

Assembly elections in 5 key States in November

Polls will be held in Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telangana; counting of votes for all the States on December 3; BJP and Congress are in bipolar contests in three States

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

NEW DELHI

Assembly elections in five crucial States – Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, and Mizoram – would be held between November 7 and 30. Announcing the poll schedule here on Monday, the Election Commission said counting of votes would take place on December 3 for all the five States.

Chhattisgarh is the only State where the polls would be held in two phases – November 7 and 17. While 20 out of the 90 Assembly constituencies will vote in the first phase, the rest would go to the polls on November 17.

Mizoram with 40 Assembly seats would vote on November 7 along with

Battle lines drawn

Mizoram, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana will go to the polls in November this year. A look at the key dates

Counting day for all the States: December 3, 2023					
	Chhattisgarh	Mizoram	Madhya Pradesh	Rajasthan	Telangana
Election day	November 7, 17	November 7	November 17	November 23	November 30
Last date for nominations	October 20	October 20	October 30	November 6	November 10

the first phase in Chhattisgarh. Voting for the 230 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh would take place on November 17 and that in Rajasthan, which has 200 seats, would be held on November 23.

Telangana, which has 119 Assembly seats, would vote on November 30.

Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh have Congress governments, Madhya Pradesh is ruled by the BJP, Telangana by the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and Mizoram by the Mizo National Front. While the BJP and the Congress are in bipolar contests in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan, in Telangana, it

is a triangular fight between the ruling BRS, the Congress and the BJP.

BJP president J.P. Nadda said in a post on X (formerly Twitter) that the BJP would form governments in all States going to the polls.

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Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said his party would go to the people with public welfare, social justice and progressive development as its guarantees.

Announcing the poll dates here, Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Rajiv Kumar told the media: "There are a total of 16.14 crore voters in the five States going to polls, which is approximately 1/6th of the total voters in country".

He said these elections were significant not only for the States, but also for the nation, "after this, we will meet for the announcement of the Lok Sabha elections," Mr. Kumar added.

The CEC said there would be 1.77 lakh polling stations in the five States, of which 1.01 lakh would have facilities for webcasting and more than 8,000 polling stations would be managed by women.

A special focus had been given for making the electoral rolls inclusive and ensuring that all voters come to vote, he said.

940 check-posts

For the first time a new Election Seizure Management System had been introduced for better oversight for ensuring inducement-free elections. A total of 940 check-posts had been put in place for a strict vigil along the inter-State borders and to dry up the inflow of illicit liquor, cash, freebies and drugs for this.

Asked about the freebies announced by various political parties ahead of the Assembly polls, Mr. Kumar branded them as '*tadka*' (tempering) of populism and said it was difficult for those who win elections to either implement these sops or stop this practice.

The CEC added that the matter was at present *sub-judice* and the EC would act as soon as clarity and decision were available on this.

On a question on when the polls would be held in Jammu and Kashmir, the CEC said they would be held at the "right time" keeping in mind the security situation there.

Economics Nobel for study on gender gap at workplace

Associated Press

The Nobel Prize for economic sciences was awarded to Harvard University professor Claudia Goldin on Monday for her research that has advanced the understanding of the gender gap in the labour market.

Ms. Goldin is just the third woman to win the prize out of 93 economics laureates.

She has studied 200 years of women's participation in the workplace, showing that despite continued economic growth, women's pay did not con-

tinuously catch up to men's and a divide still exists despite women gaining higher levels of education than men.

"I've always been an optimist. But when I look at the numbers, I think something has happened in America, that we, in the 1990s, our labour force participation rate for women was the highest in the world, and now it isn't the highest in the world," Ms. Goldin said.

Explaining the gap

Ms. Goldin's research does not offer solutions, but it allows policymakers to tackle the entrenched problem, said

economist Randi Hjalmarsson, a member of the Nobel committee.

Ms. Goldin, 77, said that what happens in people's homes reflects what happens in the workplace, with women often taking jobs that allow them to be on call at home – work that often pays less.

"Ways in which we can even things out or to create more couple equity also leads to more gender equality," she said.

According to Ms. Goldin's analysis, a woman's role in the job market and the pay she receives aren't influenced just by broad social and economic changes. They also are determined partly by her individual decisions about, for example, how much education to get.



Claudia Goldin

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Glittering show

India's best-ever tally in Asian Games came from a diverse set of events

India's returns of over a hundred medals from the Hangzhou Asian Games is a watershed moment in its sporting history. The momentous achievement has understandably sent the country into a state of euphoria that has even overshadowed the start of the Men's Cricket World Cup. The 107 medals India clinched (28 gold, 38 silver and 41 bronze) is its best-ever tally, head and shoulders above the previous high of 70 secured at Jakarta 2018. While a lion's share of the gold medals came from the three disciplines of track and field (six), shooting (seven) and archery (five), India earning podium finishes across 22 different sports points to the nation's increasing diversification of excellence. The rowers, squash players, kabaddi stars and the men's hockey team impressed; there was a first-ever gold medal in equestrian; new heroes were found in roller-skating, wind-surfing, wushu and sepaktakraw. Even cricket, which has long lived an insular life away from multi-disciplinary extravaganzas, joined the party, contributing to India's tally with two golds. This being a visual era, some moments are sure to remain etched in the collective memory, like Parul Chaudhary's stunning heist in the final 50 metres to win the women's 5000m and Kishore Jena leading Olympic and World Champion Neeraj Chopra in men's javelin before settling for a creditable silver.

However, at continental games, harsh as it may sound, some medals are worth more than others. Sports such as badminton and table tennis see near world-level competition in Asia, which adds a bit more lustre to the medals won. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty's gold in men's doubles badminton, H.S. Prannoy's bronze in men's singles badminton, and Sutirtha and Ayhika Mukherjee's stunning win over the Chinese world champions in Chen Meng and Wang Yidi in women's doubles table tennis to ensure a bronze all fall into this category. Additional perspective can be gleaned from the fact that of the 28 golds, only 12 have come in events that are part of the Olympics roster. Even here, just a handful of marks, like Neeraj's 88.88m throw, are world-beating. This shows that while Indian sport has come a long way, a lot more needs to be done to bridge the gap with global standards. The Union government, Sports Authority of India and various State governments have come up with a plethora of initiatives to help athletes. But they are perennially threatened by inefficient administrators, factionalism in federations, endless court battles and the giant doping cloud that hangs around. For the head to be held high, the body and the legs cannot be allowed to falter.

Original sin

Israeli occupation of Palestine territories must end for lasting peace

The unprecedented surprise attack by Hamas on Israel on Saturday, killing some 700 people, should serve as a reminder of the unsustainability of the situation in the occupied and blockaded Palestinian territories and the dangers that non-state actors such as Hamas pose to Israel, no matter how strong their military and intelligence agencies are. Tensions have been flaring in the West Bank for months, but nobody expected such a coordinated, low-tech yet lethal incursion from Gaza. The West Bank has seen violence on a daily basis in recent months. Before Saturday's attack, some 200 Palestinians and 30 Israelis were killed this year alone. The Benjamin Netanyahu government largely ignored the violence, and went ahead with its other policy preferences, including the overhaul of the judiciary. The Israeli military described the situation in Gaza as "stable instability", noting that the situation, though volatile, was under control. And then came the Hamas attack, reminiscent of the 1973 Yom Kippur war when Egypt and Syria shook Israel. Hamas, an Islamist militant organisation that carried out suicide attacks in the 1990s and early 2000s, showed no distinction between civilians and soldiers, dealing the bloodiest blow to Israel in recent history.

The attack raises moral and pragmatic questions. Hamas's indiscriminate violence against Israeli civilians is repugnant and is not going to help the Palestinian cause in any way. On the contrary, it will put more Palestinian lives at risk as Israel, equally disregarding civilian casualties, is pounding the besieged enclave. But at the same time, Palestinian territories, under the yoke of the longest occupation in modern history, have been a fuming volcano. There is no peace process. Israel has continued to build settlements in the West Bank, raising security barriers and checkpoints, limiting Palestinian movements, and never hesitating to use force or collective punishment to keep organised Palestinians under check. This status quo has only turned Palestinians more radical and Hamas even stronger. Israel has now declared war. But past attacks – ground invasions and air strikes – have done little to weaken Hamas. West Asia has also witnessed geopolitical realignments in recent years – from the Israel-Arab reconciliation to the Iran-Saudi détente. But these changes have conveniently sidestepped the occupation of Palestine, West Asia's original sin, letting the status quo prevail. But the status quo cannot prevail without consequences. If Israel and other regional and international players want lasting peace and stability in the region, their focus must turn to finding a solution to the question of Palestine. The military operations without addressing the core issue would only be cosmetic interventions.

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Urban unemployment rate drops to 6.6% in Q1

For men, it decreased from 7.1% to 5.9% and for women, it decreased from 9.5% to 9.1%, show NSSO data; the labour force participation rate in the urban areas increased from 47.5% to 48.8%

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), carried out by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), has reported that unemployment rate in urban areas of the country has shown a decrease during the period April-June 2023.

Similarly, the labour force participation rate (LFPR) for persons aged 15 and above and the worker-population ratio (WPR) have also improved during the period.

This national survey processed details from 5,639 first-stage sampling units (FSUs) and 1,67,916 people from 44,190 urban houses.

The LFPR in urban areas increased from 47.5% in April-June 2022 to 48.8% in April-June 2023. While it hovered around 73.5% for men during this period, for women, the LFPR increased from 20.9% to 23.2% during this period,



The survey processed details from 5,639 first-stage sampling units and 1,67,916 people from 44,190 urban houses. NAGARA GOPAL

the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation said in a release here on Monday.

The WPR in urban areas increased from 43.9% in April-June 2022 to 45.5% for persons aged 15 and above. For men, it increased from 68.3% to 69.2% and for women, it increased from 18.9% to

21.1% during this period.

Decreasing trend

The PLFS claimed a decreasing trend in unemployment rate (UR) for persons aged 15 and above.

"UR in urban areas decreased from 7.6% in April-June 2022 to 6.6% in April-June 2023 for persons of age 15 years and above,"

the PLFS report said.

For men, it decreased from 7.1% to 5.9% during this period and for women, it decreased from 9.5% to 9.1%.

Key indicators

The Centre also claimed improvement in key labour market indicators in urban areas compared with those in pre-pandemic period (April-June 2018 to October-December 2019).

The LFPR ranged from 46.2% to 47.8% during the pre-pandemic period and in the latest report it was 48.8%.

The WPR was between 41.8% and 44.1% before the pandemic and now it is 45.5%.

The unemployment rate ranged between 7.8% and 9.7% during the pre-pandemic period and at the latest survey it was 6.6%, which, according to the Centre, is lower than the unemployment rates observed in the quarters covered in the pre-pandemic period.

Stroke deaths likely to surge to 9.7 million by 2050, says report

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Stroke, a highly preventable and treatable condition, could lead to nearly 10 million deaths annually by 2050, primarily affecting low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), warns a report published in the *Lancet Neurology* journal on Monday.

The projection comes from the collaborative effort of the World Stroke Organization and the Lancet Neurology Commission under which four studies have been published. The report underscores that stroke deaths are expected to surge from 6.6 million in 2020 to a daunting 9.7 million by 2050. By 2050, it is estimated that the contribution of stroke deaths in LMICs will see an increase from 86% to 91%.

The report has emphasised the critical role of evidence-based, pragmatic solutions in combating this looming crisis and notes

that implementing and rigorously monitoring the commission's recommendations, which are firmly grounded in evidence, could lead to a significant reduction in the global stroke burden, effectively countering this ominous projection.

The commission authors have presented their findings into 12 evidence-based recommendations. The recommendations include – establishing cost-effective surveillance systems for precise epidemiological stroke data to guide prevention and treatment, elevating public awareness and fostering healthier lifestyles through the widespread utilisation of mobile and digital technologies, including training and awareness and prioritising meticulous planning of acute stroke care services, capacity building, training, provisioning of equipment, treatment, affordable medicines, and allocating adequate resources.