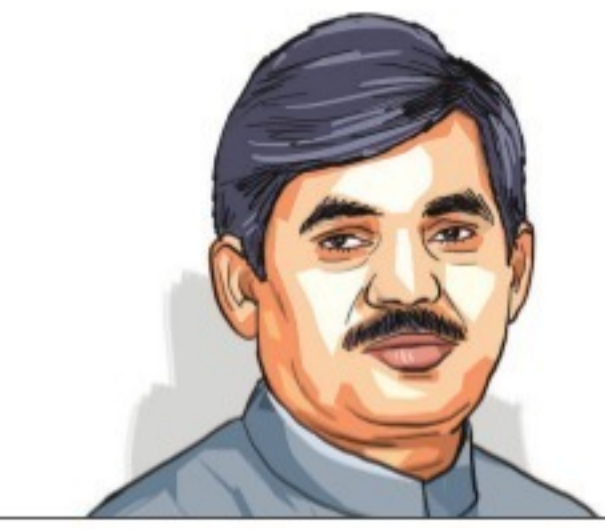


# 9 GOVT & POLITICS



## LOSING OUT

AMONG THE BJP leaders who lost seats in the pact with the JD(U) in Bihar is the party's most active spokesperson Shah Nawaz Hussain. After losing Bhagalpur by a small margin in 2014, Hussain, a regular face of the BJP in political debates on Hindi channels, has been working hard in the seat, hoping it would be given to him. However, in the seat-sharing agreement with the JD(U), the BJP has given Bhagalpur to its ally. The whisper in the BJP corridors is that Hussain, the single Muslim face of the BJP in the 13th, 14th and 15th Lok Sabha, who is also a member of Central Election Committee (CEC), could not find space in the party's "Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas" agenda. Hussain was Civil Aviation Minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government. Another party leader who is learnt to be upset over the seat-sharing deal is Union minister Giriraj Singh, who lost his Nawada seat to Lok Janshakti Party. Singh had even communicated that he would not like to contest if Nawada seat is not given to him.

## CALMING TEMPER

CONGRESS LEADER Sonia Gandhi is learnt to have initiated efforts to calm down KV Thomas, who was dropped from the party candidates' list in Kerala issued on Saturday. Thomas, who went public with his anger and disappointment as his Ernakulam seat was given to young MLA Hibi Eden, pointed out that he was the only sitting MP to be denied a ticket. The former Congress president has apparently told senior party leaders Ahmed Patel and Mukul Wasnik to meet Thomas to mollify him. Gandhi apparently wanted the senior leader to ensure that Thomas, considered a Gandhi family loyalist, would not take "any hasty decision" in anger. With Kerala's Congress leadership unanimously opposing Thomas' candidature, the national leadership may try to placate the former Union minister.

## SCREEN TIME

WASIM RIZVI, chairman of the Shia Waqf board, who has already drawn criticism from his community for his fight for a Ram mandir, is now ready with his film on Ram Janmabhoomi, titled Ram Ki Janmabhoomi. The movie, which he had said would portray what exactly had happened at the disputed area since 1992, stars Govind Namdev among others. The movie, to be released on March 29, also talks of practices such as nikah halala.

## Former IPS officer who arrested Jagan in assets case joins Jana Sena party

**SREENIVAS JANYALA**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

FORMER IPS officer V V Lakshminarayana, 53, who had arrested YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and Gali Janardhana Reddy, when he was a CBI officer, has joined K Pawan Kalyan's Jana Sena party. Lakshminarayana is likely to contest in the April 11 elections in Andhra Pradesh.

When he was posted to the CBI (Hyderabad Unit), Lakshminarayana, as an IG and later as Joint Director, had investigated the disproportionate assets case against Jagan. He has also handled several other high profile cases including Obulapuram mining scam, Emaar Properties case, and Satyam Computers scam.

On Sunday afternoon, Lakshminarayana met Pawan Kalyan at Jana Sena office in Hyderabad and formally joined the party. "Very few persons have the kind of qualities that Pawan Kalyan has. He is very committed towards work for the people and our ideas and vision match. I am happy to join Jana Sena," Lakshminarayana said.



Lakshminarayana (L) with Pawan Kalyan. Express

The Jana Sena on Sunday also announced an electoral tie-up with the Bahujan Samaj Party in Andhra Pradesh, allotting three Lok Sabha and 21 assembly seats to it for the April 11 elections.

Hailing from Kadapa district, Lakshminarayana is a 1990 batch IPS officer of Maharashtra cadre. He was posted as SP of Nanded and then joined the Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad before being posted to the CBI in 2006. After a seven-year stint in the CBI, he was appointed as Joint Commissioner of Police, Thane in March 2013. Lakshminarayana was later promoted as Additional DGP.

## In YSRCP list, 41 seats for backward classes

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 16

YSRCP has fielded 41 candidates from backward classes and five Muslim nominees for Andhra Pradesh Assembly polls, party chief Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said on Sunday.

After releasing the list of 175 Assembly poll candidates and 25 Lok Sabha poll candidates, he said the list was finalised after various surveys and representa-

tion was given to all sections. "The list includes 41 backward classes candidates as the party believes in social justice unlike Chandrababu Naidu who has included other castes also in backward classes category to boost up the numbers," he said. While Jagan will contest from Pulivendula, sitting MLA A Rama Krishna Reddy was renominated from Mangalagiri from where Nara Lokesh Naidu, state minister and Chandrababu Naidu's son, is contesting.

## MAHARASHTRA RERA LAYING DOWN SOPs

# Soon, flat buyers can remove builders from delayed projects

**NEERAJ TIWARI**  
MUMBAI, MARCH 17

IN A move aimed at empowering home buyers, the Maharashtra Real Estate Regulatory Authority (MahaRERA) is in the final stages of laying down a Standard operating procedure (SOP) under which flat purchasers in a private residential project will have the power to remove the builder from the project for failing to complete the project on time.

At present, there are at least 20 cases before the MahaRERA in which home buyers have complained against the builder for non-completion of the project by the promised date.

Faced with a slew of such complaints, the authority decided to frame guidelines under section 7 of the RERA Act under which a society, with the consent of 51 per cent or more of its members, can divest the builder from the project. A circular effecting the new guidelines will be issued soon, MahaRERA secretary Vasant Prabhu said. The guidelines, however, will apply to projects that are free of litigation before any other



There are at least 20 cases before MahaRERA in which home buyers have complained against builder for delay.

fora. "When a homebuyer purchases a flat in any private apartment, then after receiving 10 per cent of the flat value from the buyer, the builder has to register the flat sale agreement. As per RERA regulations, if more than half the flats are sold in any project, a society or an association of the flat owners has to be formed. Once the association or society is formed and majority of the members conclude that the builder won't be able to complete the project on time, they can file a

complaint in the name of the society and the builder can be removed from the project," Prabhu told The Indian Express.

The builder will get 30 days notice before being pulled from the project.

"According to the RERA guidelines, the money used in under-construction projects is from homebuyers and lenders (Banks or financial institutions). Under Section 8 of the RERA Act, if the builder is pulled out of the project, the first opportunity of completing the project will be accorded to

the society formed by the flat purchasers," Prabhu said.

Housing expert and lawyer Sanjay Chaturvedi said that the move will help homebuyers assert their rights. He also said that it will put builders in check and ensure projects are completed on time. He also said that in the city and suburbs more than a thousand private projects are stranded on account of the builders inability to complete them.

Ajay Kulkarni, a homebuyer who had booked a flat in the project at Mulund that saw multiple extensions in possession date said, "If RERA comes with a circular in which 51% consent of homebuyers can remove the builder from a delayed project, it will be a big move to keep builders in check, which will benefit homebuyers to get their homes." Rajkumar Sharma, ALMANAC (Advanced Locality Management and Networking Action Committee) coordinator for M - East & West wards Chembur while praising the move had a note of caution, "If a builder is removed by the society, any other builder will be sceptical in investigating in a project for fear of being targeted."

## BJP releases names for Arunachal, Andhra polls

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
AMARAVATI, NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE BJP on Sunday announced its first list of 123 candidates for elections to the 175-member Andhra Pradesh assembly, scheduled for April 11.

BJP is hoping to improve on its tally of four in 2014 while the main contest will be between ruling Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and main opposition YSR Congress headed by Y S Jaganmohan Reddy.

P Vishnu Kumar Raju, who was elected to the assembly for the first time in 2014 from Visakhapatnam North, has been re-nominated.

Sitting MLA P Manikyala Rao from Tadepalligudem showed no interest to fight again while another, Kamineni Srinivas, from Kailakuru has announced he was quitting electoral politics.

Incidentally, both of them served as ministers in the Chandrababu Naidu Cabinet when the TDP and the BJP were in alliance from 2014 to 2018.

T Jayaramulu has been chosen for the Badvel (SC) seat in Kadapa district. He was elected in 2014 on YSRC ticket but he moved to the TDP in 2016. Just a couple of days ago, he quit the TDP and joined the BJP.

Former MLA Nimmaka Jayaraju has been chosen for Kurupam (ST) seat. BJP also named candidates for 54 seats in the 60-member Arunachal Pradesh Assembly. Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu has been fielded from Mukto constituency.

## OPEN LETTER TO PEOPLE OF UTTAR PRADESH

# With help of Ganga, I will reach you: Priyanka

**MAULSHREE SETH**  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 17

A DAY before starting her campaign from Prayagraj, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, AICC general secretary and in-charge of eastern Uttar Pradesh, wrote an open letter to the people of the state saying that she would take the help of "Gangaji" (Ganga River) to reach their doorsteps and establish "saccha samvaad" (truthful dialogue) to bring "political change".

Referring to the Ganga River as the symbol of "Sacchayi" (truth) and "Sammanata" (equality) and also symbol of our "Ganga-Jamuni culture", Priyanka said she was taking the river's help to reach to the people. "Ganga Sacchayi aur Sammanata ki prateek hai. Ganga humari Ganga-Jamuni sanskriti are chih hai. Weh kisi se bhedh bhav nahi karti. Gangaji Uttar Pradesh ka sahara hai. Main Gangaji ka sahara lekar bhi apke beech pahunchungi." (Ganga is the symbol of truth, Ganga Jamuni culture. It does not dis-



Priyanka Gandhi in Lucknow on Sunday. PTI

tinguish. Ganga is the lifeline of Uttar Pradesh and taking the support of Ganga, I will also reach you), wrote Priyanka.

Priyanka, who is scheduled to start her campaign Monday, will take the river route for her 'Ganga yatra' from Prayagraj to Varanasi, the parliamentary constituency of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On the first day, she is also scheduled to hold 'Boat pe charcha' with students.

It may be recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had started his campaign in Varanasi in 2014, referring to river Ganga

## In video, Sharma takes dig at Priyanka

**AMIL BHATNAGAR**  
NOIDA, MARCH 17

A VIDEO has surfaced showing Gautam Buddha Nagar MP Mahesh Sharma referring to Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi as 'Pappi' after calling party president Rahul Gandhi 'Pappu' during a public meet in Sikandrabad near Bulandshahr on Saturday.

The video was reportedly uploaded by a member of the crowd.

"I was sitting in Parliament one row being the PM. The way he (Rahul Gandhi) winked, even I was floored. Now the Pappu says he wants to become a PM. So now Mayawati, Akhilesh Yadav and now Pappu's Pappi have also come. Wasn't Priyanka a daughter of the nation before? Wasn't she Congress' daughter?" Sharma,



as "Maa" and maintaining that it was the call of "Ganga Maa" that prompted him to contest from Varanasi.

In her open letter, Priyanka referred to the people of the state as "Pyari Behno aur Bhaiyon" making sure that like in her previous speech, "sisters" come before "brothers". She also wrote that Congress president Rahul Gandhi had given her responsibility for the party's affairs in Eastern Uttar Pradesh but she shared a long-standing bond with the state.

"Uttar Pradesh se mera nata bahut purana hai," she wrote, maintaining that she has been made the "sipahi" of Congress to "change politics of Uttar Pradesh". Alleging that youngsters, women, farmers as well as labourers are facing troubled times in Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka said a "stagnancy" had set in.

a BJP MP, is shown as saying in the video. "What is a new thing she (Priyanka) will be doing? Wasn't she daughter of Sonia Gandhi earlier also, or will she cease to be in the future? So first Nehru, then Rajiv, then Sanjay, then Rahul and then Priyanka. There might be just some more Gandhis." When contacted, Sharma said he could not talk as he was at a condolence meeting.

# Leaders across party lines condole Parrikar's death

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17



'He was an unparalleled leader, a true patriot and exceptional administrator'

LEADERS ACROSS parties expressed grief over the demise of Goa Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar who, they said, was a dedicated public figure and one who built modern Goa and was loved by Goans.

President Ram Nath Kovind's condolence message, which was the first official confirmation about his death, described Parrikar as the "epitome of integrity and dedication in public life" while Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he was "an unparalleled leader, a true patriot and exceptional administrator".

Parrikar, former Defence Minister of India, died at his private residence in Goa on Sunday after an illness. He was 63. His health, which has been fluctuating for a year, took a turn for the worse in the past two days.

"Extremely sorry to hear of the passing of Shri Manohar Parrikar, Chief Minister of Goa..." the President tweeted.

"Shri Manohar Parrikar was the builder of modern Goa. Thanks to his affable personality and accessible nature, he remained the preferred leader of the state for years. His pro-people policies ensured Goa scales remarkable heights of progress," PM Modi tweeted.

BJP president Amit Shah said: "In him, the nation has lost a true patriot who selflessly dedicated his entire life to the country and ideology. Parrikar ji's commitment towards his people and duties was exemplary... Parrikar ji has shown the entire nation how a BJP Karyakarta, even during his toughest time, is committed to the philosophy of Nation First, Party Next and Self Last. He will always be remembered for his contributions as India's Defence Minister and as CM of Goa." Expressing pain over the demise of his "dear friend", Home Minister Rajnath

Singh tweeted: "Deeply saddened and pained by the demise of my dear friend & Chief Minister of Goa, Shri Manohar Parrikar. He was known for his honesty, integrity and simplicity. He served the nation and the state of Goa with great diligence..." Congress president Rahul Gandhi, who recently visited Parrikar in Panaji, said on Twitter "I am deeply saddened by the news of the passing of Goa CM, Shri Manohar Parrikar Ji, who bravely battled a debilitating illness for over a year (sic)." Union minister Nitin Gadkari, considered to be close to Parrikar, posted on Twitter: "I am speechless. Today, we have lost a person who always practised gentle and simple politics. My brother Manohar was truly the leader of every worker's heart."

## Kanimozhi, Maran, Raja in DMK's Lok Sabha list

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
CHENNAI, MARCH 17

THE DMK on Sunday announced former Union ministers Dayanidhi Maran, A Raja and T R Baalu and its Rajya Sabha member Kanimozhi among its candidates for the 20 Lok Sabha constituencies it is contesting in Tamil Nadu.

Releasing the list of candidates, party president MK Stalin said Maran will contest from Central Chennai, A Raja from Nilgiris (SC) and T R Baalu from Sripurambudur constituencies, which they had won in 2009.

Stalin's sister and Rajya Sabha MP Kanimozhi will for the first time try her luck in the Lok Sabha polls. She will contest from Tuticorin constituency in southern Tamil Nadu. A total of 12 candidates are new faces.

In the April 18 elections, DMK is contesting 20 out of the 39 Lok Sabha seats in the state, leaving the rest to its allies, including Congress.

The party had drawn a blank

in the 2014 polls when it contested 34 seats while its arch rival AIADMK won 37 segments. Congress had gone alone but failed to win a single seat.

Replying to questions from reporters, Stalin said DMK's manifesto will be released soon. It would be both the "hero and heroine and definitely not a villain," he added.

DMK also named its candidates for bypolls to the 18 Assembly constituencies in the state to be held along with the Lok Sabha polls on April 18.

Former Union ministers of state S Jagathrakshagan and S S Palanimanickam have been fielded from Arakkonam and Thanjavur constituencies.

T Sumathi alias Tamizhachi Thangapandian, a noted orator in Tamil, will contest from Chennai South, Kalandidhi Veerasamy from Chennai North and D M Kathir Anand, son of party Treasurer Duraimurugan, from Vellore. Similarly, in Kallakurichi, former State Minister K Ponnudi's son Gowtham Sigamani is fielded.

## INTERVIEW: RAMDAS ATHAWALE

# 'Don't take Dalits for granted; give respect, get respect'

Union Minister for Social Justice RAMDAS ATHAWALE believes Republican Party of India (A) has got a raw deal in the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance in Maharashtra for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. In an interview to SHUBHANGI KHAPRE, Athawale warns that the Dalit vote base should not be undermined by Shiv Sena-BJP across 48 Lok Sabha seats.

**Where does RPI(A) feature in the Shiv Sena-BJP alliance?**

I am extremely unhappy with the Shiv Sena-BJP leaders' decision to undermine RPI(A) in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. Of the total 48 Lok Sabha seats in Maharashtra, Shiv Sena is contesting 23 and BJP 25. They should have conceded at least one Lok Sabha seat to RPI(A). I had expressed my desire to contest from Mumbai North East or Mumbai North Central.

**Why have Shiv Sena-BJP overlooked RPI(A)?**

I had meetings with both Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and BJP president Amit Shah. The central leadership believes they went out of their way to accommodate me as a Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha in 2014. It was followed by induction in the Narendra Modi government as Union minister of state for social justice... they had also promised to accommodate two RPI(A) members in the State Legislative Council in Maharashtra. But it is all on paper.

**So, are you planning to distance yourself from NDA?**

No. Any extreme step at this moment will amount to premature politics. I am just ventilating the anger of my followers not only in Maharashtra but also other parts of India. RPI(A) has taken the



Ramdas Athawale

decision to support NDA. But I would like to warn the Shiv Sena not to take Dalits' support for granted. Give us respect. Get our respect.

How will you ensure that?

We are still demanding our right for one Lok Sabha seat in the Assembly elections scheduled in October 2019. RPI(A) would seek at least eight seats. Both Sena and BJP should consider our demands from their respective quota. I

firmly believe Sena-BJP alliance will continue in the state Assembly polls.

**How would you compare NDA 2014 and 2019?**

In 2014, they had given four seats to smaller allies - RPI(A) contested from Satara, Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatna got two seats, Hathkanangale and Madha. The Rashtriya Samaj Party contested from one seat, Baramati. Of the four seats, only Raju Shetti won from Hathkanangale. Yet, I am insisting on at least one seat to keep the morale of my followers high. I am not against Modi or Fadnavis government which has conceded to all our demands.

**Do you perceive a political challenge from Vanchit Bahujan Agadhi led by Prakash Ambedkar?**

Not at all. My Dalit vote base

will remain intact. My friend Prakash Ambedkar has formed a new political front and is drawing good public response. But whether the public support will translate into electoral seats remains to be seen. I don't think he will succeed in winning seats. He will cut into Congress-NCP vote base. Ambedkar's politics will work to Shiv Sena-BJP's advantage.

**What more steps should be taken to stop atrocities against Dalits in the country?**

There cannot be any tolerance for even a single instance of atrocity against Dalits. Therefore, we fought and ensured the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act was not diluted.

**Did Congress-NCP approach you to join their**

**Mahagathbandhan?**

I have always received an open invitation from Congress-NCP. But we cannot forget the ill-treatment meted to us by Congress-NCP in the past. It was Congress which plotted my defeat from Shirdi in the 2004 Lok Sabha polls. After the humiliation, I took a decision after adequate consultation within my party to have an alliance with Shiv Sena. Another reason for shunning Congress-NCP is, they always used us as votebank. Whereas, Modi government has been more responsive in addressing the policies or projects which help in uplift of Dalits.

**What about ideological differences with RSS?**

I admit there are some issues where we have differences with RSS. But if we look at Indian politics both at the Centre and state there are no untouchables.