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# People living in camps in violence-hit Manipur will be allowed to vote from there: EC

## NEW DELHI

People living in camps in violence-hit Manipur will be allowed to vote from their camps in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission announced on Saturday.

Responding to a question on Manipur during a press conference on the announcement of dates of the Lok Sabha elections, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said "we will make all arrangements."

"We have drawn a scheme, which we have notified... To allow the voters in the camp to vote from the camp. Like there is a scheme for Jammu and Kashmir migrants... Same way the scheme will be implemented in Manipur. Voters will be allowed to vote from the respective camps... From the lower constituency to higher and higher to lower," Kumar said.

"My appeal to the voters is that let us decide through



the ballot, peacefully by participating in the elections, we will make the arrangements," he added.

Ethnic clashes between the Meitei and tribal Kuki communities in Manipur since May last year have resulted in the loss of over 200 lives.

According to officials, over 25,000 people have been rescued by the security forces while around 50,000 are living in camps following the unrest.

## Normal life hit of 48-hour shutdown in Manipur

### IMPHAL

Burning of tyres in the middle of roads, road blockades, sit-in protests, torchlight rallies, normal flight service continuance, students rushing to the exam halls, emergency services, and religious ceremonies were seen on the first day of the 48-hour

general strike on the state on Friday.

The bandh called by a coalition of 13 outfits demanding the unconditional release of three arrested persons of the United National Liberation Front, (P) by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) crippled normal life in the valley districts.

## Manipur CM distributes Rs. 113 crore to 1,650 MSE beneficiaries

### IMPHAL

Taking a huge risk to encourage and support the entrepreneurs amid the ongoing strife in the state, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh distributed Rs. 113 crore (approximately) loan sanctions to 1,650 beneficiaries.

Singh, who also holds a finance portfolio, handed over the loans to the beneficiaries under the Manipur Credit Guarantee Scheme (MCGS) for Micro and Small Enterprises at the Durbar Hall of the Chief Minister's Secretariat under the Planning Department on Thursday.

The first sanction for the scheme is Rs. 113 crore for 1,650 beneficiaries, he said while gracing the function as a chief guest.

The aim is to provide around Rs. 700 crore under the scheme to around 14,000 Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) units, the CM said observing that it is the right time to act for economic revival.

The CM, in an appeal to the bankers attending the function, sought their support in reviving the state's economy.

He also further spoke on the need to put in extra hard work to make up for all the lost time due to the unfortunate incidents within the next four to five months.

The government is also taking a huge risk to encourage and support the entrepreneurs, he said further lauding the entrepreneurs of the state for being sincere, transparent, and for maintaining quality.

### WHO SAID WHAT

**Electoral bonds were introduced to end the influence of black money in Indian politics. Everyone has to accept the decision given by the Supreme Court. I fully respect the Supreme Court decision. But I feel that instead of completely scrapping the electoral bonds, it should have been improved."**

**AMIT SHAH**  
UNION HOME MINISTER



# 7-phase Lok Sabha polls from April 19; RESULTS ON JUNE 4



## NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha polls will be held in seven phases beginning from April 19 and the counting of votes will take place on June 4 for the world's biggest election exercise in which Prime Minister Narendra Modi will bid for a third consecutive term. The other phases will be on April 26, May 7, May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar said at a press conference on Saturday.

Assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim will be held on April 19, and in Andhra Pradesh on May 13. Elections to Odisha

assembly will be held in four phases on May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1.

Bypolls will also be held for 26 assembly constituencies, Kumar said at a press conference flanked by two new Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

Polling will be held in all seven phases in three states - Bihar, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. In the first phase on April 19, voting will take place in 102 constituencies spread over 21 states/UTs, with 10 states/UTs completing the poll process in this phase.

Voting will take place in 89 constituencies across

13 states/UTs in the second phase on April 26, Kumar said, adding that the poll process would be completed in four more states/UTs.

In the third phase on May 7, voting will take place in 94 constituencies spread across 12 states/UTs. With this, polling will be completed in six more states/UTs.

In the fourth phase on May 13, 96 constituencies spread across 10 states/UTs would vote. With this, three more states/UTs would have completed voting. As many as 49 constituencies spread across eight states/UTs will vote in phase five on May 20. This phase will see voting complet-

ed in three more states/UTs.

In the sixth phase on May 25, voting will take place in 57 constituencies spread across seven states/UTs. Polling in two more states/UTs would be completed with this phase. The seventh and final phase will take place on June 1 in 57 constituencies spread across eight states/UTs. The polling process in eight states/UTs would be completed. Led by Prime Minister Modi, a buoyed BJP, which swept the November assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, will take on the opposition parties which have been trying to put up a joint front under the umbrella of the INDIA bloc, with limited success confined to some states.

The CEC said the poll authority is prepared to counter the challenges of four 'M's - muscle power, money power, misinformation and Model Code of Conduct violations.

# KRCTIMES

STAY-ENRICHED

## TRANSFORMATIVE RAIL PROJECTS

In a significant stride towards bolstering India's transportation networks and catalysing economic growth, Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone and dedicated railway projects worth over Rs 85,000 crore. The initiatives spanning across various States and Union Territories mark a monumental leap towards enhancing connectivity, promoting local craftsmanship, and fostering economic resilience. All the efforts are directed towards a commitment to harnessing the potential of rail infrastructure as a catalyst for progress. From the inauguration of the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra at Srinagar Railway Station to the launch of the Gati Shakti Terminal at Samba, the initiatives underscore the Government's unwavering dedication to modernising the region's transportation landscape. One of the standout initiatives is the 'One Station, One Product' (OSOP) programme, aimed at promoting the rich heritage of local communities while strengthening the 'Vocal for Local' and 'One District, One Product' campaigns. By establishing OSOP stalls at various railway stations, passengers will have the opportunity to experience and purchase authentic local goods, thereby providing a much-needed impetus to artisans and bolstering rural economies. Moreover, the inauguration of the Rail Coach Restaurant at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Railway Station adds a touch of hospitality to the railway experience, offering passengers a chance to indulge in culinary delights while traversing the scenic landscapes of Jammu and Kashmir. Such initiatives not only enhance the passenger experience but also contribute to the socio-economic development of the regions they serve. The launch of the Gati Shakti Terminal at Samba holds immense promise for streamlining the movement of goods and bolstering trade networks across the region. With its strategic location and state-of-the-art facilities, the terminal is poised to emerge as a pivotal hub for logistical operations, facilitating seamless transportation and accelerating economic growth. All these initiatives have a transformative impact on the region's development trajectory. From revolutionising rail infrastructure to expanding access to quality healthcare through the Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Kendra, these endeavours exemplify the Government's commitment to inclusive growth and development. Prime Minister Modi's remarks during the inauguration ceremony reflect a resolute determination to propel the region towards a brighter future. Jammu and Kashmir has received notable focus from the Prime Minister, with every project aimed at providing long-term benefits to the region's populace. Tourism serves as the backbone of the Union Territory's economy, and each initiative launched is geared towards promoting tourism and showcasing the region's products.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

No great art has ever been made without the artist having known danger.

Rainer Maria Rilke

# CHILDHOOD MEMORIES

SMARAJIT KANUNGOE

Sometimes in the early sixties, we were at a place called Nampong, the last Indian post on the way to Burma (present-day Myanmar) on Stilwell road in the then undivided Tirap District of NEFA (North East Frontier Agency), present-day Arunachal Pradesh. Our family was of four brothers and parents only. A big four-bedroom accommodation with a big and open courtyard on the back was earmarked for us, it was of tin shed with a cemented floor with walls made of cement-plaster over bamboo-made structures (mesh-like) in wooden frame. We, brothers, were too happy finding much open space on the back of it leading to a small river. These quarters were probably made for the officers of the then Allied forces (USA, UK etc). Perhaps, they could not imagine that WWII would end so dramatically following the fall of Japan and the Stilwell road so dearly built by them had to be abandoned so early without even using it for carrying troops/ war materials as planned. The courtyard on the back was a plain field of about half an acre. We found some seasonal plants of sweet potatoes already grown on their own besides a few papaya trees with fruits on that land. The river, flowing on our back, after a few turns goes leftward and crosses the Stilwell road giving rise to a steel bridge over it named Hellgate. Customs / immigration posts of the then British India, now of India, were placed there only. Movement of vehicles was almost nil except for occasional movement of Assam Rifles vehicles carrying their men, materials etc. AR was kept there for border patrolling as well as for immediate requirements of local administration in case of their need for maintaining peace etc. There was no any deployment of police or any other kind of force in the area. The British had left only some fifteen years back keeping the whole area under the "Excluded area" of Assam Province to be collectively known as the Excluded Areas of the province of Assam under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. In a sense, it was only formally administered with almost zero interference from the then-British unless it had caused harm to their interest. During our days it was a single-line administration with all powers vested with the Political Officer only, who was heading the district Administration. However, the local village elders, called Gaon Buraah, were there for helping to formulate and execute the Govt policy. After the British left everything was in fluid condition. However, gradually it was picking up with the active support of the local population and started walking for the formation of government schools, Offices, democratic institutions etc to become the present-day Arunachal Pradesh. I was fortunate enough to see the state in its formation period. CPWD, a central Govt engineering department, was there from the beginning to construct roads, village tracks, bridges, culverts, and buildings for schools, offices, hospitals etc of the state. Only a few families were there in the small township of Nampong. They were one Lady Doctor, Mrs Deshpande, Base Superintendent (Admin Officer), Mr Smith and one central Customs Officer, I do not remember now. Mrs Deshpande was our immediate

neighbour. She had two daughters of our age only, around ten. Whenever in the evening we would go to their place, they would start reading their textbooks loudly as if they were more serious students than us! I wonder how and where they are now...are they still serious with their children like those days of sixties? My elder brother was hardly three years senior to me while the youngest one was a baby of a month only.

After some days Mrs Deshpande was transferred out of the state and in her place, Dr. D L Roy was posted. He came with his family. Incidentally, in a later period sometime in 1976, I met him in Agartala only. At that time he was in WHO. He invited me to his house located just opposite the Stable Ground by the side of the road towards GBP Hospital. As a first-timer in Agartala in 1976, I was always at a loss to locate Post office Choumohini from Paradise or VM Choumohini since all the squares were very much identical for me, even the man on the road would ask you to go east or west or south. But as I was a newcomer to the place I did not know in which way the Sun had risen to locate the east or west, so always finding me at their mercy only after two or three rounds of the same square.

The township of Nampong was in the valley surrounded by hills around, a part of the big mountains of the Great Himalayan Ranges. The villages of the local indigenous people were in those hills. I visited two or three of them while going to the Assam Rifles camp on the top of the hill. My father was temporarily posted out to a new place, Miao, for the construction of Miao-Vijoy nagar road. Vijoy nagar was strategically too important for the Govt. as it was almost closer to a meeting point of three countries, namely India, China (Tibet area) and Burma (now, Myanmar). It seems now that the Centre, perhaps, had been aware of the Chinese mood ahead of 1962 and so, was putting much importance on those internal roads at that time. I heard on the other day from one of my friends over there that the road is still in its 'infant' stage, nothing progressed much in the last five and half decades. Many a day we, two brothers, went up to the hill to visit the Assam Rifles camp to send messages or to collect information about our father working at Miao as in those days there was no any other mode of communication other than AR net. They were quite friendly. Villagers from those hilly areas would often come down to our quarters with their local produce like rice, chilly, vegetables etc. They might be even from Burmese villages also since at all borders people on both sides are from the same group of people only.

I believe there was no such line or possible demarcation on the hills implying a 'zero' line in those days. The same was the case in that McMahon line also in the upper Subansiri district where I was there in 1973-75. Our men would visit the so-called 'zero' line, stay there for some time, and leave behind leftover food, match-box, butts of cigarettes, packets etc. indicating their movement in the area. Again in the next visit, they would find similar items left by the men from across the border showing their movement...this was almost a game. I am talking about some forty-five years or so back. Rice was uniquely purchased from

the villagers. In those days condensed milk in a tin-container was very popular for ready milk for tea/ coffee etc. The quantity of rice required to fill up three such milk containers with mount over it was treated to be equal to one Ser (about 66 gms less than the present one Kg.) costing three eight Annas of those days. There was a big grocery shop of one Rankam Mossang if I could correctly remember, a very tall and hefty fellow. Mostly from his family only, one Kamoli Mossang, a Master's degree holder, was the Education Minister, for some time. We would take milk and other grocery items from his shop. I would go to their shop-cum-house on a high-raised tiller daily morning with a small aluminium jug to collect fresh milk after milking the cows in my presence only. Life was so simple and encouraging. Nowadays, a boy of even class VIII is not allowed to come out of his house alone to catch the school bus on the main road, he is always escorted by his mother or father routinely as if otherwise, given a chance, he would escape from the eyes of his parents going stray. For a few months in 1964, we were at a place called 10th Miles Camp on Stilwell Road. It was almost an isolated location. Local villages located on both sides of the road started about one km away from our place towards Jagun (7th mile). These places were mostly inhabited by the ex-servicemen, Gorkhas, who did well in agriculture producing rice, wheat, vegetables, rearing cattle etc. on the plain land/ foothills. One day in the morning hours while collecting milk from them and going back home I saw someone in a cycle running from the other side shouting through a homemade 'chunga', a local device made of hardboard or tin in a conical shape to focus the sound in a more converging way. I was reading in class VII at that time so could manage to understand what he was saying in 'Nepali'. I could understand that our PM Jawaharlal Nehru had died on the previous day and it was being announced on behalf of the Mukhia. Reaching home, I told my father and others, but none wanted to take me seriously. However, immediately, they tried Radio BBC and could learn the whole story. That was the level of communication in those days. In those days, radio was too costly as well as a heavy item requiring a big dry battery of 9 volts (minimum of 6"x4"x3" size), a high antenna outside on bamboo poles etc. So any common man could not afford it. With the passage of more than five decades, days are rapidly changing beyond our imagination. We, the old-timers, many a time find ourselves too inadequate in coping with the rapid changes going on in and around our society, life-style, a new vocabulary of the time, and new dimensions in all spheres of life. Life is not as it was days before. Moving itself is life. I wonder, before I go back 'home' as the wiserman says in spiritual terms, what more changes could be seen in this ever-changing world.

(Smarajit Kanungoe, a retired IPS officer, spent his childhood days in the interiors of Arunachal Pradesh near the Indo-Burma border, where his father was in CPWD. He did his School and college level studies in upper Assam and served in Arunachal Pradesh for a few years in upper Subansiri, closer to McMahon Line of 1914. Later he shifted to his native state Tripura.)

# Assam gears up for three-phase Lok Sabha polls: Voting on April 19, 26 & May 7



GUWAHATI

The 2024 Lok Sabha elections are set to be held in seven phases, commencing on April 19 and culminating on June 1, as declared by the Election Commission of India. Results will be announced on June 4.

In the first phase on April 19, voters across 102 parliamentary constituencies

in 21 states will cast their ballots. Subsequently, the electoral process will progress through six additional phases, with the second phase on April 26 encompassing 89 constituencies in 13 states.

CEC Rajiv Kumar outlined the subsequent phases, indicating that the third phase, commencing on May 7, will witness voting across 94 parliamentary constituencies spanning 12 states. Phase four, scheduled for May 13, will cover 96 constituencies in 10 states.

Phase five, on May 20, will see elections on 49 constituencies across 8 states, while the sixth phase, on May 25, will involve voting on 57 parliamentary constituencies across 7 states.

Finally, the seventh phase, on June

1, will engage 57 parliamentary constituencies across 8 states.

Assam will go to elections in three phases: April 19, April 26, and May 7. The first phase in Assam will encompass Kaziranga, Sonitpur, Lakhimpur, Dibrugarh, and Jorhat LS seats.

The second phase, on April 26, will cover Darrang-Udalguri, Diphu, Karimganj, Silchar, and Nagaon. Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Barpeta, and Guwahati will undergo polls in the third phase on May 7.

Manipur and Tripura will undergo two-phase polls, on April 19 and April 26. Meanwhile, elections in Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Nagaland, Mizoram, and Meghalaya are slated for a single phase on April 19. The counting of votes will take place on June 4.

## Public Aspiration Boxes of BJP handed over to State President

**BISWADEEP GUPTA**

**IMPHAL:** M. Asnikumar Singh, Spokesperson of BJP, Manipur Pradesh on behalf of Election Manifesto Sub Committee of the party along with representatives from districts and mandals, handed over Public Aspiration Boxes of Bhartiya Janata Party which were collected from different section of the society, from different corners of Manipur to A. Sarda Devi, President BJP Manipur Pradesh. Part of a nation wide programme of the BJP to collect aspirations of people under "Your Vision, Your Dream, Your Manifesto" for inclusion in the party's manifesto of the upcoming Lok Sabha Elections 2024. These aspiration from the people of Manipur will be handed over to Central BJP Office, New Delhi within a couple of days by 23 members of the election manifesto sub committee for consideration. The program was joined by "Abhay Kumar Giri", General Secretary (Orgsn), L. Deven Singh, General Secretary (Adm), MK Preshow Shimray (Ex Dy Speaker) and Prabhari Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency, Manipur E. Johnson Singh, Spokesperson, L. Bikram Singh, Secretary, Md Asker Ali, President Minority Morcha, other party leaders, District Presidents and Mandal Presidents etc. While reacting to the election declared by the ECI, Asnikumar, spokesperson in a press release stated that this democratic process provides us with an opportunity to fulfill our commitment to serve the people of Manipur and work towards the welfare of the state. "He appealed to people that through the democratic process let us uphold the constitutional values and take forward Manipur and the nation.

## PPFA appreciates Assamese society on CAA understanding

**GUWAHATI**

Appreciating the mainstream Assamese society for taking rational views on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) 2019 despite provocative statements from some so-called intellectuals, journalists, and political analysts, the Patriotic People's Front Assam (PPFA) urges both the governments in New Delhi and Dispur to convince the people of Assam that the CAA deadline of December 31, 2014, will not be extended anymore and the central government will pursue with the neighbouring countries (precisely Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Afghanistan), which regularly indulge in religious persecution against minorities like Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis, and Christians.

It may be mentioned that soon after the notification of CAA, many individuals and organizations in Assam pronounced 'revolutionary statements' against the CAA rules and urged the people to come to the streets demanding its repeal. Some have already

approached the apex court of Bharat to nullify the CAA claiming that it's unconstitutional. The forum of nationalist citizens opines that the verdict of the Supreme Court will be obeyed, but the PPFA raises a pertinent question- Can a court in India repeal an act, which was passed by both houses of Parliament and subsequently signed by the President, the head of state of the Republic of India?

Some may refer to the case of Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act 1983, which was struck down by the apex court in 2005, and hence the CAA may also be repealed by the same court. But the major difference between the IMDT Act and CAA remains the exclusiveness of the former one to Assam. The IMDT, enacted by the then Indira Gandhi government, was applicable to Assam only, whereas other States continued to follow the Foreigners Act 1946 to define an illegal immigrant in India. Moreover, under the IMDT, it was the responsibility of an accuser/authority

to prove an individual as an illegal foreigner, whereas in the Foreigners Act, the accused has to prove his identity as an Indian.

Moreover, the IMDT excluded the migrants who entered India before 21 March 1971 (this particular cut off year has now been challenged in the SC).

The PPFA, which sent a memorandum to Assam Governor supporting the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2016 (and faced uncivilized criticism for some anti-national elements), maintains that the government publicity machineries should divulge all the sensitive facts to the people relating to the CAA rules respecting their anxieties.

Moreover, the forum appeals to the group of Guwahati-based editor-journalists, which out rightly rejected the CAB and even organized a meeting with the Governor five years back, to clarify their stand if they have accepted the CAA or bowed down to the authority and public sentiments emerged on social media in the last few days.

# CM Himanta Biswa Sarma eyes biometric unlock with CAA implementation



**GUWAHATI**

Assam CM announces CAA implementation to unlock biometrics. Biometrics of 27 lakh individuals were frozen during NRC update. Discussion with AASU and stakeholders planned post elections.

Assam's Chief Minister, Himanta Biswa Sarma, unveiled a significant development, asserting that the implementation of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, holds the key to unlocking the biometrics of approximately 27 lakh individuals in the state. These biometrics had been frozen during the extensive National Register of Citizens (NRC) updating process, leaving them unable to access Aadhaar cards.

"I will discuss the process with All Assam Students' Union (AASU)

and other stakeholders and hopefully, a solution will be reached soon after the elections", said the CM at a press conference at Guwahati on Friday. He further emphasized the newfound clarity brought forth by the CAA implementation, paving the way for a solution to this long standing issue.

This promising development offers hope to thousands of individuals facing bureaucratic hurdles, for a potential resolution on the horizon.

As Assam navigates this critical juncture, anticipation mounts for a collaborative and effective approach towards unlocking these biometrics, ensuring access to essential services and fostering inclusivity within the state.

# Over 97 crore eligible to vote in LS elections, urge voters to get inked: CEC Rajiv Kumar

NEW DELHI

Over 97 crore voters are eligible to exercise their franchise in the Lok Sabha elections, Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said on Saturday and urged everyone to "get inked."

Addressing a press conference to announce the Lok Sabha elections, Kumar said the poll authority is preparing to set up 10.5 lakh polling stations across the country.

"We are fully prepared and I request the voters to get inked," the Chief Election Commissioner said flanked by two new Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu.

"This is a historic opportunity for all of us," he said.

He said the poll panel promises to deliver the national election in a manner that can add to India's shine on the world stage.

"After assessment in all states, we are confident of ensuring a memorable, independent and impartial polls,"



Kumar said.

"We have 97 crore registered

voters, over 10.5 lakh polling stations manned by 1.5 crore personnel, and 55 lakh EVMs," he said.

Kumar said the Commission has conducted 17 Lok Sabha elections, 16 Presidential elections and more than 400 assembly elections.

The CEC said there are 97.8 crore eligible voters of which 49.72 crore were male voters and 47.1 crore were female voters. He said there are 1.82 crore first-time voters.

The last 11 state elections were peaceful and violence-free with near-zero re-polls, he said, adding that this will further be improved going forward.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, polling was held in seven phases.

There were a total of 91.2 crore eligible voters with about 43.8 crore female voters and nearly 47.3 crore male voters.

A total of about 61.5 crore votes were cast and the voter turnout was 67.4 per cent.

In the 2019 poll results, the BJP won 303 seats, Congress 52, Trinamool Congress 22, BSP 10, NCP 5, CPI-M 3 and CPI 2.

## NDA fully prepared for polls, India saw glorious turnaround under this govt: PM Modi

NEW DELHI

Asserting that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is fully prepared for the general elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday slammed the opposition as "rudderless" and "issueless" and expressed confidence about retaining power.

Soon after the Election Commission announced the seven-phase schedule for the Lok Sabha polls, Modi, in a series of posts on X, highlighted the "glorious turnaround" India has seen in the 10 years of his government and said the ruling alliance will go to people based on its track record of good governance and service delivery across sectors.

"The biggest festival of democracy is here! EC has announced the 2024 Lok Sabha election dates. We, the BJP-NDA, are fully prepared for elections," he said with the hashtag 'Phir Ek Baar Modi Sarkar' ('once again Modi government').

Reiterating his confidence about winning the polls, the prime minister said the war against poverty and corruption will go on at an even faster pace in his third term and the emphasis on social justice will be strong.

There is much work to

be done in the third term, he said.

"The last decade was about filling gaps created by those who ruled for 70 years. It was also about instilling a spirit of self-confidence that yes, India can become prosperous and self-reliant. We will build on this spirit," Modi said.

"We are going to work towards making India the third largest global economy. We will further cement our effort for fulfilling the dreams of the youth." Prime Minister Modi claimed that 10 years ago before the BJP came to power at the Centre, the people of India were feeling betrayed and disillusioned "thanks to INDI Alliance's pathetic governance". No sector was left untouched from scams and policy paralysis and the world had given up on India, he said. "From there, it has been a glorious turnaround."

In a swipe at the opposition, he said it is "rudderless and issueless".

"All they can do is abuse us and practise vote-bank politics. Their dynastic approach and attempts to divide society are not being accepted. Equally hurting them is their corruption track record. People don't want such leadership," Modi said.

Powered by 140 crore Indians, the nation is creating new records of development, he said.

"We have become the fifth largest economy and crores of people have been freed from poverty. Our schemes have reached all parts of India and the emphasis on saturation has yielded great results," Modi said.

People are witnessing what a determined, focused and result-oriented government can do, he said and added that they want more of it. "That is why from every corner of India, cutting across all sections of society, the people are saying in one voice - 'Ab Ki Baar, 400 Paar'," he said. Modi said he can see that the coming five years will be about the collective resolve of establishing the roadmap that will guide the nation's trajectory for the next 1,000 years and make India the embodiment of prosperity, all-round growth and global leadership.

The prime minister said he derives great strength from people's blessings, especially the poor, farmers, youth and women. When they say they are Modi's family, it fills him with joy and makes him work harder to build a developed India, he said.

## Excise 'scam': Delhi court grants bail to CM Kejriwal in case against him for skipping ED summons

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Saturday granted bail to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in two complaints filed by the Enforcement Directorate against him for skipping summons in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam. The court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Divya Malhotra also allowed Kejriwal to leave the courtroom. "Offence being bailable, accused Arvind Kejriwal is admitted to bail," it said. The court further directed

the ED to hand over documents related to the complaints to Kejriwal. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed two complaints before the magisterial court, seeking Kejriwal's prosecution for skipping multiple summonses issued to him in the case. The latest complaint pertains to the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor not honouring summonses no. 4 to 8 sent by the federal probe agency under Section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

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# ETHANOL 100 fuel launched by Petroleum Minister Hardeep S Puri

Shri Hardeep Singh Puri, Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Housing and Urban Affairs, launched 'ETHANOL 100, a revolutionary automotive fuel at IndianOil Retail Outlet M/s. Irwin Road Service Station, here today. Starting from today, customers can avail ETHANOL 100 at select 183 retail outlets across five states – Maharashtra, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, New Delhi, and Tamil Nadu.

Shri Pankaj Jain, Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas; Shri Shrikant Madhav Vaidya, Chairman, senior officials from MoP&NG, functional Directors of IndianOil also participated in the launch ceremony.

Launching the path breaking fuel, Shri Hardeep Singh Puri said that the launch of ETHANOL 100 was inspired by the vision of the Prime Minister of India to transform Annadatas to Urjadatas. Calling it a revolutionary fuel, the Minister said that ETHANOL 100 fuel has the potential to transform our transportation sector and reduce our dependence on fossil fuels.

"It reflects the government's commitment to reducing import dependency, conserving foreign exchange, and boosting the agriculture sector. Since the Prime Minister's announcement on E20 (20% ethanol blended fuel) in 2023, the E20 availability has increased to 12,000 outlets in under a year, and now, with the launch of ETHANOL100 at 183 outlets of IndianOil, we are close to achieving the target of 20% ethanol blending by 2025-26. During the last 10 years these ethanol blending initiatives have enhanced farmer incomes, increased rural employment, reduced CO2 emissions equivalent to planting 1.75 crore trees and resulted in savings of Rs 85,000 crore worth of foreign exchange" he stated.

Speaking about the strides made by the country towards realizing vision of PM to reach



20% blending of Ethanol in Petrol by 2025-26, Shri Puri, said that Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have been at the forefront of this endeavor, introducing various blends of Ethanol with Petrol across the country. He said that OMCs have signed long term offtake agreements with 131 dedicated ethanol plants. These plants are expected to add an annual production design capacity of 745 crore litres. OMCs have also invested in increasing storage capacity and allied infrastructure for handling higher blending percentages, he added.

On the occasion, Shri Jain, Secretary MoPNG, said "The initiative underscores a significant shift towards embracing sustainable technologies, instilling confidence in manufacturers to invest in ethanol-based vehicles. The transition of high-volume vehicles to alternative fuels is a testament to our commitment. Moreover, the consistent supply of ethanol, backed by our robust ethanol industry, addresses concerns over its availability. This move also affirms our commitment to decarbonization. I extend my compliments to IndianOil for spearheading this initiative. Their support signifies the permanence of ethanol and flex fuels in our

energy landscape".

Addressing the gathering, Shri Vaidya, Chairman, IndianOil highlighted that India is among the few countries of the world to have ETHANOL 100 fuel. He said "This marks a significant milestone in India's journey towards sustainability and clean mobility".

ETHANOL 100 stands as a cleaner, greener

alternative to gasoline, boasting lower emissions of greenhouse gases and pollutants, thus aiding in combating climate change and enhancing air quality in our communities. With its high-octane rating, typically between 100-105, ETHANOL100 proves ideal for high-performance engines, ensuring improved efficiency and power output all while

minimizing environmental impact. Moreover, ETHANOL 100's versatility shines through, as it can be used in a wide array of vehicles, including flex-fuel vehicles (FFVs) designed to run on gasoline, ethanol, or any blend of the two, showcasing its practicality and potential to become a mainstream fuel option with the right infrastructure in place.

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