

EDITORIAL

DILUTED AMBITIONS:  
THE PARADOX OF INDIA'S  
NEW PLASTIC WASTE RULES

The latest iterations of India's plastic waste management rules, announced on March 31, suggest that the government has hit a wall in its attempts to curb plastic waste collection and recycling. The Plastic Waste Management Rules, first introduced in 2016, have been amended periodically, reflecting a policy framework in constant evolution. The intent is to make companies that produce and use plastics invest in recycling plastic so that, ultimately, less plastic is wasted and dumped in landfills, rivers, oceans, and public spaces. The paradox is that the same qualities that have made plastic ubiquitous — adaptable to a near infinite range of consumer goods, easy to produce, accessible to the richest and the poorest, and flexible in a way that metal can never be — also make it near impossible to incentivise collection and reuse. This is why the Rules were necessary.

Since 2022, when the Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) regime came into force, producers, importers and brand owners — makers and users of plastic packaging and raw materials — were required to collect and process plastic waste equivalent to 35% of the plastic they introduced into the market in 2021-22, increasing to 70% in 2022-23 and 100% by 2024-25. The amendments of 2026 bring in new mandates. This time, companies must ensure that recycled content makes up a minimum (and increasing) percentage of their plastic packaging annually. For instance, producers, importers and brand owners must ensure that rigid plastic packaging (Category I) contains at least 30% recycled material, rising to 60% by 2028-29. There are also similar 'reuse' obligations. But, strangely, companies that fail to meet their targets in 2025-26, the gazette notification says, may carry forward the shortfall for up to three years, provided they make up at least a third of the deficit annually. In effect this means that the 2025-26 target can be met in 2028-29. Also, at present, there is no evidence or even a claim by the government that all companies are collecting 100% of their obligations. By the government's own responses to Parliament it hovers from 50%-60%, and yet there are no targets set for 2025 and beyond. This seems to suggest that the government has given up on pushing companies to collect or recycle plastic, or has shifted focus to having them use recycled plastic irrespective of how it is sourced. There are provisions on using 'trading certificates' that suggest the logic is to let market economics decide on what is an environmental problem. Without a proper reckoning of collection and recycling targets, the new targets on reuse, which are already elastic, risk being ignored, thus undermining the intent of the EPR regime.



IS IT SO?

Poised upon the fragile edge of longing  
for beauty, for becoming  
O mind, mirrored in chambers of illusion,  
what is it you truly behold?  
A form or the fading echo  
of a self you have forgotten?  
In the unrest of thought's unceasing tides,  
when inquiry begins to erode its own shore,  
why does awareness dissolve  
into a silence  
that refuses even the shape of an answer?  
"Is it so?"  
not merely a question,  
but a tremor of the soul,  
adrift in the undercurrents of unknowing  
not doubt alone,  
but a diaphanous veil  
softly dimming the face of truth.  
Eyes may see  
yet remain untouched by vision  
words may fall upon the ear  
yet never awaken meaning.  
This is not living,  
but a mirage  
where meaning arrives only to vanish.  
Beauty  
is not the contour cast by a mirror,  
but the quiet flame  
kindled in the unseen.  
Speech  
is not the utterance of sound,  
but the music of humanity  
woven upon the loom of silence.  
Wealth may crown the body with pride,  
yet only virtue  
charts the course of life.  
If affection is the sky,  
empathy is the boundless beyond it.  
Life  
a universe slipping through a single drop;  
Time  
a witness dissolving  
within the brevity of a moment.  
Therefore  
let each instant be embraced as illumination  
let the heart be shaped  
in the likeness of compassion.  
When truth begins to breathe within,  
questions surrender into stillness  
the whisper—"Is it so?"  
unfurls into quiet knowing  
"It is."  
And then  
you are no longer merely human,  
but the very essence of humanity  
not a passing shadow cast by illusion,  
but a living flame  
of the eternal.

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OPEN FORUM

Mamata Wants to Make Bengal's Identity a  
Major Election Issue

A tense atmosphere looms over the electoral ground of West Bengal. The ruling Trinamool Congress, led by Mamata Banerjee, is putting in all its strength to save its chair, while the Bharatiya Janata Party is weaving dreams of capturing power. This time, the battle appears completely different from the 2021 contest. In earlier elections, a reign of violence was witnessed, where rioters received open protection. But now the situation has changed. Strict enforcement of law has broken the courage of troublemakers. Paramilitary forces are stationed at every corner, ready to crush any form of hooliganism. The Election Commission has taken strict steps to ensure peaceful voting. These changes have angered Mamata Banerjee. She is trying to present herself as a victim, which is her old tactic.

As soon as the election battle began, an atmosphere of excitement spread across the streets of West Bengal. The scenes witnessed in 2021 were horrifying. At that time, Trinamool workers resorted to violence. Ram Navami processions were attacked, houses were set on fire, and innocent people were targeted. The police turned a blind eye. But this time everything is different. The central government deployed paramilitary forces in large numbers. These personnel do not hesitate to take direct action. In one locality of Kolkata, when miscreants tried to create chaos near a polling station, the personnel immediately used batons. Five miscreants were injured and taken into custody. The surrounding area became peaceful. In another incident, in a village of South 24 Parganas district, Trinamool supporters surrounded BJP workers. But the paramilitary forces intervened instantly. Warning shots were fired in the air and the miscreants fled. These examples make it clear that the law now listens to no one.

Mamata Banerjee does not seem comfortable with this strictness. She keeps shouting at every opportunity that the central government is interfering in the elections. In a rally, she said with tears that her state was under attack. But the

reality is that paramilitary forces are working in a neutral manner. They are showing equal strictness toward Trinamool miscreants as toward others. For example, in Howrah, a Trinamool leader threatened a police officer. When the officer filed a complaint, the paramilitary forces arrested that leader on the spot. Mamata termed this a political conspiracy. She claims that her workers are being targeted. But the figures tell a different story. According to records of the Election Commission, incidents of violence this time have reduced by 70 percent compared to 2021. No major disturbance occurred at polling booths. All this is the result of the presence of paramilitary forces.

The Election Commission is also not stepping back. The Commission has formed special teams in every district. These teams are patrolling day and night. Once in Uttar Dinajpur, a judge was surrounded by Trinamool workers. The judge was monitoring the election process. Workers were shouting that the judge was biased. But paramilitary forces arrived immediately, safely escorted the judge, and arrested eight people. In his report, the judge wrote that if these personnel had not been present, the situation could have worsened. Similarly, in Malda, a police officer received threats. The officer was supervising the counting of ballot boxes. Miscreants surrounded him, but personnel responded with baton charges. Three miscreants ended up in the hospital. These examples show that law and order now prevails. Judges and officers feel safe. Earlier they were afraid, now they can work fearlessly.

Mamata Banerjee appears deeply agitated by this situation. Her temper seems high. In every rally, she criticizes the central government. She says that people from Delhi will destroy her state. But this tactic is backfiring. The public is now understanding her dramatics. Playing the victim card is her old method.

In 2021 as well, she did the same. After the violence, she appeared on television crying and sought votes while portraying herself as a mother. She said, "Save your son." This time too, she is following the same formula. In a rally in Kolkata, she bent her knees and sat down. With tears in her eyes, she said that there was a conspiracy to remove her from power. Her supporters started shouting, but BJP workers laughed. Her videos went viral on social media. People started calling it drama. Take another example. When paramilitary forces detained one of her legislators, Mamata held a press conference. She said the legislator was innocent and falsely accused. But investigation revealed that the legislator himself had incited violence. The Commission declared him disqualified. Mamata again tried to play the victim, saying that the justice system was against her.

Apart from this, Mamata is not missing any opportunity to provoke supporters. She says that atrocities are being committed against the daughter of Bengal. But the public has now awakened. She succeeded in 2021 because there was fear of violence. Now the fear has vanished. Paramilitary forces have broken the backbone of miscreants. In a survey, it emerged that 60 percent of voters are happy with peaceful elections. They are fed up with hooliganism. For instance, in Asansol, a woman voter said that earlier she used to feel scared, but now she voted without hesitation. Similarly, a young man from Purulia said that his brother was beaten in 2021, but this time everything remained peaceful. These changes are warning signs for Mamata. Her victim card is now failing. She wants to gather votes by portraying herself as a victim, but people have understood the truth.

Several other interesting incidents occurred during the election atmosphere. In Bankura district, Trinamool allegedly attempted fake voting, but the Election Commission team caught it. Paramilitary

forces conducted a raid on the spot. Twenty people were arrested. Mamata called it a conspiracy, but evidence proved otherwise. In Hooghly, a judge received a threatening phone call. The judge informed the Commission. Personnel traced the caller and arrested him. He turned out to be a local Trinamool leader. Mamata remained silent. These incidents clearly show that strictness is working. Those attempting disturbances are learning lessons. Judges and officers are now able to work without fear.

Mamata's method of playing the victim card is very clear. She describes every incident as a conspiracy against her. She starts crying and provoking supporters. She claims that Bengal's identity is under threat. But this time the strategy is not working. The public is witnessing how paramilitary forces have brought peace. Memories of the 2021 violence are still fresh. People were troubled by violence. Now they want peaceful elections. Mamata's anger stems from this reality. She knows that power is slipping away. The BJP's atmosphere appears to be strengthening. Workers are campaigning without fear. Overall, this electoral battle in West Bengal is turning into a victory for democracy. The strictness of paramilitary forces and the Election Commission has uprooted violence from its roots. Mamata Banerjee's victim card has failed. There are countless examples to cite. Similar stories are emerging from every district. The public is now choosing the truth. This change is historic. Peace is being established on the land of Bengal.



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BJP Foundation Day Turns  
Delhi to Lucknow Saffron-Hued

The BJP's Foundation Day painted the entire country and state in saffron colors. On April 6, this special occasion saw BJP workers' enthusiasm spill onto the streets from Delhi to every corner of Uttar Pradesh. Speeches echoed from stages, slogans from workers filled the air, and saffron flags fluttered everywhere. This day was not just a celebration of the party but also proved to be a moment that infused new energy for the future. The presence of stalwarts like Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath made the celebration even more grand. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while addressing a massive rally in Delhi, described in detail the BJP's 47-year journey. He explained the challenges the party faced in its early days. During Indira Gandhi's Emergency era, when democracy was being crushed, BJP's founders chose the path of struggle under the leadership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, and other leaders. Modi said that after the Emergency, when the BJP was established in 1980, it never compromised. He stated that the party always stood firm on principles such as nationalism, the construction of the Ram Temple, and Integral Humanism. Challenges included economic crises, political instability, and the dominance of the Congress party. Yet BJP continued to reach out to the people with its message.

Modi also shared stories of veteran leaders. He mentioned Atal Ji's poetry and eloquence, which often silenced opponents in Parliament. Referring to Advani Ji's Ram Rath Yatra, he said that the journey united the country into one thread. These anecdotes filled workers with en-

thusiasm. Modi also shed light on the reasons behind the decline of Congress. He said Congress promoted dynastic politics from the Nehru era itself. During Indira Gandhi's tenure, the Emergency crushed democracy, breaking public trust. In Rajiv Gandhi's period, the Bofors scandal exposed corruption. Later, during the governments of P.V. Narasimha Rao and then Sonia Gandhi-Manmohan Singh, inflation, corruption, and terrorism gripped the country. Scandals like 2G, Coalgate, and others damaged Congress's reputation. Modi remarked that Congress made promises but instead of fulfilling them, burdened the country with debt. On the other hand, BJP's rise helped fill these gaps. In 1998, Atal Ji's government strengthened the nation with the Pokhran nuclear tests. In 2014, the Modi government introduced initiatives like Digital India and Make in India. Today BJP is in power, and the country's economy has become the fifth largest in the world.

In Uttar Pradesh, the Foundation Day had a unique flavor.



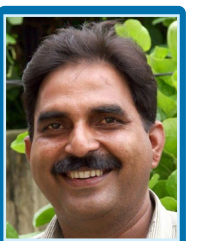
India turned saffron on April 6 as the Bharatiya Janata Party celebrated its Foundation Day with massive rallies, high-energy street participation, and speeches by top leaders including Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath. From Delhi to Uttar Pradesh, party workers marked the occasion as both a tribute to BJP's 47-year journey—from its formation in 1980 after the Emergency era—to its current political dominance, while also setting the tone for future electoral battles and national ambitions.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath attended programs in several districts. From the BJP headquarters in Lucknow to gatherings in Varanasi, his presence boosted workers' morale. Yogi said that bulldozer actions had eliminated mafias in the state and established the rule of law. Referring to the 2027 Assembly elections, he urged workers to ensure BJP secures a full majority again. Yogi cited Modi's speech, saying that the party's work in poverty alleviation, farmer welfare, and women empowerment would not be forgotten by the people. At the main event in Lucknow, thousands of workers gathered. Young supporters wearing saffron scarves raised slogans. Yogi remembered veteran leaders and said their sacrifices were bearing fruit today. Across the country, the Foundation Day celebrations took different forms. A huge crowd gathered at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan to hear Modi's speech. People arrived in tractors, jeeps, and buses. Rallies were also held in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, and Madhya Pradesh. BJP Pres-

ident J.P. Nadda addressed workers at the national level, stating that the party is now the world's largest political party with more than one crore members. Despite challenges, BJP expanded from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. BJP governments were formed in the Northeast, where Congress once dominated.

In his speech, Modi mentioned decisions such as the ban on triple talaq, the removal of Article 370, and the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). He said these decisions delivered justice even to minorities, although the opposition allegedly misrepresented them. The story of Congress's decline is closely linked to BJP's rise. While Congress pursued vote-bank politics in the name of secularism, BJP followed the principle of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas." After the Janata Party's victory in 1977, Congress returned to power, but after 1989 its graph steadily declined. BJP first formed a government at the Centre in 1991 and ruled from 1998 to 2004. However, the real turning points came in 2014 and 2019, when the Modi

wave gave BJP 303 seats. Today the party governs at the Centre and in most states. In a large state like Uttar Pradesh, BJP created history by winning 273 out of 403 seats. The Yogi government accelerated temple construction, turning Ayodhya into a saffron city. This Foundation Day ignited new hope among workers. Saffron processions marched through streets, and sweets were distributed in homes. Youth wing workers shared videos on social media. Modi concluded by saying that in the coming years BJP will make India a developed nation, and by 2047 India will become a global leader. Yogi told state workers that in the 2027 elections, BJP's wave would return once again. Against the opposition's alleged scams and unfulfilled promises, people would choose BJP. Thus, the Foundation Day was not just a remembrance of history but also a pledge for the future. BJP's journey has been full of struggles. In 1984, it began with just two seats, but patience and organizational strength took it to the peak. The hard work of veteran leaders like Kushabhau Thakre and Murlu Manohar Joshi bore fruit. Today the Modi-Yogi duo is carrying forward this legacy. The saffron atmosphere across the country indicates that the public stands with BJP. In the coming elections, this enthusiasm is expected to become the foundation of victory.



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