

LOCAL MATTERS**Issues of livelihood, governance should shape poll campaigns in Maharashtra and Haryana**

Politics is set to take the centre stage in national debates with the announcement of Assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana, though there was hardly a lull after the Parliament election earlier this year. The BJP is in power in both States currently, in Maharashtra with its oldest and most combative ally, the Shiv Sena. In 2014, the BJP got its first Chief Ministers in both the States, reaping the reward for some audacious political moves. In Maharashtra it gambled away its alliance with the Shiv Sena and contested separately to win 122 seats compared to Sena's 63. The Sena lost its position as the alliance leader in the post-poll alliance, and that reality will now be formalised in a pre-poll alliance. In Haryana, the BJP dramatically rose, assembling a non-Jat social coalition and later reinforcing it by appointing a non-Jat CM in Manohar Lal Khattar. In Maharashtra too, the party's political strategy involved the appointment of a non-Maratha as CM — Devendra Fadnavis. In both States, the Prime Minister's popularity provided further momentum to the BJP's rise, which continued into 2019. The track records of the State governments can be debated but the party's advantage over its political rivals is evident.

The disarray in the opposition ranks, which is partly a reflection of the underlying social factors including deep communalisation of the polity in both States, is the biggest advantage for the BJP. In Maharashtra, the Congress-NCP alliance had long become a bastion of dynastic politics and vested interests. The BJP's strong-arm tactics has contributed to furthering the existing vulnerabilities of the alliance. In Haryana, the Opposition is split into three — the Congress, the Indian National Lok Dal and another breakaway faction of the party. These groups are in the grip of the dominant Jat community, which gives a tremendous starting advantage to the BJP. The Congress, under pressure from former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda, replaced its State Chief Ashok Tanwar, a Dalit, just ahead of the poll announcement. Altogether, the Congress's messaging has been uninspiring for its crucial social base of disadvantaged groups. Despite these remarkable advantages, the BJP has shown a tendency in recent weeks to stir up controversial issues. In Haryana, the CM wants to implement the NRC; in Maharashtra the government is, unlinked to the NRC, planning detention centres for undocumented people suspected to be immigrants. The BJP has also sought to bring issues such as the hollowing out of Article 370 into the campaigns. As two industrialised States, Haryana and Maharashtra must be at the centre of any effort to infuse fresh momentum in the country's sagging economy. Not surprisingly, these States are also hosts to migrant communities. A sharp focus on governance and economy at the State level in the forthcoming campaign will be helpful not only for Maharashtra and Haryana but for the entire country too.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Governance	Noun	Dominion, power, sovereignty, supremacy
Announcement	Noun	Pronouncement, declaration, claiming
Lull	Noun	Pause, respite, interval, break, hiatus, interlude
Combative	Adj.	Pugnacious, aggressive, antagonistic
Ally	Noun	Associate, concordat, confederation, coalition
Reap	Verb	Receive, obtain, get, come by, acquire
Audacious	Adj.	Impudent, impertinent, presumptuous, irrelevant discourteous, disrespectful
Alliance	Noun	Association, union, league, entente
Assemble	Verb	Come together, gather, muster, congregate
Coalition	Noun	Association, confederation, alliance, ally
Reinforce	Verb	Strengthen, fortify, bolster up, toughen
Strategy	Noun	Master plan, game plan, scheme, procedure
Momentum	Noun	Energy, power, strength, drive, impetus, force
Advantage	Noun	Upper hand, edge, lead, trump card, sway, dominance
Rival	Adj.	Competitor, opponent, contender, contestant
Evident	Adj.	Obvious, apparent, noticeable, conspicuous, perceptible, discernible
Disarray	Noun	Disorder, confusion, chaos, muddle, clutter, jumble
Vulnerability	Noun	Exposure, gullibility, predisposition, proneness
Faction	Noun	Clique, coterie, caucus, cabal, bloc, group
Dominant	Adj.	Controlling, commanding, ascendant, authoritative
Tremendous	Adj.	Huge, stupendous, prodigious, vast
Advantage	Noun	Upper hand, edge, lead
Inspire	Verb	Prod, exhort, stimulate, motivate, persuade
Crucial	Adj.	Pivotal, critical, key, decisive, deciding, climacteric, Influential
Disadvantage	Adj.	Deprived, underprivileged, destitute, bereft, indigent, poor
Remarkable	Adj.	Extraordinary, exceptional, astounding, astonishing, Incredible, stunning
Tendency	Noun	Propensity, proclivity, proneness, aptness
Stir up	Adj.	Vivacious, energetic, zealous, rapturous
Controversial	Adj.	Conflicting, moot, disputable, contentious
Detention	Noun	Imprisonment, incarceration
Immigrants	Noun	Newcomer, settler, incomer, emigrant
Hollow out		Delete, do away with, abolish, abrogate
Infuse	Verb	Fill, pervade, permeate, saturate, imbue
Sagging	Adj.	Becoming weaker, declining, flagging, attenuating

SEEKING TO SECURE

The move to link Aadhaar with GST registration is a tentative step in the right direction

Ever since the Centre and the States passed the landmark legislation in 2016 adopting a single countrywide Goods and Services Tax (GST), the federal council that is tasked with overseeing all the regulatory aspects of the indirect tax has had its hands full. From recommending the rates that could apply to various products and services, to deciding on what could be tax exempted, the GST Council has had the onerous task of laying out the policy framework for administering the tax in a manner that

benefits all stakeholders – the governments, the consumers and the suppliers along the value chain. Given the complexity of the legacy taxes that GST subsumed and replaced and the teething troubles of operating a new tax system, ensuring optimal outcomes has proved an abiding challenge. A significant concern relates to the loopholes that unscrupulous operators have sought to exploit, whereby revenue that ought to have accrued to the Centre and the States has leaked while allowing these elements to derive illicit profits. And the scale of some has been breathtaking. Earlier this month, the Directorate General of GST Intelligence and the Directorate General of Revenue Intelligence conducted a pan-India joint operation, which saw about 1,200 officers simultaneously conducting searches at 336 different locations. In the process they unearthed a network of exporters and their suppliers who had connived to claim fraudulent refunds of Integrated GST, with more than ₹ 470 crore of input tax credit availed being based on non-existent entities or suppliers with fictitious addresses. A further ₹ 450 crore of IGST refund is also under review.

It is against the backdrop of such cases, and the fact that frauds totalling up to a staggering ₹ 45,682 crore have been detected since the rollout of the tax in July 2017, that the GST Council has decided “in principle” to recommend linking Aadhaar with registration of taxpayers. In its 37th meeting in Goa on Friday, the council also agreed to appraise the possibility of making the biometrics-based unique identifier mandatory for claiming refunds. Already the GST Network — the information technology backbone on which the whole tax system runs — has made it mandatory for new dealers registering under the composition scheme for small businesses to either authenticate their Aadhaar or submit to physical verification of their business, starting January 2020. The council too needs to follow the network’s lead and move swiftly to recommend mandatory linking for refunds, especially since that has proved to be the main source of most frauds. In a becalmed economy, neither the Centre nor States can afford to forego even a rupee of revenue that is due to the public coffers.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Tentative	Adj.	Provisional, unconfirmed, unsettled, conjectural
Adopt	Verb	Embrace, take on, acquire, affect, espouse
Oversee	Verb	Supervise, superintend, inspect, administer
Recommend	Verb	Advocate, endorse, approve, put up, mention
Various	Adj.	Sundry, varied, assorted, heterogeneous
Onerous	Adj.	Difficult, absorb, percolate, imbibe
Subsume	Verb	Include, absorb, percolate, imbibe
Ado	Noun	Trouble, travail, fuss, bother, upset
Loopholes	Noun	Hole, gap, opening, aperture, hiatus
Abiding	Adj.	Enduring, lasting, persisting, long lasting, everlasting

		Perpetual
Exploit	Verb	Utilize, make use of, capitalize on, draw on
Unscrupulous	Adj.	Unprincipled, unethical, immoral, reprobate, Degenerate, fraudulent, dishonest
Accrue	Verb	Result, arrive, follow, ensue, emanate
Illicit	Adj.	Illegal, unlawful, illegitimate, outlawed
Proceeds	Noun	Profits, takings, gain
Unearth	Verb	Seize, discover, confiscate, impound, commandeer, sequester, sequestrate
Connive	Verb	Deliberately, ignore, overlook, blink at
Fraudulent	Adj.	Dishonest, cheating, swindling, corrupt, illicit, unlawful
Fictitious	Adj.	False, fake, counterfeit, specious, fallacious
Staggering	Adj.	Deeply, shocking, astonishing, astounding
Appraise	Adj.	Evaluate, assess, estimate, judge, gauge
Backbone	Noun	Mainstay, cornerstone, foundation, chief, support
Mandatory	Adj.	Obligatory, compulsory, binding, imperative, essential, requisite
Authenticate	Verb	Verify, validate, certify, substantiate, prove
Swiftly	Adj.	Rapidly, quickly, fast, promptly
Forego	Verb	Do without, go without, give up, renounce
Coffers	Noun	Strongbox, moneybox, wealth, repository