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Cover Story

# MODI MAGIC

Led by a charismatic Narendra Modi, NDA posts a speculator victory to prove all naysayers wrong



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## MODI 2.0 - Narendra Shah & Amit Modi integration is complete

**N**arendra Modi and Amit Shah Partnership have been scripted in heavens. The integration is so profound that the headline of this editorial piece justifies it completely. BJP president Amit Shah has been



Modi's most trusted lieutenant since the late 1980s when both started their political careers in Gujarat, to making a grand entry in the prime minister's group of ministers. He emerged from the backstage, from where he directed the BJP's ascent to its peak, to take dominant centre stage as a minister in Narendra Modi's second government.

A series of recent events had pointed to such a possibility. The first signal was Shah contesting the Lok Sabha elections. It was perhaps the first clear sign that Shah was getting into the administrative side of politics. Shah presence in Lok Sabha without the likes of Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj in the government indicates power structure in the Modi 2.0 government.

The second clear signal was the symbolism of Modi and Shah being together since the party's victory celebrations. After the election results were announced on May 23, the Modi-Shah duo had walked together to the BJP headquarters to greet and address party workers. The current No. 1 and No. 2 in the BJP had also travelled together to their respective constituencies of Varanasi and Gandhi Nagar, they addressed the first press conference at the BJP HQ together.

The third clear sign is actually a historical fact. When Shah laid the ground for Modi's return as Gujarat chief minister in 2002, he was rewarded with 10 portfolios, including home, law and justice, prison, border security and housing. A repeat performance on a national level, given the comfortable position to which Shah guided his party, was arguably going to fetch him a reward in the form of a cabinet berth.

Besides, Modi's trust in Shah is indisputable. At the BJP national executive following the party's massive victory in 2014 and 2019 elections, Modi had said, "Amit Shah was the man of the match. I have personally known Shah for a long time. He will perform to his potential in his new responsibility and I have no doubt about that.

But what does Shah's ministerial position mean for the BJP's larger politics? Is Modi grooming Shah for administration? "Amit Shah's transition is complete. He is now the legitimized inheritor of Modi's legacy. By the time the tenure of Modi 2.0 comes to an end in 2024, Modi will be 73 years old. Given the rule he has set for the party — of encouraging those above 75 years of age to retire from active politics — it will be time for the BJP, in case it wins a third straight term in Lok Sabha, to appoint its successor. Will today's cabinet minister be tomorrow's prime minister? It is a line of thought worth pursuing. Interestingly, RSS approval will have a decisive say in the final outcome for the successor of Modi.

Modi 2.0 will see Amit Shah in Home Ministry, Rajnath Singh in Defense Ministry, Nirmala Sitaraman in Finance Ministry, Subramaniam Jaishankar in External Affairs Ministry as the part of CCS — the super cabinet. The Modi 2.0 will have 24 Cabinet Ministers, 9 Independent Ministers & 24 Minister of state.

—Prashant Tewari,  
Editor-in-Chief

JUNE 2019

COVER STORY

## Team Modi Takes Over

The second cabinet of Narendra Modi is a mix of youth and experience, and is without several prominent faces of the previous one...

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# TEAM MODI TAKES OVER

THE SECOND CABINET OF NARENDRA MODI IS A MIX OF YOUTH AND EXPERIENCE, AND IS WITHOUT SEVERAL PROMINENT FACES OF THE PREVIOUS ONE...

## First Among Equals

Narendra Modi | 68

### *Prime Minister*

Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions; Department of Atomic Energy; Department of Space; All important policy issues; and All other portfolios not allocated to any Minister

Won from Varanasi by a margin of over 4.7 lakh votes. Modi was appointed Chief Minister of Gujarat in 2001 and succeeded Keshubhai Patel. He was elected to the Assembly soon after and went on to retain the CM's post till he took over as Prime Minister in 2014. In 2014, he became the first PM, outside of Congress, to win with full majority.



## Cabinet Ministers



**Rajnath Singh**

Age: 67

***Defence***

Won from Lucknow by over 3.47 lakh votes. Multiple-term MLA in UP and state minister from 1991 to 92. He also served as UP CM for two years. He took over as BJP chief in 2005. Won the 2009 Lok Sabha poll from Ghaziabad and in 2014 from Lucknow. Was home Minister in the previous Narendra Modi government. He also served as Union Minister in Vajpayee governments.



**Amit Shah**

Age: 54

***Home Affairs***

Makes Lok Sabha debut, won from Gandhinagar by 5.57 lakh votes. Won his first Assembly election in 1997 from Sarkhej. In 2012, he changed his constituency to Naranpura after Sarkhej was split by delimitation. Elected to Rajya Sabha from Gujarat in 2017. Led BJP to victory in 2014 LS polls. Appointed BJP national president the same year. was Gujarat's MoS Home in Narendra Modi government in 2002.



**Nitin Gadkari**

Age: 62

***Minister of Road, Transport and Highways***

Won from Nagpur by over 2.16 lakh votes. Continues from being a senior minister in the previous Narendra Modi government. Became minister in Maharashtra's first Shiv Sena-BJP government in 1995. He contributed to Pradhanmantri Gramin Sadak Yojana during Vajpayee government. Became Surface Transport, Shipping, Water Resources and Ganga Rejuvenation Minister in 2014.



**D V Sadananda Gowda**

Age: 66

***Chemicals and Fertilisers***

Won from Bangalore North by a margin of 1.47 lakh votes. A four-time MP, Gowda has served as Karnataka CM. In his first two terms as MP, he was elected from seats in coastal Karnataka. In 2014, he shifted to the Bangalore North seat. Gowda has served as the railway minister, law minister and minister of statistics and programme implementation in the first Narendra Modi government.



**Nirmala Sitharaman**

Age: 59

***Finance and Corporate Affairs***

She is a Rajya Sabha member from Karnataka. An economist and social worker, Sitharaman is a former BJP spokesperson. In the previous Narendra Modi government, she served as a Minister of State for finance, then corporate affairs and later as a Minister of State (Independent charge) for Commerce and Industry. In September 2017, she was named Defence Minister.



**Ram Vilas Paswan**

Age: 72

***Consumer Affairs***

BJP has assured him a Rajya Sabha berth. Paswan was elected an MLA in 1969 and became a Union minister in the V P Singh government in 1989. A leader of the SC Paswan community, his LJP is an important NDA ally. Was labour and social welfare minister in V P Singh government. He has held Railways, communications, chemicals and fertilisers and coal portfolios in UPA and NDA government.



## Narendra Singh Tomar

Age: 61

### **Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare**

Won from Morena by a margin of over 1.13 lakh votes. Began his political career as a councillor in Gwalior Municipal Corporation. He was elected to MP Assembly in 1998 and 2003. Tomar was elected to Rajya Sabha in 2009. In May 2009, he was elected to Lok Sabha from Morena. Was Union minister for Steel, Mines, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj portfolios in the previous Narendra Modi government. Served as a minister in MP government earlier.



## Ravi Shankar Prasad

Age: 64

### **Law and Justice**

Contested maiden Lok Sabha election, won from Patna Sahib by a margin of 2.84 lakh votes. Rose from JP movement. Minister in A B Vajpayee and 2014 Narendra Modi governments; BJP spokesperson and party's in-charge for 8 states. Multiple-term RS member. Law minister in Vajpayee government; Communications & IT minister (up to 2016) in the Modi government. After 2016, minister of Electronics and Technology; Law and Justice.



## Harsimrat Kaur Badal

Age: 52

### **Food Processing Industries**

Defeated Congress's Amarinder Singh Raja Warring by a margin of over 21,000 votes to win from Punjab's Bathinda constituency for the third time in a row. Wife of former Punjab CM in Akali Dal-led government, Sukhbir Badal. Ran a private jewellery business before contesting her first Lok Sabha election in 2009. She served as Food Processing Industries minister in the previous Narendra Modi government after being elected in the 2014 general election.



## Thaawarchand Gehlot

Age: 71

### **Social Justice and Empowerment**

Rajya Sabha member from Madhya Pradesh. Started as a member of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh in 1962. He has been MLA for three terms. Was elected to Lok Sabha for the first time in 1996 and remained MP till 2009. He has also been a whip of BJP parliamentary party. He was minister for Social Justice and Empowerment in the previous Narendra Modi government. He has also served as a minister of state in MP government.



## Subrahmanyam Jaishankar

Age: 64

### **External Affairs**

Did not contest, not a member of any house. He was Foreign secretary from 2015 to 2018 in which he was given an extension to the two-year term. A career diplomat, he had served as India's ambassador to China and the US. He joined the Tata Group after retirement as President, Global corporate affairs.



## Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank

Age: 59

### **HRD**

Re-elected to the Lok Sabha from Haridwar constituency in Uttarakhand, winning by over 2.6 lakh votes. Was Uttarakhand CM from 2009-2011. Three-term MLA in undivided Uttar Pradesh from 1991. After formation of Uttarakhand, two-term MLA since 2000. Was Culture and Religion minister in UP 1999-2000. Uttarakhand minister in 2000-02, 2007-09.



## Arjun Munda

Age: 51

### **Tribal Affairs**

Won from Khunti by a thin margin of 1,445 votes. Three-time Jharkhand CM: in 2003, 2005, 2010. Fought Assembly polls for Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in 1995. Joined BJP in 2000. Elected to LS from Jamshedpur in 2009. Was Tribal Welfare minister before taking over as Jharkhand's second Chief Minister. As CM, defused tension over "domicile movement", got state Lokayukta and conducted Panchayat polls after 32 years.



## Smriti Irani

Age: 43

### **Women and Child Development, and Textiles**

Defeated Congress president Rahul Gandhi from Amethi by over 55,000 votes. Contested and lost from Chandni Chowk LS seat in Delhi 2004; lost from Amethi in 2014. Elected to RS from Gujarat first in 2011, and again in 2017 (has resigned now that she is in LS). Was Union HRD minister (2014-16); Textiles (since 2016). In July 2017, given additional charge of I&B ministry, which was given to Rajyavardhan Rathore in May 2018.



## Dr Harsh Vardhan

Age: 64

### **Health & Family Welfare, Science and Technology**

Won from Chandni Chowk by a margin of 2.28 lakh votes. A former RSS worker, he has been a four-time MLA from Krishna Nagar in East Delhi. He was the BJP's CM face for the 2013 Assembly polls. Held portfolios of Health, Environment, Forests and Climate Change in the previous Narendra Modi government. He has also held portfolios of health, law and education in Delhi government and is credited with a successful polio eradication programme.



## Prakash Javadekar

Age: 68

### **Environment and MIB**

Third-term Rajya Sabha member. Was elected to RS from Maharashtra in 2008, Madhya Pradesh in 2014 and Maharashtra again in 2018. Has been BJP national spokesperson for long; was Maharashtra BJP spokesperson earlier. Ministers of State (Independent Charge) for I&B (up to July 2016); Environment, Forest & Climate Change; Parliamentary Affairs (both up to Nov 2014. HRD Minister (since 2016).



## Piyush Goyal

Age: 54

### **Railways, and Commerce and Industry**

RS MP from Maharashtra. Played a key role in drawing strategies for BJP in the 2019 elections, worked closely with party president Amit Shah and PM Narendra Modi. In the previous Modi government, Goyal was made Minister of State for Power, Coal, New and Renewable Energy and Mines. He was elevated mid-term to cabinet rank and made Minister for Railways. In 2018, he temporarily held charge of finance.



## Dharmendra Pradhan

Age: 49

### **Petroleum, Natural Gas and Steel**

Did not contest. Was key manager of Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Odisha. Odisha MLA 2000-04; BJP national secretary of BJP in 2002; elected to Lok Sabha from Deogarh in 2004. Elected to Rajya Sabha (from MP) in May 2012; re-elected to RS in April 2018.



## Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

Age: 61

### **Minority Affairs**

Elected a Rajya Sabha member from Jharkhand in 2016. Naqvi has been one of the few Muslim faces in the BJP. He won the 1998 Lok Sabha poll from Rampur. In 1998, he was appointed minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. In 2014, he was appointed MoS, Minority Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs. Was later given independent charge of the minority affairs ministry.



## Pralhad Joshi

Age: 56

### **Parliamentary Affairs, Coal and Mines**

Won from Dharwad constituency by a margin of over 2 lakh votes. A fiery orator who enjoys a good rapport with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah, Joshi has been a four-time MP and former Karnataka BJP chief. He was considered to be a close aide of former BJP minister H N Ananth Kumar, who died last year.



## Mahendra Nath Pandey

Age: 61

### **Skill Development and Entrepreneurship**

Won from Chandauli by a margin of nearly 14,000 votes. He won as an MLA in 1991 and served as minister in the UP government. In 2014, he contested from Chandauli and won. In August 2017, he was named state BJP president. He was named Union Minister during the 2016 cabinet reshuffle but after the BJP came to power in UP, he was shifted to the state to head the BJP unit there.



## Arvind Sawant

Age: 67

### **Heavy Industries and Public Enterprise**

Won from Mumbai South by a margin of over 1 lakh votes. Started as labour union leader; was Mahanagar Telephone Kamgar Sangh leader for over 25 years. Helped secure multiple wage and other agreements, including govt pension agreement for MTNL employees. Was Maharashtra MLC from 1996-2010.



## Giriraj Singh

Age: 66

### **Animal Husbandry, Dairy and Fisheries**

Won from Begusarai by a margin of over 4.5 lakh votes. An upper caste leader, Singh is a two-time MP. He is known to make controversial remarks. This election, he was up against former JNUSU president and CPI candidate Kanhaiya Kumar. Singh has been Cooperative and animal husbandry minister in the Bihar government. He was also a Union minister in the previous Narendra Modi government.



## Gajendra Singh Shekhawat

Age: 51

### **Jal Shakti**

Won from Jodhpur by a margin of over 2.7 lakh votes. Shekhawat was elected president of the students' union at Jai Narayan Vyas University in 1992 as an ABVP candidate. He has also been associated with Swadeshi Jagran Manch and Seema Jan Kalyan Samiti. Shekhawat was appointed the Union Minister of State, Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, in September 2017.

**MoS (Ind Charge)**



**Santosh K  
Gangwar**

Age: 70

***MoS Labour and  
Employment***



**Rao Inderjit  
Singh**

Age: 69

***Statistics, Programme  
Implementation and  
Planning***



**Dr. Jitendra Singh**

Age: 63

***Development of North Eastern  
Region; MoS PMO; MoS  
Ministry of Personnel, Public  
Grievances and Pensions; MoS  
Department of Atomic Energy;  
MoS Department of Space***



**R K Singh**

Age: 66

***Ministry of Power; MoS  
New and Renewable  
Energy; MoS Ministry of  
Skill Development and  
Entrepreneurship***



**Kiren Rijiju**

Age: 48

***Ministry of Youth  
Affairs and Sports;  
MoS Ministry of  
Minority Affairs***



**Prahalad Singh  
Patel**

Age: 58

***Culture; Ministry of  
Tourism***



**Hardeep Singh  
Puri**

Age: 67

***Housing and Urban  
Affairs; Ministry of Civil  
Aviation; Commerce  
and Industry***



**Mansukh  
Mandaviya**

Age: 44

***Ministry of Shipping;  
Chemicals and  
Fertilizers***



**Shripad Yesso  
Naik**

Age: 66

***Ayurveda, Yoga and  
Naturopathy, Unani,  
Siddha and Homoeopathy  
(AYUSH); MoS Defence***

## MoS

Faggan Singh Kulaste, 60  
*Ministry of Steel*



Ashwini Kumar Choubey, 66  
*MoS Health and Family Welfare*



Arjun Ram Meghwal, 65  
*Parliamentary Affairs; Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises*



General (Retd.) V K Singh, 68  
*Road Transport and Highways*



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*Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution*



G Kishan Reddy, 55  
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Niranjan Jyoti, 51,  
*Rural Development*



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*Environment, Forest and Climate Change*



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*MoS Home Affairs*



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*Jal Shakti; Social Justice and Empowerment*



V Muraleedharan, 60  
*External Affairs; Parliamentary Affairs*



Renuka Singh Saruta, 55  
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Som Parkash, 70  
*Commerce and Industry*



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*Food Processing Industries*



Pratap Chandra Sarangi, 64  
*MSME; Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries*



Kailash Choudhary, 45  
*Agriculture and Farmers Welfare*



Debasree Chaudhuri, 48  
*Women and Child Development*



# MODI 2.0

In his second tenure with a resounding win, Modi is all set to redefine modern India

**T**he resounding victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) coalition in India's federal election represents a key marker in the modern history of India. It was the most extensive and probably most expensive election campaign in the country's history, with 900 million voters casting their votes in one million polling stations over 38 days. Some 83 million Indians were first-time voters, with 15 million of them aged 18 and 19.

The great Indian festival of democracy—as the elections are often called—is seen as the most challenging exercise in making all Indians feel they have a say in the running of the government.

And the return of Narendra Modi as prime minister is both an opportunity and challenge for the country. The 2019 parliamentary elections were the most “presidential” since the era of prime minister Indira Gandhi four decades ago, with a focus more on the personality of one leader (and his track record) than the candidates standing for office and their respective parties.

We travelled across India to the hustings in as many as 50 parliamentary constituencies and witnessed firsthand the “Modi phenomenon.” In constituency after constituency, BJP candidates evoked Modi's name and displayed his image every opportunity they could.





## Modi's larger-than-life presence

Modi was projected as the only leader who would revive the great Indian civilisation and save the country from the powerful elites and corrupt politicians who made up what the BJP deemed the “anti-national” opposition.

At times in the campaign, his personality assumed almost mythological proportions. The defining image was of the Indian leader shedding his regal robes and retreating to a bare cave in the Himalayas, close to one of the important centres of Hindu pilgrimage, where he meditated in a monastic saffron shawl. This reinforced his popular image as a puritanical and incorruptible leader whose first choice in life was to be a monk.

In contrast to this imagery, the opposition parties ran lazy, tired campaigns that failed to have much impact. The Congress party, the country's once-dominant political party, did not improve much on its devastating results from the 2014 election. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the sister of Congress president Rahul Gandhi, tried hard to mobilise voters with rousing speeches and campaign events, but these were just brief moments in the longest campaign in Indian electoral history. The Congress party's traditional hubris showed little signs of abating as it abandoned any chance of building potentially winning coalitions that could have countered the Modi juggernaut. The statement of veteran leader AK Antony speaks the pathetic state of Congress party wherein he has claimed in an open forum that 2019 elections are no disaster for the party. This self denial is likely to hurt Congress party more in the near future.

The only real resistance to the BJP-led coalition came from India's largest state of Uttar Pradesh, where two strong regional parties suspended their traditional rivalry to establish an alliance. The Modi campaign succeeded not just in appealing to nostalgia for India's greatness or in the ultra-nationalism that peaked after air-strikes against what India viewed as terrorist camps in Pakistan in February. It was actual delivery on the ground.

The social welfare schemes built around providing lavatories, cooking gas, and direct cash transfers to India's poorest have had tremendous impact across the country. Surprisingly, even the more woolly-headed schemes of the Modi government, such as his chaotic demonetisation decision in 2016 and a poorly implemented introduction of GST, were perceived by many voters as policies that were well-intentioned, but badly execut-

ed by the toxic bureaucracy seeking to undermine Modi.

In part due to these social welfare schemes, the BJP expanded its presence in states where it has traditionally had little previous success, including Bengal, Odisha, and many parts of southern India.

What Modi's win means for India

So, what can Indians expect from a BJP-led government for the next five years? Based on what we have seen since 2014, the government will be centralised and driven primarily from Modi's office. Fortunately, the messiness of Indian democracy and the strengths of the constitution will prevent the country from leaning towards authoritarianism, so that should not be a concern.

The previous Modi government has shown it was possible to take a pragmatic approach to social and economic policies. There are many key challenges that will require a fine balancing act. These include a further liberalising of the economy, with the structural changes needed to make it easier to do business in India and attract more foreign investment. Creating jobs and skills training for the vast numbers of young Indians remains a formidable challenge, as does India's struggling agrarian sector, which has reached a crisis point. The Modi 2.0 new finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman is honest and unconventional in approach so the country may see many new innovative steps taken in the financial sector.

It remains to be seen if the activism of the BJP's rank-and-file members, as well as the party's supporters in the Hindu nationalist movement, can be managed without compromising on key policies that India needs for social cohesion and to continue growing the economy. It will also fall to Modi to reassure ethnic and religious minorities—many of whom have fallen victim to Hindu mob attacks—that they are part of an inclusive vision for the country.

In terms of foreign policy, Modi has demonstrated deftness in New Delhi's relations with powers like China and the US, as well as other countries in the region. There are sure to be new challenges with Pakistan, in particular, as well as an increasingly belligerent China, but Modi has already shown he has a unique ability to build a personal rapport with other leaders. And with a surprise appointment of S. Jaishanker in the foreign ministry, Modi is ready for an aggressive muscular pro active foreign policy.

**Inputs Hemant Sharma, Dr Shiv Kumar, Diwakar Shetty and compiled by Dr Rahul Misra.**

# BJP's Chanakya

A man with avowed aim of having the BJP rule from “panchayat to Parliament”, Amit Shah has built his party into a formidable army that has been forever marching on since he took charge as its president in July 2014, turning India more saffron than it has ever been.



**F**or the 2019 elections, Amit Shah deployed over 7,000 leaders for nearly 500 poll committee across the country, with special focus on 120 seats that the BJP had lost in 2014, and brought in 3,000 “full-timers” across parliamentary seats.

- Amit Shah is known as an astute strategist

- Amit Shah took charge as BJP president in July 2014

- Amit Shah held over 161 rallies, visited over 312 Lok Sabha seats, travelled 1.58 lakh km, more than any other leader

He combined BJP’s core Hindutva plank with a hardcore nationalism agenda and set up a huge ground-level organisational setup to execute it -- the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) ‘Chanakya’, Amit Shah, blazed such a trail that the ‘Modi Wave 2.0’ surpassed its own original avatar with a much bigger saffron surge.

Known as an astute strategist whose non-political interests range from playing chess and watching cricket to stage performances and listening to classical music, 54-year-old Amit Shah is often hailed as the BJP’s most successful president for crafting its way to power states after states.

The record tally that Amit Shah has now delivered for the BJP in the Lok Sabha 2019 elections is already being seen by many as something that would be difficult to repeat, though there are others who believe there is more to come as they point towards further inroads to be made in West Bengal, Odisha and in down South.

A man with avowed aim of having the BJP rule from “panchayat to Parliament”, Amit Shah has built his party into a formidable army that has been forever marching on since he took charge as its president in July 2014, turning India more saffron than it has ever been. Political pundits say Amit Shah has used a skilful mix of ideological firmness, unlimited political imagination and realpolitik flexibility to keep the BJP ahead of the game.

Amit Shah ceded space in states like Bihar and Maharashtra to put allies at ease, worked on rival politicians with captive local vote banks to get them into the BJP fold, and sewed up new alliances as in Tamil Nadu and in the North East to boost his party’s winning prospects.

And, unlike in the 90s when the BJP first came to power at the Centre, Amit Shah ensured that his party made new



friends without inviting the charge from its core voter base of diluting its core principles, ranging from Ram temple to cow, nationalism and Kashmir, for political gains.

If under Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L K Advani, the saffron party was seen as being inhibited in going all-out with its Hindutva plank for fear of antagonising allies and due to its perceived limited electoral appeal, the BJP has worn its Hindutva ideology on sleeve like a badge of honour under Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah.

Amit Shah has been of a firm view that Hindutva combined with the BJP’s hardcore nationalism agenda, though panned as shrill and divisive by its critics, render the party a distinct identity, and is a winning electoral strategy. Amit Shah has always believed that the allies would keep coming as long as the party

is delivering in the polls. Amit Shah is also known to always match his limitless political ambition with a thorough spadework, and then takes charge at the ground to put it into work.

When it emerged in 2015 that the BJP with its small allies was no match to the joint forces of Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar in Bihar, the party worked at winning over the JD(U) president, who finally broke his short alliance with Prasad in 2017 and joined hands with the former ally. And when reports of disquiet within the JD(U) emerged with the alliance, Amit Shah met Kumar and announced that both parties will contest equal number of Lok Sabha seats in Bihar, virtually conceding the senior status to the regional party within the state.

In Maharashtra, where Amit Shah had let ally Shiv Sena walk out of the



alliance in the 2015 assembly polls so that the BJP can consolidate its position there, he offered a generous seat-sharing deal to the Hindutva ally for the all-important Lok Sabha polls.

In Uttar Pradesh with Yogi Adityanath at helm as chief minister, Amit Shah combined the Hindutva agenda with the Modi government's development plank to woo backward castes and bolster its traditional base of upper castes to take on a formidable SP-BSP combine.

Having risen through the ranks since starting at the booth level for the party in Gujarat at the age of 14 years, Amit Shah is a firm believer in the prerequisite of a strong ground-level organisational machinery for poll successes.

In state after state, he has put in place a robust organisational machin-

ery for publicising the government schemes, carrying out political programmes and making full use of social media to reach out to voters.

For the 2019 elections, Amit Shah deployed over 7,000 leaders for nearly 500 poll committee across the country, with special focus on 120 seats that the BJP had lost in 2014, and brought in 3,000 "full-timers" across parliamentary seats. Seen as a Modi confidante, Amit Shah also brought about cohesion between the government and the party, with the party leaders promoting the government's work and the ministers being used for the party work.

Leading from the front, Amit Shah held over 161 rallies and visited over 312 Lok Sabha seats, clocking over 1.58 lakh km, more than any other leader. After being given charge

of the party, Amit Shah was seen as Modi's hand-picked man to usher in changes to make it more attuned to the prime minister's vision. He did so, including by easing out veterans like L K Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi, cultivating a new band of younger leaders and by keeping the party firmly under his grip.

By all accounts, Amit Shah has become to Modi what Advani was to Vajpayee, and may have crafted a success much bigger than that of the original Hindutva mascot.

Just a few months back, Amit Shah said the BJP will remain in power for 50 years if it wins the 2019 elections. With the 2019 done and dusted, he can be trusted to work at the "50-year" saffron rule in India.

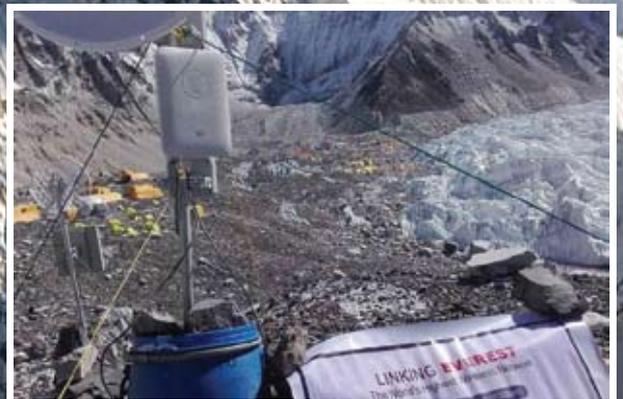
**By Prakhar P Misra**  
**Political Editor Opinion Express**



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# BJP's Policies and Vision

The nation hopes that with this resounding majority and consequent political stability, the Prime Minister will succeed in actualising his own vision and India's unbound aspirations.

Chandan Mitra

**T**he BJP was well on its way to emerging as India's 'natural party of Government' under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee when its hope was rudely dashed in 2004 after the "India Shining" campaign slogan backfired and the party lost decisively. Few expected the UPA 2 Government to return to power under the low-profile leadership of Manmohan Singh in the 2009 polls. But the unexpected happened and the BJP's exile from power got extended

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The 2019 poll results demonstrate that apart from setting new benchmarks in India's parliamentary history, the BJP has successfully crafted a new record of continuity of personality and policy.

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by another five years. However, under the muscular charge of Narendra Modi, the BJP bounced back with a stunning majority in 2014, pushing the Congress' tally to a paltry 44 seats in the Lok Sabha. The 2019 poll results demonstrate that apart from setting new benchmarks in India's parliamentary history, the BJP has successfully crafted a new record of continuity of personality and policy. Arguably not every section of the electorate is delighted by the BJP's overwhelming triumph, but all have accepted that its footprint across the entire country is unmissable now.

Once derided as a Brahmin-Bania party whose influence was confined to the Hindi-speaking States of North India, the BJP has broken through political and cultural barriers in the South,



East and North-East of India this time. This is a humongous achievement for which the party's charismatic leader Prime Minister Narendra Modi and tireless strategist Amit Shah can justifiably claim full credit. Commentators have attributed its spectacular victory to a combination of robust nationalism of the Balakot kind, a series of populist doles such as LPG gas cylinders to placate the underprivileged and a powerful dose of Hindutva. Many of these schemes and ideological predilections are not original. Some were directly borrowed from the predecessor UPA while the ideological positioning clearly bears the newly emboldened RSS's imprint. For its policies to outlast a five-year term and become ingredients of the BJP's ambition that it should become part of the "natural party of governance," there

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## The Time magazine's recent cover story describing the Prime Minister as India's divider-in-chief was certainly not a complimentary epithet.

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has to be a degree of balance and conciliation which has not been evident in the ruling party's style so far. Narendra Modi's combative approach may have endeared him to the national electorate but this may not always work in a complex society which requires consensus and conciliation rather than confrontation. The Time magazine's recent cover story describing the Prime Minister as India's divider-in-chief was certainly not a complimentary epithet. Although palpably exaggerated and symptomatic of typical Western media bias, Modi would do well to go in for an image makeover to emerge as an unifying rather than a divisive force. It is apparent that most of the minorities, particularly India's 185 million Muslims, have a deep distrust of the Prime Minister. This may not be justified as the NDA Government's policies evidently do not target Muslims adversely, but perceptions matter a great deal in shaping attitudes. Therefore, NDA 3 will need to work consciously to dispel the impression that India might get transformed into a Hindu-majority Pakistan. The political rise of rabble rousers like Sad-



hvi Pragya Singh Thakur up the BJP's ranks is certainly not reassuring in this context.

Apart from the social anxieties, the country's economic health report during Modi's first tenure has hardly been inspiring. Although, Modi managed to dust economic issues under the carpet through a skillful mixture of demagoguery and populist policies, the fact is that the fundamentals of the economy are shakier than during the UPA era. The truly worrying part is the stagnation of industry, credit squeeze and sharp drop in consumption. It was assumed in 2008 that the Government would come up with an incentivisation package and

then Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee did just that in the aftermath of the 2008 global slowdown. It is not too late even now to revive such a plan as tighter controls on tax collections have led to robust revenue growth. Modi may have successfully prevented jobs and distressed farmers' issues from dominating the election agenda. But merely ignoring them will not make the issues disappear. While doles such as the PM-Kisan Yojana may be temporary palliatives, in the long run, they cause irretrievable damage to the economy.

The new Government also needs to work hard to formulate a clear foreign policy, especially with an eye on the



neighbourhood. A mischievous western neighbour is perennially backed by an expansionist northern neighbour, and together they keep tensions alive in the region. Terrorists sponsored from across the border force India to be permanently on tenterhooks; by fomenting unrest in Jammu & Kashmir, Pakistan keeps provoking us routinely. New Delhi needs to have a clear Zero Tolerance Policy, necessitating physical demonstration of its exasperation. Modi has built a reputation as a no-nonsense leader, ready to hit back through surgical strikes across the border and other measures, including economic blockages. The Prime Minister must remember

that he is expected by his myriad supporters not only to act but must also be seen to act. India has made invaluable diplomatic strides in Modi's first term. Undoubtedly, our relations with the US, China, Japan, European Union and other powerful nations and blocks have shown marked improvement. This policy needs successful upgrading to position us as a superpower in the making. Similarly, India's space programme is among the world's most coveted. During Modi's second term, the country's first manned mission to space, Gaganyaan and spacecraft to the Mars, Mangalyan, will get launched putting India in an altogether different league.

As the saying goes, there is so much to be done but so little time to do this. But the Prime Minister himself coined the slogan "Modi hai toh mumkin hai. (Everything is possible with Modi at the helm)." The nation hopes that with this resounding majority and consequent political stability, the Prime Minister will succeed in actualising his own vision and India's unbound aspirations. The Prime Minister recently spent two days meditating at the holy Kedarnath cave. Lord Shiva would have blessed him then to fulfill our collective dreams.

**Courtesy: The Pioneer**

# Congress must reinvent 360° to exist

**T**he Congress party suffered a rout in the Lok Sabha 2019 elections and the big gloom over the party is more humiliating than the 2014 results with the biggest jolt in the hotly-contested Amethi seat in Uttar Pradesh. Firebrand Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Smriti Irani defeated Congress president Rahul Gandhi at his home turf, the traditional Gandhi pocket borough thereby taking the wind out of the sails of the Congress.

The impact of Rahul's shocking defeat, where huge victory margins have added the halo of invincibility to Gandhi family members will be felt outside the geographical boundaries of Amethi.

The spectacular show by the Modi-Shah duo has put a question mark on Rahul's leadership. Unlike 2014, this election was Rahul's first as party president and workers were looking up to the Gandhi scion to lead the way. Rahul miserably failed to rise to the challenge and stuck to Modi bashing that was amplified by the 'chowkidaar chor hai' jibe. Many in party's own circle believed that the tagline breached the boundary of political decency stereotyped the Congress of weaving a negative campaign with nothing to add of its own.

Oblivious to the ground realities or how the slogan was being received by voters, Rahul went on an overdrive even landing himself into trouble with the Supreme Court that further dented the Congress confidence. Rahul seems to have offered his resignation to UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi but his party leaders suggested that the matter should be left to be discussed at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting. As a matter of procedure, a CWC would be called within weeks of the results for a postmortem.

The CWC is likely to constitute a committee to delve into the reasons on the lines of the Antony Committee Report in 2014 that blamed UPA-2's anti-majority perception for its defeat.

But the Congress' course corrections have often been mere tokenism and less about transparency in order to insulate the top leadership. With PM Modi's unrelenting attack on dynastic politics the party will be under tremendous



pressure to act and show that it is actually serious about remaining in business. One of the most telling reactions came from veteran leader and former organisational general secretary of the party Janardan Dwivedi. When asked about the verdict he replied: "I am not surprised..." he said, not willing to add more.

Another old-hatter Punjab CM Captain Amarinder Singh known for being critical of Rahul's ways earlier, hit out at Navjot Singh Sidhu. Amarinder fired the salvo: "Navjot Singh Sidhu wants to become CM... His going to Pakistan and hugging Pakistan Army Chief Qamar Javed Bajwa cost the Congress dearly... the party should have taken disciplinary action against him..." he said.

Trouble for Rahul doesn't end here. Clouds of uncertainty are gathering over Karnataka where Chief Minister HD Kumaraswamy seems to be edgy and has been calling up Congress leaders to discuss the situation. Madhya Pradesh government could also be a cause for Rahul to worry.

More than demanding respect a leader needs to command it, and with his own image severely dented it is not going to be easy. Then the comparisons with the BJP's stalwarts is only going to get more sharper and unsparing that will make the unease and discontentment within the party only grow louder.

Congress President Rahul Gandhi's age — he will be 49 next month— and his party's Lok Sabha tally for 2019 at 52, seem to have moved up in a synchronised manner. Five years ago, in May 2014, Rahul, a highly empowered vice-president at the time, was on the threshold of turning 44, exactly the number of seats Congress had won in the sixteenth Lok Sabha.

While this is just a coincidence, this unintended tango can be symbolic of the existential crisis that faces both Gandhi and his party.

The Congress is staring at a credibility crisis following its poor show in the Lok Sabha elections, particularly when it comes to taking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata

Party (BJP).

The results are a poor reflection on party president Rahul Gandhi's leadership capabilities, besides the Congress' election strategy to take on the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The gravity of the loss can be understood from Gandhi's loss to Union minister Smriti Irani in Amethi, Uttar Pradesh, which was represented by the Gandhi family for over three decades.

India's oldest political party was limited to just 51 seats, marginally improving from its worst ever tally of 44 seats in 2014 with a 19.3% vote share. To make matters worse, for the second time in a row, the party will not be able to claim the position of the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha, falling short of the minimum requirement of winning one-tenth of total seats, or 54 seats, in the Lower House.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday evening, Rahul Gandhi said that the "public has given its mandate". When asked if he would resign from the post of party president, Gandhi said "We will have a meeting of the working committee and then it would be decided there...That you can leave between me and the working committee."

While Congress performed poorly across all key states in North India, it faced an electoral bloodbath in a direct contest with the BJP. Out of this, the biggest disappointment was in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, where it had defeated the BJP in state elections just six months ago. Out of the 65 parliamentary seats three states represent, the Congress managed to retain just three, virtually giving a walkover to the BJP.

Even in Gujarat, where it had remarkably improved its performance in the assembly polls, the Congress did not win any seats this time. The same story played out in direct contest states such as Haryana, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, where it failed to open its account. The shrinking of electoral footprint in the North-East continued, with the Congress conceding half of its 2014 seats largely to a resurgent BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA). "We have suffered huge losses in the Hindi heartland. All our gains are only from the South. The BJP ran an aggressive campaign; we could not take on their nationalism narrative and people voted for Modi. Top leaders will sit and introspect on what went wrong where," a senior party leader from Uttar Pradesh said, requesting anonymity.

The leader added that the party should have tried more to stitch up alliances like the one in Uttar Pradesh, where the opposition vote was split between the Congress and the Samajwadi Party-Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) combine. "As a political party, we need to decide whether our main aim is to take on the BJP or grow as a party. Both can happen simultaneously, but if at all we have to chose one, there should be a uniform approach. Even in states where we did have an alliance, there was hardly a common narrative," a senior party leader from Bihar said, requesting anonymity.

In all, the party drew a blank in over a dozen states. Its only bright spot came from Kerala and Punjab, which together accounted for 23 out of the 50 seats it won. Congress gained maximum seats from the south, including Tamil Nadu.

Party leaders said that despite their push for a 'constructive campaign' around a nationwide farm loan waiver and minimum income guarantee scheme, or NYAY, its campaign did not find resonance with the people and only those candidates who were strong locally, ended up winning.

"Unexplainable," said a senior party functionary from Madhya Pradesh, expressing his disappointment on the outcome. "How do you make sense of this result? How do you explain that after winning Chhattisgarh six months ago with two-thirds mandate, we are back to 2014 tally?" he added, also requesting anonymity.

This is the first general election, which was being overseen by Rahul Gandhi as the national president, since he took charge in 2017. Following the historic drubbing in 2014, former party president Sonia Gandhi withdrew herself from active political engagements, while Rahul Gandhi was given the charge to lead from the front.

With the exception of Punjab in 2017, Congress did not win any state poll on its own until last year. A ray of hope for the party came last December, when it won the three state elections. But according to political analysts, Thursday's results puts the focus back on the leadership crisis in the party. "After 2014, everyone kept talking about how Congress is facing a leadership challenge. People and particularly party workers hoped that they will do much better this time. But that did not happen. Post this result, the questions on Rahul Gandhi will grow. From a leadership challenge in 2014, this has become a leadership crisis in 2019,"

said Sanjay Kumar, director at the New Delhi-based Centre for the Study of Developing Societies.

Party leaders, however, said that it will be a while before voices of dissent come to the fore from within the party to question the leadership. "People will either desert the party or not question the leadership. If not the Gandhis, then who?" a senior party functionary said, requesting anonymity.

Senior party leaders were also wary of the fact that many Congress top guns lost from their seats, and this would have an impact on the party's state units.

While sitting Lok Sabha members Mallikarjun Kharge, Sushmita Dev, Ranjeet Ranjan and Jyotiraditya Scindia have lost the elections, former chief ministers Digvijaya Singh and Sheila Dikshit, too, had to concede defeat.

After the results Congress' challenge will not be limited to putting its house in order, but to stand up to a stronger and resurgent BJP in key assembly polls. Haryana, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, Delhi and Bihar will go to polls over the next one year.

Besides, considering that it will have a minor presence in the Lok Sabha for the second time in a row—it may not stake claim for the post of the leader of opposition—the party will have to build greater consensus among all opposition parties to make any strong pitch in the Lok Sabha.

According to analysts, the larger challenge, or 'crisis' as they put it, will be to accept that the party needs to reinvent itself to adapt to the new political realities.

"Frankly, Congress has multiple challenges and that is not restricted to this election alone. Everyone can predict what happens next from here. Almost like a clockwork, Congress will form a committee with its old war horses, who will prepare a report on what went wrong, but those issues will never get discussed. People will offer to resign taking responsibility, but almost everyone will continue to be on board," said Ashutosh Kumar, professor of political science at Panjab University.

"Congress is like an old elephant, which has an idea attached to it, but that too is fading gradually. The challenge for the party is to either arrest that decline or allow it to happen rapidly," he added.

**By Rajiv Agnihotri  
Bureau Head- Africa is based  
in Mauritius.**

# Global Media on **Namo 2.0 success**

Top publications from across the world took note of the scale of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's re-election victory, with some describing it as part of a global political trend



**T**he “charismatic but polarising” BJP leader’s return to power “mirrored a trend of right-wing populists sweeping to victory, from the United States to Brazil to Italy, often by promoting a tough security stance and protecting trade policies”, the Associated Press reported.

The outcome of India’s marathon Lok Sabha election, the seventeenth in its history, was clear well before officials began declaring results on Thursday. Trends confirmed what multiple exit polls had predicted: not only would the National Democratic Alliance (NDA)

win, but it would do so by a landslide.

Modi’s Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which leads the NDA, has once again won a parliamentary majority on its own -- it now has over 300 seats in a 545-strong Lok Sabha with two nominated members. Its leader was helped by a “mix of brawny Hindu nationalism, populist humility and grand gestures for the poor”, the New York Times reported.

The Guardian said in an editorial that Modi’s triumph would “see India’s soul lost to a dark politics one that views almost all 195 million Indian Muslims

as second-class citizens”.

Expectations that Modi would boost the economy and generate employment after his famous win in 2014 “remain unfulfilled,” said the Washington Post. This time, the newspaper added, “Modi instead pushed a message of nationalist pride, telling voters that he was the only candidate who would safeguard the country’s security and fight terrorism”. National security became an election issue after a military escalation between India and Pakistan brought the two nations to the brink of war in February. That happened days after a Pakistan-based terrorist group killed dozens of Indian paramilitary soldiers in a suicide bombing in Kashmir.

An editorial in Pakistan’s Dawn newspaper said the months “leading up to Mr Modi’s campaign were marked by anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan rants”; it accused India of “going so far as to escalate tensions by conducting airstrikes inside Pakistan in order to whip up nationalist sentiment”. The newspaper said “the focus must turn to a practical way forward for sustainable peace in the subcontinent. This is possible solely through an unwavering commitment to dialogue, an offer Pakistan has extended -- and India has rebuffed -- consistently.”

India’s position on dialogue with Islamabad is that talks and terrorism cannot go together.

While reporting on Prime Minister Modi’s victory, foreign publications did not lose sight of the other big story -- the Congress’s decline. Under Rahul Gandhi, the party that once dominated Indian politics now has just 52 seats in the Lok Sabha. It had won even fewer seats in 2014.

India’s Lok Sabha election was held between April 11 and May 19, and over two-thirds of around 900 million eligible voters took part. “The elections, so daunting an exercise they are phased over six weeks, were a testimony to the vibrancy of the world’s largest democracy just 72 years since India won independence from British colonial rule,” the Associated Press said.

Surprisingly the anti-Modi sting in the media was missing as for many outlets it was not an unexpected outcome of the elections. There was also no use in regular reporting of threat to Muslims and minorities by Modi or his BJP. However, analysis and editorial did highlight such threats.

The element of in-depth coverage of elections followed by deep analysis was





missing as almost all papers and other media outlets were dependent on news agencies in absence of dedicated reporting teams in India.

Dawn in a front page report wrote that Modi won an emphatic mandate in general elections that saw him pitching national security as an invincible talisman. “In projecting himself as the choreographer of air raids on Balakot across the border, Mr Modi severely bruised a fractious and unequal opposition, according to the paper.

The next government in New Delhi will determine the course of Indo-Pakistan ties, which were pushed to a new low after the Pulwama terror attack. During the campaign, Modi harped on national security issues, including a counter-terror operation carried out at the biggest JeM training camp in Pakistan’s Balakot.

Dawn wrote a scathing editorial about the success of Modi, terming it a victory of communal politics. “For the world’s largest democracy, the writing is on the wall: communal politics in India has triumphed in an age that will define the future of the republic,” it wrote.

It wrote that the results are astounding, and depressingly show that religious hatred and sectarian politics can be exploited to lure voters.

“Notably, the months leading up to Mr Modi’s campaign were marked by anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan rants, with India going so far as to escalate tensions by conducting air strikes inside

Pakistan in order to whip up nationalist sentiment, it opined.

The News International termed Modi’s win as “dramatic” but added that it only was reflection of a global trend. “His re-election reinforces a global trend of right-wing populists sweeping to victory, from the United States to Brazil and Italy, often after adopting harsh positions on protectionism, immigration and defence,” according to the report. However, an analytical article by Aijaz Zaka Syed appeared in The News International credited Modi for the victory of the BJP.

“If the BJP and Modi have won this election, they perhaps deserved to win. They put in a great deal of hard work and have had the hunger to win,” he wrote. He also said that Modi could be responsible for many sins but the Opposition failed to expose his fail-ures.

“It failed to offer a positive, redeeming narrative to counter the BJP’s campaign of hate and toxicity. Other than the single point agenda of getting rid of Narendra Modi, the opposition did not offer anything else. The Congress’ promise of nyay’ (justice for all) came very late in the day and was simply lost in the BJP’s propaganda blitz screaming about its various schemes and initiatives, he wrote.

The Express Tribune’s main story about Indian election results was not much different from the The News International as both had used contents of

same news agencies. The Nation in the main story highlighted that Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan congratulated Modi on his victory.

The electronic media was also not overtly involved in the results coverage and seldom stopped routine reporting to give breaking news and alerts about the Indian election results. However, some of the evening TV talk shows pondered over the questions regarding impact of Modi on India’s relations with Pakistan.

Special advisor to Prime Minister on information Firdous Ashiq Awan told Hamid Mir of Geo news in his talk show on Thursday night that victory of Modi is neither a bad news for Pakistan nor a good news.

“We want to engage with India and resolve all difference through talks. For us there is no difference who is leading India, she said.

Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Faisal to a question about elections in India said Pakistan consistently maintained that the only way to resolve all outstanding issues, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir is through implementation of UNSC resolutions. Dialogue is hence essential. We remain committed to the same, irrespective of whoever forms the new Government in India, he said.

**Inputs from Anshuman Dogra, Hemant Sharma from FCC – New Delhi.**

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# HISTORY MAKING BY PM MODI

The massive victory of BJP-led NDA has shown how the collective efforts of social media warriors, some media houses and political commentators to undermine the Modi government have failed miserably

**Kapil Dudakia**

**O**n 23rd May as results began to be released of India's mega General Elections, the feeling of déjà vu was experienced by the masses not just in India, but people around the world. The massive victory of PM Modi in 2014 was becoming a reality for the second time in 2019. Media channels, political commentators, social media warriors all left aghast as they realised that their collective attempt to undermine India and PM Modi had backfired spectacularly. The decimation of Rahul Gandhi's Congress for the second time was equally historic. The opposition failed to turn up. Their campaign of negativity, of undermining the nation and in attacking PM Modi with outlandish unsubstantiated allegation all fell to deaf ears of the electorate. Commendation must be

## KONVERSATIONS WITH KAPIL

given to the Indian electorate. It is now no longer ignorant of national politics and of the inherent power they have in their vote. The historic enslavement of the masses by the Lutyen cabal in Delhi using their control over the traditional media was broken by the Social Media which allowed their lies and fake news to be exposed to the voters. India with more than 50% of the voter base being less than 40 years old proved that this new generation aspires a bigger vision for the nation, and the only national leader that articulated this vision was PM Modi.

The news of this incredible victory of PM Modi was received with rampant enthusiasm by NRIs and PIOs around the world. From the UK the following gives a glimpse of how this victory is seen and



what it means for India/UK relations.

The congratulations were kicked off by Prime Minister May who said on twitter: "Congratulations PM Modi on your re-election as Prime Minister of India. I look forward to the UK's relationship with India continuing to go from strength to strength during your second term."

Bob Blackman MP (Conservative Party) placed this question to the British Parliament:

We have just witnessed in India the historic, landslide re-election of the BJP, and Shri Narendra Modi as Prime Minister. Will my hon. Friend join me in

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**"Congratulations PM Modi on your re-election as Prime Minister of India. I look forward to the UK's relationship with India continuing to go from strength to strength during your second term."**

**—Theresa May**

**British Prime Minister**

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congratulating him on his re-election? Can we have a debate in Government time on our relationship with India and how we have forged this friendship that goes back over 300 years?

And he received this response from the Government representative:

Mark Spencer MP Conservative Party (Whip, House of Commons):

My hon. Friend is right to draw the attention of the House to what is, I think, the largest democratic vote in the world. I congratulate the new Prime Minister of the Indian state. This would be an excellent topic for an Adjournment debate or a Backbench business debate. I encourage him to take the opportunity to make representations to the Backbench Business Committee so that we can all celebrate our relationship with the Indian state.

So, an election in India has had direct impact on what will be discussed in the British Parliament. Of course, the UK will shortly be getting a new PM and I am certain the level of interaction

between these two nations will elevate to yet another level as Brexit becomes a reality in the UK.

Lord Gadhia in an article wrote: Narendra Modi's victory in the Indian elections this week is not only the biggest democratic mandate of any leader in the world, in a subcontinent with more than 900 million eligible voters — it's also a vindication of the relationship that successive British prime ministers, led by David Cameron, have built up with the fastest growing country in the G20. Next month, I am hosting the first ever UK-India Day in Parliament. It provides an opportunity to demonstrate that "Global Britain" is not an empty slogan but a genuine attempt to win friends in a country which will play an increasingly significant role in our future prosperity.

Contrast this with total silence from the leader of the opposition in the UK. Jeremy Corbyn the leader of the Labour Party has so far tweeted nothing whatsoever on this historic democratic man-

date given to PM Modi by the people of India. You should not be too surprised though, Jeremy Corbyn after all is the same person who with his band of leftie extremists attempted to ban the then CM Modi and then incredibly, even ban PM Modi from entering into the UK. India and Indians should be fully aware that in the UK we have the Labour Party that has increasingly exhibited anti-India and anti-Modi sentiments. The Labour Party does have history of a close relationship with the Congress Party in India and all too often these two parties, with the Democrats in the USA, have created an arc of left leaning politics and power grab. In the UK the Labour Party is now also very closely associated with the Sunni Muslim community. In fact, in many circles the term, 'Labour has become Sharia Complaint' resonates loudly.

I asked Shri Satish Sharma, the Secretary General of the National Council of Hindu Temples about his views on the election result. He said, 'PM



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Lord Swraj Paul took to Twitter to congratulate the people of India as well as Modi. “You have shown your commitment in democracy. More than 600 million people voting largest in the world. Makes us all very proud. Let us make India strong. I am very proud to be Indian,” he said

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proven to be very successful. In 2019 PM Modi has expanded his reach and it is clear that the people of India trust their Prime Minister. The NRI and the PIO community in the UK are very supportive of PM Modi and his steadfast policy for the masses. I congratulate PM Modi and his team for a spectacular victory. We all look forward to tremendous achievements in the coming years. We also look forward to his visit to the UK so we can give him a proper ‘desi’ welcome’.

The Confederation for British Industry (CBI), the UK’s representative industry body, also welcomed the “landslide victory.” “The economic ties that bind the United Kingdom with India continue to go from strength to strength. Our latest research shows that the UK is the largest western investor in India and British business has created nearly 425,000 jobs since 2000,” CBI India director Shehla Hasan said. “India will be a vital trading partner as the UK charts a new future outside the EU. The bold economic reforms already taken by Prime Minister Modi have enticed ever greater numbers of British firms to India. To fully capitalise on these opportunities, businesses would like to see further progress in reducing corporate tax rates, data privacy and ease of doing business indicators like enforcing contracts or registering a property,” she said.

Lord Swraj Paul took to Twitter to congratulate the people of India as well as Modi. “You have shown your commitment in democracy. More than 600 million people voting largest in the world. Makes us all very proud. Let us

Modiji’s election victory is a wonderful development not just for India and Indians, but for the world at large. His 2014 political mantra, “with everyone for everyone”, has become a practical reality. Modiji’s performance and consequential success is also a “political lighthouse” for the world’s political leaders. The greatest change however that Modiji is making is to bring a newfound respectability to authentic Dharmic principles on a global scale. For example, the effects of the International Day of Yoga are still being felt around the world and the best is yet to come. When the principles of Dharma start to release humanity from the grip

of blind belief, starts to help a divided humanity to re-connect and when the philosophy of our shared eternal divinity begin to dissolve the divide and rule identity politics of the last millennia, we will genuinely begin to understand the depth behind “Sab Ka Saath, Sab ka Vikaas - with everyone for everyone”.

Mrs Trupti Patel the President of the Hindu Forum of Britain also commented, ‘In 2014 the HFB congratulated PM Modi on his historic victory with a positive vision for the whole of India. In these years of governance PM Modi has shown that he speaks for the whole of India and his policies of uplifting the masses from the grassroots has



make India strong. I am very proud to be Indian,” he said

Since 2014 India has made a huge impression on the international stage. We in the UK have noticed that the respect for India and Indians has gone up significantly. Gone are the days when the world could or would ignore an Indian PM. Today we have reached a stage when the name of PM Modi is sufficient to get world leaders to stand up and take notice. The huge victory for a second term is history in the making. There is no doubt that the next 5 years may well prove to be the pivotal years during which India becomes Bharat once again. The world is in need of a Dharmic superpower to give balance to many conflicting forces that can undermine the very fabric of society. India has a huge role to play. PM Modi has the stature to step forward and lead from the front. The 21st Century belongs to India, it belongs to Dharmic communities across the world. For India it must now reflect and adjust to the

new paradigm. It cannot allow vested interests, be they from within or those from abroad, who would wish to undermine and destabilise the largest democracy in the world.

There are many challenges and no doubt PM Modi is well aware of these already. However, from this simple author a few highlights that I feel require almost immediate attention. The following list is not in any order, but an exemplification of the direction of travel that I feel India needs to take and secure in the next 5 years:

- Making the availability of clean water to every citizen the prime policy.
- Revoking Article 370 and Article 35A immediately. There can only ever be one law under which all citizens are governed.
- Defense of the nation with latest technology.
- Continue with infrastructure development.
- Education: It's time significant capacity is built in Higher Education

that is on par with some of the best universities in the world.

- Expedite the conclusion of all outstanding cases of corruption.
- National Health Scheme to be embedded and made the rock for the nation.

I can of course continue but suffice to say I trust the flavour of my thinking is clear in the points above. How many of these resonate with the new Government and thus end up being implemented, only time will tell. However, I am confident that I am not too far off what I believe will be the top priorities for PM Modi's new Government.

In the words of Swami Vivekanandaji: “Every nation has a message to deliver, a mission to fulfill, a destiny to reach. The mission of India has been to guide humanity”.

*Writer is chief of bureau: Reporting live from the UK. He can be located at Twitter: @kdudakia  
Twitter: @kk\_OEG*

# Historic Blunder?

As BJP promises to annul article 35A, what is the roadmap ahead?

**W**ith a majority government in Lok Sabha and near majority in Rajya Sabha, Narendra Modi-led NDA government will be looking to correct the historic mistake made by signing “Delhi Pact 1952” by then Prime Minister Pandit Jawarlal Nehru and Shieikh Abdullah. Article 35A of the Constitution protects any laws in Jammu & Kashmir relating to the definition and privileges of permanent residents from being challenged as discriminatory or unconstitutional. As an example of these privileges, Jammu & Kashmir restricts anyone except permanent residents from acquiring immovable property. Article 35A grants the Legislative Assembly in the state the power to make such a restriction, and prevents a challenge against this on the basis that this is inconsistent with the laws that apply to other citizens of India. A large number of political and defence analysts attribute instability in

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) to India’s inability to fully integrate the state into the union. The challenges towards such integration have historical roots, dating to the circumstances under which the state, led by Maharaja Hari Singh, acceded to India, following Pakistan’s attempts to annex the state through force. Historically, Pakistan has also consistently provided support to terrorist and separatist movements in J&K and has also extended such support to promote terror in other parts of the country, in furtherance of its own interests. The third factor is the imposition of Article 370 in the Indian Constitution and the addition of Article 35A, through the provisions of Article 370.

This provision has been challenged in the Supreme Court in several petitions, which is heard since August 2018, when the matter was postponed in light of the upcoming local elections. However, the court has a limited to power to interpret the provision and Parliament

is the forum to decide the fate of the Article 35A.

## Article 35A is against women

If a Kashmiri man marries a non-permanent resident, he can bequeath his property to his children. However, if a Kashmiri woman who is a permanent resident marries a non-Kashmiri, her children lose their claim over her ancestral property. Charu Walikhanna desires to build a house in Jammu and Kashmir to rediscover her Kashmiri Pandit roots. But her marriage to a non-Kashmiri demotes her to the status of a ‘non-permanent resident’ of her home state. And a non-permanent resident, as per Article 35A of the Indian Constitution, cannot acquire immovable property, vote, seek a government job or admission to a government-aided educational institute in Jammu and Kashmir. Charu Walikhanna’s petition challenges Article 35A on the grounds





that it is discriminatory against women. But there's still room for further clarification. The full judge bench of the J&K High Court did not elaborate on whether the children of women married to non-Kashmiris would also be considered permanent residents who could inherit the property.

Incidentally, the law that gives 'state subjects' or 'permanent residents' special rights and privileges is a direct import from a 171-year-old agreement between the first Dogra ruler of J&K, Gulab Singh and the East India Company. It was incorporated under Article 370 through a constitutional order signed by Rajendra Prasad in 1954. Sixty-three years after Dr Rajendra Prasad signed the constitutional order bringing Article 35A into existence: its validity is being questioned. Sixty-three years after Dr Rajendra Prasad signed the constitutional order bringing Article 35A into existence, its validity is being questioned.

### **Article 35A does Not Have Parliament's Approval**

A constitutional order is essentially an expansion of an existing provision that does not need to be voted on, or need the approval of the Parliament. That Article 35A was included in the Constitution through a constitutional order and not with the Parliament's ap-

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**In 1949, all princely states were requested to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly to help draft the Constitution of India. The princely states were also encouraged to set up their own constituent assemblies. The J&K constituent assembly's only representation was to incorporate only those provisions in the Indian Constitution that corresponded with the Instrument of Accession.**

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proval (Article 368) is at the heart of the petition filed by a Delhi-based NGO, 'We the Citizens'.

### **What is the Relevance of Article 370 to this Debate?**

Before Independence, J&K was under British suzerainty. What this meant was that the ruler of the princely state, Maharaja Hari Singh, was in total control of all matters of administration and governance except – defence, foreign affairs and communication, which came under the British. At the time of Independence, Maharaja Hari Singh, albeit under pressure from tribal insurgents, chose to accede to India but agreed to sign the Instrument of Accession as long as the same arrangement was allowed to continue.

In 1949, all princely states were requested to send their representatives to the Constituent Assembly to help draft the Constitution of India. The princely states were also encouraged to set up their own constituent assemblies. The J&K constituent assembly's only representation was to incorporate only those provisions in the Indian Constitution that corresponded with the Instrument of Accession.

This came to be known as Article 370. A question mark on the special status of J&K will put a question mark on the accession itself, said former J&K CM Omar Abdullah on the government's stand in the apex court seeking a wider debate on Article 35A. A question mark on the special status of J&K



will put a question mark on the accession itself, said former J&K CM Omar Abdullah on the government's stand in the apex court seeking a wider debate on Article 35A.

### **What was PM Nehru's Take on Article 370?**

In 1952, the State and Union signed the Delhi Agreement which extended Indian citizenship to all residents of the state and allowed the state to decide

on the rights and privileges of the state subjects or permanent residents, as they would now be called. In a statement to the Lok Sabha on the Delhi Agreement, Prime Minister Nehru said:

### **Was Article 370 Meant to Be a Permanent Solution?**

It must be noted, however, that Article 370 was stipulated in the Indian Constitution as a temporary provision. In the 60 years since, Jammu and Kash-

mir continues to enjoy its special status, but its autonomous nature has eroded considerably.

Over the years, Reserve Bank of India and the Supreme Court have extended their jurisdiction to the state. A more recent and relevant example, however, is when India awoke to a brand new taxation system on the midnight of 1 July, the state of Jammu and Kashmir remained fast asleep. The state's tryst with the new tax took place a week later



after the J&K state assembly passed a resolution accepting the Goods and Services Tax, which was then formalised with a Presidential order passed by Pranab Mukherjee.

### **What is the Argument Against Article 370?**

The fact that Article 370 was prescribed in the Constitution as a temporary provision is the bone of contention in Kumari Vijaylakshmi Jha's appeal

admitted to the Supreme Court on 8 August. It asks the court to consider whether the temporary provision lapsed with the dissolution of the state's constituent assembly in 1957.

Article 370 was drafted in Part XXI of the Constitution, which relates to "Temporary, Transitional and Special Provisions". Clause 3 of the Article empowers the President of India on the recommendation of the J&K Constituent Assembly to issue a notification for

the abrogation of Article 370. However, the J&K Constituent Assembly dissolved itself on January 25, 1957, without recommending abrogation of Article 370, leaving some people to argue that Article 370 had become a permanent fixture of the Constitution of India, despite being titled a temporary provision in the Constitution.

### **Can Article 370 Be Revoked?**

Clause 3 states that a Presidential order issued on the recommendation of the Constituent Assembly of the State can revoke Article 370. However, that would require a new constituent assembly to be convened, one that is willing to recommend the revocation of Article 370. But even if it were to happen, the entire exercise could be subjected to a judicial review that could find that this clause essentially defines the relationship between the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union of India. In its affidavit to the Supreme Court, the state of J&K defended Article 370 saying it had become a "permanent feature of the Indian Constitution".

### **Article 35A - Introduction**

Article 35A of the Indian Constitution was added by presidential order in 1954 on the aid and advice of the Jawaharlal Nehru cabinet. It was promulgated in consonance with Article 370 of the Constitution. It grants special status to J&K and empowers the Legislature of Jammu and Kashmir to define its 'Permanent Residents', their rights and privileges and imposing restrictions upon other persons. The terms of Article 370 were negotiated by the Kashmiri Muslims keeping only their interest and sentiments in mind, while completely ignoring the sentiments and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Ladakh Divisions.

### **History of Article 35A**

Before independence, J&K was a princely state ruled by Maharaja Hari Singh and its citizens were referred to as the subjects of the state. In 1927 and 1932, Hari Singh passed State Subject order conferring rights and privileges only to those state subjects. It was passed due to the apprehensions of Dogras from Jammu that the influx of people from Punjab would render them to lose their lands and jobs.

After J&K's accession to India, National Conference leader Sheikh Abdullah took over the reign from Hari Singh.

Sheikh Abdullah and the then Prime Minister of India Jawaharlal Nehru entered into an agreement known as the Delhi Agreement of 1952. Pursuant to the Agreement of 1952, the provision of the state deciding special rights and privileges on its people was added to the Constitution through the Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954, issued by the country's first president, Rajendra Prasad, on May 14, 1954, through powers conferred by clause (1) of Article 370. It was intended to protect the State Subject order.

### Who are the Permanent Residents of Jammu & Kashmir?

Section 6 under Part III of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir defines the Permanent Residents of Jammu and Kashmir. It states that:

(1) Every citizen of India shall be a permanent resident of the State, if on the fourteenth day of May 1954-

(a) he was a State Subject; or

(b) having lawfully acquired immovable property in the State has been ordinarily resident in the state for not less than ten years.

(2) Any person who, before the fourteenth day of May 1954, was a State Subject and who had migrated after the first day of March 1947, to the territory now included in Pakistan, returns to the State under a permit for resettlement in the State.

### Understanding Article 35A

Article 35A is not included in the 395 articles of the constitution, rather it is found in Appendix I in the Appendices of the Constitution, for it was not passed by the Indian Parliament. Despite the same, it is virtually included in Part III of the Indian Constitution.

Following are the special rights and privileges which the Legislature of J&K has conferred only upon its Permanent Residents:

1. Employment under State Government;
2. Acquisition of immovable property in the State;
3. Settlement in the State; or
4. Right to scholarships.

This article further goes on to state that no such law legislated by the J&K Assembly shall be void on the ground of it being inconsistent with the Part III of the Constitution, i.e. inconsistent with the fundamental rights of the Indian citizens.



### Arguments In Favour of 35A

1. Scrapping Article 35A would breach the Delhi Agreement 1952 which allowed the Presidential order of 1954 promulgating Article 35A.

2. Art. 35A conspicuously states that such law shall not be void on being inconsistent with fundamental rights. This creates a restriction for challenging the same.

3. Scrapping it would create apprehension in the minds of Kashmiris that it might disturb the demography and majority of Kashmiri Muslims in the state and cease the special status of J&K.

### Arguments against Article 35A

1. It was not added under Article 368 of the Constitution as it was passed in a Presidential order and was not laid down in the Parliament.

2. Indian citizens who are not the Permanent Residents of J&K are barred

from buying any property in J&K. On the contrary, the Permanent Residents of J&K can buy property anywhere in India along with J&K.

3. Persons who have been living for decades in J&K but who are not the residents of J&K can vote in the Lok Sabha elections, however, are barred from voting in State Legislative Assembly elections.

4. Students from other states cannot take admission in any College or University in J&K.

5. Hampers Industrialization and Privatization, for industrial and private sectors, are hard to be established in J&K due to restrictions in ownership.

6. It is a gender-biased law. A Woman who is a permanent resident of J&K loses her permanent resident status if she marries a man who does not hold the Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC). Further PRC is not given to the children of such a woman, debarring them from inheritance.



Whereas the same situation does not arise in the case of a man with PRC marrying a woman without PRC.

7. Violative of the integrity of the nation as enshrined in the Preamble of the Indian Constitution.

8. Violates fundamental rights of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes who have been living in J&K for decades and generations. Valmiki and Dalits, who were brought to the state in the 1950s, were granted the PRC subject to the condition that they and their future generations would continue to serve as safai-karmacharis (scavengers).

## Conclusion

Article 35A violates the very concept of equality enshrined in the Constitution of India. Its treatment of non-permanent residents of J&K is akin to treating its own people as second rate citizens.

The provisions of Article 35A also

violate the principles of gender equality. Section 6 of the Constitution of J&K, which derives its power from Article 35A, discriminates against women residents of the state who marry a person from another state. The children from such unions are not entitled to the Permanent Resident Certificate (PRC) or the benefits consequent thereupon, such as the right to acquire immovable property and a government job. The same, however, does not apply to the offspring of a male who marries a woman from another state.

Article 35A is in limelight nowadays. Two wings have been created in the country. One in its support and the other against it. This matter is sub-judice in the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India. The Kashmiris feel that scrapping Article 35A would prejudice their identity as a Kashmiri and would disturb their privacy in Kashmir. Farooq Abdullah, National Conference Leader,

says, "If 35A is abrogated, the revolt is going to be bigger." The other wing, comprising of the ruling party BJP and others believe that Article 35A should be scrapped to strengthen the unity and integrity of the nation.

Article 35A is a symbol of "Kashmiri colonialism" over the rest of J&K. It is time to repeal Article 370 and Article 35A. There will be violence instigated in the Kashmir Valley when the nation takes recourse to such action, but that cannot, and must not, deter the state from preserving the right to equality, enshrined in the Constitution. For the good of the people of India and for the residents of J&K, Article 35A must be repealed forthwith as it will pave the way for the development of the state and its total integration with the union.

**Prashant Tewari**  
*Editor-in-Chief,*  
*Opinion Express*

# Countryside Japan transitions from Heisei to Reiwa period with a fine balance between Culture and Economy

Long term Japan resident **Sanjeev Sinha** helps in global awareness of Japanese culture

## Japan a collage of tradition and technology

For the first time in modern history the Japanese emperor has decided to resign leading to a change from Heisei Period to Reiwa period from May 1st 2019. The Heisei period has led Japan through a new paradigm of balance between modern and tradition and placing Japan into a post-industrial society 5.0.

Among many of Japan's traditions, lacquerware making, known as Urushi in Japanese, goes back to 5000 BCE in Japan during Jomon Period.

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With a history of Japanese capital and arts and culture hubs moving to different locations across Japan, the tradition is also dispersed across different parts of Japan including small towns and villages.

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Japanese lacquerware, paintings, ancient pottery, sculpture, ink painting and calligraphy, woodblock prints, ceramics and origami are known and collected across the world. Famous Ukiyo-e paintings are also a popular collector's items. More recently manga which is modern Japanese cartoons and comics along with a myriad of other types are being known as Japanese soft power.

With a history of Japanese capital



Author with 4 sisters around 80 years old running the 108 years old Inn Tamaya in Daigo

and arts and culture hubs moving to different locations across Japan, the tradition is also dispersed across different parts of Japan including small towns and villages.

Japan is also well known for bullet trains, which is demonstrably the world's best as a combination of length, speed, frequency, service and most of all safety: not a single accident

fatality despite many severe earthquakes in the total history of more than 50 years. The remote rural part of Japan is also well covered by the public transport despite a very mountainous terrain of the country through breath-taking bridges and tunnels.

Japan's urban transport systems are also a wonder, with greater Tokyo having the world's most extensive



and smooth urban rail network of 158 lines with 2,200 stations serving 40 million passenger rides daily, a little more than the total population of the region, which is also world's largest urban conglomerate, at about 35 million. This is further connected with a dense and frequent bus operation as well as increasingly pedestrian and bicycle friendly urban planning. This is topped with a long-time impeccable record for safety and on-going regular improvements on all aspects. This leads to a very comfortable urban life style in Tokyo with almost zero crime, practically zero unemployment, negligible traffic jams, great healthcare and increasing convenience with omnipresent network of 24 hours convenience stores.

Similar is the case for other major cities of Japan like Osaka, Fukuoka, Sapporo, Sendai, Mito etc.

This poses a dilemma for Japan as the youth of Japan especially gets pulled into a handful of bigger cities not just for economic attraction but also for the active and playful lifestyle leaving the smaller cities and towns of Japan with dwindling ageing population.

### **A modern dilemma for traditions**

While Tokyo is upcoming as a major international arts and culture hub the traditional culture, arts and craftsmanship of Japan widespread into its diverse landscape of smaller towns are facing a threat.

Sanjeev Sinha, President of India Japan Partnership Group specializing

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**Sanjeev Sinha, President of India Japan Partnership Group specializing in promotion of collaboration including technology, finance, arts and culture between India and Japan, was invited by a joint initiative of TV Osaka and TV Tokyo for an experience and global awareness building of Japan's traditional culture, arts and craftsmanship in smaller towns.**

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in promotion of collaboration including technology, finance, arts and culture between India and Japan, was invited by a joint initiative of TV Osaka and TV Tokyo for an experience and global awareness building of Japan's traditional culture, arts and craftsmanship in smaller towns. In the context, Sanjeev Sinha is also an Advisor at the Committee on Promotion of AI and Inclusion at Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communication of Japan, been an Advisor to the Nagareyama City and for Japanese collaboration of new capital city of Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, President of India Japan Partnership Fund, India Japan Institute of Technology and a guest lecturer of Urban Development at University of Tokyo.

The place chosen for the theme Daigo Town is a little-known place in Ibaraki Prefecture, on the border of two other prefectures of Fukushima and Tochigi for the period of April 19th to 21st 2019.

The town at 160 kilometers north of

Tokyo is a host to a small community for plantation and collection of lacquer and more recently for making of inkstones and is the original investor of a popular health food of Japan Konyak.

The town also has many traditional inns called Ryokan and hot springs called Onsen, as is common in many places in Japan making it a wholesome trip to experience the local culture, hospitality and economy.

The Daigo Town has records of lacquer plantation and harvesting, known as Urushi Kaki in Japanese, for more than half a millennium. Sanjeev and visitors were greeted by Mr. Tobita84yo on the slopes of the hills in the town where a new plantation for lacquer is being carried out. It takes 8 to 10 years for a tree to be harvested which takes specialized traditional tools. As the visitors were taken around different plantation sites, they were treated to a wide variety of fresh local food highlighting the hospitality of country side of Japan called Omotenashi.



Mr. Tsuji from Tokyo University of Arts making Daigo his home for lacquerware arts

## Return of the youth to the tradition

In the team of 5 people most people were in their 70s and 80s except one Mr. Watanabe, affectionately called Watanabe Kun, who was only 26 years old.

Watanabe Kun was born and brought up in a large and world famous city of Kawasaki which is a part of greater Tokyo described above. His presence in the small and remote Daigo Town for Lacquer plantation was a very interesting phenomenon which deserves some deeper analysis. The generation of Millennials across the world are known for their special and independent nature. The accelerated changes in the global economy which are now so fast that a single generation can face 3 or 4 different economic paradigms. At the same time the great access of latest and world wide access of information makes it a very different world where the younger generations have a huge reasons to think very independently of their earlier generations. While the economic efficiency of the new world makes their lives very comfortable in the moment the serious concerns of the climate change makes the younger generation question the very values systems of the older system.

Watanabe Kun chose to leave the comforts and economic benefits of the bigger city and live in Daigo Town just with an impulse as he liked the idea. He is not worried about his economic future because the modern economy of

At the same time the great access of latest and world wide access of information makes it a very different world where the younger generations have a huge reasons to think very independently of their earlier generations.

Japan offers him enough opportunities for a good life style anytime he wishes to choose and change.

This brings the core intellectual and aesthetic luxury of arts, culture and nature to the forefront as a major driving force. Watanabe Kun, not worried about his own economic wellbeing, just chose to live in nature and tradition in defiance to the economic common sense of the earlier generations.

## Vertical integration of arts and culture

While Daigo Town has had the tradition of Lacquer plantation for hundreds of years, the town has not been known much because of the background nature

of the work. In the foreground is the lacquerware itself which is well appreciated as an art work across the world.

Hence not surprisingly, the town has attracted an art expert Mr. Tsuji from the top arts university of Japan, Tokyo University of Arts, to make it a base for his lacquerware studio.

Mr. Tsuji is producing world class lacquer art in Daigo Town and gave a demonstration and educational session to Sanjeev and visitors group. He also uses latest technology for temperature and humidity control in his process creating a fine balance and coexistence between tradition and technology.

The arts and culture survive on a sense of pride by the community, hence the lacquerware artwork in the town also enhances the sense of pride of the lacquer plantation community and the whole town can expect a boost. This was seen in move of youth moving to Daigo to work with Mr. Tsuji, and this time it was two young ladies in their 20s from central Tokyo.

Lacquerware also has symbolism in India Japan relations as many of the Buddhist artwork exchanged between the two countries historically and contemporarily. Both countries and rest of Asia also place a huge symbolism on Lacquerware, bringing Asia together in one of the ways of culture.

## Hardship of tradition and need for society

Symbolically so too, hard stone of Daigo has led to a new artwork in the

town with Mr. Sato, in his 70s, to chose the town for his hard work of inkstones making.

Inkstone making goes back hand in hand to the early history of calligraphy to thousands of years back. It requires special types of stones which lend themselves for the delicate shapes and finish required for Inkstones called Suzuri in Japanese. Mr. Sato found a river basis in Daigo which has the right kind of stone for the purpose. As a one-man project to begin with Mr. Sato started digging these stone, acquiring the tools for the Suzuri making and created his workshop on the way to a shrine in the mountains.

Mr. Sato, having lost his first wife and now battling with the illness of his second partner in the hospital, is spending a rather solitary life in the mountains and couldn't stop his tears when spoken on the matter.

Over the time Mr. Sato, has attracted a group of younger professionals, still in their 50s, to support him in his efforts and now is a proud owner of a Suzuri gallery hosting Suzuri work ranging from few hundred grams to 10s of kilograms and from 20,000 yen to few million Yens in valuation.

Omotenashi: the mantra of Prime Minister Abe to secure 2020 Olympics and Paralympics

Japan is known for Ometanashi, which is a level of hospitality and service from heart and culture going beyond any economic reasons. And it goes

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beyond age too as was proven by the four sisters all around 80 years old running a 108 years old inn called Tamaya Ryokan.

The four sisters symbolizing the longer lifespan of women then men have all lost their husbands to natural reasons. They decided to come together to renew their 80 years old bonding from childhood to live together and run the 2 storied inn inherited by them in this small town of Daigo.

Running the Ryokan requires taking care of all the errands from procurement, cooking, cleaning and bed making and they do it all with their heart into it. Their deep knowledge of the society, human relations and culture makes any

conversation with them very lively and enlightening.

Even in the age of 80s the third eldest sister makes an annual trip of couple of weeks with around 40 other friends from the Daigo town to different parts of Japan. Showing how the passion for life, community bonding and active lifestyle can help one live longer naturally and happily. The reason for their good health also lies in the healthy traditional food of the town as the town takes the credit for invention of famous health food of Japan called Konjak(pronounced in Japanese as Konnyaku) made from the Asian plant *Amorphophallus konjac* and has great health benefits with negligible calories





Japanese open air onsen called Rotenburo in Daigo

in the various forms of processed Konjac. As Japanese tea has become very popular in India in recent years for its health benefits, Sanjeev is also exploring promoting Konjac in India for its dieting benefits. Japan with its excellence in food processing has a wide range of Konjac based health supplements which can be preserved, transported and consumed under various conditions. Daigo town hosts a historical factory of Konjac and offers a wide variety of Konjac cuisines. Daigo also has a beautiful municipality run hot water spring, known as Onsen in Japanese, in the mountains with open air baths called Rotenburo. It's a delight to soak in the natural hot water in a very comfortable and clean environment surrounded by hills and trees.

The town is also attracting modern style guest houses like Lahar run by a young couple Mr. and Mrs. Komatsuzaki. Coming from the bigger capital city of Ibaraki Prefecture called Mito, the couple is providing the much-needed outbound marketing insights to the town that Sanjeev and other foreigners as longtime resident of Japan in the visiting group could closely associate with.

Japan having been a very homogenous country lacks the global marketing acumen which is much needed to promote the awareness of Japanese virtues to the rest of the world and India is

The town is also attracting modern style guest houses like Lahar run by a young couple Mr. and Mrs. Komatsuzaki. Coming from the bigger capital city of Ibaraki Prefecture called Mito, the couple is providing the much-needed outbound marketing insights to the town that Sanjeev and other foreigners as longtime resident of Japan in the visiting group could closely associate with.

widely recognized as a trusted potential partner for the same.

### **Smaller towns as a guideline for modern solitude**

The modern world especially in big well managed cities like Tokyo have gone beyond their economic necessities. With good lifestyle infrastructure of restaurants, 24 hour convenience stores and trustworthy health care with ambulances reaching within few minutes of calling, every individual is extremely self-sufficient. The self-sufficiency has led to people living alone and has taken its toll on human and family bonding leading to serious issues of loneliness.

The lifestyle of the four sisters in the small town of Daigo comes as a great inspiration and a living example to solve that problem of solitude as the people

in Japan can afford to focus more on culture and lifestyle than economy. Smaller towns can serve as the hubs for community rebuilding and in parts the big cities can also emulate to implement similar lifestyle models in the big cities.

With modern economic and urban development advantages, Tokyo is already seeing new development of smaller self-sustainable residential hubs in the so-called Society 5.0 or Post Industrial Society model which will underline the new Reiwa period.

Japan with its long term and well-balanced socio-economic planning leads the world in post-industrial society issues and solutions and can offer a significant amount of experience and know how in the domain, including the example of Daigo.

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# MERCEDES-MAYBACH: THE ULTIMATE CAR

**M**ercedes-Maybach stands for the ultimate in exclusivity and individuality. The luxury brand combines the perfection of the Mercedes-Benz S-Class with the exclusivity of Maybach. Now the top model from Mercedes-Benz is even more refined. A new radiator grille, optional two-tone paintwork and new exclusive colour combinations in the interior ensure an even more majestic look. The world premiere is at the Geneva Motor Show (6.–18.3.2018).

A reinterpretation of the Mercedes-Maybach radiator grille with its fine, vertical struts accentuates the front end. The grille was inspired by a pinstriped suit. It celebrated its world premiere in the Vision Mercedes Maybach 6, the exclusive coupé study which thrilled connoisseurs and fans of the brand in 2016.

The two-tone exterior paint finish is also a classic Mercedes-Maybach theme. In future there will be nine different colour combinations available on request. The double clear coat is available as a further new option for all dark colours. It creates a brilliant surface finish with a piano lacquer effect and a

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special impression of depth. The second bodywork clear coat, including intermediate sanding, is intricately applied by hand in the Maybach Manufaktur by specially trained varnishers.

The exterior look of the top model is rounded off by a new luxury 20 inch multi-spoke wheel. There are also three exclusive 20 inch wheels to choose from for the Mercedes-Maybach, including the wheel with a 20 hole design familiar from the Mercedes-Maybach S Cabriolet. Two new exclusive colour combinations

are offered in the interior: armagnac brown/black and savanna beige/black.

The black Maybach Exclusive nappa leather upholstery appointments can also be ordered with a choice of copper-, gold- or platinum-coloured contrasting topstitching. Also new in the range are trim inserts in design flowing lines Magnolia.

With a length of 5,462 mm and a wheelbase of 3,365 mm, the flagship of the Mercedes-Benz model range exceeds the long-wheelbase S Class Saloon by 20 cm in both dimensions. Rear passengers benefit from this increased size, as well as from standard equipment that includes Executive seats on both left and right and other exclusive details such as innovative voice amplification. The huge success of the Mercedes-Maybach speaks volumes: since the market launch of the Maybach in February 2015 over 25,000 Mercedes-Maybach S Class models have already been delivered to customers. In 2017, too, more than 1 in 10 S Class models sold was a Mercedes-Maybach.

**By Romil Raj Bhagat  
Bureau Chief – Middle East is  
based in Dubai.**





# Inspirational Aparna ignites hope for millions

**M**y guest today is called shy with a timid demeanour. But underneath all of that, is an aggressive sports girl which we will unearth as we move forward into our conversations with her. She's internationally recognized as having played and represented India at the prestigious Olympics, the Asian and Commonwealth games. She's the 9 times consecutive winner, of the senior national championships in India, a feat achieved earlier only by her coach and mentor Mr. Prakash Padukone. It is my honour and my pleasure to have with us, **Aparna Popat**. Aparna began playing badminton at the age of 8 under the guidance of her first coach, also a National Champion, Anil Pradhan.

**Q. Aparna, as a student, how was the feeling to equal the achievements of your own coach and what was your learning to having moved to that level?**

A. Well, I think, you know, first of all, when I shifted to Bangalore from Mumbai...that was after my 10th standard, to train under Mr Prakash Padukone. For me, it was just a big opportunity. He has always been my idol. Not only because of the accolades, and because he was world number one or All India champion, but also just because of the way he conducted himself. But training under him and actually watching him play day-on-day, actually made me want to emulate him even more.

**Q. So, which is where, as a student, even if we reach the level that our coach has been, somewhere we still remain the students under them.**

A. Exactly, that's exactly what it is. Though still, a lot more learning to gain from him and yeah...I think, I've just been very fortunate to have trained under him.

**Q. How did you push your physical and mental limits, to go beyond the sport that you had chosen to be in?**

A. I think when you're trying to achieve

excellence and try to get to a certain level, in any field, for that matter. You know, you said it right, you really need to push yourselves beyond what is required and it's not only in certain times of your career, but it's almost each and every day. And that really comes with an intensive motivation to be better each day. Because sometimes, as human beings we all have emotions and we feel, but you're trying to achieve something consistently, those emotions can't affect your place. You almost become very stoic in a way. So there's a lot of control need to be on that front as well. So yeah, I think, it's just the motivation and for the love for the game or whatever you're doing that actually gets to push yourselves to that limit.

**Q. So, which is where this question...there are a lot of children begin playing pro-sports. But the difference, with a lot of them falling out of the circuit is when they're unable to balance between this growing up and wanting to have fun and the friends and the family and the celebrations, the festivals and to be able to commit yourself so much passionately to the sport that you have to kind-off completely change your life palette. How easier, how difficult is it to actually do that?**

A. Umm...so, for me, it came very naturally because...I love the sport more than anything else. So nothing else mattered for me. It was just badminton as a young, tried to play seven days a week, which left little time for anything else if you consider school and the sport. But yes, it's a choice that a few youngsters have to make. It's really your priority, it's how you look at it and whatever you do should be done happily. So, I don't like to use the word 'sacrifice' because you're not sacrificing something to do something, it's just that you've chosen to play a sport or have chosen to pursue something over something else and that's a choice you have to make.

**Q. What is the difference between playing on a National circuit, where it is your home turf, it is**

**your comfort zone and then having to go beyond, to make that little shift, to move to an international platform and go for higher rankings and ratings, what is that thinking that is required to make that bridge ?**

A. When you're aiming to play at an international level that aim and preparation has started at much before. You get your opportunity as you get them. I played my first world junior championship when I was 14. At that point, we were at a stage in Indian badminton where we didn't really have too much international exposure. So, when I went out it was almost like, awestruck like, where am I? What happened? But, a lot of things have changed since then where today a child in an academy, in a pro-academy and ask what do you want to achieve, what's your aim? And they'll start Olympic medals downwards. So, that's a huge mental shift. And now, that is happening in Indian badminton and, you know, the results are there for all of us to see.

**Q. What is it that helps to make that transition?**

A. I think just the maturity to see it before it comes and not see it when it actually happens, because as I said the preparation is completely different. So, in my case after I won the silver medal and being junior world number 2, to them suddenly realise there's a senior circuit and now I have to do things differently, by which time, you've probably gone three steps behind in terms of the senior circuit. Umm...but today, it's not like that. Today I think, the kids at the age of 15-16 are already looking at senior badminton and then playing and preparing accordingly. So, that's just the difference.

**Q. How stressful is it, mentally, to make these transitions and what helps beyond the physical play...like beyond bettering your game, and technically getting more and more, you know, able to make the difference in the physical aspect of the pain? How much this mental, and like you had mentioned, emotional,**



**how much does that play a role and how do you say coach for it?**

A. I believe really, from my experiences through the last 20 years, you know that I played competitive badminton was really sport is really emotion and motion. You feel a lot of things as you're going along. There's a lot of anxiety, there's nervousness, there's elation, there's disappointment, there's frustration, there's pain, there's a lot of emotions that go along. And as a sportsperson over the years, we've learned to handle them. We've not stopped feeling, but it's just you learn to handle it and for me, the mind is really what dictates your body, the mind tells your body what to do. So, it's just a HUGE part of sport. And today we have sports psychologists, to actually look into this aspect it wasn't that many years ago, but it is the VERY, very significant part of the process. And that's when you come into, you know, things like killer-instinct, like you know, bouncing back from dis-

appoint, and all these things have to be handled and if they're handled professionally and if they're handled quickly, it's just more helpful.

**Q. Right. So, I have a question. They say 'bad carpenter only blames his tools'. But, how important are these little aspects like the right racket, or the grip or the kind of shuttles or the kind of coat that you're wearing and all your gear, how much does it actually also affect some of these games? How important is it?**

A. Yes, it is very important, because eventually the quality of your equipment will, to a certain extent, affect the output, what you're putting out. But it's not the only thing. It depends on which stage of your career you're in. I think for a beginner, it doesn't matter. It's about how you use the racket as opposed to which racket you're holding, or you know, how much of physical training

are you doing as opposed to which shoes you're wearing, different stages require different sort of equipments and if we, if you could just keep that sacrosanct, again each individual requires different things. So, that just has to be identified. And there's a lot of technical stuff in the sport today. If we can use technology to help your performance, of course take it. That's a no-brainer. But, it's not the only thing.

**Q. How much of that belief, the inherent belief in yourself, and the key to what makes you a sportsperson?**

A- You know, eventually you've got to realise that you're accountable for your performance. You know, that is the bottom line. As I do a bit of coaching, you see kids coming and saying, you know I hit the shuttle out, I say where was the racket? They say, in my hand. And I say, exactly. And it is IN YOUR HAND. So eventually, you need to take



the youth and you need to take the accountability for the outcome. So, if you can be responsible for your own performance, in a very mature and a balanced way, like you don't have to beat yourself down for every disappointment because we know sport, we can't win everything. But, if you can be balanced about it, but be responsible about it and very importantly be happy about it, yeah... I think, you should be alright.

**Q. Is there a hack that you could share for those down moments? Like you said you don't beat yourself about it. But, there are times when most of us get there, be it**

**we're a sport person or anywhere we're in the life. What is it that you use to get yourself out of these situations? Or especially when you're on court, when you've lost a shot or lost a point...how you kind-off change, in that split second?**

A. I think the key is, for me, at least, to find a solution, as to find a reason as to why happened, happened. And if you can identify the reason, you can identify solution. And if you identify the solution, your mind sort-off goes away from the outcome, which is what you want, because you don't want to be thinking, oh I lost, oh I lost, I lost the point, oh I lost, you know this rally of, you know

whatever it be, I'm supposed to be thinking, oh...even if I've made this mistake what could it have been due to? So then it takes my mind off the actual outcome and the result of what happened. And that sort-off help me going forward in the match or in the future, as well, as opposed to just looking at the outcome.

**Q. How has being a sports-person shaped you as an individual? What aspects of sports have actually been an intensive part of you as a person now?**

A. I think a lot of things. So I might say sports, came very naturally to me. I love sports more than anything else and I



still do, started off like that and still very much like that, which I'm very thankful for. But, as a person I think, the biggest learning for me is just to be patient, to take success and failures in your stride and I say, success is harder to handle than failures. I've seen that. And the third thing is, just as a person, to make me much more confident, because I was a very shy and reserved person. If you ask me to stand and speak to even 3 people, I would probably say I won't and I run away. And that's how I was, as a child. But I think sports has put me in a position a lot of times where I had to stand up and speak and today I feel like I finally found my voice somewhere.

And I'm still shy. I don't like too much social interaction. But at the same time, I feel I have a responsibility and that I can contribute back, you know, considering my experience, and I would love to do that when I get the chance.

**Q. Aparna, I wanted to talk to you about how women in India, most girls are playing sports as girls and they're doing professional, they're doing non-professional, whereas they grow more into their lives and further and they, most of them, sports takes a backseat. Like most guys would have a Sunday out, or a week where**

**today, I'm going out and playing sports, but the women still don't choose sports as an active part of their lives. So what is that could be a message for a lot of them to be able to see what 'sports' actually does for you in your life, to be able to take it forward?**

A- Well, the first thing is that, yes, you're right. I mean, not as many come up. But as we're seeing the change over the years, where a lot more women are coming out and taking part in various physical activities, which is great to see. But, for me, Sport is really; physically it does great things for you. There's no question about that. But for me, especially, you know, at a later stage, you know when you finish with school and college and you still want to pursue sports, it's more about what it makes you feel. Because it does eventually do very good for your confidence, you sort-off along with your physical fitness, you occupy yourself with your friends, you're networking and having fun, and you build those social circles and I think, it's more about that. Though, a lot of women go into the competition as well which is absolutely brilliant...

**Q. One last question, Aparna. What makes Aparna the woman that she is?**

A- Ah...! I think, for me it's still very much trying to be better each and every day and trying to learn. I've always had, you know this motto sort to say, you cannot be the best at everything, you need to go out to learn from other people and other situations and whatever your surroundings are. So, I just love to explore new things, learn, you know from different people, love watching talk-shows, love watching, you know, going to these forums, love watching documentaries... so, a lot of learning. And yeah, as much as I can keep in touch with sports, because that's what I love. So I do sit as the executive director at the Olympian association of India. I do a bit of coaching in badminton, some mentoring; I do a bit of TV commentary. So, it's just being involved in sport that makes me really happy. So yeah, leaning and sport, I think. That's it.

Thank you so much being with us: beyond sports and all the best that you're doing, for us, as a country, to take sports forward. Thank you so much!

***Article & Interview conducted by Sonalli Gupta: She is an acclaimed writer and corporate***

# A FREE SPRIT TO ENTERTAIN US

**K**arol Zine (previously Harshali Zine) is an Indian television actress. She has done her roles in various Indian television shows like Hitler Didi, Diya Aur Baati Hum, CID, Fear Files: Darr Ki Sacchi Tasvirein, Savdhaan India, Haunted Nights, Ishq Kills, Kismat Connection, Aahat, and Bhanwar.

Harshali zine, born n brought up in Mumbai based Maharashtrian family. About my family, I have two siblings, an elder sister n younger brother. Mom n dad both used to work; hence our upbringing has been very independent. I'm fiercely independent individual living life on my terms n conditions. I'm a hotel management graduate; studied n worked in gulf before perusing my dreams to become an actor. It's been 9years I'm working as an actor and it's been an awesome journey so far. I have been part of Marathi, Kannada n Hindi TV and films. So far I have survived but now I want to rise above survival and do something life changing. Currently I'm awaiting my Marathi film release on 6th October called Bhavishya Chi Aishi tashi, I play lead role in it. It's an astrological thriller. I intend to produce and direct films in future but for now I'm focused on acting.

***With Inputs from Nithya Ramesh –  
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