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Royal Harbinger

UDAIPUR | SATURDAY, AUGUST 15, 2026

Rajasthan Civic Elections: A Test of Grassroots Democracy

Editorial

Rajasthan's civic elections are not merely another contest between political parties. They are an important test of how effectively democracy reaches the doorstep of the citizen. With preparations for the 2026 urban local body elections moving ahead, the focus must now shift from political calculations to the quality of urban governance.

The elections have already been preceded by considerable administrative and legal uncertainty. The Rajasthan High Court had earlier directed completion of the local-body election process, while the state government subsequently informed the court of a phased schedule extending into November. Meanwhile, ward delimitation and reservation have been major components of the preparatory exercise.

This prolonged process should serve as a reminder that local democracy cannot be treated as an administrative afterthought. Municipal corporations, councils and municipalities deal with issues that affect citizens every day—roads, drinking water, sanitation, drainage, waste management, street lighting, traffic, parks, encroachments and public health. These are not abstract political questions; they determine the quality of everyday life.

The latest reservation exercise across urban local bodies has intensified political activity, with prospective candidates becoming increasingly active. Reservation is constitutionally important because it ensures representation for women and historically disadvantaged communities. But reservation must ultimately translate into meaningful participation and accountable leadership, rather than merely becoming an electoral arithmetic exercise.

Another important concern is the repeated restructuring of municipal boundaries and wards. Jaipur, for example, has undergone major changes in its civic structure, with the city now moving toward a single municipal corporation with 150 wards. Frequent changes can be justified by demographic growth and administrative requirements, but they also create confusion among voters and candidates.

The real challenge, therefore, is to make the election about performance rather than personalities.

Political parties should present clear local manifestos with measurable commitments. Candidates should tell voters how they intend to address waste management, water security, public transport, traffic congestion, heritage conservation and environmental protection. Citizens, too, must look beyond party symbols and assess the credibility, accessibility and track record of candidates.

For Rajasthan's rapidly growing cities, urban planning deserves particular attention. Cities such as Jaipur, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Kota and Ajmer face different challenges, but all require stronger municipal institutions. Tourism-oriented cities need heritage and lake conservation; expanding cities need scientific land-use planning; industrial centres require better pollution and waste management; and smaller municipalities need reliable basic infrastructure.

The elections also provide an opportunity to strengthen the relationship between elected representatives and citizens. Ward committees, public consultations, transparent budgeting and digital grievance mechanisms should become integral to municipal governance. A councillor should not disappear after winning an election; citizens should have regular avenues to question performance.

The State Election Commission and the administration also carry a crucial responsibility. Electoral rolls, ward boundaries, reservation lists and polling arrangements must be transparent and accessible. Any further uncertainty can weaken public confidence in an election that is fundamentally about restoring representative local governance.

Rajasthan now needs a civic election campaign that raises the political conversation from "Who will win?" to "Who will deliver?"

The true winner of these elections should not simply be a political party. It should be the citizen—the resident who expects a clean street, reliable water, safer roads, efficient waste collection, better public spaces and a responsive municipality.

Local democracy becomes meaningful only when the ballot box leads to better governance on the ground. Rajasthan's 2026 civic elections offer precisely that opportunity.

From Freedom to Viksit Bharat: The Seven Streams of Strength

India's 80th Independence Day is more than a celebration of political freedom. It is a moment to reflect on the nation's remarkable journey and renew our commitment to building a prosperous, self-reliant and developed India by 2047.

The generation of 1947 secured Swaraj. The responsibility of the present generation is to transform that freedom into economic opportunity, technological capability, social progress and a better quality of life for every citizen.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat @2047, articulated through the framework of Shakti ki Saptadhara, offers a broad roadmap for India's next phase of development.

Seven Streams of National Strength

1. Manufacturing Power: India must move beyond being a major consumer market and emerge as a globally competitive manufacturing hub. Quality, innovation, technology and skilled manpower will be the pillars of this transformation.

2. Agriculture and Food Processing: India's prosperity is closely linked to the prosperity of its farmers. Modern farming, irrigation, storage, food processing and better market access can increase rural incomes and make agriculture a stronger engine of growth.

3. Technology and Innovation: Artificial intelligence, semiconductors, quantum technology, digital infrastructure and scientific research will shape the global economy. India's young population can become its greatest technological advantage through quality education and skills.

4. Infrastructure and Connectivity: Roads, railways, ports, airports, logistics and digital networks are the arteries of a modern economy. Efficient connectivity will accelerate trade, investment and employment.

5. Defence and Strategic Self-Reliance: True independence also means strategic capability. Indigenous defence production, cybersecurity and critical technologies can strengthen national security while creating new economic opportunities.

6. Green and Blue Economy: Development must remain environmentally responsible. Renewable energy, water conservation, biodiversity protection and sustainable use of marine resources can create growth without compromising the future.

7. India's Soft Power: India's civilisational heritage is a powerful global asset. Yoga, Ayurveda, art, literature, cinema, music, cuisine and cultural traditions can deepen India's global influence.

From Vision to Action

A developed India cannot be built by government alone. It requires skilled youth, empowered women, productive farmers, innovative entrepreneurs, strong educational institutions and responsible citizens. The success of Viksit Bharat will ultimately be measured by how effectively development improves the lives of ordinary Indians.

The centenary of Independence in 2047 is no longer a distant dream. The decisions taken today will determine the India of tomorrow. Economic freedom, technological strength, energy security, environmental sustainability and equal opportunity must become essential dimensions of modern independence.

The 80th Independence Day should therefore be both a celebration and a pledge. Our freedom fighters secured the right of India to determine its own destiny.

Our generation must use that freedom wisely to build a nation that is capable, confident, inclusive and globally respected.

From Swaraj to Sashakt Bharat, and from freedom to Viksit Bharat—the next chapter of India begins today.

Chancellor Bhanwar Lal Gurjar Acts on Representations, Dr. Manju Mandot Takes Charge

Udaipur: Acting on representations and information highlighting alleged administrative irregularities at Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidyapeeth (Deemed to be University), Udaipur, Chancellor Bhanwar Lal Gurjar has taken immediate action and appointed Dr. Manju Mandot as the new Vice Chancellor of the university.

Dr. Mandot assumed charge as Vice Chancellor on August 14, marking a significant administrative development at the institution.

The action follows representations submitted to the authorities raising concerns over alleged irregularities in appointments, regularisation, promotions and service-related matters. The representations had particularly questioned the manner in which certain ad-hoc employees were allegedly granted regular appointments within a short period, while several long-serving employees continued to await regularisation and other service benefits.

Among the matters highlighted was the case of a Research Assistant who, according to documents cited in the representations, was appointed on an ad-hoc basis in February 2026 and subsequently regularised in July 2026. The complainants had sought an independent examination of the recruitment and regularisation process and other administrative decisions taken during the previous administration.

The representations also contained allegations of preferential treatment in appointments and promotions and raised questions regarding employee service benefits, including increments, promotions, provident fund statements, pay slips, gratuity and updating of service records. The allegations concerning individual appointments and alleged nepotism remain subject to verification through official records.

The decision by Chancellor Bhanwar Lal Gurjar to appoint Dr. Manju Mandot is being viewed as an important administrative step amid demands for greater transparency and accountability in the functioning of the university.

With Dr. Mandot assuming charge on August 14, attention is now expected to focus on the new administration's approach towards employee grievances, pending regularisation cases and the review of administrative decisions taken during the previous tenure.

Employees and complainants have expressed hope that the new leadership will undertake a transparent review of pending matters and ensure that legitimate employee rights are protected while maintaining due process in all administrative decisions.

Dr. Manju Mandot's assumption of charge marks a new phase for Janardan Rai Nagar Rajasthan Vidyapeeth, with expectations of greater transparency, accountability and rule-based administration

Patriotic Melodies Echo at Anand Old Age Home

Udaipur: The 80th Independence Day was celebrated with enthusiasm and patriotic fervour at Anand Old Age Home, operated by Tara Sansthan in Hiran Magri Sector-14, Udaipur.

The elderly residents participated in the celebrations with great enthusiasm and spirit. The programme began with the residents jointly unfurling the national flag, followed by a collective rendition of the national song Vande Mataram and the national anthem Jana Gana Mana, expressing their respect and reverence for the nation.

During theEvent , the elderly residents presented patriotic songs that filled the atmosphere with a strong sense of nationalism and pride. Their enthusiasm and love for the country added warmth and vibrancy to the celebrations.The programme concluded with the residents raising spirited slogans of "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" and "Vande Mataram."

On the occasion, the residents recalled the significance of Independence Day and expressed their commitment to the unity, integrity and progress of the nation.The celebration strengthened the spirit of togetherness, belonging and patriotism among the residents of Anand Old Age Home.

Sai Tirupati University Celebrates Independence Day

Udaipur: Sai Tirupati University, Umarda, celebrated the 80th Independence Day with patriotic fervour and enthusiasm. The ceremony began with Vande Mataram, followed by flag hoisting by President Dr. Prashant Nahar, Registrar Dr. Devendra Jain, PIMS Principal Dr. Suresh Chandra Goyal and principals of constituent colleges.

The National Anthem and an impressive NSS march-past added grandeur to the event. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Nahar highlighted the sacrifices of freedom fighters and students' role in nation-building. Patriotic cultural performances were presented by students. Outstanding faculty members and students were felicitated for their contributions and performances during the celebrations.

Udaipur Civic Polls Enter New Political Phase

Udaipur: The reservation lottery for Rajasthan's upcoming local body elections has intensified political activity in Udaipur, with the Municipal Corporation mayor's post declared unreserved. The chairperson posts of Bhindar Municipality and Salumber Municipal Council have also been left unreserved, opening the field to a wider pool of aspirants.

The mayoral race, however, will depend heavily on the reservation of individual wards. Aspirants must first secure a councillor seat, making the upcoming ward reservation lottery crucial. The addition of 10 wards and changes in boundaries have further altered traditional political equations.

The BJP is expected to face strong competition among potential candidates, with names including Pramod Samar, Paras Singhvi, Atul Chandalia, Nanalal Baya, Ramkripa Sharma, Yashwant Anchalia, Jinendra Shastri, Harish Rajani, Pinky Mandawat and Alka Mundra being discussed.

Congress is also viewing the open mayoral post as an opportunity to challenge the BJP. Among the names under discussion are Fateh Singh Rathore, Gopal Krishna Gopji, Pankaj Sharma, Arun Tank, Ajay Porwal, K.K. Sharma and Dinesh Shrimali.

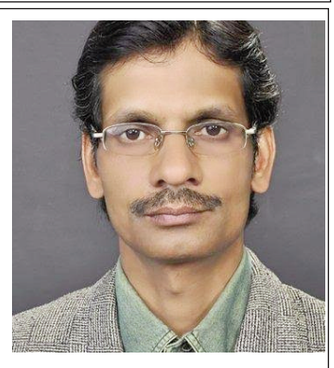
The name of former Up Pramukh Laxmi Narayan Pandya is also emerging in Congress discussions for the Pramukh post after the District Pramukh seat was declared unreserved. His previous experience in rural local politics could strengthen his claim if the party opts for an experienced candidate.

The BJP has a strong civic record in Udaipur, having formed the municipal board six times since 1994. Kiran Maheshwari, Yudhishthir Kumawat, Ravindra Shrimali, Rajni Dangi, Chandra Singh Kothari and G.S. Tank have served as mayors during this period.

Meanwhile, rural political equations are also changing. Udaipur district has 20 panchayat samitis, 590 gram panchayats and 318 panchayat samiti wards, with more than 13.78 lakh voters.The final political picture will emerge after ward-level reservations are announced. For BJP and Congress, candidate selection, winnability, social equations and regional representation will be key factors in the 2026 civic battle.

Achieving Ecological Sovereignty Through a Constructive Citizen's Movement

- Dr. Anil Mehta , PSG and Vidya Bhawan



On Independence Day, national discourse usually focuses on political freedom and defense borders. However, a crucial dimension must be integrated: India's fundamental strength, integrity, and long-term sovereignty depend on its natural ecosystems—its mountains, rivers, forests, and watersheds.

Major mountain systems—from the Himalayas and Aravallis to the Vindhyas, Satpulas, and Western Ghats—are not merely scenic landscapes or geological features. They serve as natural fortresses, climate regulators, water sources, and living monuments of India's civilizational identity.

Mountains feed the river systems that sustain agriculture, industry, and daily life, while serving as historic cradles of trade, culture, and defense.

True national security is not just limited to militarydefense. Strategic capability relies heavily on ecological, water, food, and energy security. Healthy mountains retain rainfall, recharge aquifers, and maintain river flows. Today, however, these critical ecosystems face unprecedented threats from unplanned urbanization, indiscriminate concrete expansion, and illegal mining.

Destructive environmental practices directly jeopardize water security, agricultural capacity, and overall economic stability.

While utilizing mineral capital is essential for industrial growth and infrastructure, it must be balanced with protecting natural capital. Developing modern industries should not come at the expense of destroying the mountains and watersheds that sustain life. Historically, indigenous traditions—such as mountain reverence and sacred conservation practices seen among tribal communities—embedded ecological protection directly into cultural values.

In the 21st century, political freedom alone is insufficient without Ecological sovereignty. When ecosystems are destroyed, cultural memory, economic stability, and civilizational identity erode. If mountains and water systems perish, agriculture and the broader economy fall with them.

Securing India's future requires expanding our understanding of independence. Moving from political freedom to ecological sovereignty demands a positive, constructive citizen's movement. Safeguarding rivers, forests, mountains, and cultural landscapes is a patriotic duty essential to keeping India self-reliant, resilient, and secure.