

10 regnl parties encashed EBs of ₹900 cr before April 12, 2019

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

TEN REGIONAL parties, most of whom were in power in their respective states, received a combined donation of about Rs 900 crore through electoral bonds prior to April 12, 2019, the date after which the details of all poll bonds redeemed by political parties were made available earlier this week.

On Friday, the Election Commission made public the data relating to electoral bonds as returned by the Supreme Court registry.

Eight of the 10 regional parties — Aam Aadmi Party (AAP in Delhi), Telugu Desam Party (TDP in Andhra Pradesh), All India Trinamool Congress (AITC in West Bengal), Biju Janata Dal (BJD in Odisha), Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS — erstwhile TRS in Telangana), Sikkim Democratic Front (SDFI in Sikkim), Jana Dal (United) (JD-U in Bihar), and Shiv Sena (undivided in Maharashtra) were in power during the donation period. The only exceptions were Yuvajan Shramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh) and Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP in Maharashtra).

Of the other 10 regional parties, the BJD reported receiving the highest amount of Rs 235 crore between July 16, 2019 to April 9, 2019, followed by the BRS which redeemed electoral bonds worth Rs 192.6 crore between October 11, 2018 and April 10, 2019, the party informed the EC.

AAP names its donors until May 2019, Bajaj Group on top of list

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

BETWEEN APRIL 2018 and May 2019, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) got Rs 575 crore through electoral bonds — from five companies and two individuals.

Of this, the Bajaj Group accounted for Rs 3 crore, credited on April 10, 2019, becoming the party's biggest poll bond donor ahead of the Lok Sabha elections that year.

The AAP was among the parties which disclosed the names of donors in the latest data released by the Election Commission (EC) on Sunday.

According to the data, the AAP got Rs 69.06 crore through electoral bonds between April 2018 and July 2023. The party, however,

JDU wrote to EC: On April 3, 2019, someone came to our office, handed over a sealed envelope containing 10 EBs of Rs 1 cr each

other parties — YSRCP (Rs 165.8 crore) and TDP (Rs 101.8 crore) redeemed bonds over Rs 100 crore between April 16, 2019 and July 16, 2019. The Trinamool Congress cashed bonds worth Rs 98.28 crore between July 16, 2019 and April 11, 2019.

The BJD reported that it redeemed 10 electoral bonds worth Rs 10 crore before April 12, 2019. These bonds were bought from SBI's Kolkata branch on April 2, 2019. In a letter to the EC on May 30, 2019, the JDU wrote, "Somebody came to our office on April 03, 2019 at Patna and handed over a sealed envelope and when it was opened we found a bunch containing 10 electoral bonds of Rs one crore each. As per Gazette notice of the Govt of India we opened a Account in SBI Main Branch, Patna and deposited it which was credited to our party account on 10.04.2019."

The SDFI reported that it redeemed five electoral bonds (each in denomination of Rs 10 lakh) totalling Rs 50 lakh on October 12, 2018. All the five bonds were donated to SDFI by Vadodara-based Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd, the party informed the EC.

disclosed the names of donors only for the period till May 2019, which included the second highest electoral bond donor, which was Gujarat-based current Pharmaceuticals Limited and Pune-based BC Shriram Construction Technology Private Limited, both of which donated Rs 1 crore each through single-bonds. Their donations to AAP were credited to the party's accounts in May 2019.

Bengaluru-based KMZ Investments donated Rs 50 lakh in a AP in five bonds of Rs 10 lakh each. The company is involved in human health activities. It has an authorised share capital of Rs. 1 lakh and a paid up capital of Rs 1,000.

The party also received Rs 20 lakh from Bengaluru-based NJK enterprises in April 2019.

2 yrs after the death of Moosewala, his parents welcome a baby boy

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, MARCH 17

ALMOST TWO years after gunmen shot dead popular Punjabi singer Shubhdeep Singh alias Sidhu Moosewala in Mansa district of Punjab, his parents Sunday welcomed a baby boy into the family.

Moosewala's father Balkaur Singh, 60, made the announcement in a post on Facebook.

"With lots of help and efforts of people who love Shubhdeep, the Almighty has blessed us with Shubh's little brother," Balkaur said in post.

"The family is healthy and I am grateful for the immense love of all well-wishers."

He also posted a picture of him holding the baby and a welcome cake with Moosewala's photo in the background. The baby was delivered at Jind Hospital in Bathinda.

Balkaur also shared an emotional video of his wife Charan Kaur, 58, from the hospital. He broke down as he said that he felt like Moosewala had returned as junior Shubhdeep.

Sources said Balkaur and his wife opted for IVF technique and had gone abroad for treatment last year. The family had at the time requested for privacy until the procedure was successful.

Balkaur Singh, father of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, with the newborn on Sunday. PTI

After the news of the birth went viral Sunday, Moosewala's fans flocked to his Moosa village house and played Holi to mark the celebrations. Fans circulated congratulatory messages on social media, saying Sidhu Moosewala was reborn. Political leaders, especially from the Congress, also congratulated the parents. PCC chief Anirban Singh Raju Warring visited Balkaur to congratulate him.

Moosewala was the only child of his parents. The singer, who had unsuccessfully contested the Punjab Legislative Assembly elections on a Congress ticket from Mansa in 2022, was shot dead on May 29 that year.

Electoral bonds an experiment, should be judged by application, says Hosabale

KEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

THE RASHTRIYA Swyamsevak Sangh on Sunday appeared to put its weight behind the electoral bonds funding mode with Sangh Sarkaryavah Datatreya Hosabale suggesting that the efficacy of the bonds be judged through their continued application as an experiment.

"Electoral Bonds is an experiment. Whatever checks and balances are needed should be there. It is being done also. Any new thing that comes is questioned in many ways. EVMs have also been questioned. There is nothing wrong with asking questions. How beneficial and effective the electoral bonds are should be allowed to be judged through the experiments," he said while speaking to the press on the last day of RSS' Akhil Bharat Pratinidhi Sabha (ABS) batikhat in Nagpur.

ABS is the highest decision-



RSS General Secretary
Dattatreya Hosabale in Nagpur on Sunday. PTI

making body of the RSS, which holds its meetings every March with all key leaders in attendance.

During his address, Hosabale also hinted that the cut off date for the recently implemented Citizenship Amendment Act may be extended if needed. "There is a cut-off date of 2014. Under the law there are some limits which have to be set. If need arises, it will be extended."

Responding to a question on whom the Sangh considers as "minorities" when it says it is trying to engage with them,

Hosabale said that when a particular community is called a minority, it creates divisions in society. "A community is not a minority as enshrined in the Constitution. Who does the country belong to? It belongs to everyone. But a tradition of calling (some communities) minorities has taken shape for the past many decades. Sangh has always opposed minority policies," he said.

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On a question of whether Samaj-Samarasata was aiming at ensuring harmony within a particular community or is meant for all communities, Hosabale said, "The focus of Samaj-Samarasata is that unfortunately within the Hindu society there are problems of social hierarchy. The reason for which the Sangh has been created from day one is that communities are not allowed in temples or cremation grounds. We have to do away with this."

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