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Bihar Election 2025 Phase 1 Begins: PM Modi Urges 'Pehle Matdan, Phir Jalpan'

(Gns). As voting begins in the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi urged citizens, particularly first-time voters, to exercise their franchise with full enthusiasm.

In an X post, PM Modi wrote, "Today marks the first phase of the festival of democracy in Bihar. My appeal to all voters in this phase is to vote with complete enthusiasm. Special congratulations to all young voters casting their vote for the first time. Remember-first voting, then refreshments! (pehle matadan, phir jalpan)."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi encouraged citizens, especially first-time voters, to vote with enthusiasm in the first phase of Bihar Assembly elections, where 121 constituencies are vot-

ing. Polling began at 7 am across 18 districts, with key candidates including Tejashwi Yadav and Samrat Choudhary, and vote counting is scheduled for November 14.

Voting is underway across 121 Assembly constituencies in the first phase, where 3.75 crore voters will decide the fate of 1,314 candidates, including prominent leaders like the INDIA bloc's chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav and Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary of the BJP. Polling began at 7 am and will continue till 5 pm across 18 districts, with central forces deployed at sensitive polling stations to ensure free and fair elections.

The Bihar Assembly elections see a direct contest between the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

and the Mahagathbandhan. The NDA includes the Bharatiya Janata Party,

while the Mahagathbandhan, led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal,



Janata Dal (United), Lok Janshakti Party (Ram Vilas), Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), and Rashtriya Lok Morcha,

comprises the Congress Party, CPI-ML led by Deepankar Bhattacharya, CPI, CPM, and Mukesh Sahani's Vikasheel Insaan

Party (VIP).

The second phase of

polling for the remaining 122 constituencies will take

place on November 11, with vote counting scheduled for

November 14.

Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel will flag off the 'Janjatiya Gaurav Yatra' from Ambaji on Friday

Celebration of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Marks the 150th Birth Anniversary of Bhagwan Birsu Munda

State Government to Organise Janjatiya Gaurav Yatra Across Gujarat with the Message of Public Awareness and Tribal Pride Covering 14 Tribal Districts

Yatra will proceed on the routes from Ambaji to Ekta Nagar and Umargam to Ekta Nagar from November 7 to 13. Service-Oriented Programs Including Health Check-up Camps, Seva Setu, and Collective Sanitation Drives to Be Organized with Public Participation Along the Rathjatra Route

Assembly Speaker Shri Shankar Chaudhary and State Ministers to Join Chief Minister at the Inauguration of the Yatra in Ambaji

Gandhinagar, 6 November 2025: Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel will flag off the "Janjatiya Gaurav Yatra" from Adhyashaktidham Ambaji on November 7.

The 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsu Munda, revered as a deity by tribal communities, is being celebrated this year under the inspiration of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi. With the objective of ensuring that the present generation understands the historical contribution of tribal communities in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Prime Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, the "Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh" under the leadership of the Prime Minister.

Under the guidance of Chief Minister Shri Bhupendra Patel, the 'Janjatiya Gaurav Yatra'

organised as part of the 'Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh Utsav' in Gujarat will be inaugurated from Ambaji. On this occasion, Speaker

ious Central and State Government schemes will be shared with the public. In addition, service-oriented activities such as

al-level celebration of Janjatiya Gaurav Divas, marking the 150th birth anniversary of Bhagwan Birsu Munda, will be held at



of the Legislative Assembly Shri Shankar Chaudhary, along with Ministers of State Shri P. C. Baranda, Shri Kamlesh Patel, Shri Pravin Mali, and Shri Swaroopji Thakor, will remain present.

This Yatra will be held from two locations, Ambaji in the tribal area of North Gujarat and Umargam on the Maharashtra border in South Gujarat, from November 7 to 13. During this period, the Yatra will spread the message of public awareness and tribal pride to the masses in various districts of the state, including 14 tribal districts.

During the Yatra, people in the villages along the route will warmly welcome the Janjatiya Gaurav Rath (Tribal Pride Chariot). At the overnight halt locations, cultural performances, exhibitions depicting the life and contributions of Bhagwan Birsu Munda, and information about var-

health check-up camps, Seva Setu programs, and community cleanliness drives will be organised in the villages along the Yatra route with public participation. Various programs will also be held to help children, youth, and society at large become familiar with the life and teachings of Bhagwan Birsu Munda.

Furthermore, painting and elocution competitions, Bhavai performances, lectures, and film screenings on the life and contribution of Bhagwan Birsu Munda towards nation-building will be organized by various government departments. Apart from the 14 tribal districts, different programs celebrating the Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh will also be held across 20 non-tribal districts from November 13 to 15.

In the inspiring presence of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, the nation-

Dediapada in the divine presence of Devmogra Mataji on November 15.

The state government has resolved that every tribal brother from the remotest and farthest villages will remain at the forefront of development to achieve the goal of Viksit Gujarat for Viksit Bharat. The Chief Minister expressed confidence that the Tribal Pride Rath Yatra will play a vital role in integrating tribal communities into the mainstream of development and nation-building.

The Chief Minister has also called for making the celebration of Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh grand through this Rathjatra, which realises the mantra of 'Vikas Bhi, Virasat Bhi' given by the Prime Minister, and for embodying the slogan 'Aapno Desh, Aapnu Raaj' given by Bhagwan Birsu Munda through the building of Atmanirbhar Bharat and Viksit Bharat.

India eyes boost to Africa ties with President's Angola, Botswana visit starting November 8

(Gns). The Ministry of External Affairs on Thursday announced that President Droupadi Murmu will be travelling to the African nations of Angola and Botswana starting this weekend.

At a press conference, MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said that the visit will take place from November 8 to 13. "This briefing is about the upcoming visit of the President of India to Angola and Botswana. The visit will take place from November 8-13..."

Sudhakar Dalela, Secretary (ER), in the ministry, told reporters that the

President's visit to the two African nations, the first by an Indian Head of State, is part of efforts to increase India's engagement with countries in Africa. The visit will focus on cooperation in areas such as politics, trade and economy.

"The President will be paying a state visit to Angola and Botswana from November 8-13. This will be the first state visit by the head of state to Angola and Botswana. India's engagement with Africa has been growing across all key pillars, from political to trade and economy, to development partnerships, and people-to-

people connections," Dalela said.

"There have been



numerous high-level political engagements, at the level of the heads of state, heads of government, PMs, EAMs. These engage-

ments have allowed us to deepen our cooperation across the African region across sectors," he added.

The President will travel to Angola first, starting on November 8; her visit there will conclude on November 11. President Murmu is travelling to Angola on the invitation of the President of the African country, who had also visited India.

"She will be participating in the 50th anniversary celebration of Angolan freedom. India had supported the Angolan freedom struggle. She will be having bilateral talks, address the Angolan Parliament, and interact with the Indian community," Dalela said.

FM says India needs lot of big, world-class banks; urges them to expand credit availability

(Gns). Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday mentioned that India needs a lot of big and world-class banks, and the work has commenced in this regard. She urged the banking sector to support growth by expanding credit availability.

Speaking at an event organised by the State Bank of India (SBI), the Finance Minister said the government has taken countless path-breaking reform measures to improve ease of doing business since 2014. She stressed that policy consistency and transparency have encouraged investment.

"Banks must deepen and widen credit flow to productive sectors to promote growth," she said, adding that the Goods and Services Tax (GST) rate cuts will spur demand and investment.

"GST rate cut-driven demand to unleash virtuous investment cycle, speed up growth," she stated.

The Finance Minister also mentioned that the government has saved over Rs 4 trillion through direct benefit transfers (DBT). "250 million people

have been pulled out of multi-dimensional poverty in the last decade," she said.



Further, Sitharaman also said the government is "not here to shut the door on futures and options trading".

"The government is here to remove the roadblocks and work on them. It is the investors' responsibility to

understand the associated risks," she added.

The minister said discussions are underway between the Finance Ministry and the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on ways to build world-class banks.

The Finance Minister also said efforts to finalise trade agreements with the US and the EU are in "full force."

She also stressed that India's economic philosophy of atmanirbharta (self-reliance) does not mean shutting doors. Instead, it means being strong enough to meet domestic needs while staying deeply connected with global trade and supply chains.

Rahul Gandhi's Marriage Plans Spark Public Curiosity

(Gns). A charming moment from the Bihar election campaign has caught the internet's attention. A video featuring opposition leader Rahul Gandhi and a young boy has gone viral. The child posed a question that many have pondered: "When are you getting married?" Although the video lacked audio, the boy shared that Gandhi responded he would marry "once he's done with his job."

Gandhi often faces questions about his marriage plans. During a Diwali visit to Ghantewala sweet shop in Old Delhi, he was asked again. Sushant Jain, the shop owner, humorously expressed his wish for Gandhi to marry soon and hoped to cater for the wedding sweets.

During the Bihar election campaign, a video of Rahul Gandhi answering a boy's marriage question

Commission of India reported a 60.13% voter turnout by 5 pm in the first phase of assembly elec-



went viral by stating he would marry after finishing his job; additionally, the public's curiosity of his marriage plans was highlighted by a Ghantewala sweet shop owner. The Election

tions in Bihar.

Rahul Gandhi's Marriage Plans

"All of India is talking about him being the most eligible bachelor," Jain remarked. He added, "I

said, 'Rahul ji, please get married soon -- we're waiting, so that we can get the order for your wedding sweets too.'" This playful exchange highlights public curiosity about Gandhi's personal life.

Meanwhile, Bihar saw a voter turnout of 60.13% by 5 pm during the first phase of assembly elections. This data was provided by the Election Commission of India (ECI), reflecting active participation in the democratic process.

The interaction between Gandhi and the boy adds a light-hearted touch to the political scene. It also underscores how personal questions often intersect with public figures' lives. Such moments provide a glimpse into their personalities beyond politics.

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Editorial

Contradiction

India's rise on the global economic stage is often celebrated as an emblem of national resurgence. Yet, a quiet contradiction shadows that progress ~ the persistently weak strength of the Indian passport. Even as India stands as the world's fifth-largest economy, its passport continues to hover low in global mobility rankings, offering visa-free access to fewer than 60 countries. For millions of Indians aspiring to study, trade, or simply travel abroad, this paradox translates into tangible obstacles in terms of longer queues, higher costs, and fewer opportunities. The weakness of India's passport is not an isolated administrative shortcoming.

It mirrors a deeper gap between economic heft and diplomatic reach. Over the past decade, India's passport has slipped or stagnated in global indices, even as the number of visa-free destinations has increased slightly. The reason lies in relative performance ~ other nations, often much smaller and less affluent, have moved faster to forge reciprocal travel agreements. The pace at which they have expanded global access far outstrips India's incremental gains. This widening gap highlights a missing dimension in India's global engagement ~ mobility diplomacy. For citizens of countries like Singapore, South Korea, or the United Arab Emirates, seamless travel is a product of deliberate policy, continuous negotiation, and mutual trust. In contrast, India's outreach on travel and migration remains cautious, constrained by security concerns and bureaucratic inertia. The result is that India's citizens pay the price for a cautious state.

For a nation that speaks often of global leadership, its citizens still face the daily constraints of limited international mobility. Reputation also plays a decisive role. A country's passport strength depends not only on its economy or military but on how it is perceived, its political stability, the conduct of its travellers, and the reliability of its identification systems. India's record of overstaying visas and recurring fraud cases has not gone unnoticed. Such perceptions feed into restrictive policies abroad, eroding the goodwill required for easier access. Technological reforms like the rollout of biometric e-passports may help improve credibility, but they cannot substitute for diplomacy. The problem is structural, not technical.

For India to translate its global ambitions into real mobility, it must pursue comprehensive travel agreements that reflect trust, reciprocity, and modern migration realities. This involves consistent foreign policy effort ~ building confidence through bilateral treaties, reducing irregular migration, and improving transparency in passport issuance. A strong passport is not just a travel convenience; it is a symbol of a nation's standing in the world. India's limited travel freedom thus underscores a paradox, an economy with global aspirations constrained by narrow diplomatic corridors. The challenge before India is to align its economic power with a mobility framework that reflects its true stature. Only when the ordinary Indian can move across borders with dignity and ease will the country's rise feel complete.

SCIENCE OUTPACING RESTRAIN : INJECTABLE WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE ANTI-OBESITY DRUG MARKET HAS BEEN ASTONISHING. IN JUST FIVE YEARS

(Agency)

India's new obsession with injectable weight-loss drugs is a story of science outpacing restraint. Once reserved for diabetics, these so-called "miracle jabs" are now being pursued by young professionals, influencers, and even wedding planners as short-cuts to a slimmer self. The drugs work, at least in the short run, by mimicking hormones that curb appetite and slow digestion. But what they also reveal is how quickly a medical advance can morph into a lifestyle fad in a country still struggling to define where health ends and vanity begins.

The transformation of the anti-obesity drug market has been astonishing. In just five years, it has ballooned from a niche segment to a multi-crore rupee industry. Patents are expiring, generics are lining up for release, and investors are calling it India's "magic pill moment." Yet, behind the euphoria lies a troubling pattern. These injections, designed for chronic metabolic conditions, are now being used casually ~

sometimes prescribed by gym trainers or beauty clinics, sometimes bought online with barely a consultation. The idea that one can jab away excess



weight without changing anything else has taken firm root in the urban imagination.

But weight is not the enemy; indiscipline is. These drugs, when used unsupervised, do not merely shed fat; they also strip away muscle, disrupt digestion, and create dependence. Users often find that once they stop, the weight creeps back faster than before. In a nation where the average diet is

(Agency)

On Kartika Purnima, when the full moon spills itself over the Mahanadi and its sister rivers, Odisha becomes a single long, luminous sigh. The night is at once festival and elegy: lamps drift like small stars, miniature boats glide like secret letters, and the water takes the moon's light and keeps it as memory. Here the celestial, the domestic, and the maritime fold into one another ~ the moon a silent witness, the river a courier, the boat a human hope set afloat. The ritual is elemental and precise.

Moonlight picks out the ribs of a boat; the river receives it. For a people once masterful in inter-continental coastal trade, these images are historical as well as symbolic. The Sadhabas ~ merchant mariners of ancient Kalinga ~ sailed from these deltas to Java, Sumatra, and Bali. Today, villagers and city folk alike float tiny vessels of banana stem, cork, or paper, each loaded with lamps, rice, betel leaves, and prayers. The gesture is both commemoration and enactment: a remembering of voyages and an offering for safe return. This triad ~ moon, river, boat ~ functions like a poem.

The moon illuminates longing; the river carries it; the boat makes of longing a movement. The objects are modest, but the meanings are vast. Bali Jatra is when Sadhabas set sail on Kartika Purnima on the Mahanadi's banks in Cuttack. It is more than a fair; it is a living archive where commerce and memory meet. Stalls and performances pulse with life while ritual send-offs hold a hush of solemnity; elders intone the old

refrains, children learn the careful choreography of letting go, and families perform a communal elegy for those who sail away. The scene finds a distant cousin in Europe's maritime pageants ~ most famously Venice's Regata Storica and its "Farewell to the Fleet." There, too, canals become theatre: crowds line the water to witness processions led by the Bucintoro, a ceremonial boat that turns civic pomp into private longing.

In both places the river or canal is a stage where departure is at once spectacle and intimate sorrow, a ritual that transforms personal loss into shared meaning. Kartika is a month of restraint; the culmination is a feast that tastes of both austerity and production. After Habisha, a period of simple, sattvic food, kitchens fill with the aroma of kakara pitha, arisa pitha, muan, and manda pitha ~ sweets that are edible memory. These offerings are practical and symbolic at once: provisions for a voyage imagined and for a soul crossing thresholds. They are gifts to the river, to the departed, and to the community that keeps the story alive. In every home, hands craft these vessels with quiet devotion.

A mother's blessing, a child's wonder, a lover's ache ~ all sealed into the hull. As they float, voices rise in haunting cadence, with a chant as old as the tide, evoking the sacred months and the journey from monsoon to migration, from hearth to horizon. Rivers are thresholds in Odia cosmology: not mere channels but spaces where worlds touch. On Kartika Purnima the river is both path and witness ~ an axis

relationship with body image has always been uneasy ~ between traditional ideals of prosperity and modern ideals of fitness. To medicalise this tension without reflection risks turning health into yet another commodity. Obesity is a chronic disease, yes, but when the same treatment is used for cosmetic slimming, the distinction between therapy and indulgence collapses. As the market opens up to cheaper generics, accessibility will improve but so will the temptation to misuse. Without tighter regulation, counterfeit drugs and unqualified practitioners could flood the system, posing grave risks.

The responsibility, however, does not lie with doctors alone. It lies with consumers who must recognise that medicine cannot replace discipline, and that wellness is earned, not injected. The real cure for India's weight crisis will not come from a syringe but from a shift in attitude, from outsourcing health to reclaiming it. No miracle jab can substitute that.

There is also a wider ethical dimension. India's

18 warriors now faces the price of their choices in this stirring finale that brings the saga full circle.

As the war cries fade and arrows find their mark, only one question remains: who will uphold dharma and who will fall to ambition?

Watch all 18 episodes of Kurukshetra are now streaming, only on Netflix.



me in kuch balidaan toh dena padega," - each of the

Where the Moon sails the river

where the living commune with the absent. Bathing, boat-floating, song ~ each is an act of passage, a seasonal invitation to cross from presence to absence and back again. Across Odisha's waterways ~



Mahanadi, Baitarani, Rushikulya, Subarnarekha ~ this liminality takes different tones: the Baitarani's weight of sacred transition, the Rushikulya's promise of return, the Subarnarekha's gleam of fortune and melancholy. Yet the core impulse is the same: to harness water and moonlight as allies in the human labour of farewell. The ritual voice of Kartika Purnima

makes personal grief a public pattern. Poets and bards, from classical to folk, have rendered this viraha ~ separation ~ into images that linger: the ocean as abyss, the boat as exile, the moon as the patient lover that links both shore and sailor. These songs keep alive a centuries-long relationship with the sea, a relationship that once sustained commerce, culture,

(Agency)

Electors in Bihar will carry their own dreams and those of candidates and political parties as they walk to booths in 121 assembly constituencies on Thursday morning. Election managers have meanwhile shifted gear from a three-month grueling phase of Special Intensive Revision



(SIR) of electoral rolls to the hardcore routine of the conduct of polls ~ logistics, law and order, rebooting of their surgical methods and of course enforcement of the vexing model code of conduct (MCC).

The Election Commission (EC) has been pointing to the four challenges it fights in delivery of a free and fair election: muscle, money, misinformation and MCC violation. For securing the poll process, 8.5 lakh civil and police personnel have been mobilized and include 350 EC observers, besides the existing ground force of 91,000 Booth Level Officers (BLOs), 243 electoral registration officers and their supervisors. Citizen complaints and 824 Flying squads on ground have ensured seizure of illicit inducements of more than Rs 100 crore so far. Neighbouring states and enforcement agencies are on high alert. The second and final phase of the poll is on 11 November. EC has taken a middle position between some demands for a single day poll and the three phases that it followed in 2020.

There is a case for limiting poll phases, so that disruption to regular governance and public life is the least. For the EC, primary factors in such phasing include security concerns and related logistics. In the third most populous state of India, prone to social conflicts, and with elections being passion raisers, a two-phase poll signifies measured progress, rather

than landing up in a single-phase misadventure.

Elections in India, unlike many in the West, are still evolving and therefore require protection of the forces. Model Code violations in these elections have been within the tolerance threshold thus far. Credit goes both to political players and regulators.



Recent elections have seen advisories and warnings from the Election Commission getting stricter in the wake of ugly violations of the model code by all sides. The onus is on political parties and campaigners, many of them election veterans; but the temptation of swaying the psyche of voters through exaggeration, insinuation and personal slurs abide. Conduct of polls may benefit from advancements of Artificial Intelligence (AI) someday, but currently Election Management Bodies (EMBs) worldwide are battling AI-engineered vitiation of election processes. The EC has cautioned parties against misuse of AI tools for distorting information and propagating deep fakes.

It has directed prominent labelling of AI-generated/synthetic content used for social media campaigning. The strategy appears to be working by and large. Poll officials are engaged in intense monitoring of the digital platforms; for myth busting and taking down of fakes by regulators. The EC on its own has gone ahead to redress old grievances and preempted potential ones relating to counting of postal ballots, periodic declaration of turnout on counting day and final voting figures being made available to political parties at polling stations. Appetite for transparency, however, keeps growing and poll managers may unavoidably respond every time. Transparency is the soul of the election

and kinship across the Bay of Bengal. From the early centuries BCE through the medieval era, Kalinga commanded thriving maritime trade and power. Ports such as Tamralipti and Manikpatna connected rice, ivory, textiles, and ritual to distant markets. The Sadhabas' voyages were economic acts wrapped in ritual: consulting tides and moons, receiving family blessings, and setting off under a sky that promised both trade and uncertainty.

Bali Jatra, non-luddite, commemorates that history without fossilizing it. The fair keeps the memory dynamic ~ commerce turned into craft stalls, navigation into narrative, loss into a communal language of resilience. Kartika Purnima is a practice in holding ambivalence. It permits gratitude and grief to coexist: the same lamp that lights a prayer for safe passage also glows in the shadow of possible loss. The festival trains the eye to see departure as a form of fidelity ~ an act in which love is demonstrated by release, by capable hands that set the vessel away trusting the tides, the moon, or fate. The ritual imagines the sea not as final erasure

process. Concerns over election-time freebies raised by the Election Commission, the Supreme Court and top political leaderships have travelled only a short distance.

The EC has proposed few accountability provisions regarding promises in party manifestos. But the subject remains entangled



in the debate of welfare vs freebie, and the rights of political parties for dialogue with electors. Net result, it has been a free for all. The election announcement in Bihar was preceded by a plethora of cash transfers and major political contenders are completely uninhibited in holding up the bigger and fancier carrots by the day. Voters do not dislike either. In the face of a large electorate, any amount of voter facilitation is never enough. The number of polling stations has gone over 90,700, compared to 77,400 in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, reducing the burden on each booth to a maximum of 1,200 electors.

While the EC has been reluctant to accept Aadhaar as a clinching document for inclusion in the electoral roll, it is the first among valid documents for identification at the polling station. Accessibility support for over seven lakh people with disabilities and over four lakh above 85 years old, including the facility of home voting, suggest higher empathy. Bihar has an unenviable reputation for poor turnouts. Despite significant improvements following the EC's one and half decade long campaign of voter engagement, turnout fell short of 60 per cent in recent polls.

2025 could mark a turnaround occasioned by significant deletion of ghost electors during the SIR process. The EC has taken up a scientific exercise of identifying low turnout constituencies and applying

but as a carrier of letters. Boats, modest and transient, become metaphors: the human habit of making hope material and putting it into circulation. Today Bali Jatra is a confluence of commerce, culture, and memory. Boat races and stalls rub shoulders with quieter rites.

Young people, many far removed from seafaring livelihoods, participate with a knowledge shaped as much by heritage as by imagination. The festival thus becomes a mechanism of cultural transmission: it keeps the Sadhaba story alive while allowing new meaning to accumulate. On Kartika Purnima, Odisha offers a simple philosophical lesson: to love is to let go. The moon records the gesture; the river carries it; the boat becomes the language of faith. Lamps drown in the dark and yet the light remembered on the water endures. In the annual choreography of float and flame, the community shapes a response to absence ~ ritual, song, and sweet food transforming private longing into a shared poetics of return. Let the boats drift. Let the moon mark our waiting.

targeted measures. Focused work on urban and youth apathy has yielded moderate results. The SIR churning would have created additional stimulation for the 7.42 crore electors in Bihar to take the walk to the polling booth in 2025. Not to be missed, 14 lakh young voters have entered Bihar's

electoral roll this year on attaining the age of eighteen. In fact, every fourth elector in Bihar is below 29 years of age, and they could decide the direction of the results, provided they actively participate. Increased number of women, both in the electoral roll and voting in the last decade, has triggered targeted welfare and cash transfers to women.

This has brought dividends to political parties in recent elections in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, West Bengal and earlier in Bihar itself. While candidate selection by political parties certainly reflects the caste mosaic in Bihar and voting is expected to considerably follow caste lines, women and youth could very well cut across the other divides, if they choose. In 2020, Bihar led the way in holding a general election in the face of a rampaging pandemic. The state is poised this time to offer a template of an election post SIR. For voters, as they walk to the polling booths, the popular pledge to vote 'without being influenced by considerations of religion, race, caste, community, language or any inducement' remains the best call. While political combatants could make a ruthless push towards the magic mark of 122 seats in a new Bihar assembly, ECI will be expected to deliver, as always, a spotless election, adding to the golden heritage of Indian election management.

WR OFFICER COMPLETES THE PRESTIGIOUS IRONMAN MALAYSIA 2025 TRIATHLON

Mumbai, On 1st November 2025, Shri Sachin Sharma, Secretary to General Manager, Western Railway, successfully completed the globally renowned Ironman Malaysia Triathlon held at Langkawi Island, Malaysia. This international endurance race is considered one of the toughest sporting challenges in the world and consists of 3.8 km open sea swimming, followed by 180 km of cycling and concluding with a 42.2 km full marathon, amounting to a total distance of 226 km.

According to a press release issued by Chief Public Relations Officer Western Railway – Shri Vineet Abhishek, Langkawi's warm and humid tropical climate made the event extremely demanding. The race commenced at the scenic Pantai Kok Beach, where participants swam in crystal clear sea waters with moderate tides. Immediately after the swim, the athletes transitioned to a 180 km cycling route passing through the picturesque coast-line and steep hilly roads

resilience of every participant.

Jersey, symbolising his achievement.

Shri Sharma is an avid endurance athlete and has participated in nearly 60 to 70 national and international marathons over the years. He has successfully completed the Comrades Ultra Marathon in South Africa, one of the world's most challenging ultra-distance road races. He has also taken part in the Border Race also called as Hell Race in Jaisalmer, known for its extreme desert conditions, as well as the Silk Route Ultra Race in Ladakh, held at high-altitude Himalayan terrain. His continuous pursuit of endurance excellence and disciplined fitness regime have been a source of motivation and inspiration for many within the railway fraternity.

This remarkable feat by Shri Sachin Sharma is a matter of pride for Western Railway, reflecting the commitment of its officers towards fitness, endurance and holistic well-being.

Shri Vineet further stated that Shri Sharma displayed exemplary determination, discipline and mental strength throughout the race. As he approached the finishing stretch amid loud cheers, the event announcer proudly declared, "SACHIN, YOU ARE AN IRONMAN!" marking his official completion of the triathlon. After finishing, he was awarded the coveted Finisher's Medal, Finisher's Tower Coin and the official IRONMAN Finisher's



Shri Sachin Sharma, Secretary to General Manager, Western Railway is seen during the Ironman Malaysia 2025 Triathlon at Langkawi Island.

Cong claims over 5 crore signatures in Vote Chor campaign

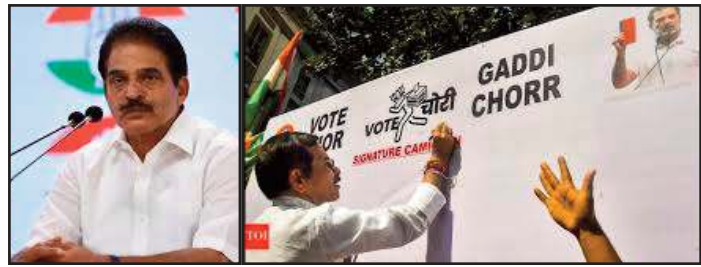
(Agency) The Congress on Thursday announced a major milestone in its 'Vote Chor Gaddi Chod' campaign, stating it has collected over 5 crore signatures from citizens nationwide.

Describing the public response as a "powerful testimony to the anger, apprehension, and deep concern among ordinary citizens about the naked murder of democracy," Party General Secretary K C Venugopal, in a statement, reiterated his party's accusations of the ruling BJP of "large-scale electoral fraud" and "electoral roll manipulation" in launched on September 15, as a mass public outreach and door-to-door signature

presented the ECI with five explicit and democratic demands aimed at restoring faith and transparency in the electoral system.

"Publish a machine-readable voter list with photographs for public scrutiny. Release all deletion and addition lists with photographs before every election. Establish a grievance redressal mechanism for wrongful deletions. Announce a clear cut-off date for voter list changes, avoiding last-minute manipulations.

"Venugopal said the Congress party, through this citizens' movement, has



collusion with the Election Commission of India.

The campaign, which translates to "Vote Thief, Quit the Chair," was

"Abua Sarkar" is actually "Thugua Sarkar," says Babulal Marandi

(Agency) BJP state president and Leader of Opposition Babulal Marandi launched a sharp attack on the Hemant Soren government in Ghatsila on Thursday, calling it a "Thugua Sarkar" that has betrayed Jharkhand, its youth, and its tribal communities.

Marandi said the government, which calls itself "Abua Sarkar," has actually pushed Jharkhand backward by 25 years instead of moving it forward. "This government is anti-tribal, anti-development and anti-people. For six years, it has deceived the people in the name of welfare," he said.

Citing the recent case of five tribal children in Chaibasa Sadar Hospital being transfused with HIV-infected blood, Marandi alleged that the state's health system has collapsed. "People are being handed death in the name of treatment," he said, adding that the government

merely suspended a few officials to cover up its negligence while the Chief Minister remained silent and the Health Minister blamed the opposition.

refusal to implement the PESA Act was an attempt to suppress tribal rights.

According to Marandi, corruption and extortion have become common at

are being issued to expand the vote bank. In Ghatsila's reserved areas, Muslim population growth has been 29.4 percent in five years compared to 3 percent among others. This cannot be natural," he claimed.

He cited the example of Hendaljori panchayat, where funds under the Maiyan Yojana were reportedly given to 174 Muslim women even though there is no Muslim family in that area. "The government is giving ration cards, Aadhaar cards and welfare benefits to outsiders. This is an attack on Jharkhand's identity," he said.

Urging voters to punish the ruling coalition, Marandi appealed for support to BJP candidate Babu Lal Soren. "Only the BJP and NDA can free Jharkhand from corruption, mafias and infiltrators. The people must now strike back through their votes," he said.



Pakistan Warns of Military Action As Peace Talks With Afghanistan Set To Resume In Turkey

(Agency) Ahead of next round of peace talks between Islamabad and Taliban in Turkey today, Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has issued a strong warning to Afghanistan that failure to reach a breakthrough would force Islamabad into direct military confrontation with the Taliban.

Speaking to Geo TV ahead of the third round of talks, Asif stated, "If the negotiations fail, the situation will deteriorate further. We have our options. Considering how we are being targeted, we may respond in the same manner."

Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif warned Afghanistan of potential military confrontation if peace talks with the

address border tensions and cross-border militant activity. The talks aim to

Afghan territory, while Pakistan has accused the Taliban government of aligning with India.

A Taliban security personnel stands guard along a road near the Ghulam Khan zero-point border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan in Gurbuz district in the southeast of Khost province on October 20, 2025. Photo credit: AFP

The Pakistani delegation, led by Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) chief Lt. Gen. Asim Malik, is expected to meet with Afghanistan's interim intelligence head Abdul Haq Wasiq in Istanbul. The renewed dialogue, facilitated by Türkiye and supported by regional allies.







સામંત ગુજરાત
Government of Gujarat



Shri Narendra Modi

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Gujarat

Patriotic Tribute

Vande Mataram

@150

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150-year Rich Cultural Legacy of this Song

Statewide Programs to be Organised in Four Phases from 7th November 2025 to 7th November 2026

First phase (November 7th to 26th, 2025) to begin with
a Collective Singing of Original Vande Mataram & a Shapath to Adopt Swadeshi

7 November, 2025

Vidhan Sabha Premises Entrance, Sachivalay

Time: 9:00 AM

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Ghar Ghar Swadeshi

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– Shri Harsh Sanghavi, Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, Gujarat

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Government of Gujarat

**"Har Ghar Swadeshi
Ghar-Ghar Swadeshi"**



Janjatiya Gaurav Varsh

Health, Dignity and Self-Employment: Holistic Progress of Tribal Women

Empowerment of tribal communities through advanced
health services and welfare schemes for women and children







Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi
inspires to prioritize Health and Social Welfare in
tribal regions through 'Vanbandhu Kalyan Yojana'

Under the leadership of
Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Bhupendrabhai Patel
free medical assistance is provided for the treatment of serious illnesses






Major Achievements of Health and Welfare Schemes (Year 2020-21 to 2024-25):

- Under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana, 1,13,579 beneficiaries received assistance worth approximately ₹34.89 crore
- Additional facility of 275 beds established at Garudeshwar, Bhiloda and Kevadiya at an estimated cost of ₹53.76 crore
- More than 23 lakh beneficiaries in tribal regions benefited from 108 emergency medical services
- Establishment of GMERS Medical Colleges at Godhra, Rajpipla, and Navsari
- Establishment of Self-financed Medical Colleges at Surat and Bharuch

- About ₹319.84 crore disbursed to 29,045 beneficiaries under the Individual Housing Assistance Scheme & Halpati Housing Assistance Scheme
- About ₹77.78 crore disbursed to 44,933 beneficiaries under the Manav Garima Scheme
- About ₹42.00 crore disbursed to 35,364 beneficiaries under the 'Kunvarbai nu Mameru' Scheme
- Through the Gujarat Tribal Development Corporation, 912 beneficiaries received financial assistance of ₹29.18 crore under the Self-Employment Scheme






Tribal Development Department, Government of Gujarat



