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Himanta hints at 'architectural change' to save Manipur govt.

Chief Minister is main hurdle, say disgruntled MLAs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT ^{ಬೆಂಗಳೂರು}
GUWAHATI/IMPHAL

Assam Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is also the convener of the North East Democratic Alliance (NEDA), said there would be an "architectural change" for resolving the political crisis in Manipur.

NEDA is a Bharatiya Janata Party-fronted forum of major regional parties in the northeast.

Marathon meeting

Mr. Sarma and Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma had taken a special flight to the Manipur capital Imphal on Sunday and had a marathon discussion with the four National People's Party (NPP) lawmakers who pulled out of the BJP-led alliance along with five others, including three of BJP, on June 17. This had reduced the Nongthombam Biren Singh government to a minority two days ahead of the Rajya Sabha election. However, the BJP managed to win the sole seat from the State.

Mr. Sangma is the national president of the NPP.

Their discussion with the NPP lawmakers and other key players in the alliance went on for nine hours before they caught the flight back at 10 p.m.

The NPP lawmakers saw them off but returned to the hotel where the Opposition Congress MLAs are camping, raising speculations that the talks had failed.

Byelections likely

Mr. Sarma told mediapersons in Guwahati on Monday, "I think you will see a good result in the next two-three days. After the RS polls, many people were disqualified. Manipur will go for byelections. So basically, the architecture will be a bit different but more or less, we are continuing with the principle of friendship and the spirit of NEDA and NDA," he said, declining to elaborate.

The NPP's Manipur unit had earlier said Mr. Biren was making it difficult for their MLAs to remain in the alliance.

The Governor on Monday summoned the Chief Minister to reportedly discuss the political crisis in the context of the Congress demanding a special Assembly session for the trial of strength.

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