



## THE TIMES OF INDIA

*Date: 25-12-24*

### High & low

**In films & other artforms, avant garde influences commercial creative outputs, makes them better**

#### TOI Editorials

Those who routinely, mournfully ask where the new Satyajit Ray is, or Bimal Roy or Kumar Shahani or Mrinal Sen, will now also ask where the new Shyam Benegal is. IPTA and eighties parallel cinema are two influences particularly storied among Indian film aficionados. It may also be true that, for example, Do Bigha Zameen, Bhuvan Shome, Manthan and Khayal Gatha, are unfamiliar to a majority of audiences today. Even in their own times, many of these texts may have lived as 'high art', which the masses stayed away from. But judging their value by the box office alone is a fool's game.

Creativity isn't mathematical. Sensitivity to the human condition is a complex civilisational inheritance. Think about a selfie and van Gogh's self-portraits. To ask which is better is no crime. But what's really interesting about the comparison is stopping to think about how the two work, to debate their form and meanings. It is contemplation and conversation that carry culture forward. Payal Kapadia, whose *All We Imagine as Light* is a Cannes Grand Prix winner, has spoken about how Ritwik Ghatak's *Subarnarekha* shook her up, its editing, its script, its scene constructions. This is how influence jumps across time. Neither is the diversity that has come to define OTT content unconnected from the storytelling that was once bracketed as art cinema.

Actually, this is true across the arts. Those who aren't exactly attempting the Great Indian Novel still benefit from those who have. There are directors who persuaded Birju Maharaj to choreograph for their movies, including Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Kamal Haasan. But the influence of kathak on the picturisation of song and dance in Indian cinema is vastly greater. It's the same with classical music. Its pop impact is immeasurable. It's impossible to think of a desi song cabinet that owes nothing to Hindustani or Carnatic or Qawwali styles. Of course, none of this stops at national borders. We are hearing Beethoven's *Für Elise* all the time, even if we don't know we are hearing it.

One thing is that the greats may not be well judged in their own times. Take Keats – ironically of the "A thing of beauty is a joy forever: its loveliness increases; it will never pass into nothingness" fame. It's said very bad reviews hastened him to an early death. How tastes evolve is impossible to predict. But that the good lifts up the average is certain.

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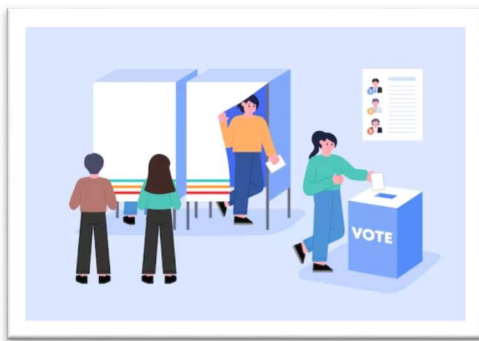


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## Hide and seek

*Transparency is key in maintaining the credibility of the election process*

### Editorial



The Election Commission of India (ECI)'s explanation on December 24 in response to the Congress party's charges regarding voter turnout data in the recent Assembly elections is unlikely to allay growing concerns regarding the integrity of the election process. It was on December 20, on the recommendations of the ECI, that the Centre had amended the Conduct of Election Rules to restrict public access to poll documents except for those that are specifically mentioned in them. The ECI has also said it does not want to share CCTV footage of the booth, citing privacy and security reasons. This change in the rules happened after the

Punjab and Haryana High Court directed the ECI to share all documents related to the Haryana Assembly elections, including CCTV footage, to a private citizen. The court ruled that this was permissible under 93(2) of the Rules which allowed public access to all "papers" which were not specifically barred. The amended rule now says that only those "papers" that are specified in it are open to public inspection. For an institution that is so central to the functioning of democracy, and yet facing an unprecedented challenge to its credibility, less secrecy and more transparency must be the way forward. Sadly, the ECI is falling short on this count, and damaging its own credibility.

Allegations of electronic tampering of voting machines are misplaced and misguided but concerns regarding the conduct of elections — police high-handedness, partisanship of local administration, and voter suppression through various means — are valid. They require a thorough and impartial investigation. Of particular concern is the dramatic rise in voter turnout in the final figures, compared to what was announced at the end of polling time, noticed in recent elections. The ECI may well be right in saying that voters who are in queue at the closing hour get recorded only in the final figures. But the easiest and perhaps the most credible way to establish this claim is to allow wide inspection of the relevant video footage. The ECI has explained that the candidates have access to all documents, papers and records and nothing has been amended in the rules in this regard. It remains unclear how its officials will deal with requests from candidates for records including video footage while the public will face a default denial in most cases. The privacy and security arguments are weak if candidates can access records anyway. In effect, the change in rules does not solve any problem that the ECI says it does, other than time and effort. And it has raised more questions about the ECI's intentions.

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# दैनिक भास्कर

Date: 25-12-24

## स्वच्छ ऊर्जा के लिए चीन पर दुनिया की निर्भरता

संपादकीय



पर्यावरण प्रदूषण का सबसे बड़ा और तात्कालिक असर अनाज उत्पादन पर होगा। पिछले 15 वर्षों से अधिक से हर साल दुनिया के कुल ग्रीनहाउस उत्सर्जन का 30% चीन कर रहा है। लेकिन चीन के खिलाफ किसी भी वैश्विक बैठक में आवाज नहीं उठती। यह दुनिया की दूसरी सबसे बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्था है, फिर भी यूएन ने इसे विकासशील माना है, जिससे इस पर उत्सर्जन खत्म करने का दबाव भी नहीं है। नतीजतन यह ऊर्जा के लिए धुंधलाधार कोयला जला रहा है। चीन के खिलाफ दुनिया के बड़े देशों तक की भी आवाज इसलिए दबी रहती है क्योंकि अगर स्वच्छ ऊर्जा की ओर पश्चिमी देश भी बढ़ना चाहते हैं तो उन्हें

कदम-कदम पर चीन पर ही निर्भर रहना होगा। चीन आज दुनिया की जरूरत के 80% सोलर पैनल, पवन ऊर्जा के टर्बाइन के 60% और स्वच्छ ऊर्जा में प्रयुक्त तमाम उपकरणों का प्रमुख सप्लायर है। अंतरराष्ट्रीय एनर्जी एजेंसी (आईईए) की ताजा रिपोर्ट कहती है कि चीन स्वच्छ ऊर्जा जैसे पवन या सौर ऊर्जा संयंत्र अमेरिका और यूरोप के मुकाबले क्रमशः 20 और 30% सस्ता बेचता है। इन सब का असर यह है कि स्वच्छ ऊर्जा पर अगर चीन शिफ्ट होता है तो दुनिया के अन्य देशों को ये उपकरण मिलना मुश्किल होगा। चीन की मजबूत स्थिति के पीछे उसका विज्ञान और शोध के क्षेत्र में भारी निवेश और 50 साल आगे की सोच है।