

POLL VITAL STATS

In the 2013 assembly elections, the BJP fielded 28 Rajput candidates; of them 23 won. In the same elections, the party nominated 32 Jat candidates; of them 23 won



6 Cycle rallies, rangoli exhibitions, women rallies, candle marches, marathon and other such awareness programmes will be organized during the Rainbow Week
ASHOK JAIN, STATE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER



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THE TIMES OF INDIA, JAIPUR | WEDNESDAY, APRIL 2, 2014

POLLNOTES

CONG CANDIDATE'S HUSTLING IN MOVIE THEATRE

A cinema hall brings people of every caste and creed together for nearly three hours, if the movie is from the Bollywood. To capitalize on voters coming to watch movies, Harish Chaudhary, the Congress candidate from the Barmer Jaisalmer, has opened his office at a cinema hall he owned in Barmer. Many of his publicity material and for the Congress party put up at the cinema hall apart is generating a lot of interest now. "Many people who are coming to watch films also visit our office and promise to support us," said a Congress worker at Barmer. Apart from the poster of Sunny Leone who stars in the film 'Ragini MMS' and being screened at the theatre, there are also posters of Rahul Gandhi and Harish Chaudhary to woo the voters.

₹ 43 lakh seized

The Jaipur unit of Investigation Wing, Rajasthan, of the EC on Tuesday seized Rs 43 lakh in cash from a vehicle near village Amarsar in Shajapur tehsil in Jaipur district. The Static Surveillance Teams (SST) deployed by the district electoral officer - cum - collector, Jaipur are already engaged in roadside checking of all vehicles to detect election related cash, gold/silver bullion, liquor and election material among others. One such team at village Amarsar, tehsil - Shajapur, detected cash amounting to Rs 43 lakhs being carried in a fertilizer polysack in a Bolero vehicle in the evening of March 31.

Effigy of BJP MLA burnt

The Rajasthan Mahila Pradesh Congress burnt an effigy of Hira Lal, BJP MLA from Niwai, for making "absurd" comments on Congress president Sonia Gandhi and her son Rahul Gandhi during a public meeting. Addressing a gathering in Tonk-Sawai Madhopur constituency, Lal remarked that Sonia and Rahul will be sent back to Italy without clothes if his party came to power. Mahila Cong president Shakuntala Rawat said the language used against a woman was indecent and it's an insult to women.

Tempo operators for BJP

Going with the 'NaMo' wave, now tempo operators of Jaipur have decided to support BJP in the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections. The association that was so far supportive of Congress has decided to shift loyalties to the BJP given the Modi wave. On the flip side, it was also believed that the association is supporting AAP.

BJP hopes to win with political greenhorns

36% Candidates Never Contested An Election

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur: To accomplish its 'Mission-25' of winning all Lok Sabha seats in the state, the BJP is counting on candidates who have never contested any elections.

Out of the 25 candidates fielded in the forthcoming general elections, nine or nearly 36% have never contested even for panchayat or local bodies' elections.

The party has given tickets to popular personalities such as Olympic medalist Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore from the Jaipur rural constituency, former DGP Harish Meena from

Dausa constituency and Swami Sumedhanand from Sikar constituency, turning down the candidatures of seasoned local leaders.

Other than this, the party has chosen Gajendra Singh Shekhawat from Jodhpur; Rahul Kaswan from Churu, Hari Om Singh Rathore from Rajsamand, Chhotu Ram Chaudhary from Nagaur, Chandra Prakash Joshi from Chittorgarh and PP Chaudhary from Pali for the elections.

In the state assembly election four months ago, the BJP led with a good margin in all assembly segments of 23 of the 25 parliamentary constituencies. BJP insiders said this was the reason the party was taking the 'risk' in Lok Sabha elections.

However, the BJP candidates in some constituencies have still not won acceptance from the party workers. For instance, the BJP



BJP candidate Ramcharan Bohra from Jaipur constituency addressing party workers

workers in Sikar were unhappy about the party's choice of candidate and make no attempts to hide their disappointment. The party

has fielded first timer Sumedhanand, a religious leader who is believed to have a large number of followers in the Jat community.

BJP heavyweight, former MP Subhash Maharia and his supporters have come out against the party decision. Maharia is con-

testing as an Independent against the BJP candidate. Maharia said, "I have been serving the people of Sikar for the past 18 years. It is unjustified that an outsider should reap the benefits of my toiling. A candidate from Haryana cannot solve the local problems. The party has cheated its five lakh devoted workers in the consistency."

Since the day Sumedhanand's name was announced, the BJP party workers have been protesting against the decision. His car was also attacked recently. Similar incidents were reported from Chittorgarh and other constituencies. "The party had sought names of three potential candidates from its local seniors and workers before picking up its nominee. It is surprising that a candidate without any political experience was still selected for the task to represent the area," a BJP worker said.

Parties play caste card in Nagaur, Sikar & Dausa

Syed Intishab Ali | TNN

Jaipur: Nagaur, Sikar and Dausa will witness a triangular fight but with a twist since candidates of the same caste are in the fray. Since, other caste voters would be a deciding factor in such constituencies, the candidates are leaving no stone unturned in wooing them.

Counting number of Meena, Jat, minority and other community votes of a particular constituency is a known method to give tickets to candidates.

In Dausa, Congress candidate Namu Narain Meena, BJP candidate Harish Meena and NPP candidate Kirori Lal Meena are in the fray. While in Nagaur, political parties fielded Jat candidates. Congress candidate Jyoti Mirdha, BJP candidate CR Chaudhary and Independent Hanuman Beniwal will take on each other. In Sikar, Jat candidates including Pratap Singh Jat from Congress, Sumedhanand Saraswati from BJP and Independent Subhash Meheria would compete for the seat.

Manish Kumar, an election watcher in

Dausa, said, "The candidates are coming to our area and they are talking about development. They promised us that they will work for the development of the area. Here, the top candidates belong to same caste so we have no other option than to vote for one of them."

Since all the top contenders in Dausa belong to Meena community, Independent candidate Anju Dhanja is trying to cash in on the opportunity to secure votes of other castes when three bigwig Meena leaders are up against each other.

However, Nagaur is another such constituency, which has candidates of same caste contesting polls. Jats are in a dominating position in Nagaur but since three Jat candidates are in the fray, there is always a possibility of division of votes, which makes other caste voters a deciding factor.

An election watcher in Nagaur, Ashfaq Kayamkhani, said, "In Nagaur, since 1967 only Jats have been becoming MPs from the district. In 1998, BJP fielded Shyam Sunder Kabra, a non-Jat candidate but he lost. So, political parties always prefer to field Jat candidates from here."

The tale of two arch rivals

Chief minister Vasundhara Raje and her predecessor Ashok Gehlot have captained BJP and Congress for almost two decades now. The two leaders have been chief ministers twice. While Raje's political career has probably reached a crescendo, the one of Gehlot seems to have sunk to its ebb. TOI peeks into the current stature of the two leaders in electoral politics and their status in their respective parties:

VASUNDHARA RAJE

She has emerged as one of the most prominent regional satraps of BJP. Her clout within the party has soared to the extent that denial of ticket to veteran leader Jaswant Singh from Barmer-Jaisalmer Lok Sabha constituency happened largely at her behest. Singh was one of Raje's mentors when she had entered politics in the eighties. However, the two fell apart after one-upmanship fight between the two leaders broke. She doesn't brook dissent. Whoever challenged her leadership has been pushed to the brink. And Jaswant Singh is one of them.

Kirori Lal Meena had once vowed to wipe Raje out of Rajasthan. Today, he is confined to merely three assembly segments. His wife and Kirori are just MLAs. He has been discarded by the BJP and Congress. NPP, to which Kirori belongs, has an alliance with BJP except in Rajasthan thanks to Raje's

firm no to Meena leader.

Within BJP, Ghanshyam Tiwari, Devi Singh Bhati, Narpat Singh Rajvi are a few other names, who have been pushed to the wall. The threesome had at some point of time fumed at Raje. A senior Brahmin community leader Tiwari is only an MLA at present and was not given ticket from Jaipur although he was the party candidate in the 2009 Lok Sabha polls. Bhati lost the recent assembly polls and Rajvi was not inducted into the state ministry although he is son-in-law of late Bhairon Singh Shekhawat.

Raje's son Dushyant Singh is the only one among BJP candidates from Rajasthan, who has been Lok Sabha MP twice. If he wins, he will be the senior most among the LS MPs from the state. The party's central leadership has embraced her as a champion leader with immense mass appeal.

ASHOK GEHLOT

He could not manage ticket for his own son Vaibhav Gehlot for the Lok Sabha polls. Gehlot expressed his discontent about denial of ticket to his son recently at Jodhpur. He went on to say, "Vaibhav ne bhi party ke liye laathi khahi hai." Vaibhav had tried for Jalore or Tonk-Sawai Madhopur LS constituencies.

None of Gehlot loyalists has made it to the Congress list of candidates from Rajasthan. Sitting MPs Mahadev Singh Khandela (Sikar) and Badri Jhakhar (Pali) are a few of them.

His two staunchest rivals, CP Joshi and Sonaram Choudhary, are contesting LS polls. Joshi was allowed to move from Bhillwara to Jaipur (rural) Lok Sabha seat. Currently MP from Bhillwara, Joshi was allowed to move in the wake of his dipped graph in Bhillwara. Raje rewarded Sonaram, BJP candidate from Barmer-

Jaisalmer, for his barbs against Gehlot. Another Gehlot baiter, Uday Lal Anjana is the Congress candidate from Jalore.

Today Gehlot stands isolated in Rajasthan politics. As PCC chief, Sachin Pilot is taking maximum calls and is being projected as Congress steward in the LS polls. CP Joshi is there in advisory role. However, Gehlot is no where to be seen. Be it party rallies or any event, he has become invisible. During a recent rally of Rahul Gandhi in Tonk district, Gehlot was asked to sit in the second row.

While the party high command has assigned a free hand to Pilot, it has turned indifferent to Gehlot for various reasons. Gehlot had assured to retain power in Rajasthan and given a free hand to select candidates. Now Gehlot has been made to pay for the cronyism that flourished when he was the helmsman till recently.

Purvottar Rang Mahotsav

Advertorial & Promotional Feature



An art AND CULTURAL CONFLUENCE

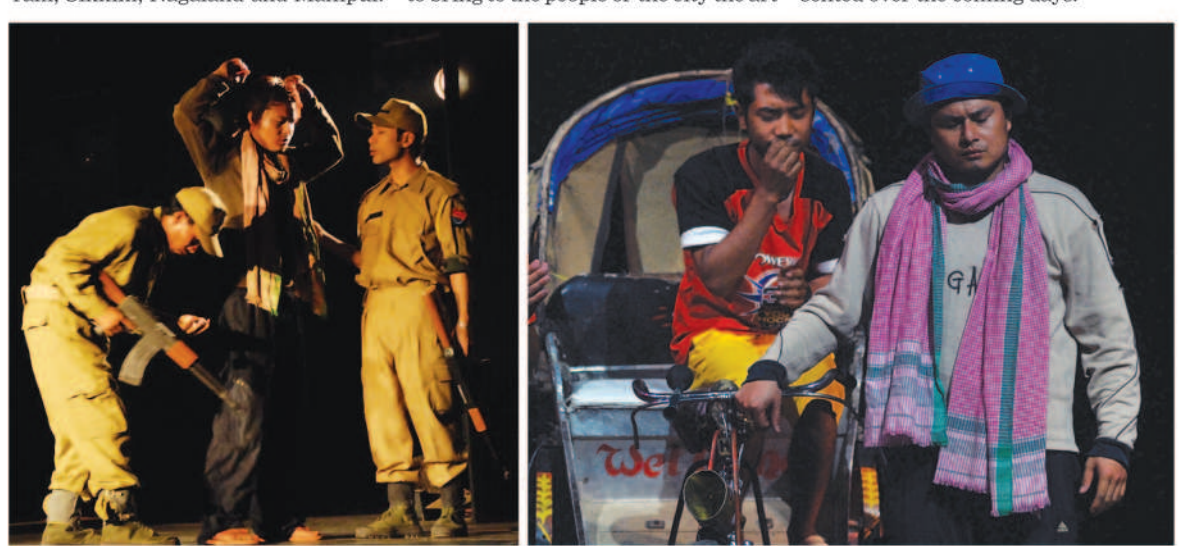
Powered by The Times of India and presented by the Sangeet Natak Akademi, New Delhi and Natyakulam, Jaipur, Purvottar Rang Mahotsav is being held at the Jawahar Kala Kendra from March 31 to April 4. An art and cultural festival, the 5 day event features 150 artists from the North East states of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim, Nagaland and Manipur.

The first day saw the play 'Rickshaw Amasung Nongmei' being staged by the artists, much to the excitement and applause of the audience.

DG, ACB, Manoj Bhatt was the Chief Guest on the first day. The second day showcased a dance performance and presentation of vocals by various groups from the North East.

The main aim of the programme is to bring to the people of the city the art and culture of the North East region namely the Raasa and Pugholam of Manipur; Bihu of Assam, Satriya, Ojhapali and Devdhani Dance forms, Ajhilmu from Arunachal Pradesh, Bodo from Nagaland, Chellam and Bembu from Mizoram.

All the days of the festival promise to showcase great talent and a plethora of cultural activities that will be presented over the coming days.



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'BJP gave only 3 tickets to Rajputs'

► Continued from P1

Jaipur: Mahavir Singh Sarvadi, an other Rajput organisation with a support base across the state, said, "The BJP leadership was so determined to sideline Jaswant that it ignored even the feedback of its own legislators and party workers." Sarvadi added, "They (BJP) claim that the candidate's winning capacity was a major factor that was taken into account to give par-

The BJP leadership was so determined to sideline Jaswant that it ignored even the feedback of its own legislators and party workers
 MAHAVIR SINGH SARVADI
 Pratap Foundation

ty's election ticket. But the candidate chosen, Sonaram Chaudhary, is someone who lost even the assembly election by a margin of 14,000 just 3 months back."

"Since its Jan Sangh times, the Rajput leaders have been winning seats on the same ideology. Our leader late Bhairon Singh Shekhawat played a crucial role in establishing BJP in Rajasthan. Still, just three of our candidates have been nominated in these elections, while a community (Jats) that was never with it has been given seven tickets," Sarvadi noted.

In the 2013 assembly elections, the BJP fielded 28 Rajput candidates; of them 23 won. In the same elections, the party nominated 32 Jat candidates; of them 23 won. "Rajputs have always won around 65% of the seats given to them. The Jats have won so many only this time, and that is because of the BJP wave," Sarvadi claimed.