

Eye on LS polls, BJP puts ears to the ground

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
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WITH its self-confidence soaring after the poll victory, the BJP has selected independent agencies to conduct a micro-survey of 350 Lok Sabha constituencies for feedbacks to help it work out its electoral strategy.

The agencies, which have been roughly assigned 70 constituencies each, have been given one month to prepare the report. Sources said, "We should have the survey report with us by February." They added that the reports would be in addition to the inputs to be provided by the party's state units and the central leaders in charge of states.

The BJP has officially set a target of winning 300 seats, but it plans to make efforts to push its score as much above the 182-mark as possible.

Sources disclosed that the party has divided the 350 seats,

identified for contesting, into six categories, from A to F. They have been listed under 'sure', 'marginal', 'borderline' and 'possible' seats.

The surveyors have been asked to identify the potential winners from the different constituencies. They have also been told to work out all possible caste-combinations and poll scenarios.

The surveyors would list the local, regional and national issues, which would influence the voting, so that the party can highlight the right issues in the right areas. Caste combinations would be crucial in the states where triangular contests are expected. Such states include UP, West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab and J-K.

The party begins work on its "Mission-2004" for the Lok Sabha polls immediately. Each Union minister has been asked to keep aside at least two days for the purpose.

PM not to advance LS polls

Sri 4/12
Sudesh K Verma in New Delhi

No farewell

Dec. 3. — Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee indicated today that he was in no hurry to advance the Lok Sabha polls. He directed all his MPs to utilise "about a year left for the polls in 2004 to establish live contact with voters". This had helped in the past, the Prime Minister stressed.

The Prime Minister asked the MPs to be "alert and cautious" about "malicious designs" of the Congress to implicate and malign them at the slightest opportunity. BJP leaders said his remarks were aimed at ending speculation that Lok Sabha polls could be advanced if the Assembly polls verdict was favourable. His remarks also meant there would be two more Parliament sessions, they said.



NEW DELHI, Dec. 3. — There'll be no Cabinet minister or official to see off the Prime Minister as he leaves on a foreign tour tomorrow. An advisory said: "In view of the Parliament session, there would be no ceremonial farewell" for Nigeria-bound Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee. Journalists have been asked to stay away as "there'll be no media coverage". He'll be in Parliament tomorrow morning and may make a statement on the Judeo issue. — SNS

There is a difference of opinion in the BJP on the wisdom of going in for early general elections. A section in the party feels Mr Vajpayee

J. B. P. in d. Parliam
should complete his term and go down in history as the first non-Congress Prime Minister to complete a full five-year term. He has completed about six years in office (owing to earlier brief stints), but a continuous five-year term would be complete only on 13 October.

The impact of video footage showing leaders taking bribes would fade away with time, says this section of the BJP. Mr Vajpayee himself said the Judeo tapes didn't cut much ice as the Congress had lost credibility. He rationalised the projected poll results, saying the BJP's performance should be seen in the context of the Congress ruling all the four states. The BJP couldn't but better its performance, he argued. He expressed satisfaction that communal issues were not raised in the state polls.

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