

BJP MLA Kalidas Kolambkar confident of ninth poll win; 'doesn't believe in Batenge toh Katenge'

■ STATE TIMES NEWS
MUMBAI: Kalidas Kolambkar, the BJP MLA from the Wadala constituency in Mumbai, has exuded confidence in winning the ninth straight term in the Maharashtra assembly elections, stressing his track record of public service and commitment to non-divisive politics.



The senior politician, who worked with Shiv Sena (undivided) and Congress before joining BJP in 2019, said he never believed in "Batenge to Katenge" politics. He emphasised that Muslim voters in this constituency will stand behind him.

Kolambkar claimed he would enter the Guinness Book of World Records for winning nine elections on the trot.

He is pitted against Shiv Sena (UBT) candidate and ex-mayor of Mumbai Shradha Jadhav from the Wadala constituency (earlier Naigaon), considered the biggest area-wise in the island city of Mumbai.

The constituency is marked by slums in the east and sky-

ed Shiv Sena, hasn't lost a single election since 1990.

He first became MLA on the Shiv Sena ticket from the erstwhile Naigaon assembly constituency, renamed Wadala after delimitation in 2009.

"I have worked at grass-roots. I know voters and they know my work over the last 40-45 years. I don't have any tension about winning the ninth term," he added.

Kolambkar claimed he would join the league of the senior-most legislators in Maharashtra who have won multiple terms.

Election data shows Congress leader Balasaheb Thorat has remained undefeated in the last 40 years. He had won his first assembly election from Sangamner constituency in Ahmednagar district as an Independent candidate.

The late Ganapatrao Deshmukh had won the highest 11 terms from the Sangola assembly constituency in Solapur district of Maharashtra.

Kolambkar, however, claimed he has been contest-

ing and winning without break since the 1990s, unlike Deshmukh.

"Ganapatrao Deshmukh was elected for 10 terms which included a break in his fifth term. I am winning continuously," he said.

A Bal Thackeray loyalist, Kolambkar quit Shiv Sena with Narayan Rane in 2005 and subsequently joined the Congress.

Kolambkar said Bal Thackeray was his political mentor.

The MLA claimed he left Congress in 2019 because the party ignored development of Wadala constituency and didn't accomplish pending works on police housing, redevelopment of BDD chawls, additional FSI for mill workers' homes.

He joined the BJP after Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis assured him to fulfil the pending works.

Kolambkar won on the BJP ticket from his home turf in the 2019 assembly polls by defeating his nearest Congress rival by more than 31,000 votes.

Kolambkar claimed he

polled more votes from new areas added to the Wadala constituency post-delimitation.

"It doesn't make any difference who is in power. My constituency was delimited several times but I stood my ground," he added.

When asked whether Muslim voters will support him in the face of "Batenge toh Katenge" slogans being raised by some BJP leaders, apparently aimed at communal polarization.

"I never used this (Batenge toh Katenge) principle in the last 40-45 years. Muslim voters in my constituency might not vote for the BJP, but they will surely vote for KK (Kalidas Kolambkar). I won multiple times as I never played caste and communal politics," he added.

Kolambkar said his opponent Shradha Jadhav posed no challenge to him as he had contested against her in the past.

"Entire Mumbai was brought to defeat me during the bypoll, but I won by 37,000 votes," he added.

Installation of FGD technology can cut SO₂ emissions by 67 pc at Delhi-area power plants: Study

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Installing the flue-gas desulfurisation (FGD) technology in 12 coal-based thermal power plants within a 300-km radius of Delhi could lead to a dramatic 67 per cent reduction in sulphur dioxide (SO₂) emissions, a new study has found.

The study conducted by the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA) said there are 11 coal-based thermal power plants within a 300-km radius of Delhi -- Dadri TPP, Guru Hargobind TPS, Harduaganj TPS, Indra Gandhi STPP, Mahatma Gandhi TPS, Panipat TPS, Rajiv Gandhi TPS, Rajpura TPP, Ropar TPS, Talwandi Sabo TPP and Yamuna Nagar TPS.

Additionally, the Goidwal Sahib power plant, located just outside this 300-km radius in Punjab, is also considered when making decisions about thermal power plants around Delhi.

Between June 2022 and May 2023, these plants released 281 kilotonnes of SO₂, into the atmosphere. However, with the integration of the FGD technology, this figure could be reduced to just 93 kilotonnes annually, the study said. Despite a 2015 directive from the government to install the technology, only two plants -- the Mahatma Gandhi Thermal Power Station in Haryana and the Dadri Thermal Power Plant in Uttar Pradesh -- have made progress, with the Haryana plant fully equipped, the study noted. The remaining plants have missed several deadlines for FGD installation. The initial deadline was set for December 2017, followed by extensions in December 2019, March 2021 and December 2022. The most recent deadlines are December 2024 for four plants

and December 2026 for the remaining one, the study pointed out. The CREA report suggests that three power plants -- Talwandi Sabo (Punjab), Rajpura (Punjab) and Panipat (Haryana) -- which emit 48 kilotonnes, 35 kilotonnes and 40 kilotonnes of SO₂, annually -- could see the largest reductions in emissions. Once the FGD technology is in place, these plants could cut their emissions by up to 83 per cent, reducing their annual output to just eight kilotonnes, six kilotonnes and seven kilotonnes respectively. The analysis has also compared the impact of thermal power plant emissions with that of stubble burning and found that the annual SO₂, emissions from the National Capital Region's (NCR) thermal plants are 16 times higher than those caused by burning 8.9 million tonnes of paddy straw. "Thermal plants emit 281 kilotonnes of SO₂, each year, compared to 17.8 kilotonnes from stubble burning," the report said. However, while stubble burning is not a significant contributor to SO₂, it does release greater quantities of particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) and carbon dioxide (CO₂), the study added.

The Union government had instructed all coal-based thermal power plants in the NCR to install the FGD technology by 2017 as part of efforts to curb SO₂, emissions. However, the slow pace of implementation has raised concerns about the effectiveness of these regulations.

Delhi's air quality worsened further on Sunday, with an AQI of 441, making it the second-most polluted city in the country.

The city's 24-hour Air Quality Index (AQI), recorded at 4 pm daily, stood at 441. On Saturday, the AQI was 417.

Prominent coaching institute faculty dies after suicide attempt in Kota

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

KOTA (RAJASTHAN): A 42-year-old teacher at a prominent coaching institute here died during treatment at a private hospital, where he underwent treatment for two days but died at 4 am on Sunday, Bharadvaj said.

No suicide note was recovered, and the reason behind the suicide yet to be ascertained, the officer said.

A case has been registered section 194 (police to enquire and report on suicide, etc) of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, for investigation to determine the actual reason of death, he said.

The body has been handed over to the family members after post-mortem later in the day, he added.

Station Incharge Arvind Bharadvaj said.

He was bleeding from his ears and nose and was taken to a private hospital, where he underwent treatment for two days but died at 4 am on Sunday, Bharadvaj said.

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When DLF's K P Singh fulfilled Rajiv Gandhi's wish of bringing GE to India!

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: When Rajiv Gandhi was the prime minister, he was determined to bring General Electric to India and his wish was fulfilled by DLF's K P Singh, who helped catalyse the American giant's presence in this country, says a new book.

Singh talks about his journey through India's transforming landscapes and his indelible contributions to the industry in "Why the Heck Not", published by Penguin Random House India.

Co-authored with Aparna Jain, Singh also writes about the bold risks and visionary decisions that shaped his career, as well as the challenges he overcame.

Delving into the GE story, the book says in the mid-

late '80s, Gandhi revered GE chairman and CEO Jack Welch as a business icon.

Determined to bring him to India, he dispatched the Indian envoy in Washington, Ambassador P K Kaul, to extend a formal invitation, it says.

"At the time, India was not globally known for business prospects and was not a priority on the lists of investors and entrepreneurs. Jack refused Kaul, bluntly stating that he would not waste his time visiting India," it says.

Singh then recalls an evening in 1988 when Gandhi's secretary, Sarla Grewal, met at a formal dinner and urged him to fulfil the prime minister's wish, regardless of obstacles.

Singh knew it was a difficult task but still said he would "meet Welch, gauge his pulse and see if I can convince him for an India visit".

Welch had then just married and Singh proposed that the couple should come and see the "romantic Taj Mahal". Soon, Jack was scheduled for a four-day visit. "I don't want to meet any fuddy-duddies. The youth are the ones with promise. I want to meet young leaders and business-people," he told Singh.

Singh unfurled the red carpet for Welch and his wife, Jane Beasley, with flair.

"From the moment Welch stepped onto Indian soil, it was a whirlwind of business meetings and back-to-back mornings with leaders,

bureaucrats and industry titans," the book says. "Breakfast was with the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's dynamic team, including Sam Pitroda, the chief technology advisor, Jairam Ramesh from the Planning Commission and Montek Singh Ahluwalia, special secretary to Rajiv Gandhi. "Sam made a critical presentation to Welch, demonstrating how India was perhaps one of the best countries for GE to begin a business processing office (BPO) - a term not even heard of in those days. Welch was impressed, sensing the pulse of India's ambition," it says.

"Sam, ever the gracious host, then chauffeured Jack to visit Manmohan Singh, who had been the former

head of the RBI and was then head of the Planning Commission. Manmohan Singh was calmly sitting on his rocking chair, and their thoughtful conversation left Jack excited about India's future," it adds.

From Delhi, Welch and his wife went to Jaipur and then Agra.

"In Agra, the serene and glistening Taj Mahal, framed against the pink sky at sunset, worked its magic on Jack and Jane. They were delighted with the trip," Singh writes.

"Jack left India, hungover from the sights, sounds and colours but incredibly excited about the prospects for GE in India," the book says.

The authors write that what GE eventually brought to India, however, would

change the landscape of Gurgaon and accelerate growth.

In 1997, when the head of GE Capital India, Pramod Bhasin, set up their new offices on eight floors of a modern commercial building-DLF Corporate Park in Gurgaon he wanted to pilot a new idea that had been mulling in his head.

"So he converted one floor into a Business Processing Office (BPO) to handle GE's back office operations. The 6000 square feet floor was filled with large white computers and four people at a desk," the book says.

"That single floor in DLF Corporate Park took on special significance, because with its resounding success began the boom of India's large scale BPO industry," it adds.

UPPSC protest: FIR registered against 4 Telegram channels for spreading misleading information

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

PRAYAGRAJ: A case has been registered against four Telegram channels for allegedly spreading misleading information to incite students and disturb law and order during the protest outside the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) here, police said on Sunday.

The Telegram channels against whom the FIR has been registered are PCM Abhyas, General Studies Edushala, Make IAS, and PCS Manthan, they said.

The FIR was registered under Section 318 (4) (cheating) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and under the

IT Act at Civil Lines police station on Thursday on a complaint lodged by Krishna Murari Chaurasia, in-charge of UPPSC police outpost, police said.

According to the FIR, misleading information was uploaded and circulated by various Telegram channels to incite students so that law and order could be disturbed.

Screenshots of the said channels have been attached with the complaint as evidence.

The students began their protest outside the UPPSC office on November 11 against its decision to conduct the preliminary examinations for Provincial Civil Services

(PCS), Review Officer (RO) and Assistant Review Officer (ARO) on two separate days and demanded that they be held on the same day.

On Thursday, the fourth day of the protest, the UPPSC postponed the RO-ARO exam and announced that it would hold the PCS exam in the old pattern in a single day. The commission also announced that it would form a committee on RO-ARO exam to ensure its transparency and fairness.

On Friday, the students called off their protest and the UPPSC announced that the PCS Preliminary Exam-2024 would be held in two shifts on December 22.

UP Dy CM Maurya terms 'batenge toh katenge' slogan a call for unity

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

LUCKNOW: A day after evading questions on Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's 'batenge toh katenge' slogan, his deputy Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday described it as a call for unity and asked why was the opposition having a "stomach ache" over the slogan.

The slogan, frequently used by Adityanath on the campaign trail, has united the opposition in its condemnation ahead of the November 20 bypolls, claiming that it has communal overtones.

"The clear message of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and the slo-



gans -- 'If we stay united, we will be safe, if we divide, we will be cut' -- that emerged from their speeches is a symbol of the unity and determination for all workers. There are no differences of opinion in the BJP, nor there was, nor will there will be," Maurya said in a post in Hindi on X.

"This slogan comes

straight from the hearts of party workers like me. The BJP's slogan is 'If we stay united, we will be safe,' he added.

Taking potshots at the opposition parties, the deputy chief minister asked why was the Samajwadi Party, Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party "having stomach aches due to this unity"?

"If the pain is unbearable, get it treated, take medicines," he added.

A day earlier, Maurya had created flutters in the political circles of Uttar Pradesh by refusing to comment on Adityanath's "batenge toh katenge" slogan, saying questions about it should be directed to the chief minister.

On Sunday, sharpened his attacks at the main opposition Samajwadi Party over its PDA (Pichda, Dalit, Alpsankhyak) pitch.

"We have to respond to the fake 'PDA' abuses spread by the Samajwadi Party and its chief Akhilesh Yadav in the same way Lord Krishna replied to Shishupal. In 2024, the Cycle (SP's poll symbol) has to be punctured by making the lotus bloom so that the polls deposits of SP candidates are forfeited."

"The Samajwadi Party has to be turned into a 'samaaptvadi' party by deepening the wounds of the crushing defeats it faced in 2014, 2017, 2019, and 2022 (elections)," he said in a post in Hindi on X.

Bypolls to nine assembly seats -- Katehari in Ambedkar Nagar, Karhal in Mainpuri, Meerapur in Mujaffarnagar, Ghaziabad, Mazhawan in Mirzapur, Sisamau in Kanpur City, Khair in Aligarh, Phulpur in Prayagraj and Kundarki in Moradabad -- will be held on November 20.

Eight of these seats fell vacant after their MLAs were elected as Lok Sabha MPs, while the bypoll on the Sisamau seat has been necessitated due to the disqualification of SP MLA Irfan Solanki, who was convicted in a criminal case.

The Congress is not contesting the bypolls and is supporting its INDIA bloc partner Samajwadi Party.

Seven injured in dispute over temple between two Hindu groups in Shimla, FIR registered

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SHIMLA: Seven people, including three police personnel were injured following a dispute between two Hindu groups here -- the "Himalayan Brahma Samaj" and the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram -- in the heart of the state capital, police said on Sunday.

The premises of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, located within the Brahma Samaj property near the Vidhan Sabha was also damaged in the conflict, they said.

The clash occurred after over a 100 people, including elderly women associated with the Himalayan Brahma Samaj, peacefully entered the ashram premises on Saturday evening to perform prayers, Shimla Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Kumar Gandhi told PTI.

The group wished to continue their prayers into the night, but the members of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram, who are in possession of the premises, objected, citing their they wished

to close the ashram for the night, Gandhi said.

Anticipating a possible takeover attempt, as there is an ongoing dispute over the ownership of the property reported worth crores, the ashram authorities called the police and administration for assistance, said ashram office bearers.

According to the SP, the issue it was a sensitive issue as it involved religious sentiments, hence police and administration were present at the spot, trying to mediate and attempting to resolve the matter.

However, when the Himalayan Brahma Samaj followers completed their prayers and agreed to leave on the condition that they will be allowed to perform prayers on Sunday, people gathered by the Ramakrishna Mission started pelting stones injuring seven people including three police personals, the SP said.

Two FIRs have been registered against seven people including Sheetal Vyas, her husband ABVP leader

Nitin Vyas, under sections 132 (assault against public servant discharging their duty), 121 (causing hurt to public servant), 221 (obstruction), 191 (unlawful assembly), 194 (2) (public fight disturbing peace) and 196 (2) (offence at place of worship) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, the police said.

Swami Tanmahimanand, secretary of the Ramakrishna Mission Ashram alleged that the property was handed over to the ashram by the Brahma Samaj for religious purposes and that the mission has been residing there since 2014.

Tanmahimanand said on Saturday, their gardner, who also looks after the ashram premises, and some union leaders held a conference in Kali Bari temple.

Thereafter, they entered the ashram as devotees and performed puja, heard pravachan and when at 8:30 pm they wished to close the ashram, members of the Himalayan Brahma Samaj raised slogans of

"Jai Brahma, this is our temple and you have occupied it' and refused to vacate, he said.

"Everyone has the right to perform puja but no one has the right to take possession of the ashram and our demand is that the people of Himalayan Brahma Samaj should vacate the temple (ashram)", he added.

Swami Ram Rupanand, co-secretary of the ashram said that an attempt was made to forcefully take possession of the temple and alleged that the administration and police remained a mute spectator to the incident. He also demanded a CBI inquiry into the incident.

Trustee, Himalayan Brahma Samaj, Shimla M R Sagroli said that a two-day Brahma Samaj conference was held in Shimla and their members from across the country wanted to visit the temple (ashram) and they should be allowed to access.

It is not a major dispute, he added.

Smuggling, arms cartel busted with arrest of two: Punjab Police

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Police on Sunday busted a trans-border narco smuggling and arms cartel with the arrest of two persons, officials said.

Director General of Police (DGP) Gaurav Yadav said those arrested have been identified as Vansh alias Billa (23), a resident of Billai Wala Chowk in Amritsar, and Sonu Chaurasia (20), a resident of Dashmesh Nagar in Amritsar.

Commissioner of Police (CP), Amritsar, Gurpreet Singh Bhullar said following reliable inputs about the involvement of Vansh alias Billa in the smuggling of narcotics, police teams arrested him from the Mohkampur area and recovered 3.5 kg heroin, 1.5 kg methaqualone powder and one Austria-made 9 mm Glock pistol from his possession.

In another operation, police nabbed accused Sonu Chaurasia from Batala road and recovered a .32-bore pistol from his possession.

Congress does not fulfil poll promises, claims BJP leader Jairam Thakur

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

RANCHI: Senior BJP leader and former Himachal Pradesh chief minister Jairam Thakur on Sunday accused the Congress of not fulfilling its poll promises.

He alleged that no promise made by the Congress party to the people during elections in Himachal Pradesh was fulfilled even after two years.

"The Congress had given 10 guarantees in Himachal Pradesh. Two years have passed but it did not fulfil even one of its guarantees till now," Thakur alleged while addressing media persons

here. The grand old party had ousted the Jairam Thakur-headed BJP government in 2022.

He claimed that the Congress, during electioneering, had promised Rs 1,500 per month to women between 18 and 60 years, five lakh jobs to youth and free electricity up to 300 units.

"None of them was fulfilled till now. But the party has been making false claims in Jharkhand that they are fulfilling the promises in Himachal Pradesh. I appeal to the people of Jharkhand not to fall prey to promises of the Congress party," he said.

Boy, 17, booked for putting up spy cam in UP college's washroom

■ STATE TIMES NEWS

SONBHADRA: Police have registered a case against a boy, aged around 17, for allegedly installing a camera in the women's washroom of an Inter-College here, police said on Sunday.

The boy's father has been detained and is being questioned, they said.

Police received a complaint on Saturday that a camera was found hidden

in a women's washroom at the college in a village, Sonbhadra. Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Kalu Singh said.

During the investigation, police found that the boy's house shared a wall with the washroom. Taking advantage of this, he allegedly installed a mini camera on the wall and connected it to his camera, Singh said.

On Saturday, a girl found

the camera and informed the school administration who approached the police, Singh added.

Based on the complaint, a case was registered under sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

Involvement of a college employee is also suspected. Investigation is underway, he added.