

September 30, 2013

## Voices of the youth



*Confident, articulate and brimming with passion. These bright young men and women impressed our judges with their debating skills*

Vipul Nanda, a final year law student in Bangalore, took a gamble by taking a day off in between his exams to come to Delhi and try his luck at being selected for the Youth Parliament. His gamble paid off as he impressed the judges — senior editors of The Times group — with his debating skills and became a part of the lucky few chosen from among thousands of applicants across the country.

On October 3, the selected young men and women — who have backgrounds as diverse as engineering, law, medicine and social entrepreneurship — will spar with some heavyweight names from the fields of politics, business, social work and academia. These include the likes of minister of state for corporate affairs Sachin Pilot, information and broadcasting minister Manish Tewari, social activist and former IPS officer Kiran Bedi, chairperson of Biocon Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, social scientist and political activist Yogendra Yadav and foreign affairs expert Brahma Chellaney among others.

So, are the young debaters feeling nervous or excited? "We believe it will be an awesome learning experience that will help us gain some valuable insights," say Karmanye Thadani, 24 and Reijul Sachdev, 20. Agrees Ashwin Chhabria, 20, "I'm looking forward to an enriching exposure. Hopefully, it will also lead to some concrete action on the ground."

What is further motivating the selected participants is the opportunity to be mentored by a panel of experts before the face-off begins in the debate which would be hosted by Times Now editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami. Twenty-one-year-old Prakhar Misra says he is looking forward to the

mentoring experience. "A good debate involves presence of mind, diction and content —it would be helpful to get tips from experts on how to achieve a balance between all three."

Avid debaters Souradip Sen, 21 and Saransh Garg, 20, final year students at IIT Mumbai are excited about the platform offered by the Youth Parliament. "It's an opportunity to put forward your views to a national audience. Such a chance comes rarely and we're not going to let it slip by."

Equally upbeat are Thamee Shahid, 22, a medical graduate and **Kavya Narayanan**, 19, a student who hope that the experience will help politicians realize that youth are equal stakeholders in countering the challenges faced by the country. Social entrepreneur Abhik Chatterjee, 25, and law student Fawaz Shaheen, 21, agree. "It's time we have a say in deciding where the country is headed."

Promises to be a passionate exchange. Watch out as the action unfolds in a few days.

#### DYNAMIC DOZEN

Meet the 12 young finalists who have been selected for the Youth Parliament. They will now debate with key policy-makers in a first-of-its-kind televised face-off on burning issues related to politics, economy and foreign affairs