition into a limited number of battleground constituencies.

In Silchar, delimitation has transferred a substantial portion of the Muslim electorate to Sonai, reinforcing Silchar's Hindu majority character and reducing electoral uncertainty. The seat has increasingly become a party driven contest. With a neutral ground mood and consolidated Hindu support, the BJP retains a clear advantage in Silchar.

Sonai has undergone the most decisive demographic transformation in Cachar. With minority dominated areas added from Silchar, it has emerged as a clear minority majority constituency. In 2021, held under the Congress AIUDF alliance, AIUDF's Karim Uddin Barbhuiya won comfortably.

The political context ahead of the upcoming election is markedly different, with no alliance between Congress and AIUDF. Karim Uddin Barbhuiya is expected to contest under the NDA, while Aminul Haque Laskar, a former BJP MLA who has since aligned with the Congress, is likely to be the principal opposition face. Anti incumbency sentiment and minority consolidation currently favour the Congress in this seat.

In Katigorah, delimitation has shifted the constituency from a near balanced seat to one with a comfortable Hindu majority. For the upcoming election, the BJP is likely to field former North Karimganj MLA Kamalakhya Dey Purkayastha and the BJP appears to have an edge in Katigorah. Lakhipur has emerged as a clear Hindu majority seat after minority areas were largely shifted to Sonai. The overall mood remains favourable to the ruling party, placing Lakhipur firmly in the BJP's column. In Udharbond, delimitation has not brought any significant change, and the constituency retains its predominantly Bengali Hindu profile, making it a pro-BJP seat.

Dholai (SC) has also seen continuity rather than disruption. Following the by-election, BJP's Nihar Ranjan Das won the seat comfortably. Although Amiya Kanti Das is also seeking the BJP ticket, the competition remains internal. Congress nominee Dhrubajyoti Purkayastha has limited traction. The last Cachar seat, Barkhola (Bodkhola), presents a contrasting picture. Post delimitation, it has shifted from a mixed constituency to one with a clearer majority profile, including a sizeable tea tribe population. Candidate choice will be decisive here, making Barkhola a genuine battleground seat.

In Hailakandi, delimitation has altered the seat from a balanced 50–50 constituency to one with a clearer Hindu advantage. In 2021, Zakir Hussain Laskar won comfortably on an AIUDF ticket. Ahead of the upcoming election, the candidate picture remains fluid, with no finalised BJP face and no strong Congress contender, though there is speculation around Rahul Roy's name from INC. While candidate selection will be crucial, organisational strength and political realignment give the NDA a marginal but clear edge. The newly formed Algapur–Katlicherra constituency has amalgamated two former seats into a single minority dominated unit. Although AIUDF swept Algapur and Katlicherra in 2021 through Nizam Uddin Choudhury and Suzam Uddin Laskar, that influence has waned considerably. The BJP is expected to cede the seat to its ally Asom Gana Parishad, while the Congress has multiple aspirants, including Khalil Uddin Mazumdar. With a divided mood and visible anti BJP sentiment, Congress appears better positioned here.

In North Karimganj, formed through the merger of Badarpur and North Karimganj, the constituency has shifted from a mixed profile to a predominantly majority oriented seat. In 2021, AIUDF's Abdul Aziz Choudhury won comfortably. His prolonged absence due to health issues has generated anti incumbency. Under present conditions, the BJP appears favourably placed. Karimganj South has become even more strongly minority dominated after delimitation. Congress's Siddique Ahmed won very comfortably in 2021, though his suspension has reopened the contest. Given demographic realities, Congress retains an advantage in Karimganj South.

In Patharkandi, boundary restructuring has produced a more dominant majority profile. BJP minister Krishnendu Paul won narrowly in 2021 and is likely to be repeated. While the BJP holds a slight edge, Patharkandi remains potentially competitive.

Ram Krishna Nagar (SC), formerly Ratabari (SC), has retained its core social composition despite renaming. BJP's Bijoy Malakar won comfortably in 2021 and is expected to be repeated. With pro incumbency sentiment and no credible Congress challenger, the seat remains a BJP strong hold.

**Upper Assam:** Upper Assam is primarily divided into two sub-regions: the north bank and the south bank of Brahmaputra. During 2021 assembly elections in upper Assam, BJP and its ally AGP swept the region and in the north bank of Brahmaputra Congress could not open its account- only exception being one seat of Naoboiacha due to majority of Muslim votes backing the party. However, in the south bank the party won 3 assemblies in 2021 elections, while its allies also won few seats. In 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BJP won all 4 Lok Sabha seats of this region eg Jorhat, Dibrugarh, Lakhimpur and Sonitpur (Tezpur in previous delimitation). But in 2024 Lok Sabha, the Congress wrested Jorhat Lok Sabha seat from BJP and current party president Gaurav Gogoi became its new MP.

This time as well, BJP appears strong in upper Assam and is likely to hold sway in the region with minor changes while Congress struggles to retain the old seats. While defection of popular leaders like Rupjyoti Kurmi, Sushanta Borgohain etc has weakened the party, another big problem for Congress in this region is lack of good candidates as most of its candidates here are either old or dead and new leadership has not emerged.

In Golaghat district, the hold of NDA seems quite strong and the alliance is likely to sweep all seats like last time. In Jorhat district, INC has chances on the Titabor and Teok seats while it is also likely to retain Nazira seat of Sivasagar district.

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Sivasagar MLA Akhil Gogoi is facing strong anti-incumbency and needs to do course correction or else he might not be able to win again from here. In the Charaideo, Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts of south bank in upper Assam, the NDA seems quite strong and is likely to repeat its old performance with the exception of Doom Dooma AC, where Durga Bhumij of INC still has a strong support base.

In the South bank, NDA's position is quite strong in the Dhemaji and Biswanath districts but this time the saffron alliance may face problems in Lakhimpur- especially at Bihpuria, Lakhimpur and Naoboisha ACs, where Congress is likely to be the main opposition.

**Middle Assam:** This is a highly contested region and a hotbed of communal polarization in the state. Concentration of Muslim and Hindu voters both in this region makes it politically competitive. In the Karbi Anglong and Dima Hasao region, NDA seems quite strong as both Karbis and Dimasas are in favour of supporting the party in power. In the Hojai district, Muslims are favouring the Congress in place of UDF while Hindu Bengali voters are in support of the BJP. Situation in Nagaon is mixed as while Hindu majority seats seems going towards the NDA, those with Muslim majority seems favourable for the Congress. Since Deoris, ethnic Assamese and other communities are inclined towards the BJP, the ruling party seems comfortably placed in Morigaon district as well. And on the north bank, due to the overt support of various communities like Gorkhas, Tea Tribes, ethnic Assamese etc, the NDA seems well placed in Darrang and Sonitpur districts both. However, there was acute anti-incumbency against Sipajhar BJP MLA and due to this opposition Congress appeared to be better placed here.

## Lower Assam:

This region has a large number of Muslim and Bodo voters while Rabhas, caste Assamese, Koch Rajbongshis and OBC voters are also present in some pockets. Congress alliance swept this region in 2021 elections. However, this time, things have changed here politically.

Under the new delimitation, Muslim majority areas of many ACs have been either merged together to decrease the influence of Muslim voters or such seats are reserved for ST/SC candidates.

Boko-Chaygaon ST is a newly carved seat joining Boko SC seat and Chaygaon AC. Both were won by INC leaders but now none of them could contest from here as it has been reserved for ST candidates.

Goalpara West ST falls in the Goalpara district and INC won from here in 2021 assembly but now the reservation of this seat has been changed from unreserved to ST so the sitting MLA can't contest from here again. Similarly, seats like Abhayapuri, Bilasipara etc where the INDIA alliance did well have drastically changed under the new delimitation. As a result, the chances of NDA's victory here is greater than that of the opposition this time. Despite these reasons, in Muslim majority seats, Congress is likely to win again and AIUDF's influence is on decline here as well. Only on the Dhubri AC of this region did the survey find a clear battleground situation between the AIUDF and INC. At the newly formed Sorbhog-Bhawanipur seat, CPI M is still in a good position but in most of the seats of Nalbari and Bongaigaon, the NDA seems well placed.

Sitting MLA of Baghbor- Sherman Ali is likely to contest from Chenga seat and since he is popular and is likely to join Raijor Dal, his party appears to be winning at least this seat for sure. Across the BTAD districts of this region, the BJP-BPF alliance seems to be sweeping with the exception of Parbatjhora AC where Congress has a chance.

## **Electorally Significant Factors**

**New Delimitation:** The delimitation of constituencies done in 2023 is applicable only for 2 upcoming elections- 2024 Lok Sabha and 2026 assembly elections. The logic was that since Assam could not do regular delimitation in 2008 with the rest of India due to law and order situation, it will be done now. However, a fresh delimitation will render it obsolete which is scheduled in 2028. It has significantly redrawn political boundaries and majorly altered the political equations in the state. BJP increased the number of seats in areas where it is confident and reduced them in areas where it was finding it difficult to get support. The Barak valley has suffered majorly due to the delimitation as the no of ACs in region has come down from 15 to 13 under the new delimitation. The intention of this delimitation was to consolidate BJP in the state for both Lok Sabha and assembly elections. To do this, the exercise followed two strategies. Firstly, it either eliminated, changed reservation or severely redrew the boundaries of seats from where Congress leaders were winning. Secondly, it consolidated Muslim votes on few seats to control the influence of Muslim voters on fewer seats. For example, two Muslim dominated seats of Dhubri- Bilasipara East and West were merged to form a single seat. Same with Abhayapuri North and South which were both Muslim dominated. Due to all this, while a large number of opposition leaders have lost winning chances on their seats, the influence of Muslim voters has also come down significantly in the state.

**INC Leadership:** The INC state leadership is in a state of constant in-fighting. PCC president Gaurav Gogoi and his coterie including deputy CLP Rakibul Hussain does not trust the other Congress leaders. The CLP leader Debabrata Saikia and ex president Bhupen Bora seem alienated. The General secretary in charge of AICC Jitendra Singh Alwar also could not reign in the warring factions and sometimes furthers enhances the in-fighting.

**Lack of strong candidates in Congress:** One of the biggest problems for Congress is lack of strong leaders and candidates across communities and regions. After the defection of Rupjyoti Kurmi, the party lacks any strong tea tribe leader. Same is the case with Bodos. Its Mising leader Bharat Narah has lost the confidence of his community so much so that he had to leave his traditional seat and go to Muslim dominated Naoboicha to get an MLA seat for himself. Due to Gaurav Gogoi, the party still has a powerful Ahom face but in a large number of districts it lacks strong candidates. The ex PCC president Bhupen Bora worked hard to revive the organization by constant initiatives and attacks on the ruling party for its corruption, but it has yet not reflected in electoral results till now.

**Declining Popularity of AIUDF:** Because of his constant hobnobbing with CM Himanta Biswa Sarma for protecting his business interests, and giving controversial statements to fan communal hatred, AIUDF has lost credibility even among Bengali speaking Muslims in lower Assam and Barak valley. Muslim respondents across regions and caste groups said that only Congress can give a political fight to BJP and this time they will vote en masse for Congress.

It looks difficult for AIUDF to even win 1-2 seat in 2026 elections if Congress fields good candidates on Muslim dominated seats.

**BJP Organizational/Electoral Muscle:** The BJP has invested systematically in building leadership across all communities and regions of Assam since 2014 elections and used defections/threats to accomplish its goal. From being a party with a narrow vote base, it now commands a base among all communities and regions of Assam and has been on a winning spree in elections with only one exception- the 2025 BTAD elections. The beneficiary class created by its welfare policies, its financial and organizational muscle and the communal polarization will all help it to increase its tally in the 2026 elections.

**Karbi Anglong Violence:** Violence erupted in Karbi Anglong district in the month of December over the issue of illegal settlers encroaching on common grazing lands, which led to curfew, vandalism, internet suspension and death and injuries to many people. Both parties involved in the violence- the Hindi speaking community and the Tribals are actually BJP inclined and the survey found out that after the return of normalcy, this incident is very less likely to impact the electoral outcome here.

**Jubeen Garg Death Issue:** The tragic and sudden death of Assam's icon Zubeen Garg in Singapore this year led to spontaneous protests and gatherings demanding justice for him. At one point of time it appeared that the widespread anger will put the government in political crisis but the handling of the matter, swift enquiry and arrest of the accused and chargesheet against them has led to the safe release of that anger. The survey found that majority of respondents were content with the findings of enquiry commission appointed in the case and that it will not impact the voting behaviour now.

**ST Status Demand of 6 Communities:** The BJP government promised ST status to six communities currently included in the OBCs like Tea Tribes, Moran, Matak, Ahoms etc. There was widespread protest against it but that was limited to BTAD districts only. While those being promised to be included are welcoming it but demanding it to reach logical conclusion before the elections, Bodos are opposing it. However, the general impression among veterans of Assam politics is that nothing concrete is expected to come out of it before the polls and it will continue to remain an issue in future as well, alike the previous decade.

**Jobs, Development and Inflation:** The issue of jobs, inflation and development are traditional election issues and most respondents did say that they will keep them in mind before deciding to vote. However, the survey found that the response of majority of people surveyed is mostly positive towards the govt on these indicators- also because of the widespread welfare schemes and creation of beneficiaries, so it is not likely to alter the political situation as of now.

**Land Patta Promise to Tea Tribes:** Most of the Tea Tribes live in and around Tea Gardens where the land is owned by the garden owners. Though they have been living in those places since centuries, they don't have land records or patta of that land and are thus technically landless. BJP promised it will give land pattas to them, but the Bagani voters have not received them. We found that there is anger against any concrete step taken by the government on this issue in upper Assam but in the middle Assam region, people are hopeful that they will receive land pattas. To win over the Bagaani voters, the government is planning to select one Tea Garden area as model garden per assembly constituency and distribute pattas there to keep the hope alive. Whether it will be able to pacify the Tea Tribes remains to be seen in subsequent surveys.

BJP's success stems from expansive social engineering, welfare schemes like Orunoday and PM Kisan creating a loyal beneficiary class, and organizational muscle built since 2014. It has penetrated diverse communities: Tea Tribes (despite unrest over unfulfilled ST status and land pattas) largely remain aligned due to infrastructure and cash benefits; Ahoms and other OBCs are shifting rightward; tribals (Bodos via BPF, Misings, Karbis) favor NDA; Hindu Bengalis back BJP post-CAA. Muslims, comprising 30%, overwhelmingly support Congress post-AIUDF fallout, viewing leader Badruddin Ajmal as self-serving.

Regionally, NDA holds sway in Upper Assam (sweeps anticipated), Middle Assam (strong in tribal areas), and Lower Assam (delimitation favors BJP-BPF in BTAD), with Barak Valley yielding 8-10 seats amid reduced Muslim influence. Opposition woes compound: Congress grapples with infighting, candidate shortages, and defections; AIUDF's credibility plummets; smaller parties like Raijor Dal and AJP stagnate.

Electoral factors like Karbi Anglong violence, Zubeen Garg's death, and economic issues (jobs, inflation) fail to dent BJP's narrative, as welfare perceptions prevail. Delimitation's pro-BJP tilt, temporary until 2028, seals the advantage. Overall, Assam's political landscape signals BJP's entrenchment, with opposition revival hinging on unlikely unity and narrative shifts. Absent major upheavals, NDA's hat-trick appears inevitable, potentially elevating its tally beyond 2021.







# PEOPLES PULSE

*an ear to the ground*

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