

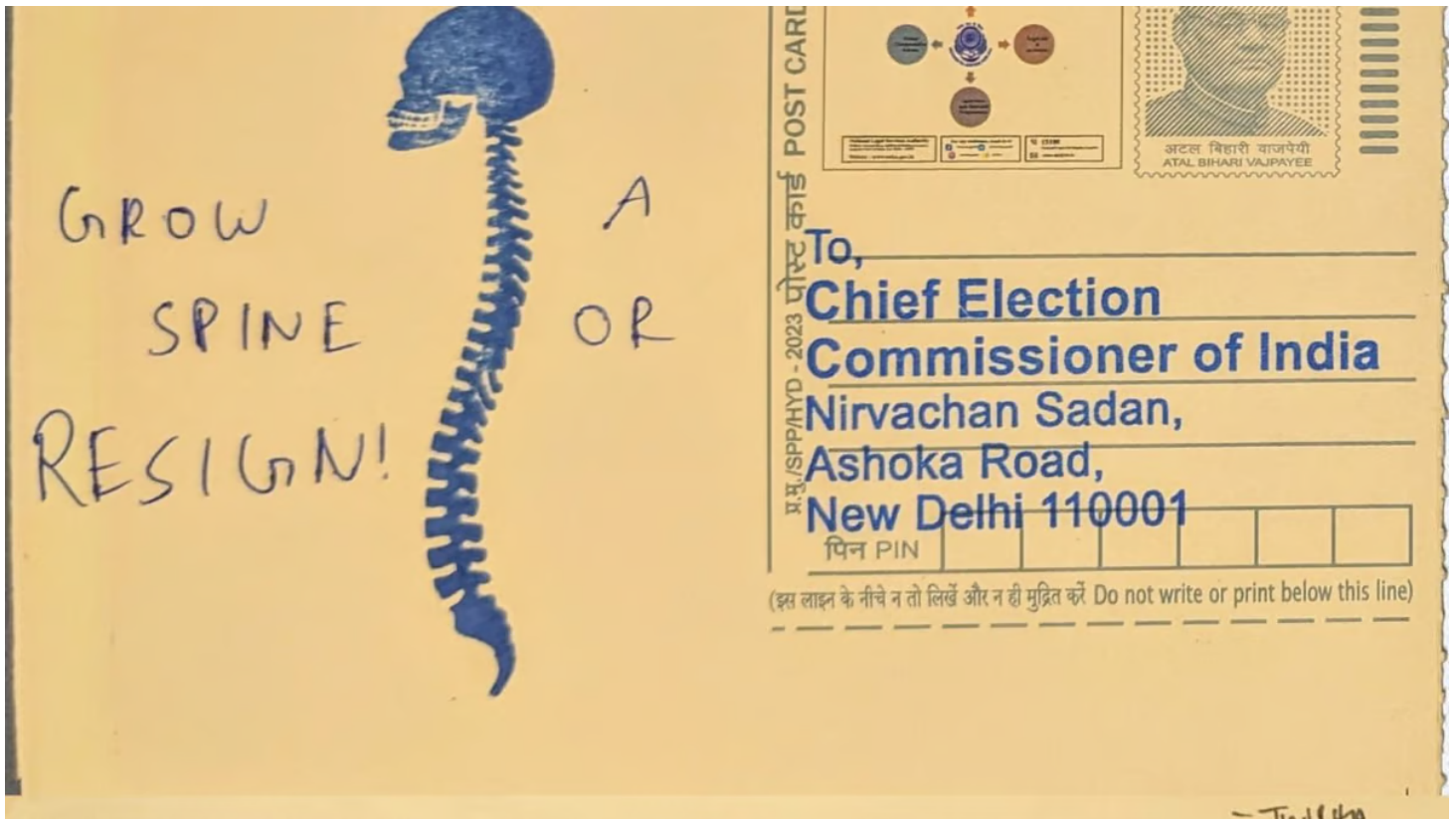


Dance of Democracy- Digital Narrative of Indian Election-2024

Photo credit-Koushik Das

Type caption for image (optional)

This Chapter of TypeRight has tried to track the digital narrative of the grand Indian Lok Sabha election vis-a-vis use of social media, campaign and propaganda of political parties through digital media and how the Indian digital consumers being targeted through medium and the messages.



Type caption for image (optional)

The above is one of several campaigns and protests that have come up in the past few months since the election to the Lok Sabha was declared.

But what is the chronology?

In the absence of a specific process so far, there have been public interest litigations regarding the choice of the election commission, its constitution, and its role in ensuring free and fair elections. As *The Hindu* [reports](#),

A Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by Anoop Baranwal in 2015 pleaded for the Supreme Court to issue directions to set up an independent, collegium-like system for the appointment of the CEC and ECs. The Supreme Court in this case, in March 2023, held that there has been a legislative vacuum due to the absence of any law by Parliament in the last 73 years (since the adoption of the Constitution) with respect to the appointment of the CEC and EC.

The SC proposed that the three members who decide this would be the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition, and the Chief Justice of India. However, the central government was quick to bring in a legislation that would block this:

On December 12, the Rajya Sabha passed the Chief Election Commissioner and other Election Commissioners (Appointment, Conditions of Office and Terms of Office) Bill, 2023.

It provides for the procedure for appointment of the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) and the other two Election Commissioners (ECs).

The CEC and EC shall be appointed by the President on the recommendation of this selection committee consisting of the Prime Minister, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha and a Union Cabinet Minister to be nominated by the Prime Minister. (The Hindu's report cited above)

But why was this legislation passed in haste, and why is this relevant? It only serves to quickly take a look at what happened this last month.

The recent ruling on EBS by the Supreme Court is something noteworthy to begin with. Publicly available data and analysis suggest that the EBS has been abused to do things like push prospective donations. This weakens the competitive parts of India's democratic process.

When a current Chief Minister from the opposition is arrested during elections, it raises major questions about whether all parties are being given a fair chance to run. Following the recent arrest of Hemant Soren,

another sitting Chief Minister from the opposition party in Jharkhand, this development has occurred. The apparent trend of employing investigative agencies to unfairly target opposition political parties and their prominent members puts the democratic process at risk.



In Amit Shah's Gandhinagar, three Lok Sabha candidates allege they faced pressure to withdraw

They claim that local BJP politicians, and, in some cases, the Gujarat Police pushed them to exit the contest. One remains ... the fray.

scroll.in



Surat Model? SUCI Candidate in Indore Says Pressured, Coerced and Pushed by BJP to N... Contest

Events in Surat resulting in a BJP MP being produced without an election surprised many, but when the Congress candidate in Indore withdrew and joined the BJP, alarm bells rang. The ...

thewire.in

A number of ex-Election Commissioners have voiced their displeasure with the opposition parties' use of law enforcement and financial institutions, claiming that this practice prevents the fair and level playing field that is essential for conducting elections. Such actions should be discouraged by the ECI. A five-point demand to the ECI to guarantee free and fair elections and a level playing field for voters was also presented by the combined opposition in a joint rally on 31 March.

<https://indianexpress.com/article/cities/ahmedabad/...>

Below is an excerpt from [Independent](#) Panel for Monitoring Indian

Elections (IPMIE)'s interim report:

Statements appealing to religion were made by senior leaders, violating the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

The MCC requires that “There shall be no appeal to caste or communal feelings for securing votes. Mosques, Churches, Temples or other places of worship shall not be used as forum for election propaganda.”

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is reported to have said in an election rally in Bihar, “...the INDIA bloc...did not turn up for pran pratishtha at Ayodhya... Ram Navami is approaching. Do not forget their sins...These parties speak against Sanatan Dharma and advocate making south India a separate country.” Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in a speech in Maharashtra, “I have come here from Uttar Pradesh - the land of Lord Ram. Wherever I went in Maharashtra, I could hear people say, ‘joh Ram ko layehain, hum unko layenge’ (we will vote for those who brought in Lord Ram [referencing the Ram temple])”. Union Minister Smriti Irani similarly invoked Lord Ram in a speech in Chennai.



BJP Karnataka's online video sparks outrage for 'demonising Muslims'

On Sunday, Congress filed a complaint against Bharatiya Janata Party leaders, alleging that the video violated the poll code.

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Election Commission Asks X To Take Down BJP Karnataka's Post

The Election Commission has ordered microblogging website X to remove an objectionable post by the Karnataka BJP, which the party did not remove even after the state chief electoral ...

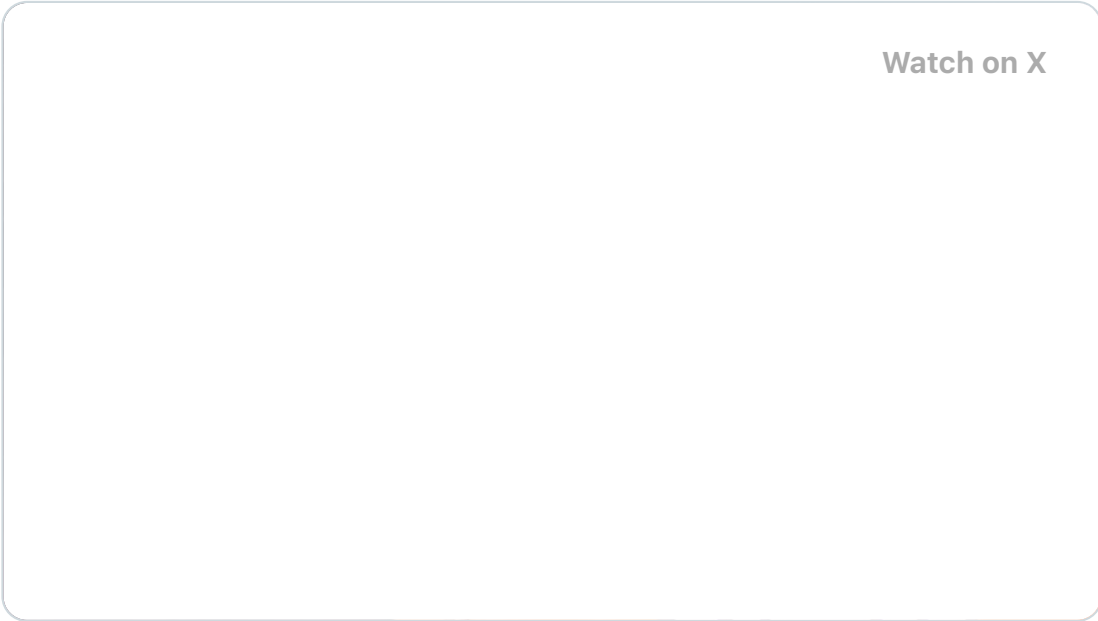
[ndtv.com](https://www.ndtv.com)



Narendra Modi 
@narendramodi · [Follow](#)



We must decide what is the route we want to take- Ram Rajya or Vote Jihad...



1:24 PM · May 7, 2024



19.1K



Reply



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PM lambasts INDIA bloc for SP leader's 'vote jihad' remark

Modi criticizes INDIA bloc's 'vote jihad' promotion, mentions Maria Alam's endorsement. He condemns targeting SCs, STs, OBCs. Modi refers to abrogating Article 370, fulfilling Sardar ...

m.economictimes.com



Lok Sabha Elections 2024: SP leader Maria Alam's appeal for 'vote jihad' sparks row

Farrukhabad (UP), Apr 30 (PTI) Seeking votes for the INDIA bloc candidate from Farrukhabad Lok Sabha seat, Samajwadi Party leader Maria Alam made an appeal for vote jihad, ...

[deccanherald.com](https://www.deccanherald.com)

National Dastak and Article 19, two media channels with more than 10 million subscribers between them, have been requested by the Union Government to be blocked from YouTube. It has come to light that Bolta Hindustan, another independent broadcaster, has also had its YouTube account blocked. Reports have surfaced of the government harassing journalists like Rana Ayyub as well as human rights advocates and campaigners like Harsh Mander.

Another excerpt from IPMIE:

As highlighted in our previous report, the ECI made an excessive delay in releasing the voter turnout data for the first two phases of voting. [Opposition leaders](#), a [former Chief Election Commissioner](#), and civil

society continue to raise [questions](#) about this delay and the fact that data related to number of votes polled per constituency has not been released. The ECI has not responded to these accusations. This casts aspersions over the transparency of the electoral process, which is essential for a free and fair election.

What has been done by the EC so far?



Lok Sabha Elections 2024: EC 'examining' complaints against PM Modi for 'hate speech'

India news, Lok Sabha Elections 2024 news, PM Modi news:
The complaints are regarding Modi's remarks in Rajasthan on Muslims and Congress.

[deccanherald.com](https://www.deccanherald.com)

It wouldn't be surprising if one feels this is too little too late, as the elections are about to conclude in a week's time.

To add to this, there are apprehensions regarding the statistics put out by the EC:

The application was filed in light of the recent controversy surrounding the substantial increase in the final voter turn out announced by the ECI for the first two phases of the ongoing Lok Sabha elections as compared to initial estimate announced on the voting day.

The application highlighted that the data published on April 30 showed a sharp increase (by about 5-6%) of final voter turn out as compared to the initial percentages announced by ECI on the day of polling.

This coupled with the delay in announcing the voter turn out has led to concerns among voters and political parties about the correctness of such data.

Supreme Court asks ECI why info on total votes polled cannot ...

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Election Commission of India (ECI) to...

barandbench.com



This story, published in partnership with the Pulitzer Center's AI Accountability Network and Princeton University's Digital Witness Lab explores how AI generated fake news spreads, focusing on one such town in India.



How Modi and the BJP turned WhatsApp into an election-winning machine

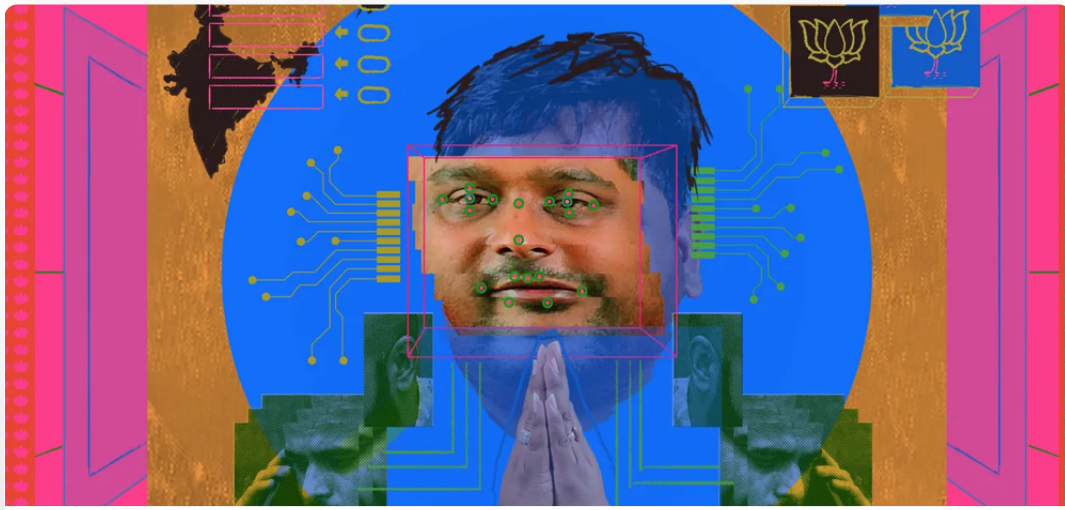
An analysis of thousands of messages reveals how India's ruling party uses the app to campaign free from public scrutiny.

restofworld.org

The scale of the BJP's WhatsApp operations is incomparable to that of any other political party in the country. Over the past decade, the BJP has grown a vast network of WhatsApp groups that attempts to influence voters by spreading campaign messaging and propaganda. According to a [report in the Deccan Herald](#), there are now at least 5 million WhatsApp groups operated by the BJP in India. Unnamed party leaders told the Herald the BJP's WhatsApp infrastructure is so powerful that it can disseminate information from Delhi to any location in the country within 12 minutes.

It is not just WhatsApp groups that are disseminating propaganda - the newest accessible AI tool for creating videos is also playing a huge role in the spread of misinformation. Deepfakes are not exactly new, but new generative AI technologies enable these videos to be made so that

they look very original, and as if the real person is saying something - even though they are all artificial.



Indian Voters Are Being Bombarded With Millions of Deepfakes. Political Candidates Approve

India's elections are a glimpse of the AI-driven future of democracy. Politicians are using audio and video deepfakes of themselves to reach voters—who may have no idea they've ...

[wired.com](https://www.wired.com)

As this WIRED report suggests,

Across the ideological spectrum, they're relying on AI to help them navigate the nation's 22 official languages and thousands of regional dialects, and to deliver personalized messages in far-flung communities. While the US recently made it [illegal](#) to use AI-generated voices for unsolicited calls, in India sanctioned deepfakes have become a \$60 million business opportunity. More than 50 million AI-generated voice clone calls were made in the two months leading up to the start of the elections in April—and millions more

| *will be made during voting*

From customizing messages to bringing dead politicians back to life, AI is being put to use as propaganda - but that does not mean good old, classical hate speech has lost value, as the report earlier mentioned pointed out. And the perpetrators include sitting MPs, Union Ministers and Chief Ministers.



‘Infiltrators make up 40 MLAs in Assam assembly... they become ministers, speakers, magistrates’: Assam CM Himanta’s latest ha... speech

In his recent hate speech targeting Muslims, Assam Chief Minister and one of BJP’s star campaigners Himanta Biswa Sarma said that “infiltrators from Bangladesh” constitute 1.2...

maktoobmedia.com



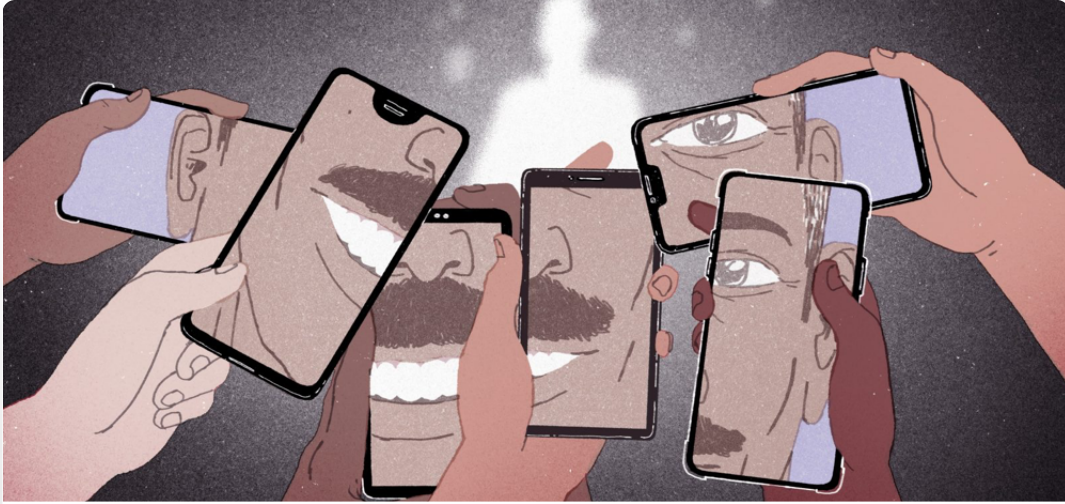
Modi's Muslim remarks spark 'hate speech' accusations as India's mammoth election deepens divides

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been accused of delivering Islamophobic remarks during an election rally Sunday, triggering widespread anger from prominent Muslim...

[cnn.com](https://www.cnn.com)

Given all of this - how free and fair is our process of democracy going to be this time, and how balanced is it going to be for the opposition? It seems, with little action from authorities, we will need to wait to know.

Following are some of the articles mentioned to further reading:



Ideas | Indian politicians are bringing the dead on the campaign trail, with help from AI

Digital rights activists have questioned the ethics of using “s... fakes” to resurrect the past and manage the future.

restofworld.org



Ideas | India's persistent, gendered digital divide

As the government moves towards gender parity, India's glaring digital gap is an extension of all the biases women contend with.

restofworld.org



Deepfake democracy: Behind the AI trickery shaping India's 2024 election

As India prepares for the world's largest elections, parties are turning to AI for novel – and dangerous – strategies.

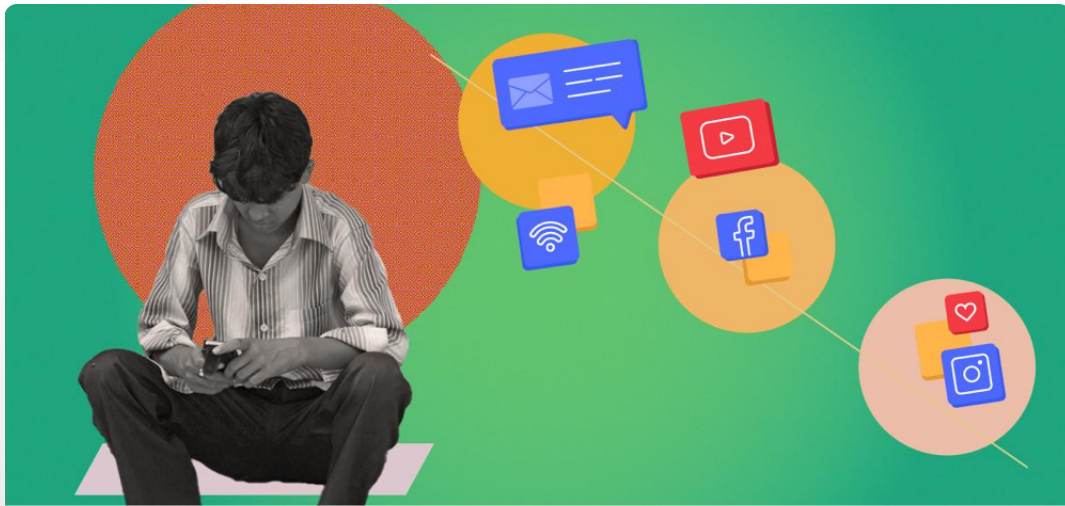
[aljazeera.com](https://www.aljazeera.com)



Are social media, AI and misinformation undermining Indian democracy?

Social media, AI and misinformation are playing an increasingly important role in Indian elections, but not always for the better.

eastasiaforum.org



Indian Elections 2024: Social Media, Misinformation, and Regulatory Challenges

How India navigates the many competing forces and interests at play in the social media landscape will be critical in determining the future and health of its democracy.

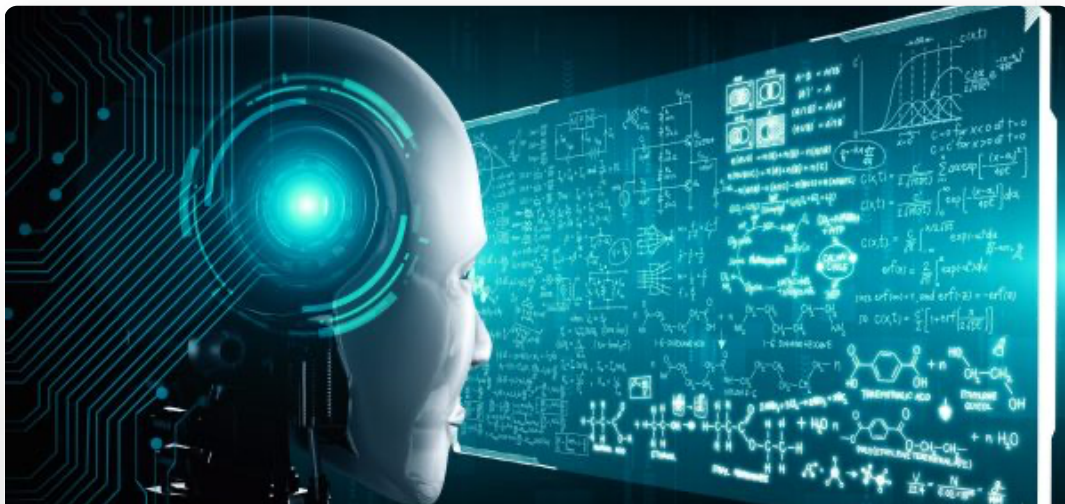
in.boell.org



YouTube vs WhatsApp: Digital Mavericks Are Testing Dubious Election Narratives

YouTube vs WhatsApp: Digital Mavericks Are Testing Dubious Election Narratives

thequint.com



AI and India's General Elections

Parties are using AI to communicate with voters across linguistic divisions but also to malign each other.

thediplomat.com



2024 India general election | How far will Artificial Intelligence go?

Unravelling the evolving landscape of election-related misinformation in India, from deepfakes to social media bots, in a digital series.

[thehindu.com](https://www.thehindu.com)



Indian political parties embrace deepfakes f... 2024 Lok Sabha Election campaigns

The increasing use of deepfakes by Indian political parties, including BJP and Congress, to sway voters highlights the evolving role of AI in election campaigns, posing challenges t...

[livemint.com](https://www.livemint.com)



Like, subscribe, and vote: India's 2024 elections depend on YouTube

As the world's biggest democracy goes to polls in a few months, election campaign managers have a new mandate: Grow YouTube presence.

restofworld.org



Despite misinformation concern, 54% India... gain factual info from social media

The OUP study has shown that, despite the questions on its credibility, concerns around misinformation and false claims, social media users derive most of their information from ...

livemint.com

Safeguarding Rural India through Critical Digital Literacy



How DEF is fighting misinformation through critical digital literacy...

PDF

InfluInterview.pdf

1.1MB

Download

Political Interviewing on YouTube: An Analysis of Indian Politicians' Engagement with Digital Influencers and

Some Recent Updates from Digital Empowerment Foundation

ETPrime
Assam government launches scheme to develop
40 lakh women SHG members as rural micro-
entrepreneurs

January 2024 report

..But Dark Clouds lurk!

Assam records highest rate of crime
against women for 5th consecutive
year: NCRB

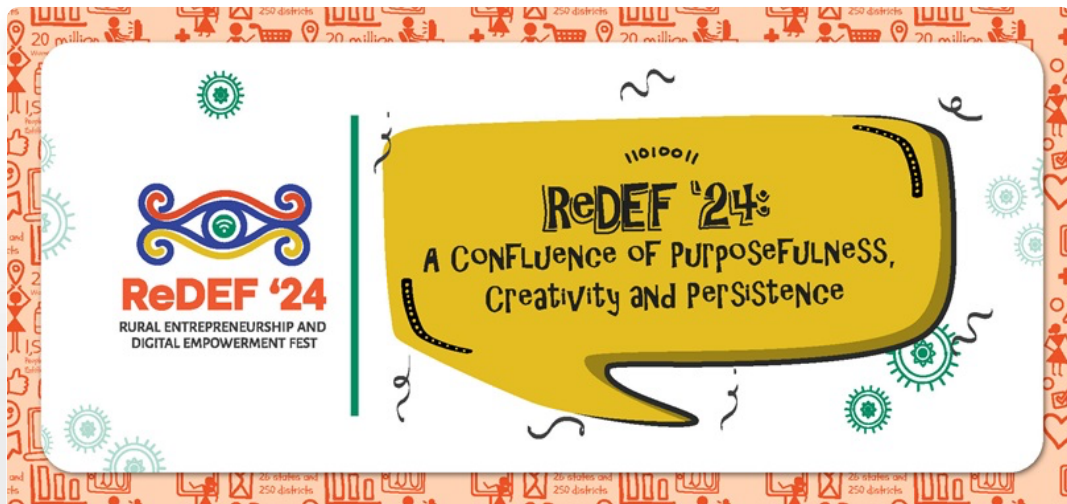
August 2022 report



**[Video] Women in Tech®India on LinkedIn:
#cybershakti #womenintechindia
#digitalempowerment #cybersecurity...**

Women in Tech®India North-East Chapter is excited to
announce "Cyber Shakti: Safe Internet Practices for Rural
Women Entrepreneurs", a program in...

[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



A Confluence of Purposefulness, Creativity and Persistence

defindia.org

Take a look at our latest newsletter, on ReDEF 2024, at the link above!

The "Safeguarding Rural India through Critical Digital Literacy" program aims to empower individuals and communities in rural India across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh.

131,440+ community members reached through Digital Literacy, Digital Services & Entitlement.

[Video] Digital Empowerment Foundation on LinkedIn: Safeguarding Rural India through Critical Digital Literacy

Through the "Safeguarding Rural India through Critical Digital Literacy" program, we've reached over 131,440 community members across Bihar, Uttar Pradesh...

[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



**Digital Empowerment Foundation on
LinkedIn: #udyamini #ruralentrepreneur
#womenentrepreneurs #soochnapreneur...**

UDYAMINI, an initiative of Digital Empowerment Foundation and other implementing partners, aims to train 20,000 rural women entrepreneurs over a period of four...

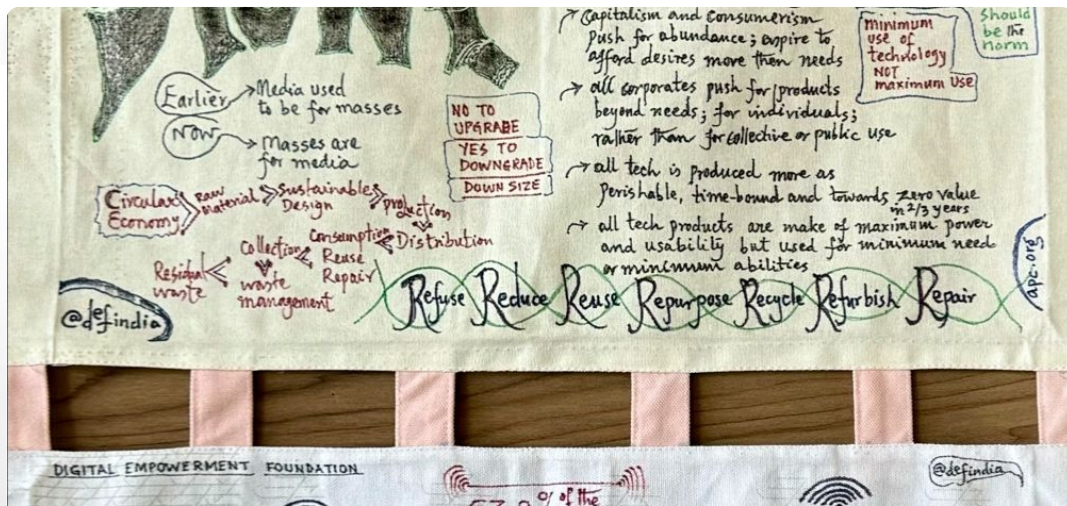
[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



Nahid Jubair on LinkedIn: Charida is a sleepy village nestled in the shadow of the majestic Ayodhya...

Charida is a sleepy village nestled in the shadow of the majestic Ayodhya Hills of Purulia district of West Bengal. Popularly known as Mukhosh Gram (Mask...

[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



Osama Manzar on LinkedIn: #environment #carbonfootprint #consumerism #digital #disaster

We all are extractive. We the consumers are more responsible for all the environmental impact of digital pervasiveness. I request all of you to please peep...

[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



Broadband India Forum on LinkedIn: Valedictory Session: Topic: Drivers of Digital Transformation in...

Valedictory Session: Topic: Drivers of Digital Transformation in India Rakesh Maheshwari Former Scientist G, Group Coordinator, MeitY is the Session Chairman...

[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



**Digital Empowerment Foundation on
LinkedIn: #misinformation #factcheck
#literacy #infopreneurs #education...**

In villages where literacy rates are low, people spread misinformation based on hearsay even without receiving the message themselves. People are not reading...

[linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)



khaanachahiye and aarthi_pillai

Joel Sunny · Luminary

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Watch on Instagram

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46 likes

khaanachahiye

In collaboration with [@defindia](#) and [@adarshsanstha](#) Foundation, we have set up a Digital Lab! 🖥️

We're empowering 200 kids from Kurla's Buntar Bhavan community with essential digital skills! 👤

We're looking for donors to help set up 5 more systems. Every contribution counts! Help us spread the word! 🙏

Huge thanks to Aarti and colleagues at [@priceline](#) for their support. Special gratitude to Rohini, Ajay, & Rahul for their help with training resources. 🙏

[#Khaanachahiye](#) [#Mumbai](#) [#Zerohunger](#)

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defindia and **osamamanzer**

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defindia

In this documentary on Fake News in India, DEF and its work is featured to highlight how it is fighting misinformation and other online threats at the grassroots level, in 24 states and 150+ districts.

It highlights the experiences of rural communities and the kind of impact misinformation can have on the digital ecosystem in villages, where access to digital rights is limited and then suspiciously viewed because of online threats and their tangible effects on marginalised communities.

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Add a comment...



defindia and osamamanzer

3,990 followers

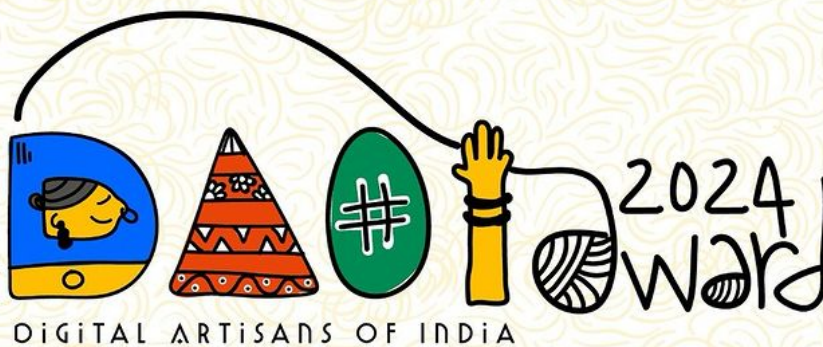
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digikargha



#CreativeDignity





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defindia

Digital Empowerment Foundation and @digikargha, in collaboration with @creativedignity are happy to announce that the Grand Jury for Digital Artisans of India is on 9th and 10th May, 2024!

This award is to recognise artisans and organisations of India who have used digital tools and digital media to break the traditional barriers and achieved higher excellence in presenting art, making Indian artistry entrepreneurial and profitable, and in making Indian art and artisans reach national and global reach.

Watch this space for more details!

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#digitalartisans #digitalhandmade #handmade #handcrafted #handloom #artisanclusters
#artisansofindia #digitalartisansofindia #defindia #traditionalarts #traditionalhandicraft
#traditionalartwork #indianculture #indianheritage #indiancultureandhistory

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digikargha and osamamanzer

168 followers

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101 likes

digikargha

India's rich history of arts and crafts spans generations, weaving a tapestry of cultural heritage.

On [#worldartisanday](#), we honor the artisans who infuse life into our traditions. Through digital training, we empower them to preserve their craft for future generations.

Let's cherish their talent and dedication, ensuring India's artistic legacy continues to shine. Happy World Artisan Day!

[#IndianArtisanship](#) [#Digikargha](#) [#DCDP](#) [#ArtisanHeritage](#) [#IndianArts](#) [#DigitalIntegration](#)
[#DigitalDevelopment](#)

Add a comment...

A reminder to everyone to exercise their right to vote! We will be back next week.