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## Breathing Hazard: Rising Air Pollution Threatens Public Health

Keval Dave

www.pdeuecho.com

Ahmedabad, November, - In recent weeks, the city of Ahmedabad has witnessed a distressing increase in particulate matter and noxious gases in the air, resulting in severe health concerns, particularly respiratory problems like cough and wheezing. While Delhi's air quality remained 'very poor' with an AQI of 343 on November 1, Ahmedabad's AQI reached 200, rated as 'moderate,' with toxic particles in the mix.

The deteriorating air quality has left an indelible mark on the health of Ahmedabad's citizens. Prakash Shah, 58 years, shared his disheartening experience. "I've lived in Ahmedabad my whole life, but I've never seen air pollution this bad. I've been coughing incessantly for the past month, which is affecting my day to day life. I wonder what will be the long-term consequences on my health." Meera Patel, another concerned citizen, expressed her distress, "My 10-year-old daughter has been coughing incessantly. It's shattering to see

ly for the past month, which is affecting my day to day life. I wonder what will be the long-term consequences on my health."

Meera Patel, another concerned citizen, expressed her distress, "My 10-year-old daughter has been coughing incessantly. It's shattering to see her suffer like this. We need immediate solutions to combat this problem."

Medical professionals are sounding the alarm as well. Dr. Manoj Modi, an ENT specialist, highlighted the gravity of the situation, saying, "The recent escalation in air pollution levels in Ahmedabad is nothing short of a public health emergency. The impact on respiratory health is staggering, and I've seen a significant increase in patients suffering from chronic cough, wheezing, and bronchial infections." Dr. Vishal Kachhy, a paediatrician, emphasised the vulnerability of children to air pollution, stating, "Children are particularly vulnerable to the effects of air pollution. We must raise awareness among parents and schools to take pre-



ventive measures such as reducing outdoor activities on high-pollution days."

The burgeoning construction activity in the city, driven by ambitious metro and bridges projects, is identified as a major contributor to the deteriorating air quality.

These projects, involving excavation, material transportation, and construction, release fine particulate matter that lingers in the air for extended periods. This pollution is further compounded by traffic congestion and vehicular emissions associated with these endeavours. In light of this crisis,

In light of this crisis, Ahmedabad must take immediate action to protect the well-being of its residents.

Implementing stringent regulations, promoting green initiatives, and raising awareness are vital steps towards ensuring a cleaner, healthier future for the city.

It is a collective responsibility for the government, healthcare professionals, and citizens to come together and combat the escalating pollution levels, ultimately improving the quality of life for all.

### CITY'S GREEN COVER STATUS

Ahmedabad has witnessed a gradual loss of its green cover. Trees and vegetation, which once acted as natural air filters, are giving way to urban development. The dwindling green spaces exacerbate air pollution and disrupt the city's microclimate, leading to higher temperatures. According to India's State of Forest Report 2021 (IFSR), Ahmedabad has suffered a significant loss of forest cover, declining from 17.86 sq km to 9.41 sq km, a 48% fall.

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# Rajasthan polls: Raje, loyalists in BJP's 2nd candidate list, Congress 1st list has Gehlot & Pilot

BJP announces list of 83 candidates day after its central election committee's held marathon meeting. This comes after first list triggered massive protests in state unit.

Neelam Pandey

New Delhi: Facing protests and rebellion after the release of its first candidates list for Rajasthan polls, the BJP has fielded former chief minister Vasundhara Raje from her Jhalrapatan assembly constituency and also allotted tickets to many of her loyalists in what is being seen as an attempt to mollify her. Raje has had a running battle with the party's high command, which has so far refused to declare her as its chief ministerial face. Three-time MLA Narpat Singh Rajvi, former vice-president of India Bhairon Singh Shekhawat's son-in-law, who was denied a ticket from his constituency Vidhayadhar Nagar, h



as been accommodated in Chittorgarh in the BJP's second list of 83 candidates released Saturday. assembly election on 25 November.

The list was announced a day after the Central Election Committee of the BJP held a marathon meeting to deliberate on the names. "Senior party leaders had spoken to Rajvi after he was denied a ticket and now he has been fielded from another seat. But his ticket has been given by replacing the sitting MLA, so this too might create some trouble for the party as many have been critical of the first list itself," said a senior BJP leader. The decision to include Raje loyalists, this leader said, came after protests from "several quarters" after the first list was released. According to BJP leaders, 25-30 Raje loyalists have been given tickets in the second list. Meanwhile, the Congress also declared its first list of 33 candidates. Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot will contest the election from Sadarpura, Sachin Pilot from Tonk, C.P. Joshi from Nathdwara, Divya Maderna from Osian, Govind Poonia from Sadulpur

## Schemes vs joblessness, graft: The choice before Telangana

Notifications for govt jobs issued in the state in 2022, after a gap of four years, have been also stuck after first list triggered massive protests in state unit.

Sreenivas Janyala

The Bharat Rashtra Samithi or BRS, led by K Chandrashekar Rao or KCR, has been in power in Telangana since the state's inception in 2014. In the nine years since, the party has consolidated its base on the ground through a series of popular welfare schemes and developmental projects. It is this narrative that the party is banking on this time too. As it gears up to fight for a third term, the BRS will face a resurgent Congress, which is going all out in its attempt after the resounding win in neighbouring Karnataka. The BJP, meanwhile, is deploying its strength from the Centre and is relying on its popu

lar state-wide yatra.

Welfare schemes, sops The central plank of the BRS have been its welfare schemes. Its direct cash transfers to farmers as part of Rythu Bandhu and Dalits through Dalit Bandhu, along with its scheme distributing sheep to OBC communities, have helped the party build a strong support base. Taking it a notch up, the BRS promised several sops in its manifesto released on October 15. The party announced that ration card holders will receive 5 kg of fortified rice through PDS shops and that 93 lakh BPL families will get life insurance premium under the KCR Bhima scheme.



The BRS also promised that the Aasara monthly pension for senior citizens, widows, beedi workers, filaria victims, single women, and handloom weavers would be raised to Rs 5,000 in the next two years from the existing Rs 3,016, with the monthly pension amount for handicapped persons going up from Rs 4,016 to Rs 6,016. It has also increased a hike in the Rythu Bandhu scheme from Rs 10,000 per acre to Rs 12,000. The party has decided to provide a gas cylinder for Rs 400 to "deserving poor women"

Sources in the BJP said they are likely to announce something on LPG cylinders in their manifesto. Replicating its Karnataka strategy, the Congress has already announced its five "guarantees" in Telangana. More such measures are likely to follow. As per D Sridhar Babu, chairman of the TPCC manifesto committee, the party is likely to promise 10 grams of gold to eligible women at the time of marriage and Rs 1 lakh and free Internet to students. The irregularities and problems in conduct

ing the state's public service examinations have become core issues shaping the discourse ahead of the coming polls. The notifications for government jobs were issued in the state in 2022 after a gap of four years. But these exams have been stuck in a limbo, causing distress to aspirants. On September 23, the Telangana High Court cancelled the Group-1 preliminary examination, finding that the Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) was not following due procedure while administering it



# India's Evolving Middle East Policy: Balancing Realism and Palestinian Support



Keval Dave  
Sharp Edge

India's UN Vote on Gaza depicts a Shift in India's Middle East policy

India's vote at the United Nations General Assembly resolution on the war in Gaza and what stands out is an important change in India's approach to the complex politics of the Middle East. At this the approach taken by the government is in the correct direction as it servers the long term strategic interest of the country. In spite of much condemnation by the opposition parties.

This mark a definitive shift in the evolution of India's regional policy over the last three decades. This, contrary to the criticism of, is not about India abandoning the Palestine cause rather It has to do with replacing the traditional diplomatic formalism with a policy rooted in a hard headed assessment of the shifting

regional dynamic, and India's enduring interests, especially in relation to terrorism.

In the past, India voted with the Arab resolutions against Israel as a matter of routine; Delhi also ducked the question of terrorism emanating from the Arab world. With its latest vote on the latest UNGA resolution, Delhi has underlined the primacy of its concerns on international terrorism without abandoning its demand for a two-state solution in Palestine which is a simultaneous just call and demand which the country has supported over the years. While the new realism is welcome, India's challenge is not with the nature of its UNGA vote that is non-binding and, in any case, ineffective. The real diplomatic task, therefore, lies outside the UN outreach to the Arab

world and explain Delhi's abiding commitment to Palestine's full statehood, publicly press Israel to re

, Sultan of Oman Haitham bin Tarik and President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi of Egypt, is a welcome first step.



spect the laws of war, and shore up humanitarian assistance to Gaza. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent telephone calls to moderate leaders of the Arab world, including Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority, King Hussein of Jordan,

Delhi's relations with the Arab leaders have never been as good as they are today, but India needs to complement it with a major diplomatic and political outreach to the Arab Street that is outraged by Israel's which has resulted into

The ongoing brutal repression in Gaza, coupled with the current presents a delicate diplomatic challenge for India. It is imperative for India to avoid conveying the perception of stifling pro-Palestine protests while endorsing demonstrations in support of Israel by groups on the opposing ideological spectrum.

To navigate this complex terrain effectively, the government must take decisive action against extremist groups that are reportedly disseminating disinformation in favor of either side. A comprehensive crackdown is necessary to curtail the influence of these groups, ensuring that the information landscape remains free from manipulation.

The BJP government, committed to a carefully crafted strategy of interest-based

## Caste census politics – what Bihar thinks today, Bihar used to think day before yesterday

Kanshi Ram was a genius & a political visionary, his ideas gave India an OBC prime minister. But Bihar-style caste census would be a very sad offering to the rest of the country.

Shekhar Gupta



Narendra Modi's challenges, whether divided, united, fortified or turbo-charged, cannot dream of defeating him next year unless they have that one big idea. If INDIA thinks a nationwide Bihar-style caste census is that big idea, I'd take liberties with the late Gopal Krishna

Gokhale's immortal line on Bengal and give it a reality check: What Bihar thinks today, Bihar used to think the day before yesterday. the Bihar social justice movement had succeeded in placing political power at the feet of the subaltern classes by 1990. It hasn't progressed since, and never

even endeavoured to take the next steps towards larger economic empowerment, widening opportunities and improving the lives of its people. This Bihar model would be a very sad and tired offering to India. It worked in Bihar, and even if all subaltern forces come together against the BJP again, it may dent Modi's prospects — but only in Bihar, where the BJP won only 17 seats by itself in 2019. How far can you reduce that? To be fair, to defeat Modi with this strategy, you don't need to paint the entire country in the colours of Bihar. You only need to do so in Uttar Pradesh Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra and maybe Haryana and Uttarakhand.

A close look at the caste breakup and traditional loyalties in any of these states will tell you that if this census is the revolution you were waiting for, it will not cross the borders of the state where it originated in 1967.

Why must you rely on my views, arguments or even biases if smart people are already calling it a revolution and Rahul Gandhi has also endorsed the late Kanshi Ram's original idea: Jiski jitni sankhya bhaari, uski utni hissedaari — to each a share according to their population or, in short, proportionate representation. Now, let's look at some facts from the 2019 elections and see where we go from there. As a detailed article by Amogh Rohmetra from ThePrint political bureau showed, in 2019, the Modi-Shah BJP had secured more than 50 percent of the vote in 224 Lok Sabha seats. That leaves them just 49 shy of a clear majority. Irrespective of which side you are on, you'd see the degree of difficulty in turning that strong a tide.

It's been nearly four decades since Mandal and Kanshi Ram rose. India has changed phenomenally since then, mostly for the better. The contribution of those ideas in enlarging India's talent base can be seen everywhere. This success has also empowered the new generations of the same social classes to aspire to more than a mere peon or clerk's job. A caste census can help the government design better, fairer policies. But its oomph will be way weaker in this era of aspiration than it was in that epoch of grievance. Does it mean the Opposition has no answer to Modi? That most certainly isn't my case. It is just that you need something bigger, more distinctive, positive, optimistic. Or in marketing terms, something that creates real brand/product distinction. The ideas Rahul Gandhi propounded, Bharat Jodo and Mohabbat ki Dukaan, checked some of these boxes. Why he is now jumping from that more virtuous boat to a tired old idea, is intriguing.



# Shuttering Fitness: Frame by Frame in Ahmedabad

In the Pursuit of Wellness, Ahmedabad Finds Its Groove



Running Strong: Women's Marathon in the city



City's Cyclists Pedal for a Healthier Tomorrow.

As the festive season approach, a remarkable shift in attitude towards fitness has taken root in the hearts of Amdavadi's. The city has seen a surge in health consciousness, has motivated citizens to embrace an active lifestyle and improve their overall well-being.



Youngsters try out zumba as a way to fitness and relive stress



Yoga Enthusiasts seen practicing.



Calm in Chaos: Meditators Find Balance and Fitness in the City.



Open air gyms at various AUDA gardens



A City Afloat on Health: Swimmers Advocate for Fitness in Ahmedabad

The rise of social media has played a crucial role in promoting healthy living. Influencers and fitness bloggers have garnered a solid following, encouraging others to adopt a routine.

Raj Agarwal, a fitness influencer, stated, "The power of social media is undeniable. I use my platform to motivate people to prioritize their health."