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Uday India

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Empowering The Nation



Lalu Legacy Facing Tough Battle in Bihar?

Caste, Corruption & Jungle Raj again Main Planks

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Uday India

inside

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Who's winning Bihar?

For Tejashwi, the task is not only to counter the NDA's advantage and convert his youth appeal into votes, but also to win over women voters from Nitish. As someone said, the old M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) formula may have defined Bihar's past as far as elections go, but the new Mahila-Youth equation could well determine its political future. Of the 7.42 crore voters in Bihar, 3.92 crore are men and 3.5 crore are women.

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MAILBOX

01 November 2025

E-mail: editor@udayindia.in

I read your recent cover story on the enduring legacy of gold with great interest. Your comprehensive overview, tracing its journey from the tombs of Egyptian pharaohs to the reserves of modern central banks, was both enlightening and timely. The data on the recent, staggering price surge—a 58% increase in gold from Diwali to Diwali—vividly underscores the metal's relentless relevance. Your analysis correctly identifies the key drivers: geopolitical instability, currency depreciation, and inflationary pressures. The mention of ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and Eastern Europe, alongside regional tensions, highlights a crucial point. In an era of digital assets and complex financial derivatives, the ancient appeal of tangible, indestructible gold as a "safe haven" remains undiminished. It is the ultimate asset that needs no counterparty's promise to pay. However, your story also hints at a deeper, more concerning narrative for a country like India. The fact that we are among the world's top consumers of gold but a minor producer is a significant economic vulnerability. Our cultural and religious affinity for gold, while a source of strength, translates into a massive outflow of capital to fund imports.



-Ajit Jaykar, Pune

Bandwidth Independence

I read with great interest the article, "India shuts down bandwidth imports from Bangladesh ," which applauds the government's decision to stop importing internet bandwidth from Bangladesh. While the piece effectively outlines the potential strategic benefits of this move, it presents a one-sided view that overlooks the complex realities of diplomacy and regional cooperation. The article frames this decision as a direct and necessary response to a "veiled warning" from a Bangladeshi political figure. This narrative, while compelling, risks oversimplifying a multifaceted geopolitical relationship. Basing a significant infrastructural policy shift on the statements of a single individual, rather than on the official stance of the Bangladeshi government, sets a precarious precedent for international relations. Long-term partnerships should be built on a foundation of dialogue and mutual trust, not reactive to political rhetoric. Furthermore, the article celebrates the "growing economic disengagement" between the two nations as a strategic victory. This perspective is shortsighted. A loss of $5-7 million annually may seem negligible to India, but for Bangladesh, it represents a tangible economic setback.

-Amitabh Chanana, Nainital

* * *

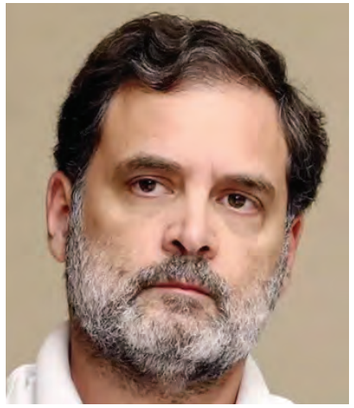
The article rightly highlights the importance of securing digital frontiers through initiatives like Atmanirbhar Bharat. However, it fails to acknowledge that in our interconnected world, complete digital isolation is neither feasible nor entirely desirable. Robust domestic infrastructure should be the priority, but this does not have to come at the cost of regional connectivity projects that can enhance trade, people-to-people ties, and collective security. The goal should be a resilient network with multiple redundancies, not a digital fortress that views its neighbors with suspicion. The assertion that this move "reinforces the North-East's integration into the national digital grid" is a positive one, but it must be followed through. The focus must now be on ensuring that BSNL's domestic network delivers high-speed, affordable, and reliable connectivity to all citizens in the region, not just defence installations. The true measure of this policy's success will be the socio-economic empowerment of the people in the North-East.

-Paridhi Jain, Kota



Containing The Dynasts

It may be noted that unlike in India where we are witnessing now too many cases of political successions, in the United States or other comparable democratic countries, their number is not proliferating. It is rare to see in India three members of the Gandhi family being members in the parliament. Not long ago, five members of the late Mulayam Singh Yadav's family were MPs.



Rahul Gandhi



Akhilesh Yadav



Tejashwi Yadav



Prakash Nanda

Is Indian politics increasingly becoming a family business?

It seems so, if one goes by the Congress Member of Parliament Shashi Tharoor. In a prestigious international news outlet, he has written how the belief that members of political dynasties are uniquely suited to lead is woven deeply into the fabric of Indian governance, from village councils to the highest echelons of parliament.

The timing of this piece by him is significant in the sense it appeared on the eve of the ongoing elections in Bihar, where the principal opposition block is led nationally by Rahul Gandhi, the supreme leader of Tharoor's Congress party. Gandhi is a political dynast of the highest order right from the days of his great grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru to grandmother Indira Gandhi to father Rajiv Gandhi. In fact, right now, three members of his family - he himself, mother Sonia Gandhi and sister Priyanka Gandhi - are members of the Indian Parliament.

And at the state level in Bihar, Gandhi-led alliance has projected electoral ally Rastriya Janata Dal's leader Tejashwi Yadav as the state's next chief minister. Tejaswi is the son of former chief minister Lalu Yadav and his sister is a member of the Lok Sabha.

Incidentally, a recent investigation by The Indian Express newspaper revealed that more than 22% of India's nearly 5,300 legislators in Parliament, and state Assemblies and Councils have familial ties to current or former legislators.

Apart from mentioning the famous political dynasties, Tharoor has revealed that 149 families are represented by multiple members in state legislative assemblies, with 11 central ministers and nine chief ministers also having family connections. He has quoted a study of the 2009 elections that "two-thirds of MPs under 45 already had a close relative in politics, and younger MPs had almost all inherited a parliamentary seat, usually from a parent. Across all parties, 70% of female MPs were from a dynastic background. Even women politicians who have no direct heirs, such as Mamata Banerjee and Kumari Mayawati, have selected nephews as their successors".

In fact, in a chapter entitled "India's Political Dynasties" that I had authored in a book, "Party System in India: Emerging Trajectories" (Lancer Publishers, 2013), I had argued that India has many more political dynasties today than it had in the past. Taken together, there might be at least 1,000 to 1,500 political families in India that have successfully promoted dynastic successions at various levels, national or provincial. So much so that with each general election, more and more dynasts are entering politics, and that too successfully.

Major examples of political dynasties in modern India include:

- Nehru–Gandhi Family: The most well-known dynasty, which has dominated the Indian National Congress (INC) since independence. Three family members (Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi) have served as Prime Minister. Current prominent members include Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, and Priyanka Gandhi.
- Abdullah Family (Jammu and Kashmir): Key to the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), with Sheikh Abdullah, Farooq Abdullah, and Omar Abdullah all serving as Chief Minister of the region.
- Yadav Family (Uttar Pradesh/Bihar): A powerful force in regional parties like the Samajwadi Party (SP) and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). Key figures include Mulayam Singh Yadav, Akhilesh Yadav (former UP CM), Lalu Prasad Yadav (former Bihar CM), and his wife Rabri Devi (former Bihar CM), as well as their children who hold various political positions.
- Karunanidhi Family (Tamil Nadu): Dominant in the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) party. M. Karunanidhi served as Chief Minister multiple times, a legacy continued by his son M. K. Stalin (current Chief Minister) and daughter Kanimozhi (MP).
- Badal Family (Punjab): A major family in the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) party, with Parkash Singh Badal serving as Chief Minister of Punjab multiple times, and his son Sukhbir Singh Badal also a prominent leader.
- Pawar Family (Maharashtra): Influential in Maharashtra politics within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) faction. Sharad Pawar and his daughter Supriya Sule are key figures.
- Deve Gowda Family (Karnataka): H. D. Deve Gowda served as Prime Minister of India, and his sons H. D. Kumaraswamy and H. D. Revanna are prominent state-level politicians, with others from the family also in politics.
- Soren Family (Jharkhand): Prominent in the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) party, with Shibu Soren and his son Hemant Soren both serving as Chief Minister of the state.
- Scindia Family (Madhya Pradesh): This family has members in both the INC and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), illustrating how dynastic influence can cross party lines.

Of course, dynastic politics is not something peculiar to Indian democracy. The United States, famous for the saga of the Kennedy clan, has already witnessed the father-son duo (Bushes) occupying the country's highest office. Elections in Japan have seen even grandsons of prime ministers occupying the same positions. Nearer home, there are examples of the Bhutto family in Pakistan and those of Bandaranaike in Sri Lanka, Koiralas in Nepal, Rahmans in Bangladesh, Sukarno in Indonesia and Suu Kyi in Burma ; all these families dominate their respective country's politics even today.

It could be argued that in a democracy ultimately it is the people who through elections legitimise the dynastic successions. Children of famous parents enjoy the initial advantage of public recognition and political connections and one cannot do much against it as long as people approve of it through a democratic exercise.

However, it may be noted that unlike in India where we are witnessing now too many cases of political successions, in the United States or other comparable democratic countries, their number is not proliferating. It is rare to see in India three members of the Gandhi family being members in the parliament. Not long ago, five members of the late Mulayam Singh Yadav's family were MPs.

In the Indian context it may be noted that almost all the important regional parties are essentially family-affairs. It is the concerned families, rather than the cadres, that determine all the party-activities. Given the fact that the era of coalitions in India is likely to continue in the foreseeable future, these family-driven regional parties will continue to play important roles in Indian politics.

There is no doubt that emotional content because of the contributions of famous parents is an important factor behind the success of the offsprings. But more important than this are the factors of monetary and administrative resources that come aplenty for the children of established and ruling politicians, whether directly or indirectly.

After all, only when political lineage is buttressed by money and other factors, political succession is guaranteed, not otherwise. If lineage were enough, then the blood-relatives of Mahatma Gandhi, Raj Gopalchari, Rajendra Prasad and Jay Prakash Narayan would have been ruling India today. In fact, grandsons of Mahatma Gandhi have lost Indian elections.

As Tharoor rightly writes, " Dynastic families typically possess considerable financial capital, which they have accumulated over years in power. Moreover, they have access to ready-made election machinery, including networks of donors, party workers, and local thugs. This gives them an enormous advantage over political newcomers".

One cannot agree more with Tharoor when he says that if elected office is treated like a family heirloom, the quality of governance inevitably suffers. But I will like to go further by saying that while one can understand an offspring joining his or parent's profession of politics, as is the case in other professions such as bureaucracy, law, medicine and engineering, it is a serious blow to democracy when these offsprings automatically inherit the leadership positions of their respective parties - see the likes of Gandhis, Yadavs, Abdullahs, Pawars and Stalins.

Therefore, my view is that it is high time the country devised ways to "contain", if not eliminate, the undemocratic growth of political dynasties.

In fact, one really cannot "eliminate" the phenomenon as in a democracy all, including the dynasts, have the right to contest elections. And the best way to "contain" is to have a suitable amendment in the constitution to limit the ministerial positions (including that of the prime minister and chief ministers) at the centre and states to two successive terms and preventing the immediate blood relatives of outgoing ministers (after two successive terms) for a period of at least one term of the respective legislatures from succeeding in the vacated offices.

Let the worthy sons and daughters of the dynasties wait and work among the masses for five years to earn, not inherit, the popular mandate.

(prakash.nanda@hotmail.com)



The UPI Duopoly

A Silent Threat to India's Digital Payment Ecosystem

The beauty of UPI was always in its openness—a government-backed, interoperable system that democratized digital payments and fostered competition. When it began, the idea was to allow banks and fintechs to innovate freely, offering users multiple platforms to transact effortlessly. But over time, this open field has turned into a near-monopoly, where two major players—PhonePe and Google Pay—account for the lion's share of the market.

■ UDAY INDIA BUREAU

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) has often been hailed as one of the greatest fintech success stories in the world. It transformed how Indians pay, from street vendors to luxury stores, by making digital transactions instant, seamless, and free. But beneath the celebration lies a worrying reality—UPI's extraordinary success is now concentrated in the hands of just two third-party apps that control over 80% of all transactions. This overwhelming dominance is not merely a matter of market share; it poses a "systemic concentration risk" that could shake the very foundations of India's digital payment infrastructure.

The beauty of UPI was always in its openness—a government-backed, interoperable system that democratized digital payments and fostered competition. When it began, the idea was to allow banks and fintechs to innovate freely, offering users multiple platforms to transact effortlessly. But over time, this open field has turned into a near-monopoly, where two major players—PhonePe and Google Pay—account for the lion's share of the market. Smaller players, including Paytm, Amazon Pay, and several bank-led apps, have struggled to retain relevance. What was once a diverse, competitive space is now dominated by a duopoly.

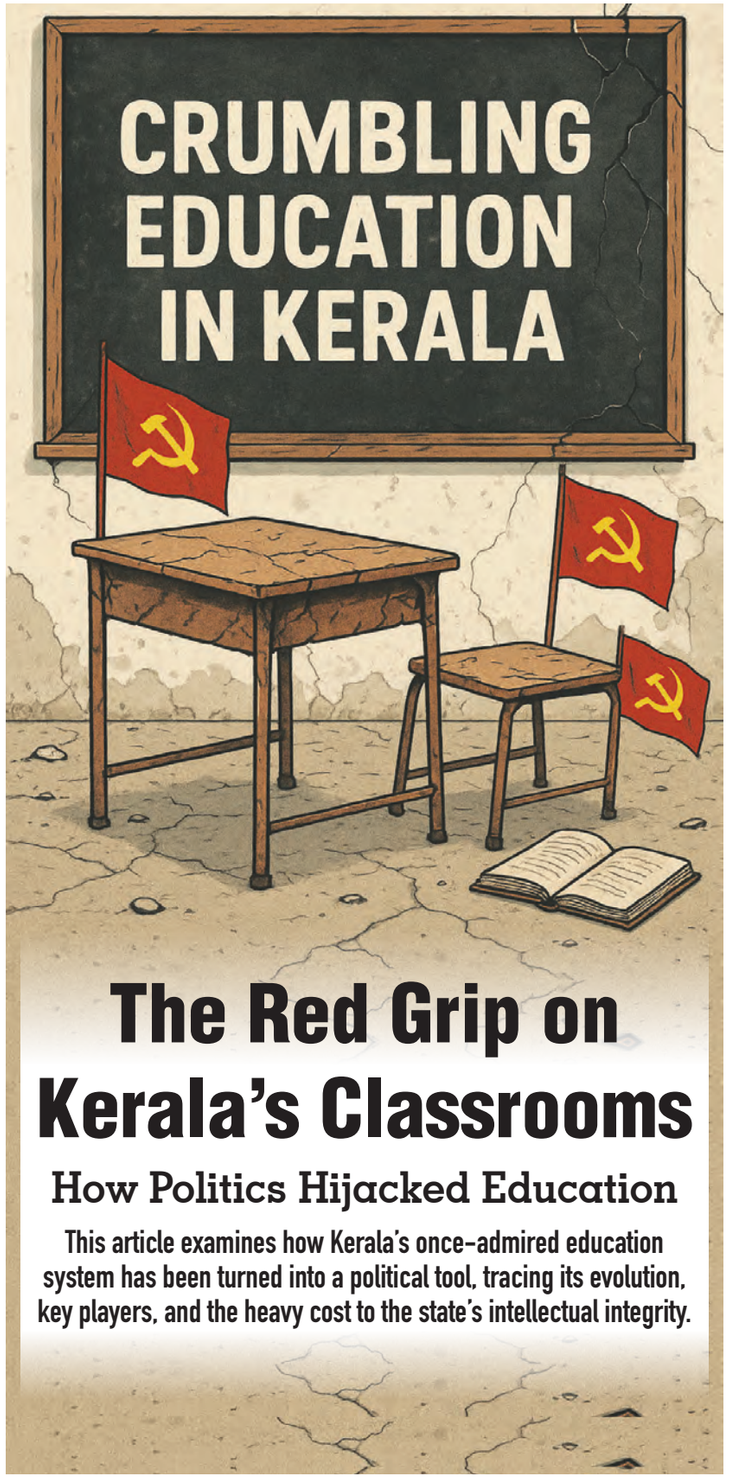
The problem with this concentration is not just about fairness; it's about stability. When 80% of transactions are routed through two platforms, any technical failure, cyberattack, or regulatory disruption could paralyze India's payment ecosystem overnight. This is no longer hypothetical—past outages have shown how dependent users and merchants have become on a handful of apps. A systemic failure at one end could ripple through the economy, affecting millions of daily transactions, from grocery payments to business transfers. In essence, India's most successful financial innovation risks becoming its most vulnerable.

The duopoly also stifles innovation and competition. Smaller fintechs, no matter how promising, find it almost impossible to scale when user habits, merchant networks, and marketing budgets are monopolized by two giants. The entry barrier is too high, as these dominant players use their deep pockets to incentivize users and merchants, locking them into their ecosystems. As a result, new entrants—who could have brought better services, improved security, or niche innovations—are driven out before they can compete. In the long run, this weakens the overall fintech landscape, making it less resilient and less dynamic.

Regulators, including the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), have previously recognized this risk. NPCI had proposed a 30% cap on the market share of any single player in the UPI ecosystem, but implementation has been repeatedly delayed. Meanwhile, concentration has only deepened. The fintech industry's recent warning to the Finance Ministry and the RBI should serve as a wake-up call. Without decisive action, India's payment system could face the same risks that traditional banking regulators try to avoid—too big to fail institutions.

What India needs is a recalibration of its UPI ecosystem. Regulators must create incentives for diversification—whether through enforcing market share caps, promoting regional or sectoral payment apps, or offering a level playing field for banks and smaller fintechs. Additionally, public digital infrastructure like UPI Lite and the upcoming Digital Payments Intelligence Platform should be leveraged to ensure transparency, prevent monopolistic practices, and protect consumer data.

India's fintech journey has been remarkable, but sustainability must now take precedence over speed. A duopoly in a system as critical as UPI is not just an economic concern; it is a national risk. The vision of UPI was to make digital payments inclusive and competitive, not concentrated and fragile. If regulators fail to act swiftly, India could find that its proudest fintech innovation has become its Achilles' heel—a system too dependent on too few.



The Red Grip on Kerala's Classrooms

How Politics Hijacked Education

This article examines how Kerala's once-admired education system has been turned into a political tool, tracing its evolution, key players, and the heavy cost to the state's intellectual integrity.



Pradeep Krishnan

Recently, when noted classical dancer and activist Mallika Sarabhai accused Kerala's Left establishment of "systematically capturing the state's academic and cultural spaces," her words struck a deep chord. Known for her liberal credentials and long association with progressive causes, Sarabhai's criticism was both unexpected and powerful. In a widely discussed interview with the New Indian Express, she spoke of how intellectual and artistic institutions in Kerala have been "walled in by ideology," leaving little room for dissent or diversity of thought. Her outburst reopened a long-suppressed conversation — how deeply has politics, particularly Marxist politics, infiltrated the state's education system? For decades, Kerala has prided itself on being India's most literate state, where education was seen as the ladder of social mobility and enlightenment. Yet, behind this celebrated façade lies a troubling story — one of systematic politicisation, recruitment bias, ideological indoctrination, and the gradual erosion of academic freedom. From universities and teachers' unions to student organisations and curriculum boards, the shadow of political influence is unmistakable. The recent controversies — over backdoor appointments, manipulated syllabi, and the silencing of dissenting voices — are not isolated incidents but symptoms of a deeper malaise.

From Model State to Political Battlefield

Kerala once stood as India's proud symbol of enlightenment and empowerment. The missionary schools of the 19th century and the educational renaissance led by Sree Narayana Guru, Chattambi Swamikal, and Ayyan Kali transformed the state into a beacon of literacy and reform. But what was once a movement for intellectual freedom has been reduced to a political battlefield. The Communist movement, which claimed credit over the legacy of these saints, converted educational spaces into ideological nurseries producing cadres instead of enlightened citizens. For decades, the Left has exercised suffocating control over teachers' appointments, student unions, and university administration. Merit and professionalism have given way to political loyalty. Today, Kerala's once-celebrated model is collapsing under the weight of corruption, bureaucracy, and ideological rigidity — a decline recently laid bare by the courageous revelations of Mallika Sarabhai, Chancellor of Kerala Kalamandalam. Her statements about how political interference has crippled academic freedom have exposed the depth of decay in the state's educational and cultural institutions.

The PM SHRI Controversy and Financial Distress

The recent controversy over the PM SHRI programme to upgrade schools into model institutions perfectly illustrates the government's misplaced priorities. When the Central Government launched the initiative, the Left administration in Kerala initially refused to implement it, calling it an attempt to "saffronize" education. Only after mounting public criticism did the government reluctantly accept the plan, but following pressure from its coalition partner, the CPI, the CPM soon backtracked on the issue.

Meanwhile, the financial mess deepens. Many schools struggle to fund mid-day meals or maintain infrastructure. Shockingly, in several institutions, teachers and headmasters pay for students' meals from their own pockets. Even in cities, classrooms deteriorate as funds dry up. The "Kerala model," once cited worldwide, is now a cautionary tale.

Politicised Teachers and Collapsing Professionalism

One of the gravest dangers to Kerala's education system is the rampant politicisation among teachers. Teachers' unions operate as extensions of political parties, especially the CPI(M). Promotions, transfers, and disciplinary actions are determined by allegiance, not merit. Faculty members participate in political campaigns during working hours, while dedicated educators are sidelined. The result is a culture



V Sivankutty



R Bindu



Mallika Sarabhai

where excellence is neither valued nor rewarded — a system producing conformity instead of curiosity.

Backdoor Appointments and Party Cadre Domination

Perhaps the most visible form of corruption is the backdoor recruitment of party cadres. Thousands of politically connected individuals have secured posts in schools, colleges, and universities through opaque procedures. The Public Service Commission, once a pillar of fairness, now faces allegations of bias and irregularity. In some universities, appointment lists are prepared before official notifications are issued; new posts are even created to suit particular candidates. This blatant misuse of power has shattered public faith and demoralized genuine aspirants.

Cultural and academic institutions have not been spared. Mallika Sarabhai's sharp criticism of Kerala Kalamandalam — once a proud custodian of performing arts — revealed how political contamination and administrative incompetence have crippled creativity. Her account of untrained staff promoted to officer ranks, inability to handle basic correspondence, and resistance to reform has forced the public to confront the depth of Kerala's institutional rot.

SFI Control and Campus Intolerance

On college campuses, the Students' Federation of India (SFI), the CPI(M)'s student wing, exerts near-total control. Under the guise of student activism, campuses have turned into arenas of fear where dissenting voices are silenced. Rival student organisations face intimidation, their posters torn down, and their meetings disrupted. Students who express alternative opinions risk physical attack or academic victimisation. Universities that should nurture dialogue and debate have degenerated into spaces of coercion and propaganda.

The Hijab Controversy and Selective Secularism

The recent hijab controversy in a Christian management school further exposed the hypocrisy of Kerala's political class. When a Muslim student, reportedly influenced by the SDPI, demanded to wear a hijab against the school's uniform policy, the government and mainstream parties remained silent. Instead of defending the school's right to enforce discipline, they pandered to sectarian interests. This selective secularism — where minority appeasement overrides principle — underscores how politics of identity have invaded classrooms, eroding their neutrality and sanctity.

Decline in Academic Standards

The consequences of this politicisation are visible in plummeting academic standards. Once among India's top-ranked universities, Kerala's institutions now perform poorly in national assessments. Research output is minimal; innovation is almost absent. The brightest students increasingly migrate to other states or abroad. The curriculum, heavily influenced by Marxist ideology, distorts historical narratives and downplays India's spiritual and civilisational heritage. In its obsession with political correctness, the system has lost its soul — students graduate without grounding in culture, ethics, or independent thought.

The Culture of Strikes and Disruption

Kerala's campuses are now synonymous with strikes and boycotts. Hardly a month passes without some protest — many driven by political theatrics rather than genuine issues.

Academic calendars are disrupted, exams delayed, and valuable teaching days lost. Students and parents bear the cost of this chaos, while unions treat confrontation as routine. The long-term casualty is the very idea of learning as a disciplined, creative process.

Private Schools under Pressure

Private and aided schools, which educate a large share of Kerala's students, are equally suffocated by political overreach. Managers face harassment and endless regulations, with little financial support from the state. Appointing a teacher often requires "clearance" from political functionaries. Merit is secondary to connections, eroding institutional independence. Many of these schools, once known for excellence, now struggle to retain credibility.

Data Doesn't Lie: A Structural Decline

Statistics confirm what experience already reveals. Independent studies and national assessments show measurable slippage in Kerala's learning outcomes and school quality. Despite increased spending, outcomes decline — pointing not to lack of intent but to failed governance. Politicised appointments, weak accountability, and misplaced resource allocation have combined to corrode the very foundation of public education. The decline of government schools and flight of students to private institutions reflect an alarming public trust deficit.

Curriculum Stagnation and Economic Mismatch

Kerala's higher education system, long dominated by traditional and theoretical subjects, shows little connection to contemporary economic realities. The absence of industry linkages, research hubs, and skill-oriented courses has produced a mismatch between education and employability. Thousands of graduates, trained in outdated syllabi, leave the state each year seeking opportunities elsewhere. Once a ladder of social mobility, Kerala's education system has become an assembly line of degrees without direction.

Teacher Morale and the Talent Drain

Demotivated by politicisation and opaque promotions, many teachers have lost enthusiasm for their profession. New educators see limited growth prospects within the system. As a result, Kerala suffers a steady outflow of academic talent to other states and countries. Salary alone cannot ensure quality; what teachers crave is professional respect and autonomy — both missing in the current system. The result: declining classroom engagement and learning outcomes.

Public Distrust and Two-Tier Education

As public education weakens, middle-class families increasingly turn to private and CBSE schools, coaching centres, and out-of-state options. This creates a two-tier system where quality becomes a privilege, not a right. The egalitarian foundation of Kerala's social development — the idea that every child, regardless of background, can access quality education — is being dismantled. For a state that once prided itself on equality through education, this growing divide is morally corrosive.

What Mallika Sarabhai's Outburst Revealed

Dr. Mallika Sarabhai's candid criticism of Kerala Kalamandalam — that "political interference and corruption have destroyed the sanctity of our institutions" — was not a casual outburst but a warning bell. Her experiences illustrate how ideological capture and administrative incompetence have crippled one of India's premier cultural universities. She described an institution where even basic operational work was beyond staff capabilities, where merit was replaced by favour, and where creative freedom was stifled. Her remarks triggered a storm of reactions across Kerala — most of them acknowledging what insiders have long known but feared to say aloud.

Public responses mirrored the frustration of ordinary citizens: "Don't just stuff posts with party men — can't they find anyone competent?" one comment read. Another lamented that "even university officers don't know how to draft a letter in English." Many pointed out how Kerala's so-called cultural elites had risen not through excellence but through political connections. These sarcastic but painful remarks reflect a society disillusioned by the hypocrisy of those who once claimed to champion enlightenment.

The Deeper Malaise

The tragedy of Kerala's education crisis lies not merely in administrative decay but in moral collapse. The same Left parties that once fought for equality have created an elitist system serving their own networks. Academic institutions — from universities to cultural academies — have become instruments of control rather than creativity. The "Kerala miracle" that once drew admiration now risks turning into a cautionary tale of how ideology can corrode intellect.

The Way Forward

Kerala urgently needs a non-partisan educational revival.

1. **Depoliticise institutions:** Appointments and promotions must be merit-based, with independent selection committees and transparent processes.
2. **Empower teachers:** Establish long-term training and career ladders linked to performance, not party loyalty.
3. **Ensure accountability:** Conduct regular audits and publish learning outcomes to restore trust.
4. **Modernise curriculum:** Create industry linkages, research hubs, and vocational pathways to align learning with real-world needs.
5. **Protect cultural institutions:** Reform governance in bodies like Kalamandalam to ensure autonomy, competence, and artistic freedom.

Reclaiming the Public Mission

Education is not a political trophy; it is the foundation of civilisation. Kerala's downfall began the moment education became a weapon of ideology. Citizens, parents, and teachers must now reclaim it from partisan control. The state's future depends on restoring the purity of purpose that once defined its educational mission — to enlighten minds, not enslave them.

The Left still claims to be the guardian of Kerala's social model. To honour that legacy, it must first free education from its own grip. Otherwise, the state once hailed as India's intellectual pride will be remembered instead as a sobering example of how power, when unchecked, can destroy the very enlightenment it once promised to protect.

(The content of this article reflects the views of writer and contributor, not necessarily those of the publisher and editor. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only)

From Teacup to Vice-Chancellor: A Marxist Success Story



Kerala Kalamandalam

Dr. Mallika Sarabhai's fiery outbursts have set Kerala's social media ablaze — and the replies are nothing short of poetic justice. "Don't just stuff posts with politicians," one quips, "can't they at least find someone with a bit of common sense?" Poor Mallika ji — she merely said that except for the Vice-Chancellor and Registrar, no one at Kalamandalam even knows how to send an email. Little does she know — once upon a time, Kerala University had a Vice-Chancellor who couldn't even draft a letter in English! If that's the qualification, perhaps we should all start applying.

Officials, people joke, don't know what their job is — better to let them sit at home and still pay them. "Madam doesn't get it," someone remarks kindly, "she's seen the world and wasn't born in Kerala." Because if she were, she'd know that our "cultural icons" and "intellectuals" are not born — they are manufactured. They climb the Marxist ladder with the grace of acrobats: from "progressive" to "intellectual" to "cultural leader." Commitment to art or society? No, no — it's all about the next chair, the next committee, the next title.

Most of these "thinkers" started off by bribing their way into private colleges, where they discovered that the surest path to success is not teaching but tutoring the party. From there begins the sacred pilgrimage — serving tea at the local committee, writing slogans, making capsules, and delivering justification lectures for the CPM. It's a kind of tapasya, really — not to gain wisdom, but to gain a post.

And then there are those rare, scholarly "leaders" who return to university late in life — not to learn, but to earn a PhD, preferably in record time and with record errors. Their theses are often delightful works of fiction, sprinkled generously with misquotes, invented sources, and footnotes that defy logic. Some even manage to quote Marx as if he were discussing modern Kerala politics — truly visionary! University committees, of course, applaud these masterpieces with standing ovations; after all, how can one fail a comrade who has already "passed" through the party school of dialectical diplomacy? The only real research question seems to be: how many typos can a doctoral dissertation survive and still get a red-carpet viva?

Of course, there are shortcuts. If you're related to someone in the party, no need for all this drama. Just marry a leader! If you lack the qualifications, don't worry — the post will be redesigned to fit you perfectly. As one wit put it, "In Kerala, love and Marxism are the two fastest ways to get tenure."

And why all this struggle? Simple — so that when you die, your obituary can proudly declare: Former Vice-Chancellor of Something. Even if you never taught a single class, you'll still enjoy a UGC salary till sixty and a pension for life. Is that not socialism at its finest?

Here, teaching is optional, attendance is theoretical, and mediocrity is a merit badge. No need to study the syllabus, no need to inspire students — just mumble something about Dalits, minorities, and Hindutva, and you're suddenly an academic revolutionary. Poor Mallika ji — she doesn't understand this beautiful ecosystem. She was never part of a teachers' union; she still thinks competence matters.

Take poet Vijayalakshmi, who topped her M.A. in Malayalam in 1980 and still didn't get a teaching job. She had to work in the post office with her tenth-standard marks — while the same bribed teachers now teach her poems in class. Isn't that poetic irony? And there's Balachandran Chullikkad — brilliant, outspoken, a postgraduate dropout. He saw through the circus early, wrote the L.D. Clerk test, and joined the Treasury. At least he can retire with his dignity — and a pension earned honestly.

Meanwhile, Kerala's youth — the bright, restless kind — are fleeing abroad faster than rats from a burning house, terrified by what they see in our universities: professors who can't send emails, officials who can't define their jobs, and "cultural icons" who think Marx wrote the syllabus. What's left behind is a paradise of degrees without depth, intellect without integrity, and slogans without sense.

And in this grand performance of progress, the audience can only laugh — because crying would mean you've understood it.

In Kerala's academia, ignorance isn't a drawback — it's a qualification with full pension benefits.

India Must Resume Nuclear Tests

As the US President has opened up a pandora's box by deciding to restart nuclear tests. Now is the time for India to master the much-awaited Hydrogen Bomb capability.



Mushroom cloud from the Castle Bravo thermonuclear weapon test in 1954



AMARTYA SINHA

On October 30, 2025, US President Donald J Trump announced that he had instructed the Department of War of the US government to resume nuclear testing. In a post on Truth Social, he wrote: "The United States has more nuclear weapons than any other country. This was accomplished, including a complete update and renovation of existing weapons, during my first term in office. Because of the tremendous destructive power, I hated to do it, but had no choice! Russia is second, and China is a distant third, but will be even after 5 years. Because of other countries testing programs, I have instructed the Department of War to start testing our nuclear weapons on an equal basis. That process will begin immediately. Thank you for an attention to this matter!" The social media post happened just a few moments before Trump met Chinese President Xi Jinping in Busan, South Korea. With this the US government scrapped the voluntary moratorium on nuke tests after a gap of almost 33 years. The announcement from Trump came just a few days after the Russian government formally declared the successful test of two cutting-edge strategic weapons: the nuclear-propelled Burevestnik cruise missile with unlimited range, and the much-awaited Poseidon nuclear-powered underwater drone that can be fired like a torpedo from submarines for destroying coastal cities.

To add fuel to the fire, President Donald J Trump officially stated on November 2, 2025 that the United States was compelled to resume nuclear testing as other countries like Pakistan, China, North Korea and Russia were already conducting secret underground nuclear tests. This fully endorsed US government reports that have many times raised suspicions that Russia and China may have conducted very low-yield or "sub-critical" tests of nuclear weapons that could technically violate the "zero-yield" benchmark of testing moratorium.

More, in a remote desert where China conducted its inaugural atomic bomb test sixty years ago, suspicious activities sparked international concern last year. According to a New York Times report, a drilling rig punctured a deep vertical shaft, potentially plunging over a third of a mile into the earth. The development signals that China may be getting ready to test a new breed of nuclear weaponry, enhancing the lethality of its expanding missile arsenal. Previously shrouded in vague speculations and concerns cited in US government reports, Lop Nur, the aging base, has now come under increased scrutiny. Satellite imagery has exposed fresh boreholes, optimal for containing the lethal aftermath of sizable nuclear detonations, amidst numerous upgrades and expansions across the military complex.

The global nuke test race

The United States of America has carried out 1032 nuclear bomb tests between 1945 and 1992, followed by the former Soviet Union which executed tests of 981 nuke devices between 1949 and 1990. Following the footsteps of the two cold-war era rivals, France has executed 215 such tests between 1960 and 1996, whereas the United Kingdom has test fired 88 nuclear weapons between 1952 and 1991. China has fired 48 nuclear devices of various yields during testing exercises held between 1964 and 1996. India has carried out

More, in a remote desert where China conducted its inaugural atomic bomb test sixty years ago, suspicious activities sparked international concern last year.

live tests of just six nuclear devices from 1974 to 1998. Pakistan has also six underground nuclear tests in 1998 in response to India's tests. North Korea has tested six nuclear bombs between 2006 and 2017. It is believed that Israel possesses nuclear weapons. But there is no concrete evidence of any live nuclear explosive test being carried out by the Jewish nation barring the "Vela incident" of September 22, 1979 which is widely considered as a secret Israeli nuclear weapon test in the Indian Ocean detected by an American spy satellite.

India's nuclear weapons journey

India has always maintained a strategic but ambiguous approach towards realising operational nuclear weapons capability. The nation's first even nuclear test (Smiling Buddha) took place on May 18, 1974 under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The experiment which involved a pure fission weapon, had an explosive yield of around 10 kilotons of TNT. This was starkly low in contrast to the explosive yields of "Little Boy" (15 kilotons) and "Fat Man" (21 kilotons) bombs dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki respectively. The six kilograms of Plutonium used in the design of the atomic bomb came from the CIRUS reactor located at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) complex in Trombay. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi diplomatically played down the test as a "peaceful nuclear explosion" fearing global geopolitical ramifications.

With the design of the pure fission weapon validated, there was increasing pressure from the Indian scientific community on subsequent Indian governments during the 1980s for carrying out further live tests in order to realise the designs of more advanced and powerful nukes. For obvious



Successful test firing of Agni-Prime nuclear ballistic missile

reasons, the next logical step was to fire a boosted-fission weapon. Unlike a pure-fission bomb, a boosted-fission device uses a small amount of fusion fuel to increase the rate and yield of a fission reaction. But with little room for live testing due to lack of political intent, Indian scientists were silently given the go-ahead to design and develop a full-fledged two-stage thermonuclear device (popularly known as Hydrogen Bomb) by the Rajiv Gandhi government in 1985. The device was finally ready for testing in 1995 under the leadership of the then Prime Minister Narasimha Rao. But the 1995 test plans were cancelled after US reconnaissance satellites blew off the covers in Pokhran.

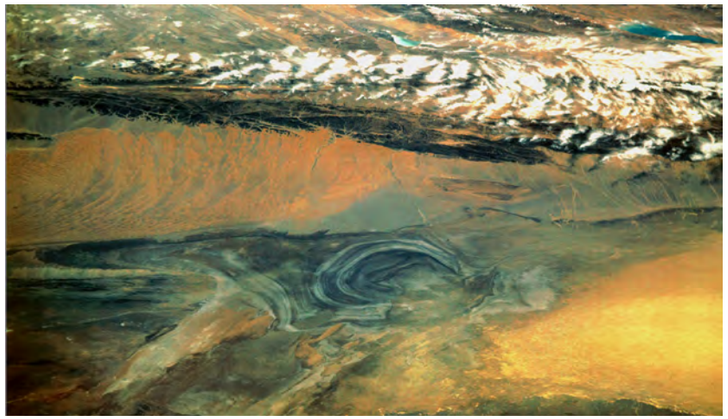
The H-bomb conundrum

After the ground shook under the hot desert sands of Pokhran on May 11, 1998, India had officially declared herself as a 'full-fledged nuclear weapons power' with three simultaneous nuclear blasts. Two more detonations followed on May 13, 1998, thus ending the series of planned tests. Soon after the series of explosions was over, eyebrows were raised in Western scientific and media circles regarding the blast-yield of one of the underground detonations. The thermonuclear weapon prototype which was reportedly detonated at an explosive yield of around 45 kilotons, soon found itself in the middle of the controversy. The device reportedly had a design yield of up to 200 kilotons and was dubbed as a fizzle by some Western experts. But the country's scientific establishment later conducted an official press conference in which eminent scientists- Dr APJ Abdul Kalam and Dr

Rajagopalachari Chidambaram said that the thermonuclear weapon performed on expected lines and that the blast yield of the Shakti-1 thermonuclear device was deliberately kept low taking into consideration the terrain and topography of the area and the test site's proximity to Khetolai village.

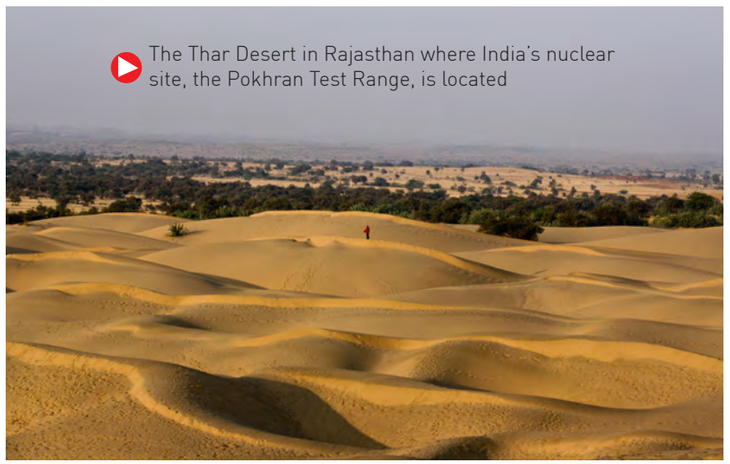
BARC (Bhabha Atomic Research Centre) officially clarified that Shakti-1 was a highly compact thermonuclear device which used a sophisticated fusion-boosted-fission trigger as the primary stage and a Tritium cylinder as the secondary stage.

In order to put all controversies to rest, BARC also executed a radiochemical analysis of soil and rock samples extracted from the thermonuclear blast site. The post-shot radioactivity measurement report on the samples says: "The signatures of the fusion reaction are activation products due to 14 MeV neutrons, such as, 54Mn, 22Na, 58Co, 46Sc, as marked in the gamma-ray spectrum. The estimation of 14 MeV neutron yield from the measured radioactivity of these products requires the knowledge of the amount of the target elements present at the site of the event and the reaction cross sections. The two major radionuclides which could be assayed in most of the samples were 54Mn and 46Sc. Although the fission neutron spectrum has a high energy tail, the total number of neutrons produced by fusion fraction being much larger, the majority of the high energy neutrons can be attributed to fusion neutrons. The possible sources of error in the measurement of fission yield are:



Satellite image of Lop Nur nuclear testing site in China

assay of radioactivity (5-7 percent); nuclear data such as half-life, gamma-ray branching intensity and fission yields (8 percent); and the error in integration which arises mainly due to the error in Rc (15 percent). In the assessment of fusion yield, the sources of errors are uncertainty in the elemental composition of the surrounding rock and its effect on the neutron spectrum used in the Monte Carlo simulations of the activity. The propagation of these errors leads to an overall error on the measured yield which is around 20 percent. Thus, it is concluded that the total yield of the thermonuclear device is 50 + 10 kT." While the report confirms that 14 MeV neutrons were found as a result of initialisation of the fusion reaction from the secondary stage of the bomb, the total explosive yield has been repeatedly disputed by senior scientists like Late Dr K Santhanam and Dr PK Iyenger who have argued that the total yield of the thermonuclear blast didn't exceed 20 kilotons. More, the presence of 14 MeV neutrons in the soil samples, might prove that there was a fusion reaction, but at no point proves that the secondary stage of the Hydrogen Bomb wasn't a fizzle. This once again puts into doubt the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government's claim of having a deployable thermonuclear deterrence in operational configurations. In fact, the Shakti-1 design required more live testing, which never really happened due to India's self-imposed voluntary moratorium on experimental nuclear explosions.



The Thar Desert in Rajasthan where India's nuclear site, the Pokhran Test Range, is located

Why India should resume testing

While it is a well-known fact that no nuclear power in the world has been able to successfully test a double-staged thermonuclear weapon in the very first attempt, the Indian test and the ensuing speculations about the blast yields raises doubt over the deployability of the capability in operational warhead configuration atop Agni series of medium-range, intermediate-range and intercontinental-range ballistic missiles. Renowned national security experts like Bharat Karnad have repeatedly publicly stated that India should resume thermonuclear testing for mastering the double staged fusion design (Teller-Ulam design).

India's arch foe- China has already achieved the boosted-fission weapon capability through Project-596L (layer cake design) way back in 1966 and has also mastered its two-stage thermonuclear capability via Project-639 in 1967.

Supercomputer simulations?

Supercomputer simulations can replace physical nuclear weapon tests only if a country has "exascale" computational capability (i.e.,"one billion billion" – 18 zeroes — operations per second) that only the US, Russia, and China have. Place the fastest Indian supercomputer, Pratyush, with the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology capable of 20 petaflops (15 zeroes) capacity alongside, and the problem becomes evident. Assuming optimistically that BARC has a 150-petaflop supercomputer (a level Pratyush expects to reach, finances permitting), it is still dwarfed by the US 'Summit' and the Chinese 'Sunway TaihuLight' exascale supercomputers. More daunting still, in October 2021 China claimed revolutionary technological breakthroughs with its 'Zuchongzhi 2.1' supercomputer featuring superconducting quantum computing and photonics quantum computing that is "10 million times faster" than 'Summit'.

India's upcoming exascale supercomputer- "Param Shankh" which will be powered by an indigenous 96 core, ARM architecture-based processor named as "Aum", may not take shape before 2030 which leaves a deep void towards generating data for advanced nuclear weapon designs.

India's foes sharing data

China's weapons programme, besides design and material help, also benefitted from Russian thermonuclear test data (as did the UK, French and Israeli fission and fusion weapons projects from American test data) and Pakistan and North Korea from Chinese test data transferred to them as part of the "rogue nuclear triad". As sensitive information sharing is ongoing within this triad, Islamabad and Pyongyang may not have to test again to enhance their strategic weapons profiles. But it will be quite impractical to think that any of the P5 nations will share their nuclear test data with India for qualitatively enhancing India's arsenal of nukes.

The road ahead

India is neither a signatory to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) nor a signatory to the CTBT (Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty). Being a signatory to the PTBT (Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty), India already fulfils its obligations by never testing any nuclear weapon underwater, in the atmospheric regime or in space. As India has tested just six nuclear weapons till date, and due to lack of exascale-level supercomputers, the data is not matured enough to design next-generation nuclear weapons which will be very compact but will have higher explosive yields. It is quite evident that if the United States restart live testing of nuclear warheads, Russia and China will also follow suit, followed by North Korea. This will leave a golden opportunity for India to resume live testing of nuclear weapons without any hindrances. Along with sub-critical tests, India must use this opportunity to retest the much awaited two-stage Hydrogen Bomb (thermonuclear weapon) under the desert sands of Pokhran. The new datasets gathered from such tests must be used for simulations in the Param Shankh exascale supercomputer in future.



MIRV nuclear warheads which are installed onboard ICBMs

India should have never stopped live nuclear tests after 1998. The tests should have continued unabated till the country achieved a credible and reliable thermonuclear capability. The 123-agreement signed with the US has a clause (Article-14.2) which opens the door open for India to cite its "changed security environment" as a trigger for any new nuclear test. Moreover, Article-2.4 of the 123-pact also states: "purpose of this agreement is to provide for peaceful nuclear cooperation and not to affect the unsafeguarded nuclear activities of either party." Hence, this clause will give India widespread diplomatic leverage as the country's military grade nuclear reactors are totally outside the purview of IAEA (International Atomic Energy Agency) safeguards. So, India has literally nothing to fear.

The only challenge for Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be to fend off the so-called peaceniks in the corridors of powers in Delhi and decision-making bodies who have done tremendous damage to India's nuclear posture by freezing the nuclear weapons programme since the last two decades. Today, India is the fourth largest economy in the world and is poised to become the third largest by 2027. The nation has one of the largest militaries in the world. Hence, without any iota of doubt, India must seize this opportunity to carry out additional series of nuclear tests. If Pokhran's geology doesn't permit very high-yield megaton-level underground blasts, alternative underground nuclear testing sites in isolated places like Ladakh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands should also be built. Meanwhile, as per a US Congressional report, it will take the US government at least 24 to 36 months to prepare the Nevada site for nuclear tests. If an American nuclear test is expected by 2028, India should be ready to execute its Hydrogen Bomb test in the same year. Now is the time for preparing the Pokhran test site accordingly, so that it can match the expected timeline and the series of nuclear tests are executed just before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. Many people in the Indian scientific community and policymaking bodies (including this journalist) have been waiting for Pokhran-3 blasts throughout their entire lifetime. The dream can be realised only by the incumbent BJP-led Hindu Nationalist NDA-3 government of beloved statesman Prime Minister Narendra Modi. If the Prime Minister takes a bold decision in this regard, it will be another feather in the cap for his unending legacy in the golden pages of history.

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India's Rice Empire Under Pressure from Global Oversupply and Buyer Shifts





Suresh Manchanda

Global rice supply is abundant in 2024–25 and 2025, driven by bumper harvests in several major producers (India, China, Bangladesh and parts of Southeast Asia). That plentiful supply — together with large public stocks, softer import demand and intense price competition from India — has pushed international rice quotations lower in 2025. Premium aromatic basmati has shown localized strength after weather damage in some growing areas, but world non-basmati/regular rice prices hit multi-year lows.

1) Global production — who makes how much ?

World production (milled basis): roughly 540 – 542 million tonnes in 2024/25 – 2025/26 (estimates). Global stocks and supplies are close to record levels.

Largest producers: India (approx. 150 million tons), China (145 million tons), Bangladesh (36–37 million tons), followed by Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Myanmar and Pakistan. India and China together account for over half of world rice production.

Why these numbers matter: rice is highly concentrated — production shifts in India, China or Thailand materially change world availability and prices.

2) Production trends by major exporting countries

India : A bumper crop in the marketing year around 2024–25 lifted India's output towards the 145 –150 million tons (milled) range. Record production and large government stocks have supported active export offers.

Thailand & Vietnam: Both remain large exporters but shipments in 2025 have been hit by intense price competition from India and by some crop/quality swings. Thailand's shipments fell in early 2025 as buyers shifted to cheaper Indian offers.

Pakistan: A major basmati and non-basmati supplier; flooding and weather events in parts of South Asia have pressured output of some premium varieties in 2025, supporting basmati differently than regular rice.

3) Global demand and trade flows

Trade volumes : International rice trade has been projected to expand modestly in 2025, but trade values are under pressure because prices are lower.

Buyer behaviour : Importers in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia are price-sensitive; when India offers competitively priced non-basmati rice, many buyers switch away from Thailand/Vietnam, shifting trade flows. That switch has dented shipments from traditional exporters.

4) Price scenario — what's happening and why prices are down

The situation: international rice prices fell significantly through 2024–25 and into 2025 and agencies commentaries during 2025 describe rice prices hitting multi-year lows or "hitting a floor."

India's aggressive export offers / price competition — India's large output and the ability of exporters to offer cheap non-basmati rice lured buyers away from Thailand and Vietnam, undercutting regional prices.

High carryover stocks (India's public stocks & global inventories) — India's central buffer (FCI and state procurement) and other carryover stocks reduced urgency for imports and lowered spot demand. APEDA noted FCI stocks significantly above the 5-year average as of mid-2025.

Soft import demand / switching patterns — some traditional importers delayed purchases or bought cheaper origins; in aggregate this reduced upward price pressure.

Variety/quality segmentation — while ordinary non-aromatic rice weakened, premium basmati showed localized strength where floods or heavy rains hit producing districts (e.g., parts of India/Pakistan), reducing supply for those varieties and lifting their prices. This keeps a split market: cheap regular rice vs. tighter premium rice.

5) India — export situation and state-wise production (India details) Exports

Export volumes: Indian industry and some forecasts expected exports for the 2025–26 marketing year to be well above previous years, with projections ranging from 22–30 million tonnes depending on assumptions (multiple industry estimates in Sept–Nov 2025 discussed higher shipments given the bumper crop and strong milling). At the same time, official monthly dashboards showed some slowing in Q2 2025 (seasonal), because of large domestic stocks and active government procurement. In short: India is shipping large volumes and remains the price-competitive global supplier in 2025.

Policy notes: India lifted a two-year ban on exports of de-oiled rice bran in early October 2025 — a move expected to revive some by-product exports and support processors. Policy changes like these shift flows and margins in the rice value chain.

Bangladesh Turns to the U.S., Iran Faces Financial Turmoil

Bangladesh's Shift and India's Changing Trade Equation

Bangladesh used to be one of India's closest friends and reliable trade partners. However, after the recent change in government there, the impact is now visible on bilateral trade relations as well. Although Bangladesh produces rice domestically, it often relied on India for rice supplies whenever needed.

This year, however, the United States has stepped into that role. After supplying 440,000 tons of wheat, reports now suggest that rice shipments from the U.S. to Bangladesh are also on the way. This development threatens India's 800,000 metric ton rice export market to Bangladesh, signaling a potential shift in South Asian trade dynamics.

Iran's Crisis and India's Stuck Payments

Iran, one of India's largest rice importers—buying 8 to 12 lakh tons annually, mostly premium basmati—is now struggling with a severe financial crisis. The bankruptcy of Ayandeh Bank, Iran's biggest private financial institution, has worsened matters.

With losses exceeding 2% of Iran's GDP (around USD 5 billion), payment settlements for Indian exporters have been jeopardized. As a result, Indian rice exporters face mounting risks of stuck payments and shrinking opportunities in a key Middle Eastern market. Simultaneously, reports suggest that global demand for rice exports is slowing in 2025.

Production in India — state wise

Government and sector sources list the top paddy/rice producing states (figures are recent season / advance estimates or state procurement figures):

Uttar Pradesh — 217.4 lakh tonnes (21.74 million tons) paddy (one of the largest single-state outputs).

Punjab — 146.8 lakh tonnes (14.68 million tons).

West Bengal — 120.8 lakh tonnes (12.08 million tons).

Chhattisgarh — 97.0 lakh tonnes (9.70 million tons).

Telangana — 81.7 lakh tonnes (8.17 million tons).

What this means: production is geographically broad — not concentrated in one small region — so a combination of state-level bumper yields tends to translate fairly quickly into national upward supply pressure.

6) Why Indian domestic prices can still be weak even with large procurement

Even with strong government procurement in some states, domestic prices are pressured because:

Large procurement fills public godowns (FCI and state warehouses), reducing market offtake and creating a visible "glut." Government agencies noted stocks were well above average mid-2025.

States with bumper output (e.g., Telangana in 2025) face storage/ logistics bottlenecks; unsold marketable surplus increases local distress or forced off-loads at lower prices. Local media reported storage crisis pressures in Telangana in October 2025.

Export demand, while robust in tonnage, is price-sensitive; if world prices fall, domestic millers/exporters may reduce farmgate paddy buying or only buy at lower prices — passing downward pressure to farmers.

7) Outlook — what to watch next

Monsoon/rabi weather and flood impacts (esp. basmati areas): weather risk can tighten premium supplies and push up those prices quickly.

Indian policy moves — export restrictions, or stock release programs (grain auctions) will be market movers. Recent policy moves such as resumption of rice-bran product exports show how policy changes can affect downstream markets.

Currency & freight — rupee movements and global freight costs change competitiveness; a weaker rupee or cheaper freight makes Indian rice more competitive and can sustain high export volumes at low nominal world prices.

8) Practical takeaway for stakeholders

Buyers / importers: abundant supply means good availability and bargaining power today — but monitor weather for premium varieties.

Farmers / state governments: storage and logistics are critical. States with bumper output should coordinate sales, stagger releases, and press for additional procurement or transport support to avoid distress sales.

India
- Production: 125.0 M MT
- Exports (2024): 17–22 M MT(India is the world's largest rice exporter by volume)

China
- Production: 147.7 M MT
- Exports (2024): 1.1 M MT

Bangladesh
- Production: 35.5 M MT
- Exports (2024): 0.0–0.5 M MT (mostly domestic consumption; modest exports)

Indonesia
- Production: 34.4 M MT
- Exports (2024): negligible — mostly import-substituting / domestic use

Vietnam
- Production: 27.1 M MT
- Exports (2024): 5–9 M MT (Vietnam is a top global exporter)

Thailand
- Production: 19.5 M MT
- Exports (2024): 7.7–10.0 M MT

Myanmar (Burma)
- Production: 12.5 M MT
- Exports (2024): 2.0 M MT (varies year to year)

Snapshot

(The content of this article reflects the views of writer and contributor, not necessarily those of the publisher and editor. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only)

Who's winning Bihar?

After a month-long campaign, Nitish is still the subject of discussion among all parties, proving his detractors wrong. The BJP has been forced, or otherwise, to acknowledge Nitish's preeminence on the battlefield and rally all caste combinations behind his leadership.



Amit Shah before addressing a rally in Darbhanga, Bihar

When the assembly elections were announced in Bihar, most of us thought the key questions before voters were: will JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar secure another third consecutive term as CM?

Could the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) announce a new chief ministerial face if the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) wins?

Or will the people of Bihar be trapped by an amnesia of sorts and vote for the Opposition, and make Lalu Prasad Yadav's son, Tejashwi Yadav, new CM?

After a month-long campaign, Nitish is still the subject of discussion among all parties, proving his detractors wrong. The BJP has been forced, or otherwise, to acknowledge Nitish's preeminence on the battlefield and rally all caste combinations behind his leadership.



Shekhar Iyer

Not far behind is Tejashwi Yadav, who appears to be trying to break free from the legacy of misrule of his parents, Lalu Prasad Yadav and Rabri Devi, even as he courts voters beyond the Muslim-Yadav stronghold.

The most influential among the voters -- the youth of Bihar are dazed by the plethora of promises made by Nitish-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and Tejashwi's Mahagatbandhan.

However, the women of Bihar, who have emerged as powerful game changers in the state, appear still solid behind the aura of empowerment created by Nitish.

The common perception is also that Nitish still commands Extremely Backward Caste (EBC) and dominant caste votes.

Since this combination made him invincible over the past 20 years, his victory this time appears still closer at hand than Tejashwi's catapulting to power.

At the same time, political pundits remind us that, even if Nitish remains the most significant factor, Tejashwi has managed to generate considerable interest to rock the NDA's boat in the ever-changing political and social landscape of Bihar.

The election will decide whether the ruling NDA, comprising the BJP and the Janata Dal (United) among others, retains power or makes way for the Mahagathbandhan (MGB), comprising the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the Congress, the Communist Party of India-Marxist Leninist and smaller regional parties.

This time around, the NDA versus Mahagatbandhan contest has also been contrasted by the foray of political strategist-turned-politician Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj party.

Prashant Kishor, or PK, as he is known, has projected his party as "an alternative to the BJP's Hindutva agenda" and the dynastic politics of Lalu, presenting a new narrative that could make the battle a triangular one. That is, if PK has persuaded Gen Z to give his fledgling party a chance.

Kishor has been touring Bihar for the last two and a half years, claiming to introduce "issue-based politics" into the state's elections. Drawing on his experience as an election strategist for several leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi, Mamata Banerjee, and M.K. Stalin, Kishor is seeking a "kingmaker's role" in the post-poll scenario.

However, his decision not to contest the elections has dampened the mood of his followers. Some even say that Jan Suraaj's presence has gradually lost relevance in many of the 236 seats it has fielded nominees. At best, his outfit could damage the NDA's prospects in many places by attracting the dominant caste and urban middle-class vote. It could also leave Tejashwi's nominees in a tight spot in a few seats.

Of the 243 Assembly seats, Tejaswhi's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) has fielded candidates in 143, leaving 100 to its alliance partners. Of the 143 seats the RJD is contesting, one is a reserved seat for Scheduled Tribes, while 20 seats are reserved for Scheduled Castes. The party has fielded Muslim candidates in 18 seats. Of the remaining 104 general seats, 52 have been given 52 to Yadavs.

The NDA has also adopted similar tactics. Of the 243 seats, 39 are reserved for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. In the remaining 204 general seats, the NDA (led by the JD-U) has fielded Muslim candidates in just five seats, with 86 of the remaining 199 seats allotted to dominant-caste Hindu candidates, who make up just over 10 per cent of Bihar's population.

Within the NDA, the BJP has fielded 101 candidates, of which 12 are Dalits in constitutionally reserved seats. Of its 89 general category candidates, 49 belong to dominant castes. Among these, Rajputs top the list, followed by Bhumihars. This falls precisely in the BJP's traditional support base.

Overall, the Bihar challenge is also a fundamental driver of national politics. One can gauge the pressure on all players. The entire top echelon of the BJP, including Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP chief ministers, and cabinet ministers, has been campaigning extensively, leaving nothing to chance.

In the 2020 Assembly polls, the NDA came to power, securing 132 of the 243 seats. The MGB finished a close second with 111 seats.

In August 2022, Nitish Kumar left the BJP in a lurch and allied with the MGB. However, in January 2024, Nitish jumped ship once again and aligned with the BJP for the Lok Sabha elections. As of today, the NDA alliance is presenting a united front, but the speculation about the future has never ceased among the leaders.

If the numbers don't add up, will Nitish be wooed by the MGP again? Is the BJP, under Modi, not keen on having Nitish return as chief minister? Or, will Chirag Paswan, as the face of the Dalits, eventually replace Nitish after some months if the NDA returns to power?

Nitish's advantage is that, due to his strong social base, he has consistently overcome the anti-incumbency sentiment.

Apart from the caste factor, unemployment, outmigration, corruption, and the decline of education and healthcare are the primary concerns dominating the discourse. In Bihar, where many seek opportunities beyond its borders, the promise of jobs is not just a campaign promise, but a lifeline.

That is why the NDA rolled out its slew of promises – one crore jobs, seven expressways, and medical colleges - to woo voters into choosing Nitish once again. The NDA has promised freebies in power, ration, education, medical treatment and a hike in stipend to farmers, fishermen and women running self-help groups (SHGs).

Countering NDA's promises, the MGB has offered the moon. It has pledged to provide one job to every family in Bihar, eliminate contract employment in government jobs, conduct a skill census, offer jobs, provide loan waivers, establish medical colleges, and offer freebies in power, education, agriculture, and to all women.

In its manifesto, marketed as 'Tejashwi Pran', the MGB has also promised new laws against exam paper leaks, financial harassment, increasing the reservation cap, and a relook at the 'liquor ban' currently imposed in Bihar.

Even before the manifesto was out, Tejashwi promised to issue an official order giving one government job per family within 20 days of becoming CM. Within twenty months, the job process will start.

What is on offer to women voters underscores the real battle. With promises like creating one crore 'lakhpati' Didis and financial aid up to ₹2 lakhs, NDA has focused on economic empowerment without direct benefit transfers (DBT). On the other hand, the MGB has promised to make all self-help group (SHG) workers under the 'Jeevika Didi' scheme government employees with a ₹30,000 salary per month, total loan waiver and a monthly stipend of ₹2000 for women-led SHGs. It has also offered a monthly stipend of ₹2,500 to all women from December, totalling ₹30,000 yearly, and a law against harassment by microfinance companies for loan/interest repayment.

Both Modi and Nitish have, in their campaign meetings, sought to convince the voters why only a 'double-engine' sarkar can deliver on poll promises.

If the social-economic surveys have to be taken seriously, the Bihar polls could be witnessing a sharp generational and gender divide. Apparently, male youth voters (18–30 years) show a clear preference for the MGB, with 41% support.

Women voters, across all age groups, remain firmly behind the NDA, with 44% choosing the ruling alliance. Among young educated men, Jan Suraaj, led by Prashant Kishor, can be a third force, securing 18% of the youth vote.

These surveys underscore that issues of gender empowerment, employment, and aspirations are driving voter behaviour. With over three crore women voters and nearly one-third of the electorate under 30, both Nitish Kumar and Tejashwi Yadav are recalibrating their campaigns to appeal to these groups.

As any voter in Bihar tells you, politics remains a battleground of aspirations. The MGB is poised to tap on the electorate's yearning for change.

However, PM Modi's presence and the NDA's organised campaign system cannot be underestimated. Nitish rests his hopes in the glory of 20 years of his stewardship, with sympathy votes from women who care about his health, and from lakhs of women who have benefited from his various welfare initiatives and prohibition.

Of course, despite facing a serious health challenge, Nitish must contend with the task of retaining his 'Sushasan babu' image among the voters while fending off anti-incumbency, particularly among job-seeking youth.

For Tejashwi, the task is not only to counter the NDA's advantage and convert his youth appeal into votes, but also to win over women voters from Nitish. As someone said, the old M-Y (Muslim-Yadav) formula may have defined Bihar's past as far as elections go, but the new Mahila-Youth equation could well determine its political future.

Of the 7.42 crore voters in Bihar, 3.92 crore are men and 3.5 crore are women. There are 14 lakh first-time voters and 4 lakh senior citizen voters. Polling will be held at 90,712 polling stations that are being set up in Bihar.

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THE DYNAMICS OF BIHAR ELECTIONS

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL FACETS





RSN Singh

The dynamics of Bihar elections have not only internal facets but external ones as well. The internal facets include caste, candidate, corruption, development, and nation-building. The external facets, however, are linked to imported ideologies, namely pan-Islamism, Pakistan's influence, jihadism, and Maoism.

These imported ideological outfits treat elections as opportunities to entrench, extend, and enlarge their ideological infrastructure, with the aim of contesting the nation-building agenda and nationalist narrative.

Dynasts, Jihadis, Criminals, and Nation-Building

Inevitably, such forces find political partners, most conveniently among dynastic political outfits and the jihadi-criminal nexus. For dynasts, who are essentially political mafias, the dynasty itself represents nationhood. For the jihadi-criminal combine, both the dynasty and Pakistan's interests constitute their idea of nationhood. The dynasts and jihadis feed off each other.

It is for this reason that Shahabuddin was a natural political partner of Shri Lalu Prasad Yadav. He was no ordinary criminal. Along with Atiq Ahmed and Mukhtar Ansari, he was a kingpin of the jihadi-crime corridor running from Allahabad to Bihar, a network that had the tacit support of Pakistan's ISI. This corridor encompassed the Darbhanga module, the Madhubani module, and, further east, the Seemanchal module.

Convergence of Pan-Islam, Jihad, and Bihar Politics

It is in these areas that pan-Islamism and jihadism converge with Bihar's politics. As per the 2011 Census, Bihar's Muslim population stands at about 17 million, roughly 17% of the total 104 million. Nearly 28.37% of these Muslims are concentrated in Seemanchal, which includes Kishanganj, Katihar, Araria, and Purnea districts. The region borders West Bengal, and the Bangladesh frontier lies only a few kilometres away.

This proximity, coupled with the border with Nepal, makes Seemanchal strategically sensitive. It forms part of the extended "chicken's neck", the Siliguri Corridor, which the Delhi riots mastermind Sharjeel Imam had threatened to "cut off" during the CAA agitation. Imam hails from Jehanabad in Bihar, and his father Akbar Imam was a JD(U) candidate in the 2005 elections.

The Kishanganj Factor

As one travels eastward from Madhubani to Araria and Kishanganj, the concentration of the Muslim population intensifies, peaking in Kishanganj. Consequently, it has become almost

impossible for a non-Muslim candidate to win elections there. India's secularism, metaphorically

speaking, ends at the gates of Kishanganj.

This demography influences the Muslim politics of the entire Seemanchal region, where the Pakistani jihadi discourse and pan-Islamic narrative are palpably present. The Muslim electorate in this region is largely driven by pan-Islamic concerns and agendas in its voting preferences. Recognizing that there is no concept of "Bihari Islam," it is pan-Islam that has brought Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM into Bihar, particularly in the Seemanchal region.

SEEMANCHAL AND INDIA'S STRATEGIC VULNERABILITIES

The demographic and electoral dynamics of Seemanchal accentuate India's strategic vulnerabilities in its eastern and northeastern frontiers. The strategic focus of major powers, including the U.S., China, and Pakistan, has shifted to this region, which holds both land and maritime significance. The land dimension involves India, China, Bangladesh, and Myanmar, while the maritime dimension centres on the Bay of Bengal.

The extra-regional player, the U.S., through its deep state, has effected a coup in Bangladesh and installed the illegitimate Yunus regime. This regime has removed the lid that Sheikh Hasina had earlier placed on jihadi elements such as Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), who are now on the rampage.

Post Operation Sindoor, and with the tacit support of Yunus, Pakistan has shifted its India-centric jihadi proxy instruments into Bangladeshi territory. Since Yunus usurped power, Bangladesh has effectively become a de facto East Pakistan.

Several Pakistani military delegations have visited the northern stretches of the India– Bangladesh border, adjacent to Seemanchal. Together with Bangladeshi jihadi groups, they are attempting to strike an Islamic resonance of the jihadi variety among Muslim voters in Seemanchal, and in Bihar at large.

The Pakistan Within Bihar

The visits by Lalu Prasad Yadav (2003) and Nitish Kumar (2012) to Pakistan served as tacit signals to the "Pakistan within Bihar." Although Bihar shares no border with Pakistan, such politicians perceive that visits to Pakistan evoke Muslim sentiments that can be converted into votes.

In the past, Lalu Prasad Yadav blatantly used an Osama bin Laden lookalike in his election campaign, a clear demonstration that pandering to pan-Islamic emotions resonates strongly with sections of the Muslim electorate.

The Bangladesh Factor

In the post-Sheikh Hasina and post-Operation Sindoor period, Bangladesh's transformation into a de facto East Pakistan has sharply increased the threat of electoral subversion. Recently, Pakistan's Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff visited Bangladesh. His visit coincided with the

presence of Ibtisham Illahi Zaheer, a key aide of Hafiz Saeed, and the Yunus regime's decision to

roll out a red carpet welcome for Zakir Naik, who remains banned in India.

The 2016 jihadi terrorist attack on Dhaka's Holey Artisan Bakery, which killed 29 people including 20 hostages, was inspired by the teachings of Zakir Naik. Both Gen. Mirza and Zaheer have reportedly visited areas close to the Siliguri Corridor, with Zaheer currently camping in Rajshahi to deliver jihadi discourses.

The timing of these visits adds unprecedented threat dimensions to the ongoing Bihar elections.

Pro-Pakistan and pan-Islamic electoral outcomes could render India's strategic vulnerabilities in the region deeply pernicious.

The Indian establishment is aware of this external threat emanating from Bangladesh, not only to Bihar's elections but to India's eastern frontier, including the Siliguri Corridor. Reportedly, Indian military manoeuvres have been conducted in the Thakurganj area, near the extreme northwest of Bangladesh and close to Seemanchal, to pre-empt any jihadi mischief by the Pakistan– Bangladesh combine. These manoeuvres elicited helicopter reconnaissance by Bangladesh Army Chief Gen. Waker-Uz-Zaman.

Additionally, India has issued multiple Notices to Air Missions (NOTAMs) across all fronts, from the western border with Pakistan to the northeast near Bangladesh, and even over the Arabian Sea and central India, signalling vigilance to inimical forces.

Operation Sindoor Factor

The jihadi subversion of Bihar's elections emanates not only from Bangladesh but also from Nepal. On 28 August this year, the Bihar Police issued a high alert after receiving inputs from central agencies that three Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) terrorists, Hasan Ali (Rawalpindi), Adil Hussain (Umarkot), and Mohammad Usman (Bahawalpur), had entered the poll-bound state via Nepal.

JeM suffered extensive losses during India's Operation Sindoor. Following this devastation, the outfit raised a women's brigade, Jamat-ul-Muminat, complicating the proxy war scenario further, as detecting burqa-clad women jihadis poses new challenges.

The Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) already has a strong presence in Bihar. Ishrat Jahan, an LeT operative tasked with assassinating Narendra Modi and neutralized in 2004, hailed originally from Bihar. Nitish Kumar had reportedly referred to her as "Bihar ki Beti."

It may also be recalled that in October 2013, an assassination attempt was made on Prime Minister Modi during his Gandhi Maidan rally in Patna. Multiple blasts killed six people and injured 85. Investigations revealed the involvement of the Indian Mujahideen (IM), which has deep ties to the LeT.

The shadow of jihadi terror over Bihar's elections has only darkened since then. LeT maintains a strong presence in north Bihar, especially in the Madhubani and Darbhanga modules. In June 2021, the NIA arrested two LeT-linked terrorists, Imran Khan and Mohammad Nasser Khan, after an explosion on Platform 1 of Darbhanga Railway Station. The parcel, booked from Secunderabad, was intended to ignite a running passenger train, highlighting the significance of the Secunderabad–Darbhanga link.

Electoral Route of Maoism And Jihadism

Prime Minister Modi has pledged to eradicate Maoism by 2026. However, this menace cannot be eliminated until urban Naxals, those pursuing power through parliamentary means like the CPM, and those taking semi-parliamentary routes to capture power in tandem with terrorism, are relegated to history, along with their ideology.

The CPI(ML) is contesting 20 seats in Bihar. These semi-Naxals have a natural affinity with jihadis, one seeks to capture the state, the other to turn it into Dar-ul-Islam. Both aim for totalitarian control.

The Congress under Sonia Gandhi has often aligned with such forces, as illustrated by Kanhaiya Kumar, who effortlessly transitioned from the tukde-tukde gang to the Congress party. Products of foreign ideologies like Maoism and jihadism constitute the backbone of this ecosystem. These are murderous doctrines that would rather see India splintered than subdued.

Conclusion

The bahubalis and dynasts in India's political arena are natural allies of tukde-tukde forces, because their idea of Bharat is confined to their fiefdoms. If unsuccessful through electoral routes, such elements often resort to the George Soros prescription, capturing power by undermining democracy through orchestrated chaos.

This pattern has been witnessed in country after country, the latest being Bangladesh. By questioning the Election Commission, Rahul Gandhi appears to have kept this disruptive option open.

Elections today are no longer a guarantee of political stability. Vested interests and inimical international forces may well attempt to replicate the Bangladesh model, this time, in Bihar.

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Populism, Performance, and Politics of False Promises



Nilabh Krishna

As Bihar prepares for the 2025 Assembly Elections, the political battlefield has become an intense three-way contest among the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), and Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party (JSP)—a relatively new entrant seeking to reshape Bihar's political culture. Amidst all this, one narrative dominating public discourse is Tejashwi Yadav's promise of giving government jobs to every family in Bihar—a claim that, while emotionally appealing, is dangerously misleading and economically impractical.

This election is not just about choosing between parties but between populism and performance, rhetoric and reform, and ultimately, truth and illusion.

The Political Landscape: Realignment in Bihar's Power Equation

The 2025 Bihar election marks a major realignment of state politics. The BJP, after parting ways with Nitish Kumar's JD(U), is contesting independently, banking on its governance record at the Centre, strong organizational machinery, and the charisma of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The Mahagathbandhan, consisting primarily of the RJD, Congress, and Left parties, is trying to revive the pre-2014 caste arithmetic that once worked in its favour. Meanwhile, Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party is attempting to position itself as a "third alternative," emphasizing clean politics and governance reforms.

However, the real contest seems to be between BJP's model of development and governance versus RJD's emotional populism. Tejashwi Yadav, the face of the Mahagathbandhan, has built his campaign on lofty promises—particularly the claim of providing "one government job to every family in Bihar." While the statement has gained traction among the unemployed youth, a closer examination exposes the hollowness of this claim.

The Reality Check: Bihar's Employment and Fiscal Condition

Bihar, with a population of over 13 crore, has roughly 2 crore families. The idea of providing one government job per family would translate to around 2 crore government jobs, an astronomical figure by any measure. Currently, Bihar has around 5.5 lakh government employees. Even if we consider vacancies and possible expansions, it is practically impossible for any state government to expand its workforce by 40 times.

Economically, Bihar's annual budget stands at approximately ₹2.6 lakh crore, of which nearly ₹80,000 crore already goes toward paying salaries and pensions. To accommodate Tejashwi Yadav's promise, Bihar would require an additional ₹7–8 lakh crore annually, far exceeding its total revenue capacity.

In essence, Tejashwi's promise is not a vision—it's a deception, designed to exploit the hopes of unemployed youth for electoral gain.

The Populist Trap: RJD's Politics of Unrealistic Expectations

Tejashwi Yadav's campaign style mirrors a populist pattern seen across several states: promise impossible benefits, stir emotional appeal, and then blame others when reality catches up. His narrative that "every family will have a government job" may sound attractive in a state struggling with unemployment, but it lacks both policy coherence and fiscal logic.

Let's recall his tenure as Deputy Chief Minister from August 2022 to January 2024. During this period, the RJD had full control over key departments, including Road Construction and Health, and partially over the Education Department. Yet, not even 10% of the promised jobs were filled. The RJD-led government announced over 10 lakh government jobs, but the majority remained stuck in administrative limbo or litigation. The result: more press conferences than appointments.

Instead of improving the industrial climate, skill development infrastructure, or private sector investment, RJD reverted to its comfort zone—making populist claims and blaming the Centre for everything. The irony is that the very state which once witnessed the "Jungle Raj" under Lalu Prasad Yadav's regime now faces the risk of slipping back into the same cycle of emotional politics and economic stagnation.

BJP's Counter: Governance Over Gimmicks

In contrast, the BJP has approached the Bihar election with a focus on realistic development metrics. Its campaign, led by senior leaders like Amit Shah and JP Nadda, emphasizes infrastructure, connectivity, law and order, and social welfare delivery—areas where the Modi government's impact is clearly visible.

Under Modi 2.0, Bihar received unprecedented investment in highways, railways, digital infrastructure, and rural electrification. The PM Awas Yojana, Har Ghar Jal, and Ayushman Bharat have tangibly improved the lives of the poor. Moreover, AIIMS Darbhanga, defence corridor extensions, and the industrial clusters along the Ganga Expressway are expected to boost employment opportunities in the private sector—something far more sustainable than artificial government employment.

The BJP's core argument is simple: real jobs come from a growing economy, not from election-time promises. Instead of distributing jobs from the state treasury, the focus should be on creating an environment where industries, startups, and MSMEs can flourish—generating employment organically.

The Economic Logic: Why Tejashwi's Job Promise Collapses

Tejashwi's claim ignores the fundamental structure of Bihar's economy. The state's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) is around ₹8.5 lakh crore, contributing only about 3% to India's GDP. The per capita income in Bihar (₹58,000) is less than one-third of the national average.

Providing government jobs on such a scale would require:

1. Massive increase in administrative expenditure, leading to a collapse in development spending.
2. Sharp rise in fiscal deficit, triggering borrowing from the Centre or financial institutions.
3. Eventual salary delays and economic mismanagement, as seen in states like Punjab or Himachal Pradesh.

Tejashwi's approach is thus not a welfare model but a recipe for fiscal disaster. It risks transforming Bihar into a state of unfunded liabilities and bureaucratic inflation, rather than economic expansion.

Jan Suraj Party: The X-Factor or a Spoiler?

Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraj Party has entered the Bihar political theatre as an aspirational alternative. Kishor's message focuses on systemic change, administrative reform, and grassroots empowerment. While his ground-level "Jan Samvad" campaigns have gained traction among youth and first-time voters, the party still lacks a robust organization or a credible chief ministerial face beyond Kishor himself.

The JSP's impact, however, could be decisive in fragmenting the anti-BJP vote, particularly among the youth and educated middle class, who might otherwise have tilted towards the RJD. Kishor's critique of both BJP and RJD as status-quoist forces appeals to an emerging class of Biharis tired of dynastic politics and empty rhetoric.

Yet, whether Kishor can translate this sentiment into votes remains uncertain. As of now, his campaign seems more likely to hurt Tejashwi Yadav's base than BJP's.

The Law and Order Question: A Legacy of the Past

Bihar's progress in the last decade has largely been due to restoration of law and order, an area where RJD's track record remains its biggest liability. During the Lalu-Rabri years, Bihar was synonymous with kidnapping, extortion, and caste-based violence. While Tejashwi Yadav claims to represent a "new RJD," his candidate list and political messaging suggest otherwise. The return of old faces linked to criminal cases, caste mobilization, and street-level muscle politics indicates that RJD's DNA remains unchanged. For voters who remember the "Jungle Raj" era, Tejashwi's populism might evoke nostalgia among some but fear among many more.

The BJP, in contrast, has successfully built a narrative around security and stability. The argument is simple: only a law-abiding state can attract investment. Without industrial confidence, all talk of employment becomes meaningless.

Caste vs. Development: The Battle of Narratives

Caste politics continues to influence Bihar's elections, but the Modi era has subtly redefined political loyalties. The non-Yadav OBCs, EBCs, and Dalits, who were once RJD's core, have increasingly moved towards the BJP due to targeted welfare delivery and direct-benefit transfers.

Tejashwi's campaign relies heavily on consolidating the Yadav-Muslim (MY) base, but this combination alone is insufficient for a majority. Meanwhile, the BJP's effort to expand its footprint among Paswans, Kurmis, Kushwahas, and Mahadalits gives it a structural edge.

The Jan Suraj Party, appealing to upper-caste urban youth, might carve out a limited segment, but the larger bipolar contest will revolve around developmental governance vs caste revivalism.

The Verdict: Bihar's Choice Between Dream and Deception

As the 2025 election unfolds, Bihar's electorate faces a defining choice. The Mahagathbandhan, led by Tejashwi Yadav, offers dreams unmoored from fiscal reality—a fantasy of overnight transformation through government jobs. In contrast, the BJP's vision is grounded in gradual, institutional growth, with an emphasis on infrastructure, industry, and inclusive welfare.

While Tejashwi's promises resonate emotionally, they are economically unsound and politically manipulative. Bihar's youth need skills, industries, and entrepreneurship, not another generation of dependence on government recruitment drives that never materialize.

In a state that has long suffered from migration, unemployment, and underdevelopment, the road to progress lies not through hollow populism but through honest governance and pragmatic economics.

Tejashwi's rhetoric may draw crowds, but it fails the test of logic. His claim of a government job for every family is not a policy—it's a political illusion. Bihar cannot afford another experiment in deception.

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वाइब्रेंट गुजरात मॉडल की सफलता का क्षेत्रीय स्तर पर अमल

गुजरात सरकार उत्तर गुजरात, कच्छ और सौराष्ट्र, दक्षिण गुजरात और मध्य गुजरात में चार वाइब्रेंट गुजरात रीजनल कॉन्फरेन्सिस का आयोजन कर रही है, जो हर वाइब्रेंट गुजरात ग्लोबल समिट के अगले संस्करण से पहले तेज क्षेत्रीय विकास के लिए गेट-वे की तरह काम करेंगी। इन रीजनल कॉन्फरेन्सिस से पहले एक दिवसीय जिला-स्तरीय कार्यक्रम का आयोजन होगा। कॉन्फरेन्सिस का उद्देश्य हर क्षेत्र की निवेश की संभावनाओं और सामर्थ्य को दर्शाना, अवसरों का लाभ उठाना और उस में से जमीनी स्तर पर विकास को हासिल करना है।

क्षेत्रीय सम्मेलन की मुख्य विशेषताएं





वाइब्रेंट विज़न, साकारित वास्तविकता

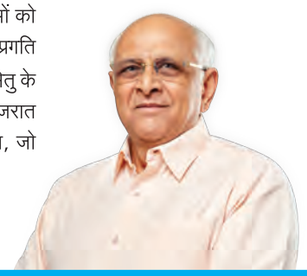
"भारत विविधताओं से भरा देश है। पूरा विश्व भारत की इस विविधता को जिज्ञासा से देख रहा है, और इसका परिणाम यह है कि भारत के प्रति सबका आकर्षण भी बढ़ गया है। अब हमें संतुलित विकास के लिए क्षेत्रीय आकांक्षाओं पर बल देना होगा और उस भावना का पूरा सम्मान करना होगा। हमारा उद्देश्य है कि समाज के सर्वांगीण विकास तथा प्रत्येक क्षेत्र के सर्वांगीण उत्थान की दिशा में आगे बढ़ें, ताकि प्रत्येक क्षेत्र को अपनी पूर्ण क्षमता तक पहुँचने का अवसर प्राप्त हो सके।"

श्री नरेन्द्र मोदी
माननीय प्रधानमंत्री

सबल नेतृत्व, सशक्त विकास

"वाइब्रेंट गुजरात रीजनल कॉन्फरेंस (VGRC) राज्य के भविष्य को आकार देने की एक महत्त्वपूर्ण पहल है, जो जमीनी स्तर से विकास को गति देने का कार्य करती है। इसका उद्देश्य प्रत्येक क्षेत्र की विशिष्ट क्षमताओं को उजागर करना, विभिन्न क्षेत्रों में वृद्धि को प्रोत्साहित करना और शहरी क्षेत्रों से आगे बढ़ते हुए औद्योगिक प्रगति को विस्तारित करना है। सहयोग, निवेश और नवाचार को अपनी आधारशिला बनाते हुए, VGRC एक सेतु के रूप में कार्य करता है जो स्थानीय आकांक्षाओं को वैश्विक अवसरों से जोड़ता है। जैसे हम 'विकसित गुजरात से विकसित भारत' की दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहे हैं, क्षेत्रीय विकास राष्ट्रीय प्रगति की आधारशिला बनेगा, जो भारत के भविष्य के निर्माण में गुजरात की अग्रणी भूमिका को और भी मजबूत बनाएगा।"

श्री भूपेन्द्रभाई पटेल
माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, गुजरात



"क्षेत्रीय विकास के माध्यम से विकसित भारत का सपना साकार करेगा गुजरात"
- श्री हर्ष संघवी, माननीय उपमुख्यमंत्री, गुजरात

कच्छ और सौराष्ट्र

अमरेली । भावनगर । बोटाद । देवभूमि द्वारका
गीर सोमनाथ । जामनगर । जूनागढ़ । कच्छ
मोरबी । पोरबंदर । राजकोट । सुरेंद्रनगर

8th-9th जनवरी 2026
स्थान: राजकोट

फोकस्ड सैक्टर्स:
- सिरामिक्स
- पर्यटन
- इंजीनियरिंग
- केमिकल्स एन्ड पेट्रोकेमिकल्स
- पोर्ट्स एन्ड लोजिस्टिक्स
- एग्रो एन्ड फूड प्रोसेसिंग
- मत्स्य उद्योग
- खनिज



भौगोलिक विविधता और सांस्कृतिक जीवंतता से परिपूर्ण कच्छ और सौराष्ट्र, प्राकृतिक धरोहर तथा गतिशील आर्थिक प्रगति का अद्भुत संगम हैं। यह क्षेत्र अपने समुद्री विरासत और रणनीतिक बंदरगाहों के माध्यम से व्यापार, परिवहन तथा समुद्री उद्योगों का सशक्त केंद्र है। मजबूत इंफ्रास्ट्रक्चर और नवाचार आधारित पहलों के समर्थन से ये क्षेत्र पेट्रोकेमिकल्स, सिरामिक्स तथा इंजीनियरिंग के सैक्टर्स में अग्रणी भूमिका निभा रहा है। औद्योगिक विकास के साथ-साथ आध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक पर्यटन भी यहां समृद्ध हो रहा है। कच्छ और सौराष्ट्र एक सशक्त, दूरदर्शी गुजरात का प्रतीक हैं, जो परंपरा और औद्योगिक एवं आर्थिक उत्कर्ष के बीच संतुलन स्थापित कर रहे हैं।



Between Hope and Cynicism

Bihar's Voter at a Crossroads!



Rakesh Kumar

"As election campaigns is at its peak, the noise of promises grows unbelievable, but within this chaos, lies a deafening silence—the silence of the Bihar's voter".

People are withholding truth — perhaps out of disenchantment or distrust.

by the time this article is published Bihar electorates will be busy in voting, the loudspeakers of political rallies would have become silent, but the voice that truly matters — that of the voter — will remain hidden in ballot box. Beneath the noise of unbelievable promises, caste arithmetic, and shifting alliances lie the future casted by Bihar voters, oscillating between loyalty and longing, searching for identity and an action plan to meet aspiration.

The Caste mathematics Still directs the political manoeuvring?

Bihar's politics is meaningless without acknowledging caste-the single most influential — and yet increasingly contested — force in the state's electoral landscape. Political parties calibrate their strategy around it. The RJD's traditional Yadav–Muslim combine, JD(U)'s Kurmi–Koeri–EBC network, and the BJP's strong upper-caste and non-Yadav OBC base has made it a force to reckon yet destined to support Nitish the CM.

Two decades of Sushasan? and a subtle change is brewing. Despite caste still determines the arithmetic, it no longer guarantees chemistry. Young and urban voters, particularly first-time voters, are not inclined to vote along caste lines. Their silence is not indifference — it's disenchantment with a system that has long measured worth by surname rather than skill.

Jobs, Migration, and the Economy: The Rising Storm

If caste is the foundation! of Bihar's politics, unemployment is the crack running through it. With limited industrialization and a heavy reliance on migration, Bihar's youth have grown restless. Over 30% of young people remain jobless, and countless others find work only in distant cities.

In every conversation on the roadside and coaching centre's corridor, a new political vocabulary is emerging — one that speaks of dignity, opportunity, and the right to stay home and still thrive. Development, not identity, has begun to command emotional weight. Politicians who once won by invoking lineage now face questions about livelihoods.

Coaching centre leading a new mission.

Priyank a young man whom I met on Facebook is running a coaching centre which provides support to young minds for non-civil service job which does not require leaving Bihar. He left Delhi to save thousands who come to Delhi to become civil servant, end up making rich the owners of coaching centres . Today hundreds of his students become clerk, inspector and so on. These are not the one who pay bribe to get the job. Hundreds of Priyank are training thousands of young minds to stay in Bihar and fight for their rights. This community may grow more and more to ask why a Bihari has to drive an auto in Mumbai when Bihar has better resources than any where else? How long corrupt criminals will force people to look elsewhere for the jobs.

Two decades of Sushasan and a subtle change is brewing. Despite caste still determines the arithmetic, it no longer guarantees chemistry. Young and urban voters, particularly first-time voters, are not inclined to vote along caste lines. Their silence is not indifference — it's disenchantment with a system that has long measured worth by surname rather than skill.

Digital age is grooming a new Generation which Speaks Softly, Shares Boldly

The WhatsApp groups, TikTok reels, and YouTube channels have created new battlegrounds influencing families. Perceptions change faster seeing Memes and micro-videos than manifestos. The emerging digital electorate is educated, sceptical, and expressive — could tilt contests in unpredictable ways. Thes trends have lured the masters of analytics who can take advantage.

The Burden of Longevity: Nitish Kumar and the Anti-Incumbency Challenge?

One of India's longest-serving leaders, Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has put Bihar at a peculiar crossroads. Once hailed as "Sushasan Babu" — he restored order and governance — he now faces fatigue in him as well as among sections of the electorate. The constant shifting of alliances between the NDA and the INDI alliance has left many voters unsure of when he will make next Palti (jumping to greener posture).

Yet, Nitish retains a loyal base among women and older voters, thanks to welfare schemes like the cycle program for girls, the liquor ban, and reservations in local bodies. Whether this reservoir of goodwill can withstand the tide of anti-incumbency is one of 2025's biggest question.

Women Voters and the Liquor Ban: Nitish Kumar's Last Reliable Lifeline?

Different news items in economics times, outlook and Indian express in past, have suggested that the ban on liquor (prohibition) was explicitly pitched as a response to what women said: problems of domestic violence, wasted household money, men coming home drunk.

Past Surveys and commentary indicate many women supported the ban. For example, women voters believed it reduced domestic abuse and improved household finances

Data show Kumar has benefitted: in constituencies where women voters outnumber men, his alliance (the NDA) did disproportionately well.

Women, once overlooked in Bihar's politics, have quietly become a decisive bloc. From self-help groups to local panchayats, they have found a voice — one that speaks softly but votes powerfully. Their priorities differ: safety, education, healthcare, and stability. Many credit Nitish Kumar's policies for empowerment; others see them as token gestures. Either way. This election will make the caste bases politicians to learn to respect women.

The Cost of Coexistence: BJP's Bihar Dilemma.

The BJP has won many frontiers, but in Bihar, it still struggles with weak local leadership. From my limited understanding, the party's strategy has long been built around coexistence,



PM Narendra Modi and other NDA Leaders at a rally in Katihar, Bihar

not confrontation with Nitish Kumar. As allies for most of the past two decades, the BJP avoided nurturing a strong CM face to prevent friction — a dependence that has now become a structural weakness.

Mahila and Youth (MY) can challenge MY of RJD.

Chirag and Maithili represent a generational shift. If they can bridge Bihar's legacy politics with modern aspirations, they could indeed change its face. It is in harmony with Nitish vision and can jeopardize the game plan of Tejaswi as well as that of Prashant Kishore.

Prashant Kishor: The Elephant in the Toy Shop Called Bihar.

In Bihar's fragile political landscape—where alliances are brittle, loyalties shift overnight, and every move is measured in caste equations—Prashant Kishor stands out like an elephant in a toy shop. His entry into the state's politics through the Jan Suraaj Yatra has rattled the old order. Unlike the traditional leaders who thrive on identity arithmetic, Kishor speaks the language of development, governance, and accountability. His methods—data-driven, strategic, and modern—clash with the sentimental and caste-bound politics that dominate Bihar. Yet, his sheer presence forces everyone to take notice; he disrupts without even fully engaging. Whether he ultimately rebuilds the shop or breaks a few toys along the way remains to be seen, but one thing is clear: Bihar's politics can no longer pretend the elephant isn't there.

However, Prashant Kishor has his quota of formidable odds that could undo his vision before it matures.

- His call for development-based politics collides with the harsh reality of caste loyalties, where social identity often outweighs governance promises.
- Lacking a party structure or grassroots machinery, Jan Suraaj movement risks remaining an energetic campaign without teeth.
- Kishor's image-driven politics, built on strategy and charisma, may struggle to sustain voter trust in a state long accustomed to broken pledges.
- By criticizing every major party, he has isolated himself, narrowing the space for alliances. If he cannot quickly demonstrate results, the public's early curiosity could turn into indifference—leaving his "movement for change" as just another echo in Bihar's labyrinth.

Prashant Kishor could not accept the status given by Nitish Kumar and work for the betterment of Bihar earlier raises a question whether he stands for Bihar or Bihar is just another experiment for an ambitious person whose success is an outcome of switching sides.

Alliance Arithmetic, Leadership Chemistry

In Bihar, elections are less a contest of individuals than a calculus of coalitions. The state's politics thrive on the art of association — who joins whom, when, and why. This fluidity is not a quirk but a defining feature of Bihar's democratic landscape, where ideological lines blur and alliances are drawn more by expediency than conviction.

Each major party brings its own distinct asset to this shifting equation. The BJP's organizational discipline gives it structure; the RJD's social mobilization provides reach; and the JD(U)'s governance record lends it an air of administrative credibility. Yet, these strengths can as easily collide as converge. The arithmetic of alliance, in Bihar, is never complete without the chemistry of leadership — and it is often the latter that determines whether a coalition holds or fractures.

In Bihar, elections are less a contest of individuals than a calculus of coalitions. The state's politics thrive on the art of association — who joins whom, when, and why. This fluidity is not a quirk but a defining feature of Bihar's democratic landscape, where ideological lines blur and alliances are drawn more by expediency than conviction.

For the electorate, however, this revolving door of partnerships has bred a weary scepticism. Across villages and small towns, a popular saying is: "Sab ek jaise hain" — "They're all the same." Probe a little and one will see a subtler demand: for constancy, for principle, and for leaders who are guided by conviction.

Why Bihar Matters?

From the time of the Mahabharata, Bihar — then known as Magadh — has stood at the forefront of the subcontinent's political and moral imagination. It was the power of Magadh that even compelled Lord Krishna to shift his kingdom to Dwarka, choosing distance over confrontation. Centuries later, under the guidance of Chanakya, Magadh became the bulwark that shielded India from Greek incursions.

Bihar has often been the cradle of transformation. It was in Champaran that Mahatma Gandhi's movement for justice first took shape. Decades later, Jayaprakash Narayan's call for Sampoorna Kranti (Total Revolution) from Bihar rattled Indira Gandhi's regime and redefined Indian politics. From that student movement emerged a generation of leaders — Nitish Kumar, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Sharad Yadav, Shatrughan Sinha — who went on to shape national discourse for decades.

If Uttar Pradesh's turnaround has propelled India's economic momentum, and if stability in the East has fostered peace in the Northeast, then a revitalized Bihar could well be the keystone in India's vision for 2047. Despite political stagnation, Bihar continues to produce exceptional civil servants, educators, and thinkers. Ironically, most of them serve other states or countries — a silent testimony to the talent Bihar generates but cannot retain.

Yet, the state's political culture tells a different story. The decline of Bihar's governance has created a troubling blend of muscle power, political opportunism, and bureaucratic complicity — eroding democratic ideals. It is disheartening that leaders with criminal convictions still command public mandates, and that election manifestos often read like wish lists, detached from logic or viability.

Those who promise Jan Suraj (people's governance) have, in practice, recycled old power structures. The much-vaunted Sushasan (good governance) has too often found comfort in Kushasan (misrule), only to abandon or embrace it when convenient.

Bihar is larger in population than many nations — and richer in history than most. It cannot be left to the accidents of political fortune. The state that once guided empires and inspired revolutions must rediscover its purpose — not merely to reclaim lost glory, but to chart India's next great leap.

Between Noise and Numbness

In the end, amid the murders and mayhem, the most striking feature of this election is the silence of the voter. The traditional political class misreads it as apathy—but it may well be reflection: a pause before transformation.

Bihar's electorate stands at a crossroads—not entirely shackled by identity, yet not wholly free from it. It hovers between nostalgia for stability and a restless yearning for change.

Tejaswi Yadav and Prashant Kishor have done their homework, crafting narratives that resonate. Yet, the BJP's ability to retain Haryana, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra suggests that surprises may still unfold—perhaps driven by a new 'MY' equation: Mahila (women) and Youth.

In this shifting landscape, all eyes will be on how Chirag Paswan and Maithili Thakur engage with these emerging constituencies. Their ability to connect could redefine Bihar's political landscape.

This time, Bihar may not deliver a fractured mandate. It may speak with quiet clarity.

(The content of this article reflects the views of writer and contributor, not necessarily those of the publisher and editor. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only)



BIHAR ELECTIONS–POLITICS, PARTIES, AND PROSPECTS

Emerging forces such as Prashant Kishore's JSP and Owaisi's AIMIM may influence outcomes in closely contested seats. Although the race remains tight, the NDA currently appears to have a slight advantage, driven by Nitish Kumar's credibility, women-centric welfare schemes, and its well-structured campaign.



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Bihar, one of India's oldest regions, has a rich and illustrious history. It was the heart of ancient empires such as the Magadha Kingdom, which gave rise to the Maurya and Gupta dynasties. Pataliputra (modern Patna) served as a major political and cultural center. The state is also known as the birthplace of Buddhism and Jainism, with Lord Buddha attaining enlightenment in Bodh Gaya. The region flourished as a hub of learning through Nalanda and Vikramshila universities. After centuries of decline under medieval and colonial rule, Bihar became a separate province in 1912 and later played a key role in India's freedom movement.

Political Evolution After Independence

After 1947, Bihar played a vital role in shaping Indian politics. Initially dominated by the Congress Party under leaders like Shri Krishna Sinha, the state later witnessed the rise of the socialist movement led by Jayprakash Narayan in the 1970s. The 1990s marked the rise of caste-based politics, led by Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which focused on social justice. From the early 2000s, Nitish Kumar and his Janata Dal United (JDU) have emphasised development and good governance. Political power in Bihar has since alternated between alliances led by RJD, JDU, and BJP. The state's population is about 13 crore, with 7.5 crore electors. Bihar has 38 districts and elects 40 members to the Lok Sabha and 16 to the Rajya Sabha. Vidhan Sabha and Vidhan Parishad have 243 and 75 seats, respectively.

Bihar is divided into several political regions based on geography, culture and political influence. The major ones are Magadh (historically rich and politically strong), Mithila (with Mathili culture and intellectual heritage), Bhojpur (political activism and strong caste influence), Seemanchal (with a significant Muslim population), Patna (state's political and administrative center), and Chotanagpur (less developed but politically relevant).

2020 Assembly elections

The ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) coalition (JDU, BJP, and LJP-R) secured 125 seats, while the opposition RJD-led block (including Congress and Left parties) won 110 seats. RJD emerged as the single largest party, winning 75 seats, followed closely by BJP with 74. The voter turnout was about 57.3%. The overall vote-share difference between the NDA and opposition was about 0.2% only, indicating a fiercely contested election.

2024 Lok Sabha elections

Of the 40 seats, the NDA won 30 (BJP 12, JDU 12, LJP-R 5), and the opposition Mahagathbandhan (MGB) comprising Congress, RJD, and others managed 9 seats. JDU's re-alignment with NDA before the election played a crucial role, combining BJP's national strength with JDU's local reach helped consolidate NDA in Bihar. The LJP-R won all 5 seats it contested, showing that smaller regional parties can perform well when strategically focused.

Caste Politics in Bihar

Caste has been a defining feature of Bihar's political landscape since independence. Initially dominated by upper caste under Congress rule, power shifted in the 1990s with the Mandal Commission's implementation, empowering Other Backward Castes (OBCs). Lalu Prasad Yadav mobilised Yadavs and Muslims, forming the powerful 'MY' alliance, while Nitish Kumar consolidated Kurmis and Extremely Backward Castes (EBCs). Dalit leaders like Ram Vilas Paswan represented marginalised communities, further diversifying caste-based politics. Although there is emphasis on development and governance, caste loyalties continue to shape alliances, candidate selection, and voting behavior.

Minority Politics and AIMIM

Muslims have long been a significant vote bank for secular parties like Congress, RJD, and JDU. Despite benefiting from government welfare schemes, they have largely refrained from voting for the BJP. The AIMIM, led by Asaduddin Owasi, entered Bihar's politics to represent Muslims and challenge the traditional parties. In the 2020 assembly elections, the party won five seats in the Seemanchal region, reflecting dissatisfaction with traditional secular parties. However, four of its MLAs later shifted to RJD. While AIMIM's influence remains limited to Seemanchal, it has emerged as an important player in minority and regional politics.

Key Political Figures

Lalu Prasad Yadav

A key figure in Bihar's political transformation, Lalu Prasad Yadav rose to prominence in the late 1980s as a champion of social justice and the empowerment of backward castes. Becoming Bihar's Chief Minister in 1990, he united the Yadavs, Muslims, and other backward castes under his RJD, ending Congress dominance. His populist style and rural connect made him immensely popular. However, governance declined under his rule, marked by poor infrastructure and lawlessness, earning his tenure the term 'Jungle Raj'. The fodder scam and corruption charges led to his conviction and downfall. Presently, he is on bail. His wife Rabri Devi succeeded him until 2005, and later his son, Tejaswi Yadav, carried forward his legacy, symbolising dynastic politics.

Nitish Kumar

Founder of JDU, Nitish Kumar is known for his clean image and administrative skills. Serving multiple terms as Bihar's Chief Minister since 2005, he earned the title 'Sushasan Babu'. He liquidated hardcore criminals in the state, and there are no corruption allegations against him during his 20-year tenure as the Chief Minister. He never promoted dynastic politics in his party and earned the image of an honest politician. Despite switching alliances between BJP and JDU over the years, Nitish remains the most credible and experienced leader in Bihar. He has performed well in last 20 years but a lot more could have been done. Bihar needs a robust policy to get rid of poverty, unemployment, lawlessness and migration. JDU is contesting on 101 seats in the coming elections.

Chirag Paswan

Son of Ram Vilas Paswan, Chirag leads the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP-R)



and represents the younger generation of Bihar politics. In 2014, he was elected to the Lok Sabha from Jamui. After his father's death, Chirag sought to expand LJP's influence independently. In the 2024 general elections, his party won all five seats it contested. Chirag, a cabinet minister in the Modi government, remains a significant Dalit face in Bihar, appealing to youth and aspiring to revive his father's political legacy through assertive leadership. His party is contesting on 25 seats in the coming elections.

Prashant Kishore

Prashant Kishore Pandey, popularly known as PK, is a political strategist turned politician who has become a significant figure in Bihar's contemporary politics. Originally known for planning successful election campaigns for leaders like Narendra Modi (2014), Nitish Kumar (2015), and Mamta Bannerjee (2021). In 2018, Nitish Kumar appointed him as the JDU's vice president, but PK left the party in 2020 due to ideological differences. In 2022, he launched the Jan Suraaj Yatra, aiming to build a grassroots political movement focused on good governance, education, healthcare, and employment. While he has not contested any elections yet, his data-driven approach and emphasis on clean politics have drawn attention from electors. He has launched the Jan Suraaj Party (JSP) and is contesting the upcoming elections.

A key figure in Bihar's political transformation, Lalu Prasad Yadav rose to prominence in the late 1980s as a champion of social justice and the empowerment of backward castes. Becoming Bihar's Chief Minister in 1990, he united the Yadavs, Muslims, and other backward castes under his RJD, ending Congress dominance. His populist style and rural connect made him immensely popular. However, governance declined under his rule, marked by poor infrastructure and lawlessness, earning his tenure the term 'Jungle Raj'.

Congress

The grand old party of India has struggled to regain relevance in the state since 1990. Rahul Gandhi, its national leader, has limited direct influence in Bihar's politics. He launched the 'Voter Adhikar Yatra' on 17th August 2025, covering 1300 km, to highlight alleged voter manipulation and disenfranchisement, but the campaign has not gained strong traction. Despite leading the party at the national level, his impact remains modest in Bihar due to the weak party organization and dominance of the RJD. Congress continues to be a junior partner in the alliance. To revive its position, the party needs to work at the grassroots level to expand its base and develop credible leaders in the state. Its current campaign for the 61 allocated seats lacks strong planning and momentum.

BJP

The party retains a base among upper castes and Hindutva-aligned voters in the state. Although a dominant national party, the BJP in Bihar is seen as a junior partner to the JDU. The party has not yet developed a strong, widely accepted local leader who can be projected as the Chief Ministerial candidate. BJP's strength lies in its disciplined cadre and robust central leadership. The election campaign is well planned, featuring rallies by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, JP Nadda, and Yogi Adityanath. However, its success in Bihar will depend on its ability to build a local identity, address regional concerns, and expand beyond its traditional voter base. The party is contesting 101 seats in the upcoming polls.

Special Intensive Revision (SIR)

The Election Commission of India (ECI) launched SIR for Bihar ahead of the 2025 assembly polls. It is a full-scale revision of the voter list to remove ineligible or duplicate voters and add new ones, thereby improving the accuracy of the roll. Opposition parties alleged that SIR could lead to disenfranchisement of eligible voters, especially those lacking documentary evidence, or those removed without proper notice. They also questioned the timing of this exercise, as it was done just before the elections. The SIR was challenged in the Supreme Court, which refused to stay the exercise. However, the court emphasized that the ECI should accept certain commonly available documents, such as Aadhar and EPIC, in the process. The court observed that conducting the SIR is within ECI's prerogative. About 65 lakh names were deleted from the roll, and over 20 lakh new names were added during the revision. The opposition, particularly Congress, has made it an election issue.

Mahagathbandhan (MGB)

The MGB, led by RJD and including Congress, VIP, and left parties, has projected Tejaswi Yadav as its Chief Ministerial candidate. The alliance has focused its campaign on the issues of poverty, unemployment, social justice and electoral fairness. Its manifesto promises include, a government job for one member of every family within 20 months, restoration of the old pension scheme (OPS) for government employees, regularization of contractual/outsourced workers, free limited electricity to poor families, complete waiver of farm loans, MSP procurements and revival of industries. While these promises ambitious, their implementation seems unlikely. However, internal seat-sharing disputes and overlapping contests have weakened its campaign. JMM not contesting under the alliance is another setback. Additionally, Tejaswi is also facing a challenge from his elder brother, Tej Pratap, who is contesting independently with his new party.



National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

The coalition of the BJP, JDU, and allied smaller parties, the NDA is contesting under the leadership of Nitish Kumar. The government has pushed major infrastructure projects and social-welfare schemes. Financial assistance to women for setting up self-employment or small business, the initial grant of Rs 10,000 (already transferred to over one crore women), and later up to two lakhs for eligible women entrepreneurs. Increased honorariums of women-related workers (Anganwadi and helpers). Pension raised from Rs 400 to Rs 1100 for senior citizens, widows, and persons with disability. Rs 1000 per month for 12th-pass unemployed youth for 2 years, and many other schemes are already in place. The NDA's manifesto further promises jobs for 10 million people, Lakhpati Didis, metro services in four cities, seven new international airports, seven expressways, Rs 3000 annually to farmers, etc. However, the feasibility of fulfilling all these promises remains uncertain.

Conclusion

Both major alliances have fielded several candidates with criminal backgrounds, reflecting a persistent weakness in Bihar's political ethics. The state urgently needs good infrastructure, improved law and order, and better governance to attract investment and create jobs.

The MGB is attempting to harness youth aspirations, concerns about unemployment, migration, and anti-incumbency sentiment against the ruling coalition. It is arguably the strongest chance for the opposition to challenge the incumbent government in Bihar. Tejaswi Yadav is a dynamic young leader. The campaign of Congress under Rahul Gandhi doesn't seem to be effective. There are some seats where RJD and Congress are fighting against each other.

Emerging forces such as Prashant Kishore's JSP and Owaisi's AIMIM may influence outcomes in closely contested seats. Although the race remains tight, the NDA currently appears to have a slight advantage, driven by Nitish Kumar's credibility, women-centric welfare schemes, and its well-structured campaign.

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Empowering Women in Bihar

Th NDA gives credit to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for empowering women in the state by giving 50% reservation to them in Panchayati Raj institutions in 2006, 35% reservation to women in police department jobs in 2013, and 35% reservation to women in all government services. Under the latest 'Mahila Rojgar Yojana', the state government has recently released Rs 10,000 as the first instalment of financial assistance to one woman from each family which is having a wider impact on the election campaign strategies of both the NDA and Mahagathbandhan.



■ Annapurna Jha

In Bihar, democracy has long worn a distinctly feminine face. As the assembly elections draw closer in the state, political parties are increasingly focused on the women vote bank as it plays a crucial role in deciding their electoral fate. The 3.5 crore women voters of the state will play a major role in deciding whether the NDA candidate Chief Minister Nitish Kumar will continue to rule or the opposition Mahagathbandan's Tejaswi Yadav will replace him in the state.

Realising that women, who make up around 48% of the population, are a key electoral demographic in Bihar and are credited for the political longevity of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar empowerment of 'Nari Shakti' alongwith Yuva Shakti has featured prominently in the NDA's 'Sankalp patra' which was released in Patna today. The document released by JDU leader and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and BJP President J P Nadda in presence of other senior leaders of the NDA has promised massive employment generation and women-led growth. It pitches for stability and welfare.

The Sankalp Patra said that under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rozgar Yojana, women will receive financial assistance up to Rs 2 lakh for starting business to promote prosperity and self-reliance. The ruling coalition aims to make one crore women 'Lakhpati Didis', or women earning more than Rs 1 lakh a year. It also plans to introduce a 'Mission Crorepati' to support successful women entrepreneurs in scaling their ventures to make them millionaires.

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Trying not to be left behind, the opposition Mahgathbandan is also making pro-woman poll-promises such as 'Mai-Behin Maan Scheme'. RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav has announced that women will receive Rs 2,500 per month (amounting to Rs 30,000 per year) starting from December 1 if Mahagathbandhan assumes power in the state. He has also promised to give permanent government job status to 'Jeevika Didis' with monthly salary of Rs Rs 30,000 which has been a long-pending demand of women associated with the scheme.

However, the mega welfare push of Rs 7500 crore outlay for the Mukhyamantri Rozgar yojna has given the NDA a lead as far as luring women voters of the state is concerned. Under the scheme 7.5 million women have already got ₹10,000 each in their bank accounts for starting their venture.

The NDA is also reminding the electorate of the so-called Jangal Raj during the previous RJD regime in Bihar highlighting the rampant crime against women and kidnappings. The Congress is making feeble attempt to criticise the ruling alliance for some recent incidents of crimes, but the people's memories of incidents during previous RJD rule is not having the desired impact. The NDA points out that during the RJD tenure, women's development was limited to their families whiles others endured pain and sufferings.



Prohibition, which was introduced by the Nitish Government in 2016, has also helped galvanise women's support in favour of NDA in the past. Prohibition was aimed to reform higher public health and social welfare by curbing alcohol misuse. Women continue to support the ban, citing fewer incidents of domestic violence and lifting living standards. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is largely credited with initiating women's political participation and launched many schemes that directly benefited girls and women, creating a lasting social base. Over the past 20 years, Nitish has launched several schemes like 50 per cent reservation for women in panchayat bodies, the self-help Jeevika Didi scheme, a cycle scheme that provides incentives to girls who pass matriculation and graduation with first class marks. These also include Hunar Scheme for minority women, Chief Minister's Entrepreneur Scheme that gives interest-free loans to women, and now, the Mukhyamantri Mahila Rojgar Yojana. Also, under the state's Social Security Pension Scheme, Rs 1,263.95 crore is being disbursed monthly to 1.13 crore pensioners, a large number of whom are women.

Women, who constitute 48% of electorates have always shaped poll outcomes in the state. In the 2020 assembly elections, women voter turnout was 59.7%, while men's was 54.6% – marking the third election in a row where female turnout exceeded male turnout in the state. In the same election, women outpolled men in 167 out of 243 constituencies. This trend indicates that the female vote is no longer "silent," but rather "smart and decisive".

This pattern extends beyond state polls. In the 2024 Lok Sabha elections in Bihar as well, women pulled ahead: their turnout being around 59.45%, compared to men at about 53%. The trend of women leading in electoral participation is not a fluke but a structural feature of Bihar's recent politics. In fact, over the last five Assembly elections, more women have voted in the state than men, even though they lag behind in terms of representation, ie., ticket allocations and victories.

While every party announces a slew of schemes to woo women voters, they remain miserly when it comes to distributing ticket to women. In the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections, of the 1,270 candidates who contested for 243 seats, only 146 were women, representing around 11.5 per cent of the total. Of these, a mere 26 women won, representing around 10.7 per cent of the total MLAs elected that year.

Bihar was the first state in the country to grant 50 per cent reservation to women in panchayats. Following this, thousands of women entered village politics and became involved in administrative decisions. Yet, the presence of women in the Legislative Assembly has seen a steady decline. Between the first state elections in 1952 and 2020, only 258 women have become MLAs in Bihar. But in the last three Assembly elections, the numbers have grown worse. While 34 women MLAs were elected in 2010, this number dropped to 28 in 2015 and to 26 in 2020.

This time NDA has fielded 34 women, while the Mahagathbandhan has given tickets to 30. Both the BJP and JD(U) have fielded 13 women each, while Chirag's LJP (Ram Vilas) has given tickets to five. The HAM(S) has fielded two women and the RLM one. The RJD has given tickets to 24 women. The Congress has fielded five women, while the CPI (M-L) Liberation and the VIP have nominated one woman each. The BSP, which is contesting 130 seats, has fielded 26 women, while Jan Suraaj has fielded 25 women.

The question now is: Will the 2025 election prove to be a decisive one for Bihar's women.

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Drug Menace

How Deep the Roots Are?



Jag Mohan Thaken

As per Media reports, on October 24, 2025 a video reportedly floated on social media, the footage of which went viral on Thursday, shows several girls covering their faces with scarves, entering the shop, purchasing liquor, and leaving briskly with bottles tucked discreetly into their school bags in Nainpur town under Mandla district of Madhya Pradesh.

For a country like India, what a disturbing and astonishing incident it is, wherein even the school girls are noticed purchasing the liquor!

Another incident which shows the most dreadful and shameful face of drug menace has been reported by Leader of opposition in Punjab Vidhan Sabha, Pratap Singh Bajwa on 25th October. Bajwa highlighted that in a gut-wrenching incident that exposes the horrifying depths of Punjab's drug crisis, a drug-addict couple from Mansa district sold their five-month-old son to a family in Budhlada for Rs 1.8 lakh — just to fund their addiction.

"In 2022, the central government submitted a report to the Supreme Court that an alarming 15.8 million youths between the ages of 10 and 17 battle substance addiction nationwide. Based on findings from a court-mandated research study, alcoholic beverages rank as the primary mind-altering substance consumed by the population, with marijuana and opioid-based drugs following behind", The New Indian Express in an Article on March 30,2025 reported.

It is despite the National Centre for Drug Abuse Prevention underscores on its website that Drug abuse is a serious problem having dangerous consequences and recognizing the seriousness of the multi-faceted implications of the incidence of substance abuse in the country, the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has been implementing various steps.

Also, in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on March 18,2025, the Minister of State in the Ministry of Home Affairs Nityanand Rai told that to address the problem of Drug Abuse, Government has formulated and implemented the National Action Plan for Drug Demand Reduction (NAPDDR) under which the Government is taking a sustained and coordinated action for arresting the problem of substance abuse. This includes: Launched Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) in all districts of the country through more than 10000 master volunteers. It has reached out to more-than 14.79 crore people including 4.96 crore youth and 2.97 crore women.

Despite the central government's launching 'Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) in all districts of the country, why has India not



succeeded in curbing this evil? Why was the evil not nipped in the bud? Why as per ground reports, the situation is still so alarming? Here we will discuss the situation in agrarian states-Punjab and Haryana, just as samples.

However, the Aam Adami Party ruled Punjab government has been running its 'YUDH NASHIAN VIRUDH' (Battle against drugs) campaign since long and on October 26, the date of writing these lines, this drive has completed its 239th day.

A government press release claims that continuing the war against drugs "Yudh Nashian Virudh" waged by Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann to eradicate drug menace from state consecutively for the 239th day, Punjab Police conducted raids at 261 locations on Sunday leading to the arrest of 66 drug smugglers after registration of 57 first information reports (FIRs) across the state. With this, the number of total drug smugglers arrested has reached 34,175 in 239 days.

However, its appreciable action and step of the Punjab government, but also exposes the ground situation of the state that how deep the roots of drug menace are. The figure of total drug smugglers arrested has reached 34,175 in 239 days shows the seriousness and gravity of the problem.

Despite strenuous efforts of the state government to hammer the problem, the opposition party, Congress, alleges that Punjab continues to face the worst-ever drug crisis, and the Chief Minister Mann keeps boasting about ending it.

The drug menace is not "under control" — it's out of control, spreading like a plague through our villages, consuming generation after generation, alleged the Leader of the Opposition Bajwa.

Bajwa came down heavily on Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann accusing him of wilfully ignoring the drug menace. Bajwa highlighted that in a gut-wrenching incident that exposes the horrifying depths of Punjab's drug crisis, a drug-addict couple from Mansa district sold their five-month-old son to a family in Budhlada for Rs 1.8 lakh — just to fund their addiction.

Bajwa stated that the mother was once a state-level wrestler. She and her husband, both enslaved by drugs, sold their baby to keep their next high going. This is not fiction. This is the reality of Punjab in 2025.

"While Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and his government shamelessly parade hollow promises about "eliminating drugs," Punjab's families are being destroyed, children are sold like cattle, and villages decay in the shadow of addiction. Every such incident is a damning indictment of this administration: a system that has utterly failed to prevent addiction, failed to protect children, and failed—repeatedly—to uphold the most basic tenets of humanity," Bajwa thundered.

The Congress party in Haryana also alleges that drug menace is growing

Despite the central government's launching 'Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyaan' (NMBA) in all districts of the country, why has India not succeeded in curbing this evil? Why was the evil not nipped in the bud? Why as per ground reports, the situation is still so alarming? Here we will discuss the situation in agrarian states-Punjab and Haryana, just as samples.

rapidly in the state.

The General Secretary of All India Congress Committee, former Union Minister, and Sirsa MP Kumari Selja, in a press statement on October 13, said that the BJP government is not serious about the growing drug menace in Haryana. Kumari Selja said that the government has blindly trusted the official figures presented by officers while the reality is that cases of drug overdose and drug-related deaths are being reported daily in various districts. Out of the 22 districts in the state, 16 have been severely affected by drug addiction, with Sirsa being the worst hit, where drug-related deaths continue to rise.

Drugs have now reached the villages from synthetic drugs to 'Chitta,' every form of addiction is spreading rapidly. The Haryana government has completely failed to control the drug menace.

Kumari Selja said that the fast-spreading drug network in Dabwali and nearby areas has engulfed the entire region, and in the last 40 days, 15 young lives have been lost, which reflects the frightening ground reality. She said it is "deeply unfortunate that drugs are being sold openly at medical stores while both the BJP government and the district administration remain silent spectators."

Kumari Selja said that there are about 1,700 medical stores in Sirsa district alone, but the number of officers and inspectors is extremely low. Kumari Selja said that without regular inspections, the sale of medical drugs as narcotics cannot be stopped. The government claims that 162 de-addiction centres are functioning in Haryana, and 3,350 villages and about 900 urban wards have been declared drug-free, including around 180 villages in Sirsa, but the ground reality tells a different story.

"Conduct high-level inspections of all medical stores. Take strict action against those selling or protecting drug peddlers. Transform the anti-drug campaign into a people's movement", advised Selja. She said the rising number of drug-related deaths is not just a statistic, it reflects the government's insensitivity and the failure of our entire system.

Concludingly, it seems that the present efforts are not efficient and sufficient. It needs a heavy hammer blow. To protect children and youth from addiction, awareness programs must be launched at schools, colleges, universities, other educational institutions and village level social platforms. Concrete steps are urgently needed to curb drug trafficking and illegal sales across the country. Will the governments and the society adopt a joint effective and forceful strategy to get rid of this blot?

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Mining Insight, Forging Strategy

From Noise to Knowledge, Know The Big Data Edge

A data-driven business strategy just means letting data be your primary guide. Forget decisions based on hunches or a limited sample set. Now, leaders can rely on a comprehensive analysis of real-world information. This shift has profound implications, honestly. The Data-driven business strategy moves a company from being reactive to proactive, letting them anticipate market changes, understand customer behavior, and optimize operations with a lot more precision.



Sarat C. Das

You really can't overstate how important business intelligence and decision-making is now. This phenomenon of business intelligence and decision-making literally the difference between a company that thrives and one that just fails. For the longest time, business leaders just relied on a mix of their gut feeling and whatever numbers were on last quarter's spreadsheet. But that approach is totally obsolete now that we're flooded with info from every smartphone and digital payment. Welcome to the era of business intelligence and decision-making.

These days, data is everything—it's the new gold of predictive analytics for business decisions. And big data analytics is the tool that makes this ''predictive analytics for business decisions'' invaluable. It's the reason why a contemporary Business Management in Spain degree, whether you're looking at a Bachelor Program in Spain or a Master Program in Spain, hammer data science so hard towards reaching the goals of predictive analytics for business decisions. Figuring out big data isn't optional for managers anymore; it's like a basic requirement.

A data-driven business strategy just means letting data be your primary guide. Forget decisions based on hunches or a limited sample set. Now, leaders can rely on a comprehensive analysis of real-world information. This shift has profound implications, honestly. The Data-driven business strategy moves a company from being reactive to proactive, letting them anticipate market changes, understand customer behavior, and optimize operations with a lot more precision.

"You know, we used to make decisions based on what we thought was happening," says Dr. Rajat Baisya. "But now with big data, we can know exactly what's happening. We can see patterns and trends that were invisible before. Thats the real foundation of a data-driven strategy."

Hiren Raval at C3S in Barcelona emphasizes the competitive imperative in Business Management in Spain. He says a company not using Data-driven business strategy is at a massive disadvantage today. "It's like flying a plane blind while your competitors have a state-of-the-art navigation system." That's why he says they teach this at every level, from a Bachelor Program in Spain to a Master Program in Spain.

Honestly, big data is just such a powerful tool for management now. It's like having a flashlight that can uncover insights in every single corner of a business.

Big data, often metaphorically described as having a "flashlight that can uncover insights in every single corner of a business," represents the modern management's most powerful tool for navigating complexity and securing competitive advantage. The integration of advanced analytics—which is the practical execution of big data—has evolved past theoretical discussion to become the core of contemporary business intelligence. This integration fundamentally defines management's role in three critical, interconnected functions: identifying market trends, personalizing customer engagement, and eliminating internal operational inefficiencies. The failure to harness this analytical power risks inviting the "wrath of Bhātarīkā," the punishing goddess of order and finance, manifesting as commercial obsolescence and operational decay.

Spotting Trends (The Strategic Foresight): At a strategic level, the ability to analyze massive, real-time data streams from social media, search engine activity, and aggregated purchase behaviors allows companies to see the next big thing way before anyone else does. By identifying emerging, high-velocity patterns in consumer preference or technological necessity, management gains predictive foresight. This intelligence enables the firm to swiftly shift its marketing focus, develop new products (R&D), and reorganize its entire strategic trajectory to capitalize on nascent market opportunities. This proactive anticipation is the foundation of agile strategic management.

Getting Customers (The Personalized Relationship): Big data provides the critical mechanism for moving past generalized marketing into hyper-personalized engagement. By consolidating data points—not just past purchases, but digital brand interactions, content consumption, and behavioral preferences—companies can build incredibly detailed customer

profiles. This capability is instrumental in creating super targeted advertisements and significantly enhancing customer service by anticipating needs. As AI expert Navin Manaswi pointed out, "AI can predict what a customer is likely to buy next based on their past behavior. It's like, the ultimate goal for using predictive analytics." This personalization transforms customer acquisition from broad appeal into targeted, high-conversion campaigns.

Fixing Operational Stuff (The Efficiency Mandate): The most profound, often unseen impact of big data is its diagnostic power in manufacturing and logistics. Analytics can show you all the hidden inefficiencies and bottlenecks in your operations that you didn't even know were there. By analyzing data from the supply chain, production floor, and logistics networks, management can pinpoint where processes are failing, reduce waste, optimize inventory levels, and achieve dramatic gains in productivity. It is no wonder that for any top business school, teaching this subject—the use of actionable data to drive operational excellence—is a critical part of modern management education. The ability to audit the entire value chain computationally ensures that resources are allocated efficiently, satisfying the core financial mandate of the business.

The real beauty of big data is that it finally gives us a complete picture. We can actually see how a marketing campaign drives sales, or how a change in the supply chain effects customer satisfaction, and how it all connects. That's the real essence of smart decision-making.

So, strategic decision-making is basically how a company figures out it's long-term direction. You know, it's about answering the really big questions, like what new markets should we get into? Or what kind of products should we even develop? What's our vision for the future? These are the high-stakes choices that can literally determine whether a whole organization succeeds or fails.

Back in the day, these calls were made in a boardroom, mostly based on the combined wisdom—and gut feelings—of the senior execs. But now, thankfully, they're made with the support of a ton of data.



I liked how Dr. Dababrata Chowdhury put it. He said, "Strategic decisions are about setting the course of the ship, not just steering it through the waves." He's right, they're super complex with so many variables and a lot of uncertainty. But using big data in management is the best tool we have to reduce that unknown. It's a key thing they teach you in a Global MBA in Spain.

Bela Desai from Barcelona also made a great point, saying that "A good strategic decision isn't just sound, it's also well-timed." And that's where predictive analytics comes in, letting leaders act on what's likely to happen next, not just what's already going on. All these developments can be attributed to big data in management.

Big data analytics is fundamentally transforming how companies approach their major strategic decisions. It significantly cuts down the guesswork by providing a comprehensive, evidence-based view of the market, allowing leaders to make calls with greater confidence, which is the essence of being "data-driven." Furthermore, big data allows companies to see the future (kinda) through the application of machine learning to historical data, enabling the forecasting of future outcomes—for example, predicting demand for a new product to optimize stock and advertising spend. It also finds new opportunities by revealing previously unknown consumer needs or market segments, thus fostering innovation and creating a competitive edge through new products or services. Finally, big data enables smarter spending by pinpointing successful projects, helping companies allocate resources—such as marketing, research, or hiring funds—to areas that promise the best return. As Professor Xavier Puertas noted, "The best strategic decisions aren't just about what to do; they're about what not to do," highlighting that big data provides the crucial evidence needed to reject risky ideas and greenlight promising ones.

The entire field of big data analytics is built upon a powerful suite of tools and technologies. This infrastructure includes Data Lakes & Warehouses, which serve as giant, centralized storage for massive amounts of both structured and messy, unstructured data. The analytical heavy lifting is done by Analytics Platforms like Apache Hadoop, Spark, and Databricks, which are designed to process these huge datasets that standard software can't handle. To make this complex data accessible, Business Intelligence (BI) Dashboards—such as Tableau and Power BI—turn the analysis into easily digestible visualizations like charts and graphs for managers. Finally, Machine Learning Models are smart algorithms trained on data to find patterns and make autonomous predictions, forming the core of predictive analytics. As Dr. Aida Mehrad emphasized, students must move beyond theory to be comfortable using these tools, a hands-on focus that is vital for top-tier business education.

Despite its powerful benefits, the adoption of big data presents significant challenges and considerations. Data Privacy and Security is a major concern, as the sheer volume of collected data makes companies a prime target for hackers, necessitating vast spending on cybersecurity and strict adherence to new data laws. A related critical challenge is Data Quality; the principle of "garbage in, garbage out" has never been truer, meaning flawed, incomplete, or biased source data will inevitably lead to inaccurate analysis and poor decisions. Compounding this is a significant Talent Gap, as there is a shortage of professionals skilled in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting big data. Many established companies also struggle with Mixing with Old Systems, facing the major headache of integrating new big data tools with their older, clunky IT infrastructure. Finally, the use of big data raises serious Ethics of It All questions, such as the appropriateness of using personal data to target vulnerable customers, a topic modern business management courses must address. As Professor David Weir noted, "Technology is just a tool. Its value depends on how it's used," underscoring the need to teach students both the technical skills and the ethical responsibilities that accompany them.

The pervasive impact of big data in management can be seen across nearly every sector. In Retail, stores leverage consumer data from online shopping, social media, and loyalty cards to personalize deals, determine optimal pricing, and manage stock, offering a prime example of predictive analytics in business decisions. Healthcare utilizes it to analyze patient records, forecast the spread of diseases, and create personalized treatment plans. In Finance, banks rely heavily on big data for spotting fraudulent transactions, assessing credit risk, and delivering tailored financial products. Manufacturing employs sensor data from assembly lines to predict machine breakdowns, allowing for proactive maintenance and significant cost savings from reduced downtime. Finally, in Marketing, companies use data to measure the effectiveness of various channels, ensuring better allocation of funds and a higher return on campaigns. As Professor Marc Sanso noted, virtually every sector is being transformed, and the companies gaining a true competitive advantage are those with a solid, data-driven strategy.

The big data revolution fundamentally changes the role of business leaders. One of the toughest shifts is trusting numbers over gut feel, requiring leaders to follow data-backed insights even when they contradict years of experience. Leaders must also focus on building a data culture, creating an environment where every employee values and uses data in their decision-making. Companies that excel in this area are those spending on people and tech, investing heavily in both the latest technology and the right talent to wield it effectively. Ultimately, while technology provides the answers, it remains the leader's job to maintain strategic vision by asking the right stuff—the smart questions that guide the analysis. Dr. Shaik Akbar Basha encapsulated this by saying new leaders are "translators, turning complex analytics into a clear, actionable plan," which highlights the need to mix technical skills with the human side of leadership, including the ability to lead a team, communicate tricky ideas, and think creatively, as Professor Michael Taylor added.

Yes, big data analytics isn't some far-off idea anymore—it's totally here and it's completely changing how big decisions get made. We've basically moved from just guessing to having real evidence, giving leaders the actual tools to spot trends, get their customers, and make their operations run smoother than ever.

For anyone who wants to lead in business, you absolutely have to get a deep understanding of this stuff. It's non-negotiable now. Whether you're doing a Bachelor Program in Spain, a Master Program in Spain, or a Global MBA in Spain, learning how to build a data-driven strategy has to be at the heart of what you study.

The companies that are gonna win in the future are the ones that can actually harness all this data. If they invest in the right people and tech, and really build a culture that gets analytics, they won't just get by—they'll actually thrive in this messy, data-rich world that's coming.

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Narendra Modi

Not Just the Pradhan Sevak, but also the Pradhan Paryavaran Senani!



VIRAL DESAI

When one thinks of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the images that often come to mind are those of a decisive leader steering India's economic and geopolitical trajectory. Yet, beneath the veneer of a "Pradhan Sevak" (Prime Servant) lies another, equally significant identity: that of a "Pradhan Paryavaran Senani" (Prime Environmental Warrior). For the past 11 years, the government led by him has embarked on a silent, yet profound, revolution aimed at protecting India's natural heritage and addressing the pressing global challenge of climate change. This environmental crusade is not merely a political slogan but a cornerstone of a new national consciousness, blending ancient Indian values of living in harmony with nature with modern, technology-driven solutions. The proactive and comprehensive measures adopted across the domains of environmental protection, wildlife conservation, and ecosystem restoration have not only fortified India's ecological resilience but have also positioned the nation as a global leader in the fight against climate change.

Environmental Protection & The Global Green Agenda

The Modi government's approach to environmental protection has been multifaceted, focusing on both domestic action and international collaboration. A major pillar of this strategy is the ambitious push for renewable energy. India has been a trailblazer in solar energy, with its installed capacity growing exponentially. The government's target of achieving 500 GW of non-fossil fuel energy capacity by 2030 is a testament to this unwavering commitment. This push is underpinned by schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Urja Suraksha evam Utthaan Mahabhiyan (PM-KUSUM), which promotes solar pumps for farmers, and the Rooftop Solar Program, which incentivizes households to generate their own clean energy. Beyond national boundaries, PM Modi's vision led to the formation of the International Solar Alliance (ISA), a global initiative to create a common platform for solar-rich countries to cooperate and reduce the cost of solar technology. The ISA has now grown into a treaty-based intergovernmental organization with over 120 member countries, cementing India's leadership in the global solar revolution.

Tackling air pollution, particularly in urban centers, has been another key area of focus. The National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) was launched with the goal of reducing particulate matter concentration by up to 30% by 2024. The government has also been promoting electric mobility through schemes like FAME India (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of (Hybrid &) Electric Vehicles in India), which offers subsidies for EV purchases and infrastructure development. The push towards cleaner fuels and stricter emission norms (like Bharat Stage-VI) has also contributed significantly to improving air quality.

The fight against plastic pollution, a menace to both land and marine ecosystems, has been taken head-on with a nationwide ban on single-use plastics from July 2022. This was complemented by the Swachh Bharat Mission (Clean India Mission), a large-scale sanitation and cleanliness drive that has not only improved public health but has also instilled a sense of civic responsibility towards waste management. The mission's second phase, Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban 2.0, focuses on making cities "garbage-free," emphasizing solid waste management and a circular economy approach. To finance these green initiatives, the government has

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Engineering & Technology

Polytechnic Diploma (Chemical, Civil, CSE, ECE, Electrical, Mechanical, Mining)	3 Years
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M.Tech. (AI, Data Science, CSE, Digital Comm., VLSI, Power System, Renewable Energy, Structural, CTM, Transportation, Manufacturing, Thermal, Polymer, Chemical, Environmental, Mine Planning)	2 Years

Agriculture & Veterinary Science

B.Sc. (Agriculture, Forestry, Horticulture)	4 Years
M.Sc. (Agronomy, Silvi Cultural, Agro-forestry, Vegetable Science, Fruit Science, Soil Science & Agriculture Chemistry, Agri. Extension , Agricultural Entomology, Plant Pathology)	2 Years

Science & Technology

B.Sc. (General) (Physics, Chemistry, Maths, Zoology, Biotech, Microbiology, Botany)	3 Years
M.Sc. (Chemistry, Physics, Maths, Biotech, EVS, Zoology, Botany, Biochemistry, Statistics, Microbiology)	2 Years

Yoga & Naturopathy

Diploma	2 Years
B.Sc. / B.A.	3 Years
M.Sc. / M.A.	2 Years
PG Diploma	1 Year

Mass & Media Communication

B.A. (Journalism & Mass Comm.)	3 Years
M.A. (Journalism & Mass Comm.)	2 Years

Computer Science & System Studies

BCA / B.Sc. (IT, CS)	3 Years
MCA / M.Sc. (IT, CS)	2 Years

Legal Studies

LL.B.	3 Years
BA + LL.B.	5 Years
BBA + LL.B.	5 Years
LL.M.	2 Years

Pharmaceutical Sciences

D. Pharm	2 Years
B. Pharm	4 Years
M. Pharm	2 Years
Pharm D.	6 Years

Health Sciences RPMC CODE 1182

Diploma in Medical Laboratory Tech. (DMLT)	2 Years
Diploma in Radiation Technology (DRT)	2 Years
Diploma in Operation Theater Tech. (DOTT)	2 Years
B.Sc. (Medical Lab Tech., Ophthalmology)	4 Years
M.Sc. (Medical Lab Tech., Ophthalmology)	2 Years
BPT (Bachelor of Physiotherapy)	4.5 Years
MPT (Master of Physiotherapy)	2 Years
GNM*	3.5 Years
B.Sc. Nursing*	4 Years

*Subjected to approval of RNC & INC

Education & Psychology

D.El.Ed. (BSTC)	2 Years
B.Ed.	2 Years
B.A. (Psychology, Education)	3 Years
M.A. (Psychology, Education)	2 Years
MSW (Family & Child Welfare,Urban & Rural Community Development, Personnel Management & Industrial Relations)	2 Years

Management and Commerce

BBA	3 Years
MBA	2 Years
BBA + MBA	4 Years
B.Com	3 Years
M.Com	2 Years

Humanities, Social Sciences & Fine Arts

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BVA / BPA	4 Years
MA (Economics, English, History, Geography, Political Science, Public Admin., Sociology, Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu)	2 Years
MVA / MPA	2 Years

Tourism & Hospitality Management

BTTM	4 Years
BHM	4 Years
MTTM	2 Years
MHM	2 Years

Physical Education

BPES (Bachelor of Physical Education and Sports)	3 Years
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also pioneered the use of financial instruments like Sovereign Green Bonds, becoming one of the first major economies to do so. These bonds channel funds towards public sector projects aimed at reducing carbon emissions and promoting environmental sustainability.

Wildlife Conservation: From Apathy to Ambitious Action

India's rich biodiversity is its greatest treasure, and the Modi government has demonstrated an unprecedented commitment to its protection. The most celebrated success story is the spectacular comeback of the tiger. Under Project Tiger, which received renewed impetus and funding, the tiger population has more than doubled from a mere 1,411 in 2006 to over 3,167 in 2022, earning India the distinction of being home to over 70% of the world's wild tiger population. This achievement is a result of a multi-pronged approach involving strict anti-poaching measures, habitat restoration, and active engagement with local communities. Similarly, Project Lion, launched with the goal of conserving the Asiatic lion, has seen a steady rise in their numbers. Perhaps the most iconic and symbolic wildlife conservation effort has been the reintroduction of cheetahs to India. This landmark project, launched after more than seven decades of the species being declared extinct in the country, involved translocating cheetahs from Namibia and South Africa to the Kuno National Park in Madhya Pradesh. This is not just about bringing back a species but about restoring a complete ecosystem and re-establishing a vital link in the food chain. The government's conservation efforts extend to other species as well, with dedicated programs for the Asian elephant and the one-horned rhinoceros, both of which have seen their populations stabilize or grow. The government's mantra of "Jan Bhagidari" (people's participation) has been crucial in these efforts, recognizing that conservation is most effective when it is a community-driven initiative rather than a top-down mandate. The concept of eco-tourism has been promoted responsibly to create economic incentives for local communities to protect their natural surroundings.

Ecosystem Restoration & A Sustainable Future

The third pillar of the government's environmental strategy is a strong focus on ecosystem restoration, an area that often goes unaddressed. India has been a strong advocate for Land Degradation Neutrality, committing to restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030. The emphasis on afforestation and increasing green cover is visible through a number of schemes and initiatives. The restoration of degraded forests, a vital carbon sink, is a key component of India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement.

The rejuvenation of rivers, particularly the sacred Ganga, has been a flagship program. The Namami Gange

The Modi government's approach to environmental protection has been multifaceted, focusing on both domestic action and international collaboration. A major pillar of this strategy is the ambitious push for renewable energy. India has been a trailblazer in solar energy, with its installed capacity growing exponentially.

Mission, launched with a massive budget, focuses on pollution abatement, riverfront development, and maintaining ecological flow. Its success is evident in the tangible improvement in the river's water quality and the restoration of its biodiversity. Similarly, the Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide safe and adequate drinking water to all rural households, is intrinsically linked to the health of water sources and the restoration of local water bodies. The government has also launched the Mangrove Initiative for Shoreline Habitats & Tangible Incomes (MISHTI) to conserve and restore mangrove ecosystems, which act as crucial buffers against cyclones and coastal erosion.

At a broader level, the government has championed the concept of a "Lifestyle for Environment" (LiFE). This global movement, spearheaded by PM Modi, promotes a shift from mindless and wasteful consumption to a mindful and deliberate utilization of resources. It encourages individuals to adopt sustainable living practices in their daily lives, transforming environmental protection from a government-mandated policy into a people's movement. By connecting the dots between individual actions and global impact, LiFE aims to create a new paradigm of environmental stewardship, one that is rooted in personal responsibility and collective action. This philosophy recognizes that true environmental change will come not just from government policies, but from a fundamental shift in human behavior.

Conclusion: A Legacy of Green Governance

Over the past decade, the Narendra Modi government has demonstrated that environmental protection and economic development are not mutually exclusive but are two sides of the same coin. The journey from being seen as a developing nation with a carbon footprint to a leader in climate action and conservation has been remarkable. The policies and programs implemented, from the ambitious solar push and the reintroduction of the cheetah to the mass movement for cleanliness and the LiFE initiative, reflect a holistic and deeply committed approach to environmental governance. PM Modi's vision extends beyond mere compliance with international treaties; it is about building a sustainable and resilient India for future generations. His role as the Prime Environmental Warrior is not defined by a single policy or a one-off project, but by a consistent and comprehensive effort that has woven the green thread into the very fabric of India's national narrative. It is a legacy that promises not just prosperity, but a harmonious coexistence with the planet.

(The author is a known Environmentalist and the pioneer of Satyagraha Against Pollution movement, viraludayindia@gmail.com)

(The content of this article reflects the views of writer and contributor, not necessarily those of the publisher and editor. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only)



EDITOR'S NOTE

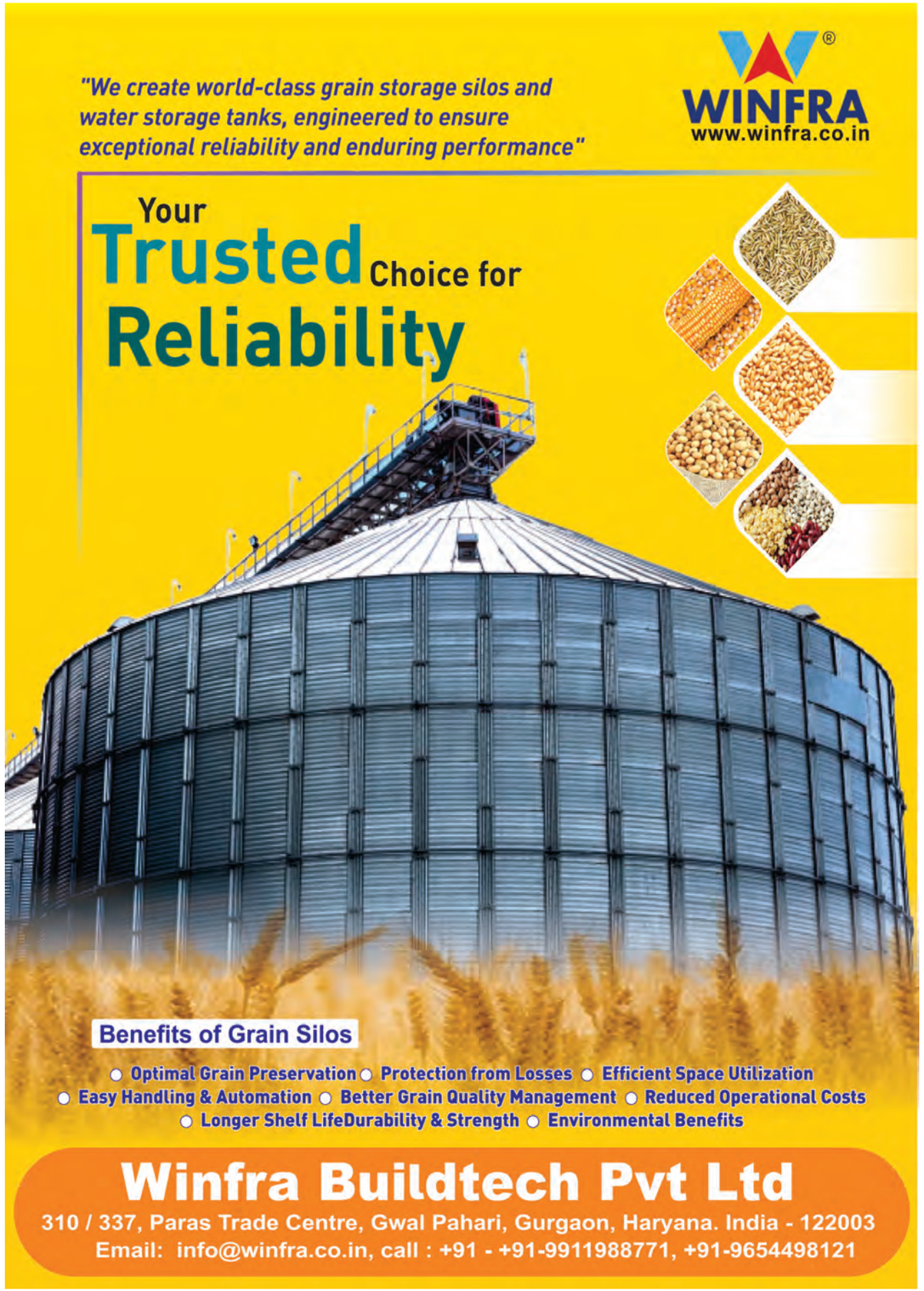
The Bihar Crucible



DEEPAK KUMAR RATH

With the end of the first round of polling today (November 06), the political battleground of Bihar has been readied for a contest that will define its destiny. The 2025 Assembly Election is shaping up to be more than a routine political exercise; it is a fundamental referendum on the future direction of governance in the state. At its core, the election presents a stark choice: will Bihar fall once again for the familiar comfort of populist sloganeering, or will it chart a new path toward accountable progress? The campaign narratives are crystallising into a clear dichotomy. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), leading the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), has framed its message around a binary of development over deception. Its campaign champions employment through empowerment, focusing on infrastructure, job creation, and aligning the state's trajectory with the Centre's vision of a 'Viksit Bharat'. This pitch is strategically positioned as a forward-looking, performance-based appeal, asking for a mandate to break from what it terms the "jungle raj" of the past. In opposition, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), spearheading the Mahagathbandhan, is deploying a campaign that critics argue hinges on emotional manipulation. Its rhetoric heavily leverages caste census data and social justice plank, often framed as a fight for the rights of the 'M-Y' (Muslim-Yadav) combination and the economically backward. While this narrative resonates with its core base, opponents accuse it of offering temporary satisfaction through doles and divisive politics, rather than a concrete blueprint for sustainable growth. Amidst this clash of the two titans, a potential disruptor has emerged. Prashant Kishor's Jan Suraaj Party (JSP) is attempting to inject a third axis of new ideas into the political discourse. With its extensive padyatras and focus on grassroots issues, the JSP aims to challenge the very nature of political conversation in Bihar. However, while it may influence the narrative at the margins, the larger battle in 2025 will still overwhelmingly revolve around the established poles of truth versus falsehood, as defined by the major alliances. The JSP's success will depend on its ability to translate its grassroots connection into tangible electoral influence.

Against this backdrop, it cannot be gainsaid that ultimately, the power to decide rests with the people of Bihar—a populace seasoned by decades of political turmoil, economic stagnation, and broken promises. The voter in Bihar is astute, capable of distinguishing rhetoric from reality. The decision they make in the polling booth will answer a profound question: Is the allure of identity-based assurances and short-term relief stronger than the promise of long-term, sustainable change? This choice carries a weight that extends far beyond Bihar's borders. As a bellwether state with a significant share of India's population, Bihar's political verdict is often seen as a reflection of the national mood. The credibility of Indian democracy itself is, in many ways, on trial. A vote for transparent, accountable governance would reinforce the democratic ideal that performance is paramount. Conversely, a regression to purely populist politics would raise questions about the electorate's prioritisation of immediate gratification over enduring progress. In 2025, Bihar stands at a crossroads. One path leads back to the known, familiar terrain of emotive politics. The other points toward an aspirational future of empowered development. The fate of millions and the soul of Indian democracy await the verdict.



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