



INTERVIEW PREPARATION

CURRENT AFFAIRS

By Shridhant Joshi Sir

MD, Kautilya Academy



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IAS, IPS, IRS, MPPSC & OTHER STATES PCS

www.kautilyaacademy.com, www.kautilyaacademy.in

Mob : 9425068121, 9893929541

BJP sweeps Hindi belt, Cong. bags Telangana

BJP routs Cong. in Madhya Pradesh, retains power with a brute majority

Cong. loses Rajasthan as State sticks to trend of voting out incumbent

Saffron party proves pollsters wrong, shocks Congress in Chhattisgarh

Congress wrests Telangana, denies BRS a hat-trick in the youngest State

Varghese K. George
NEW DELHI

Trouncing the Congress in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Chhattisgarh, the BJP consolidated its position in the Hindi heartland, while the Congress unseated the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) in Telangana, as results of the Assembly elections in the four States were announced on Sunday. The BJP finished third in Telangana.

With these results, the BJP now has 12 Chief Ministers and the Congress three. The saffron party had lost all the three northern States in 2018, but topped the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh, to return to power in 2020. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the



Moments of triumph: (From left) Union Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia offers a sweet to Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan; former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje poses for a selfie with party workers in Jaipur; BJP workers celebrate the victory in Raipur; Telangana Congress president A. Revanth Reddy greets supporters at Gandhi Bhavan in Hyderabad. AP, R. V. MOORTHY & G. RAMAKRISHNA

BJP's victory. "This victory is of the mantra of '*Sabka saath, sabka vishwas* and *sabka prayas*' given by PM Modi," Ms. Raje said.

"Today's election results have proved that the days of appeasement and caste politics are over," Home Minister Amit Shah posted on X (formerly Twitter). Mr. Modi thanked party workers for "tirelessly" highlighting "our development agenda among the people". The BJP faced the election without a chief

ministerial face and its campaign was largely built around Mr. Modi in all the States. "The results... indicate that the people of India are firmly with politics of good governance and development," he said.

Margin of victory

The BJP won two of every three seats in Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, and three of every five in Rajasthan.

The Congress crumbled in Madhya Pradesh where

it hoped to gain from anti-incumbency sentiments, which turned out to be non-existent.

In Chhattisgarh, the Congress's social engineering and welfare politics could not fend off the storm of corruption allegations laced with religious symbolism that the BJP unleashed.

In Rajasthan, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's sprightly campaign fell short in the face of a strong anti-incumbency trend

against Congress MLAs. The State stuck to its pattern of voting out the government in every election. "We thought we would form a government based on our schemes and promises," Mr. Gehlot said after the defeat.

Conceding defeat in the three States, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who had spearheaded the party campaign, said the "battle of ideology would continue".

Mr. Gandhi thanked the

people of Telangana, where several leaders attributed the party's victory to his Bharat Jodo Yatra that was received well, while Mr. Modi pledged that the BJP would continue to build its presence in the State. The BJP doubled its vote share in the State and won eight seats compared with one in the previous Assembly election, positioning it as a more consequential player in the State.

The BRS's hopes of a

third term were dashed, as public mood in the State took a turn in favour of the Congress since March, when the party won an impressive victory in neighbouring Karnataka.

BRS president K. Chandrashekhara Rao went incommunicado after the results while his son and Cabinet colleague K.T. Rama Rao said the party would analyse them.

FULL COVERAGE

» PAGES 7, 10, 11 & 12

A.P. braces for heavy rainfall as Michaung intensifies

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM/CHENNAI

Cyclone Michaung has intensified in its move across the southwest Bay of Bengal and is likely to make landfall on the Andhra Pradesh coast between Nellore and Machilipatnam on Tuesday morning as a severe cyclonic storm, with maximum sustained wind speeds of 90 kmph to 100 kmph, gusting to 110 kmph, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday.

A red alert has been issued in parts of Tamil Nadu's Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram, and Chengalpattu districts, which are expected to be lashed by a heavy downpour over the next two days. Extremely heavy rainfall is also expected in parts of coastal A.P., Yanam, and



Lull before the storm: Boats anchored as dark clouds gather at the Harbour area in Visakhapatnam on Sunday. K.R DEEPAK

Rayalaseema, and a storm surge of more than a metre above the tide is likely to inundate the State's southern coastal districts at the time of landfall.

PM takes stock

Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to A.P. Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday to take stock

of rescue and relief preparations, and assured him of the Union government's support. Both affected States have deployed disaster response teams and set up relief camps, evacuating hundreds from low-lying areas. Fishermen have been warned to stay away from the sea, and preparations are being made to

Storm surge of over one metre expected to flood coastal districts when severe cyclonic storm makes landfall tomorrow

protect the paddy harvest. Trains have been cancelled in the region, and schools will be shut on Monday in affected districts.

The coastal districts of Nellore, Tirupati, Prakasam, Bapatla, Guntur, Krishna, and West Godavari are likely to face damages due to inundation from an expected storm surge of about one to 1.15 metres above the astronomical tide on Tuesday.

Mr. Reddy directed officials to take all possible efforts to minimise the loss of life and property due to the cyclone. He sought

“foolproof” relief and rescue measures, instructing officials to make sure all facilities such as drinking water, food, and necessary medicines are provided in the relief camps.

Stalin holds review

T.N. Chief Minister M.K. Stalin visited the Emergency Operations Centre in Chennai on Sunday to review precautionary measures. “A total of 685 individuals have been evacuated to 11 relief camps in Chengalpattu, Chennai, Kancheepuram, and Tiruvallur districts,” he said.

Over 500 personnel from the State and National Disaster Response Forces have been rushed to Chengalpattu, Chennai, Cuddalore, Kancheepuram, Mayiladuthurai, Nagapattinam, Tiruvallur, Vilupuram districts.

Nationally dominant, with a strategy that clicks

The results of the four-State election (Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana), declared on Sunday, provide a wealth of compelling evidence that might help us answer two of the most important questions relating to Indian politics. What are the crucial factors which best explain the continuing national dominance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)? Second, and somewhat relatedly, what explains the perennially feeble state of the Opposition (principally the Congress party)?

Explaining the BJP's triumph

In some respects, the BJP's triumph in all three States, i.e., Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, represents a puzzle. However, it might appear much more of a puzzle to those who have consistently laid emphasis on the organisational machinery and the welfare model of the BJP to explain its electoral successes. Those factors are important but not decisive.

In Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, the welfare plank rested with the incumbent Congress, and both Congress Chief Ministers, i.e., Bhupesh Baghel and Ashok Gehlot, respectively, commanded (as per survey evidence) broad popular satisfaction in this respect.

Also, in both these States, paralysing factional struggles and centralised control of the BJP had weakened its State-level leadership. The resultant organisational inertia had characterised much of the last five years of the Opposition BJP in both these States. Meanwhile, in Madhya Pradesh, the State BJP leadership was weighed down by a two-decade long anti-incumbency. Therefore, one must desist from reflexively ascribing every electoral victory of the BJP to a certain popular welfare scheme or a superior organisational machinery. These advantages, after all, had not materialised for the BJP in earlier State elections, including the Karnataka election in May.

The BJP's victories in these State elections, as in previous elections north of the Vindhyas, owe themselves to two principal factors. First, a dominant (and in some respects unchallenged) ideological agenda, represented by the expansive rubric of Hindu nationalism. Second, a trusted and charismatic national leadership (chiefly Prime Minister Narendra Modi) which is highly adept at constantly reimagining and activating this ideological agenda through super-charged electoral campaigns. In much of the Hindi belt, the BJP now possesses a core ideological vote bank that ensures a forbidding structural advantage to the party in any election. In Rajasthan, for example, survey evidence (Axis India Today) suggests three times as many upper castes voted for the BJP as the Congress. The



Asim Ali

is a political researcher and columnist

traditional divisions between Brahmins, Rajputs and Baniyas that had long characterised State politics seemed to have disappeared. More importantly, voters from the Other Backward Classes now represent the most critical support base of the party in the vast majority of the 'Hindi belt' States. Consider the leads commanded by the BJP against the Congress among OBC voters as in exit poll evidence (Axis India Today): 26%-point lead among the OBCs in Rajasthan, 24%-point lead in Madhya Pradesh, and a 13%-point lead in Chhattisgarh.

At least among certain upwardly mobile and dominant OBCs, support for the BJP now remains resilient and insulated through many contingent factors. Consider some of these factors: the two incumbent Chief Ministers belonging to OBC castes and often emphasising their identity; Rajasthan expanding the OBC quota and announcing caste census; the popularity of Mr. Baghel among farming OBC communities such as Kurmis and Sahus.

The urban and upwardly mobile OBCs certainly identify and relate more with the ideological agenda of the National Democratic Alliance and the charismatic leadership of the BJP. Consider some survey markers of the JIST-TIF research, where the responses of OBC voters and upper caste voters of Rajasthan appear to be virtually identical. On the question of responsibility for high inflation resting with the national or State government: 54% upper castes and 48% OBC respondents say State government, as opposed to 31% Dalits and 33% tribals. Even on questions relating to whether 'freebies' are right or wrong, upwardly mobile OBCs (Yadav, Kurmi, Lodhi, Gujjar) appear ambiguous and divided, close to the position of upper castes, in contrast to the overwhelming support evinced by the Most Backward Castes, Dalit and tribal voters.

The state of the Opposition and the Congress

The charismatic leadership of Mr. Modi, who took a significant political risk fronting all three elections, remains crucial in melding this expanded support base of the party and smoothening out divisions among them through evoking a populist personality-based appeal. Mr. Modi also remains a singularly powerful force perhaps when facing an incumbent Opposition leader, electorally mobilising all the various constituencies harbouring latent feelings of anti-incumbency. Mr. Modi's personal popularity has been perhaps a decisive factor in ensuring that no incumbent Congress Chief Minister of a large State has come back to power in the entirety of the Modi era (the last time was perhaps Tarun Gogoi in the Assam election in 2011).

Now, let us come to the factors explaining the

weakened state of the Opposition, principally the Congress. All of these factors have been quite obvious for a long time and, hence, can be tackled quite briefly.

First, the old guard of the Congress in North India (exemplified by Kamal Nath perfectly) is now perhaps a decade past its expiry date. They prevent the party from propounding a real progressive agenda and developing a State-level leadership that can embody progressive ideas. Since the old guard is resolutely status quoist, this not only harms the party by stanching intra-party competition and the emergence of a young leadership but they also veto the taking up of new ideas such as the caste census. The caste census agenda was virtually put into pause by the Congress in three State elections (even in Madhya Pradesh, where the CSDS NDTV survey evidence indicated a clear plurality of voters agreeing with the plank).

Consider the *modus operandi* of Congress Chief Ministers such as Mr. Baghel and Mr. Gehlot. They not just sidelined strong rival leaders (such as Sachin Pilot and T.S. Singh Deo) but also marginalised their State Congress organisation, preferring to operate through bureaucrats and chosen ministerial aides. Their excesses have been enabled by a weakened high Command. The resulting atrophy of the State organisations, however, also means that the party struggles to convert latent satisfaction with the respective Congress Chief Ministers into actual votes for the Congress party on election day. Meanwhile, the Congress lost much of its tribal support base in both the northern Sarguja and the southern Bastar belt of Chhattisgarh (where it had swept in the previous election). This is again a reminder of the perils of not advancing a distinctive ideological agenda.

The Congress's victory in Telangana provides not only an important consolation point but also a way forward. The strategy in Telangana (and the election in Karnataka earlier) has been the inverse of its strategy in northern India. In Telangana, the specific year-long mobilisations among Dalit and tribal voters, and electoral promises such as the significant subsidy to tenant farmers, had introduced a pronounced progressive agenda into the electoral contest. In both these States, the Congress has also evolved a credible leadership which can embody such an ideological agenda.

In summary, the Congress might console itself by claiming that it has now become the leading party of southern India. Yet, the BJP remains the nationally dominant party, and it increasingly appears that the saffron dominance might not face a credible rival challenge either in 2024 or even for some time beyond it.

In much of the Hindi belt, the Bharatiya Janata Party now possesses a core ideological vote bank that ensures the party a forbidding structural advantage in any election

India, disability inclusion and the power of 'by'

Disability as an identity and entity exists at the intersection of multiple vulnerabilities – social, economic and gender – with each facet requiring careful consideration when conceptualising action for equity.

Globally, 1.3 billion people (which is equivalent to nearly the entire population of India) live with some form of disability. Of them, 80% live in developing countries; further, 70% of them live in rural areas. Current systems are designed for persons without disabilities and end up being exclusionary to people with disabilities, resulting in them experiencing higher instances of poverty, lack of access to education and opportunities, informality and other forms of social and economic discrimination.

According to the English dictionary, "For" is often used when a person is receiving something and "By" is to "identify the agent performing an action". This difference is crucial when it comes to disability inclusion, as the approach is completely different if it is "by" persons with disabilities being a part of the process and not "for" them, without them in the process.

A case for inclusion

At the outset, the inclusion of persons with disabilities into the economy can help boost global GDP between 3% to 7%, as per the study by the International Labour Organization (ILO), "The price of exclusion: The economic consequences of excluding people with disabilities from the world of work".

We believe that everyone has the right to equal treatment and opportunities at work, agnostic of any attributes other than the ability to do the job. The reality, however, is mixed. The current employment scenario is limited, providing fewer jobs for persons with disabilities and perpetuating stereotypes that create further barriers for people with disabilities to access the labour market. It is also in direct contravention of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of



Michiko Miyamoto

is Director,
International Labour
Organization (ILO)
Decent Work
Technical Support
Team (DWT)/Country
Office (CO)-New Delhi



Ulaş Demirag

is Country Director
and Representative,
International Fund for
Agricultural
Development (IFAD)
India, Part of Team
UN India

There need to be more inclusive opportunities and employment in the rural areas as a majority of persons with disabilities live here

Persons with Disabilities, which advocates changing attitudes and perceptions towards persons with disabilities and viewing inclusion from a social development dimension. Disability inclusion is rooted in assuring the rights of persons with disabilities and recognising the economic benefits of inclusion.

Greater challenges in rural areas

In India, the Central and State governments have various schemes for persons with disabilities and a unique id for persons with disabilities (UDID) card, established as part of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Act (2016). The first step is awareness to ensure last-mile connectivity of the benefits enumerated for people with disabilities by the government, which begins with the capacity-building of community leaders who can advocate for this at the grass-roots level. This is especially important in rural areas, where persons with disabilities tend to face greater challenges when compared to their urban counterparts, with even more limited access to education and employment. Some developmental schemes, too, exclude them. They are viewed as objects of charity and not as persons with agency with an ability to participate in decision-making processes. Rural areas also have high agricultural dependence and face the heightened risk of climate calamities arising from rising sea levels, reduced access to clean water and food, hurricanes, heatwaves and floods, with rural people at the frontlines of these challenges. A bottom-up approach to disability inclusion is crucial to build productive pathways out of poverty and ensure that persons with disabilities are recognised as active members of society and the economy.

The private sector holds a key in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. In addition to a robust legal framework, experience shows the importance of engaging the private sector and building the confidence of companies to hire and retain workers with disabilities.

Additionally, engagement of employers' federations, including those representing small and medium-sized enterprises, as well as with trade unions, has shown to have great potential to promote the employment of persons with disabilities.

The SPARK project

The ILO and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), in collaboration with the Women's Development Corporation in Maharashtra, are implementing the Sparking Disability Inclusive Rural Transformation (SPARK) project. Through this project, persons with disabilities were put in the lead, being identified from the villages, and trained as Disability Inclusion Facilitators (DIFs). The DIFs engage with the community, persons with disabilities, caregivers of persons with disabilities, women from self-help groups and other stakeholders to raise awareness about disability inclusion and barriers to inclusion. The DIFs identify women with disabilities and mainstream them in existing self-help groups for social and economic development, where these women have been able to access funds to start an enterprise. The SPARK project has been able to bring an attitudinal shift towards persons with disabilities, right from the societal to administrative levels.

The goal of social justice cannot be achieved without the inclusion of persons with disabilities in all spheres of development, starting with rural areas and rural resilience. Evidence shows a bi-directional link to poverty, nutrition, and hunger, and as a consequence, there needs to be more inclusive opportunities and employment in rural areas. Given the historic marginalisation of persons with disabilities and the backsliding of the progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, a fundamental shift in commitment, solidarity, financing and action is critical. It is about time that the voices and needs of persons with disabilities be prioritised at the centre of the global development agenda.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to
dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

Today is the 225th death anniversary of the Italian physicist and philosopher Luigi Galvani. This is a quiz about his legacy

Vasudevan Mukunth

QUESTION 1

Galvani made a name for himself by investigating electricity in animal bodies. In 1780, he reported that when an electric current was applied to the legs of a dead frog, their muscles twitched. Name the modern field of study that investigates the role of electricity in biological development.

QUESTION 2

Based on his studies, Galvani interpreted animal electricity to be a force that imbued organic matter with life. However, X, a famous experimental physicist and Galvani's contemporary, disputed Galvani's claims and in the process created the first electrochemical battery. Name X.

QUESTION 3

Y wrote one of the first books of science

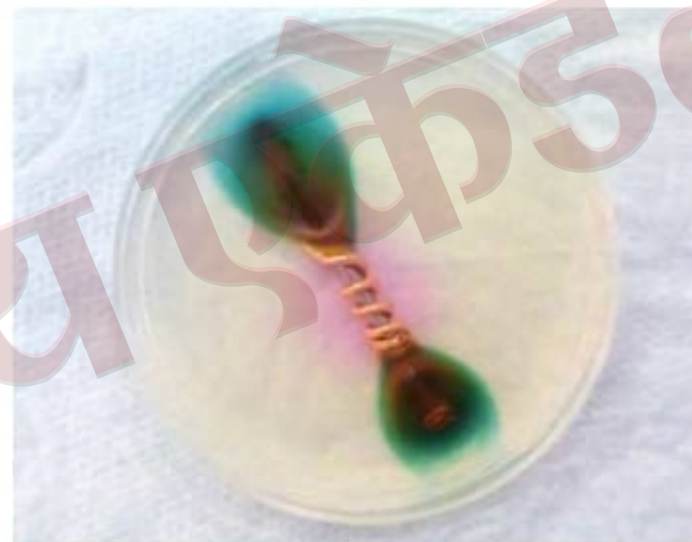
fiction in 1818. Y has said that Galvani's experiments, reports on which he published in the early 1790s, were an important inspiration for the book, whose plot bears a strong allusion to Galvani's work and whose protagonist studies animal electricity. Name Y.

QUESTION 4

In January 1803, a man named Z was found guilty of killing his wife and child. He was hung, and his body was taken to a house where Galvani's nephew, Giovanni Aldini, applied electric currents to different muscles to make them quiver and twitch. Name Z.

QUESTION 5

Galvanisation, named for Galvani, is an electrochemical process in which a coating of an element is provided to iron or steel to prevent rusting. Name the element.



Visual question:

In galvanic corrosion, given two metals plus an electrolyte, the more reactive metal will corrode preferentially. Name the monument, built in part by Gustave Eiffel, in which galvanic corrosion was found in the 1980s. WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Questions and Answers to the December 1 edition of the daily quiz: 1.

- The location of the original Madame Tussauds museum. **Ans: London**
 - In 2008, a wax model of this person was decapitated at the Madame Tussauds museum in Berlin. **Ans: Adolf Hitler**
 - The largest and smallest statue at the London Madame Tussauds museum. **Ans: The Incredible Hulk and Tinkerbell**
 - The wax figure of this singer was removed from public display. **Ans: Ye (Kanye)**
 - This Indian actor has a wax figure at the Madame Tussauds in London, Hong Kong and Bangkok. **Ans: Shah Rukh Khan**
 - Madame Tussauds is globally managed by this company. **Ans: Merlin Entertainment**
- Visual Question: Identify the modeler. **Ans: Bernard Tussaud; he is Marie Tussaud's great-great grandson**
- Early Bird:** Pranshi Siwach

Shreyas, Mukesh and Bishnoi shine as Men in Blue clinch a humdinger

With Australia needing 10 runs for victory off the final over, Arshdeep delivers by conceding only three; India wins series 4-1



Young guns: The Indian side soaks up the success after its comfortable series win over Australia. K. MURALI KUMAR

AUSTRALIA IN INDIA

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Australia's hope of leaving the sub-continental shores with a consolation win proved a mirage as India won the final T20I by six runs at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

Chasing 161, Australia needed 10 from the final over, with the marauding Matthew Wade still at the crease. But Arshdeep Singh conceded just three runs and also sent back Wade (22, 15b, 4x4) by having him caught at long-on to ensure India finished the series 4-1.

So long as Travis Head

was at the wicket (28, 18b, 5x4, 1x6), Australia cantered along. The southpaw hit Arshdeep for a hat-trick of boundaries – through extra-cover, down the ground and wide of long-leg – muscled Avesh Khan over mid-wicket and cut him through cover.

Ravi Bishnoi was summoned to stop the bleeding, but Head welcomed him with a slog-swept maximum over mid-wicket. But off the very next ball, the leggie bamboozled Head with a slider that disturbed the off-stump. Not long after, Bishnoi had Aaron Hardie caught at long-on.

The run flow was down to a trickle and Australia didn't breach the ropes for three full overs (eight to 10). But Ben McDermott, who had started with a two

mighty sixes off Mukesh Kumar and Avesh, assumed the mantle by sending Bishnoi soaring over long-on, carving Arshdeep over deep-point and then smashing the left-armer straight down to bring up his fifty off 34 balls.

Arshdeep, however, would have his revenge in the same over when McDermott couldn't clear Rinku Singh at long-off.

With 45 needed from 30 balls, Avesh bowled a tight eight-run over before Mukesh conceded just five and removed Matthew Short and Ben Dwarshuis off consecutive deliveries to reduce Australia to 129 for seven from 17 overs.

With 32 needed from 18 balls, Wade hit Avesh for a hat-trick of boundaries to keep Australia within

touching distance, only for Mukesh (19th over, seven runs) and Arshdeep to thwart his best-laid plans.

Earlier, after being asked to bat first, India struggled to stroke freely on a pitch that was double-paced and had some turn. Yashasvi Jaiswal, as he has done all series, punted on his belligerent hitting and clubbed Aaron Hardie and Jason Behrendorff for a couple of sixes.

But Jaiswal's dismissal in the fourth over – caught by a running Nathan Ellis from square-leg off Behrendorff – triggered a mini collapse. From 33 for no loss, India slumped to 55 for four, with Ruturaj Gaikwad, Suryakumar Yadav and Rinku all back in the hut.

Australia's fielding was tight and its catching excel-

lent. With the outfield also sluggish, the least obstructive and frictionless path towards scoring big was to deal in sixes or via boundaries behind square.

Shreyas Iyer (53, 37b, 5x4, 2x6) did exactly that, creaming Dwarshuis over long-off, nicking behind the wicket-keeper to collect a couple of fours and using the pace of the ball to ease Dwarshuis past point for his best shot of the evening.

Along with Shreyas' half-century, neat cameos from Jitesh Sharma (24, 16b, 3x4, 1x6) and Axar Patel (31, 21b, 2x4, 1x6), propped India up, with the fifth- and sixth-wicket partnerships fetching 42 and 46 runs respectively. Two hours on, these efforts acquired a match-winning halo.

SCOREBOARD

INDIA

Yashasvi Jaiswal c Ellis b Behrendorff 21 (15b, 1x4, 2x6), Ruturaj Gaikwad c Behrendorff b Dwarshuis 10 (12b, 2x4), Shreyas Iyer b Ellis 53 (37b, 5x4, 2x6), Suryakumar Yadav c McDermott b Dwarshuis 5 (7b), Rinku Singh c David b Sangha 6 (8b, 1x4), Jitesh Sharma c Short b Hardie 24 (16b, 3x4, 1x6), Axar Patel c Hardie b Behrendorff 31 (21b, 2x4, 1x6), Ravi Bishnoi run out 2 (2b), Arshdeep Singh (not out) 2 (2b); Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-3): 6; Total (for eight wks. in 20 overs): 160.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-33 (Jaiswal, 3.6 overs), 2-33 (Ruturaj, 4.3), 3-46 (Suryakumar, 6.5), 4-55 (Rinku, 9.1), 5-97 (Jitesh, 13.1), 6-143 (Axar, 18.4), 7-156 (Shreyas, 19.3), 8-160 (Bishnoi, 19.6).

AUSTRALIA BOWLING

Hardie 4-0-21-1, Behrendorff 4-0-38-2, Dwarshuis 4-0-30-2, Ellis 4-0-42-1, Sangha 4-0-26-1.

AUSTRALIA

Travis Head b Bishnoi 28 (18b, 5x4, 1x6), Josh Philippe b Mukesh 4 (4b, 1x4), Ben McDermott c Rinku b Arshdeep 54 (36b, 5x6), Aaron Hardie c Shreyas b Bishnoi 6 (10b, 1x4), Tim David c Avesh b Axar 17 (17b, 1x6), Matthew Short c Ruturaj b Mukesh 16 (11b, 2x4), Matthew Wade c Shreyas b Arshdeep 22 (15b, 4x4), Ben Dwarshuis b Mukesh 0 (1b), Nathan Ellis (not out) 4 (6b), Jason Behrendorff (not out) 2 (2b); Extras (w-1): 1; Total (for eight wks. in 20 overs): 154.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-22 (Philippe, 2.3), 2-47 (Head, 4.5), 3-55 (Hardie, 6.6), 4-102 (David, 13.2), 5-116 (McDermott, 14.6), 6-129 (Short, 16.3), 7-129 (Dwarshuis, 16.4), 8-151 (Wade, 19.3).

INDIA BOWLING

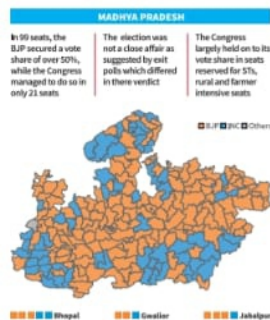
Arshdeep 4-0-40-2, Avesh 4-0-39-0, Mukesh 4-0-32-3, Bishnoi 4-0-29-2, Axar 4-0-14-1.

PoM: Axar; **PoS:** Bishnoi.

It's 3-1 in favour of BJP

The Bharatiya Janata Party recorded a resounding win in all the three Hindi heartland States, while the Congress recorded a comfortable victory in Telangana by defeating the Bharat Rashtra Samithi. The BJP's victories were backed by its all-round show across most regions of Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh, with a strong urban performance helping it seal a decisive win. Despite the loss in three States, the Congress largely managed to keep its vote share intact as the BJP had gained mostly at the expense of others.

Jasmin Nihalani, Rebecca Rose Varghese, Sonikka Loganathan and Vignesh Radhakrishnan



The BJP recorded an emphatic victory in Madhya Pradesh by putting up an all-round show with its vote share increasing across all the regions. The BJP's relative weakness in the rural seats and its candidacies where more than 75% workers were involved in agriculture, was not capitalised on by the Congress despite its strong performance in such seats. Fielding sitting MLAs worked for the BJP. The Congress managed to increase its vote % in Bundelkhand, while the Malwa North region punished it the most. However its overall vote share decreased only by 0.5 percentage points (pp).

Wins/leads and vote share

The BJP secured a vote share of 48.6%, its highest-ever in the State, leading to a massive win

	Win/lead	Vote %		
	2023	+/-	2023	+/- pp
BJP	163	+54	48.6%	+7.5
INC	66	+48	40.4%	-6.5
Others	1	-6	11.0%	-7.0

Gains & holds

Of the 163 seats won/led by the BJP, it gained 70 from the Congress and held on to 89

	BJP	INC	Others	Total
BJP	89	70	4	163
INC	20	43	3	66
Others	0	1	0	1

Vote share in reserved seats

The BJP's vote share was lowest in the seats reserved for ST, while Congress's was the highest. But BJP's share improved across all seats

	Gen		SC		ST	
	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp
BJP	48.8%	+7.3	51.2%	+8.1	46.8%	+7.1
INC	38.6%	-0.2	40.2%	-2.3	42.8%	-0.1

Seats won/led across various vote margins

The polls did not turn out to be a close fight as only 41 out of 220 seats were won/led with a vote margin of less than 2.5 percentage points.

	<1.5 pp		1.5-5 pp		5-10 pp		10-20 pp		>20 pp	
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	18	-2	12	-5	38	+7	61	+32	34	+22
INC	78	+6	9	-5	13	-18	15	-18	4	-13

Seats across various vote share ranges

The BJP recorded a resounding victory by securing more than 50% votes in 10 seats. It contested in nine of the seats it secured <20% vote shares.

	<10%		10-20%		20-35%		35-50%		>50%	
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	0	-2	11	+45	120	+30	99	+67		
INC	5	-4	53	+16	151	+118	21	-17		

Vote shares secured across farmer-intensive seats

The BJP's vote share was lowest in the seats where >75% workers are involved in agriculture, while Congress's was the highest.

Agriworker share	BJP		INC	
	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp
<50%	53.7%	+7.2	39.9%	-2.5
50-75%	49.1%	+7.5	39.4%	+6.5
>75%	46.8%	+7.7	41.7%	-6.3

Strike rate of incumbent MLAs

Over 77% of the sitting BJP MLAs who contested again in 2023 won. Whereas the strike rate for Congress's sitting MLAs was just about 37%.

	Incumbent	Non-incumbent
BJP	77.3%	67.7%
INC	33.3%	24.8%

Vote share pattern across regions

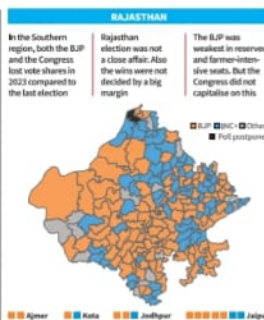
BJP increased its vote share by about 18% points (pp) in Bundelkhand and Chhambal, while its best performance came in Madhya Bharat

	BJP		INC	
	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp
Bundelkhand	48.2%	+8.8	37.9%	+3.3
Chhambal	44.3%	+9.7	42.1%	-1.1
Madhya Bharat	53.9%	+7.7	40.8%	-2.8
Mahakoshal	47.1%	+7.0	42.8%	+0.7
Malwa North	52.1%	+5.4	38.8%	-4.2
Malwa Tribal-Nimar	46.0%	+6.8	45.2%	+0.9
Vindhya	45.4%	+7.4	35.0%	+2.2

Vote share pattern in rural-urban seats

The BJP's vote share was highest in the urban seats and lowest in rural areas. The Congress's vote share was highest in rural seats.

	Urban	Semi-urban	Semi-rural	Rural	
2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	56.0% +7.2	46.4% +5.9	48.6% +9.0	47.5% +7.5	
INC	41.1% -2.8	38.1% -1.8	39.9% -2.8	41.3% +1.4	



The BJP's victory in Rajasthan was backed by another strong performance in the urban seats where its vote share increased by 1.5 percentage points (pp) to over 50%. Except in the South, the BJP's vote share increased in all other regions of the State. The strike rate of the BJP's incumbent MLAs was higher than that of other candidates. The Congress performed poorly in both the seats reserved for ST and in farmer-intensive candidacies. Fielding incumbents did not work for the Congress. However, Congress managed to retain its overall vote share.

Wins/leads and vote share

The BJP crossed the halfway mark comfortably. The Congress retained its vote share but lost 31

	Win/lead	2023	+/-	2023	+/- pp
BJP	115	+42	41.7%	+2.9	
INC	70	-31	39.7%	+0.2	
Others	14	-12	18.6%	-3.0	

Gains & holds

Of the 115 seats won/led by the BJP, it gained 56 from Congress+ and held on to 44 seats

	BJP	INC+	OTH.	Total
BJP	44	56	15	115
INC+	25	36	9	70
OTH.	4	0	2	14

Vote share in reserved seats

Both the Congress and the BJP lost vote share in the seats reserved for ST, with the Congress performing recorded in those seats.

	Gen		SC		ST	
	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp
BJP	41.8%	+3.2	43.9%	+4.0	36.5%	+0.2
INC	46.1%	+0.5	41.2%	+0.2	35.4%	-4.3

Seats won/led across various vote margins

It was neither a close contest, nor a big win. Most seats were won/led with a margin of 5-20 percentage points (pp).

	<1.5 pp	1.5-5 pp	5-10 pp	10-20 pp	>20 pp					
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	18	0	18	+6	38	+13	37	+15	11	+7
INC	12	-1	12	+3	18	-15	23	-10	5	-6

Seats across various vote share ranges

In more than 129 seats the Congress secured a vote share of 35-50%, but couldn't convert them into wins/leads

	<10%	10-20%	20-35%	35-50%	>50%			
2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	
BJP	0	+2	35	+26	108	-3	48	+28
INC	0	-8	41	+12	123	+18	27	-13

Vote shares secured across farmer-intensive seats

Both the Congress and the BJP's weakest performance was recorded in the seats where >75% workers were involved in agriculture

Agri-worker share	BJP		INC	
	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp
<50%	44.4%	+2.5	41.3%	+1.2
50-75%	41.2%	+3.8	40.2%	+1.3
>75%	39.8%	+1.0	35.7%	-5.5

Strike rate of incumbent MLAs

Over 62% of the sitting BJP MLAs who contested again in 2023 won. Whereas the strike rate for Congress's sitting MLAs was just about 32%.

	Incumbent	Non-incumbent
BJP	62.7%	55.7%
INC	31.7%	37.8%

Vote share pattern across regions

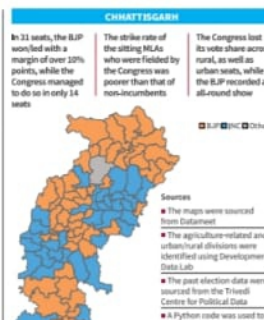
The BJP's strongest performance came in Hoshi region where the Congress lost the most vote share.

	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
Central	45.7%	+5.0	41.6%	-0.1		
Hoshi	46.8%	+0.3	42.4%	-3.7		
Matiyaj	39.9%	+7.1	41.9%	+2.5		
North	39.2%	+2.0	39.9%	+0.7		
South	40.2%	-2.2	34.9%	-2.3		
West	41.2%	+3.2	39.6%	+1.7		

Vote share pattern in rural-urban seats

The BJP's vote share was highest in the urban seats and lowest in rural areas. The Congress did not capitalise on BJP's rural weakness

	Urban	Semi-urban	Semi-rural	Rural				
	2023 +*	2023 +*	2023 +*	2023 +*				
BJP	52.2%	7.5	41.2%	2.0	41.7%	3.8	46.1%	1.0
INC	41.8%	-2.3	42.6%	4.4	37.8%	-13.8	39.7%	1.0



The BJP's comfortable victory in Chhattisgarh was backed by a strong show across all types of seats and regions. The BJP managed to increase its vote share by over 10 percentage points (pp) in rural as well as urban seats. The Congress's plan to field sitting MLAs did not work for them with non-incumbents having a better strike rate. The Congress recorded considerable declines in farmer intensive, rural and in seats reserved for ST its vote share also declined by over 11 percentage points in urban areas. Whereas the BJP increased its vote share in seats reserved for ST and in farmer-intensive seats as well.

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Vote share		2023		2013	
Party	Seats	Seats	%	Seats	%
BJP	54	+39	46.2%	+13.1	
INC	25	-33	42.2%	-8.8	
Others	1	-6	11.5%	-12.2	

Gains & holds

Of the 54 seats won/lost by the BJP, it gained 43 from Congress and held on to 11 seats

	Gen	SC	ST	Total
BJP	8	43	3	54
INC	7	24	4	35
Others	0	1	0	1

Vote share in reserved seats

The BJP gained over 20% points vote share in SC and ST seats too,

	Gen		SC		ST	
	2023	+* pp	2023	+* pp	2023	+* pp
BJP	68.7%	+14.8	42.0%	+12.8*	83.3%	+11.3
INC	41.6%	+6.2	45.3%	+0.8	41.7%	-3.4

Seats won/led across various vote margins

It was a decisive victory with a win/lead margin of over 10% points (pp) in 45 out of 90 seats

	<10 pp		10-20 pp		20-35 pp		35-50 pp		>50 pp	
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	0	+1	5	+3	14	+9	20	+15	11	+1
INC	6	+5	5	-2	10	-2	11	-18	3	-1

Seats across various vote share ranges

In 29 seats the BJP secured a vote share of over 50%, with the Congress managing to do so in only 14 seats.

	<25%		26-31%		31-50%		>50%	
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	8	-3	11	+6	50	+17	29	+27
Cong	1	-4	17	+1	58	+19	14	-16

Vote shares secured across farmer-intensive seats

The BJP's vote share increased the most in the seats where >75% workers were involved in agriculture, with Congress's share declining

Strike rate of incumbent MLAs

Only around 15% of the sitting Congress MLAs who contested again in 2023 won, lower than the strike rate of non-incumbents.

	Incumbent	Non-incumbent
BJP	34.0%	43.2%

Vote share pattern across regions

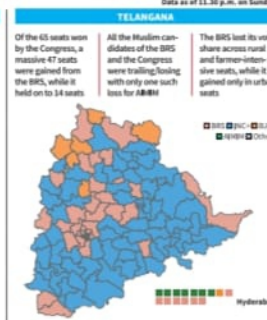
The BJP's vote share increased by over 10% points (pp) in both the northern and southern regions of Telangana.

	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
North	46.2%	+13.0	40.0%	-4.3		
Central	46.9%	+13.6	44.4%	+6.7		
South	43.7%	+9.5	40.1%	-6.1		

Vote share pattern in rural-urban seats

The BJP's vote share was highest in the urban seats and lowest in rural areas. The Congress's vote share declined the most in urban areas.

	Urban	Semi-urban	Semi-rural	Rural				
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
BJP	57.0%	+12	50.4%	+24.5	44.4%	+13.8	44.2%	+12
INC	35.3%	-11.1	41.0%	+6	45.4%	-47.7	41.7%	-42.5



The Congress's win in Telangana was backed by a strong performance in rural and semi-rural seats where its vote share increased by over 10 percentage points (pp). Despite BRS's better performance in the urban seats, its poor show in the rural areas led to its defeat. The BJP too, made inroads in the State by increasing its vote share by over 7 percentage points (pp) in seats tallying increasing to eight from just one in 2018. The ABPM continued to dominate in the capital city.

Wins/leads and vote share

The Congress alliance recorded a resounding victory by increasing its vote share by about

	Win/lead	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
INC	45	48	29.7%	103	
BRS	39	+48	37.4%	-0.5	
Others	7	0	2.3%	-0.6	
ABPM	0	7	14.2%	7.2	
Others	0	-4	6.6%	-6.0	

its seat tally to 45 at the expense of the BRS.

Inc.	6	7	34.2%	7.2
Opp.	0	-4	6.6%	-6.6

Gains & holds

Of the 65 seats won/led by the Congress*, it gained 47 from BRS and

	INC	BRS	ABPM	Others	Others	Total
INC	14	47			4	65
BRS	5	34				39
ABPM			7			7
Others		7		1		8
Others						0

The Congress improved its vote share by over 10% points (pp) in seats reserved for SC and ST, while BRS lost vote share in both areas

	Gen		SC		ST	
	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp	2023	+/- pp
INC	36.8%	+9.4	40.9%	+17.6	48.3%	+12.1
BRS	17.2%	-9.8	10.0%	-10.7	16.2%	-5.4
ABPM	2.9%	-0.8	0	0.0	0	0.0
Others	16.8%	+0.3	6.5%	+3.9	7.6%	+0.4

Seats won/led across various vote margins

It was a decisive victory with a win/lead margin of over 10% points (giving a majority of the seats)

	<10 %		10-20 %		20-35 %		35-50 %		>50 %	
	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
INC	3	-3	8	+4	11	-7	19	+15	24	+1
BJP	0	-2	0	-6	10	-2	17	-13	7	-7

Vote shares secured across farmer-intensive seats

The Congress's best performance came in the seats where >75% workers were involved in agriculture. The change is in % points (pp).

	Agri-worker share	2023	+/-	2023	+/-	2023	+/-
<50%	31.8%	0.0	36.8%	-0.0	+1.3	20.1%	18.4
50-75%	40.9%	10.3	37.8%	-10.0	0	13.8%	4.3
>75%	49.4%	13.0	27.7%	-0.2	0	6.8%	3.2

50-75%	40.9%	10.2	37.9%	-10.9	0	0.0	13.9%	4.3
+75%	49.4%	13.0	37.7%	-6.2	0	0.0	6.4%	3.3

Muslim candidates

AB Muslim candidates of BRS and Congress lost. One Muslim candidate

	Strike rate	
	Muslim candidates	Win%
BRS	3	0%
Cong	6	0%

Why is Facebook-parent Meta suing the U.S. Federal Trade Commission?

What are the allegations levelled against the FTC by the social media company? What does this mean for children's privacy rights across Meta's apps? How will this affect regulators trying to reign in Big Tech companies?

Sahana Venugopal

The story so far:

Usually competition regulators investigate trade practices, sue corporations, and levy penalties on them. The U.S. Federal Trade Commission (FTC) probes antitrust practices and files lawsuits against tech companies it sees as violating consumer laws. But in a shock move, Facebook-parent Meta in late November sued the FTC, claiming the regulator was making an "obvious power grab" and that its action caused the social media giant "immediate and irreparable" harm.

What is the case about?

Meta, the parent of Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp, and Threads, sued the U.S. FTC on November 29 in an effort to stop it from reopening a past privacy settlement where the social media company was ordered to pay \$5 billion to settle charges for violating an older FTC order. The privacy settlement, which was made in 2019, enforced broad privacy restrictions on Meta. The \$5 billion penalty against Facebook was first announced in 2019 but is referred to as the 2020 privacy settlement. The FTC described it as "the largest ever imposed on any company for violating consumers' privacy."

What are the new changes the FTC wants Meta to make?

The FTC, in May, proposed changes to the

three-year-old agreement, noting that Meta had not fully complied with the previous terms. The FTC alleged that Meta misled parents about the Messenger Kids app and misrepresented how some app developers could access private user data. As part of the latest changes proposed by the FTC, Meta would be barred from profiting off the data it collected from children (users below 18) as well as the data from its virtual reality products. Meta would also be restricted in its use of facial recognition technology, its launch of new products and features, and would have to provide even more user protections, as per the regulator.

Meta spokesperson Andy Stone shared a statement on May 3 on X (formerly Twitter), in which he called the FTC's action a "political stunt" and claimed the regulator did not allow Meta to discuss the agreement. "Let's be clear about what the FTC is trying to do: usurp the authority of Congress to set industry-wide standards and instead single out one American company while allowing Chinese companies, like TikTok, to operate without constraint on American soil," said part of Stone's statement, as he promised Meta would "vigorously fight" the action.

In its November complaint against the FTC, Meta stressed that stopping the collection of children's data would hurt its development. "By way of example, the Proposed Order purports to limit Meta's collection and use of the data of so-called

"Youth Users," which would severely curtail the Company's ability to market new products and services to a key demographic of its users," noted Meta in its complaint.

Could the FTC's proposed changes hurt Meta?

In its third quarter report this year, Meta recorded revenue of \$34.15 billion, which was an increase of 23% year-over-year. However, the company observed that rising legal and regulatory challenges across the European Union and the U.S. might affect its future financial results. In its report, Meta called out the FTC in specific. "Of note, the Federal Trade Commission is seeking to substantially modify our existing consent order and impose additional restrictions on our ability to operate. We are contesting this matter, but if we are unsuccessful it would have an adverse impact on our business," said the company on October 25. The FTC is yet to publicly respond to Meta's latest complaint or issue a formal statement.

Why does Meta claim the FTC does not have authority over the issue?

Meta claimed that the FTC's proposed changes to the 2020 agreement violate due process and that the regulator itself plays an "unconstitutional dual role." The company also believes that the FTC's conditions would affect its ability to launch new products and services (without third-party approval), and would

intrude on Meta's private rights.

The company said it wanted to "challenge the structurally unconstitutional authority exercised by the FTC through its Commissioners." However, Meta highlighted that it was not looking to legally debate the FTC's findings about its actions and instead wanted to focus on the constitutionality of the regulator's structural characteristics. In particular, Meta pointed at the FTC's "dual role as prosecutor and judge" and said that the social media company had a right to a jury trial.

Has any other tech firm ever sued the FTC before?

While other companies have accused the FTC of overstepping its boundaries, Meta's act of suing the FTC is an aggressive move that came after a federal judge allowed the FTC's proceeding to take place.

If Meta is successful, even in part, this could set a precedent for other companies singled out by the regulator to question the FTC's ability to carry out unbiased proceedings and instead push for their case to be handled by jury trials. In turn, such a shift could obstruct not only the FTC, but also regulators such as the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and prevent them from carrying out swift enforcement actions against Big Tech companies in the future.

ONCE SPREAD OVER 100 ACRES, WATER BODY NOW A SHADOW OF ITS BRIMMING PAST

An emperor's dream come to life, a 13th-century reservoir hopes to restore lost glory

VIDHEESHAKUNTAMALLA
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 3

HOMETO a myriad dynasties one after the other, Delhi is a repository of the indelible legacy left by each of them in the form of various architectural marvels. One such legacy is the Hauz-i-Shamsi, a project which was Sultan Iltutmish's "dream come true".

Situated in Mehrauli near the Jahaz Mahal, Hauz-i-Shamsi, also known as the Shamsi Talab, is a water reservoir built between 1211-1236 AD.

Once spread over 100

hectares, this water body has shrunk into a patch of filthy water over the years. However, in recent years, some efforts have been made to restore and conserve it with the ASI taking up the task of repairing and maintaining the monuments near the tank. On Friday, the ministry of Jal Shakti organised a 'Jal Itihas Utsav' here to raise public consciousness about safeguarding water heritage sites.

According to a PIB statement, dated November 30, "The restoration work of the Shamsi Talab...adequately reflects convergence of various Departments of Central



and State government."

Elaborating on the Iltutmish connect, author Rana Safvi, in her book *Where Stones Speak:*

Historical Trails in Mehrauli, the First City of Delhi, wrote: "According to legend, Sultan Iltutmish wanted to build a tank



Hauz-i-Shamsi in earlier days; (L) in 2023. 14 *Historic Walks of Delhi*/Swapna Liddle

for his people...One night it was the Prophet Mohammad, who came in his dreams on his horse and instructed him to dig for wa-

ter and build a water reservoir in the place marked by the hoof of his winged horse, named Buraq. The sultan...went to look for the place and found the mark of the hoof with water flowing from it and built the reservoir around it."

Safvi further wrote: "Sultan Firoz (Shah) Tughlaq got it repaired and it was refilled with water...Even today there is water in it—although extremely dirty—and weeds choke the tank."

The reservoir also finds mentions in the works of famed traveller Ibn Batuta who had described the Hauz-i-Shamsi as a rectangular-shaped reservoir that

was spread across an area of one mile by two miles.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* on the current state of the reservoir, writer Sohail Hashmi said, "In the middle of a depression in the Shamsi Talab was a rock...Today, this rock is not in the middle of the lake anymore but

stands at the corner. This suggests that more than 50% of the lake had been encroached upon..."

Author Swapna Liddle, in her

book *14 Historic Walks of Delhi*, wrote: "The reservoir was an ambitious enterprise, occupying a large area and fed by underground springs as well as streams. The

pavilion you see across the tank from the Jahaz Mahal once stood in the middle of the water...The tank had a tendency of silting up and

required repeated excavation—first by Alauddin Khalji and then by Firoz Shah Tughlaq."



WHAT IS IT?

Methane: More potent, less persistent

Methane is an organic compound. Its molecule consists of carbon and four hydrogen atoms (CH_4). It's in the news of late because of its character as a potent climate pollutant. While climate talks have by and large focused on carbon and carbon dioxide emissions, there is increasing acknowledgement among the world's leaders as well as philanthropists of methane's effects on global warming. At the ongoing COP-28 climate talks in the United Arab Emirates, for example, a group of well-endowed philanthropic bodies, including the Sequoia Climate Foundation and the Bezos Earth Fund, announced that they would collectively invest \$450 million in solutions to tackle methane emissions.

Methane has a greater global warming potential (GWP) than carbon dioxide. The GWP is a measure of the warming caused by a substance relative to that due to the same mass of carbon dioxide; the GWP100 measures this over a century at a time. If carbon dioxide has a GWP100 of 1, methane is 28, nitrous oxide is 265, and sulphur hexafluoride is 23,500. However, while carbon dioxide lasts for several decades at a time in the atmosphere before breaking down, methane breaks down in a matter of years. That is, it's a short-lived climate pollutant. Its sources include cattle-farming, landfills,



Dairy cows eating silage on a farm. GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

wastewater treatment facilities, rice cultivation, and some industrial processes.

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Coal phase-out in COP28 pledge, India refrains from endorsing it



EXPRESS AT COP28

AMITABH SINHA
DUBAI, DECEMBER 3

A REFERENCE to coal phase-out and suggestion to end fresh investments in coal prevented India from endorsing a renewable energy pledge at the COP28 climate meeting, and a mention of health sector emissions is expected to keep it away from a declaration on health as well.

The pledge was mainly about tripling global renewable energy installed capacity by 2030, something that India had already

backed as part of the G20 grouping. But the pledge, taken by more than 100 countries Saturday, included references to coal phase-out and an end to fresh investments in that sector, something that India could not sign on to.

India has repeatedly made it clear that it would continue to use coal for electricity generation in the near future even as it ramps up the capacity of renewable energy sources. Just ahead of the COP28 meeting, Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra had reiterated the same line in a press conference in New Delhi, saying India's economic and developmental imperatives did not allow for a sudden abandonment of coal, as is often demanded.

The pledge was not part of the COP discussions. It was a part of an initiative by the host country, not unusual at the COPs, to forge alliances of countries on some specific subjects in order to

create a momentum for greater climate actions. These pledges or alliances have no legal sanctity and many of them fizzle out after some time. India has rarely been part of such platforms.

It is unlikely to endorse a health declaration as well because of similar reasons. For the first time, COP had a dedicated health day Sunday. More than 120 countries were listed as having given their endorsement to a declaration that expressed the grave impact of climate change on human health and well being, and emphasised on urgent climate action to reduce such impacts.

However, the text also was references to curbing of emissions from the health sector, and assessment of greenhouse gas emissions of health systems. India has reiterated its position it does not want to align itself with

these kind of sectoral approaches outside the UNFCCC framework.

Such pledges and declarations are not negotiated documents and do not contain the nuance language that comes out of negotiations. India has generally kept away from becoming a part of such initiatives, particularly those that contain issues it is sensitive to, because they could prejudice its positions at the climate change negotiations.

Discussions on tripling of renewable energy are expected to be taken up within the COP process as well. It is one of the keenly awaited outcomes from COP28 meeting. Estimates from International Energy Agency suggest that a tripling of global renewable energy capacities by 2030 could avoid about one billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent of emissions every year on an average till 2030.

RBI's MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE

Why is MPC likely to leave the repo rate unchanged?

HITESH VYAS
MUMBAI, DECEMBER 3

THE MONETARY Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank may keep the repo rate — its key lending rate — unchanged at 6.5 per cent in its upcoming monetary policy review scheduled from December 6-8, on rising inflationary risks stemming from the recent spike in vegetable prices.

The central bank is also expected to retain the stance of the monetary policy as 'withdrawal of accommodation'. With better-than-expected second-quarter gross domestic product (GDP) print at 7.6 per cent, the RBI may revise upwards its FY '24 growth estimate.

Why will RBI keep the repo rate unchanged?

Economists said that the six-member rate-setting panel of the RBI is unlikely to tinker with the repo rate — the rate at which RBI lends money to banks to meet their short-term funding needs — in the upcoming policy. "There will be no change (in the RBI policy). The reason is that the inflation will start inching up because food inflation is



This will be the fifth monetary policy on the trot when the MPC is likely to leave the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. File

going to increase. We have seen onion and tomato prices going up again. So, there is no case for even thinking of lowering the repo rate. At the same time, core inflation is around 4 per cent, and therefore, there is no reason for the RBI to increase the rate," said Madan Sabnavis chief economist, Bank of Baroda.

Consumer price-based inflation (CPI) eased to 4.87 per cent in October from 5.02 per cent in September. The retail inflation, however, continues to remain

above the 4 per cent target of the RBI. Last month, RBI Governor Shaktikanata Das said that though headline inflation has moderated, it remains vulnerable to recurring and overlapping food price shocks coming from global factors and adverse weather events.

In such a scenario, the monetary policy needs to remain watchful and actively disinflationary while supporting growth.

"We are completely focused

on the 4 per cent target. We maintain Arjuna's eye on the inflation target (of 4 percent)," he had said at a banking event.

According to Kaushik Das, chief economist, India & South Asia, Deutsche Bank, with the strong July-September 2023 GDP print and upside risks to near-term inflation prints due to food price volatility, RBI is likely to remain hawkish in the upcoming monetary policy.

"RBI will likely keep repo rate and stance unchanged, persist with tight liquidity and ensure that short-term rates remain around 6.85-6.90 per cent, resulting in an 'effective rate hike'," Das said.

This will be the fifth monetary policy on the trot when the MPC is likely to leave the repo rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent. Last time, the repo rate was raised from 6.25 per cent to 6.5 per cent in February 2023. Between May 2022 and February 2023, the policy rate was raised by 250 basis points (bps). One basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point.

Will the RBI change the policy stance?

The stance of the monetary

policy may be retained as the 'withdrawal of accommodation', analysts said.

"In the last policy, the RBI stated that the transmission of (250 bps hike in) the repo rate has not happened. If you look at the weighted average lending rates and deposit rates of banks, there is still a 50 bps in the lending rates. Therefore, the stance will continue to be 'withdrawal of accommodation'," Sabnavis said.

In response to the cumulative 250 bps hike in policy rate since May 2022, banks have revised their repo-linked external benchmark-based lending rates (EBLRs) upward by the same magnitude.

The one-year median marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) increased by 152 bps during May 2022 to October 2023.

The weighted average lending rates (WALRs) on fresh and outstanding loans of banks increased by 187 bps and 111 bps, respectively, during May 2022 – September 2023. On the deposit side, the weighted average domestic term deposit rates (WADTDRs) on fresh and outstanding rupee deposits increased by 229 bps and 166 bps,

respectively.

Will the GDP and inflation projections be revised?

With the Q2FY'24 GDP growth overshooting its estimate of 6.5 per cent, the RBI may revise its FY2024 growth forecast marginally. The real GDP growth for FY'24 is projected at 6.5 per cent. The RBI may not revise the headline inflation forecast, which has been kept at 5.4 per cent for the current fiscal.

"RBI will likely increase FY'24 GDP forecast to 6.8 per cent y-o-y, from 6.5 per cent y-o-y earlier, while holding the FY'24 CPI forecast unchanged at 5.4 per cent (as food inflation will come off sharply in January-March 2024, after picking up in October-December 2023)," Deutsche Bank's Das said.

What will happen to lending rates in case of a pause by RBI?

As the RBI is expected to keep the policy rate unchanged at 6.5 per cent, all external benchmark lending rates that are linked to the repo rate will not rise. It will provide some relief to borrowers as their equated monthly instalments (EMIs) will not increase.



DECEMBER 4, 1983, FORTY YEARS AGO

AKALI DAL (L) ARRESTS

SIKH POLICEMEN IN plainclothes entered the Sisganj gurdwara to arrest supporters of the Akali Dal (L) chief Sant Longowal who had earlier clashed with workers of the Tara Singh faction of the Akali Dal. The Akali Dal (L) supporters resisted with sticks and swords, stones and bottles but the police fired 65 rounds of tear-gas shells to end the resistance.

BANGLADESH VIOLENCE

SECURITY FORCES HAVE winded up 37 political leaders in Chittagong following violent anti-government demonstrations in the

south-eastern port city earlier this week. According to the unofficial figures, five people have been killed and more than 400 injured in the violence that saw security forces fire on crowds in both Dhaka and Chittagong. A police spokesman said, "About 40 people were held for curfew violations," in Dhaka.

EC'S CONDUCT CHANGES

THE ELECTION COMMISSION will make changes to include in its model code of conduct a ban on financial grants, use of official aircraft and entry of ministers in the polling stations or counting halls except as candidates, voters or agents. This was announced by the

Chief Election Commissioner R K Trivedi. There was, however, no agreement on the punishment to the candidate found guilty of breach of the model code of conduct.

RIVAL FACTIONS

FEARING OBSTRUCTIONS AND sabotage by the warring factions in West Bengal, the Congress (I) high command is considering taking direct control of the reception committee and the two dozen sub-panels formed to conduct the plenary session of the party in Calcutta this month-end. A final decision to end the present stalemate will be taken after a special meeting of the steering committee.

GRANDMASTER

After Pragg, sister: the highest title that a chess player can attain — once earned, it's held for life

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 3

VAISHALI RAMESHBABU became a Grandmaster by crossing 2,500 International Chess Federation (FIDE) ranking points at the IV El Llobregat Open in Spain on Friday. With this achievement, Vaishali and her younger brother, Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa, became the first-ever Grandmaster brother-sister duo in history.

A Grandmaster

The Grandmaster title and other chess titles are awarded by FIDE (acronym for its French name *Fédération Internationale des Échecs*), the Switzerland-based governing body of the international game.

The title is the badge of the game's super elite, a recognition of the greatest chess talent on the planet, which has been tested and proven against a peer group of other similarly talented players in the world.

All such chess titles that are given by FIDE are valid for life, unless a player is stripped of the title for a proven offence like cheating.

FIDE regulations say the "use of a FIDE title or rating to subvert the ethical principles of the title or rating system may sub-

ject a person to revocation of his title".

Grandmasters since 1950

The term Grandmaster is about a century old, and was initially used as a generic expression to describe a player who was better than just a 'master'. In 1950, FIDE started formally designating the best players as Grandmasters, based on a set of laid-down criteria. Twenty-seven Grandmaster titles were awarded in the first batch in 1950, including to then world champion Mikhail Botvinnik of the erstwhile USSR.

Qualifications for Grandmaster

Currently, FIDE awards chess' highest honour to a player who can achieve a FIDE Classical or Standard rating of 2,500, plus three Grandmaster norms.

Grandmaster norms are defined by a set of complex and rigorous rules regarding tournaments, games, and players that are set out in the FIDE Title Regulations.

Broadly, a player must have a performance rating of 2,600 or higher in a FIDE tournament that has nine rounds, playing against sev-

eral opponents from federations or countries other than the one to which the player belongs, and those opponents must be titled themselves.



Vaishali Rameshbabu and Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa
FIDE

Lessons from MP, Telangana: revdi is a hit-and-miss electoral strategy

BJP won Madhya Pradesh on the back of welfare schemes for women. In Telangana, the Congress won despite not promising a return to the Old Pension Scheme, as it had done in other states earlier

PVAIDYANATHAN IYER
NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 3

IT IS never easy to call an election; with the benefit of hindsight, everyone attempts to explain the results. A complex interplay of factors influences elections — from organisational strength to poll management and strategy, from the choice of candidates to the issues that resonate with the people.

An important ability is to be able to listen to the messages underlying the words. Shivraj Singh Chouhan did it in Madhya Pradesh, and it may not be only luck that took the Congress to victory in Telangana. Shivraj read the data to get the message, and Congress defied old wisdom in Telangana.

Shivraj Singh Chouhan's politics of economics

The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister appears to have understood the message behind the data, and tied the solutions to his image. His Ladli Behna scheme, launched in March this year, just eight months ahead of the Assembly elections, resonated with voters for two reasons.

One, it is one more — and a big one — in the many schemes for the *maa aur behan* in the state.

Ladli Laxmi, Mukhyamantri Kanya Vivah and Nikah and Mukhyamantri Kanya Abhibhavak Pension were some of the earlier schemes for women.

Two, it is a freebie — but the data show that it is also a response to a problem that is unique to Madhya Pradesh. The latest annual report of the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) July 2022-June 2023, shows that in rural MP, the percentage of women "helpers in household enterprises" increased to 58.2 per cent, from 53.4 per cent in 2017-18. The all-India average for rural women "helpers in household enterprise" was just 43.1 per cent in 2022-23.

"Helpers in household enterprise" are self-employed persons who work in their household enterprise but are not paid for it. Economists tell us that this happens more at times when the economy is not doing so well, and there are fewer jobs being created by businesses.



Ladli Behna scheme is available to all women of ages 21 and older. More than Rs 6,800 cr have been disbursed to 1.2 cr women. Facebook/Shivraj Singh Chouhan

MADHYA PRADESH: DISTRIBUTION OF WORKERS (IN %)

	RURAL		URBAN	
	MP	All India	MP	All India
Own account worker, employer	15.4	27.9	30.9	27.6
Helper in household enterprise	58.2	43.1	19.2	12.8
Total self-employed	73.6	71	50.2	40.4
Regular wage/salary	3.4	8	38.1	50.8
Casual labour	23	21	11.7	8.9

Source: Annual Report PLFS July 2022 – June 2023

OWN TAX REVENUES IN FOUR STATES

	OTR	PENSION	SALARIES	INTEREST	% OF OTR
Chhattisgarh	29,000	7,603	27,842	7,222	147
Madhya Pradesh	72,860	19,360	54,101	22,166	131
Rajasthan	98,294	24,439	66,385	28,838	130
Telangana	1,08,212	11,385	27,523**	18,912	54

Pensions, salaries and interest percentage of OTR*, Assuming salary rose 4 per cent a year over last two years between 2020-21 and 2022-23**

OTR: Own Tax Revenues; All figures in Rs crore

Also, if household finances are tight, women who were not working earlier start working in the enterprises set up in the household, without being paid for their

work. In urban areas, the percentage of such women "helpers in household enterprises" remained more or less flat — in 2022-23, it was 19.2 per cent, in 2017-18, it was margin-

ally lower at 19 per cent.

The Ladli Behna scheme is now available to all women of ages 21 years and older, who receive a monthly direct benefit transfer (DBT) of Rs 1,250. The state has so far disbursed Rs 6,800 crore to more than 1.2 crore women, and Chouhan has allocated approximately Rs 13,000 crore to the scheme for the current financial year. Of course, women constitute almost 48.5 per cent of the total voters in the state, and their turnout during polling at 76 per cent was higher than the 74 per cent for men.

Congress victory in Telangana, without need for OPS carrot

For the Congress, the Telangana win tells several stories. To uproot a regional party is never easy; what helped the Congress was its ability to convey the political message better in the south of the Vindhyas than in the north.

In the north — Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh — it went with faces that have dominated the party's politics for decades. In 2018, Bhupesh Baghel had brought raw energy and fighting spirit to Chhattisgarh and won. Revanth Reddy did it for Congress in Telangana this time.

So, it is not just "revdi" — the expression coined by the Prime Minister to refer to freebies that parties offer to voters — that helps win elections. In fact, of the four big state elections this November, it's only in Telangana that the Congress did not promise a return to the Old Pension Scheme (OPS).

In Madhya Pradesh, the party promised OPS, and in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, Congress governments have already reversed the pension reform clock. A year ago, last November, many attributed the Congress victory in Himachal Pradesh to the OPS promise — even though Rahul Gandhi said he wasn't sure that was the case.

Of the four states — Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh — Telangana is the best placed in terms of government finances, shows the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) *State of State Finances* report.

Data show that in Telangana, committed expenditure — salaries, pension, and interest payment on debt — account for just 54 per cent of the state's own tax revenues. In the case of the other three states, this is well over 100 per cent, leaving less money for developmental expenditure.



ONLY SIXTH TIME SINCE 1861: WHY US CONGRESS EXPELLED A LAWMAKER

ARJUN SENGUPTA

NEW DELHI, DECEMBER 3

REPUBLICAN CONGRESSMAN George Santos was expelled from the US House of Representatives on Friday over criminal corruption charges and accusations of mispending campaign money.

The House voted 311-114 for his immediate ouster, making Santos only the sixth member in history to be expelled.

Multiple criminal allegations

Santos, 35, was elected from New York's 3rd congressional district in 2022.

Subsequently, *The New York Times* found that he lied about crucial details of his life. His claims of working at Goldman Sachs, and having descended from Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust were also found to be untrue.

Santos admitted to lying, but said he "was not a criminal". In May, the Department of Justice slapped him with 13 counts of wire fraud, money laundering, etc., and briefly took him into custody.

A superseding indictment filed in October upped the charges to 23, accusing him of inflating his campaign's fundraising numbers and charging campaign contributors' credit cards without their consent.



George Santos in Washington. AP

A trial date has been set for September 2024, unless Santos reaches a plea deal with the prosecutors first.

Damning Committee report

In November, the House attempted to expel Santos, but failed. Later, a bipartisan Ethics Committee report came out, saying he "sought to fraudulently exploit every aspect of his House candidacy for his own personal financial profit." Among other things, it mentioned spa treatments worth \$4,000, which were charged to his congressional campaign account.

With his expulsion, which received the support of 105 Republicans, the party's majority in the House has now reduced to a slim 221-213.