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# India lawmakers oppose creation of new Telangana state

**There has been uproar in southern India's Andhra Pradesh assembly in protest against the government's decision to create a new state.**



The government's move sparked mass protests in southern Andhra Pradesh

Lawmakers have shouted slogans against the decision to carve out a new state of Telangana in its north.

An estimated 35 million people will live in the new state, Telangana.

Separately, a four-day strike called by a regional political party demanding a separate state has been called off in India's tea-producing Darjeeling hills.

The Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) is demanding a separate state and fairer treatment for Darjeeling's Nepali-speaking Gorkha community.

The movement got a boost after the Indian government announced a new state of Telangana last week.

## Hunger strike

Dozens of members of the Andhra Pradesh state assembly have already stepped down, ministers have handed in resignations and there have been violent demonstrations and a strike in southern and coastal areas.

Hundreds of women in Kurnool city, outside the Telangana area, have gone on a hunger strike in protest against the decision.

"We will lay down our lives for the sake of a united Andhra Pradesh state," Hem Lata, 45, from Kurnool said.



- Population of 35 million
- Formed from 10 districts of Andhra Pradesh, including city of Hyderabad
- Landlocked, predominantly agricultural area
- One of the most under-developed regions in India
- Culmination of 50-year campaign
- More than 400 people died in 1969 crackdown

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Fearing trouble, Indian cricket authorities have shifted the venue of Friday's one-day international match against Sri Lanka from the coastal city of Visakhapatnam to Nagpur city in western Maharashtra state.

Separately, hundreds of Gorkha volunteers have begun an indefinite fast in the Darjeeling region to press the demand for a separate state.

The Indian government has called for a meeting on 21 December that would involve representatives of the federal and the West Bengal state government and GJM.

Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee has already said a separate Gorkha state was not "possible and feasible".

"That is his personal view. We want to know what his government thinks," GJM chief Bimal Gurung said.

The Gorkhas in Darjeeling ran a long campaign for a separate state in the 1980s but then settled for considerable autonomy.

But now their leaders say the autonomy deal has not worked and they blame the Left coalition government of West Bengal for its failure.

The demand for separate state status for the underdeveloped and drought-prone area of Telangana dates back 50 years.

More than 400 people died in violence in 1969.

Campaigners say Telangana's economic development has been neglected in favour of the richer and more powerful Andhra region - and that a new state is the only solution.

The last three new states in India were formed in 2000: Chhattisgarh was created out of eastern Madhya Pradesh; Uttarakhand was created out of the hilly areas of northern Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand was carved from Bihar's southern districts.

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