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Battle Cry for Lok Sabha General Elections Begins!

India gears up for the grand festival of the world's largest democracy as the Election Commission announces the dates for the Lok Sabha elections. The elections will be conducted in seven phases from April 19 to June 1, 2024, with two phases scheduled for Rajasthan. Vote counting will take place on June 4, and the election results will be declared. A new central government will be formed before June 16.

New Delhi: It's time to kick-start the battle for the Lok Sabha general elections! India is now set for the grand festival of the world's largest

democracy. The Election Commission of India has unveiled the election dates for the 543 seats of the 18th Lok Sabha. The voting process will span across seven phases from April 19 to June 1, 2024, with the vote count scheduled for June 4. Notably, the tenure of the 17th Lok Sabha is concluding on June 16, paving the way for the formation of a new Lok Sabha as per regulations.

In addition to the Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission has also announced the dates for assembly elections in four states: Sikkim, Odisha, Arunachal Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. Furthermore, by-elections for 26 assembly seats in various states will also be conducted concurrently. With the announcement

of the Lok Sabha elections, the Model Code of Conduct comes into effect nationwide from Saturday. Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar, along with newly appointed Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, announced the 46-day election schedule for the Lok Sabha elections in a significant press conference held at Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi. The first phase of Lok Sabha elections in Rajasthan will take place on April 19, followed by the second phase on April 26. Additionally, a by-election will be held for the Bagidaura assembly seat in the tribal-dominated Banswara district of southern Rajasthan.

In the first phase of Lok Sabha elections in Rajasthan, voting will occur across 12

seats, including Jaipur City, Jaipur Rural, Bikaner, Sriganganagar, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Alwar, Bharatpur, Karauli Dholpur, and Dausa. The second phase, scheduled for April 26, will cover 13 Lok Sabha seats in the state, including Jodhpur, Barmer, Jalore, Pali, Rajsamand, Ajmer, Bhilwara, Chittorgarh, Udaipur, Banswara-Dungarpur, Kota, Tonk-Sawaimadhopur, and Jhalawar-Bandra.

Voting across 22 states will be held in a single phase, while Rajasthan, Karnataka, Tripura, and Manipur will witness two phases. Chhattisgarh and Assam will have three phases, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand will see four phases, Maharashtra and Jammu and Kashmir will

have two phases, and Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and West Bengal will have seven phases each.

Chief Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar highlighted that a total of 97 crore 88 lakh 21,926 voters will participate in the Lok Sabha elections, with around 2 crore new voters aged 18 to 29 joining the electoral rolls. The number of registered voters has increased by 6 percent compared to 2019, with a gender ratio improvement from 940 in 2023 to 948 in 2024.

Preparations for the elections are in full swing, with 10.5 lakh polling booths established across the country. Approximately 1.5 crore polling officers will be deployed, and 55 lakh EVM machines will be utilized for voting. Chief



Election Commissioner emphasized the importance of every vote in shaping the nation's future, with special arrangements made for physically challenged individuals and elderly voters above 85 years of age to cast their votes from home.

Furthermore, measures have been implemented to combat issues like muscle power, money power, misin-

formation, and violations of the Model Code of Conduct. The Election Commission aims for violence-free elections, with drones monitoring international borders and strict actions against the misuse of money. The Chief Election Commissioner called for increased voter turnout and urged the media and voters to cooperate in motivating everyone to vote.

Amidst discussions on EVMs, the Chief Election Commissioner emphasized accountability and urged political parties to maintain decorum and avoid personal attacks in speeches. He concluded with poetic verses, emphasizing the significance of democracy and the responsibility of every citizen in shaping the nation's destiny.

The Election Commission's proactive measures and meticulous planning reflect its commitment to conducting transparent and fair elections, ensuring the democratic essence of the country's electoral process. As India gears up for the Lok Sabha elections, the world watches with anticipation, recognizing this democratic celebration as the pride of the nation.

Unraveling the Veil of Electoral Bonds: A Deep Dive into Political Funding Dynamics

In the intricate landscape of Indian politics, where power dynamics often hinge on financial backing, the recent revelations surrounding electoral bonds have sparked a nationwide debate. With transparency and accountability at the forefront, the Election Commission's disclosure of electoral bond data has become a pivotal moment in understanding the nuances of political funding.

Unveiling the Key Players
At the heart of this revelation lies Future Gaming and Hotel Services, whose staggering contribution of Rs 509 crore to Tamil Nadu's ruling party DMK has raised eyebrows. Accounting for over

77% of DMK's disclosed bond receipts, this substantial donation has prompted queries regarding the utilization of the remaining Rs 859 crore worth of bonds purchased by Future Gaming.

But Future Gaming is just one piece of the puzzle. The data dump by the Election Commission, mandated by the Supreme Court, has exposed the financial transactions of over 523 recognized and non-recognized political entities. From the BJP to the Trinamool Congress, the Congress, and the Bharat Rashtra Samithi, the distribution of electoral bonds paints a revealing picture of political funding dynamics across the country.



Enter Prudent Electoral Trust

Yet, amidst the plethora of contributors, one entity stands out: Prudent Electoral Trust. Serving as the largest donor to the BJP, Prudent has chan-

neled approximately Rs 2,254 crore into the ruling party's coffers through electoral bonds. This revelation has cast a spotlight on the functioning of electoral trusts and their significant influence on the political land-

scape.

Transparency vs. Opaqueness

While electoral bonds were introduced with the noble aim of enhancing transparency in campaign financing, their implementation has been met with skepticism. While some political parties have opted for transparent disclosures, others have chosen a more opaque route. The disparity in transparency raises crucial questions about the fairness and integrity of the electoral process.

The Call for Accountability
As the nation grapples with the implications of electoral bonds, calls for greater accountability in political fund-

ing mechanisms have grown louder. The widening gap in funding between political parties, as evidenced by the exponential growth of the BJP's coffers, underscores the need for a level playing field in democratic processes.

The unveiling of electoral bond data marks a watershed moment in India's political landscape. As the nation navigates through this revelation, the quest for transparency, fairness, and integrity in political funding remains paramount. It is not merely a matter of financial transactions but a question of upholding the principles of democracy and ensuring that every voice is heard on an equal footing.

Lok Sabha General Elections 2024 Kick Off in Udaipur Constituency

Amidst the vibrant hues of democracy, the Lok Sabha General Elections 2024 have been announced, marking the commencement of the largest festival of democracy in India. Scheduled for April 26, voters in the Udaipur constituency, comprising over 22.17 million individuals, will exercise their constitutional right to elect their representatives.



Electoral Landscape:

The Udaipur parliamentary constituency spans across six assembly constituencies within Udaipur district, along with segments from Pratapgarh and Dungarpur districts. Additionally, Mavli and Vallabhnagar assembly constituencies under the Chittorgarh parliamentary constituency will also participate in the electoral process.

With 2230 polling stations and 23 auxiliary polling stations, the electoral machinery is gearing up for seamless voting operations.

Voter Registration and Demographics:

The final electoral roll boasts 22,17,193 registered voters, comprising 11,26,677 male, 10,90,496 female, and 20 transgender voters. Registration continues until March 24, with Kherwada boasting the highest registered voters and Udaipur City the lowest.

Preparations and Regulations:

To ensure fair and peaceful elections, District Magistrate Arvind Kumar Poswal has enforced restrictions on sound amplification systems and loudspeakers from 10 PM to 6 AM until April 30, in line with Supreme Court directives and environmental regulations.

Election Timeline:

The nomination process commences on March 28, with voting scheduled for April 26. Key dates include the last date for filing nominations on April 4, scrutiny of nomination papers on April 5, and the last date for withdrawal of candidature on April 8. Vote counting will take place on June 4, 2024.

Compliance and Participation: Poswal emphasized adherence to the Model Code of Conduct, with strict measures in place for poster removal and compliance with electoral regulations. Political parties are urged to facilitate voter enrollment and uphold democratic values.

Weapon Deposit Directive:

In a bid to maintain law and order during the electoral process, District Magistrate Arvind Poswal has issued directives for weapon holders and firearm license holders to deposit their arms at their nearest police stations. Exemptions include security personnel and government officials involved in law enforcement.

As the electoral canvas unfolds, political parties and the Election Commission are poised to orchestrate a vibrant democratic spectacle, ensuring every citizen's voice resonates through the ballot box. Stay tuned as India embarks on yet another journey of democratic expression and nation-building.

Congress Fields Former IAS Officer Tarachand Meena from Udaipur

Udaipur: (Dr. Munesh Arora) In a significant move, the Congress party has nominated former IAS officer Tarachand Meena as its candidate from the Udaipur Lok Sabha constituency. This decision comes as part of the party's second list of candidates for the upcoming elections.

Background: From Bureaucracy to Politics - Tarachand Meena served as the District Collector in Udaipur before being appointed as the Tribal Commissioner for the region. His tenure witnessed the initiation of several developmental projects aimed at uplifting marginalized communities.

Challenging BJP's Nomination - The BJP, on the other hand, has nominated Manna Lal Ravat, an officer from the transport department, to contest from the same constituency. This sets the stage for a direct contest between two former government officials.

Political Endeavors after Civil Service - Tarachand Meena's

journey from bureaucracy to politics is marked by his commitment to public service. His notable initiatives during his tenure as District Collector earned him recognition and praise from the local communities.

Speculations and Recognition - While Meena was initially speculated to contest from the Jhadi Assembly constituency, his candidature for the Lok Sabha elections reflects the party's confidence in his leadership and administrative capabilities. His contributions to the development of the Kotra region earned him accolades, including the Chief Minister's Award.

Conclusion: A Shift from Administration to Representation
Tarachand Meena's transition from civil service to active politics underscores his dedication to serving the people of Udaipur. His nomination by the Congress party reflects a strategic move aimed at leveraging his administrative experience for effective representation in the Lok Sabha.

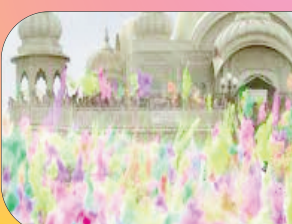
Holi : The Festival of Colors and Joy

Holi, the vibrant and colorful festival celebrated across India, heralds the arrival of spring and bids farewell to winter. This joyous occasion, also known as the "Festival of Colors," is a time of exuberant celebration, laughter, and merriment.

Traditionally observed on the full moon day of the Hindu lunar month of Phalgun, usually falling in March, Holi brings together people from all walks

of life, transcending barriers of age, gender, and social status. It is a time when communities unite to revel in the spirit of camaraderie and brotherhood.

The highlight of Holi is the playful throwing of colored powders and water, symbolizing the victory of good over evil, as well as the triumph of love and joy. Streets and pub-



lic spaces transform into kaleidoscopic spectacles as peo-

ple chase each other with handfuls of vibrant gulal (colored powder) and spray water using water guns and balloons. Music, dance, and traditional folk performances add to the festive fervor, creating an atmosphere of sheer jubilation. Delicious sweets and savory delicacies are shared among friends and family, enhancing the sense of togetherness and warmth.

Holi also holds cultural and religious significance. Legend has it that the festival commemorates the divine love between Lord Krishna and Radha, and the playful pranks they indulged in with colored powders. Additionally, it marks

the victory of the virtuous Prahlad over the malevolent Holika, symbolizing the triumph of righteousness over evil.

Beyond its religious connotations, Holi transcends boundaries to become a universal celebration of joy, friendship, and renewal. It is a time to forgive past grievances, mend broken relationships, and embrace new beginnings.

As the colors of Holi paint the sky and hearts alike, it serves as a reminder of the beauty of diversity and the richness of life. So, let us immerse ourselves in the spirit of Holi, spreading love, laughter, and happiness wherever we go. Happy Holi! Place and community in the region.