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'Caste is the biggest political party in Bihar'



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Despite thorny issues like the migration crisis, unemployment, lack of industries, rising crime, this election will be about identity politics. Will the upper castes stake their claim again, or will the marginalised continue to assert themselves?

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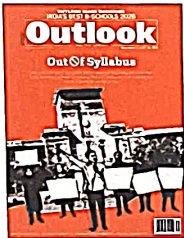
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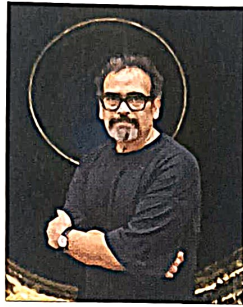
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ON THE COVER

'Flowering Cactus' by Subodh Gupta

Bihar, a land reborn from its shadows—once called the "wild west of India"—now stands resilient, much like the cactus that roots itself deep in the hardest soil. The cactus becomes a mirror to the spirit of this place: enduring, protective, and quietly radiant.

In the cactus, warmth and endurance grow side by side. It tells the story of Bihar—not of defeat, but of transformation; not of desolation, but of a beauty that survives.

The artwork was installed in Patna in 2012 during the centennial celebration of Bihar.

ABOUT THE ARTIST

Subodh Gupta is a contemporary artist from Bihar now based in New Delhi. Trained as a painter, he went on to experiment with a variety of media. Gupta is known to work with ubiquitous objects such as mass-produced steel utensils. The ordinary items are combined and transformed into sculptures that reflect the social and political economies of Gupta's homeland, while acknowledging multiple references from the history of modern art.



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Brutal shootouts in broad daylight, women hunted down as witches, chaos in the electoral rolls. Is Bihar slipping back to the lawlessness of the 90s, as elections near?



7 | THE DYE WAS ALWAYS CASTE

For all the talk of 'development first' politics, Bihar remains a state where caste is the primary currency

By Mohammad Ali



28 | EXTREME PEOPLE

Political parties in Bihar are trying hard to woo members of Extremely Backward Classes

By Umesh Kumar Ray

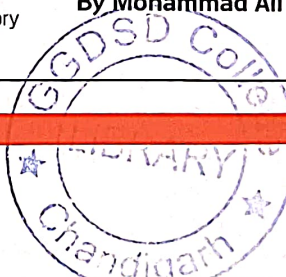


30 | BIHAR IS NOT FOR BEGINNERS

The political foundation in Bihar is caste which carries the burden of its own class

By Tanvir Aeijaz

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