

RAJYA SABHA ELECTIONS IN UTTAR PRADESH

Official sticks to stand on rejection of nominations

By J.P. Shukla

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LUCKNOW, JUNE 25. The Returning Officer for the Rajya Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh, Rajendra Prasad Pandey, today stuck to his ruling and rejected the nomination papers of the two Congress candidates, Harendra Agrawal and M.M. Shukla.

Mr. Pandey had rejected the papers on the ground that the candidates' personal details had not been furnished in the format as required. The two went to the Election Commission, which stayed the declaration of results and asked Mr. Pandey to review the case.

After hearing arguments for and against for the past two days, Mr. Pandey today said he had deliberated the case at length in accordance with the Commission's directives and saw no reason to review his ruling.

The decision invited protests from the two candidates and the party's State unit president, Jagdambika Pal, who said they would move the Commission again demanding

countermanding of the Rajya Sabha elections in the State.

They demanded that Mr. Pandey issue them a certified copy of the decision so that they could approach the Chief Election Commissioner immediately before the results could be announced tomorrow, the last date for withdrawal of nominations.

After Mr. Pandey left, the Congress leaders turned to the Chief Election Officer, Vijay Sharma, present during the hearing as the Election Commission's Observer.

They alleged that Mr. Pandey had hatched a conspiracy to deprive the Congress candidates of their democratic right to contest so that all other candidates, including the BJP-supported Lalit Suri, were elected unopposed.

They requested Mr. Sharma to see that they got a certified copy of Mr. Pandey's decision soon to enable them to take the next step.

The leaders of the Samajwadi Party and the Bharatiya Janata Party have welcomed the decision, saying the rule of law had been

vindicated.

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The Revenue Minister, Ambika Chaudhary, said that discrepancies in the papers of the two Congress candidates were of their own making and that they had tried to blame others for their faults. Had they acted with caution there would have been no reason to blame others for their mistakes.

Earlier, Mr. Agrawal and Mr. Jagdambika Pal claimed that the required affidavit on Form 26 had been submitted by Mr. Agrawal and that it had been lost in the office of the Returning Officer.

When Mr. Pandey refuted this, Mr. Agrawal started accusing Mr. Pandey of being prejudiced. Mr. Pandey requested him to sit down but Mr. Agrawal said, "what can you do if I do not sit down?" Mr. Pandey then asked the security guards to remove him but Mr. Pal intervened to save the situation.

Today's ruling has thrown the Congress out of the race with the possibility of all the 11 candidates in the field being elected unopposed.

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WITHOUT JURISDICTION

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THE ELECTION COMMISSION has plainly exceeded its constitutional brief while dealing with the Rajya Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh. By asking the Returning Officer to reconsider his decision to reject the nominations of two Congress candidates, the Commission has contravened a slew of judicial pronouncements and disregarded the well-settled and salutary principles that contribute to the smooth and uninterrupted flow of the electoral process. It is not entirely clear why the Returning Officer, R.P. Pandey, rejected the nominations of Messrs. H. Aggarwal and M.M. Shukla but reports suggest this was done on procedural grounds, that is, because their papers suffered from certain technical flaws. The Congress, which has alleged that the rejection is "unconstitutional and unlawful," has insinuated that the Returning Officer was acting at the behest of the ruling Samajwadi Party — a charge that has not been backed by any evidence. But the political controversy has been overshadowed by the legal one — sparked by the Election Commission's decision to act beyond its jurisdiction. The simple truth is that the Commission is not empowered to act on appeals against a Returning Officer's decision — which is exactly what it did by asking Mr. Pandey to reconsider "relevant matters" and pass such orders "as he may deem fit." Returning Officers act as quasi-judicial authorities when accepting or rejecting nomination papers and the courts have made it clear that the Election Commission cannot overrule or review the exercise of such quasi-judicial power.

This point was reinforced only recently by the Supreme Court in connection with a case with a striking similarity. The background: following the rejection of the nomination papers of a candidate who wanted to contest the Haryana Assembly election in 2000, the Election Commission directed the Returning Officer to

conduct a fresh scrutiny. In its judgment delivered on January 23, 2004, the Supreme Court held that the Election Commission's directive was "not only illegal but also without jurisdiction." The three-member Bench also stressed that "once the nomination paper of a candidate is rejected, the [Representation of the People] Act provides only for one remedy, that remedy being by an election petition to be presented after the election is over; there is no remedy provided at any intermediate stage" (Ram Phal Kundu *vs* Kamal Sharma). The larger purpose behind this is to ensure that the electoral process, once formally initiated, is smooth, uninterrupted and insulated from any kind of intervention — even from the judiciary. Such a purpose finds expression in Article 329 (b) of the Constitution, which specifically excludes the jurisdiction of courts to entertain matters relating to election disputes except through election petitions.

The Election Commission's communication to Mr. Pandey may have been couched in the form of a request, but a message from a superior to a subordinate that suggests the review of a decision is in the nature of a directive. The Commission has compounded its mistake by directing the Uttar Pradesh Chief Electoral Officer to be present as the "central observer" during the re-scrutiny of the nomination papers by Mr. Pandey. This is likely to have the unfortunate, and unintended, effect of creating the impression that, after committing the blunder of calling for a review, it has got itself entangled in the very process of review. The Commission may believe it has good reasons to think the Returning Officer erred by rejecting the nomination papers. But the solution cannot lie in its usurping the role of an appellate body — which, as the Courts have pointed out, the Election Commission is decidedly not under the Constitution or any statute.

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Shivraj Patil, Ambika Soni elected to Rajya Sabha

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21. The Union Home Minister, Shivraj Patil, the Health Minister, R. Anbumani, the former BJP Union Ministers, Jaswant Singh, Yashwant Sinha, Dilip Singh Judev, and Pramod Mahajan, the Congress leaders, Ambika Soni, Capt. Satish Sharma and Sukhbans Kaur Bhinder, and the outgoing Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairperson, Najma Heptulla, were declared elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha today in the biennial elections for 57 seats.

The Congress retained its majority and will continue to call the shots in the Upper House of Parliament.

Mr. Patil and Mr. Mahajan were elected from Maharashtra. Others elected are the chairman and managing director of the *Lokmat* group of newspapers, Vijay Darda (Congress), the executive editor of *Saamna*, Sanjay Raut, and the Shetkari Sanghatana leader, Sharad Joshi (both on Shiv Sena ticket), and Tariq Anwar (NCP).

Mr. Dilip Singh Judev and the senior Congress leader, Mohsina Kidwai, were elected unopposed from Chhattisgarh.

In Madhya Pradesh, the BJP leader, Narayan Singh Kesri, was elected unopposed in the by-elections to the seat vacated by the Lok Sabha member, Kailash Joshi. Elections for three full-term seats would be held on June 28. The BJP leaders, Pyarelal Khandelwal, Laxminarayan Sharma and S. Thirunavukarasar, and the Congress leader, Aziz Quereshi, are in the fray.

The former Union Minister and JD(U) candidate, Sharad Yadav, and the Congress candidate, R.K. Dhawan, were among the candidates from Bihar who were elected unopposed. The Rashtriya Janata Dal candidates, Subhash Yadav, Mangni Lal Mandal, Vidya Sagar Nishad and Moitur Rehman, and the BJP candidate, Capt. Jai Narain Nishad, were also elected from the State.

Ms. Najma Heptulla and Mr. Jaswant Singh

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were elected from Rajasthan. Others elected from the State are the State BJP chief, Lalit Kishore Chaturvedi, the Jat Mahasabha patron, Gyan Prakash Pilonia, and industrialist Santosh Bagrodia.

Besides Dr. Anbumani (Pattali Makkal Katchi), the others elected from Tamil Nadu were T.T.V. Dinakaran, K. Malaisamy, N.R. Govindarajar and S. Anbazhagan (all belonging to the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam) and Sudarsana Natchiappan (Congress).

The AICC secretary, Jairam Ramesh, industrialist Girish Sanghi and the former BSP leader, Rashid Alvi, were elected unopposed from Andhra Pradesh. The senior Congress leader, V. Hanumanth Rao, bureaucrat Jesudasu Seelam, the Telugu Desam Party leader, C. Ramachandraiah, and the CPI(M) nominee, P. Madhu, were also declared elected.

From Orissa, Chhatrapal Singh (BJP), Pyarimohan Mohapatra (Biju Janata Dal) and Radhakant Nayak (Congress) were elected unopposed for full six year terms. Rudranarayan Pani (BJP) was elected in the by-election held against a vacancy caused by the resignation of Manmohan Samal, who was elected to the State Assembly.

Elections will be held on June 28 in Karnataka to fill four seats, for which five candidates are in the fray. Only one nominee had backed out by the end of the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations today. Prabhavati Jairam of the Janata Dal (Secular) withdrew her papers on June 18. The contestants are the Union Minister, Oscar Fernandes, the Congress secretary, B.K. Hari-prasad, the BJP national president, M. Venkaiah Naidu, the BJP leader, Shakuntala Hegde, and the Chennai-based industrialist, M.A.M. Ramaswamy (JD-S). — UNI, PTI

Election Commission puts off Rajya Sabha poll results in U.P.

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 21. The Election Commission today put off the declaration of results of the Rajya Sabha polls in Uttar Pradesh and asked the Returning Officer to send records of the nomination papers of the two Congress candidates which were rejected on Saturday.

The Commission will decide the next course of action tomorrow after going through the re-

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cords and the objections filed by the Congress today. The Deputy Election Commissioner, A.N. Jha, said the records would

Shivraj Patil, Jaswant Singh, Najma Heptulla, others elected unopposed to Upper House: Page 11

reach the Commission tomorrow and a decision would be taken by evening.

The decision to stay the dec-

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laration of results and summon the records and all necessary and relevant papers from Lucknow was taken at a meeting of the full Commission, presided over by the Chief Election Commissioner, T.S. Krishnamurthy.

A Congress delegation, including the Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee chief, Jagdambika Pal, Congress Legislature Party leader, Pramod Tiwari, and senior party leader, Birendra Singh, in charge of

party affairs in Uttar Pradesh, visited the Commission today and submitted their objections.

The party is upset over the rejection of the nomination papers of its candidates, Harendra Agrawal and M.M. Shukla, on the grounds that personal information submitted by them was not in accordance with the stipulated format. The party delegation pleaded before the Commission that results should not be declared till the nomination papers were re-examined. The delegation told the Commission that the Returning Officer's decision to reject the nomination papers was "undemocratic and unconstitutional."

As many as 11 Rajya Sabha seats from the State are at stake. In the fray are industrialist, Anil Ambani, the former cine star, Jaya Bachchan, hotelier Lalit Suri and others.

The Samajwadi Party leader, Amar Singh, also met the Deputy Election Commissioner today. He described the Congress charges as "baseless." The results were expected to be declared today and at the end of the deadline for the withdrawal of nominations there would have been 11 candidates for as many vacancies in the biennial elections for Uttar Pradesh to the Council of States.

Rajya Sabha polls in UP stayed

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW, June 21. — The Election Commission today stayed the declaration of Rajya Sabha results in Uttar Pradesh following a Congress petition against the rejection of two of its candidates in the state. The EC will look into the matter and announce its decision by tomorrow. Till then, the fate of 11 candidates, who otherwise would have got elected unopposed, hangs in balance.

Prominent among them are Reliance vice-president Mr Anil Ambani and Mrs Jaya Bachchan (both SP); Dr Murl Manohar Joshi, Mr Arun Shourie and Mr Lalit Suri (all BJP), and BSP supremo Miss Mayawati.

The poll panel has asked the UP chief election officer to send all records of nomination papers of the two Congress candidates, Mr Madan Mohan and Mr Haren Aggarwal, rejected by returning officers on technical grounds. The papers will be

Premature celebration



Mayawati, MM Joshi, Anil Ambani and Jaya Bachchan

analysed by the EC tomorrow, Deputy Election Commissioner Mr AN Jha said.

The EC took up the issue after the Congress filed a complaint alleging that the UP government had influenced the state election officer to cancel the nomination papers. In all,

13 members filed nomination papers for the 11 Rajya Sabha seats in UP.

But for the EC move, the unopposed victory of the remaining 11 candidates would have been imminent. Today was the last day for withdrawal of nomination papers.

However, two Union ministers and some former ministers got elected unopposed to the Upper House today. They included Mr Shivraj Patil, Ms Ambika Soni, Mr Satish Sharma, Mr RK Dhawan, Mr Jairam Ramesh, Ms Mohsina Kidwai, (all from the Congress), Mr R Anbumani (PMK), Mr Jaswant Singh, Mr Yashwant Sinha, Mr Pramod Mahajan, Mr Dilip Singh Judeo (from the BJP), and former Rajya Sabha deputy chairperson Ms Najma Heptullah.

Nationalist Congress Party leader Mr Tariq Anwar, and Shiv Sena's Mr Sanjay Raut (editor of party mouthpiece *Saamna*) were elected unopposed from Maharashtra. The AIADMK had four of its candidates elected from Tamil Nadu.

All Candidates From State Set To Win Unopposed

Bihar RS polls see no contest

LJP, RJD feud out in open

Ashok K. Mishra
PATNA 17 JUNE

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 17 JUNE

ALL the contenders for Rajya Sabha from Bihar are set to be elected unopposed, as only seven have filed nomination papers for the seven seats.

JD(U)'s Sharad Yadav was the only candidate to file his papers on Thursday, the last day. The other six candidates filed their papers on Wednesday. The candidates are expected to be declared elected on 19 June, the last date of withdrawal.

The biennial poll to the five Rajya Sabha seats and the by-poll to the two Rajya Sabha seats were scheduled on 28 June. Those filing their papers for the biennial poll were Shubash Yadav, Moti-ur-Rahman, R.K. Dhawan, Jainarain Nishad and Sharad Yadav. Magni Lal Mandal and Vidya Sagar Nishad (both RJD) had filed their papers for by-election to the two seats which got vacated after the resignation of Laloo Prasad Yadav and Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lallan Singh.

The run-up to the Rajya Sabha elections in the state has also set the stage for shadow boxing between the RJD and the LJP leaders.

THE war between Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Laloo Prasad Yadav and Lok Janshakti leader (LJP) Ram Vilas Paswan two leading components of the United Progressive Alliance, is out in the open. After denying

the latter the chance to lurch over the railways ministry again, the RJD strongman has ensured that the Lok Janshakti is not given any ticket for the ensuing Rajya Sabha biennial polls from Bihar.

And now comes the news that the RJD is set to poach from Mr Paswan's outfit its general secretary Rajesh Ranjan, aka Pappu Yadav, whose wife Ranjeet Ranjan is the LJP MP from Saharsa.

Mr Pappu Yadav, currently lodged in judicial custody following the orders of the Supreme Court for his alleged involvement in the murder of CPM MLA Ajit Sarkar, had lost the just-concluded Lok Sabha polls from Purnea, but suffered the mortification of seeing his wife win.

Itching to come back to political action, Mr Pappu Yadav has now declared that he'll contest the by-election for the Madhepura seat.



WALKOVER: Sharad Yadav arrives in Patna to file his nomination on Thursday. — PTI

BJP rewards Najma with RS ticket

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Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 10. — The BJP leadership has apparently decided to pitch for Ms Najma Heptulla for the post of Deputy Chairperson of the Rajya Sabha in the hope that she would win via cross voting from other parties. The Samajwadi Party and the Nationalist Congress Party may support her candidature. She is close to the NCP chief, Mr Sharad Pawar.

The BJP view is that with her 24 years' experience in the Rajya Sabha of which she spent 15 years as Deputy Chairperson she must have created personal friends to help her win the election which may not even have a whip. Ms Heptulla immediately thanked the BJP by giving it a certificate of secularism.

Before the Lok Sabha elections, she had lauded the leadership of Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and attacked Mrs Sonia Gandhi over her foreign origin. The BJP has now tried to send a message that it could be trusted by "friends", a party leader said.

As the party announced its nominations for the RS polls, it appears to have followed the beaten path instead of evolving criteria for ministers who lost the LS polls. Therefore,

Mr Murli Manohar Joshi and Mr Yashwant Sinha were given nominations from Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand respectively, but Syed Shahnawaz Hussain, the lone Cabinet minister in the NDA government from the minority community, was not.

There was a lot of pressure from the RSS to give a Rajya Sabha seat to Mr Joshi as they are concerned with the United Progressive Alliance's attack on the NDA for saffronisation of education. The former disinvestment minister, Mr Arun Shourie, was not nominated though Mr Dilip Singh Judeo, caught on camera taking a bribe, was given the seat from Chhattisgarh.

The nominations of Mr M Venkaiah Naidu from Karnataka, Mr Jaswant Singh from Rajasthan and Mr Pramod Mahajan from Maharashtra were as expected. Mrs Shakuntala Hegde, Ramakrishna Hegde's widow, has been nominated for the second seat from Karnataka and she may have to depend on second preference votes for victory. Former BJP president Mr Pyarelal Khandelwal has been given a seat from MP. Mr Narayan Singh Kesari and Mr S Thirunavukarasar were the other nominees from the state.

Another report on page 4

RS cheer for Congress

K. SUBRAHMANYA

New Delhi, June 9: The Supreme Court's order today vacating its stay on the Rajya Sabha elections has come as a relief to the Congress.

It has paved the way for the election of home minister Shivraj Patil, power minister P.M. Sayeed and minister of state for programme implementation Oscar Fernandes to the Upper House.

The three are not members of either the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha and have to get themselves elected to either House within six months of their appointment as ministers.

While Patil is expected to seek election from his home state Maharashtra and Fernandes from his home state Karnataka, Sayeed, who is a resident of Lakshadweep, would have to seek election from outside the Union territory as it does not have representation in the council of states.

Congress leaders see no hitch in getting Sayeed elected to the Upper House, though columnist Kuldip Nayar's petition questioned the constitu-

tional validity of last year's amendments to the Representation of Peoples Act that allowed a resident of one state to seek election from another.

"Since the court has stated that the election would be subject to its final judgment on the writ petition, there is no bar on fielding any candidate to contest the Rajya Sabha elections as of now. In case the court strikes down the amendment to the Representation of Peoples Act in its final judgment and restores the earlier legal position, then those elected from outside his state of ordinary residence would lose his membership," said a senior leader.

He, however, did not foresee the possibility of the apex court striking down the amended law. After all, the stay order on the elections — now to be held on June 28 instead of June 21 as scheduled earlier — came before arguments on the petition had commenced, he said.

"Once the court considers the merits of Parliament's amendment legislation, it would be impossible for it to strike down the amended law,"

said another leader.

Even so, to be truthful, Sayeed is expected to state in his affidavit to go along with the nomination papers that "he is a normal resident of 'A' state but seeking election to the Rajya Sabha from 'B' state", the leader added.

The party also sees no threat to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. "As a member elected for the third term from Assam, he is already a registered voter in that state and qualifies to be an ordinary resident of that state as required even under the earlier election law.

"Similarly, two other members — law minister H.R. Bhardwaj (Madhya Pradesh) and R.K. Anand (Jharkhand) — are registered as voters in the state which they are currently representing in the Upper House, though they originally hailed from other states," said a source.

The only person who could have a problem, the source added, is M.S. Gill. The former chief election commissioner, a voter in Delhi, was elected to the Upper House from Punjab last April as a Congress nominee.

ELECTION ON 28 JUNE, SAYS EC

Supreme Court lifts RS poll stay

J. Election (R.S.)

Our Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI, June 9. — The Supreme Court (coram, Balakrishna, Reddi, JJ) today lifted its 4 June order staying elections to 65 vacant Rajya Sabha seats and permitted the Election Commission to announce a revised polling schedule for it but said that such results would be subject to the final orders of the court on the matter.

The court clarified that poll results would be subject to any final orders on two petitions, one filed by journalist Mr Kuldip Nayar and another by a former member of the Rajya Sabha, Mr Inderjit, challenging a recent amendment to the law that deletes the domiciliary requirement of candidates contesting the Rajya Sabha polls.

"...We do not think that it is just and proper that the interim stay should continue. We hereby vacate the interim stay. As the presidential notification has already been issued and the election process has started we do not think that there are compelling reasons to stop the election process at this stage; especially in view of the presumption of constitutionality of the impugned provisions," the court said.

However, keeping in mind the possibility that the impugned amendment may be found unconstitutional, the court made it

a must for all candidates seeking election to the Rajya Sabha to indicate clearly in their nomination form 2C the state in which they are ordinarily resident.

Implying that if the court does come to the conclusion that the amendment is unconstitutional on the ground that it violates the basic structure of the Constitution, any member not ordinarily resident in a particular state would have to vacate the seat. The court is likely to hear the matter in detail on 12 July.

Appearing for the Union, Mr Gopal Subramaniam stated that there can be no interdict of the election process once it's under way. EC counsel Mr S Murlidhar stated that the EC was constitutionally duty-bound to complete polls.

Mr Nayar's counsel said false declarations are punishable but Parliament has legalised the practice. Mr Fali S Nariman, counsel for Mr Inderjit, said the requirement that the elector be ordinarily resident in the state from which he is seeking poll is part of the constitutional scheme of federalism.

Poll dates: The Election Commission today announced a fresh schedule for Rajya Sabha polls. Nominations will open on 17 June, scrutiny will take place the next day, withdrawal of nominations would close on 21 June followed by polling on 28 June, said an EC spokesman.

রাজ্যসভা নির্বাচন নিয়ে স্থগিতাদেশ প্রত্যাহার

নয়াদিগ্লি, ৯ জুন— রাজ্যসভার ৬৫টি শূন্য আসনে নির্বাচন প্রক্রিয়ার উপর থেকে স্থগিতাদেশ তুলে নিল সুপ্রিম কোর্ট। জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইনের একটি ধারার পরিবর্তন করে এন ডি এ সরকার যে সংশোধনী এনেছিল, তার সাংবিধানিক বৈধতা নিয়ে প্রশ্ন করে সাংবিদিক কুলদীপ নায়ার আদালতের দ্বারস্থ হলে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট অন্তর্বর্তী আদেশে রাজ্যসভার আসন্ন নির্বাচন স্থগিত করতে বলেছিল। নির্বাচন কমিশনের আবেদনের ভিত্তিতে শীর্ষ আদালত স্থগিতাদেশ তুলে নেওয়ায় আসন্ন রাজ্যসভা নির্বাচন প্রক্রিয়া ফের চালু করার আপাতত কোনও বাধা থাকল না। তবে আদালত স্থগিতাদেশ তুলে নিলেও সাক্ষর জানিয়ে দিয়েছে, এই দফার নির্বাচন হয়ে গেলেও নির্বাচিতদের রাজ্যসভার সদস্য পদের বৈধতা বিচারার্থী মামলার রায়ের উপর নির্ভরশীল থাকবে। অর্থাৎ, বর্তমান আইনের বিতর্কিত ধারাটি আদালতের রায়ে বাতিল হলে নির্বাচনে জয়ী রাজ্যসভার সদস্যদের সদস্যপদও খারিজ হয়ে যাবে। উল্লেখ্য, নতুন করে নির্বাচনী প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করে এবার রাজ্যসভার ৬৫টি শূন্য আসনের জন্য ভোট ২৮ জুন হবে। কিন্তু সুপ্রিম কোর্টে মামলার ফয়সালা ২১ জুলাইয়ের আগে হবে না।

জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইনের যে অংশটি এন ডি এ সরকার সংসদে সংশোধনী এনে পরিবর্তন করেছিল, তাতে রাজ্যসভার ভোটে গোপন ব্যালটের বদলে প্রকাশ্যে ভোটদান চালু করা হয়। আরও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ, এতদিন রাজ্যসভার নির্বাচনে লড়তে হলে নির্দিষ্ট রাজ্যের স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা হওয়া ছিল বাধ্যতামূলক। নতুন সংশোধনীর বলে এখন একটি রাজ্যের স্থায়ী বাসিন্দা না হয়েও সেই রাজ্য থেকে রাজ্যসভার প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে নির্বাচিত হওয়া যাবে। উল্লেখ্য, এন ডি এ সরকার ওই সংশোধনী আনলেও বিরোধী কংগ্রেস তখন তাতে কোনও বাধাই দেয়নি। জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইনের এই সংশোধনী আদতে রাজ্যসভা গঠনের মূল সাংবিধানিক উদ্দেশ্যকেই খারিজ করে দিয়েছে বলে সুপ্রিম কোর্টের কাছে জনস্বার্থ মামলা করেন কুলদীপ নায়ার। এ নিয়ে মামলা শুরু হওয়ার পরেই আদালত নির্বাচন কমিশনকে ওই মামলার সঙ্গে যুক্ত করে।

আজ রাজ্যসভার আসন্ন নির্বাচনের উপর স্থগিতাদেশ তুলে নিলেও সুপ্রিম কোর্টের বিচারপতিরা জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন, রাজ্যসভার নির্বাচনে যে সব প্রার্থী প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করবেন, সেই সব প্রার্থীর মনোনয়নে তাঁরা কোন রাজ্যের বাসিন্দা এবং কোন রাজ্যের ভোটার তালিকায় তাঁদের নাম রয়েছে তা উল্লেখ করতে হবে। প্রসঙ্গত, অনেক নেতাকেই লোকসভায় জিততে না পারলে বা লোকসভায় নির্বাচিত হওয়ার সুযোগ না থাকলে ভিন রাজ্য থেকে রাজ্যসভায় নিয়ে আসার একটা রীতি কংগ্রেস, বি জে পি সহ অনেক দলই এর পর তিনের পাতায়

স্থগিতাদেশ প্রত্যাহার

প্রথম পাতার পর

পালন করছিল। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহ নিজে পঞ্জাবের অধিবাসী ও দিল্লির বাসিন্দা হলেও অসম থেকে রাজ্যসভায় নির্বাচিত হয়ে এসেছেন। এ জন্য নির্দিষ্ট রাজ্যে একটি স্থায়ী ঠিকানা জোগাড় করলেই আগের জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইনের শর্ত মানা হত। সংশোধনী এনে সেই বাধাও দূর করা হয়। তারই বিরোধিতা করে আদালতে মামলা হয়েছে।

প্রমুখরা এ বার নির্বাচনে হেরে গিয়েও মন্ত্রী হয়েছিলেন। রাজ্যসভা থেকেই তাঁদের নির্বাচিত হয়ে সংসদে আসার কথা। আবার রাজ্যসভার প্রধান বিরোধী নেতা যশবন্ত সিংহ, বিজেপি নেতা প্রমোদ মহাজন, অরুণ শৌরির মতো নেতারও রাজ্যসভায় ফিরে আসার কথা। —পি টি আই

বিচারপতি কে জি বালকৃষ্ণান এবং বিচারপতি পি বেক্টরাম রেড্ডিকে নিয়ে গঠিত শীর্ষ আদালতের এক অবসরকালীন ডিভিশন বেঞ্চ এই রায় দিয়ে জানিয়েছে, সংবিধানের ৩২৯-খ ধারা অনুযায়ী এক বার কোনও নির্বাচন প্রক্রিয়া শুরু হয়ে গেলে কোনও আদালতই সেই প্রক্রিয়ার উপর স্থগিতাদেশ জারি করতে পারে না। আদালতের এই রায়ের ফলে স্বস্তির নিঃশ্বাস ফেলেছে সরকার ও বিরোধী দুই পক্ষই। সংবিধান অনুযায়ী সংসদের সদস্য না-থাকা সত্ত্বেও কেউ মন্ত্রী হলে ছ'মাসের মধ্যে সংসদের কোনও একটি কক্ষে তাঁকে নির্বাচিত হতে হবে। সেই নিয়ম অনুযায়ী কংগ্রেসের শিবরাজ পাটিল, পি.এম. সঙ্গ

Election Commission moves Supreme Court

● 'Lift the stay on ^{J. Veerli an (R-S)} Rajya Sabha polls'

By J. Venkatesan

DELHI, JUNE 5. The Election Commission, which has been restrained by the Supreme Court from proceeding with the Rajya Sabha polls, today moved the Court with an application for lifting the stay.

The Commission filed the application with a request that the matter be heard today itself at the residence of the presiding judge. The Central Government also filed a similar application. But after perusing the applications, a Bench of Justice B.N. Agrawal and Justice P. Venkatarama Reddi said the matter would be listed on Monday for further orders.

Earlier in the day, the Commission asked the Chief Electoral Officers of various States not to accept the nomination forms from candidates in view of the Supreme Court's order putting on hold the election process.

The Commission in its application submitted that the notification for the Rajya Sabha polls for filling 65 vacancies was issued on the morning of June 4, prior to the Court's interim order. Citing earlier decisions that under Article 329 (b) of the Constitution no court could interfere once the election process starts, the Commission requested the Court to lift the stay to enable it to complete the process as otherwise there would be a constitutional crisis of not filling the vacant seats.

A vacation Bench of Justice Ruma Pal and Justice B.N. Agrawal had on Friday stayed the election process after hearing senior journalist and former Rajya Sabha member Kuldip Nayar, who assailed an amendment to the Representation of the People Act made in August 2003 that a person for getting elected to the Rajya Sabha need not be a resident of that partic-

ular State. The Commission drew the Court's attention to the fact that after the amendment to the RP Act came into force, two byelections were held, one in September 2003 to fill a vacancy in Pondicherry and another in March to fill 10 vacancies in five States. The petitioner had rushed to the court only on April 26 after the completion of two rounds of elections. As long as the amendment was not stayed, the Commission was bound to implement it and discharge its constitutional obligations to fill the vacancies to the Rajya Sabha.

In some States, the Commission submitted, the vacancies had already arisen but could not be filled because of the Assembly elections and it could not allow the vacancies to remain unfilled. Due to the interim stay, it would not be possible to fill these vacancies.

6 JUN 2004

স্বগিতাদেশ তুলতে আজি কমিশনের

নয়াদিল্লি, ৫ জুন— রাজ্যসভায়
৩৫টি আসনে দ্বিবার্ষিক নির্বাচন ও
উপনির্বাচন প্রক্রিয়া স্থগিত রাখার যে
নির্দেশ দিয়েছে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট, তা খারিজ
করার আবেদন জানিয়েছে নির্বাচন
কমিশন। তাদের বক্তব্য, নির্বাচনী
প্রক্রিয়ায় হস্তক্ষেপ করার আইনি
অধিকার আদালতের নেই। রাজ্যসভায়
নির্বাচনের জন্য কাল সকালেই বিজ্ঞপ্তি
জারি করা হয়ে গিয়েছিল বলে তাদের
আবেদনে জানিয়েছে কমিশন। ১১

একই সঙ্গে কমিশন বিভিন্ন রাজ্যে
মুখ্য নির্বাচনী অফিসারদের নির্দেশ
দিয়েছে, তাঁরা যেন আপাতত প্রার্থীদে-
মনোনয়নপত্র জমা নেওয়া বন্ধ রাখেন।

নির্বাচন কমিশনের মুখপাত্র এ এ
বা বলেন, “সুপ্রিম কোর্টের কাছে আমরা
আবেদন, তারা যেন তাদের স্বগিতাদেশ
তুলে নেয়।” গত কাল এক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ
আদেশে ১৪ জুন পর্যন্ত অন্তর্বর্তী নির্বাচন
প্রক্রিয়া স্থগিত রাখার নির্দেশ দেয় সুপ্রিম
কোর্ট। ২১ জুন এই নির্বাচন ও
উপনির্বাচন হওয়ার কথা।

আদালতের এই নির্দেশ স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রী
শিবরাজ পাটিল, বিদ্যুৎমন্ত্রী পি এম
সঙ্গীদ, এবং যশোবন্ত সিংহ, প্রমোদ
মহাজন, অরুণ শৌরির মতো নেতাকে
বিপাকে ফেলতে পারে। লোকসভা
নির্বাচনে হেরে যাওয়ার পর রাজ্যসভার
মনোনয়ন পাওয়ার আশা করছিলেন
পাটিল ও সঙ্গীদ। — পি টি আই

ANAD BAZAR PATEIKA

8 JUN 2004

সুপ্রিম কোর্ট স্থগিত করল রাজ্যসভার দ্বিবার্ষিক নির্বাচন

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৪ জুন: সুপ্রিম কোর্ট আজ এক গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অন্তর্বর্তী আদেশে রাজ্যসভার ৬৫টি আসনে দ্বিবার্ষিক নির্বাচন ও উপ-নির্বাচন প্রক্রিয়া ১৪ জুন পর্যন্ত স্থগিত রাখার নির্দেশ দিয়েছে। ওই দিন এই মামলার আর এক দফা শুনানি হবে। ২১ জুন ওই নির্বাচন হওয়ার কথা ছিল। মাত্র কিছুদিন আগেই এন ডি এ সরকার জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইন সংশোধন করে রাজ্যসভার নির্বাচনের ক্ষেত্রে গোপন ভোটের বদলে প্রকাশ্য ভোটদান পদ্ধতি চালু করেছিল। একই সংশোধনের সুবাদে স্থির হয়েছিল, কোনও একটি রাজ্যের অধিবাসী না হয়েও এক জন প্রার্থী সেই রাজ্যের হয়ে রাজ্যসভা নির্বাচনে প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতা করতে পারবেন। এই নতুন সংশোধনগুলিকে চ্যালেঞ্জ জানিয়ে আদালতে আবেদন দায়ের করেন রাজ্যসভার প্রাক্তন সদস্য, বিশিষ্ট সাংবাদিক কুলদীপ নায়ার। এই আবেদনের ভিত্তিতেই সুপ্রিম কোর্টের একটি বিশেষ বেঞ্চ আজ এই অন্তর্বর্তী রায় দেয়। নির্বাচন কমিশনকেও মামলার সঙ্গে যুক্ত করা হয়েছে।

কুলদীপের বক্তব্য ছিল, 'ক্রস ভোটিং' রুখতে এন ডি এ সরকার এবং পূর্ববর্তী বিরোধী দল কংগ্রেস একমত হয়ে প্রকাশ্য ভোটদান ব্যবস্থা চালু করতে বর্তমান আইনের যে সংশোধন করেছিল, তা সংবিধান-বিরুদ্ধ। তা ছাড়া, সংবিধানে বলা রয়েছে, রাজ্যসভার সদস্য তাঁর রাজ্যের বিধায়ক ও বিধানপরিষদের সদস্যদের প্রতিনিধি। এক রাজ্যের লোক অন্য রাজ্য থেকে রাজ্যসভা নির্বাচনে দাঁড়ালে সংবিধানের সেই নিয়ম অগ্রাহ্য করা হয়। তাঁর আবেদনের ভিত্তিতে বিচারপতি রুমা পাল ও বিচারপতি বি এন আগরওয়ালকে নিয়ে গঠিত বিশেষ বেঞ্চ আজ উল্লিখিত নির্দেশ দিয়েছে। একইসঙ্গে মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনারকে একটি নোটিস জারি করে আদালত বলেছে, রাজ্যসভা নির্বাচন করার বিষয়ে কমিশন ১৪ জুন পর্যন্ত কোনও ব্যবস্থা নিতে পারবে না। ওই সময় বিষয়টি পরবর্তী শুনানির জন্য অন্য একটি অবসরকালীন বেঞ্চ যাবে।

উল্লেখ্য, অতীতে বহু রাজনৈতিক নেতাকেই লোকসভায় জিততে না পারলে, বা প্রার্থী করা সম্ভব না হলে রাজ্যসভার সদস্য হিসাবে নির্বাচিত করা হয়েছে। সে জন্য কোনও কোনও ক্ষেত্রে তাঁদের নিজ রাজ্যের বাইরে অন্য রাজ্য থেকেও রাজ্যসভার আসনে প্রার্থী করা হয়েছে। প্রধানমন্ত্রী মনমোহন সিংহও রাজ্যসভায় এসেছেন অসমের প্রতিনিধি হিসাবে। একই ভাবে কংগ্রেসের গুলাম নবি আজাদ, বিজেপির অরুণ জেটলি, অরুণ শৌরিরা রাজ্যসভায় এসেছেন। তবে জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইন বাঁচিয়ে প্রার্থী করার জন্য তাঁদের যে রাজ্য থেকে প্রার্থী করা হয়েছে, সেখানকার একটি বাসস্থান ও ঠিকানা জোগাড় করে নেওয়া হত। জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইনের নতুন সংশোধনীতে সেই সমস্যাটাও দূর করার ব্যবস্থা হয়েছিল। বর্তমানে সংশোধিত আইন অনুযায়ী লোকসভার মতোই রাজ্যসভাতেও প্রার্থীরা যে কোনও জায়গা থেকেই দাঁড়াতে পারবেন, তাঁদের আর আগের মতো কোনও একটি রাজ্যের বাসিন্দা হিসাবে প্রমাণপত্র পেশ করতে হবে না। কুলদীপ নায়ার এই দুই সংশোধনীতেই আপত্তি জানিয়ে আদালতের দ্বারস্থ হন।

তাঁর আবেদনের ভিত্তিতে কোনও অন্তর্বর্তী আদেশ না দেওয়ার জন্য কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের তরফ থেকে আদালতের কাছে আবেদন জানানো হয়। কিন্তু আদালত সরকারের এই আবেদন খারিজ করে দেয়। সরকারের তরফে আইনজীবী কৈলাশ বাসুদেব আদালতে অনুরোধ নিয়ে হাজির ছিলেন। কিন্তু সুপ্রিম কোর্টের বিচারপতির জানিয়ে দেন, যে হেতু আদালতের সামনে সংবিধানের মূল ভিত্তিই পরিবর্তন করার মতো গুরুতর অভিযোগ রয়েছে, সে ক্ষেত্রে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট ইচ্ছে করলে কারও বক্তব্য না শুনেও একতরফা রায় দিতে পারে। প্রসঙ্গত, আজই রাজ্যসভা নির্বাচনের বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারির কথা ছিল। তবে নির্বাচন কমিশন এখনও পর্যন্ত রাষ্ট্রপতিকে নির্বাচন প্রক্রিয়া সম্পর্কে কিছু জানায়নি। শীর্ষ আদালতের বেঞ্চ আজ অন্তর্বর্তী নির্দেশে জানিয়েছে, "যদি ইতিমধ্যে ওই বিজ্ঞপ্তি গেজেটে প্রকাশিত না হয়ে থাকে, তবে তা আর প্রকাশ করার দরকার নেই। যদি হয়ে থাকে, তবে দেখতে হবে যাতে তা কার্যকর না হয়।" কুলদীপ নায়ার আজ নিজেই সুপ্রিম কোর্টে উপস্থিত হয়ে জানান, দু'দিন আগেই তিনি নির্বাচন কমিশনকে চিঠি দিয়ে অনুরোধ করেছেন, যাতে কমিশন তাড়াহুড়ো করে রাজ্যসভার নির্বাচনের বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি না করে। তিনি কমিশনকে আরও অনুরোধ করেছেন, এ ব্যাপারে সুপ্রিম কোর্ট কী বলে তা জানার জন্য কমিশন যেন তার আইনজীবীকে আদালতে হাজির থাকতে নির্দেশ দেয়। তবে আজ শুনানির সময় নির্বাচন কমিশনের তরফে কোনও আইনজীবী উপস্থিত ছিলেন না।

আগামী ২১ জুন রাজ্যসভার যে ৬৫টি আসনে নির্বাচন হওয়ার কথা ছিল তার মধ্যে পাঁচটি আসন সদস্যরা লোকসভায় নির্বাচিত হওয়ায় ও পদত্যাগ করায় খালি হয়েছে। রঞ্জন সিংহ, লালপ্রসাদ যাদব, কৈলাশচন্দ্র ও প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় লোকসভায় নির্বাচিত হয়েছেন। ওড়িশার মনমোহন শামল রাজ্যসভা থেকে পদত্যাগ করেছেন। বাদবাকি ৬০টি আসন খালি হয়েছে সদস্যরা অবসর নেওয়ায়। এর মধ্যে তিনটি আসনে প্রার্থীরা মারা যাওয়ায় উপ-নির্বাচন হওয়ার কথা ছিল।

এ ছাড়াও কুলদীপ নায়ার আদালতে তাঁর আর্জিতে জানিয়েছেন, চলতি বছরের মধ্যেই সব মিলিয়ে অন্তত ৭৫ জন রাজ্যসভা সদস্যের মেয়াদ উত্তীর্ণ হবে। তাই গুরুত্ব দিয়ে বিচার করে এই বিষয়টির ফয়সালা করা দরকার।

Court move shadow on Singh's MP post

R. VENKATARAMAN

9.6.2003 (RS) (1) 5/6

New Delhi, June 4: The Supreme Court today questioned the "unconstitutional" practice of electing Rajya Sabha members from states they do not belong to and stayed elections to the Upper House.

If the court pursues this line of questioning to its conclusion, it could raise the possibility of Prime Minister Manmohan Singh being disqualified as an MP.

The court issued notices to the Election Commission asking why such members should not be disqualified. The poll panel has to submit its response by June 14. A vacation bench of Justices Ruma Pal and B.N. Agarwal directed the commission not to issue a notification for the biennial polls slated for June 23.

The order followed a petition by columnist Kuldip Nayar, who recently retired as a nominated member of the Upper House. Nayar today pleaded before the court that a letter he had written objecting to the practice indul-

TROUBLE WITH ROOTS



• Prime Minister Manmohan Singh is from Punjab but has been elected from Assam



• BJP president Venkaiah Naidu is from Andhra but elected from Karnataka



• Former law minister Jana Krishnamurthy is from Tamil Nadu but elected from Rajasthan

• Union law minister H.R. Bhardwaj is from Haryana but elected from MP



• Former law minister Arun Jaitley is from Punjab but elected from Gujarat



• Former disinvestment minister Arun Shourie is from Punjab but elected from UP



ged in by nearly all political parties be treated as a public interest litigation.

Notices were issued on April 28, asking the Centre, states, Union territories and the attorney-general why such Rajya Sabha members should not be disqualified.

But Nayar contended that there was no point in the court hearing the case after the vacation in the first week of July as the elections to fill up 75 vacancies in the 250-member Upper House would have taken place by then. The argument led to the

court staying the elections.

In its interim stay order, the apex court said the poll panel's notification "shall not be published and if it had already been published it shall not be given effect to".

The court gave the commission liberty to seek modification or vacation of the order on the next date of hearing, June 14.

The Prime Minister (home state Punjab) tops the list of Rajya Sabha members elected from states they do not belong to. He was elected from Assam. BJP president M. Venkaiah Naidu,

who is from Andhra Pradesh, was elected from Karnataka.

Nayar had penned a newspaper article titled "Bringing down the Rajya Sabha". Along with it, he had written a letter to the chief justice of India pleading him to treat it as a PIL. He said political parties were violating the Constitution that stipulates persons be elected to the Rajya Sabha from the state they belong to.

He challenged the 2003 amendment to the Representation of People's Act that dispensed with the requirement of domicile for candidates contesting for Rajya Sabha membership.

The Upper House was created with members to represent the interests of their states. Why such a House is at all needed is a question many have asked since Lok Sabha members, elected by the people, command greater legitimacy as representatives.

But, even without going into that debate, the purpose of having the Upper House is defeated if its members are elected from states they do not belong to.

9. 6. 2004
(CS)

Laloo wins Chapra seat

HD-1

By Our Special Correspondent

SP

PATNA, JUNE 2. The Rashtriya Janata Dal president and Railway Minister, Laloo Prasad Yadav, was today declared elected from the Chapra Lok Sabha constituency defeating the BJP candidate and former Union Minister of State for Civil Aviation, Rajiv Pratap Singh Rudy, by a margin of about 70,000 votes. Repolling was held in the constituency on May 31 following allegations of rigging.

The RJD's tally in the Lok Sabha is now 22 and that of the alliance (comprising the Congress and

the Lok Janshakti Party, besides the RJD) has gone up to 29 out of the 40 seats in Bihar. The BJP and the Janata Dal (United) have 11 seats. The RJD has a total of 24 seats emerging as the fifth largest party in the Lok Sabha.

Mr. Laloo Yadav represents two constituencies in the present Lok Sabha. He won the Madhepura seat defeating the former Union Minister, Sharad Yadav, by an almost identical margin. He is a member of the Rajya Sabha and will be required not only to resign his membership but give up either Chapra or Madhepura as well.

Advani admits 'India Shining' campaign failed to click

By Vinay Kumar

9/2/05
NEW DELHI, MAY 28. Admitting that the "India Shining" and "Feel Good" catchphrases widely used by the Bharatiya Janata Party in the Lok Sabha poll campaign failed to click, the former Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, said today that the phrases were used by the party's political opponents to highlight poverty, uneven development, unemployment and problems of farmers.

Breaking his silence after the debacle of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, Mr. Advani, who had crafted the party's poll strategy, appealed to BJP supporters and workers not to feel despondent because of the "temporary setback" but make sustained efforts to re-connect to the people and highlight their problems in the months to come.

At a press conference at the BJP headquarters here, Mr. Advani said the Congress-led coalition Government should not "misread the people's fractured verdict as a decisive mandate for any alliance, much less for any single party and certainly not for any individual."

He said the Congress had only seven seats more than the BJP. "The only unequivocal interpretation of the divided verdict of elections 2004 is that the people expect the new government to follow the path of maximum consensus, not only within the ruling alliance but also with the Opposition."

He alleged that the Congress and the Communist parties carried out a "viciously negative campaign, replete with falsehood, to claim that India had actually suffered ruination under the NDA Government."

Admitting that the poll outcome had gone totally against the party's expectations, Mr. Advani

isaid the situation called for introspection and firm corrective action.

However, the BJP would continue to wage an ideological battle against those who portray Hindutva as "communal" for their narrow political ends.

Asked if the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin issue was overplayed by the BJP, he said the party's view was that there was nothing personal in it and that it was a political issue.

And when Ms. Gandhi's refused to accept the Prime Minister's post, the country heaved a sigh of relief. On "tainted Ministers" finding Cabinet berths in the Manmohan Singh Government, Mr. Advani said it was "sad" to see a clean person such as Dr. Singh making efforts to defend "tainted Ministers with criminal track record."

Union Cabinet adopts CMP

By P. Sunderarajan

NEW DELHI, MAY 28. The Union Cabinet tonight adopted the Common Minimum Programme formulated by the ruling United Progressive Alliance as the National Common Minimum Programme and decided to set up an advisory council with a chairperson in the rank of a Cabinet Minister. The panel will have 20 members to be appointed by the Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh.

The Cabinet meeting also decided that each Ministry at the Centre would work out the modalities along with the financial implications for the implementation of the various items in the programme that were of concern to them.

RJD romps home in Siwan and Bettiah

In jail, but at Laloo's service

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Patna, May 26: He is in jail but has still helped his leader consolidate his position in the Lok Sabha.

Controversial Rashtriya Janata Dal member Mohammad Shahabuddin, jailed in connection with several criminal cases, was one of the two party candidates who emerged victorious from Bihar following fresh polls in two constituencies.

Shahabuddin won from Siwan, trouncing the Janata Dal (United)'s Om Prakash Yadav by 1,04,000 votes to retain the seat, while last time's runner-up, the CPI(M-L)'s Amar Nath Yadav, finished third.

This was Shahabuddin's

held on Monday after a special Election Commission team confirmed reports of rigging and violence in the two constituencies.

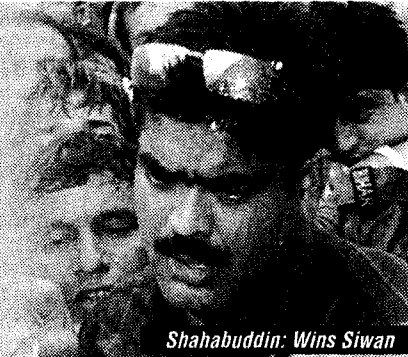
According to the affidavit filed by Shahabuddin before the Election Commission, the 38-year-old faces 19 criminal cases, including two counts of murder and 10 counts of attempt to murder, besides charges of kidnapping, extortion and unlawful assembly. Seventeen of these cases are pending before a Siwan court and one each before courts in Gopalganj and Jamshedpur. Shahabuddin is lodged in Siwan jail.

Former director-general of police D.P. Ojha, who dared to take on the Siwan MP and was removed from his post by the Rabri Devi government, had contested the Lok Sabha polls as

BIHAR COUNT

•LS seats: 40
•Results: 39
•Pending: Chhapra*
RJD 21
JD (U) 6
BJP 6
LJP 4
Cong 3

*Repoll on May 31



Shahabuddin: Wins Siwan

fourth consecutive win from Siwan.

In Bettiah, the RJD's Raghunath Jha, who switched camps from the Dal (U) just before the elections were announced, romped home, defeating the BJP's Madan Prasad Jaiswal by a margin of nearly 35,000 votes. Film director Prakash Jha, who contested as an Independent, finished third.

The party's strength in the new House has now gone up to 23, including the two seats it won in Jharkhand. A total repoll for the only remaining seat, Chhapra, where RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav takes on the BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy, is scheduled for May 31.

Fresh polls in 429 booths in Bettiah and 193 in Siwan were

an Independent from Begusarai. He had to forfeit his deposit.

Going by the number of criminal cases, the RJD's parliamentarian from Kishanganj, Mohammad Taslimuddin, who defeated the BJP's Shahnawaz Hussain and was consequently appointed a Union minister of state, pales in comparison to Shahabuddin.

Two other RJD leaders, already appointed ministers despite facing serious corruption charges, are Laloo Prasad, who defeated the Dal (U)'s Sharad Yadav in Madhepura, and Jay Prakash Narayan Yadav, who won from Munger.

Of the 40 seats in Bihar — results of all except Chhapra have been declared. The RJD contested 26 and won 21.

প্রথম দফায় হিংসার শিকার ৩৭

১৪/৪/৫৮
১৪/৪/৫৮
১৪/৪/৫৮



মুসলিম মহলার দুটি ভোট-চিত্র। মঙ্গলবার বিগ্রেহের। প্রথমটি কাশ্মীরের সিরিতে। দ্বিতীয়টি গুজরাতের আমদাবাদে। — রয়টার্স এবং এ এফ পি

৫০-৫৫% ভোট, কমিশন বলল শান্তিপূর্ণ

স্বাধীনতা, নয়া দিল্লি, ২০ এপ্রিল— লোকসভার প্রথম দিনের ভোটে হিংসার শিকার ৩৭। এরা প্রায় সকলেই স্বাধীনতা বা নকশালদের হিংসার শিকার। নিহতদের মধ্যে আছেন একজন ম্যাড্রাজি, এক ক্রিস্টিয়ান সাংবাদিক এবং সাত জন নকশাল। এ ছাড়া হামলা হয়েছে বিশেষজ্ঞী যশবন্ত সিনহা ও ন্যাশনাল কনফারেন্সের চেয়ারম্যান ওমর আবদুল্লাহর কনভেনশনের উপর। ভোট পড়েছে ৫০ থেকে ৫৫ শতাংশ। আজ ভোট নেওয়া হয়েছে তেরোটি রাজ্য ও তিনটি কেন্দ্রশাসিত অঞ্চলের ১৪০টি লোকসভা কেন্দ্রে। ভোট-হওয়া রাজ্যগুলির মধ্যে কাশ্মীর ছাড়াও চারটি নকশাল অধ্যুষিত রাজ্য রয়েছে।

নির্বচন কমিশনের মুখপাত্র এ এন খান'র মতে, আজ যে সব জায়গায় ভোট হয়েছে, তা দেশের সবচেয়ে কঠিন জায়গাগুলির মধ্যে পড়ে। ভোটের পর তিনি বলেছেন, "মোটের উপর পরিষ্কার নিয়ন্ত্রণ ছিল। তুলনামূলকভাবে শান্তিপূর্ণ ছিল আজকের দিনটি।" সাতটি রাজ্য— জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর, মণিপুর, বিহার, ঝাড়খণ্ড, গুজরাত, ছত্তীসগড় ও অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশ থেকে বিজয় হিংসার খবর পাওয়া গিয়েছে।

ঐনগর থেকে রুশি আহমেদ জানাচ্ছেন: কাশ্মীরে আজ জঙ্গি হানার মুখে পড়েন নাশনাল কনফারেন্স প্রধান ওমর আবদুল্লাহ। তবে তিনি নিরাপদেই আছেন। বাদগাঁওয়ে

তার কনভেনশন হয়ে যাওয়ার পরেই রাত্তর রাধা শক্তিশালী ল্যান্ডমাইন বিস্ফোরণ ঘটে। কাশ্মীরে আজ দুটি আসনে আজ ভোট হয়েছে, বারামুলা এবং জম্মু। জঙ্গি হানার সব ঘটনাই ঘটেছে মূলত বারামুলায়। পোলিং বুথে জঙ্গিদের হামলায় সাংবাদিক কুমার ভারতী, দু-জন নিরাপত্তা রক্ষী-সহ চারজন মারা যান।

রাতি থেকে দেবজিৎ ভট্টাচার্য জানাচ্ছেন: ঝাড়খণ্ডে হাজারিবাগের কাছে বিদেশমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহার কনভেনশন করে পাথর ছোড়া হয়েছে। যশবন্তের গাড়ির কাচ ভাঙলেও তিনি আহত হননি। সি পি আই সমর্থকেরা এই কাণ্ড ঘটিয়েছে বলে যশবন্তের অভিযোগ। ঝাড়খণ্ডে ভোট-হিংসার শিকার পাঁচ। ধানবাদের কাছে একটি গ্রামে নকশালদের পুতে রাধা ল্যান্ডমাইন ফেটে একে ম্যাড্রাজিদের মৃত্যু হয়েছে। ভোট বানচাল করতে উদ্যোগী জঙ্গিদের সঙ্গে নিরাপত্তা বাহিনীর সংঘর্ষ হয়েছে ছাত্তরা, পলাশু ও ধানবাদে। নিরাপত্তা রক্ষীদের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে চার জঙ্গি মারা গিয়েছে।

আমরতলা থেকে প্রভাত ঘোষ জানাচ্ছেন: মণিপুরের মায়ানমার সীমান্তে জঙ্গিদের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে অসম রাইফেলস বাহিনীর আরও ১৯ জওয়ান নিহত হয়েছে বলে খবর পাওয়া গিয়েছে। জঙ্গিরা অনেকগুলি বৈদ্যুতিক ভোটচিহ্ন নষ্ট করে দিয়েছে। তারা করেছে জন ভোটকর্মীকে অপহরণ করে ভোটকর্মীদের কয়েকটি গাড়িও জ্বালিয়ে দিয়েছে। যদিও ইফলার কাংলা দুর্গে বাহিনীর আঞ্চলিক সদর দফতর থেকে এ খবরের প্রতিবাদ বা সমর্থন কিছুই করা হয়নি। এর আগে ১৯ তারিখ সকালে একই জায়গায় জঙ্গিদের সঙ্গে সংঘর্ষে বাহিনীর চার জওয়ান নিহত হন।

মণিপুর পুলিশের এক সুপ্রজ্ঞান, মঙ্গলবারের সংঘর্ষে জঙ্গিদের চারজনেরও নিহত হওয়ার খবর পাওয়া গিয়েছে। ওই রাজ্যে প্রথম দফার ভোটের শুরু থেকে জঙ্গি ও নিরাপত্তা রক্ষীদের মধ্যে তুলনামূলকভাবে খবরে রাজ্যের মুখ্য নির্বাচন অফিসারও তিনজন পড়ে গিয়েছেন।

পটনা থেকে সুভ বসু জানাচ্ছেন: তাম্রপর্ণীর ভাং বিহারে প্রথম দিনে হিংসা তুলনামূলকভাবে কম। রাজনৈতিক সংঘর্ষে দু'জন আর জে ডি সমর্থক এবং মাওবাদীদের হানায় এক জন কনস্টেবল মারা গিয়েছেন। নওয়াদা কেন্দ্রের ডিহিরি গাম থেকে এম সি সি জঙ্গিরা ভোটের দায়িত্বে থাকা চার জনকে তুলে নিয়ে যায়। এর মধ্যে এক জন পুলিশকে তারা হত্যা করেছে এবং এক জন নিশেধ। বাকি দু'জনকে তারা গ্রেপ্তার করেছে।

ওড়িশা থেকে অনমিত সেনগুপ্ত জানাচ্ছেন: ওড়িশায় এর পর হরের পাতায়

বুথ-ফেরত সমীক্ষায় পাছমা ভারী এনডিএ'র

স্বাধীনতা, নয়া দিল্লি, ২০ এপ্রিল— বুথ-ফেরত ভোট সমীক্ষার ফলাফলে কংগ্রেস-বিজেপি দু'পক্ষই খুশি। দুই দলই আগে এই ধরনের সমীক্ষার বিরোধিতা করেছিল। নির্বাচন কমিশন আজও বলেছে, এই ধরনের সমীক্ষা দেখানোর ব্যাপারে তারা তিন দিন পরে সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে। তবে তার আগে আজ প্রথমবারের ভোটের বুথ ফেরত সমীক্ষায় বিজেপি-কংগ্রেস অংশ নিল।

বিজেপি খুশি, কারণ, তেলঙ্গানা, মহারাষ্ট্র-সহ যে সব জায়গায় তাদের ফল ভাল হবে না বলে দলীয় নেতৃবৃন্দের আশঙ্কা ছিল, সেখা যাচ্ছে সেখানে ফল ততোটা খারাপ হয়নি। সব মিলিয়ে দল ও জোট গণতান্ত্রিক সংখ্যার কাছাকাছি থাকছে। যে সামান্য ক্ষতি হয়েছে তা পরবর্তী পরে নিতিয়ে সরকার গঠনের জায়গায় তারা পৌঁছে যাবে বলে বিজেপি মনে করছে।

কংগ্রেসের খুশির কারণ, সমীক্ষা দেখে তাদের স্পষ্ট ধারণা হয়েছে, এন ডি এ তাদের মতে, ভারত উদ্যোগ যে ছবি তুলে ধরে বিজেপি নেতারা প্রথম থেকে বিশাল জয়ের দাবি করছিলেন, সেখা যাচ্ছে তা ঠিক নয়। অধিকাংশ চ্যালেন্সের ফলাফলে দেখা যাচ্ছে কংগ্রেস গণতান্ত্রিক থেকে ভাল ফল করেছে।

দুই প্রধান দলের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতায় আরও একটা মিল রয়েছে। দু'দলই মনে করছে, তারা বাস্তবে এই ফলাফলের থেকে অনেক ভাল ফল করবে। বিজেপি-র দাবি, ১৪০টির মধ্যে এন ডি এ একপেয়ার বেশি আসন পাবে। অসুস্ত বিজেপি রাজ্য শাখার রিপোর্ট তাই। আর কংগ্রেস নেতারা প্রথমেই বলে নিচ্ছেন তারা বুথ ফেরত ভোট সমীক্ষায় বিশ্বাস করেন না। কারণ ভোট সমীক্ষায় দেখা যায়, এই সমীক্ষায় যা বলা প্রায়শই দেখা যায়, এই সমীক্ষায় যা বলা

এর পর হরের পাতায়

প্রথম দফার ভোট

মোট আসন সংখ্যা: ১৪০

১৯৯৯ সালের ফল:
বিজেপি ও সহযোগী দল ৮৮টি
কংগ্রেস ও সহযোগী দল ৪৪টি
অন্যান্য ৮টি

বিজেপি জোট	কংগ্রেস জোট	অন্যান্য
৮০	৫০	৭
আজ তক	৯৩	৩
জি নিউজ	৮২	৫
স্বাধীন	৮৮	৫২
এন ডি টি	৭৫	৫৩

বুথ ফেরত সমীক্ষা

বেশি আসনে এন ডি এ-র জেতার সম্ভাবনা অবশ্য অন্য কোনও চ্যালেন্সের সমীক্ষায় আসেনি। তবে প্রায় সমস্ত চ্যালেন্সের সমীক্ষাতেই এন ডি এ এগিয়ে রয়েছে কংগ্রেস ও তাদের জোটসঙ্গীদের চেয়ে। মহারাষ্ট্র ও অন্ধ্র এন ডি এ (বিজেপি এবং তাদের শরিকরা) ধাক্কা পেয়েছে। একমাত্র 'এন ডি টি'-র সমীক্ষায় বলা হয়েছে, মহারাষ্ট্রে বিজেপি-শিবসেনা জোটের ফল কংগ্রেস-এন ডি টি জোটের চেয়ে অনেক ভাল হবে।

এর পর হরের পাতায়

কংগ্রেস, বিজেপি খুশি, ভিন্ন ভিন্ন কারণে

স্বাধীনতা, নয়া দিল্লি, ২০ এপ্রিল— বুথ-ফেরত ভোট সমীক্ষার ফলাফলে কংগ্রেস-বিজেপি দু'পক্ষই খুশি। দুই দলই আগে এই ধরনের সমীক্ষার বিরোধিতা করেছিল। নির্বাচন কমিশন আজও বলেছে, এই ধরনের সমীক্ষা দেখানোর ব্যাপারে তারা তিন দিন পরে সিদ্ধান্ত নেবে। তবে তার আগে আজ প্রথমবারের ভোটের বুথ ফেরত সমীক্ষায় বিজেপি-কংগ্রেস অংশ নিল।

বিজেপি খুশি, কারণ, তেলঙ্গানা, মহারাষ্ট্র-সহ যে সব জায়গায় তাদের ফল ভাল হবে না বলে দলীয় নেতৃবৃন্দের আশঙ্কা ছিল, সেখা যাচ্ছে সেখানে ফল ততোটা খারাপ হয়নি। সব মিলিয়ে দল ও জোট গণতান্ত্রিক সংখ্যার কাছাকাছি থাকছে। যে সামান্য ক্ষতি হয়েছে তা পরবর্তী পরে নিতিয়ে সরকার গঠনের জায়গায় তারা পৌঁছে যাবে বলে বিজেপি মনে করছে।

কংগ্রেসের খুশির কারণ, সমীক্ষা দেখে তাদের স্পষ্ট ধারণা হয়েছে, এন ডি এ তাদের মতে, ভারত উদ্যোগ যে ছবি তুলে ধরে বিজেপি নেতারা প্রথম থেকে বিশাল জয়ের দাবি করছিলেন, সেখা যাচ্ছে তা ঠিক নয়। অধিকাংশ চ্যালেন্সের ফলাফলে দেখা যাচ্ছে কংগ্রেস গণতান্ত্রিক থেকে ভাল ফল করেছে।

দুই প্রধান দলের প্রতিদ্বন্দ্বিতায় আরও একটা মিল রয়েছে। দু'দলই মনে করছে, তারা বাস্তবে এই ফলাফলের থেকে অনেক ভাল ফল করবে। বিজেপি-র দাবি, ১৪০টির মধ্যে এন ডি এ একপেয়ার বেশি আসন পাবে। অসুস্ত বিজেপি রাজ্য শাখার রিপোর্ট তাই। আর কংগ্রেস নেতারা প্রথমেই বলে নিচ্ছেন তারা বুথ ফেরত ভোট সমীক্ষায় বিশ্বাস করেন না। কারণ ভোট সমীক্ষায় দেখা যায়, এই সমীক্ষায় যা বলা প্রায়শই দেখা যায়, এই সমীক্ষায় যা বলা

পশ্চিমবঙ্গে লোকসভার কেন্দ্র-ভিত্তিক ফল

(*গত বারের বিজয়ী দল)

কোচবিহার

*হিতেন বর্মণ (ফব)	৪৯০৯৮২
সিরীন্দ্র বর্মণ (ভূণমূল)	২৬৪৪১৩
শৈলেন বর্মা (কংগ্রেস)	১১৬৭১৫
অমর রায়প্রধান (নির্দল)	২৬৭৫৫
ব্যবধান	২২৬৫৬৯

আলিপুরদুয়ার

*জ্যোতিন বাজলা (আর এস পি)	৩৮৪২৫২
মনোজ টিগা (বিজেপি)	২৩৯১২৮
রতন বারাইক (কংগ্রেস)	১৬৯৪৯৯
ব্যবধান	১৪৫১২৪

জলপাইগুড়ি

*মিনতি সেন (সিপিএম)	৪২৪১৬৩
পরশ দত্ত (ভূণমূল)	২৪৩৫৫৮
দীপক জৈমিক (কংগ্রেস)	১৩০২৫৫
ব্যবধান	১৮০৬০৫

দার্জিলিং

দাওয়া নরবলা (কংগ্রেস)	৩৯৬৯৭৩
*মণি ঝাণা (সিপিএম)	২৯৫৫৫৭
গভীরসিংহ ইয়াজন (বিজেপি)	১১৩৯৭২
ব্যবধান	১০১৪১৬

রায়গঞ্জ

*প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্ডি (কংগ্রেস)	৪২১৯১৪
মিনতি ঘোষ (সিপিএম)	৩৮২৭৫৭
জয়নাল আবেদিন (ভূণমূল)	৫৭৯৩১
ব্যবধান	৩৯১৫৭

বালুরঘাট

*রশেন বর্মণ (আর এস পি)	৪১৫২৯৪
মনোমোহন রায় (বিজেপি)	৩৪৪১২৫
দীপ্তি বর্মণ (কংগ্রেস)	১১৯১০৪
ব্যবধান	৭১১৬৯

মালদহ

*গনি খান চৌধুরী (কংগ্রেস)	৪১২৯১৩
প্রণব দাস (সি পি এম)	৩০১৮০৫
বাদশাহ আলম (বিজেপি)	৮৬৫২৫
ব্যবধান	১১১০৮

জলিপুর

প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় (কং)	৪৩০৪৪৪
*আবুল হাসনাত খান (সিপিএম)	৩৯৩১৬৪
শিশ মহম্মদ (ভূণমূল)	১৮২৩৯
ব্যবধান	৩৭২৮০

মুর্শিদাবাদ

মান্না হোসেন (কংগ্রেস)	৪৬১৮৯৫
*মইনুল হাসান (সিপিএম)	৪৪৬৪১৫
মহম্মদ আলি (ভূণমূল)	৪৩৭১৬
ব্যবধান	১৫৪৮০

বহরমপুর

*অধীর চৌধুরী (কংগ্রেস)	৫০৮০৯৫
প্রমথেশ মুখোপাধ্যায় (আর এস পি)	৪০৯১৯৪
তাপস চট্টোপাধ্যায় (বিজেপি)	৪১৪৯০
ব্যবধান	৯৮৯০১

কৃষ্ণনগর

জ্যোতির্ষী সিকদার (সিপিএম)	৩৯৭৫৫৯
*সত্যজিত মুখোপাধ্যায় (বিজেপি)	৩৭৭১৭০
অশীম সাহা (কংগ্রেস)	৯৫৪৭৮
ব্যবধান	২০৩৮৯

নবদ্বীপ

অলকেশ দাশ (সিপিএম)	৫৬০১৭৫
*নীলিমা নাগ (ভূণমূল)	৫৩০১৮৩
নৃপেন্দ্রনাথ হাওলাদার (কংগ্রেস)	২৪৩২১
ব্যবধান	২৯৯৯২

বারাসত

সুভ্রত বসু (ফব)	৫৯৪৬০৯
*রঞ্জিত পাঁজা (ভূণমূল)	৫৮০৯৭৩
প্রবীর বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (কং)	৬০৬৮১
ব্যবধান	১৩৬৩৬

বনিতপুর

*অজয় চক্রবর্তী (সি পি আই)	৪৬৩৮৭৩
সুজিত বসু (ভূণমূল)	২৭০৩৯০
মহম্মদ নিজামুদ্দিন (কং)	১১০৫০৮
ব্যবধান	১৯৩৪৮৩

জয়নগর

*সনৎ মণ্ডল (আর এস পি)	৪৫০০৪৩
অসিতবরণ ঠাকুর (বিজেপি)	২১৯৫২২
সুকৃতি বিশ্বাস (আরপিআই)	২১৭১১
ব্যবধান	২৩০৫২১

মথুরাপুর

*বাসুদেব বর্মণ (সিপিএম)	৪৪০৮৬২
রাধিকারঞ্জন প্রামাণিক (ভূণমূল)	৩৫৮৮৩৪
মনোরঞ্জন হালদার (কং)	৭১৭০০
ব্যবধান	৮২০২৮

ডায়মন্ড হারবার

*বাসুদেব বর্মণ (সিপিএম)	৪৪০৮৬২
রাধিকারঞ্জন প্রামাণিক (ভূণমূল)	৩৫৮৮৩৪
মনোরঞ্জন হালদার (কং)	৭১৭০০
ব্যবধান	৮২০২৮

*শমীক লাহিড়ি (সিপিএম)

সৌগত রায় (ভূণমূল)	৪৩০৮৯০
শেখ দৌলত আলি (কং)	২৭৭১০৬
ব্যবধান	৯২৮৫৯

যাদবপুর

সুজন চক্রবর্তী (সিপিএম)	৫০৫৩৯৬
*কৃষ্ণা বসু (ভূণমূল)	৪১৫৭২৮
ওমপ্রকাশ মিশ্র (কংগ্রেস)	৬৬১২১
ব্যবধান	৮৯৬৬৮

ব্যারাকপুর

*তড়িৎ তোপদার (সিপিএম)	২৯৪৫৪৮
অর্জুন সিংহ (ভূণমূল)	২৭৭৯৭৭
দেবী ঘোষাল (কংগ্রেস)	৪৩৭৪২
ব্যবধান	১৬৫৭১

দমদম

অমিতাভ নন্দী (সিপিএম)	৬১৯১৮৪
*তপন সিকদার (বিজেপি)	৫২০৭০০
তাপস মজুমদার (কংগ্রেস)	৭৬৮২৩
ব্যবধান	৯৮৪৮৪

উত্তর-পশ্চিম কলকাতা

সুধাংশু মীল (সিপিএম)	১৫১৭৭২
*সুভ্রত মুখোপাধ্যায় (ভূণমূল)	১০৮৭৬৮
সুদীপ বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (নির্দল)	৮১৯৫২
ব্যবধান	৪৩০০৪

উত্তর-পূর্ব কলকাতা

মহম্মদ সেলিম (সিপিএম)	২৮৪৭৭২
*অজিত পাঁজা (ভূণমূল)	২১০৬০৬
মৌসুমী চট্টোপাধ্যায় (কংগ্রেস)	৫৫৮৪৫
ব্যবধান	৭৪১৬৬

দক্ষিণ কলকাতা

*মমতা বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (ভূণমূল)	৩৯৩৫৬১
রবীন দেব (সিপিএম)	২৯৫১৩২
নাকিসা আলি (কংগ্রেস)	৩০৩৭৭
ব্যবধান	৯৮৪২৯

হাওড়া

*স্বদেশ চক্রবর্তী (সিপিএম)	৪৮৯৪৪৯
বিক্রম সরকার (ভূণমূল)	২৪২৫০৭
সুলতান সিংহ (কংগ্রেস)	১৫২১০০
ব্যবধান	২৪৬৯৪২

উলুবেড়িয়া

*হাসান মোল্লা (সিপিএম)	৪২৪১৮৪
রাজীব বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (ভূণমূল)	২৭৩৭৫৯
আবদুল রেজ্জাক মণ্ডল (কংগ্রেস)	১৩৫৩০০
ব্যবধান	১৫০৪২৫

শ্রীরামপুর

শান্তী চট্টোপাধ্যায় (সিপিএম)	৪০৪০৮২
*আকবর আলি খোন্দকার (ভূণমূল)	৩৮৪৩৯৫
কেট মুখোপাধ্যায় (কংগ্রেস)	১২৫৩২০
ব্যবধান	১৯৬৮৭

হুগলি

*রূপচাঁদ পাল (সিপিএম)	৪৯৪২৪৫
ইন্দ্রাণী মুখোপাধ্যায় (ভূণমূল)	৩২৮৬১৩
অশোককুমার দাশ (কং)	৬৯৫২৬
ব্যবধান	১৬৫৬৩২

আরামবাগ

*অনিল বসু (সিপিএম)	৭৪৪৪৬৪
স্বপন নন্দী (বিজেপি)	১৫১৯৬২
প্রদীপ দত্ত (কংগ্রেস)	৬৮৪১৪
ব্যবধান	৫৯২৬০২

পাঁশকুড়া

*গুরুদাস দাশগুপ্ত (সি পি আই)	৫৪১৫১৩
হেমা চৌবে (ভূণমূল)	২৬২০৩৫
নাজিম আহমেদ (কংগ্রেস)	৭১০৬
ব্যবধান	২৭৯৪৭৮

তমলুক

*লক্ষ্মণ শেঠ (সিপিএম)	৫০৪২৭৩
শুভেন্দু অধিকারী (ভূণমূল)	৪৪৮৪৪১
সুদর্শন পাঁজা (কংগ্রেস)	৩৪৭৫২
ব্যবধান	৫৫৮৩২

কাঁথি

প্রশান্ত প্রধান (সিপিএম)	৪৬১৬২৩
*নীতীশ সেনগুপ্ত (ভূণমূল)	৪০৩৬০৪
ক্ষিতীন্দ্রমোহন শাহ (কং)	২৫৯৬৩
ব্যবধান	৫৮০১৯

মেদিনীপুর

*প্রবোধ পণ্ডা (সি পি আই)	৪৮০০৩৪
রাহুল সিংহ (বিজেপি)	৩১৯২৭৪
নারায়ণচন্দ্র পারিয়া (কং)	৬৮৩৩৮
ব্যবধান	১৬০৭৬০

ঝাড়গ্রাম

*রূপচাঁদ মূর্মু (সিপিএম)	৫৮৪০০৫
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নিত্যানন্দ হেমব্রম (ভূণমূল)

খগেনন্দনাথ হেমব্রম (জেএমএম)	১৫৭৭০২
ব্যবধান	৪২৬৩৪৩

পুরুলিয়া

*বীরসিংহ মাহাতো (ফব)	৩২৪১৫৭
শান্তিরাম মাহাতো (কং)	১৯৫৩৩৯
নিয়তি মাহাতো (ভূণমূল)	১০৫১২৭
ব্যবধান	১৪৫৭১৮

বাঁকুড়া

*বাসুদেব আচারিয়া (সিপিএম)	৪১৭৭৯৮
দেবপ্রসাদ কুণ্ডু (ভূণমূল)	১৮৭৪৬৯
নটবর বাগদি (পিডিএস)	২১৩০৬
ব্যবধান	২৩০৩২৯

বিষ্ণুপুর

*সুস্মিতা বাউরি (সিপিএম)	৫১৮৫০৭
জনার্দন সাহা (ভূণমূল)	১৮৬৬৭৮
অচিন্তা মাঝি (কংগ্রেস)	৬১৭৯৩

ব্যবধান

৩০১৮২৯

দুর্গাপুর

*সুনীল খান (সিপিএম)	৫০২৯৬৪
শিবনারায়ণ সাহা (বিজেপি)	২৩০২৯৫
শোভা ধীবর (কং)	৭২৩২৫
ব্যবধান	২৭২৬৬৯

আসানসোল

*বিক্রম চৌধুরী (সিপিএম)	৩৬৯৮৩২
মলয় ঘটক (ভূণমূল)	২৪৫৫১৪
তাপস বন্দ্যোপাধ্যায় (কংগ্রেস)	৭০৮৬৭
ব্যবধান	১২৪৩১৮

বর্ধমান

*নিখিলানন্দ সর (সিপিএম)	৬৭৩০৯১
অনিন্দ্যোগোপাল মিত্র (বিজেপি)	২০১৭৪০
চন্দ্রকান্ত গড়াই (কংগ্রেস)	৮৮২১৭
ব্যবধান	৪৭১৩৫১

কাটোয়া

*মহবুব জাহেদি (সিপিএম)	৪৯৪৭১৬
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সুলতান আহমেদ (ভূণমূল)	৩৫১৩৬৭
সৈফুদ্দিন চৌধুরী (পিডিএস)	৬০৬৯৩
ব্যবধান	১৪৩৩৪৯

বোলপুর

*সোমনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায় (সিপিএম)	৫০৪৮৩৮
নির্মল মাজি (ভূণমূল)	১৯৪৫৩৫
ধনঞ্জয় ঘোষ (কংগ্রেস)	৪৮৭৫৬
ব্যবধান	৩১০৩০৩

বীরভূম

*রামচন্দ্র ডোম (সিপিএম)	৩৭২২৯৪
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গোপালচন্দ্র দাস (কংগ্রেস)	১৮০৬৮২
অর্জুন সাহা (বিজেপি)	১৩৯৭৯৬
ব্যবধান	১৯১৬১২

J. Election (CS)

DMK-Cong: 40, Amma & allies: nil

Congress decimates TDP-BJP combine

Statesman News Service

HYDERABAD, May 13. — The Congress and its allies made a clean sweep of the 42 Lok Sabha seats in Andhra Pradesh by winning 36 of them. In the process, the Congress decimated the TDP and wiped out the BJP.

The BJP did not win a single seat, a result that happened only once in the 1989 Lok Sabha polls. Union ministers Mr D

Union ministers Mr Dattatreya, Mr C Vidyasagar Rao and Mr Krishnam Raju fell by the wayside.

The TDP won five, better than its worst ever performance of two seats in 1989. It wrested back Bobilli and retained Anakapalle, Nagarkurnool and Chittoor seats. Yet, this was worse than the worse case scenario of exit polls projecting only six seats.

“Even my worst critic would not say I would win only six,” Mr N Chandrababu Naidu then fumed.

The MIM retained its Hyderabad stronghold, while the CPI and CPI-M, in alliance with the Congress, wrested back their strongholds of Nalgonda and Bhadrachalam. The other ally, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, won all the five seats it contested.

The Congress on its own won 29 seats, ironically the

‘Anti-incumbency not the reason’

HYDERABAD, May 13. — Mr N Chandrababu Naidu said the anti-incumbency against state governments rubbed off on the NDA, but attributed his own defeat to various reasons.

“In Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Punjab, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Haryana, the anti-incumbency against the state

governments reflected in the Lok Sabha results, even though the BJP also gained in a couple of states due to it. The only exceptions to this were Bihar and West Bengal,” he said.

Mr Naidu said despite the defeat the NDA exists and that the TDP would be part of it. “The question of outside support

same figure the TDP held in the 1999 elections. The TDP has won three seats in coastal Andhra and one each in Rayalaseema and Telangana regions.

TDPP leader Mr K Yerran Naidu retained his Srikakulam seat. The consolation for Mr Naidu is having retained Chittoor Lok Sabha seat, of which his native Kuppam segment is a part.

Congress heavyweights former chief minister Mr N Janardhan Reddy from



Mr N Chandrababu Naidu

“The Opposition got a lot of time to say what they wanted,” he said.

At one stage he said: “Andhra Pradesh had begun to be recognised worldwide. But people here could not accept it as they had their own problems”. The party’s apex politburo would meet in a day or two and later the party would hold its annual Mahanadu on 27 and 28 May to go into the rea-

sons for the defeat.

On CM designate Dr YS Rajashekar Reddy saying that his pet Janmabhoomi programme would be scrapped, he said: “Its not right for me to react to that. Wait and watch. They have made several promises. I won’t react before they start doing it”. — SNS

constituency set a record for this elections by winning with a margin of over 2.6 lakh votes.

PARTY POSITION

Total Seats	. . . 42
Declared	. . . 42
Cong+Allies	. . . 36
TDP 5
MIM 1



Mr M Karunanidhi



(Right) DMK supporters celebrate in Chennai on Thursday. — AFP

Jaya Menon in Chennai

May 13. — A massive anti-incumbency wave coupled with the magic of formidable alliance arithmetic resulted in a landslide victory for the DMK-led Democratic Progressive Alliance which won all the 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone seat in neighbouring Pondicherry. The AIADMK-BJP alliance did not inspire Tamil voters with its Vajpayee-centric campaign, failing to win even a single seat.

The DMK, which contested 15 seats, won all of them with impressive margins. So did the other constituents of the DPA — the Congress, which contested 10 seats won all, MDMK won all four it contested, PMK six, including the Pondicherry seat, CPI and CPI-M two each, and the Muslim League two.

DMK’s Mr Dayanidhi Maran, son of late Murasoli Maran, won the Central Chennai seat with a hefty 1.20 lakh margin and former Union minis-

ter, Mr TR Baalu, also from DMK, won the South Chennai seat, defeating AIADMK candidate, Mrs Bader Sayeed, the Church Park school mate of Miss Jayalalitha. DMK’s Mrs Radhika Selvi, widow of Venkatesa Pannaiyer who was killed in an alleged police encounter, campaigned along with her month-old baby in the furchendur constituency and won with an impressive 1.8 lakh margin.

Among the victorious Congress candidates are Rajiv crouy, Mr Mani Shankar Aiyar, who fought a tough contest in Mayiladuthurai, facing Amma’s handpicked candidate, and Mr JM Haroon, who defeated Miss Jayalalitha’s “favoured candidate,” Mr TTV Dinakaran, in Periyakulam constituency. Former Union minister, Mr P Chidambaram, who heads the Congress Jananayaga Peravai, and contested on a Congress ticket, won the Sivaganga seat.

Tamil superstar Rajnikanth had vowed to defeat all the six PMK candidates with the help of his fan clubs and teach PMK leader Dr. Ramadoss

a lesson. But the Raji factor was swamped by the combined might of the DPA and the anti-AADMK sentiments, which seemed to sweep across the state. The AIADMK, which contested 33 seats, and the BJP seven, failed to win even a single seat.

“The victory was expected. It is a vote against the autocratic rule of the Jayalalitha government,” an elated DMK president, Mr M Karunanidhi, told scribes soon after the trends indicated a clean sweep for the front led by him. He said the BJP had not given importance to the secular character of the nation and failed to respect the opposition parties.

Even while it became obvious that the Congress-led front was more likely to stake a claim to form a government at the Centre, the party’s Tamil ally, the DMK chief, reiterated his view that his party should not join the government at the Centre. In a press release, DMK general secretary, Mr K Anbazhagan said the party’s executive committee would meet on Saturday.

POLLSTERS GO WRONG, AGAIN

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 13. — A series of opinion and exit polls predicting the NDA’s return to power proved totally wrong today, their figures nowhere close to the actual.

The final outcome has no doubt shocked the NDA and been a pleasant surprise for the Congress and its allies, but it is psephologists, who had taken into account all possible factors, who are reacting with disbelief, their predictions as much as 40 per cent off the real picture.

While the BJP and its allies were projected to get 20 to 45 per cent more seats, the Congress was estimated to get eight to 29 per cent less than its actual tally. And others were given nine to 45 per cent fewer seats by all pollsters.

As against the actual figure of 188, the BJP and its allies were given the highest by Star TV — between 263 to 275. Aaj Tak gave them 248, Zee TV 249, NDTV 230 to 250 and Sahara TV 263 to 278 seats.

EXIT POLLS V REALITY			
All India			
	Cong+ Allies	BJP+ Allies	Others
AJ TAK	190	248	104
NDTV	190-205	230-250	100-120
SAHARA SAMAY	171-181	263-278	92-102
STAR NEWS	174-186	263-278	86-98
ZEE NEWS	176	249	117
ACTUAL	219	188	132

The highest tally predicted for the Congress was 190-205 by NDTV against its actual performance of 219 seats. Aaj Tak gave it 190, Star TV 174-186,

Sahara TV 171-181 and Zee TV 176). Similarly other political parties were also underestimated by all surveys, While the exit polls gave them 86 to 120 seats,

others had a much higher tally of 132.

The gap between the actual and the predicted in states Assembly results was huge in most of cases.

Left sweeps Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, May 13. — The CPI-M led Opposition LDF in Kerala today made a clean sweep of 18 of the 20 Lok Sabha seats in the state against one each by UDF partner IUML and NDA ally, IFDP.

The CPI-M won 12 of the 13 seats it contested, CPI three out of four and JD-S, Kerala Congress and LDF-Independent one each. The UDF leader Congress drew a blank failing to win any of the 17 seats it contested.

The sole consolation for the ruling front was the victory of IUML candidate Mr E Ahmed in Ponnani with an impressive margin of over one lakh votes.

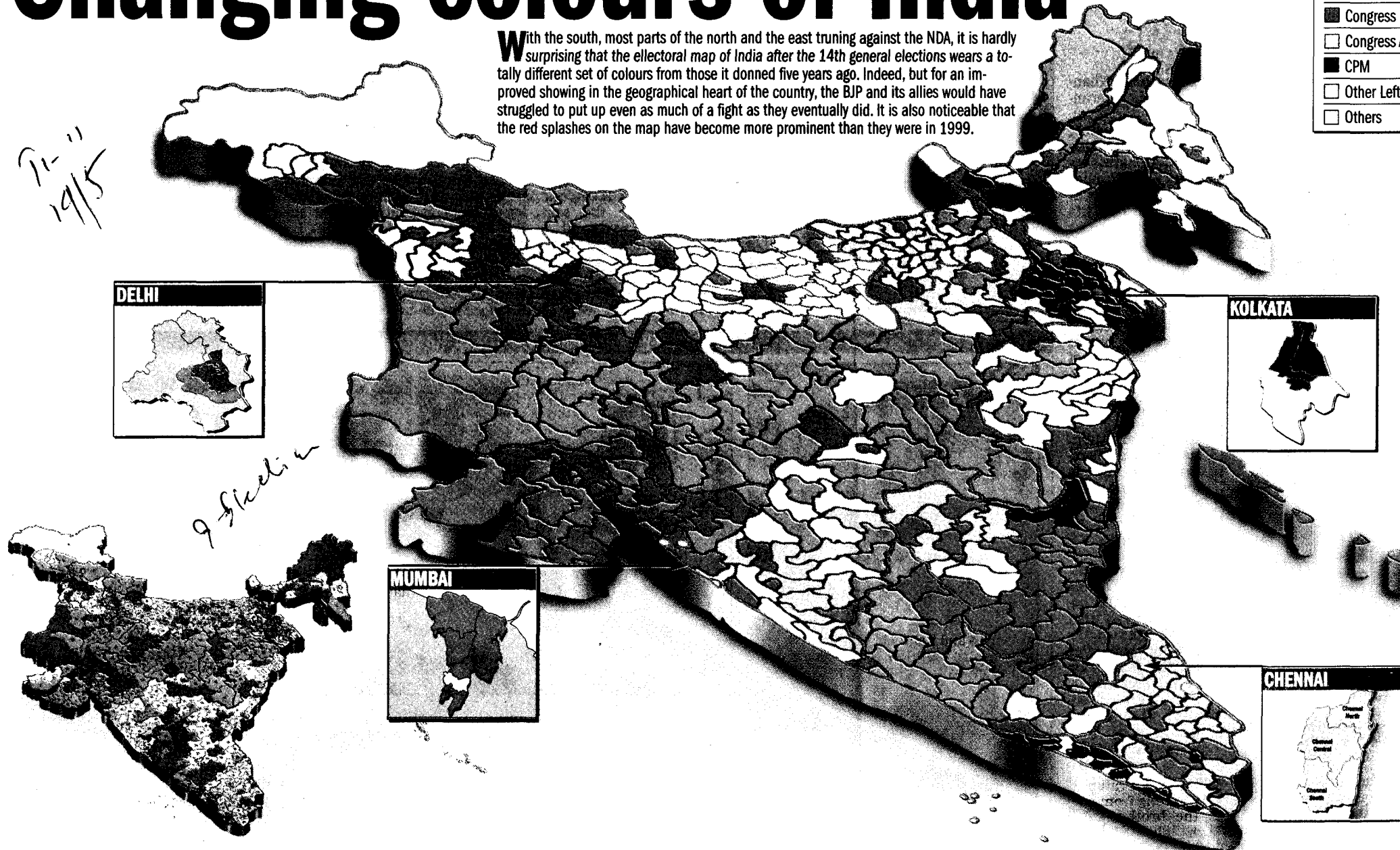
While Kerala continues to be a barren land for BJP, IFDP’s Mr PC Thomas retained his seat, winning a grimly fought three-corner fight in Muvvattupuzha, which he won last time as an UDF nominee. Mr Thomas won with a slender margin of 529 votes over his CPI-M rival Mr PM Ismail. — PTI

15 MAY 2004



Changing colours of India

With the south, most parts of the north and the east truing against the NDA, it is hardly surprising that the electoral map of India after the 14th general elections wears a totally different set of colours from those it donned five years ago. Indeed, but for an improved showing in the geographical heart of the country, the BJP and its allies would have struggled to put up even as much of a fight as they eventually did. It is also noticeable that the red splashes on the map have become more prominent than they were in 1999.



■	BJP
□	BJP Allies
■	Congress
□	Congress Allies
■	CPM
□	Other Left
□	Others

SIZING THEM UP		
Parties	'99 Party Position	'04 Party Position
BJP	182	138
INC	114	145
CPM	33	33
JD(U)	21	8
BSP	14	19
CPI	4	10
JD(S)	1	4
TDP	29	5
SP	26	36
SHS	15	12
DMK	12	16
ADMK	10	0
BJD	10	11
NCP	8	9
AITC	8	2
RJD	7	20
PMK	5	6
INLD	5	0
JKN	4	2
MDMK	4	4
RSP	3	3
FBL	2	3
MUL	2	1
SAD	2	8
SJP(R)	1	8
MSCP	1	0
HVC	1	0
SDF	1	1
KEC	1	1
KEC(M)	1	0
RLD	2	3
ABLTC	2	0
CPI(M)(L)	1	1
BBM	1	0
PWPI	1	0
AIMIM	1	1
SAD(M)	1	0
MADMK	1	0
IND	6	4
AGP	0	2
TRS	0	5
PDP	0	1
RPI	0	1
HVP	0	0
LJP	0	3
Total	543	539

Numbers for Mulayam and Maya go up, but bargaining power comes down

By Atul Chandra/TNN

Lucknow: Some wanted the crown, others thought of donning the hat of a kingmaker. But all that they could get is a first-row seat to watch the final poll act. Despite bettering their performances in the Lok Sabha elections, SP and BSP may find that their best performance

may not be good enough. At the end of the day, they may not be required to play the kingmaker, leave alone demanding the throne for their party leaders. While it may be nearly impossible for Mayawati to dictate terms, Mulayam Singh Yadav still nurtures hope of being in a key position at the Centre.

With SP increasing its tally from 26 to 38 (including the seats won by Rashtriya Lok Dal), one thought that Mulayam would hold the key to government formation. With 38 MPs in his kitty, at least the DPM's post would have been within Mulayam's reach but for the stunning performance of the Congress and Left.

The Left-Congress combine may not require the support of either SP or BSP to form a government. But SP is refusing to give up. Party general secretary Amar Singh has cited the instance of J&K to make a case for Mulayam, to be elected leader of the conglomerate that would include Congress, Left, DMK and others.

If Mufti Mohammed Sayeed can be appointed CM, why can't the same yardstick be applied in the present situation to have Mulayam as prime minister, he is reported to have said. Mayawati, on the other hand, has nowhere to go to. She also does not have the kind of advantages which Mulayam

has by way of close ties with the Left. When Congress approached her for a pre-poll alliance, Mayawati refused to settle for anything less than prime minister ship. Though her party has increased tally in UP from 14 to 19, it can't NDA because there's no protection: the grand alliance can now offer.

Voters have spoken

Their message to their leaders is ruthless in its clarity: Deliver, or face oblivion.

EVERY General Election is about a nation talking to itself. In Election 2004 that faceless, voiceless entity called the voter has transmogrified into a veritable demolition machine, which has just laid low some of the tallest figures on the political spectrum. It began with a synthetic shine created in an advertising agency's studio and ended with the BJP-led NDA being left in the dark. It began with the systematic creation of a "feel good" mood and ended with the ruling coalition feeling the discomfort of rejection. The biggest mistake the NDA made was to have actually believed its own self-serving myths.

It inflated Atal Bihari Vajpayee into a larger than life figure and hoped to continue in power by riding on his shoulders. It mistook one good year of fairly sustained growth as evidence of the country having entered the league of economic superpowers. It perceived brisk cellphone sales and cheap housing loans as symbolising a nation on the move. It believed that it could wish away the post-Godhra communal riots in Gujarat — among the worst in the nation's history — and move on. It felt it could get away with the numerous scandals that had surfaced with monotonous regularity during its six years of power — whether it was the petrol pump scandal or the Tehelka scam, the cash-on-camera blot or the ministers-milking-PSUs imbroglio — with its image unaffected. Somewhere the NDA, and more specifically the BJP, lost touch with the complex reality of a nation called India and have paid the ultimate price for that folly.

WHAT the election results have just indicated is that even if the NDA was foolish enough to swallow its own myths, voters were not prepared to do so. People speak of the "wisdom" of the voter without quite believing in that wisdom. Jose Ortega y Gasset put it another way in his *Revolt of the Masses*, where he talked of the world as the sum total of our vital possibilities. Time and again, the millions who make up this country have demonstrated an uncanny ability to perceive their world as the sum total of their vital possibilities. And they also do this by punishing and rewarding those who represent them in the state assemblies and in Parliament through the one means at their disposal — their vote. They showed this ability, most notably, during that famous Janata victory of 1977, when they reminded Indira Gandhi that she had overreached herself by imposing the Emergency with all its attendant draconian measures, and had destroyed some of the foundational principles on which Indian democracy was based. They showed it again by punishing her son, Rajiv Gandhi, in 1989

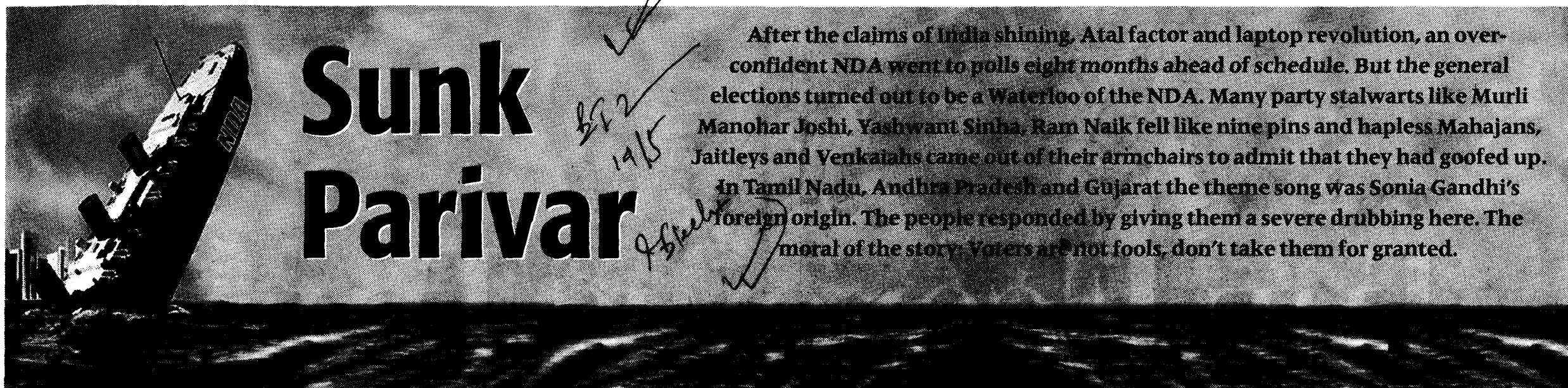
and dispatching him to the Opposition benches, after having rewarded his party with a landslide victory of over 400 seats just five years earlier.

This time, voters have singled out parties and individuals for their special scrutiny. They threw out three incumbent governments in the process — Atal Bihari Vajpayee's at the Centre, Chandrababu Naidu's in Andhra Pradesh, S.M. Krishna's in Karnataka. Almost to the last man and woman, they rejected AIADMK supremo J. Jayalalithaa's monotonous attack on Sonia Gandhi's foreign origins. Ever as they humbled senior leaders of the erstwhile dispensation in New Delhi whether it was a Yashwant Sinha, or Murlidhar Joshi, they clearly welcomed youthful promise, even if many of these candidates happened to be the sons and daughters of minister and chief ministers.

WHAT then are the voters telling their leaders? The temptation to rush to hasty conclusions can sometimes prove to be a trap. There is a perception in the RSS, for instance, that the BJP's current dilemma has been caused by the fact that it did not follow the Hindutva line rigorously enough. Yet the signals point in the contrary direction. Observe, for instance, the results in Gujarat and the relatively good performance of the Congress in a state that had just over a year ago voted decisively for Narendra Modi's brand of bigoted politics in the assembly elections. This belies the easy assumption that Gujarat's voters are religious hardliners. Similarly, it is intriguing, is it not, that the two major metropolises of Delhi and Mumbai — both of them strongholds of the BJP and BJP-Shiv Sena respectively — have voted overwhelmingly for the Congress? The very fact that Sonia Gandhi's foreign origins did not stir the air despite the best efforts of the BJP indicates that Hindutva as an ideology is on the wane, that emotive politics can take any political party, that needs to pass the electoral test, only that far. It was Vajpayee, more than any other BJP leader, who best understood this. That, unsurprisingly, also accounted for his impressive political popularity.

There is a plethora of data thrown up by this election that is waiting to be absorbed and understood but a quick assessment seems to indicate that voters everywhere have become much more conscious of their rights as citizens and of the power of their votes. People will increasingly deploy the strength that democracy gives them to get better lives for themselves and a better future for their children. Election 2004, then, was about rising popular expectations and the ability — or inability — of leaders to address them.

SERIOUS, SOLID POLITICS: GOING BEHIND THE SCENES & DECODING THE POWER MATRIX FOR YOU



Sunk Parivar

After the claims of India shining, Atal factor and laptop revolution, an overconfident NDA went to polls eight months ahead of schedule. But the general elections turned out to be a Waterloo of the NDA. Many party stalwarts like Murli Manohar Joshi, Yashwant Sinha, Ram Naik fell like nine pins and hapless Mahajans, Jaitleys and Venkaiahs came out of their armchairs to admit that they had goofed up. In Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat the theme song was Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin. The people responded by giving them a severe drubbing here. The moral of the story: Voters are not fools, don't take them for granted.

Record Tally Puts Left In The Right

Amrita Shah
NEW DELHI 13 MAY

WHAT Left is will now cease to be the running joke among its detractors. As the LS picture gets clear, the Left Front — consisting of CPM, CPI, RSP and FB — has swept the bastions of Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal and won most of the seats it contested in Andhra and Tamil Nadu to emerge as the third biggest player in the national scene with a record tally.

This is not the only record the Left has broken today. For the first time in its history the CPM has won itself 44 seats. The highest the Marxists have managed to win so far was 36 in 1980, when Indira Gandhi returned to power after her 1977 debacle post-emergency.

The maximum the Left parties together ever won was 56



In 1991 when Narasimha Rao formed a minority government. The Left extended support from outside informally back then. In West Bengal, the Left reduced Trinamool Congress to just its founder Mamata Banerjee while wresting their strong-

get a majority in Lok Sabha elections since 1967, the sweep of 18 seats has surprised the Left itself. But what shocked the state was the CPM victory in the Muslim League pocket of Manjeri for the first time. The Left had 10 seats from Kerala in the last Lok Sabha.

The Left front in West Bengal has taken its score from 29 to 35. The CPI, which was reduced to three seats in the last Lok Sabha, has also regained some seats taking its tally to 10. The smaller Left allies, the Forward Bloc and RSP have got three each.

At least in Kerala, the Left resurgence may not entirely be credited to its ideology as much as to the infighting in Congress, which has not won a single seat in Kerala this time. The IUML, which is now with the UDF has won one seat and PC Thomas, who is supporting the NDA, has got the other. In Andhra

Pradesh and Tamil Nadu, where the Left parties have won 6 seats, the CPM and CPI have been in alliance with the Congress, TRS and DMK.

Politburo member Prakash Karat dubbed the Kerala scenario as a "total failure of the Antony government." He said there was all-round anger against it in all sections because of the Congress infighting. Veteran Congress leader K Karunakaran's son Muralidharan lost the by-poll while his daughter Padmaja Venugopal lost the Lok Sabha election.

"Obviously one section of Congress supporters have voted against the party. Traditional Congress patrons have got disgusted with it. The Muslim league has lost ground among Muslims," Mr Karat said. He said the CPM was confident that the LDF would get 15 seats but "this kind of sweep was unexpected."

Team Sonia: Meet The Backroom Boys & Gals

Praveen S Thampi
NEW DELHI 13 MAY

DURING the course of the GE-04 campaign, when India was still 'Shining', ET had an opportunity for a first-hand comparison between the BJP and the Congress state of affairs. The location was Lucknow, the objects d'ovre: HQs of both the parties in a state, which at that juncture was considered to be the most crucial.

Even at the height of the campaign process, the contrast was hard to miss. The BJP office looked like the venue for a wedding, the Congress office looked as if a funeral had just been underway. But as it turns out, that very ambience got reflected in the results, in a rather anti-climatic fashion. Plush with funds, and riding on a booming middle class wave, the BJP managers thought that India that is Bharat will fall in line. On the other side, the sad and gloomy Congress atmosphere struck a strange cord with the rural India, whose spirit was busted by the blinding lights of India Shining.

"They outspent us during the campaign by 1:8," said Jai Ram Ramesh of the Congress' economic cell and a key member of the Congress Strategy Committee. As one of the pillars of the Congress' Backroom Brigade, he should know. Pitted against the hype of saffron spin doctors like Pramod Mahajan, Arun Jaitley, Venkaiah Naidu and Sushma Swaraj, the Congress' men and women did what the dictum demanded: Let your work speak for yourself.

ET dug out the Team Congress which stayed behind the Gandhi lineup, to make things

happen without any help from the media chorus. First the backroom line up that operated from Delhi: Besides Mr Ramesh, Ambika Soni, Ahmed Patel, Salman Khurshid, Janar-

dan Trivedi.

Chowdhary Birendra Singh, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Prithviraj Chauhan, Vayalar Ravi and, to a certain extent, Digvijay Singh, acted as Sonia Gandhi's field marshals, in charge of crucial states like UP, AP, J&K, Gujarat, Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. The old war horses and the master strategists, Pranab Mukherjee, Arjun Singh and to some extent, Nataraj Singh, formed the top

think-tank at 10 Janpath, which finalised the action plan for attack and defence. While Morilal Vora was keeping the funds in safe custody, Mr Mukherjee, Murli Deora, Mr Patel and around a dozen chief ministers acted as the main fund raisers. With this army in place, Ms Gandhi, aided by her two children in UP, launched, perhaps, the most ambitious and painstaking campaign across the country, at a time when the BJP and NDA looked invincible in the make-believe world of India Shining.

Asked to comment on the backroom squad, the most vocal of them all, Mr Ramesh shrugs it off: "It's for the front-runners to decide whether the backroom boys succeeded or not." And that statement carries more than a ring of truth. Almost all of the party second rung that ET spoke to, confessed that what inspired the grassroots workers — long tired of mega egos and their factional fights — was Sonia's Jansampark Yatra. Once again, pitted against a larger-than-life Bharat Uday Yatra by I K Advani, Sonia's journey cut through the hype and made real contacts in the nooks

and corner of the country. And many neutral observers feel that was the single biggest reason why BJP's foreign-origin campaign failed to take off. Having charged up the battery, the backroom boys staged the next turning point: Rahul Gandhi's plunge into electoral politics and Priyanka's first dip. The battelions were drawn, but BJP failed to take notice. After all, politics is not kids' stuff, went the reasoning.



By guv! Times they may be changin' at Raj Bhavans

Team ET
13 MAY

THE REGIME change at the Centre may leave quite a few governors worried about their fate. Primarily, veteran RSS/BJP leaders who were rewarded by the Vajpayee government for their "services" towards the Sangh, with postings at Raj Bhavans across the country.

The list of such "threatened" governors is fairly long: Kailashpati Mishra in Gujarat, ML Khurana in Rajasthan, Rama Jois in Bihar, VK Shastri in UP, Babu Parmanand in Haryana, KN Sahny in Goa and N N Jha in Pondicherry. Although the NDA government had steered clear of any major gubernatorial reshuffles soon after taking over from the United Front government in 1996, it had been a practice during the earlier regimes.

The Congress-led government would be able to accommodate two leaders in Madhya Pradesh and Kerala; here, the death of incumbents Ram Prakash Gupta and Sikander Bakht have left the Raj Bhavans vacant.

Nevertheless, the obligation of the Centre to consult the state governments prior to appointment of governors may pose a roadblock to the Congress-led government's plans to drop the guillotine on governors of Opposition-run states. It would be more difficult to remove Gujarat governor Kailashpati Mishra or his Rajasthan counterpart, Madan Lal Khurana, given the presence of BJP governments in these two states.

The odds are, however, heavily against Mr Jois as he had only recently invoked the ire of the RJD government by criticising the state's law and order situation in his Republic-Day eve speech earlier this year. With RJD set to be part of the Congress-led alliance, Mr Yadav is certain to insist on easing Mr Jois out of Bihar.

An alternative way of getting rid of the "swayamsevak" governors is transferring them to smaller and comparatively insignificant states so that they can complete the remainder of their terms without proving a hindrance.

Keep The Peace: New Govt Has Its Job Cut On The Internal Security Front

Team ET
13 MAY

FOR the Congress-led alliance, the topmost internal security issue when it assumes power at the Centre, will be to take forward the peace process with separatist groups: primarily, the Hurriyat Conference in Jammu and Kashmir and the Naga rebel group NSCN(I-M) in Nagaland. Centre talks were tentatively scheduled in the first week of June. With LK Advani no longer the deputy prime minister, it will be for his successor to

continue the dialogue with the Hurriyat led by the moderate Maulana Abbas Ansari. The transition may not be too jerky: PDP is a Congress ally and its leader, J&K chief minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed was the biggest force behind the Centre's decision to open negotiations with the Hurriyat Conference. Not only the transition,

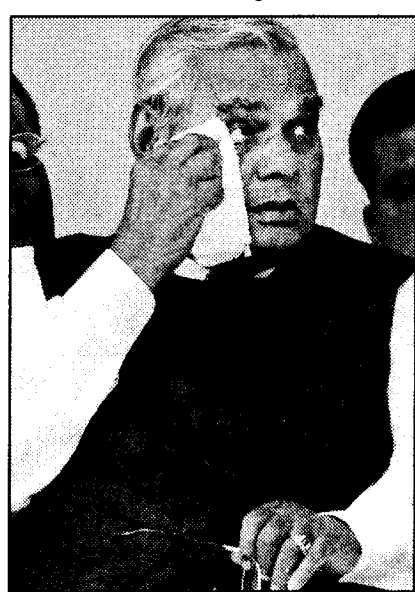
but even the progress in the coming years — it is normal for peace talks to stretch for years — is expected to be smooth, considering that the Congress itself will take over the reins of J&K next year. As per the rules of the PDP-Congress alliance, the PDP and Congress will head the government in turns for three years each.

Besides, with the interlocutor for the Hurriyat talks yet to be appointed, and the agenda yet to be charted, the Congress has a clean slate. Not only can it put its own man on the crucial job, but can independently decide on the finer points of dialogue. As for the other insurgency-hit state of Nagaland, the Congress-led alliance will have little option but to continue with the process that has been going on for several years now. The Centre's interlocutor for Naga talks, K Padmanabhaiah, is considered close to the Congress, and may be allowed to continue on the job.

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 13 MAY

IN GE-1999, the BJP created a magic halo around Atal Bihari Vajpayee. He emerged as the toast of the middle class and the aftermath of Kargil saw his appeal spreading into rural India. And when the campaign for GE-2004 picked up steam, the BJP took it for granted that a Vajpayee versus Sonia battle will be a no contest, a non starter. And that his charisma would deliver it a

ATAL Proves FATAL



majority in the Lok Sabha. But the poll outcome has conclusively proved the BJP wrong. If the BJP had hoped that the Vajpayee charisma would help the NDA duck the incumbency disadvantage, the results showed that over-dependence on the PM was no substitute for real alliances. In a fractured polity, alliances have become crucial — if you are successful in putting together a winning combination, you have done it, otherwise you bite the dust.

The BJP also excessively relied on the power of the middle classes to change opinion. Although they wielded a clout disproportionate to their actual size, the rise and rise of region-

ception was simply wrong. A series of opinion polls showing high job approval ratings for the prime minister in the recent past making them conclude that the Vajpayee was the winning card. In the process, they forgot the most crucial element that catapulted BJP into dominance — support of allies in terrains where saffron is either non-existent or less powerful.

It may be recalled that its networking power was the principal reason for its success in the 90s. The party moved beyond fellow saffronite Shiv Sena to embrace various colours of the rainbow. Mr L K Advani's leadership striking deals with even the once-unthinkable — the Dravidian parties — and this saw the lotus blooming in areas which remained inaccessible to the BJP.

BJP leaders were confident that strategies can be worked out from air-conditioned rooms in Delhi. They forgot that the nuts and bolts of elections have to be fixed at the ground level. The overconfidence saw the party spurring offer of tie-ups from parties like the NCP, AGP and HVP.

MOOD SWING: A TALE OF TWO PARTIES

Bhangra, Confetti Usher In Cong

Team ET
13 MAY

OM PRAKASH Chopra was crying on camera. The burly, middle-aged Congress worker, duly bedecked in a tricolour scarf, was clearly overcome with emotion. In between shouting slogans for party president Sonia Gandhi and offering bytes to the waiting cameras, Chopra veered from the exultant to the tearful.

"This victory is Soniji's victory. All these years we said the Congress combine would manage 100+ seats, but we've crossed even 200," he said, adding, for good measure, that the party rank and file was already talking of Sonia Gandhi as PM. "There is no confusion on this issue and the allies are

also aware of that," Chopra said. In between, someone called on his cell phone to inform him that the party was leading in six Delhi seats. Meanwhile, the Congress HQ had transformed into a carnival venue. Hearty party workers broke into an impromptu bhangra. Young Congress workers did a Sourav Ganguly, yanking off their shirts and frenetically waving the party flag. There were fire crackers and confetti and enough cameras to keep the spirit going.



Shock & Denial As Pop Goes BJP

Team ET
13 MAY

ONE by one the orange and green balloons went Pop! Pop! Pop! in the marquee behind the desolate BJP office at 11 Ashoka Road. There was no apparent reason for them to burst, except the heat. But coming as they did in tandem with the BJP's deflated aspirations of sitting on the Treasury benches of the 14th Lok Sabha, it was strangely appropriate.

"These results are all wrong," said one of the few party workers to be found among the gaggle of media people and empty enclaves set up by TV channels. First comes the shock and then denial. What a change from five years ago, when confetti littered the lawns and the din of drums and cheers made the byte-givers go hoarse to make themselves heard.

The office building was deserted, except for three workers huddled in front of a television. Outside the steel-bound outer gates of the compound, the sounds of ecstatic Congress supporters doing their victory laps round Lutyens Delhi, filtered in. Missing were the white ambassador cars that usually mark the presence of Important People on the premises.

"These results are all wrong," said one of the few party workers to be found among the gaggle of media people and empty enclaves set up by TV channels. First comes the shock and then denial. What a change from five years ago, when confetti littered the lawns and the din of drums and cheers made the byte-givers go hoarse to make themselves heard.

Amma, Modi hit by Italian cannon

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 13 MAY

TWO verdicts — Tamil Nadu and Gujarat — have one thing in common. The chief anchors of the NDA campaign in these two states, Ms Jayalalitha and Mr Narendra Modi, tried to transform the elections into a Vajpayee versus Sonia contest, but the voter rejected their planks and voted on bread and butter issues.

If it was the resentment of a

large section of the middle classes and the rural population against the Jayalalitha regime that led to the AIADMK's rout, Gujarat chief minister had to pay a heavy price for the disaffection of the powerful Patels and the rest of the farming community in the polls. Both had pitched the campaign on Ms Gandhi's foreign origin in the hope that local issues will move to the margins.

In meeting after meeting, the two chief ministers harped on Ms Gandhi's roots in the hope that it would captivate the voters' imagination. Their efforts have been rebuffed in a resounding fashion. While the AIADMK-BJP combine drew a blank in Tamil Nadu, the BJP's tally in Gujarat has tumbled down to 16.

The two leaders have alienated large sections of the society by their imperious attitude. The middle classes, which reposed their faith in the AIADMK supremo just two years ago, have turned against her. Government employees were miffed

by some of her harsh decisions. Her new-found ally, the BJP, too had a taste of her brash ways when she put her foot down on the candidature of union minister Thirunavukarasu from the Pudukottai Lok Sabha seat.

In Gujarat, Mr Modi's move to hike power tariff in the state drew howls of protest from the RSS-backed Bharatiya Kisan Sangh. The standoff between the two came to an end only after the intervention of the central leadership.

Abki Bari, No Lal, No Bihari

Team ET
13 MAY

WHEN the BJP parliamentary board sits down tomorrow to take stock of the party's dismal performance in the Lok Sabha polls, it'll find enough reasons to blame itself for alienating old friends and its inability to win new partners. In the first category are parties such as the DMK, MDMK, PMK, the Lok Janshakti, while in the second group are outfits such as the NCP, AGP, JMM and the HVP.

A party which prided itself in its ability to network with regional parties and run a stable coalition government created such conditions in states like Tamil Nadu, Bihar and Haryana that its partners were forced to walk out of the NDA. If it was the DMK, followed by the MDMK and the PMK, in Tamil Nadu, Lok Janshakti leader Ram Vilas Paswan was compelled to leave the alliance in Bihar in a huff.

In the southern state of Tamil Nadu, local BJP leaders did not leave any chance to heap abuses on DMK chief M Karunanidhi, while lavishing praise on AIADMK supremo J Jayalalitha for her "pro-Hindu" stance on issues such as the anti-terror legislation and the ban on religious conversions.

The result: while the DMK was forced to jettison the BJP and join hands with the Congress, MDMK, PMK and the Left parties, the BJP was forced to tie-up with Ms Jayalalitha on the insistence of SJM stalwart S Gurumurthy, the Kanchi Shankaracharya and the radical Hindu Munnani.

The party's reflexes were also found wanting in winning over new friends in Haryana, Assam, Jharkhand and Maharashtra. While Pramod Mahajan saw to it that the proposal to enrol the NCP in the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance failed to take-off, resistance from the local units sabotaged the prospects of a partnership with the AGP in Assam and the JMM in Jharkhand.



Lok Sabha Verdict 2004



Kerala's Left Democratic Front supporters in a celebratory mood near the Ernakulam Collectorate on Thursday. — Photo: H. Vibhu

Kangra	Votes polled..... 9,07,283
Chander Kumar(INC)	T K Hamza(CPM)..... 4,26,920
Margin of victory: 17,791	K P A Majeed(MUL)..... 3,79,177
Total electorate..... 10,33,696	Others..... 1,01,186
Votes polled..... 6,43,177	1999: E. Ahamed (MUL) won by 123411
Chander Kumar(INC)..... 3,14,555	
Shanika Kumar(BJP)..... 2,96,764	
Others..... 31,858	
1999: Shanta Kumar (BJP) won by 100742	
Mandi	
Pratibha Singh(INC)	Total electorate..... 8,71,616
Margin of victory: 66,566	Votes polled..... 6,44,614
Total electorate..... 10,65,083	Adv C S Sujatha(CPM)..... 2,78,281
Votes polled..... 6,69,552	Ramesh Chennithala(INC)..... 2,70,867
Pratibha Singh(INC)..... 3,57,623	S Krishnakumar(BJP)..... 83,013
Maaheshwar Singh(BJP)..... 2,91,057	Others..... 12,453
Others..... 20,872	1999: Ramesh Chennithala (INC) won by 33,443
1999: Maheshwar Singh (BJP) won by 131025	
Simla	
Dhani Ram Shandil(INC)	Mukundapuram
Margin of victory: 1,08,180	Lonappan Nambadan(CPM)
Total electorate..... 10,18,988	Margin of victory: 1,17,097
Votes polled..... 5,28,655	Total electorate..... 10,24,435
Dhani Ram Shandil(INC)..... 3,11,182	Votes polled..... 7,23,009
Hira Nand Kashyap(SC) (BJP)..... 2,03,004	Lonappan Nambadan(CPM)..... 3,75,175
Others..... 14,471	Padrajaya Venugopalan(INC)..... 2,58,078
1999: Lt. Col. Dhani Ram Shandil (HVC) won by 46,930	Others..... 89,756
	1999: K. Karunakaran (INC) won by 52463
Muvattupuzha	
Adv P C Thomas (Puloli)(IFDP)	
Margin of victory: 529	
Total electorate..... 9,84,003	
Votes polled..... 7,45,871	
Adv P C Thomas (Puloli) (IFDP)..... 2,56,411	
Adv P M Ismail(CPM)..... 2,55,882	
Jose K Mani(KEC(M))..... 2,09,880	
Others..... 23,698	
1999: P. C. Thomas (KEC-M) won by 76939	

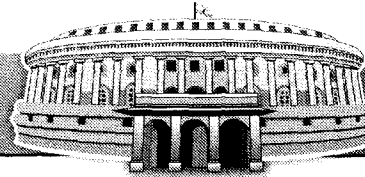
KERALA	
Adoor (SC)	
Chengara Surendran(CPI)	Total electorate..... 9,60,310
Margin of victory: 54,534	Votes polled..... 8,84,434
Total electorate..... 9,60,310	Chengara Surendran (CPI)..... 3,32,216
Votes polled..... 8,84,434	Kodikunni Suresh (INC)..... 2,77,682
Chengara Surendran (CPI)..... 3,32,216	Others..... 74,536
Kodikunni Suresh (INC)..... 2,77,682	1999: Kodikunni Suresh (INC) won by 22006
Others..... 74,536	
1999: Kodikunni Suresh (INC) won by 22006	
Alleppey	
Dr K S Manoj(CPM)	Total electorate..... 10,92,142
Margin of victory: 1,009	Votes polled..... 8,06,835
Total electorate..... 9,71,172	S Ajiya Kumar (CPM)..... 3,95,928
Votes polled..... 7,30,066	K A Thulasi (INC)..... 3,25,518
Dr K S Manoj(CPM)..... 3,35,494	Others..... 85,389
V M Sudheeran(INC)..... 3,34,485	1999: S Ajiya Kumar (CPM-M) won by 13,715
Others..... 60,117	
1999: V. M. Sudheeran (INC) won by 35094	
Badagara	
Adv P Sathodevi(CPM)	Ottapalam
Margin of victory: 1,30,589	Margin of victory: 70,410
Total electorate..... 10,92,826	Total electorate..... 10,92,142
Votes polled..... 8,28,533	Votes polled..... 8,06,835
Adv P Sathodevi(CPM)..... 4,29,204	S Ajiya Kumar (CPM)..... 3,95,928
Adv M T Padma(INC)..... 2,68,705	K A Thulasi (INC)..... 3,25,518
Others..... 1,00,534	Others..... 85,389
1999: A K Premjiam (CPI-M) won by 25,844	1999: S Ajiya Kumar (CPM-M) won by 13,715
Calicut	
M P Veerendra Kumar(JD(S))	Paighat (SC)
Margin of victory: 65,326	Margin of victory: 98,158
Total electorate..... 11,09,433	Total electorate..... 10,76,233
Votes polled..... 7,81,984	Votes polled..... 8,20,856
M P Veerendra Kumar(JD(S))..... 3,40,111	N N Krishnadas(CPM)..... 3,75,144
Adv V Balaram(INC)..... 2,74,785	V S Vijaya Raghavan(INC)..... 2,76,986
M T Ramaswami(BJP)..... 97,889	C Uday Bhaskar(BJP)..... 1,47,792
Others..... 68,399	Others..... 20,934
1999: K. Muralidharan (INC) won by 50402	1999: N N Krishnadas (CPI-M) won by 30,767
Cannanore	
A P Abdullakutty(CPM)	Ponnani
Margin of victory: 83,949	E Ahamed(MUL)
Total electorate..... 10,88,892	Margin of victory: 1,02,758
Votes polled..... 8,60,998	Total electorate..... 11,02,557
A P Abdullakutty(CPM)..... 4,35,058	Votes polled..... 7,30,339
Mullappally Ramachandran(INC)..... 3,51,209	E Ahamed(MUL)..... 3,54,551
Others..... 74,731	P S Suresh(CPI)..... 2,21,293
1999: A P Abdullakutty (CPI-M) won by 10,247	1999: G. M. Banathalla (MUL) won by 130478
Chirayinkil	
Varkala Radhakrishnan(CPM)	Quilon
Margin of victory: 50,745	P Rajendran(CPM)
Total electorate..... 10,20,604	Margin of victory: 1,11,071
Votes polled..... 6,69,639	Total electorate..... 10,32,368
Varkala Radhakrishnan(CPM)..... 3,13,610	Votes polled..... 7,05,482
M I Shanavas(INC)..... 2,62,870	P Rajendran(CPM)..... 3,55,279
Advocate J P Padmakumar(BJP)..... 71,982	Soranand Rajasekharan(INC)..... 2,44,208
Others..... 21,172	Others..... 1,05,995
1999: Varkala Radhakrishnan (CPM) won by 3128	1999: P Rajendran (CPI-M) won by 19,294
Ernakulam	
Dr Sebastian Paul(IND)	Trichur
Margin of victory: 70,099	C K Chandrappan(CPI)
Total electorate..... 10,79,109	Margin of victory: 45,961
Votes polled..... 6,58,916	Total electorate..... 9,90,732
Dr Sebastian Paul(IND)..... 3,23,042	Votes polled..... 6,87,705
Dr Edward Kuthath(INC)..... 2,52,943	C K Chandrappan(CPI)..... 3,20,960
Others..... 82,931	A C Jose(INC)..... 2,74,999
1999: George Ven (INC) won by 113105	P S Sreeraman(BJP)..... 72,108
	Others..... 19,638
	1999: A C Jose (INC) won by 11,632
dukki	
K Francis Geede(KEC)	Trivandrum
Margin of victory: 479	P K Vasudevan Nair(CPI)
Total electorate..... 10,34,338	Margin of victory: 54,603
Votes polled..... 7,28,518	Total electorate..... 11,12,571
K Francis Geede(KEC)..... 3,13,610	Votes polled..... 7,63,829
Benny Behanan(INC)..... 2,84,050	P K Vasudevan Nair(CPI)..... 2,86,057
Others..... 90,939	V S Sivakumar(INC)..... 2,31,454
1999: K. Francis Geede (KEC) won by 9298	O Rajagopal(BJP)..... 2,28,052
	Others..... 18,266
	1999: Adv. V S Sivakumar (INC) won by 14,485

MAHARASHTRA	
Kasargod	
P Kanakaram(CPM)	Ahmednagar
Margin of victory: 1,083	Gadakh Tukaram Gangadhar(NCP)
Total electorate..... 11,60,134	Margin of victory: 75,077
Votes polled..... 9,01,603	Total electorate..... 12,95,593
P Kanakaram(CPM)..... 4,37,284	Votes polled..... 6,87,722
N A Mohammed(INC)..... 3,29,028	Gadakh Tukaram Gangadhar(NCP)..... 3,82,938
Adv. V. Balakrishna Shetty..... 1,10,328	Prd. N. S. Pharanand(BJP)..... 2,87,861
Others..... 24,963	Others..... 36,923
1999: Thayambath Govinda(CPM) won by 31578	1999: Dilipkumar Mansukhlal Gandhi (BJP) won by 28457
Kottayam	
Adv K Suresh Kurup(CPN)	Akola
Margin of victory: 42,914	Dhote Sanjay Shamrao(BJP)
Total electorate..... 9,63,886	Margin of victory: 1,06,371
Votes polled..... 7,05,776	Total electorate..... 12,71,055
Adv K Suresh Kurup(CPM)..... 3,41,213	Votes polled..... 7,35,372
Anto Antony(INC)..... 3,98,299	Dhote Sanjay Shamrao(BJP)..... 3,13,923
Others..... 66,264	Laxmanrao Tayade(INC)..... 2,06,952
1999: Suresh Kurup (CPM) won by 59	Ambedkar Prakash Yashwant (BBM)..... 1,87,202
	Others..... 27,895
	1999: Ambedkar Prakash Yashwant (BBM) won by 8716
Manjeri	
T K Hamza(CPM)	Dahanu (SC)
Margin of victory: 47,743	Shingada Damodar Barku(IND)
Total electorate..... 12,673	Margin of victory: 63,363
	Total electorate..... 16,05,119
	Votes polled..... 6,83,363
	Shingada Damodar Barku (INC)..... 2,86,004
	Adv. Chintaman Wanga (BJP)..... 2,22,641
	Varatha Ramji Mahadu (CPM)..... 1,18,090
	Others..... 56,618

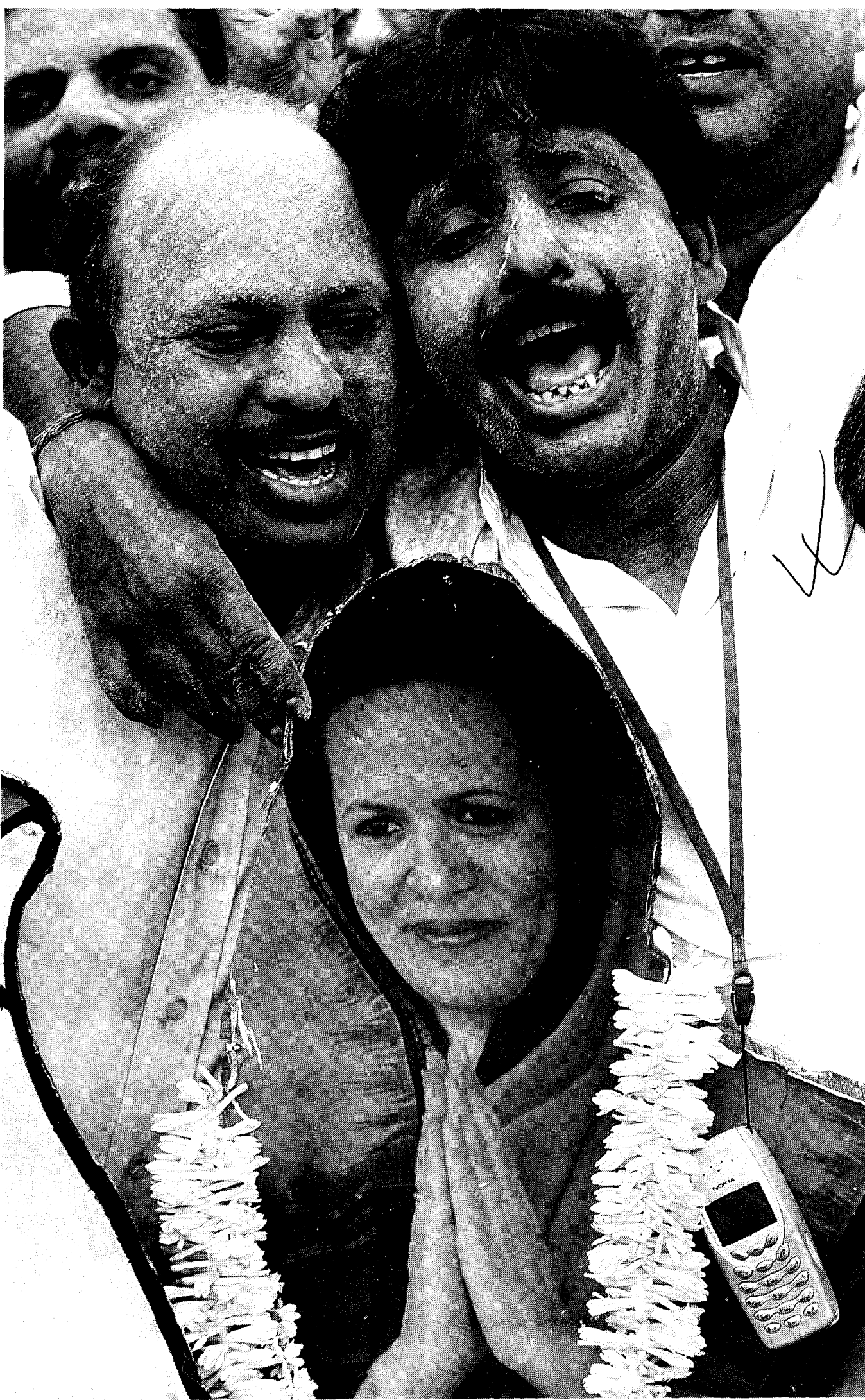
Amravati	1999: Adv. Chintaman Wanga (BJP) won by 62270
Anant Gudhe(SHS)	Margin of victory: 14,234
Total electorate..... 12,04,881	
Votes polled..... 9,12,371	
Anant Gudhe(SHS)..... 2,03,216	
Omprakash Alias Bacchu Babarao Kadu (IND)..... 1,88,982	
Chaura Bapu Hari (INC)..... 1,50,902	
Gavri Ramdas Rupla (BJP)..... 2,02,949	
Haji Rafique Sethi(IND)..... 78,606	
Others..... 54,715	
1999: Ramdas Rupla Gavri (BJP) won by 12865	
Dhule (ST)	
Chaura Bapu Hari(IND)	1999: Adv. Chintaman Wanga (BJP) won by 62270
Margin of victory: 7,765	
Total electorate..... 12,26,114	
Votes polled..... 4,55,571	
Chaura Bapu Hari (INC)..... 2,10,714	
Gavri Ramdas Rupla (BJP)..... 2,02,949	
Others..... 41,908	
1999: Ramdas Rupla Gavri (BJP) won by 12865	
Kolhapur	
Mandlik Sadashivrao Daboba(NCP)	Margin of victory: 14,753
Total electorate..... 11,62,212	
Votes polled..... 8,13,344	
Mandlik Sadashivrao Daboba (NCP)..... 4,01,922	
Mahadik Dhananjay Bhirao (SHS)..... 3,87,169	
Others..... 24,253	
1999: Mandlik Sadashivrao Daboba (NCP) won by 108910	
Mumbai South Central	
Mohan Rawale(SHS)	Margin of victory: 22,188
Total electorate..... 7,04,452	
Votes polled..... 4,47,972	
Mohan Rawale(SHS)..... 1,28,536	
Ahir Sachin(NCP)..... 1,06,348	
Arun Gulab Gawli Ales Dady (GABS)..... 92,210	
Others..... 20,678	
1999: Mohan Vishnu Rawale (SHS) won by 79036	
Kopergaon	
E. V. Alias Balasaheb Vikhe Patil (INC)	Margin of victory: 87,331
Total electorate..... 10,77,519	
Votes polled..... 6,68,700	
E. V. Alias Balasaheb Vikhe Patil (INC)..... 3,56,688	
Murkute Bhanudas Kashinath (SHS)..... 2,69,597	
Others..... 42,655	
1999: E. V. Balasaheb Vikhe Patil (SHS) won by 47415	
Latur	
Patil Rupatai Diliprao Nilangekar (BJP)	Margin of victory: 30,891
Total electorate..... 12,93,202	
Votes polled..... 8,22,355	
Patil Rupatai Diliprao Nilangekar (BJP)..... 4,04,500	
Patil Shivraj Vishwanath(IND)..... 3,73,609	
Others..... 44,246	
1999: Patil Shivraj Vishwanath (IND) won by 40290	
Malegaon (ST)	
Harishchandra Devram Chavan(BJP)	Margin of victory: 4,528
Total electorate..... 12,22,363	
Votes polled..... 5,90,772	
Harishchandra Devram Chavan (BJP)..... 2,18,259	
Mahale Haribhau Shankar (JD(S))..... 2,13,731	
Gavli Jiva Pandu (CPM)..... 1,13,436	
Others..... 45,346	
1999: Mahale Haribhau Shankar (JD(S)) won by 4382	
Mumbai North	
Govinda(IND)	Margin of victory: 48,271
Total electorate..... 23,77,866	
Votes polled..... 11,19,342	
Govinda(IND)..... 5,59,763	
Ram Naik(BJP)..... 5,11,492	
Others..... 48,087	
1999: Ram Naik (BJP) won by 154136	
Mumbai North Central	
Eknath M. Gaikwad(IND)	Margin of victory: 13,329
Total electorate..... 11,17,487	
Votes polled..... 5,14,593	
Eknath M. Gaikwad(IND)..... 2,56,282	
Manohar Gajanan Joshi(SHS)..... 2,42,953	
Others..... 15,358	
1999: Manohar Gajanan Joshi (SHS) won by 168995	
Mumbai North East	
Adv. Kamat Gurudas(IND)	Margin of victory: 99,400
Total electorate..... 19,74,560	
Votes polled..... 9,25,659	
Adv. Kamat Gurudas(IND)..... 4,93,420	
Kirit Somaiya(BJP)..... 3,94,200	
Others..... 38,219	
1999: Kirit Somaiya (BJP) won by 7278	
Mumbai North West	
Sunil Dutt(IND)	Margin of victory: 47,358
Total electorate..... 15,15,745	
Votes polled..... 7,47,687	
Sunil Dutt(IND)..... 3,85,755	
Sanjay Nirupam(SHS)..... 3,38,397	
Others..... 23,535	
1999: Sunil Dutt Ragnath (INC) won by 85539	
Mumbai South	
Milind Muri Deora(IND)	Margin of victory: 10,246
Total electorate..... 6,20,431	
Votes polled..... 2,74,358	
Milind Muri Deora(IND)..... 1,37,956	
Jayawantiben Mehta(BJP)..... 1,27,710	
Others..... 8,692	
1999: Jayawantiben Mehta (BJP) won by 10243	

Pune	
Kalmadi Suresh(IND)	Margin of victory: 73,176
Total electorate..... 16,08,614	
Votes polled..... 7,69,018	
Kalmadi Suresh(IND)..... 3,73,774	
Pradip Trimbak Rawat(BJP)..... 3,00,598	
Others..... 94,646	
1999: Praep Rawat (BJP) won by 91285	
Rajapur	
Suresh Prabhakar Prabhush(SHS)	Margin of victory: 80,899
Total electorate..... 8,35,714	
Votes polled..... 4,80,535	
Suresh Prabhakar Prabhush(SHS)..... 2,76,720	
Sudhir Sawant(IND)..... 1,83,102	
Others..... 33,432	
1999: Suresh Prabhakar Prabhush (SHS) won by 112850	
Ramtek	
Mohite Subodh Baburao(SHS)	Margin of victory: 14,102
Total electorate..... 11,48,759	
Votes polled..... 6,47,483	
Mohite Subodh Baburao(SHS)..... 2,76,720	
Dr. Shrikant Jichkar(IND)..... 2,62,618	
Others..... 1,08,145	
1999: Subodh Mohite (SHS) won by 11689	
Ratnagiri	
Anant Geete(SHS)	Margin of victory: 1,48,968
Total electorate..... 9,14,770	
Votes polled..... 5,60,976	
Anant Geete(SHS)..... 3,34,690	
Govindrao Nikam(NCP)..... 1,85,722	
Others..... 40,564	
1999: Anant Gangaram Geete (SHS) won by 115343	
Sangli	
Patil Prakashbapu Vasantdada(IND)	Margin of victory: 81,623
Total electorate..... 11,86,616	
Votes polled..... 6,92,999	
Patil Prakashbapu Vasantdada (IND)..... 3,05,048	
Deepak (Baba) Abasaheb Shinde Mhaisarkar (BJP)..... 2,23,425	
Kraniveer Nagnath(Anna) Ramchandra Naikwad (SP)..... 1,37,122	
Others..... 27,404	
1999: Prakash (Babu) Vasantrao Patil (INC) won by 1,60,560	
Satara	
Laxmanrao Pandurang Jadhav (Patil) (NCP)	Margin of victory: 3,957
Total electorate..... 11,49,290	
Votes polled..... 6,75,012	
Laxmanrao Pandurang Jadhav (Patil) (NCP)..... 2,81,577	
Hindurao N. Naik Nimbalkar (SHS)..... 2,77,620	
Others..... 1,15,815	
1999: Laxmanrao Pandurang Jadhav (NCP) won by 124771	
Sholapur	
Deshmukh Subhash Sureshchandra (BJP)	Margin of victory: 5,798
Total electorate..... 11,88,560	
Votes polled..... 6,56,801	
Deshmukh Subhash Sureshchandra (BJP)..... 3,16,188	
Ujjwalatai Sushilkumar Shinde (INC)..... 3,10,390	
Others..... 30,223	
1999: Shinde Sushilkumar Sambhaji(IND) won by 76,995	
Thane	
Parajape Prakash Vishwanath(SHS)	Margin of victory: 22,258
Total electorate..... 32,20,196	
Votes polled..... 13,13,252	
Parajape Prakash Vishwanath (SHS)..... 6,31,414	
Davkhare Vasant Shankarrao (NCP)..... 6,09,156	

Lok Sabha Verdict 2004



Rampur P. Jaya Prada Nahata(SP) Margin of victory: 85,474 Total electorate: 14,20,598 Votes polled: 8,10,596 P. Jaya Prada Nahata(SP): 2,89,390 Begum Noor Bano Alias Mehtab Zamani Begum (INC): 2,03,916 Afroz Ali Khan(BSP): 1,26,406 Rajendra Kumar Sharma(BJP): 1,21,785 Others: 69,099 1999: Begum Noor Bano Urf Mahtab Zamani Begum (INC) won by 115471	Godda Furkan Ansari(INC) Margin of victory: 26,754 Total electorate: 13,38,939 Votes polled: 8,31,356 Furkan Ansari(INC): 3,73,138 Pradeep Yadav(BJP): 3,46,384 Others: 1,11,834 1999: Jagdambhi Prasad Yadav (BJP) won by 79863
Saharanpur Rasheed Masood(SP) Margin of victory: 26,828 Total electorate: 15,66,135 Votes polled: 9,90,415 Rasheed Masood(SP): 3,53,272 Mansoor Ali Khan(BSP): 3,26,444 Ch. Yashpal Singh(BJP): 2,50,346 Others: 80,353 1999: Mansoor Ali Khan (BSP) won by 22307	Hazaribagh Bhubneshwar Prasad Mehta(CPI) Margin of victory: 1,05,328 Total electorate: 11,80,058 Votes polled: 7,05,439 Bhubneshwar Prasad Mehta(CPI): 2,36,058 Yashwant Sinha(BJP): 2,50,730 Others: 98,651 1999: Yashwant Sinha (BJP) won by 182642
Sambhal Pro. Ram Gopal Yadav(SP) Margin of victory: 1,98,061 Total electorate: 12,49,017 Votes polled: 8,11,908 Pro. Ram Gopal Yadav(SP): 3,57,049 Tarannum Aqeel(BSP): 1,58,988 Dharampal Yadav D.P. Yadav (RJD): 1,37,273 Others: 1,58,598 1999: Mulyam Singh Yadav (SP) won by 115834	Jamshedpur Sunil Kumar Mahato(JMM) Margin of victory: 1,05,633 Total electorate: 13,72,124 Votes polled: 7,76,519 Sunil Kumar Mahato(JMM): 3,96,056 Abha Mahato(BJP): 2,90,423 Others: 90,040 1999: Acha Mahato (BJP) won by 121488
Shahabad Ilyas Azmi(BSP) Margin of victory: 46,369 Total electorate: 12,57,875 Votes polled: 5,79,629 Ilyas Azmi(BSP): 2,10,171 Satya Dev Singh(BJP): 1,63,802 Babu Khan(SP): 1,56,574 Others: 49,082 1999: Daud Ahmad (BSP) won by 42132	Khunti (ST) Sushila Kerketta(INC) Margin of victory: 51,183 Total electorate: 9,04,846 Votes polled: 4,85,340 Sushila Kerketta (INC): 2,15,155 Kariya Munda (BJP): 1,54,992 Others: 1,04,193 1999: Kariya Munda (BJP) won by 26262
Shahjahanpur Kunwar Jitin Prasad(INC) Margin of victory: 81,832 Total electorate: 12,40,983 Votes polled: 6,33,853 Kunwar Jitin Prasad(INC): 2,20,763 Ram Murti Singh Verma(SP): 1,58,931 Satya Pal Singh Yadav(BSP): 1,27,472 Suresh Kumar Khanna(BJP): 1,03,541 Others: 43,146 1999: Kunwar Jitendra Prasad (INC) won by 17992	Kodarma Babul Marandi(BJP) Margin of victory: 1,54,944 Total electorate: 13,25,734 Votes polled: 8,25,710 Babul Marandi (BJP): 3,66,656 Champa Verma(JMM): 2,11,712 Raj Kumar Yadav(CPI(ML))(L): 1,36,554 Others: 1,10,789 1999: Tikahant Pandit Singh (INC) won by 10178
Sitapur Rajesh Verma(BSP) Margin of victory: 5,234 Total electorate: 12,92,685 Votes polled: 5,96,569 Rajesh Verma(BSP): 1,71,733 Mukhtar Anees(SP): 1,66,499 Janardan Prasad Mishra(BJP): 1,37,822 Raja Mohd. Amir Mohd. Khan (INC): 68,827 Others: 51,688 1999: Rajesh Verma (BSP) won by 36362	Palamu (SC) Manoj Kumar(RJD) Margin of victory: 55,144 Total electorate: 12,89,313 Votes polled: 6,41,543 Manoj Kumar (RJD): 2,06,733 Braj Mohan Ram (BJP): 1,51,589 Radha Krishna Kishore (JD(U)): 1,06,725 Others: 1,76,496
Unnao Brajesh Pathak(BSP) Margin of victory: 17,761 Total electorate: 13,03,203 Votes polled: 5,47,566 Brajesh Pathak(BSP): 1,78,366 Deepak Kumar(SP): 1,60,605 Ramesh Chandra Singh(BJP): 94,711 Shiv Pal Singh(INC): 83,473 Others: 30,411 1999: Deepak Kumar (SP) won by 37775	Rajmahal (ST) Hemal Murmu(JMM) Margin of victory: 2,974 Total electorate: 10,72,040 Votes polled: 6,91,123 Hemal Murmu (JMM): 2,26,411 Thomas Hanrahan (INC): 2,23,437 Som Marandi (BJP): 1,92,454 Others: 48,821
Ranchi Subodh Kant Sahay(INC) Margin of victory: 15,421 Total electorate: 13,79,179 Votes polled: 6,95,754 Subodh Kant Sahay(INC): 2,84,035 Ram Tahal Choudhary(BJP): 2,68,614 Others: 1,43,105 1999: Ram Tahal Choudhary (BJP) won by 241177	Ranchi Subodh Kant Sahay(INC) Margin of victory: 15,421 Total electorate: 13,79,179 Votes polled: 6,95,754 Subodh Kant Sahay(INC): 2,84,035 Ram Tahal Choudhary(BJP): 2,68,614 Others: 1,43,105 1999: Ram Tahal Choudhary (BJP) won by 241177
Singhbhum Bagun Sumbra(INC) Margin of victory: 59,196 Total electorate: 9,19,728 Votes polled: 5,20,155 Bagun Sumbra (INC): 2,21,943 Laxman Gilwa (BJP): 1,62,147 Sukhram Oraon (AJSU): 72,623 Others: 64,042 1999: Laxman Gilwa (BJP) won by 82311	Ranchi Subodh Kant Sahay(INC) Margin of victory: 15,421 Total electorate: 13,79,179 Votes polled: 6,95,754 Subodh Kant Sahay(INC): 2,84,035 Ram Tahal Choudhary(BJP): 2,68,614 Others: 1,43,105 1999: Ram Tahal Choudhary (BJP) won by 241177



Congress workers celebrate the party's victory with a cutout of their party president, Sonia Gandhi, in Kolkata on Thursday. — Reuters

Jalpaiguri Minati Sen(CPM) Margin of victory: 1,80,605 Total electorate: 11,04,781 Votes polled: 8,90,105 Minati Sen(CPM): 4,24,163 Parash Datta(AITC): 2,43,558 Dipak Krishna Bhowmik(INC): 1,30,255 Others: 92,129 1999: Minati Sen (CPM) won by 108937	Srinagar Omar Abdullah(JKN) Margin of victory: 23,159 Total electorate: 10,53,733 Votes polled: 6,08,074 Ch. Lal Singh(INC): 2,40,972 Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta(BJP): 1,33,697 Khalid Najib Suhawardy(JKN): 69,971 Others: 1,03,534 1999: Prof. Chaman Lal (BJP) won by 118307
Jhargram (ST) Rupchand Murmu(CPM) Margin of victory: 3,51,343 Total electorate: 10,29,496 Votes polled: 7,95,312 Rupchand Murmu (CPM): 5,09,045 Nityananda Hembram (AITC): 1,57,702 Others: 1,28,565 1999: Rupchand Murmu (CPM) won by 108681	Udhampur Ch. Lal Singh(INC) Margin of victory: 47,175 Total electorate: 13,48,721 Votes polled: 6,08,074 Ch. Lal Singh(INC): 2,40,972 Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta(BJP): 1,33,697 Khalid Najib Suhawardy(JKN): 69,971 Others: 1,03,534 1999: Prof. Chaman Lal (BJP) won by 118307
Joynagar (SC) Sanat Kumar Mondal(RSP) Margin of victory: 2,30,521 Total electorate: 11,36,859 Votes polled: 8,06,334 Sanat Kumar Mondal (RSP): 4,50,043 Asit Baran Triakur (BJP): 2,19,522 Tarun Kanti Naskar (IND): 90,798 Others: 45,971 1999: Sanat Kumar Mondal (RSP) won by 112301	Udhampur Ch. Lal Singh(INC) Margin of victory: 47,175 Total electorate: 13,48,721 Votes polled: 6,08,074 Ch. Lal Singh(INC): 2,40,972 Prof. Chaman Lal Gupta(BJP): 1,33,697 Khalid Najib Suhawardy(JKN): 69,971 Others: 1,03,534 1999: Prof. Chaman Lal (BJP) won by 118307
Katwa Mahboob Zahedi(CPM) Margin of victory: 1,43,349 Total electorate: 11,69,525 Votes polled: 9,66,263 Mahboob Zahedi(CPM): 4,94,716 Ahmed Sultani(AITC): 3,51,587 Others: 1,20,180 1999: Mahboob Zahedi (CPM) won by 108362	Bagalkot Gaddigoudar Parvatagouda Chandanagouda(BJP) Margin of victory: 1,67,383 Total electorate: 13,24,829 Votes polled: 8,68,472 Gaddigoudar Parvatagouda Chandanagouda (BJP): 4,59,451 Patil R S(INC): 2,92,068 Others: 1,16,953 1999: Rudragouda Sanganager Patil (INC) won by 76434
Malda A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury(INC) Margin of victory: 1,11,108 Total electorate: 10,88,411 Votes polled: 6,50,600 A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury (INC): 4,12,913 Pranab Das(CPM): 3,01,805 Badsha Alam(BJP): 86,525 Others: 49,357 1999: A. B. A. Ghani Khan Choudhury (INC) won by 24603	Bangalore North Dr Sangliana H T(BJP) Margin of victory: 30,458 Total electorate: 21,33,579 Votes polled: 11,57,236 Dr. Sangliana H T(BJP): 4,73,602 Jaffer Sharief C K(INC): 4,43,144 Ibrahim C M(JD(S)): 2,68,688 Others: 31,902 1999: C. K. Jaffer Sharief (INC) won by 1,75,605
Midnapore Prabodh Panda(CPI) Margin of victory: 1,60,760 Total electorate: 11,52,887 Votes polled: 9,08,499 Prabodh Panda(CPI): 4,80,034 Rahul (Biswaji) Sinha(BJP): 3,19,274 Others: 1,09,191 1999: Indrajit Gupta (CPI) won by 28773	Bangalore South Ananth Kumar(BJP) Margin of victory: 62,271 Total electorate: 16,22,138 Votes polled: 8,00,649 Ananth Kumar(BJP): 3,86,662 Krishna M(IND): 3,24,411 Others: 89,566 1999: Ananth Kumar (BJP) won by 66,054
Panskura Gurudas Dasgupta(CPI) Margin of victory: 2,79,478 Total electorate: 10,61,186 Votes polled: 8,74,554 Gurudas Dasgupta(CPI): 5,41,513 Hemal Choudhury(AITC): 2,23,437 Others: 71,006 1999: Gita Mukherjee (CPI) won by 46858	Belgaum Angadi Suresh Chanabasappa(BJP) Margin of victory: 84,753 Total electorate: 13,54,182 Votes polled: 8,93,902 Angadi Suresh Chanabasappa (BJP): 4,10,843 Anandharan Vasanthrao Patil(IND): 3,20,900 Others: 1,56,989 1999: Amarasinha Vasanthrao Patil (INC) won by 49898
Purulia Bir Singh Mahato(AIFB) Margin of victory: 1,45,718 Total electorate: 9,92,438 Votes polled: 6,96,219 Bir Singh Mahato(AIFB): 3,41,357 Sharifur Mahato(IND): 1,95,339 Niyah Mahato(AITC): 1,05,127 Others: 54,696 1999: Birsingh Mahato (AIFB) won by 174870	Bellary Karunakara Reddy G(BJP) Margin of victory: 31,679 Total electorate: 14,23,161 Votes polled: 9,50,328 Karunakara Reddy G(BJP): 3,16,978 Kondiah K C(IND): 2,87,298 Gulagi Nagaraj B(JD(S)): 2,47,842 Others: 96,209 1999: Sonia Gandhi (INC) won by 56100
Raiganj Priya Ranjan Dasgupta(IND) Margin of victory: 39,147 Total electorate: 11,47,290 Votes polled: 9,17,582 Priya Ranjan Dasgupta(IND): 4,21,904 Minati Ghosh(CPM): 3,82,757 Others: 1,12,921 1999: Priya Ranjan Dasgupta (IND) won by 75255	Bidar Ramchandra Veerappa(BJP) Margin of victory: 23,621 Total electorate: 13,72,385 Votes polled: 9,17,582 Ramchandra Veerappa (BJP): 3,12,838 Narasinga Hulla Suryawanshi (INC): 2,89,217 Motiram Chowdhary (JD(S)): 1,73,291 Others: 40,446 1999: Ramchandra Veerappa (BJP) won by 152033
Vishnupur (SC) Susmita Bauri(CPM) Margin of victory: 3,31,829 Total electorate: 10,52,852 Votes polled: 8,06,624 Susmita Bauri (CPM): 5,18,507 Janardan Saha (AITC): 1,86,678 Others: 1,01,439 1999: Sandhya Bauri (CPM) won by 181570	Bijapur Basanagouda R Patil(Yatnal)(BJP) Margin of victory: 37,533 Total electorate: 13,28,325 Votes polled: 8,06,624 Basanagouda R Patil(Yatnal) (BJP): 3,44,905 Basanagouda Somanagouda Patil (Managali) (INC): 3,07,372 Kheer Ningappa Siddappa(JD(S)): 1,37,457 1999: Basanagouda Patil (BJP) won by 36339

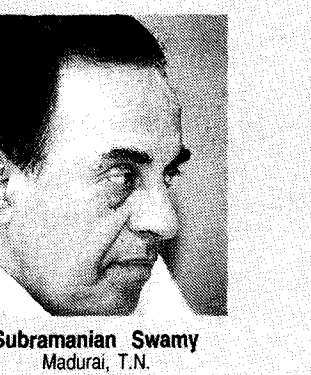
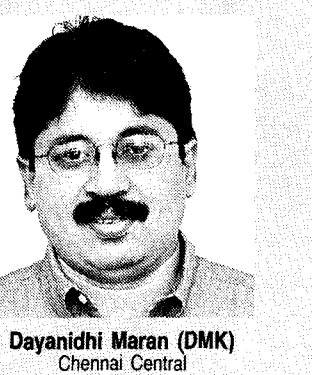
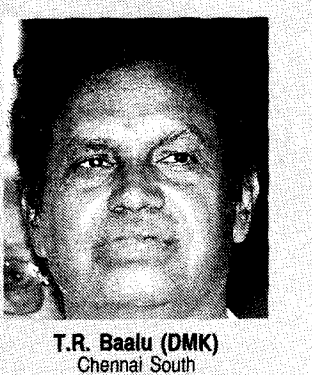
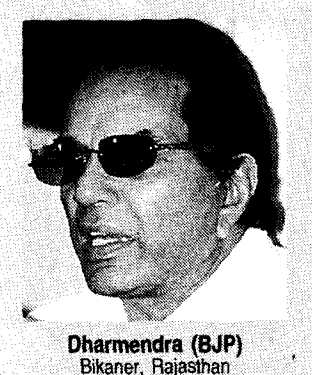
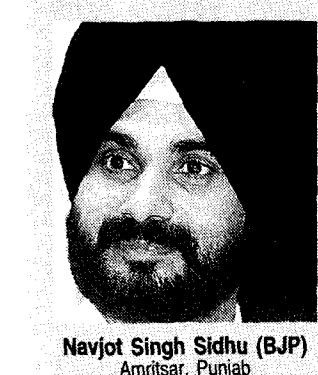
JHARKHAND Chatra Dharendra Agarwal(RJD) Margin of victory: 18,855 Total electorate: 9,78,364 Votes polled: 4,35,504 Dharendra Agarwal(RJD): 1,21,464 Inder Singh Namdhari(JD(U)): 1,02,609 Nagmani(BJP): 99,862 Ramlal Oraon (IND): 51,917 Others: 30,852 1999: Nagmani (RJD) won by 55099	WEST BENGAL Alipurduars (ST) Joachim Baxia(RSP) Margin of victory: 1,45,124 Total electorate: 10,45,038 Votes polled: 8,40,836 Joachim Baxia (RSP): 3,84,252 Manoj Tripathi (BJP): 2,39,128 Rajan Lal Barak (INC): 1,69,489 Others: 47,957 1999: Joachim Baxia (RSP) won by 153133
Dhanbad Chandra Shekhar Dubey(IND) Margin of victory: 1,19,378 Total electorate: 17,49,456 Votes polled: 9,41,478 Chandra Shekhar Dubey(IND): 3,55,499 Rita Verma(BJP): 2,36,121 A. K. Roy(MCO): 1,47,470 Samresh Singh(IND): 1,06,234 Others: 96,154 1999: Rita Verma (BJP) won by 14226	Arambagh Anil Basu(CPM) Margin of victory: 5,92,502 Total electorate: 11,87,647 Votes polled: 9,54,940 Anil Basu(CPM): 7,44,454 Swapnan Kumar Nandi(BJP): 1,51,962 Shibu Soren (JMM): 3,39,542 Sone Lal Hembram (BJP): 2,24,527 Others: 61,049 1999: Babu Lal Marandi (BJP) won by 4648
Dumka (ST) Shibu Soren(JMM) Margin of victory: 1,15,015 Total electorate: 10,83,200 Votes polled: 6,25,118 Shibu Soren (JMM): 3,39,542 Sone Lal Hembram (BJP): 2,24,527 Others: 61,049 1999: Babu Lal Marandi (BJP) won by 4648	Asansol Bikash Chowdhury(CPM) Margin of victory: 1,24,318 Total electorate: 10,92,132 Votes polled: 7,25,198 Bikash Chowdhury(CPM): 3,69,832 Ghatak Moloy(AITC): 2,45,514 Others: 1,09,852

Bolpur Chatterjee Somnath(CPM) Margin of victory: 3,10,307 Total electorate: 10,35,012 Votes polled: 7,70,061 Chatterjee Somnath(CPM): 5,04,838 Dr. Nirmal Maji (AITC): 1,94,531 Others: 70,692 1999: Somnath Chatterjee (CPM) won by 186388	Calcutta South Mamata Banerjee(AITC) Margin of victory: 98,429 Total electorate: 10,96,709 Votes polled: 7,72,742 Mamata Banerjee(AITC): 3,93,561 Rabn Dab(CPM): 2,95,132 Others: 84,049 1999: Mamata Banerjee (ITC) won by 214008	Dum Dum Amitava Nandy(CPM) Margin of victory: 98,484 Total electorate: 15,43,705 Votes polled: 12,47,804 Amitava Nandy(CPM): 6,19,184 Tapan Sikdar(BJP): 5,20,700 Others: 1,07,920 1999: Tapan Sikdar (BJP) won by 134561
Balurghat (SC) Ranen Barman(RSP) Margin of victory: 71,146 Total electorate: 11,29,369 Votes polled: 9,25,631 Ranen Barman (RSP): 4,15,298 Manomohan Roy (BJP): 3,44,152 Dipi Barman (INC): 1,19,104 Others: 47,077 1999: Barman Ranen (RSP) won by 62321	Burdwan Nikhilananda Sar(CPM) Margin of victory: 4,71,351 Total electorate: 12,21,820 Votes polled: 9,52,571 Nikhilananda Sar(CPM): 4,90,382 Gindera Nath Barman (AITC): 2,64,413 Salim Barma (INC): 1,16,715 Others: 80,461 1999: Sar Nikhilananda (CPM) won by 301683	Durgapur (SC) Sunil Khan(CPM) Margin of victory: 2,77,508 Total electorate: 11,50,939 Votes polled: 8,47,616 Sunil Khan (CPM): 5,05,250 Shih Narayan Saha (BJP): 2,27,742 Others: 1,14,624 1999: Sunil Khan (CPM) won by 117963
Bankura Acharia Basudeb(CPM) Margin of victory: 2,30,329 Total electorate: 10,20,046 Votes polled: 6,95,487 Acharia Basudeb(CPM): 4,17,796 Deb Prasad Kundu (Tara)(AITC): 1,87,469 Others: 90,220 1999: Acharia Basudeb (CPM) won by 106998	Cooch Behar (SC) Hiten Barman(AIFB) Margin of victory: 2,26,569 Total electorate: 11,48,936 Votes polled: 9,52,571 Hiten Barman (AIFB): 4,90,382 Gindera Nath Barman (AITC): 2,64,413 Salim Barma (INC): 1,16,715 Others: 80,461 1999: Amar Roy Pradhan (AIFB) won by 108165	Hooghly Rupchand Paul(CPM) Margin of victory: 1,65,632 Total electorate: 11,61,683 Votes polled: 9,20,141 Rupchand Paul(CPM): 4,94,245 Indrani Mukherjee(AITC): 3,28,613 Others: 97,283 1999: Rupchand Paul (CPM) won by 12485
Birbhum (SC) Ram Chandra Dome(CPM) Margin of victory: 1,91,612 Total electorate: 10,29,870 Votes polled: 7,23,661 Ram Chandra Dome (CPM): 3,72,294 Gopal Chandra Das (INC): 1,80,682 Ajun Saha (BJP): 1,39,796 Others: 30,889 1999: Ram Chandra Dome (CPM) won by 157156	Darjeeling Dawa Narbuia(IND) Margin of victory: 1,01,416 Total electorate: 12,49,238 Votes polled: 8,88,083 Dawa Narbuia (IND): 3,96,973 Dawa Narbuia(CPM): 2,95,572 Dr. G. S. Yonzene (BJP): 1,13,972 Others: 81,581 1999: S.P. Lapcha (CPM) won by 111969	Howrah Swadesh Chakraborty(CPM) Margin of victory: 2,46,937 Total electorate: 12,40,427 Votes polled: 9,11,632 Swadesh Chakraborty(CPM): 4,89,444 Dr. Bakram Sarkar (AITC): 2,42,507 Sultan Singh(IND): 1,52,100 Others: 27,581
Calcutta North West Sudhangshu Seal(CPM) Margin of victory: 43,004 Total electorate: 6,09,204 Votes polled: 3,60,117 Sudhangshu Seal(CPM): 1,51,772 Subrata Mukherjee(AITC): 1,08,769 Bandyopadhyay Sudip(IND): 81,952 Others: 17,625 1999: Sudip Bandyopadhyay (ITC) won by 84170	Calcutta North West Sudhangshu Seal(CPM) Margin of victory: 43,004 Total electorate: 6,09,204 Votes polled: 3,60,117 Sudhangshu Seal(CPM): 1,51,772 Subrata Mukherjee(AITC): 1,08,769 Bandyopadhyay Sudip(IND): 81,952 Others: 17,625 1999: Sudip Bandyopadhyay (ITC) won by 84170	Ladakh Thupstan Chhewang(IND) Margin of victory: 25,589 Total electorate: 1,75,768 Votes polled: 1,28,794

JAMMU & KASHMIR Jammu Madan Lal Sharma(IND) Margin of victory: 17,568 Total electorate: 18,51,838 Votes polled: 8,21,670 Madan Lal Sharma(IND): 3,19,994 Dr. Nirmal Singh(BJP): 3,02,426 Surjit Singh Siathia(JKN): 1,20,397 Others: 78,853 1999: Vishno Datt Sharma (BJP) won by 142019	Chikballapur Jalappa R L(IND) Margin of victory: 60,022 Total electorate: 13,14,311 Votes polled: 9,31,128 Jalappa R L(IND): 3,76,204 Shashi Kumar (JD(S)): 3,16,162 Ashok Krishnappa(JDU): 1,91,766 Others: 46,976 1999: R. L. Jalappa (INC) won by 211198
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WINNERS

LOSERS



Navjot Singh Sidhu (BJP)
Amritsar, Punjab

Dharmendra (BJP)
Bikaner, Rajasthan

T.R. Baalu (DMK)
Chennai South

Dayanidhi Maran (DMK)
Chennai Central

Subramanian Swamy
Madurai, T.N.

T.T.V. Dinakaran (AIADMK)
Penyakulam, T.N.

Vijay Goel (BJP)
Delhi Sadar

Nafisa Ali (Cong.)
Kolkata South

Lok Sabha Verdict 2004

<p>Kishanganj</p> <p>Taslimuddin(RJD) Margin of victory: 1,60,497</p> <p>Total electorate 12,78,476 Votes polled 8,13,315 Taslimuddin(RJD) 4,20,331 Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain(BJP) 2,58,834 Others 1,33,150 1999: Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain (BJP) won by 6545</p>	<p>Karol Bagh (SC)</p> <p>Krishna Tirath(INC) Margin of victory: 37,629</p> <p>Total electorate 5,08,534 Votes polled 2,49,185 Krishna Tirath (INC) 1,38,596 Anita Arya (BJP) 1,00,967 Others 9,622 1999: Anita Arya (BJP) won by 12445</p>
<p>Madhepura</p> <p>Lalu Prasad(RJD) Margin of victory: 69,987</p> <p>Total electorate 11,87,490 Votes polled 6,98,864 Lalu Prasad(RJD) 3,44,301 Sharad Yadav(JD(U)) 2,74,314 Others 80,269 1999: Sharad Yadav (JD-U) won by 30319</p>	<p>New Delhi</p> <p>Ajay Maken(INC) Margin of victory: 12,784</p> <p>Total electorate 4,64,391 Votes polled 2,02,557 Ajay Maken(INC) 1,05,415 Jagmohan(BJP) 92,691 Others 4,511 1999: Jag Mohan (BJP) won by 27893</p>
<p>Motihari</p> <p>Akhilesh Prasad Singh(RJD) Margin of victory: 97,024</p> <p>Total electorate 12,21,716 Votes polled 6,79,090 Akhilesh Prasad Singh(RJD) 3,48,596 Radha Mohan Singh(BJP) 2,51,572 Others 78,922 1999: Radha Mohan Singh (BJP) won by 21670</p>	<p>Outer Delhi</p> <p>Sajjan Kumar(INC) Margin of victory: 2,23,790</p> <p>Total electorate 33,68,399 Votes polled 15,53,153 Sajjan Kumar(INC) 8,55,543 Sahib Singh(BJP) 6,31,753 Others 66,553 1999: Sahib Singh Verma (BJP) won by 202472</p>
<p>Muzaffarpur</p> <p>George Fernandes(JD(U)) Margin of victory: 9,693</p> <p>Total electorate 12,37,345 Votes polled 7,04,096 George Fernandes(JD(U)) 3,70,127 Bhagwan Lal Sahani(RJD) 3,61,454 Others 53,535 1999: Captain Jai Narain Prasad Nis(JD-U) won by 60720</p>	<p>South Delhi</p> <p>Vijay Kumar Malhotra(BJP) Margin of victory: 16,005</p> <p>Total electorate 0 Votes polled 4,78,876 Vijay Kumar Malhotra(BJP) 2,40,654 K. Anand(INC) 2,38,649 Others 13,573 1999: Vijay Kumar Malhotra (BJP) won by 29919</p>
<p>Nalanda</p> <p>Nitish Kumar(JD(U)) Margin of victory: 1,02,396</p> <p>Total electorate 13,11,901 Votes polled 8,95,116 Nitish Kumar(JD(U)) 4,71,310 Dr. Kumar Pushpanjay(LJNSP) 3,68,914 Others 54,892 1999: George Fernandes (JD-U) won by 105621</p>	<p>UTTAR PRADESH</p> <p>Agra</p> <p>Raj Babbar(SP) Margin of victory: 57,342</p> <p>Total electorate 14,30,713 Votes polled 6,42,719 Raj Babbar(SP) 2,43,094 Muran Lal Mittal Fatehpuria (BJP) 1,85,752 Pandit Keshav Prasad Dixit (BSP) 1,74,149 Others 39,724 1999: Raj Babbar (SP) won by 112982</p>
<p>Nawada</p> <p>Virchandra Paswan(RJD) Margin of victory: 56,006</p> <p>Total electorate 15,05,544 Votes polled 10,10,037 Virchandra Paswan (RJD) 4,89,992 Sanjay Paswan (BJP) 4,33,986 Others 86,059 1999: Sanjay Paswan (BJP) won by 84085</p>	<p>Amroha</p> <p>Harish Nagpal(IND) Margin of victory: 17,885</p> <p>Total electorate 13,42,541 Votes polled 8,85,153 Harish Nagpal(IND) 2,87,523 Mahmood Madni(RLD) 2,69,638 Aley Hasan(BSP) 1,68,698 Chetan Chauhan(BJP) 1,30,522 Others 28,782 1999: Rashid Alvi (BSP) won by 93225</p>
<p>Purnea</p> <p>Uday Singh(BJP) Margin of victory: 12,883</p> <p>Total electorate 11,79,491 Votes polled 7,09,015 Uday Singh(BJP) 2,44,426 Rajesh Ranjan Alias Pappu Yadav (LJNSP) 2,31,543 Others 2,93,046 1999: Rajesh Ranjan (IND) won by 2,52,568</p>	<p>Aonla</p> <p>Kunwar Sarvaraj Singh(JD(U)) Margin of victory: 6,871</p> <p>Total electorate 11,45,676 Votes polled 5,36,458 Kunwar Sarvaraj Singh(JD(U)) 1,53,322 Rajesh Singh(SP) 1,46,451 Sudhir Kumar Maurya(BSP) 1,42,198 Others 94,487 1999: Kunwar Sarvaraj Singh (SP) won by 17626</p>
<p>Saharsa</p> <p>Ranjeet Ranjan(LJNSP) Margin of victory: 30,787</p> <p>Total electorate 12,96,799 Votes polled 7,38,280 Ranjeet Ranjan(LJNSP) 3,50,426 Dinesh Chandra Yadav(JD(U)) 3,19,639 Others 68,215 1999: Dinesh Chandra Yadav (JD-U) won by 94932</p>	<p>Azamgarh</p> <p>Ramakant Yadav(BSP) Margin of victory: 6,968</p> <p>Total electorate 14,25,023 Votes polled 7,11,430 Ramakant Yadav(BSP) 2,58,216 Durga Prasad Yadav(SP) 2,51,248 Ram Naresh Yadav(INC) 37,185 Others 1,04,781 1999: Rama Kant Yadav (SP) won by 26979</p>
<p>Sasaram</p> <p>Mira Kumar(INC) Margin of victory: 2,58,262</p> <p>Total electorate 12,91,800 Votes polled 6,97,268 Mira Kumar (INC) 4,16,673 Muni Lal (BJP) 1,58,411 Madan Ram (BSP) 96,580 Others 25,604 1999: Muni Lal (BJP) won by 18676</p>	<p>Bagspat</p> <p>Ajit Singh(RLD) Margin of victory: 2,20,638</p> <p>Total electorate 15,70,374 Votes polled 6,56,920 Ajit Singh(RLD) 3,53,181 Aulad Ali(BSP) 1,32,543 Satyapal Singh Malik(BJP) 1,02,317 Others 68,859 1999: Ajit Singh (RLD) won by 154572</p>
<p>DELHI</p> <p>Chandni Chowk</p> <p>Kapil Sibal(INC) Margin of victory: 79,417</p> <p>Total electorate 3,46,393 Votes polled 1,79,003 Kapil Sibal(INC) 1,27,395 Smriti Z. Irani(BJP) 47,978 Others 3,630 1999: Vijay Goel (BJP) won by 1995</p>	<p>Bara Banki</p> <p>Kamala Prasad(BSP) Margin of victory: 20,922</p> <p>Total electorate 12,14,993 Votes polled 5,40,251 Kamala Prasad (BSP) 1,96,370 Ram Sagar (SP) 1,75,448 Ram Naresh Rawat (BJP) 1,15,994 Others 52,439 1999: Ram Sagar (SP) won by 55291</p>
<p>Balrampur</p> <p>Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh(BJP) Margin of victory: 52,613</p> <p>Total electorate 13,16,006 Votes polled 6,98,106 Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh (BJP) 2,70,941 Rizwan Zaheer Alias Rijju Bhaya (BSP) 2,18,328 Dr. Mohd Umar(SP) 1,85,080 Others 43,747 1999: Rizwan Zaheer alias Rijju Bhaya (SP) won by 20158</p>	<p>Bareilly</p> <p>Santosh Gangwar(BJP) Margin of victory: 59,644</p> <p>Total electorate 15,56,024 Votes polled 8,22,848 Santosh Gangwar(BJP) 2,69,651 Akbar Ahmed Dempo(BSP) 2,10,007 Praveen Singh Aron(INC) 1,91,342 Islam Sabir(SP) 1,20,474 Deendra Bhardwa(BSP) 1,19,104 Others 66,240 1999: Santosh Gangwar (BJP) won by 134700</p>
<p>Delhi Sadar</p> <p>Jagdish Tytler(INC) Margin of victory: 15,974</p> <p>Total electorate 4,96,311 Votes polled 2,71,544 Jagdish Tytler(INC) 1,40,733 Vijay Goel(BJP) 1,24,099 Others 7,372 1999: Madan Lal Khurana (BJP) won by 13852</p>	<p>Bijnor</p> <p>Munshiram(RLD) Margin of victory: 80,175</p> <p>Total electorate 13,55,437 Votes polled 7,05,737 Munshiram (RLD) 3,01,599 Ghan Shyam Chandr Khanwar (BSP) 2,21,424 Sheesh Ram Singh Ravi (BJP) 1,01,340</p>
<p>East Delhi</p> <p>Sandeep Dikshit(INC) Margin of victory: 2,29,779</p> <p>Total electorate 25,94,890 Votes polled 11,90,814 Sandeep Dikshit(INC) 6,69,527 Lal Bihari Tiwari(BJP) 4,39,749 Others 81,539 1999: Lal Bihari Tiwari (BJP) won by 62,780</p>	<p>Chail</p> <p>Shalendra Kumar(SP) Margin of victory: 630</p> <p>Total electorate 14,84,115 Votes polled 5,55,376 Shalendra Kumar (SP) 1,96,206 Vashtagni (BSP) 1,95,576 Dr. Anril Lal Bhari (BJP) 1,00,181</p>

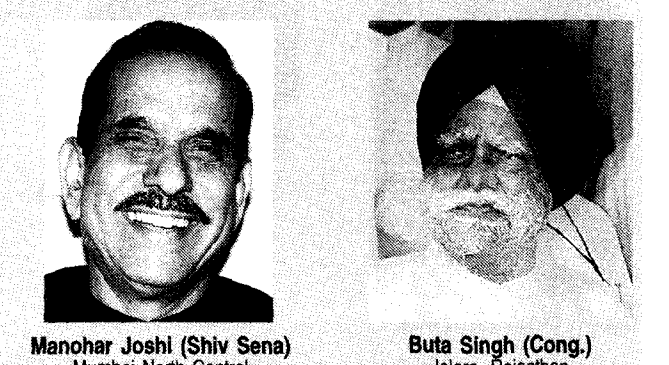
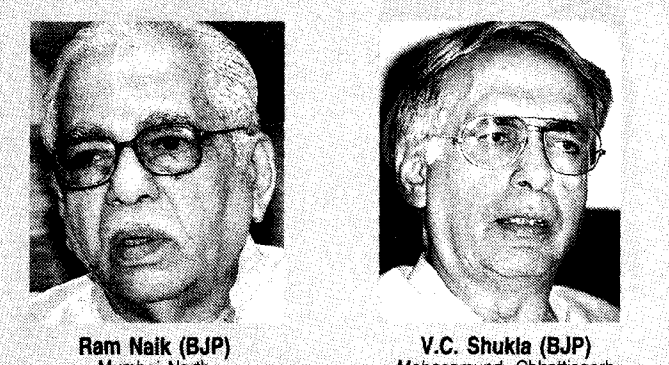
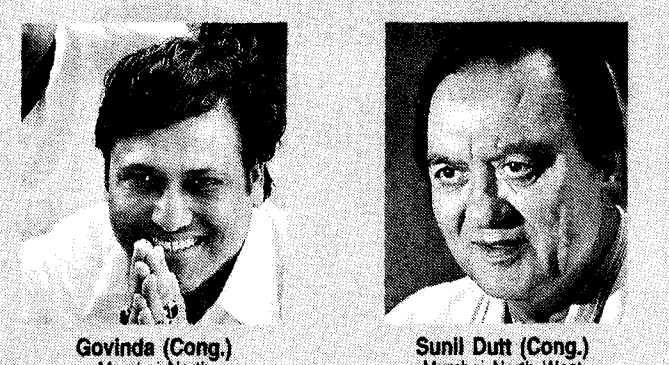
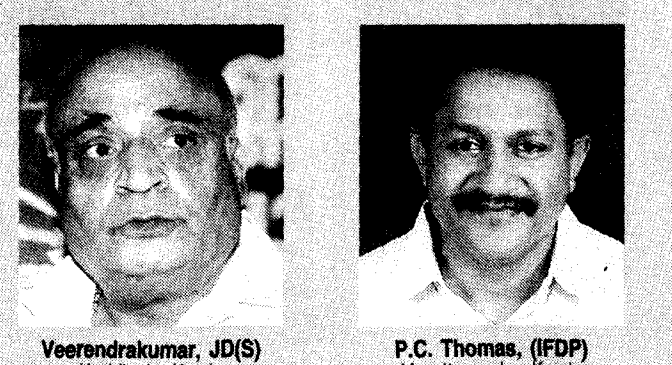


Congressmen in Chandigarh distributing sweets as they celebrate the victory of their party leader. — Reuters

<p>Bansgaon</p> <p>Mahaveer Prasad(INC) Margin of victory: 16,441</p> <p>Total electorate 14,41,224 Votes polled 6,32,109 Mahaveer Prasad (INC) 1,80,388 Sadai Prasad (BSP) 1,63,947 Sahawati Paswan (SP) 1,35,501 Raj Narayan (BJP) 1,26,897 Shyam Bhari Mishra(BJP) 1,59,681 Others 59,728 1999: Raj Narayan Pasi (BJP) won by 9688</p>	<p>Bilhaur</p> <p>Raja Ram Pal(BSP) Margin of victory: 24,402</p> <p>Total electorate 13,69,589 Votes polled 6,41,397 Raja Ram Pal(BSP) 1,35,501 Lal Singh Tomar(SP) 1,98,793 Shyam Bhari Mishra(BJP) 1,59,681 Others 59,728 1999: Raja Narayan Pasi (BJP) won by 9688</p>	<p>Budaun</p> <p>Saleem Iqbal Sherwani(SP) Margin of victory: 51,322</p> <p>Total electorate 12,00,435 Votes polled 5,90,009 Kamala Prasad (BSP) 1,96,370 Ram Sagar (SP) 1,75,448 Ram Naresh Rawat (BJP) 1,15,994 Others 52,439 1999: Ram Sagar (SP) won by 55291</p>	<p>Bulandshahr</p> <p>Kalyan Singh(BJP) Margin of victory: 16,651</p> <p>Total electorate 12,26,141 Votes polled 6,85,261 Kalyan Singh(BJP) 2,58,284 Badrul Islam(RLD) 2,41,633 Deendra Bhardwa(BSP) 1,19,104 Others 66,240 1999: Chhatra Pal (BJP) won by 61929</p>	<p>Etawah</p> <p>Raghuraj Singh Shukya(SP) Margin of victory: 1,90,151</p> <p>Total electorate 12,64,560 Votes polled 7,03,958 Raghuraj Singh Shukya(SP) 3,67,810 Sarla Bhaduria(BJP) 1,77,659 Sudheendra Bhardwaj(BSP) 1,30,043 Others 28,446 1999: Raghuraj Singh Shukya (SP) won by 83683</p>	<p>Farrukhabad</p> <p>Chandra Bhushan Singh Munoo Babu(SP) Margin of victory: 2,745</p> <p>Total electorate 13,66,501 Votes polled 6,65,435 Chandra Bhushan Singh Munoo Babu (SP) 1,76,129</p>
<p>Bansgaon</p> <p>Others 81,374 1999: Sheeshram Singh Ravi (BJP) won by 23700</p>	<p>Domargaganj</p> <p>Mohd. Mueqem(BSP) Margin of victory: 52,902</p> <p>Total electorate 13,50,045 Votes polled 6,43,129 Mohd. Mueqem(BSP) 2,02,544 Jagsankha Pali(INC) 1,49,942 Brij Bhushan Tiwari(SP) 1,33,439 Ram Pal Singh(BJP) 1,15,104 Others 42,400 1999: Ram Pal Singh (BJP) won by 35567</p>	<p>Etah</p> <p>Ku. Devendra Singh Yadav(SP) Margin of victory: 51,335</p> <p>Total electorate 11,28,519 Votes polled 5,87,118 Ku. Devendra Singh Yadav(SP) 2,76,156 Ashok Ratan Shukya(BJP) 2,24,821 Others 86,141 1999: Kunwar Devendra Singh Yadav (SP) won by 52524</p>	<p>Etawah</p> <p>Raghuraj Singh Shukya(SP) Margin of victory: 1,90,151</p> <p>Total electorate 12,64,560 Votes polled 7,03,958 Raghuraj Singh Shukya(SP) 3,67,810 Sarla Bhaduria(BJP) 1,77,659 Sudheendra Bhardwaj(BSP) 1,30,043 Others 28,446 1999: Raghuraj Singh Shukya (SP) won by 83683</p>	<p>Fatehpur</p> <p>Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) Margin of victory: 52,568</p> <p>Total electorate 12,79,387 Votes polled 5,06,699 Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) 1,63,568 Achal Singh(SP) 1,11,000 Ashok Patel(BJP) 1,01,484 Khan Gulran Jahidi(INC) 92,741 Others 37,906 1999: Ashok Kumar Patel (BJP) won by 1063</p>	
<p>Bansgaon</p> <p>Others 81,374 1999: Sheeshram Singh Ravi (BJP) won by 23700</p>	<p>Firozabad</p> <p>Ram Ji Lal Suman(SP) Margin of victory: 54,788</p> <p>Total electorate 13,04,274 Votes polled 5,31,363 Ram Ji Lal Suman (SP) 2,12,383 Kishori Lal Mahaur (BJP) 1,57,595 Biresh Kumar Alias Dadua (BSP) 69,564 Prabhudayal Katherna (RSM) 54,332 Others 37,499 1999: Ram Ji Lal Suman (SP) won by 83368</p>	<p>Fatehpur</p> <p>Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) Margin of victory: 52,568</p> <p>Total electorate 12,79,387 Votes polled 5,06,699 Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) 1,63,568 Achal Singh(SP) 1,11,000 Ashok Patel(BJP) 1,01,484 Khan Gulran Jahidi(INC) 92,741 Others 37,906 1999: Ashok Kumar Patel (BJP) won by 1063</p>	<p>Fatehpur</p> <p>Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) Margin of victory: 52,568</p> <p>Total electorate 12,79,387 Votes polled 5,06,699 Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) 1,63,568 Achal Singh(SP) 1,11,000 Ashok Patel(BJP) 1,01,484 Khan Gulran Jahidi(INC) 92,741 Others 37,906 1999: Ashok Kumar Patel (BJP) won by 1063</p>	<p>Fatehpur</p> <p>Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) Margin of victory: 52,568</p> <p>Total electorate 12,79,387 Votes polled 5,06,699 Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) 1,63,568 Achal Singh(SP) 1,11,000 Ashok Patel(BJP) 1,01,484 Khan Gulran Jahidi(INC) 92,741 Others 37,906 1999: Ashok Kumar Patel (BJP) won by 1063</p>	<p>Fatehpur</p> <p>Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) Margin of victory: 52,568</p> <p>Total electorate 12,79,387 Votes polled 5,06,699 Mahendra Prasad Nishad(BSP) 1,63,568 Achal Singh(SP) 1,11,000 Ashok Patel(BJP) 1,01,484 Khan Gulran Jahidi(INC) 92,741 Others 37,906 1999: Ashok Kumar Patel (BJP) won by 1063</p>

<p>Votes polled 8,69,184 Atalaj Ansari(SP) 415,687 Mono(BJP) 1,88,910 Uma Shankar(BSP) 1,85,120 Others 79,467 1999: Manoj (BJP) won by 11033</p>	<p>Others 73,425 1999: Ravi Prakash Verma (SP) won by 4515</p>
<p>Gonda</p> <p>Kirti Vardhan Singh Alias Raja Bhaiya(SP) Margin of victory: 36,998</p> <p>Total electorate 13,91,430 Votes polled 6,06,654 Kirti Vardhan Singh Alias Raja Bhaiya (SP) 2,51,947 Ghan Shyam Shukla(BJP) 2,14,949 Fazilul Bari Alias Banne Bhai (BSP) 69,543 Others 70,215 1999: Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh (BJP) won by 59174</p>	<p>Khurja</p> <p>Ashok Kumar Pradhan(BJP) Margin of victory: 41,150</p> <p>Total electorate 14,37,828 Votes polled 6,00,704 Ashok Kumar Pradhan (BJP) 2,14,701 Ravi Gautam (BSP) 1,73,551 Devi Dayal (INC) 1,09,114 Ram Niwas Balmiki (RLD) 86,374 Others 16,964 1999: Ashok Kumar Pradhan (BJP) won by 110298</p>
<p>Gorakhpur</p> <p>Aditya Nath(BJP) Margin of victory: 1,42,039</p> <p>Total electorate 14,32,002 Votes polled 6,99,249 Aditya Nath(BJP) 3,53,647 Jamuna Prasad(SP) 2,11,608 Pradeep Kumar Nishad(BSP) 70,449 Others 53,544 1999: Aditya Nath (BJP) won by 7339</p>	<p>Mainpuri</p> <p>Mulayam Singh Yadav(SP) Margin of victory: 3,37,870</p> <p>Total electorate 12,11,002 Votes polled 7,19,918 Mulayam Singh Yadav(SP) 4,60,470 Ashok Shukya(BSP) 1,22,600 Balram Singh Yadav(BJP) 1,11,153 Others 25,695 1999: Balram Singh Yadav (SP) won by 28026</p>
<p>Hamirpur</p> <p>Rajnarayan Alias Rajju Mahraj(SP) Margin of victory: 37,154</p> <p>Total electorate 11,85,235 Votes polled 6,04,099 Rajnarayan Alias Rajju Mahraj (SP) 2,20,917 Ashok Kumar Singh Chandel (BSP) 1,83,763 Gangacharan Rajput(INC) 1,11,673 Others 87,746 1999: Suresh Chandel (BJP) won by 128247</p>	<p>Mathera</p> <p>Manvendra Singh(IND) Margin of victory: 38,132</p> <p>Total electorate 12,77,346 Votes polled 6,02,187 Manvendra Singh(IND) 1,87,400 Choudhary Laxminarayn(BSP) 1,49,268 Dr. Gyankari Singh(IND) 1,44,366 Choudhary Teveer Singh(BJP) 1,03,007 Others 18,146 1999: Choudhary Tejvir Singh (BJP) won by 41727</p>
<p>Hapur</p> <p>Surendra Prakash Goyal(INC) Margin of victory: 42,363</p> <p>Total electorate 18,06,644 Votes polled 7,99,736 Surendra Prakash Goyal(INC) 2,35,114 Ramesh Chand Tomar(BJP) 1,92,751 Kunwar Ayub Ali(BSP) 1,80,688 Trilok Tyagi(RLD) 1,70,710 Others 21,093 1999: Ramesh Chand Tomar (BJP) won by 11958</p>	<p>Meerut</p> <p>Mohd. Shahid(BSP) Margin of victory: 69,336</p> <p>Total electorate 13,29,974 Votes polled 6,97,484 Mohd. Shahid(BSP) 2,52,518 Makook Nagar(RLD) 1,83,682 K. C. Tyagi(JD(U)) 1,67,221 Others 94,563 1999: Avtar Singh Bhadana (INC) won by 24836</p>
<p>Hardoi</p> <p>Usha Verma(SP) Margin of victory: 39,203</p> <p>Total electorate 12,13,260 Votes polled 5,22,103 Usha Verma (SP) 2,03,445 Shiv Prasad Verma (BSP) 1,64,242 Anita Verma (BJP) 1,16,473 Others 37,943 1999: Jai Prakash (ABLT) won by 5404</p>	<p>Mirzapur</p> <p>Narendra Kumar Kushwaha(BSP) Margin of victory: 36,412</p> <p>Total electorate 16,30,287 Votes polled 7,28,015 Narendra Kumar Kushwaha(BSP) 2,01,942 Veerendra Singh(BJP) 1,66,530 Sharda Prasad(SP) 1,58,011 Rajesh Pati Tripathi(INC) 1,40,735 Others 61,797 1999: Phoolan Devi (SP) won by 84476</p>
<p>Jalaun</p> <p>Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma(BJP) Margin of victory: 26,791</p> <p>Total electorate 13,10,159 Votes polled 5,79,717 Bhanu Pratap Singh Verma (BJP) 1,95,228 Ghanshyam Kon (SP) 1,68,437 Brij Lal Khatri (BSP) 1,57,559 Others 58,553 1999: Brij Lal Khatri (BSP) won by 13352</p>	<p>Moradabad</p> <p>Dr. Shafiqurrahman Barq(SP) Margin of victory: 35,840</p> <p>Total electorate 13,53,266 Votes polled 6,55,175 Dr. Shafiqurrahman Barq(SP) 2,18,079 Chandra Vijay Singh Urf Baby Raja (BJP) 1,82,239 Itakar Mohanmad(BSP) 1,50,616 Others 1,04,241 1999: Chandra Vijay Singh Alias Baby Raja (ABLT) won by 36450</p>
<p>Jalesar</p> <p>Pro. S.P. Singh Baghel(SP) Margin of victory: 1,06,068</p> <p>Total electorate 12,40,923 Votes polled 6,50,356 Pro. S.P. Singh Baghel(SP) 2,87,091 Pratyendra Pal Singh (Pappu Bhaiya (BJP) 1,81,023 Updesh Singh Chauhan(BSP) 1,49,654 Others 32,588 1999: Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel (SP) won by 8062</p>	<p>Padrauna</p> <p>Baleswar Yadav(NLP) Margin of victory: 8,422</p> <p>Total electorate 15,01,706 Votes polled 7,90,050 Baleswar Yadav(NLP) 2,06,850 Kunwar Ratanjeet Pratap Narayan Singh (INC) 1,98,428 N.P. Kushwaha(BSP) 1,68,889 Ram Nagina Mishra(BJP) 1,15,975 Others 99,928 1999: Ram Nagina Mishra (BJP) won by 26738</p>
<p>Kaiserganj</p> <p>Beni Prasad Verma(SP) Margin of victory: 12,650</p> <p>Total electorate 12,72,807 Votes polled 5,69,950 Beni Prasad Verma(SP) 2,19,920 Anil Mohammad Khan(BJP) 2,07,290 Fard Mahfooz Kir(BSP) 1,12,027 Others 30,743 1999: Beni Prasad Verma (SP) won by 51559</p>	<p>Pilibhit</p> <p>Maneka Gandhi(BJP) Margin of victory: 1,02,720</p> <p>Total electorate 12,85,919 Votes polled 6,77,107 Maneka Gandhi(BJP) 2,55,615 Satyapal Gangwar(SP) 1,52,895 Anis Ahmad Khan Alias Phool Babu (BSP) 1,21,269 V.M. Singh(INC) 1,06,186 Others 41,142 1999: Maneka Gandhi (IND) won by 239855</p>
<p>Kannauj</p> <p>Akhilesh Yadav(SP) Margin of victory: 3,07,373</p> <p>Total electorate 13,46,673 Votes polled 7,58,627 Akhilesh Yadav(SP) 4,64,367 Th. Rajesh Singh(BSP) 1,56,994 Ramanand Yadav(BJP) 1,12,349 Others 24,917 1999: Mulayam Singh Yadav (SP) won by 79139</p>	<p>Pratapgarh</p> <p>Akshay Pratap Singh 'gopal Ji'(SP) Margin of victory: 69,272</p> <p>Total electorate 13,32,216 Votes polled 5,72,548 Akshay Pratap Singh 'gopal Ji' (SP) 2,38,137 Rajkumar Ratna Singh(INC) 1,68,865 Shiv Prakash Mishra'senanar' (BSP) 82,876 Others 82,670 1999: Rajkumar Ratna Singh (INC) won by 6012</p>
<p>Kanpur</p> <p>Shri Prakash Jaiswal(INC) Margin of victory: 5,638</p> <p>Total electorate 14,27,231 Votes polled 6,18,721 Shri Prakash Jaiswal(INC) 2,11,109 Satya Dev Pachauri(BJP) 2,05,471 Haji Mushtaq Solanki(SP) 1,59,361 Others 42,780 1999: Shri Prakash Jaiswal (INC) won by 34459</p>	<p>Rae Bareli</p> <p>Sonia Gandhi(INC) Margin of victory: 2,49,765</p> <p>Total electorate 13,29,189 Votes polled 6,43,560 Sonia Gandhi(INC) 3,78,107 Ashok Kumar Singh(SP) 1,37,111 Others 1,37,111 1999: Captain Satish Sharma (INC) won by 73549</p>

WINNERS



Lok Sabha Verdict 2004

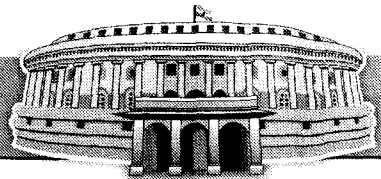


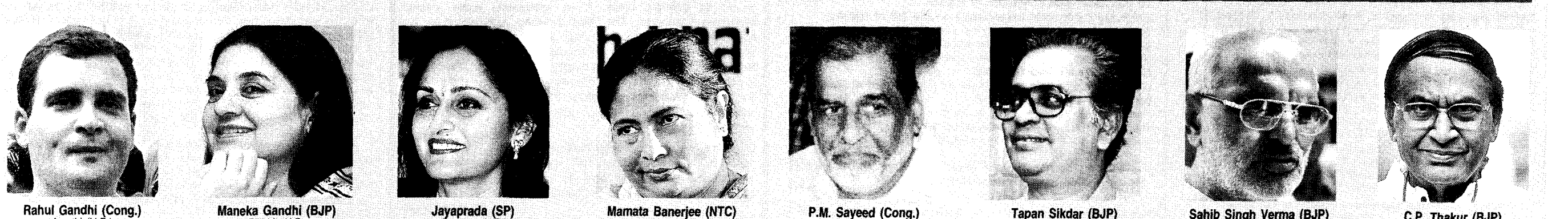
Table of Lok Sabha election results for various constituencies including Chikkodi (SC), Raichur, Chikmagalur, Shimoga, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Davangere, Udupi, Dharwad North, Dharwad South, Gulbarga, Hassan, Kanakapura, Kanara, Kolar (SC), Mandya, Mangalore, Chikmagalur, Shimoga, Chitradurga, Tumkur, Davangere, Udupi, Dharwad North, Dharwad South, Gulbarga, Hassan, Kanakapura, Kanara, Kolar (SC), Mandya, Mangalore.



Congress supporters celebrate the party's victory outside the AICC headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. — Photo: Shanker Chakravarty.

Main table of Lok Sabha election results for various constituencies including Phillaur (SC), Bhopal, Ropar (SC), Chhindwara, Dhar (ST), Gwalior, Mandla (ST), Mandsaour, Morena (SC), Rajgarh, Rewa, Chandramani Tripathi (BJP), Vidisha, Sagar (SC), Satna, Seoni, Shahdol (ST), Sidhi (ST), Ujjain (SC), Chandigarh, Daman And Diu, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Lakshadweep, Union Territories, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Pondicherry.

WINNERS



WINNERS: Rahul Gandhi (Cong.), Maneka Gandhi (BJP), Jayaprada (SP), Mamata Banerjee (NTC), P.M. Sayeed (Cong.), Tapan Sikdar (BJP), Sahib Singh Verma (BJP), C.P. Thakur (BJP).

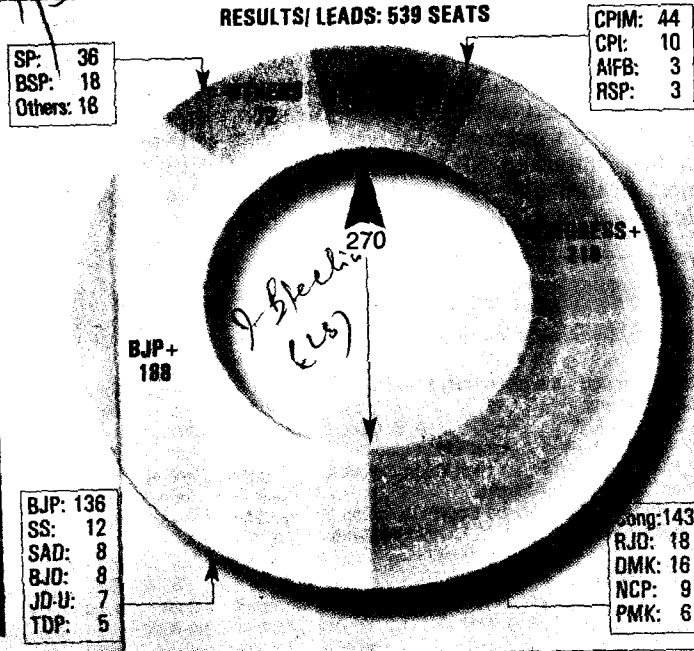
LOSERS



LOSERS: Various candidates from different parties.

SIMPLE MAJORITY FOR CONGRESS-LED ALLIANCE WITH LEFT SUPPORT

SONIA SHINING



ADIEU ATAL



"We have given up office, but not our responsibility to serve the nation."
— Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee

MAY 13. — In one of the most unexpected results of any national election, the government of Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee was voted out of power today. Mrs Sonia Gandhi was set to lead the next government at the head of a resurgent Congress, but would have to contend with a significant which, with 60 seats, extended support to it.

The CPP would meet on Friday to formally elect Mrs Gandhi as its leader, after which, as is "normally" the practice, she would get an invitation from the President to form the next government. In effect, the Congress may have to wait till Monday before being invited by the

President to form the next government. The new Lok Sabha is to be constituted on the same day — 17 May.

Mr George Fernandes said the NDA would sit in the Opposition and Mr Vajpayee would continue to lead the combine. Mr Vajpayee, in a farewell address to the nation after submitting his resignation to the President, indicated he would function as Leader of the Opposition, dispelling suggestions of his exit from public life. Mr Vajpayee said his "hand of cooperation" would be extended to the new government. "We have lost an election, but not our determination," he said in an address to the nation. "Victory and defeat are a part of life, which are to be viewed

with equanimity," he said. Significantly, the Congress has also overtaken the BJP as the single largest party, winning 143 seats, while the lat-

ter managed just 136 seats. The Congress is making a strong pitch for Mrs Gandhi's nomination as the prime ministerial candidate of the "sec-

ular" coalition that's to take power. And while Mrs Gandhi did say "we are open to work with all like-minded parties", doubts over the CPI-M

and DMK sharing power with the Congress continue. BSP chief Ms Mayawati phoned Mrs Gandhi to extend her support as did Mr Sharad Pawar, though he said his party would decide "in a day or two" whether to join the government.

ENTER, MINISTER RAHUL GANDHI?

NEW DELHI, May 13. — Will Mr Rahul Gandhi, MP, like his father, grandmother and great-grandfather join the Council of Ministers? Senior Congressmen are tight-lipped about such dynastic arrangements even as his mother, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, is likely to be the next Prime Minister. "This is something the family will have to decide," a senior Congress leader said. If Mr Rahul Gandhi does wish to join the government, he would be welcome, he said. However, there is an equally strong view

in the party that Mr Rahul Gandhi should be kept out of government. It is possible that he will be made an AICC general secretary in charge of UP to begin with, much like his father. India Gandhi was inducted into the Congress by Jawaharlal Nehru as a party functionary. She became a minister only after Nehru's death. Then there was Sanjay Gandhi, a power centre in the PMO. Could Mr Rahul Gandhi end up playing a similar role? Only time will tell.

— Mohan Sahay



Mr Rahul Gandhi

Kudos from Italy

The mayor of Orbassano, Mrs Sonia Gandhi's birthplace in Italy, offered "warm congratulations" today, reports AP from Rome. Mr Carlo Marroni expressed his "great satisfaction", his office said. "We're sending a telegram to Sonia Maino."

Assembly polls: pg 6
Editorial: Sonia's next test: pg 8

Industry reactions: pg 12

LEFT IN CONTROL

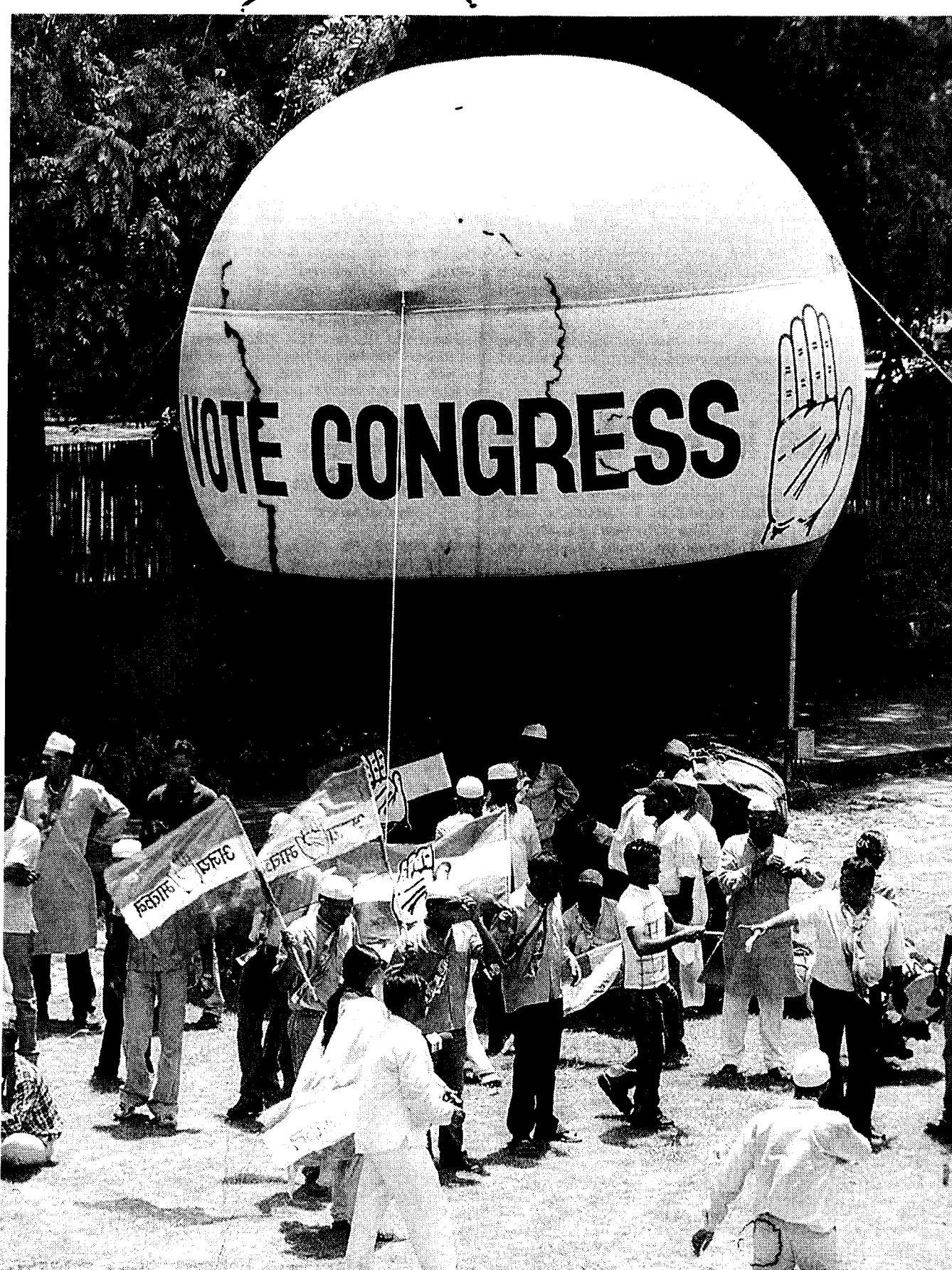
NEW DELHI, May 13. — A decade after reforms began, the Left will have a crucial veto power over the next government at the Centre. More than Mr Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party vis-a-vis the Vajpayee government, the Left parties with 60 seats — its best ever performance — will be looking over the next Prime Minister's shoulder before every decision, whether they join the coalition or support it from outside. Mr Jyoti Basu has spoken of a common minimum programme, but even he, one of those in the party with a more "liberal" economic outlook, has warned against blindly following World Bank prescriptions. While Mr Basu did speak in favour of reforms and wanting to "develop India", and Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee

said industry need not worry, it is not certain what the Left will say about continuing economic reforms, especially regarding the tougher issues like divestment of public sector firms, particularly the profitable ones, or labour-related matters. There could be questions about who the next finance minister could be. Will the Left accept Dr Manmohan Singh after all the criticism of him or would Mr Pranab Mukherjee or Mr P Chidambaram, who was Union finance minister when CPI leader Indrajit Gupta was Union home minister, be acceptable. Never has the Left been so strong. Even in 1967, when the Left got over 40 seats out of 520 and Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister, who was moving leftwards in any case and later abolished the privy



purses for the ex-princes and nationalised banks, did the Marxist parties have as much clout. Besides economic reforms, the other contentious issues relate to WTO, but the question remains whether a reversal is at all possible. — SNS

ANDHRA PRADESH	
Adilabad	Hindupur
Madhusudhana Reddy Thakkala(TRS) Margin of victory: 40,974	Nizamuddin(INC) Margin of victory: 1,840
Total electorate 11,40,834	Total electorate 11,79,211
Votes polled 8,31,337	Votes polled 8,68,063
Madhusudhana Reddy Thakkala (TRS) 4,15,429	Nizamuddin (INC) 4,19,744
Dr. S. Venugopala Chary (TDP) 3,74,455	B.K. Parthasarathi (TDP) 4,17,904
Others 45,917	Others 30,415
1999: S. Venugopala Chary (TDP) won by 109723	1999: B.K. Parthasarathi (TDP) won by 1,34,636
Amalapuram (SC)	Hyderabad
G.V. Harsha Kumar(INC) Margin of victory: 41,485	Asaduddin Owaisi(AIMIM) Margin of victory: 1,00,145
Total electorate 9,04,207	Total electorate 17,70,771
Votes polled 7,04,224	Votes polled 9,86,737
G.V. Harsha Kumar (INC) 3,50,346	Asaduddin Owaisi (AIMIM) 3,78,854
Durra Janardhana Rao (TDP) 3,08,861	G. Subash Chandreri (BJP) 2,78,709
Others 45,917	Konda Lakshma Reddy (INC) 49,516
1999: Mohana Chandra Balayogi Ganji (TDP) won by 118879	Others 79,658
Anakapalli	Kakinada
Chalapathirao Pappala(TDP) Margin of victory: 15,414	Mallipudi Mangapati Pallam Raju (INC) Margin of victory: 57,252
Total electorate 10,23,113	Total electorate 11,64,984
Votes polled 7,82,106	Votes polled 8,32,284
Chalapathirao Pappala (TDP) 3,85,406	Mallipudi Mangapati Pallam Raju (INC) 4,10,982
Nanda Gopal Gandham (INC) 3,69,992	Mudragada Padmanabham (TDP) 3,53,730
Others 26,708	Others 67,572
1999: Ganta Srinivasa Rao (TDP) won by 69464	1999: Mudragada Padmanabham (TDP) won by 121435
Anantapur	Karimnagar
Anantha Venkata Rami Reddy(INC) Margin of victory: 73,404	K. Chandra Shaker Rao(TRS) Margin of victory: 1,31,168
Total electorate 12,81,823	Total electorate 13,44,170
Votes polled 8,75,135	Votes polled 8,74,498
Anantha Venkata Rami Reddy (INC) 4,58,925	K. Chandra Shaker Rao (TRS) 4,51,199
Kalava Srinivasulu (TDP) 3,05,521	Chennamaneni Vidyasagar Rao (BJP) 3,20,031
Others 30,689	Others 1,03,268
1999: Kalava Srinivasulu (TDP) won by 21102	1999: Chennamaneni Vidyasagar Rao (BJP) won by 19370
Bapatla	Khammam
Daggupati Purandareswari(INC) Margin of victory: 94,082	Renuka Choudhary(INC) Margin of victory: 1,06,888
Total electorate 9,48,929	Total electorate 12,98,614
Votes polled 7,35,462	Votes polled 10,22,177
Daggupati Purandareswari (INC) 4,11,099	Renuka Choudhary (INC) 5,18,047
Daggupati Ramanaidu (TDP) 3,17,017	Nama Nageswara Rao (TDP) 4,09,159
Others 7,946	Others 95,971
1999: D. Ramanaidu (TDP) won by 92457	1999: Renuka Choudhary (INC) won by 8398
Bhadrachalam (ST)	Kurnool
Midiyam Babu Rao(CPM) Margin of victory: 53,806	Kotla Jayasurya Prakash Reddy(INC) Margin of victory: 1,01,098
Total electorate 11,93,297	Total electorate 13,10,724
Votes polled 8,23,415	Votes polled 8,18,809
Midiyam Babu Rao (CPM) 3,73,148	Kotla Jayasurya Prakash Reddy (INC) 4,33,529
Smt.Kprk Phaneeswaramma (TDP) 3,19,342	Kambalapadu Ediga Krishnamurthi (TDP) 3,32,431
Others 1,30,925	Others 52,849
1999: Dumpa Mary Vijaya Kumari (TDP) won by 37103	1999: Kambhalapati Krishna Murthy (TDP) won by 24487
Bobbili	Machilipatnam
Kondapalli Pydithalli Naidu(TDP) Margin of victory: 31,348	Badiga Ramakrishna(INC) Margin of victory: 50,341
Total electorate 9,76,012	Total electorate 9,93,058
Votes polled 7,46,725	Votes polled 7,68,537
Kondapalli Pydithalli Naidu (TDP) 3,73,922	Badiga Ramakrishna (INC) 3,87,127
Jhansi Botcha (INC) 3,42,574	Ambati Brahmaniah (TDP) 3,36,786
Others 30,229	Others 31,401
1999: Botcha Satyanarayana (INC) won by 3827	1999: Brahmaniah Ambati (TDP) won by 82996
Chittoor	Mahabubnagar
D.K. Adikesavulu(TDP) Margin of victory: 62,138	D. Vittal Rao(INC) Margin of victory: 47,907
Total electorate 11,70,442	Total electorate 13,65,922
Votes polled 8,75,992	Votes polled 8,66,550
D.K. Adikesavulu (TDP) 4,54,128	D. Vittal Rao (INC) 3,80,857
Dr. Ravun Venkata Swamy (INC) 3,91,990	Yekuti Yella Reddy (TDP) 56,929
Others 29,874	Others 56,929
1999: Noothana Kalva Ramakrishna Reddy (TDP) won by 18638	1999: A.P. Jilender Reddy (BJP) won by 3690
Cuddapah	Medak
Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy(INC) Margin of victory: 1,31,674	Ale Narendar(TRS) Margin of victory: 1,23,756
Total electorate 11,43,362	Total electorate 12,59,126
Votes polled 8,19,201	Votes polled 9,01,005
Y.S. Vivekananda Reddy (INC) 4,61,431	Ale Narendar (TRS) 4,53,728
Mule Venkata Mysara Reddy (TDP) 3,29,757	P. Ramachandra Reddy (BJP) 3,29,972
Others 28,013	Others 1,17,305
1999: Vivekananda Reddy Y.S. (INC) won by 26597	1999: A. Narendar (BJP) won by 22083
Eluru	Miryalguda
Kavuru Samba Siva Rao(INC) Margin of victory: 1,23,291	Jaipal Reddy Sudini(INC) Margin of victory: 2,16,907
Total electorate 11,51,671	Total electorate 12,89,212
Votes polled 8,96,946	Votes polled 9,62,589
Kavuru Samba Siva Rao (INC) 4,99,191	Jaipal Reddy Sudini (INC) 4,79,519
Bolla Bulli Ramaiah (TDP) 3,75,900	Vangala Swamy Goud (TDP) 3,55,262
Others 21,855	Others 35,168
1999: Bolla Bulli Ramaiah (TDP) won by 62231	1999: Jaipal Reddy Sudini (INC) won by 57477
Guntur	Nagarkurnool (SC)
Rayapati Sambasiva Rao(INC) Margin of victory: 1,29,792	Dr. Manda Jagannath(TDP) Margin of victory: 99,650
Total electorate 11,72,954	Total electorate 12,96,544
Votes polled 8,21,478	Votes polled 8,83,360
Rayapati Sambasiva Rao (INC) 4,66,221	Dr. Manda Jagannath (TDP) 4,05,046
Y. V. Rao (TDP) 3,36,428	K.S. Ratnam (IND) 3,05,396
Others 18,828	P. Bhagavanthi (IND) 1,19,813
1999: Yemparala Venkateswararao (TDP) won by 40330	Others 53,095
Hanamkonda	Nalgonda
B.Vinod Kumar(TRS) Margin of victory: 2,17,067	Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy(CPI) Margin of victory: 56,151
Total electorate 12,07,089	Total electorate 16,12,088
Votes polled 8,31,926	Votes polled 10,47,866
B.Vinod Kumar (TRS) 4,96,048	Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy (CPI) 4,79,519
Chada Suresh Reddy (TDP) 2,79,981	Nallu Indrasena Reddy (BJP) 4,23,360
Others 56,897	Others 1,44,995
1999: Chada Suresh Reddy (TDP) won by 85781	1999: Guha Sukender Reddy (TDP) won by 25744
Narasapur	Nandyal
S.P. Y. Reddy(INC) Margin of victory: 1,11,679	S. P. Y. Reddy(INC) Margin of victory: 1,11,679
Total electorate 11,82,201	Total electorate 11,82,201
Votes polled 8,29,976	Votes polled 8,29,976
S.P. Y. Reddy (INC) 4,58,528	S.P. Y. Reddy (INC) 4,58,528
Bhuma Shobha Nagi Reddy (TDP) 3,46,647	Bhuma Shobha Nagi Reddy (TDP) 3,46,647
Others 24,603	Others 24,603
1999: Bhuma Nagi Reddy (TDP) won by 22609	1999: Bhuma Nagi Reddy (TDP) won by 22609
Narasaraopet	Narasaraopet
Mekapati Rajamohan Reddy(INC) Margin of victory: 86,295	G. Venkatas Wamy(INC) Margin of victory: 2,63,135
Total electorate 12,55,040	Total electorate 13,86,543
Votes polled 8,99,784	Votes polled 9,39,450
Mekapati Rajamohan Reddy (INC) 4,81,310	G. Venkatas Wamy (INC) 5,72,207
Maddi Lakshmaiah (TDP) 3,35,055	Dr. M. C. Suguna (TDP) 3,09,972
Others 23,419	Others 58,171
1999: Janardhanareddy Nedunurall (INC) won by 13882	1999: Dr. Smt. C. Suguna Kumari (TDP) won by 15261
Nellore (SC)	Rajahmundry
Panabaka Laxmi(INC) Margin of victory: 1,28,224	Aruna Kumar Vundavalli(INC) Margin of victory: 1,48,820
Total electorate 11,53,181	Total electorate 10,74,223
Votes polled 8,36,492	Votes polled 8,16,125
Panabaka Laxmi (INC) 4,53,129	Aruna Kumar Vundavalli (INC) 4,13,927
Balakondiah Karupotla (BJP) 3,21,905	Kanjipudi Sarvarayudu (BJP) 2,65,107
Others 64,458	S.B.P.P.K. Satyanarayana Rao (IND) 29,920
1999: Rajeswaramma Vukkala (TDP) won by 40453	Others 37,420
Nizamabad	Rajampet
Yashki Madhu Goud (INC) Margin of victory: 1,37,871	M. Anjan Kumar Yadav(INC) Margin of victory: 68,758
Total electorate 11,28,373	Total electorate 10,74,223
Votes polled 7,82,439	Votes polled 8,16,125
Yashki Madhu Goud (INC) 4,42,142	Aruna Kumar Vundavalli (INC) 4,13,927
Syed Yousof Ali (TDP) 3,04,271	Kanjipudi Sarvarayudu (BJP) 2,65,107
Others 36,026	S.B.P.P.K. Satyanarayana Rao (IND) 29,920
1999: Ganga Reddy Gaddam (TDP) won by 3436	Others 37,420
Ongole	Secunderabad
Sreenivasulu Reddy Mangunta(INC) Margin of victory: 1,06,021	M. Anjan Kumar Yadav(INC) Margin of victory: 68,758
Total electorate 10,63,365	Total electorate 10,74,223
Votes polled 7,99,329	Votes polled 8,16,125
Sreenivasulu Reddy Mangunta (INC) 4,46,544	Aruna Kumar Vundavalli (INC) 4,13,927
Bathula Vijaya Bharathi (TDP) 3,40,583	Kanjipudi Sarvarayudu (BJP) 2,65,107
Others 11,962	S.B.P.P.K. Satyanarayana Rao (IND) 29,920
1999: Karanam Balarama Krishna Murthy (TDP) won by 21948	Others 37,420
Parvathipuram (ST)	Siddipet (SC)
Kishore Chandra Suryanarayana Deo Vyricherla(INC) Margin of victory: 7,418	Sanjay Sathyanarayana(INC) Margin of victory: 1,30,571
Total electorate 11,28,373	Total electorate 11,28,373
Votes polled 7,82,439	Votes polled 7,82,439
Kishore Chandra Suryanarayana Deo Vyricherla (INC) 4,42,142	Sanjay Sathyanarayana (INC) 4,42,142
Syed Yousof Ali (TDP) 3,04,271	Others 36,026
Others 36,026	1999: Sanjay Sathyanarayana (INC) won by 97626



Congress supporters sharing their joy at the party headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. — Photo: Ramesh Sharma

Jogaiah(INC) Margin of victory: 64,412	Total electorate 8,96,336	Votes polled 6,60,923	Jogaiah (INC) 3,21,788	Others 3,39,135	1999: Jogaiah (INC) won by 13,198
K. C. Sunaynarayana Deo Vyricherla (INC) Margin of victory: 3,21,788	Total electorate 9,96,175	Votes polled 7,68,537	K. C. Sunaynarayana Deo Vyricherla (INC) 3,21,788	Others 4,46,749	1999: K. C. Sunaynarayana Deo Vyricherla (INC) won by 13,198
Dadichiluka Veera Gouri Sankara Rao (TDP) Margin of victory: 3,14,370	Total electorate 4,02,761	Votes polled 3,38,349	Dadichiluka Veera Gouri Sankara Rao (TDP) 3,14,370	Others 68,391	1999: Dadichiluka Veera Gouri Sankara Rao (TDP) won by 13,281
M. Rajalaiah (TDP) Margin of victory: 15,372	Total electorate 27,427	Votes polled 22,427	M. Rajalaiah (TDP) 15,372	Others 12,055	1999: M. Rajalaiah (TDP) won by 15,372
Peddapalli (SC)	G. Venkatas Wamy(INC) Margin of victory: 2,63,135	Total electorate 17,12,951	G. Venkatas Wamy (INC) 5,72,207	Others 11,40,744	1999: G. Venkatas Wamy (INC) won by 5,72,207
Yerrannaidu Kinjarapu(TDP) Margin of victory: 31,879	Total electorate 13,86,543	Votes polled 9,39,450	Yerrannaidu Kinjarapu (TDP) 31,879	Others 9,07,571	1999: Yerrannaidu Kinjarapu (TDP) won by 31,879
Warangal	Balashowry Vallabhani(INC) Margin of victory: 78,556	Total electorate 15,15,574	Balashowry Vallabhani (INC) 78,556	Others 14,37,018	1999: Balashowry Vallabhani (INC) won by 78,556
Dharavath Ravinder Naik(TRS) Margin of victory: 19,262	Total electorate 8,90,148	Votes polled 6,73,462	Dharavath Ravinder Naik (TRS) 19,262	Others 6,54,200	1999: Dharavath Ravinder Naik (TRS) won by 19,262
Sarangarh (SC)	Arunachal East	Tapir Gao(BJP) Margin of victory: 42,639	Tapir Gao (BJP) 42,639	Others 3,99,561	1999: Tapir Gao (BJP) won by 42,639
Guharam Agalle(BJP) Margin of victory: 59,118	Arunachal West	Khiren Rijju(BJP) Margin of victory: 47,424	Khiren Rijju (BJP) 47,424	Others 4,52,140	1999: Khiren Rijju (BJP) won by 47,424
Total electorate 11,91,389	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,95,927	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
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Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
Votes polled 5,97,737	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik(BJP) Margin of victory: 56,213	Shripad Naik (BJP) 56,213	Others 5,39,714	1999: Shripad Naik (BJP) won by 56,213
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NDA out, Sonia set to become PM

● India opts for change ● Surge for Congress, Left, SP ● Jolt to BJP in Uttar Pradesh, sweep in M.P. and Rajasthan ● NDA blotted out in Tamil Nadu, routed in A.P. ● Congress out for a duck in Kerala

By Harish Khare

NEW DELHI, MAY 13. The electorate has decisively rejected the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance and has voted in a Congress-led coalition spearheaded by Sonia Gandhi. A clean sweep by the Congress alliance in Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are central to the upset verdict, first of its kind since 1977.

Mr. Vajpayee has resigned as Prime Minister and the mood within the Congress is overwhelmingly in favour of Ms. Sonia Gandhi assuming the prime ministerial mantle. Ms. Gandhi is scheduled to be elected leader of the Congress Parliamentary party on Saturday.

With the Left Front indicating that it would have no problem with Ms. Gandhi in a prime ministerial role, a Sonia Gandhi-led government has emerged as a viable proposition. Also, indications are that the Left may consider joining such a coalition. However, the Left has let it be known that it would be disinclined to let the Congress call all the shots.

The Congress has already begun work on a Common Minimum Programme to be discussed and agreed on with the allies. The party has constituted a drafting committee headed by Manmohan Singh for this purpose. The members include Pranab Mukherjee, Arjun Singh, Jaipal Reddy and Jairam Ramesh.

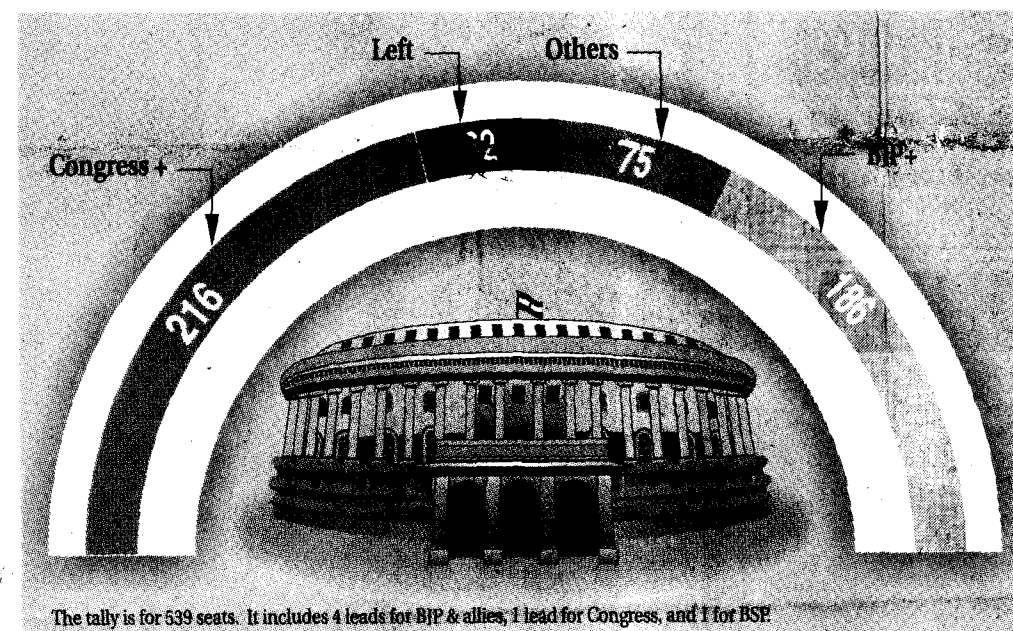
Contrary to the expectations and predictions of a "hung parliament," the final figures for the 14th Lok Sabha indicate an unambiguous mandate for the Congress and its pre-election allies. On its own the Congress has emerged as the largest single party, with 145 seats under its belt. Along with the Left parties (62 seats), the Congress coalition (with 216 seats) is comfortably placed to cross the halfway mark in the new Lok Sabha.

The BJP, which till last night still entertained some hopes, threw in the towel within the first two hours of the counting of votes. The defeat of over half a dozen Cabinet Ministers and the BJP's failure to retain its position as the single largest party brought home the extent of the rebuff. By noon the BJP and the NDA leaders gathered at the Prime Minister's residence and decided to accept the verdict of rejection.

Mr. Vajpayee presided over, for the last time, a Cabinet meeting at which it was formally decided that the Council of Ministers should resign. Later, accompanied by the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, the Prime Minister drove to Rashtrapati Bhavan to hand in his resignation. According to a Rashtrapati Bhavan press communiqué, the President has asked Mr. Vajpayee to continue "in office till alternative ar-



BEYOND EXPECTATIONS: With the Congress and allies plus the Left winning a majority in the 14th Lok Sabha, Sonia Gandhi has the Prime Ministership unless she chooses to turn it down. — Photo: V. Sudershan



The tally is for 539 seats. It includes 4 leads for BJP & allies, 1 lead for Congress, and 1 for BSP.

Graphics by Varghese Kallada

rangements are made."

Later, the Prime Minister addressed the nation and noted that "my party and alliance may have lost, but India has won." Mr. Vajpayee will be the Leader of the Opposition and will not retire from public life, according to Sushma Swaraj, the outgoing Minister for Par-

liamentary Affairs, who briefed reporters after the Cabinet meeting.

The Samajwadi Party, with 35 seats, and the Bahujan Samaj Party, with 19 seats, have emerged as key players. But the Left Front, with a tally of 62, has replaced the Telugu Desam Party as the most influential

bloc. Ms. Mayawati of the BSP has already pledged support to a "secular government" and the Samajwadi Party is also expected to pitch in with its numbers, though the party is likely to name a price for its support and the stability it would bring to the new governing arrangement.

Mufti, S. Bangarappa, Suresh Prabhu, and P. Chidambaram. Among the prominent losers were Murli Manohar Joshi, Sharad Yadav, Ram Naik, Jagmohan, Sahib Singh Verma, Yashwant Sinha, P.M. Sayeed, Shivraj Patil, Buta Singh, Bal-

ram Jhakar, and C.K. Jaffar Sharief.

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More reports on Pages
11, 12, 13
Jubilation in Italy: Page 20
Photographs on celebrations:
Page 24

Vajpayee quits, offers cooperation to new government

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, MAY 13. The outgoing Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who submitted his resignation, today extended his "hand of cooperation" to the new government. The defeat of the ruling coalition, the National Democratic Alliance that he was leading, had not affected his determination to proceed forward, he said.

Addressing the nation on Doordarshan, he said that it was always "with the will of the people" that governments were formed and changed. This power of democracy was a matter of pride to the nation that the people must always cherish and preserve. His party and alliance may have lost, but India has won, he said.

He thanked the people for giving him an opportunity to serve the country as Prime Minister since March 1998. "Your goodwill and affection were my greatest assets," and "your support and trust were my greatest sources of strength," he said.

Mr. Vajpayee referred to the multi-religious, multi-lingual and multi-ethnic nation that was India and said that he had demonstrated that coalition governments could be stable and successfully deal with the challenges before the country. It was for history to judge but he was satisfied that he had left India stronger and more prosperous than it was when he took the reins of government in his hand. He had brought stability to the polity after a period of instability. "It is for you — and history — to judge what we have achieved during this period."

It was not a defeatist attitude that came through but one that

demonstrated that he was willing to play his role in the Opposition, although he did not directly mention this.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Vajpayee said, the people had rebuffed militancy and reposed their faith in democracy. India had embarked on a historic



peace process with its "neighbour," he said without mentioning Pakistan.

A shock for the BJP

The Bharatiya Janata Party's crushing defeat — it was not only the loss of government but the fact that the BJP's own final tally was less than that of the Congress minus its allies — has come as a big shock for the party.

It was expecting that it could be short of a bare majority, but none of the leaders had any idea of the extent of losses the party and its National Democratic Alliance partners would suffer when the counting of votes began at 8 a.m. today.

Tomorrow, the party's parliamentary board will meet at Mr. Vajpayee's residence at 11 a.m., but it was decided today that Mr. Vajpayee would be the Leader of the Opposition.

Reversal for Cong in Karnataka

Mid term polls cloud on hung House



Mr SM Krishna addresses a Press conference after submitting his resignation in Bangalore on Thursday. — AFP

Statesman News Service

BANGALORE, May 13. — The voters in Karnataka took the cue from their counterparts in Andhra Pradesh and dashed the hopes of their hi-tech IT savvy chief minister, Mr SM Krishna, of enjoying a second term. The Congress barely managed to get 64 seats in a House of 234, showing that the anti-incumbency factor was not to be dismissed casually as the party had been doing earlier.

At the same time, the voters gave a fractured verdict with both the BJP and JD Secular, the two main Opposition parties, failing to get the numbers to form a government on their own.

Though the BJP raised its tally substantially from that of 1999, which was 44, the 79 seats that it bagged this time failed to give it the required numbers to form a government on its own. It needed to get 113 to make Karnataka its gateway to the South. Its ally, the JD-United, however, bagged five seats.

The JD-Secular, on its part, too did extremely well, but again did not get enough to form a government. Against the 19 seats that it bagged in the 1999 elections, the party got 58 this time. A party, which was said to have been on its last legs, showed enough clout to upset the apple cart of both the BJP and the Congress by cutting into their votes. The result of

Karnataka Lok Sabha		
Party	Contested	Won
BJP	28	18
Congress	28	8
JD-S	28	2

one more constituency was held up because of some delay.

The Independents have accounted for 13 seats while the CPM, RPI, Karnataka Vatal Paksh, got one each. The newly floated Kannada Nadu party too opened its account getting one seat.

Predictably, the results shook the Congress, leaving its leaders, such as Mr Krishna and the state party president, Mr Janardan Poojary, shell shocked. With the available trends clearly giving an indication of the party's rout in the elections this morning, the chief minister did not hesitate to submit his resignation to the governor, Mr TN Chaturvedi. He was asked to continue till a new government was put in place.

The loss apart, what really jolted the Congress was the inroads made by the BJP and the JD-Secular into its vote bank. As the chief minister admitted, the BJP had done extremely well in the coastal districts while JD Secular had an encouraging ride in southern Karnataka. More important, over 25 of the 47 odd ministers in Mr Krishna's government bit the dust this time, mak-

ing the verdict more painful for the Congress.

What added to the party's discomfiture was the loss in the Lok Sabha elections as well. Here again the BJP boosted its tally from seven in the last elections to a whopping 11 this time out of the 28 parliamentary seats in the state. The Congress which had bagged 18 seats last time, has had to be content with a mere eight.

For the BJP, it was a mixed verdict. While it was obviously elated at its performance, the disappointment was writ large on the faces of its leaders.

The party had launched an aggressive campaign in the state with its senior leader, Arun Jaitley, and state party president, Mr Ananth Kumar, meticulously planning their strategy to convince the voters that BJP was the party for them. One of the immediate steps that they took in this direction was to welcome Mr S Bangarappa, veteran Congressman and a leader with considerable hold over the people in the state, into its fold. In one stroke, it mobilised the backward votes.

Mr LK Advani's Bharat Uday Yatra too had much to do with the success of the party in the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections this time. He was promoting brand Atal and the achievements of the NDA government under the Prime Minister during his marathon yatra which included several public speeches.

Statesman News Service

Assembly seats 224

Party	Won
BJP	79
Congress	64
JD-S	58

BANGALORE, May 13: With the Karnataka voter giving a fractured verdict in the assembly elections, the second since 1983, none of the three major parties, including the BJP, Congress and the JD Secular, has got enough seats to form a government on its own.

Therefore, the road is set for a mid term poll even if the parties cobble together a working coalition for the time being. This is the unanimous view of most analysts here..

Even though the BJP, with 79 seats is clearly the single largest party, with the Congress at 64 and JD Secular, 58 coming second and third, respectively, it is still too far from the

required number of 113 to form the government in a house of 234. It is not giving up hopes though as evident by the visit of its star strategist, Arun Jaitley, to the city, late this evening.

With the Independents accounting for 13 seats and parties like the CPM, RPI, Kannada Nadu and K Vatal Paksh bagging one each, it is still difficult for the BJP to command the required numbers after wooing them, if at all. Unless, of course, there is a split in the ranks of the JD Secular.

Accordingly, it is desperately trying to woo the JD Secular to align with it to form a non-Congress government, a fact that its leaders like Shankarmurthy and state president, Mr Ananth Kumar, do not conceal. Realising their plight though, the JD Secular is also playing hard to get with its leader and former Prime Minister, Mr Deve Gowda, clearly stating to newsmen that he would have no truck with the BJP at any cost.

Mr P G R Sindia, a senior leader in JD Secular, who joined the party recently after quitting the JD United, and an old supporter of Ramakrishna Hegde, on his part, feels that the door cannot be closed on the BJP yet.

While admitting that his party was the only one which could be called secular in the real sense of the word, he said 'for us all options are open. As it stands now, the Congress and the BJP are equidistant. While the decision to support the Congress or the BJP to form a government rested with the party high command, no possibility could be ruled out.'

Taking pot shots at the Congress, however, he said, it had written off JD Secular in this elections. Further, now that the Congress has been rejected, it would be for the leaders of JD Secular to see how a new chapter in the state could be opened.

Mr Krishna, had said that all secular forces should join to checkmate the advance of fascist forces.

Demolition of Mamata magic

ASHIS CHAKRABARTI

The Left's domination of Bengal politics, which the results have confirmed once again, was not in question in these elections. Even the better showing of the Congress was predictable — with Pranab Mukherjee stealing a march over the CPM in the campaign and Subash Ghisingh throwing his weight behind the Congress in Darjeeling.

The real surprise of the Bengal results is the near-decimation of the Trinamul Congress-BJP combine in the state.

Even Mamata Banerjee knew that she had alienated Muslims from her party because of its alliance with the BJP. That was a huge risk anyway in a state where Muslims constitute nearly one-third of the population. It was also evident that she had lost her magic with her biggest constituency — the middle classes in both urban and semi-urban areas.

What was not so clear was the extent of the disenchantment of the non-Left voters with Mamata's aimless, flip-flop politics. The urban middle classes, which moved away from the Left over the years, seem to have become disillusioned with the alternative that Mamata once offered. The strongest evidence of this is the Left's recovery of Calcutta and Jadavpur after several Lok Sabha elections. Even the huge drop in Mamata's own winning margin is a testimony to this.

If the decline of her personal popularity had left her vulnerable, the popular perception of the BJP as the pro-rich party made things worse for her. Unlike in the early years of her alliance with the BJP, her weakened position made her more and more dependent on the so-called Vajpayee factor.

With her own strength failing and the BJP prop proving insufficient, Mamata went down under. At the same time, the failure

of the Mamata factor sealed the BJP's fate, too, in Bengal. Together the two parties swam last time, together they sank this time.

Just as the countrywide resentment against the NDA contributed to her undoing, the resurgence of the Congress did the rest for her. Wherever the people looked for an alternative to the Left, as in Berhampore, Jangipur, Murshidabad, Malda and Raiganj, they chose the Congress rather than the Trinamul Congress-BJP combine. The popular shift towards the Congress — in the Muslim-dominated districts — was expected to move a large share of the Trinamul vote to the Congress.

But the Trinamul's hope of getting a similar share of the Congress vote in the NDA's areas of promise, particularly in south Bengal, seems to have been belied. The attempted "mahajot" of Trinamul-BJP-Congress votes has not worked as planned.

If her own problems and a resurgence of the Congress took the wind out of her sail, she also looked defenceless in the face of a massive Left onslaught to recover lost territory.

The Left succeeded in its recovery attempts more against the Trinamul-BJP alliance than against the Congress. A.B.A. Ghani Khan Choudhury's Malda or Priya Ranjan Das Munshi's Raiganj held their ground against the CPM fightback; Mamata's — and the BJP's — forts, on the other hand, fell like nine pins. Obviously, the weakened Trinamul-BJP turfs proved greener pastures for the Left charge.

The Left's improved tally could also be seen as much as a positive vote for itself as a negative swing away from the Trinamul. This, however, has held true in most elections in Bengal and helped the Left keep off the anti-incumbency factor that has toppled government after government in other states.

Whether it was the undivided Congress before Mamata broke it or the Trinamul Congress now, the Opposition sought to work on a negative vote against the Left, rather than on a positive vote for itself. Surprisingly, for a party in power for 27 years, the CPM seems to have managed to garner more positive votes this time than in other recent elections.

It would, however, be premature to write off Mamata, the CPM-baiter. With the Left and the Congress joining head and heart in Delhi, she cannot go over to the Congress in a hurry, as she did in 2001.

She has no choice but to remain the centre of non-Left politics in the state. Her own flock could be under attack from a bullish Congress. Mamata Banerjee may have to start it all over again. And she may have to plough a lonely furrow — with the NDA government gone and no Atal Bihari Vajpayee in Delhi to give her a helping hand.



Mamata at a news conference in Calcutta on Thursday. Picture by Amit Datta

STATE SCAN

FROM PAGE 1

Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh

The BJP's honeymoon period is still on in all three states, where the party swept back to power in the Assembly elections in December. Four months is too short a time for voters to change their minds. Besides, the Congress was completely demoralised.

Kerala

Anti-incumbency combines with a groundswell of resentment against factionalism in the Congress results in the party's worst showing ever. It has drawn a blank. The only seat in the alliance was won by its partner, the Muslim League.

Orissa

Naveen Patnaik survives anti-incumbency. Congress' J.B. Patnaik, with his controversial past, was seen as no alternative to Naveen, who has a clean image. The chief minister, a BJP ally, made corruption a campaign plank.

Delhi

Sheila Dikshit's government not only bucks anti-incumbency, but routs the BJP in India's capital. Like MP, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, the Congress had won Assembly elections here in December. People have stayed with it.

Punjab

Anti-incumbency against the Congress' Amarinder Singh government, opposition to his one-point agenda of pinning down Parkash Singh Badal on corruption charges.

Haryana

Here, Om Prakash Chautala's government was at the receiving end of voters' wrath. The break-up of his alliance with the BJP also helped the Congress.

Himachal Pradesh

With Sukh Ram back and ex-servicemen rooting for the party, the Congress sweeps. People do not appear to have forgotten the corruption in Prem Kumar Dhumal's government a year ago.

Northeast

Candidates of ruling parties in each of the seven states have done well here. One region where incumbency seems to work in favour of parties.

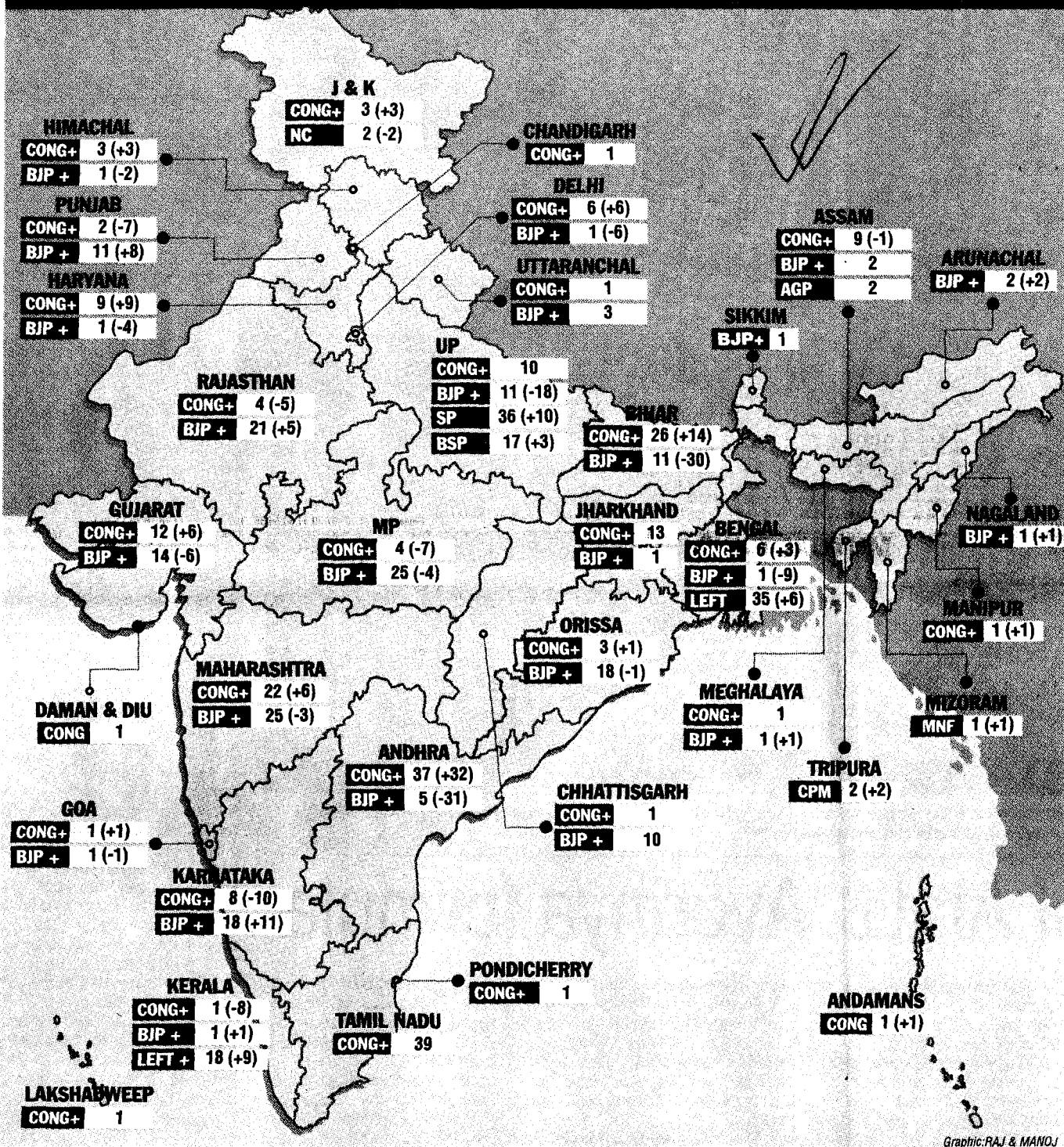
Hometown pays quiet tribute

Milan, May 13 (Reuters): The mayor of Sonia Gandhi's hometown congratulated her for the electoral victory, but her reclusive Italian family kept a self-imposed silence out of respect for the Gandhi dynasty's tragic past.

Orbassano, near the northern Italian city of Turin paid quiet tribute. "Orbassano and its entire administration express their warm congratulations for this victory by our fellow citizen," mayor Carlo Marroni said in a statement to be sent in a telegram to Sonia.

But no public rejoicing was planned following the triumph. "Yes, we are proud, but we also request the family's desire to be left alone," the aide to mayor Marroni said.

HOW INDIA HAS CHANGED



Shock & awe in Gujarat



Modi

BASANT RAWAT

Ahmedabad, May 13: Stunned, surprised — the story of the BJP and the Congress in Gujarat.

Narendra Modi gloated at every rally that his party would take all — the 26 Lok Sabha seats in the state. Far from it, the BJP has lost six seats from its 1999 tally and managed to hold on to only 14.

Call it anti-incumbency, call it a slap on the face of Modi — the brand of aggressive Hinduism practised by Modi — or a belated backlash of the riots, the result in the BJP bastion (for nearly two decades) has left the state BJP headquarters in shock. The mouths fell open at the

Congress camp, too. But the surprise soon turned into celebrations. Once the final result had come in, the scorecard read: Congress 12, double its previous tally and just two shy of the BJP, which had seemed out of reach in the Assembly elections.

It is a sweet victory for the demoralised Congress cadre, who are reading the verdict as a signal for the party's revival. The most spectacular gains for the party came in the tribal belt of eastern and central Gujarat and Saurashtra, where the BJP was considered invincible. Barring Dahod, which it won by a slender margin, the BJP has been nearly wiped out from tribal-dominated areas where it had

made deep inroads. In fact, it won all the tribal seats in 1999. This time, it has lost in Mandvi, Valsad and Chhota Udepur.

It will satisfy the Congress that it retained Kheda and wrested Anand (central Gujarat) and Chhota Udepur, some of the worst-affected areas. In the Assembly polls held after the riots, the BJP had swept all the Assembly seats in central Gujarat.

The party also made dents in the BJP bastion of Saurashtra, capturing three of the eight seats. Union minister Bhavnabh Chikhaliya, who was seeking re-election from Junagadh, lost. Modi loyalist Dilipbhai Sangani lost from Amreli. Jamnagar also slipped from the BJP's grasp.

Part of the BJP's undoing in Saurashtra was infighting. It was an open secret that Keshubhai Patel, Modi's predecessor and bitter rival, had vowed to make Sangani bite the dust.

Patel had torpedoed Modi's efforts to get Sangani to succeed state BJP president Rajendrasinh Rana. Patel and Sangani's hostility dates back to when Modi launched a campaign in Delhi to mobilise support to oust Patel as the chief minister.

BJP chief campaign in-charge Suresh Mehta admitted "our performance has been less than what we had expected" and attributed the poor showing to "low turnout due to heat and marriage season".

He said another factor was voter fatigue with the same old faces. Mehta was referring to Sangani and Chikhaliya, who were seeking their fifth and fourth terms, respectively.

As soon as a shadow fell on Modi's domination, the suppressed dissent in the BJP surfaced. A party insider claimed there were indications of what was to come, but the overconfident, arrogant leaders could not read the writing on the wall. The wave of resentment among farmers over high power tariff and Modi's style of functioning had cost the party heavily.

Senior Congress leader Siddharth Patel attributed much of his party's success to the BJP's

neglect of farmers. He believed tribals and rural voters had turned against the BJP and would fuel the Congress revival.

State Congress president B.K. Gadhvi said his party was bound to bounce back, but some political analysts are loathe to give it credit. They claim it is a vote against Modi and the Congress has won by default.

Some of them argued that the BJP's poor showing was partly due to the resentment of the VHP and the Bajrang Dal. They were aghast that the man who was not long ago called the "Hindu holiday samrat" could not protect those involved in riot cases. Unlike the last Assembly elections, the VHP workers re-

mained passive. Their anger was directed at Modi, whom they saw as doing little to protect them from "judicial activism".

In central Gujarat, several senior VHP and BJP leaders are languishing in jail after the Supreme Court ordered fresh investigation in some of the riot cases the state police had closed.

Ganesh Devy, a Vadodara-based tribal activist, linked the drubbing in the tribal belt, especially Chhota Udepur, to the riots. The tribals had been indoctrinated and turned against the Muslims in 2002. They realised they had played into the BJP's hands — the party got power and they got a bad name — and paid back by dislodging its MPs.

Time for GeNext, not India, Shining

ALOKE TIKKU

New Delhi, May 13: Dynasty isn't such a dirty word in Indian politics, not after the Indian electorate embraced the GeNext of India's political families.

Leading the charge is Rahul Gandhi. Amethi, the pocket borough of the Nehru-Gandhi family which has given India one Prime Minister — a likely fourth has moved next door to Rae Bareilly this time — has passed on the baton to Rahul this time.

The story is replayed in Jhalar in Rajasthan and Guna in Madhya Pradesh, where scions of the Scindia family have won. First-timer Dushyant Singh, son of Vasundhara Rajee, won from Jhalawar by over 80,000 votes. Jyotiraditya Scindia has retained Guna, which he won in the byelection after father Madhavrao's death in a plane crash.

Sheela Dikshit's son Sandeep made a sparkling debut by wresting East Delhi from the BJP. Sons are shining down south, too. Dayanidhi Maran, son of former Union minister Murasoli Maran and grandnephew of DMK chief M. Karunanidhi, has won the Central Chennai seat.

Like the Sonia-Rahul pair, Mulayam Singh Yadav will always be at hand in the Lok Sabha to help out son Akhilesh or brother Ramgopal. Akhilesh has won from Kannauj and Ramgopal from Sambhal.

Manvendra Singh, son of Rajya Sabha member Jaswant Singh, was not as lucky as Akhilesh. Unlike Mulayam's son, he lost his first election in 1999 from Barmer. But he persisted and reaped the reward today by defeating his Congress rival by over 2.7 lakh votes.

Sachin Pilot had no such problems. Father Rajesh Pilot had nurtured the Dausa constituency and when he died, mother Rama kept it safe for her young son. Sachin did not let her down and retained the seat, defeating the BJP's Kartar Singh Bhadana by over 1.15 lakh votes.

Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's daughter made him proud by winning from Anantnag. She had tried to enter Parliament from Srinagar in 1999, but lost to Omar Abdullah, another dynasty product. Farooq Abdullah's son has won from Srinagar again, for the third time.

If Lady Luck smiled on some, she let down others. K. Karunakaran's daughter Padmaja failed him after he bargained hard to get a party ticket for her from Mukundapuram.

I.K. Gujral's son Naresh, put up by the Akali Dal-BJP combine, lost from Jalandhar. Sons of Haryana chief minister O.P. Chautala, Ajay and Abhay, also lost.

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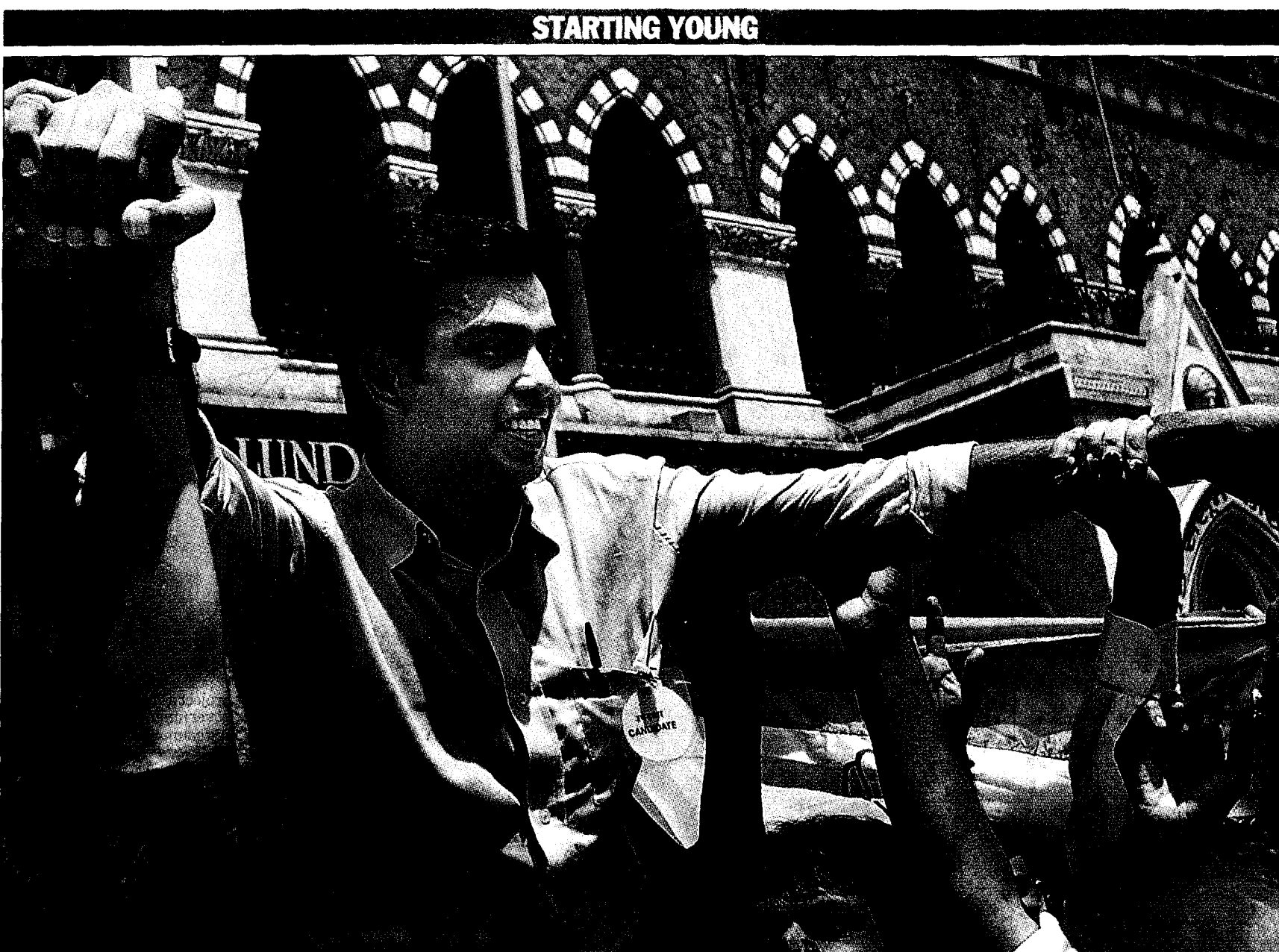
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Milind Deora, the Congress candidate from Mumbai South, celebrates with party workers after winning the elections. The 27-year-old winner is considered the youngest candidate to make it to Parliament. (AFP)

Magic goes out of Atal & Ayodhya formula

TAPAS CHAKRABORTY

Lucknow, May 13: The BJP had hoped its old magic formula of Atal and Ayodhya would work in the country's largest state. The hope faded with every passing hour as it became increasingly clear that Uttar Pradesh would not help boost its dwindling numbers.

From 27 MPs in 1999, the party was down to 11, its lowest ever in the state. The return of former chief minister Kalyan Singh, dubbed the "iron man of the BJP", appeared to have made no impact.

As the results poured in, BJP leaders went into a huddle in the party office here and an uneasy silence settled on the once bustling rooms. In contrast, the Congress office thrived with spontaneous jubilation as thousands

of party workers sang and danced to drum beats.

For them, the appeal of the Gandhi dynasty had worked its magic. And Sonia Gandhi and Rahul had won from the state — the mother from Rae Bareilly, the son from Amethi. Although at least five key leaders lost — among them state unit chief Jagdambika Pal — the party maintained its 1999 tally of 10 seats.

In the BJP camp, some of the big names who lost are Murlidhar Manohar Joshi, Swami Chintamanand, Joshi's colleague in Atal Bihari Vajpayee's council, and BJP state president Vinay Katiyar. Katiyar has sent his resignation to BJP national chief M. Venkaiah Naidu.

Assembly Speaker and BJP candidate Kesrinarth Tripathi finished third after the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan

Samaj Party. Kalyan Singh barely made it from Bulandshahr. The BJP even lost in Faizabad, which covers Ayodhya.

"To be frank, I had no idea of this resentment among voters against the BJP. Let me tell you, the voters were not hostile to leaders like Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Their anger must have been brewing against local leaders," said senior leader Kalraj Mishra.

The blame game has already started with some leaders accusing the campaign managers of depending on old rhetoric and ignoring signs like thin attendance at rallies and survey reports that suggested the party might not do well. "In 1998 we had 58 seats. In 1999 it was reduced to 27. Now this. Something has gone drastically wrong," said a leader.

Insiders pointed to the Ayodhya temple issue, which the BJP

sought to rake up on the first leg of the campaign. Having included it in the NDA agenda, though the coalition's leaders sensed it would alienate Muslims, the party embarked on a plan to split the minority vote. The ploy did not work.

The Samajwadi Party and the BSP gained at the BJP's expense. "We would have done better had the BJP and the Congress not spread confusion about us," said Samajwadi chief Mulayam Singh Yadav. The chief minister's party had won 35 seats, a gain of eight.

The BSP, which had won just 14 seats, improved its tally by three. In some places, the BSP made inroads into Samajwadi territory, like Azamgarh.

In Amethi, where Rahul trounced the BJP's Ram Vilas Vedanti by over three lakh votes, the

Gandhi scion praised his mother. "I said some time ago that my father is my hero," he said. "Today, I have another hero. She is my mother."

Later, commenting on the outcome of the elections, Rahul said: "Soniaji has won the elections. She has suffered a lot and the country has reciprocated." In Amethi, after being declared elected, he did not forget to wish Vajpayee. "I wish all the best to Vajpayee. I wish him many years in the future... I am saying from my heart and not saying this for the sake of saying it."

But Rahul also did not forget to indirectly remind Vajpayee that he had arrived. He said he would strive to become an "adult" in politics. The reference was to Vajpayee's remark that he was a "child" in the rough and tumble of politics.

Kingmakers again, but for rival camp

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Chennai, May 13: At his last rally in Chennai, Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said Tamil Nadu would make a critical difference to government formation in Delhi.

He was hinting at the key role the 39 Lok Sabha seats from the state and one from Pondicherry have played since 1996 when coalition regimes came to stay in Delhi.

Back then, the DMK-Tamil Maanila Congress-CPI combine had swept the polls at the cost of the ADMK and gone on to play a major role in the United Front governments in Delhi, led by H.D. Deve Gowda and I.K. Gujral. Tamil Nadu then had as many as eight Union ministers, the highest ever from the state.

But the United Front's instability, following the Congress' withdrawal of support, heralded the turning point of 1998 when the first-time alliance of the BJP and the ADMK (including the PMK and the MDMK) grabbed 31 of the 39 seats. Tamil Nadu had always heeded the call for "need for stability at the Centre".

But Jayalalithaa's walkout from the Vajpayee government in 1999 and her subsequent alliance with the Congress and the Left brought the "Vajpayee factor" of stability into play again. That year, the DMK-BJP combine, including the PMK and the MDMK, bagged 26 of the 39 seats.

Thus, the swing towards the BJP-inclusive alliance, led by either of the main Dravidian parties, had been critical in the numbers game in Delhi in the last two Lok Sabha polls.

The swing has been at work again this time — but against the ADMK-BJP alliance — as DMK chief M. Karunanidhi has retained the 1999 winning combination, excluding the BJP but including the Congress and the Left. Helping along was the strong anti-incumbency against Jayalalithaa and the BJP's half-hearted tie-up with her party.

The Congress, now reunited with the breakaway TMC, has won 10 seats this time, the highest since 1991, thus substantially adding to the party's Lok Sabha kitty. Besides, the DMK, the PMK and the MDMK have assured outside support.

So any combine that wins about 30 seats in Tamil Nadu is in the position to make a difference to government formation at the

Centre. This time, the Congress is the beneficiary, which was evident in a singular scene outside the DMK headquarters here.

The cadre of the Dravidian party that has fed on an anti-Congress stand over the decades today danced with a poster of Sonia Gandhi as news trickled in of the DMK-led alliance's sure sweep of all 40 Lok Sabha seats.

Firecrackers and sweets completed the picture of victory that was apparent in the very first trends since counting began at 8 this morning.

Karunanidhi thanked people for the "thumping" victory they

VICTOR



VANQUISHED



had handed his Democratic Progressive Alliance and said it was a decisive verdict against chief minister Jayalalithaa's "autocratic rule".

MDMK chief Vaiko said the victory "gives a message to the whole of India that Tamil Nadu is the vanguard for secularism, democracy and to fight against the Hindutva fundamentalist forces". He added that the "mortal blow against the repressive Jayalalithaa regime" was also an "interim referendum" against her policies, including the "misuse" of the anti-terror law, and demanded her resignation.

"It is a washout practically and I accept the defeat," state BJP's senior-most leader E. Ganesan said.

LONE WINNER



Babul Marandi

Dragged to doom by a 'death wish'

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Ranchi, May 13: In Jharkhand, it was "a death wish" which did the BJP in.

In the 1996 general elections, the BJP had lost only one seat in what constitutes Jharkhand today. Eight years later, in 2004, the BJP has just won one seat. Dumka alone had deserted the party then. This time, it is Koderma alone which has elected the BJP candidate in the state. Eight years ago, Babul Marandi was the solitary BJP leader to have lost in the region. This time, he is the only BJP leader to have won.

Significantly, Marandi is the only BJP candidate in Jharkhand who contested this time from a new constituency, "a virgin territory". All the other candidates were seeking re-election from their old constituencies. Some, like Laxman Gilua in Singhbhum and Dukha Bhagat in Lohardaga, were seeking a second term in the Lok Sabha; some like Yashwant Sinha and Abha Mahato were seeking third terms; a few like Rita Verma (Dhanbad),

Ravindra Pandey (Giridih) and Brij Mohan Ram (Palamau) were looking forward to a fourth term while stalwarts like Karia Munda (Khunti) and Ram Tahal Choudhary (Ranchi) have already been to Parliament six times or more.

The undercurrent of hostility against the incumbents was evident; so much so that sections within the party had seriously put forward a proposal that at least half a dozen candidates in Jharkhand should be replaced by the party. The list, said insiders, included the names of Rita Verma, Dukha Bhagat and Ravindra Pandey.

But the party's central leadership overruled the suggestion on the ground that it would encourage factionalism. The BJP would probably have fared marginally better if it had fielded fresh faces. It is doubtful, however, if that step alone could have bucked the trend.

If the voters in Jharkhand have given a resounding "electoral slap" to the BJP, the party has only itself to blame. It put too much store by the India Shining campaign, which, for all practical purposes,

turned into a bit of a joke along with the "feel good" factor. Poor governance in Jharkhand robbed the slogan of its sheen and merely served to anger people. Erratic electricity and water supply, poor road conditions barring some of the highways and little employment opportunity in Jharkhand made a mockery of highfalutin claims like foreign currency reserves.

Over-confidence in the BJP rank and file, who took victory for granted and believed that the Vajpayee factor would help the party sail through, is another factor that did them in. The arrogance with which people like M. Venkaiah Naidu and Yashwant Sinha spoke of sweeping the poll in the state was an index of over-confidence bordering on the suicidal. More so because of the day-to-day squabbles within the party.

Conceded a senior BJP leader today: "For the last three years, we have been fighting amongst ourselves, issuing statements against each other and even publicly accusing each other of corruption. It was comical and the party had made a

spectacle of itself.

But the central leadership overlooked the shenanigans of party leaders in the state. They exercised little or no control over party MPs who merrily favoured their own relatives and cronies, amassed wealth and did little of distinction. Even a long-serving MP like Karia Munda made no effort to have a good hospital in his far-flung constituency.

Worse, leaders actually encouraged the infighting, pitching one leader against the other. The two lobbies of Babul Marandi and Arjun Munda were allowed to snipe at each other publicly. Yashwant Sinha, who was the senior-most BJP leader at the Centre and the most influential, had little time to spare for Jharkhand.

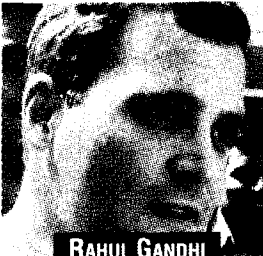
As the finance and then the foreign minister, he had his hands full. But he was allowed to virtually preside over and dominate both the organisation and the government in Jharkhand. Sinha's was the last word and the party drifted apart as Sinha attended White House receptions with Colin Powell.

VIP LOSER

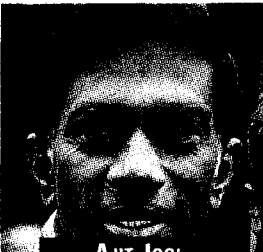


Yashwant Sinha

WINNERS



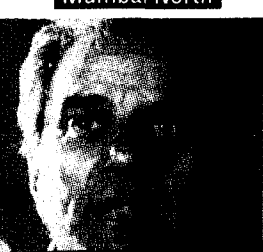
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Amethi



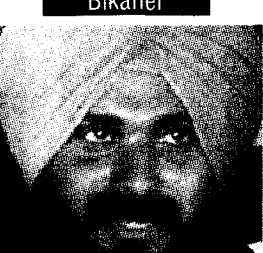
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Mahasamund



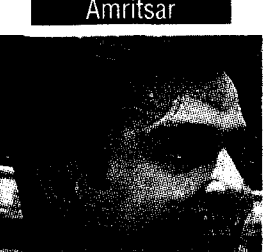
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DHARMENDRA
Bikaner

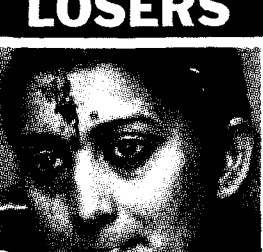


NAVJOT SINGH SIDHU
Amritsar

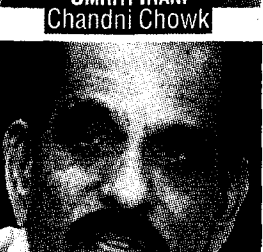


MILIND DEORA
Mumbai South

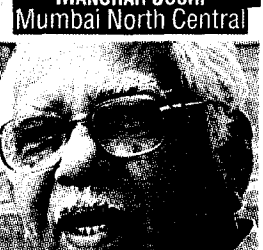
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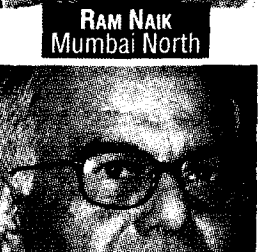
SMRITI IRANI
Chandni Chowk



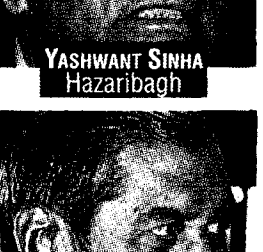
MANOHAR JOSHI
Mumbai North Central



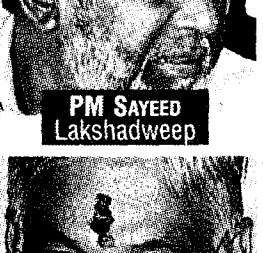
RAM NAIK
Mumbai North



YASHWANTH SINHA
Hazratnagar



PM SAYEED
Lakshadweep



MM JOSHI
Allahabad

Loser & winner: The whys

Lessons from Verdict 2004

RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

New Delhi, May 13: Pollsters, internal assessments, astrologers — they all went wrong.

The general prognosis was the National Democratic Alliance would "somehow" make it and the Congress was destined to sit in the Opposition for another five years. In this stunner of an election, the only person who got it right was the voter who knew who his choice was, untouched by "informed" opinion.

BJP sources rued their over-reliance on party surveys and exit polls and felt it was time they started trusting their political instincts. So what does Verdict 2004 signify?

Smart alliances work, irrespective of who cobbles them: Complacent that the NDA would get a majority with its nine allies and consolidate its position later, courtesy new friends, the BJP had jettisoned two reliable team-mates: the DMK and its constituents, including the PMK and the MDMK, and the Indian National Lok Dal. The result was a wipeout in Tamil Nadu and one seat in Haryana.

The Congress, on the other hand, did not allow the memories of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, the LTTE and the DMK "link" and the Jain Commission report to cloud its political imperatives. It cemented a coalition with the DMK and the Left in Tamil Nadu, a state which eluded its grasp for decades. The alliance worked and resulted in a complete sweep.

The BJP made the mistake of rebuffing the Asom Gana Parishad in the knowledge that it had emerged as the "anti-Congress" pole in Assam. The AGP belied the claim by picking up more seats than the Congress.

In Maharashtra, the alliance with the Nationalist Congress Party came in handy in offsetting the anti-incumbency sentiment against the Sushil Kumar Shinde government.

The other states where alliances came in handy for the Congress were Bihar — though the Rashtriya Janata Dal ladled out only four seats — and Jharkhand, where the Congress-RJD-JMM combine swept the polls.

In Uttar Pradesh, however,

the BJP cut its losses by ensuring that the Congress did not tie up with either the Samajwadi Party or the Bahujan Samaj Party.

In Karnataka, had the Congress teamed up with H.D. Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular), the story might have been different.

Failure of the India Shining and "feel-good" campaign: The India Shining campaign may have been one of the most glitzy publicity exercises after the Congress campaign of 1984. While the latter — which conjured up images of an India "under siege" after Indira Gandhi's assassination — worked wonders for the Congress, India Shining burnt itself out after a few flickers.

Even BJP strategist Pramod Mahajan said he decided halfway to pull out of the campaign once he gauged the extent of what he said was "middle-class anger".

The middle-class was put off by the perception that the government had allegedly poured crores of taxpayers' money into the campaign. In rural areas, the "feel-good" catchline was the butt of jokes among people for whom basic amenities like electricity, water and roads were a distant dream.

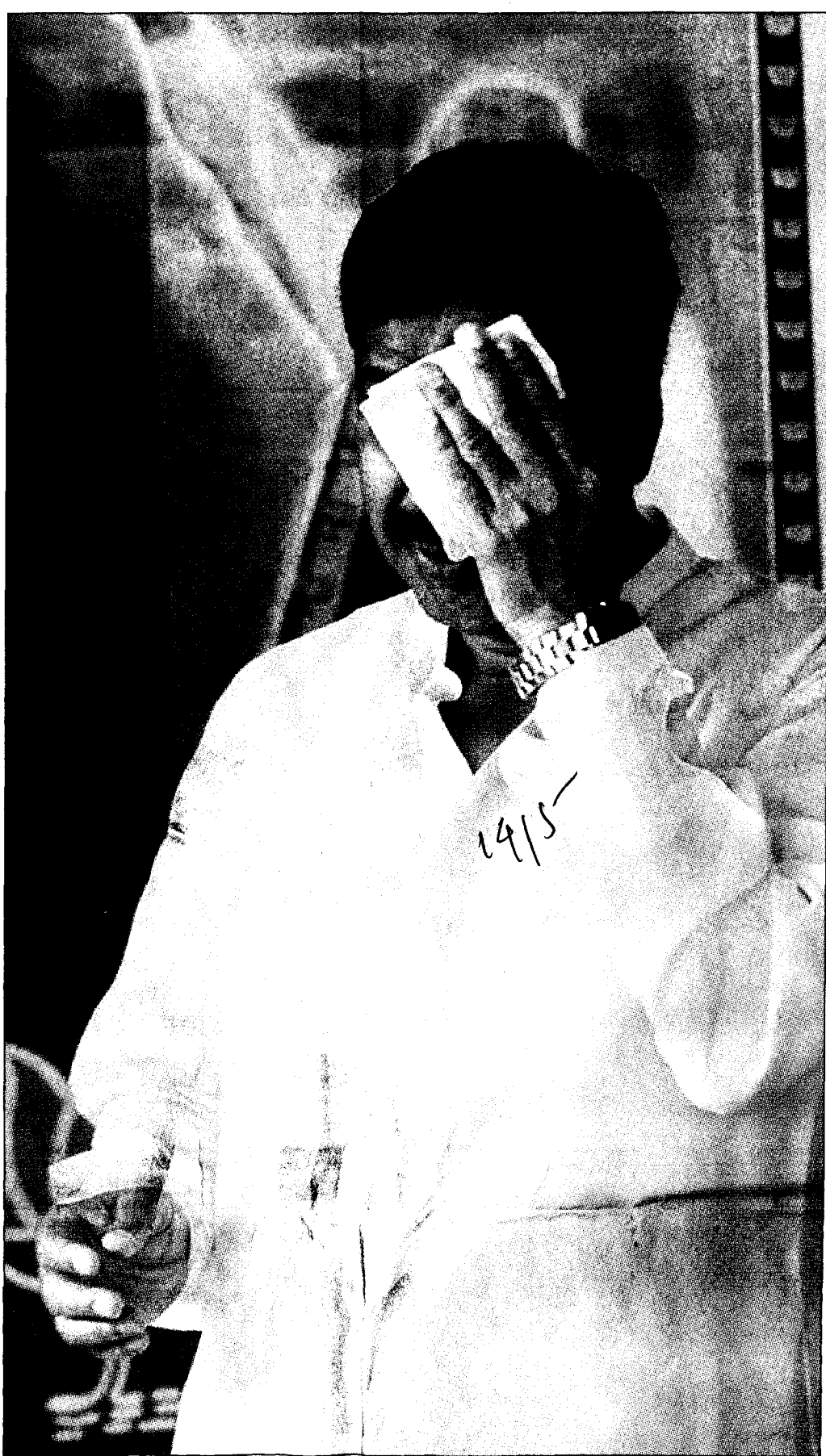
The idea behind the campaign, BJP strategists said, was to fuel the "aspirations and ambitions" of the poor and the marginalised classes.

Anti-incumbency: It is difficult to assess the extent to which the anti-incumbency factor operated because there is no general pattern. In Andhra Pradesh, N. Chandrababu Naidu was handicapped by the double baggage of his own nine-year rule and the five-year NDA regime. It swept his party and the BJP out.

In Karnataka, S.M. Krishna's government brought about his own downfall and that of his party, the Congress, in the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls to the BJP's advantage. In Maharashtra, on the other hand, the Congress-NCP could stave off a far greater anti-incumbency disadvantage through a pre-poll coalition, which checked the BJP-Shiv Sena's march.

In Punjab, chief minister Amarinder Singh had to pay a price for his alleged high-handedness against the Akali Dal.

NOT FEELING GOOD



BJP leader Pramod Mahajan at the party office in New Delhi on Thursday. (PTI)

Andhra augury for Delhi feat

K.SUBRAHMANYA

New Delhi, May 13: Until three days ago, the Congress, buoyed by its allies, was merely hoping to substantially improve its tally in the 14th Lok Sabha. All that changed on Tuesday afternoon.

The Congress tasted blood after the landslide victory in Andhra Pradesh. It sensed a distinct chance of upsetting the NDA.

The resounding verdict against the Telugu Desam party leaders interpreted, could reflect not just the anti-incumbency sentiment against Chandrababu Naidu's government but also the NDA regime. More so, as the Vajpayee card that Naidu played did not rescue his government. The party's apex poll strategy committee chaired by Sonia Gandhi described the Andhra verdict as a "three-in-one victory".

Yet, they could not have expected a clear verdict to form a government with its allies and the Left parties. Party leaders were pleasantly surprised as the results blinked on the EVMs through the day.

First and foremost, the unexpected clear verdict, which belied projections of a hung Parliament, was attributed to "people's resentment" against the BJP-led government's policies.

"People of India have rejected the BJP-led NDA government. It is a clear disapproval of the NDA government's communal politics," said party general secretary Ambika Soni. The improved Congress tally in Gujarat — 12 of the 26 seats — mirrored the anti-communal nature of the verdict, she said.

Soni felt the voters did not accept the way the NDA sought to project a "feel-good" image of its government and the India Shining campaign. The Congress was successful in its campaign to counter the NDA propaganda by highlighting the ruling alliance's neglect of the agricultural sector and the growing problem of rural and urban unemployment, she said.

Sonia's political secretary Ahmed Patel attributed the stunning verdict against the NDA to the "arrogant" conduct of its leaders.

However, neither Soni nor Patel only blame the NDA's fail-

ures for the outcome. They gave credit to Sonia's "decisive" leadership in the run-up to the elections.

"Ever since the Shimla brainstorming session last July, the Congress president worked on forming strong strategic and secular allies with the objective of defeating the BJP-led alliances. Our alliances have made all the difference in the overwhelming mandate in states like Andhra and Tamil Nadu," said a party functionary.

But the most crucial aspect,



Sonia greets the media at her residence in Delhi. (Reuters)

said general secretary Oscar Fernandes, has been Sonia's campaigning. She single-handedly took on the responsibility of boosting the morale of party workers by travelling across the country by road since last September. She was the sole star campaigner for the party, he said.

The euphoria could not dismiss the gloom of some setbacks. Party functionaries expressed concern that the anti-incumbency against the NDA did not work in party-ruled states like Karnataka, Kerala, Punjab and Maharashtra. "We are disappointed with our performance in these states," said Soni.

There is a feeling that the results in Karnataka could have been different had the party explored an alliance with H.D. Deve Gowda's Janata Dal (Secular).

Swords out in BJP, Naidu prime target

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 13: The very day the Telugu Desam-BJP combine was voted out in Andhra Pradesh, the blame game had started at the BJP headquarters.

Although the party did not have much at stake in the Assembly elections, the more perceptive minds saw what was coming: Andhra could be repeated many times over.

So who is the culprit? Heading the casualty list is party chief M. Venkaiah Naidu. In retrospect, his decision to tussle his head and shave off his moustache at the Tirupati temple, a day before the Andhra results were declared, was ill timed. The buzz in the party is: "Sar munda ke, olay pade" (He shaved his head, then the hailstones fell).

There is a murmur of how Naidu allowed himself and the BJP to be "swept away" by the hype generated by its victories in the three Assembly elections last year. It is an open secret that Atal Bihari Vajpayee was not interested in advancing the Lok Sabha polls as he wanted to carry forward his Pakistan peace initiative.

But Naidu and the proponents of an early poll persuaded him to accept their argument. They said by September — when the polls were due — the "anti-incumbency" factor might undo whatever positive achievements the government had to speak of and the BJP might lose the advantage it had gained in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh.

In his defence, Naidu's supporters say he "energised" the cadre after the "lacklustre" spell of his predecessors, Kushabhau

Thakre and K. Jana Krishna-murthi. But his detractors ask what happened to their "energies" in states like Gujarat, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh where the party has seen its worst-ever performance since 1996?

Naidu has secured a second term as president but it has to be endorsed by the party's national council, scheduled to be held in a couple of months. The BJP had hoped to convert it into a "massive victory celebration" but that is not to be, at least not for Naidu, who might find his job on the line. With Vajpayee ready to become leader of the Opposition, speculation has already begun on L.K. Advani's return as head of the party to rev it up for the electoral battles ahead.

The other factor that goes against Naidu is that he was allegedly instrumental in pushing through the alliance with the Desam in Andhra against the state unit's wishes. The terms and conditions of the alliance,

sources say, were dictated entirely by the Desam. The feeling is that the BJP's potential, in what sources claimed was a "high-growth" area, was thwarted by the alliance.

Casualty number two could be Pramod Mahajan and the school of politics he typifies which, the sources maintain, is miles removed from the ground realities. "His laptop computers, surveys and micro-management may have worked miracles in Rajasthan, but look what happened in Uttar Pradesh," says a former MP.

In Maharashtra, Mahajan's home turf, the BJP could not repeat its 1999 success despite its perception that there was a "huge" anti-incumbency sentiment against the Sushil Kumar Shinde government.

Sources close to Mahajan, however, say he was brought into Uttar Pradesh barely a month before the elections and it took him some time to grasp the "complexities" of the state. By the time he got down to working out strategies, they say, it was too late. The sources also maintain that unlike Rajasthan, where his writ prevailed over the state unit, the Uttar Pradesh leaders held their own against Mahajan.

The third casualty could be Narendra Modi, prided as the BJP's Hindutva mascot. The last thing the party was prepared for was a loss of 12 seats in Gujarat, which returned it to power in the state with a landslide verdict less than two years ago. Sources say the debacle might fuel the incipient rebellion within the state BJP against Modi.

Others on the less-favoured list include Kalyan Singh and Rajnath Singh. Both were expected to send the BJP's Uttar Pradesh tally soaring to 40-plus.

SON'S DEBUT LIKE FATHER'S, TO TAKE CHARGE OF UP

Rahul set for Rajiv encore

RASHEED KIDWAI

New Delhi May 13: Rahul Gandhi is now going to focus on Uttar Pradesh. Like father Rajiv Gandhi on his political debut, Rahul is all set to be made party general secretary in charge of the country's most populous and politically significant state.

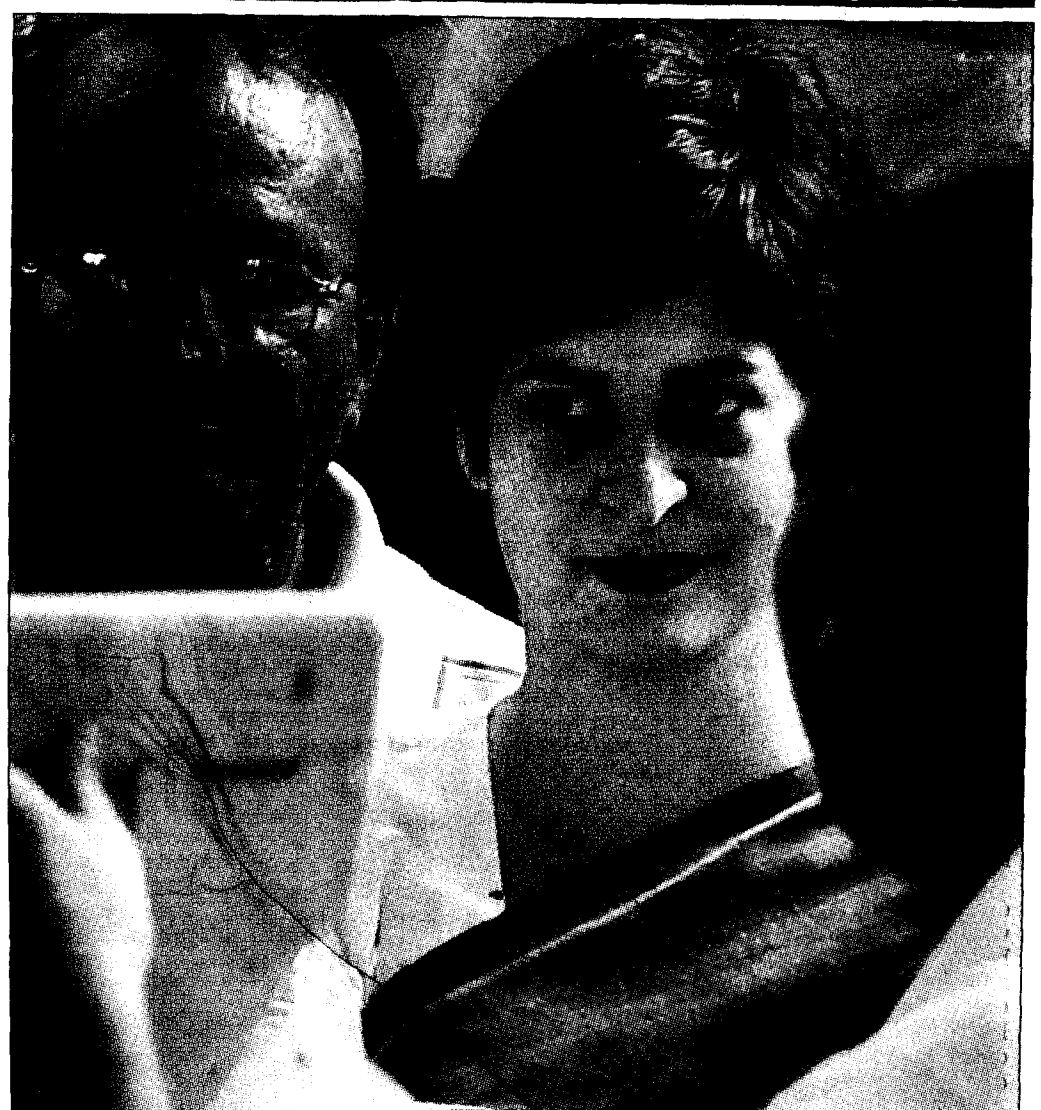
In Sonia Gandhi's scheme of things, the Uttar Pradesh Congress unit will be divided between four "working presidents" instead of having one customary head. These working presidents will directly report to Rahul.

In addition, as a member of Parliament, Rahul will be in the Lok Sabha to provide "moral support" to Sonia in case she goes on to become Prime Minister.

It is, however, unclear how younger sister Priyanka will make a formal political entry. Family retainer Sitish Sharma's defeat in Sultanpur has come as a mild shock because he had been asking voters to support him as he was keeping the seat warm for Priyanka.

10 Janpath insiders said Rahul's public face and Priyanka's behind-the-scenes role as Sonia's "closest adviser" was part of a well thought out strategy and will continue to be in operation for some more time. As an insider said, "Let us not forget that the arrangements have been worked out as part of a design. Rahul could not have been a success without Priyanka's encouragement and support. The three are close friends in addition to being family."

While Congress workers are



Priyanka Gandhi attends the counting of votes in Rae Bareilly on Thursday. (AFP)

seen to see Priyanka assume a more active and direct role, 10 Janpath is not in a tearing hurry because she has a "more important task" of bringing up two young children. Politics, being a punishing assignment, can wait, they argue.

In the Congress, Rahul's stock has gone up manifold. He is seen as an ultimate power centre now. In fact, a Rahul "coterie" has emerged, consisting of Jair-

am Ramesh, Salman Khursra, Sam Pitroda and Vincent George, who are calling shots in the party on all crucial matters.

Rahul's Uttar Pradesh task is not without significance. The leadership is conscious about grooming him for the future and the heartland state is seen as the best battleground. Congress workers are convinced that if the party has to regain its primacy in national politics, it must re-

gain lost ground in Uttar Pradesh that sends 80 MPs to the Lok Sabha.

Assembly polls in the state which are scheduled for February 2007, apply him Rahul ample time to is one challenge and get results. It mar the party. Can make or are somehow cons workers only Rahul can deliver that against a resurgent Samajwadi Party, the BSP and the BJP.

The party had put up 13 nominees for the poll. Mooli's flimsy was from Ganga herjee's Bengal Congress.

India shines through Verdict 2004

By C. Rammanohar Reddy

Verdict 2004 is surely as momentous as the defeat of Indira Gandhi and the Emergency in 1977. There have been more decisive outcomes, in terms of yielding a clear majority in Parliament, like Indira Gandhi's triumph in 1971 and Rajiv Gandhi's landslide victory in 1984, but no election other than 1977 has arguably articulated the voice of the Indian people as clearly as 2004. The message is unequivocal: India firmly rejects the economic, social and political agenda of the Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance Government.

To explain the defeat of the NDA in terms of anti-incumbency or to say that the BJP was let down by its allies or that the rural voter has prevailed over the urban is to throw red herrings on the road to understanding the reasons for the ouster of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government. There certainly was a mosaic of factors that contributed to the outcome in each Lok Sabha constituency in each State. There is, however, one set of reasons that, barring the odd exception, is common across the length and breadth of the country for why a sufficiently large number of voters did not press a particular button on the electronic voting machines. They felt insulted by the BJP's claims about the economy doing exceptionally well. They refused to buy the stability argument of the NDA. They were angry about the ruling coalition's ugly tirade against Congress president Sonia Gandhi. And they obviously did not believe the claim that a government headed by Mr. Vajpayee is the best one to govern the country for another five years.

The BJP, flush with its unexpected victory last December in three major States and with the string of good news about the macro-economy, thought it

was going to be a cakewalk over the demoralised Congress. The NDA first espoused the 'Feel good' theory. While macro-economic parameters such as the GDP growth rate and exports have indeed been positive, the regime in New Delhi overlooked some obvious facts. First, the country had seen a better economic performance earlier. The NDA wrongly assumed that the people would believe the record in one year (2003-04) foretold the future. Secondly, and this was more important, for years whatever growth had taken place had benefited only certain regions and classes. Be it job creation, health services, education or even nutrition, for the vast majority things were not very much better and they were tired of the promises of a new India. The crude 'India Shining' campaign was increasingly seen as cruel propaganda by most Indians who continued to struggle to make ends meet. Statistics can lie but the ground reality cannot. What the NDA forgot was that the citizen still possessed the ultimate weapon that could be used against an insensitive and manipulative government. This was indeed wielded to show the NDA the door. The coalition did attempt to change strategy mid-course and first turned on the Sonia Gandhi as foreigner issue. But when the anti-Sonia campaign turned vituperative, this was yet another insult to the Indian voter. Even the 'stability' slogan found few buyers when the BJP in the closing weeks tried every trick in the book to enlist as many new allies as possible. Voters could hardly be expected to trust a coalition that became more and more desperate to return to power.

The election turned out to be predominantly a vote against the NDA, but it was also a vote for parties that promised to be empathetic to the condition of the ordinary citizen. In retrospect, how could it have been different

when one political formation held out, for instance, the promise of 100 days' employment to every rural family while the other was content to speak of \$100 billion of foreign exchange reserves and making India 'a great power'? Yes, the Congress did also choose its allies wisely (notably in Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra) and the NDA was no match for some local configurations (Tamil Nadu was the best example). However, the more important factors that drove the NDA to a stunning defeat was a larger all-India anger at the NDA. It is important to recognise that even States that overwhelmingly voted in favour of the BJP last December have now seen a marginal but distinct shift in favour of the Congress. In Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, a dispirited Congress was expected to be wiped out in the Parliamentary elections. But while the Congress tally of 10, at the time of writing, is half the 20 it got in 1999, it is certainly more than it expected. The Congress may well have done much better if it had believed in itself in these States. The extent to which the voter was prepared to turn against the BJP is exemplified by the results in Gujarat. The BJP had as recently as December 2002 shown that it had a stranglehold on the State. Yet it ended up with what can only be described as an embarrassment: a loss of 12 out of 26 seats — with many of the losses in areas that witnessed the terrible violence against Muslims in March 2002.

To return to the anti-incumbency argument, which is often the lazy explanation offered for electoral outcomes. Yes, voter anger against the party in power — whatever its hue — expressed itself in both Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. But if anti-incumbency is the dominant force, how does one explain the victory of the ruling parties in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh,

Delhi, Bihar, Orissa and Maharashtra? Another trivial interpretation is that the rural electorate has voted with its feet against the NDA, while, by implication, the supposedly more enlightened urban residents had allied themselves with the forward-thinking NDA. This again is a self-serving explanation. Yes, rural India has by and large voted for the Congress-led alliance. But so too has the electorate in most of the urban constituencies of Delhi, Kolkata, Mumbai, Chennai and Hyderabad. An interesting statistic is that urban voters have on occasion shown a greater anti-NDA sentiment in the Lok Sabha elections. In the Secunderabad constituency, two-time Union Minister of State for Railways Bangaru Dattatreya of the BJP was defeated by a margin of 70,000 votes. This was six times as large as the gap between the total votes polled by the BJP/TDP and Congress candidates in the Assembly elections in the same constituency. Yet another theory is that the BJP was let down by its allies. This is hardly the case. Yes, the Telugu Desam Party has ended up with 25 seats fewer than in the 13th Lok Sabha and the All-India Anna DMK with 10 seats less. However, the BJP cannot hide the fact that, other than in Karnataka, its own performance has been dismal. It has lost 42 seats (nearly 25 per cent less than its 1999 tally of 180), has emerged an embarrassing fourth in Uttar Pradesh and will come behind the Congress, which it used to deride as incapable of crossing the double-digit mark in the new House.

The BJP will, in the days to come, project an air of injured pride. It will ask itself how much more it could have done than working towards peace with Pakistan and even softening its Hindutva colours. One can only speculate that perhaps the voter could not also forget that it was the BJP that was

in power in Gujarat in March 2002, that it was the party that made India go openly nuclear, and that it had its eyes and ears more attuned to earning praise from the international financial community than to improving the lives of the people in the country. After tasting power and expanding its base among India's middle and upper-income urban classes, the BJP paid the price for becoming disconnected from reality. India twice gave the BJP an opportunity to rule, but on both occasions it failed to rise to the challenge. Now in the most amazing of elections, the country has decided to withdraw the remit to the BJP-led coalition and hand it over to the Congress and its allies.

Will the Congress-led Government do any better? One can only hope that the new coalition at the Centre will learn from past experiences. The grand old party has been out of power for eight years. It was written off, but has managed to claw back after realising that it has to respect coalition politics. It was the Congress-initiated brand of economic reform that India has rejected twice — in 1996 when the Narasimha Rao Government was voted out and now in 2004 when the Vajpayee Government, which followed the same policies, has been shown the door. It must surely recognise at least now that the people are demanding broad-based and inclusive economic policies. They will not accept an approach to the economy that makes India one of the fastest growing economies in the world but also one where a dominant underclass gets left behind.

In election 2004, the majority has shown that it will not be bribed by vague promises of India becoming a superpower in 2020. This certainly is India shinning.

14/5

THE MEANING OF VERDICT 2004

IF INDIAN GENERAL elections are one of the wonders of the world, the country's 670 million voters come close. Without losing their head in any way, refusing to be fooled by grandiose slogans, keeping their eye on issues that matter — above all, livelihood and national unity — more than 350 million of them who turned out to vote have produced a big upset. In fact, this is the first general election since 1977 that has upset every electoral calculation and poll prediction. No pollster or party leader of any significance allowed for a verdict in which the Congress, not the Bharatiya Janata Party, would emerge as the single largest party in the 14th Lok Sabha. Nobody could foresee the Congress-led alliance ending up 30 seats ahead of the BJP-led combine. Nobody could predict the significant increase in the weight of the Left in national politics, with more than 60 seats in a 543-member Lok Sabha and, given these numbers, qualitatively well placed to influence the economic, political and foreign policies of the new Government.

Of the two largest national players, the party that once ruled India without much challenge has performed above expectation everywhere — with the exception of Left-swept Kerala where, for the first time since Independence, the Congress has the mortification of not winning a single Lok Sabha constituency in a general election. The BJP has done well in its traditional strongholds of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh; slipped a little (along with its hard-core ally, the Shiv Sena) in Maharashtra; and made substantial inroads in Karnataka. Its biggest losses have come in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, Haryana — and Gujarat. Some of its heavyweight Cabinet Ministers have been humbled, among them Murli Manohar Joshi, Yashwant Sinha and Sahib Singh Verma (not to mention the Speaker in the last Lok Sabha, the Shiv Sena's Manohar Joshi).

Contrary to opinion and even exit poll findings, the BJP has not fared significantly better than its allies. Over the past decade and a half, the BJP advanced on the national stage partly through raising its vote share incrementally, but even more through its success in striking alliances in every region with parties big and small. This contrasted with the conspicuous failure of the Congress to break out of its shell and find effective allies within the secular camp. This time, three of the BJP's senior partners in key States have suffered a spectacular debacle — Jayalalithaa's All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam in Tamil Nadu, Chandrababu Naidu's Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh, and Mamata Banerjee's Nationalist Trinamool Congress in West Bengal. A critical ally, the Janata Dal (United), fared poorly in Bihar. The impressive performance of two allies, the Biju Janata Dal in Orissa and the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab, cannot compensate for the flopping of the alliance factor in the big States of the South and the East. The other side of the coin is that the Congress' key alliances have clicked — in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Maharashtra — to put the formation clearly in the lead over its national rival. There is yet another feature of Verdict 2004 that needs to be noted; this is the unhesitating verdict given by the people in favour of the Left in its stronghold States — Kerala, West Bengal, and Tripura — in preference to both the Congress and the National Democratic Alliance. The significance of this outcome within an outcome for national politics clearly exceeds the numbers involved.

Starting with an editorial in this newspaper, there has been an interesting debate on what

constitutional rules of the game the President must apply to the identification and appointment of a Prime Minister in a hung Lok Sabha. The biggest upset of this election is that there is no hung Parliament except in the most superficial technical sense. The Congress and its allies as a pre-election formation and the Left parties together constitute a majority in the 14th Lok Sabha. There is a good prospect of bringing in another major secular force, the Samajwadi Party, which has performed exceedingly well in Uttar Pradesh. This means that the new Government in New Delhi will enjoy the confidence of more than 310 MPs, something that the first round of opinion polls predicted for the BJP-led formation! This means a stable Government that can complete its term and function on the basis of a common minimum programme, which has to be negotiated after a thorough discussion among all the parties that participate in and support the new secular and democratic dispensation. What is clear is that this Government can be led only by the Congress and, given the announced stand of the Left and virtually all the parties in the Congress-led alliance, Sonia Gandhi has the Prime Ministership unless, for some reason, she chooses to turn it down.

What is the political meaning of Verdict 2004? It is clearly a vote against the NDA's policies — its highly divisive policies pursued most viciously in Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh and also in the educational arena. The much-hyped Vajpayee factor, which was supposed to render the general election into a one horse race, failed to deliver. The campaign against Sonia Gandhi's foreign origins clearly backfired, as did the highly personalised attacks witnessed from the likes of Narendra Modi and Ms. Jayalalithaa. "India Shining" must be given an award for the worst advertising campaign of the last five years: by seeming to mock the deprivations of the mass of voters in rural as well as urban areas, it opened up a huge credibility gap for the ruling party. In the final analysis, this election was lost by the BJP and its allies — and also by the Congress where it faced the Left — on mass livelihood issues.

What kind of policies can we expect from the new Congress-led dispensation? Reform — in the sense of improving the rules of the economic game and removing inefficiencies and roadblocks to economic development — must be persevered with. The Congress and the Communist parties have profound differences on economic issues. It is obvious that the policies of the new Government cannot and will not be the Left's policies. The point is that a one-sided policy of economic liberalisation and globalisation without factoring in the livelihood concerns of the masses of working people in both town and countryside will not be viable for both socio-economic and political reasons — something that the authors of the "India Shining" campaign and its regional variants failed to comprehend. On the domestic front, the first thing the new Government must do is to have Parliament repeal the notorious Prevention of Terrorism Act, which virtually all the alliance partners are committed to repealing. On the foreign policy front, while good initiatives such as the *détente* Prime Minister Vajpayee attempted with Pakistan and deepening relations with China must be built upon, corrections need to be made on distortions that have crept into official policies on Iraq and Palestine-Israel. The real meaning of India Shining lies in the democratic, progressive and silent way in which hundreds of millions of people have brought about the biggest political upset of recent times.

4 MAY 2004

ভারত উদয় দু'বিবেকে খারিজ করণ প্ল্যাঁচ মহানগরই

শশিষ্ঠা রায়

চতুর্দশ লোকসভার ফলাফল বেরনোর সঙ্গেই স্পষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছে, বিজেপি তথা এন ডি এ-কে গ্রামীণ ভারতবর্ষ যেমন প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছে তেমনই ভারতবর্ষের পাঁচটি মেট্রোপলিটান শহর দিল্লি, মুম্বই, কলকাতা, চেন্নাই ও হায়দরাবাদের মানুষও কার্যত প্রত্যাখ্যান করেছেন বিজেপি ও তার সহযোগীদের। অথচ কয়েক মাস আগে লোকসভা ভেঙে নির্বাচনে যাওয়ার আগে প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী বোধহয় দুঃস্বপ্নেও ভাবতে পারেননি তাঁর সাপেক্ষে 'ভারত উদয়' দাবির এমন করুণ পরিণতি হতে চলছে।

'ইন্ডিয়া শাইনিং' বিজ্ঞাপনগুলিতে উজ্জ্বল ভারতের যে সোনালি ছবি আঁকা হয়েছিল তার পুরোতালো ছিল শহরীকগুলের মানুষের মনে ফিল গুডের ভাবনাকেই আরও সঞ্চারিত করার চেষ্টা। বার বার বলা হচ্ছিল, শহরের মানুষের ক্রয়ক্ষমতা বাড়ছে, আশাআকাঙ্ক্ষাও বাড়ছে, সেই সঙ্গে শহরে শহরে নতুন নতুন বিপণন কেন্দ্র ও দিশি-বিদেশি পণ্যের সজ্জার এমনভাবে তাদের চাহিদা মেটাচ্ছে, যা অতীতে কখনও কোনও সরকারের আমলে ভাবা যায়নি। কিন্তু আজ ফলাফল ঘোষণার সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই স্পষ্ট, গ্রামের সঙ্গেই দেশের সবচেয়ে উন্নত শহরগুলির মধ্যবিস্ত, নিম্নবিস্ত ও বস্তিবাসী মানুষও মুখ ফিরিয়ে নিয়েছে বিজেপি ও এন ডি এ-র দিক থেকে। 'ভারত উদয়' পরিণত হয়েছে নিছক প্রহসনে। পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কের উন্নতি, বিদেশি মুদ্রার ভাণ্ডার উপলক্ষে পড়া, এবং সর্বোপরি বাজপেয়ীর একটি 'সর্বজনগ্রাহ্য' ভাবমূর্তি, শহরের মানুষের মনজয়ের এই রসায়নে বিজেপি আশাবাদী ছিল। কিন্তু আজ ভোটের ফল তাদের এক ধাক্কায় কটম বাস্তবে নামিয়ে আনল।

রাষ্ট্রধানী দিল্লির সাতটি আসনের মধ্যে ছ'টিতে পরাজিত হয়ে বিজেপি কোনও রকমে একটি আসনে লোকসভা তোটে দিল্লির সাতটি আসনই বিজেপির দখলে থাকলেও এ বার কেবল দক্ষিণ দিল্লিতে জিতেছেন বিজেপির বিজয় মলহোত্র। দিল্লির মুখ্যমন্ত্রী শীলা দীক্ষিতের ছেলে সন্দীপ দীক্ষিতের কাছে হেরেছেন বিজেপি বিহারী তেওয়ারি। দিল্লির প্রাক্তন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ও কেন্দ্রীয়মন্ত্রী সাহিব সিংহ বর্মা হেরে গিয়েছেন বহির্দিল্লি কেন্দ্রে। চাঁদনি চকে জনপ্রিয় অভিনেত্রী স্মৃতি ইরানিকে কংগ্রেসের কপিল সিবালের বিরুদ্ধে প্রার্থী করেছিল বিজেপি। কিন্তু স্মৃতির আদর্শ ভারতীয় বধুর ইমজও এই কেন্দ্রে দলের ভরাতুবি ঠেকাতে পারেনি। কবোলাবাগেও জিতেছেন কংগ্রেস প্রার্থী। দিল্লি সদরে কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রী বিজয় গোয়েল হেরেছেন কংগ্রেসের প্রাক্তন মন্ত্রী জগদীশ টাইলারের কাছে। তবে ইন্দ্রপাতন ঘটেছে ন্যমাদিল্লি আসনে কেন্দ্রীয় পর্যটনমন্ত্রী জগমোহনের পরাজয়ে। কিছু দিন আগেই শহরের সৌন্দর্যায়নের লক্ষ্যে হাজার হাজার বস্তিবাসীকে উচ্ছেদ করেন জগমোহন। ন্যমাদিল্লির ওই উচ্ছেদ হওয়া মানুষগুলিকে কিছু ওই কেন্দ্রেই ভোটের হিসেবে স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছিল হাইকোর্ট। নির্বাচনে জগমোহনের বিরুদ্ধে সেই ক্ষোভ উগরে দিয়েছেন ভিটেমাটি হারানো মানুষেরা।

দেশের অর্থনৈতিক রাজধানী মুম্বই শহরের ছ'টি আসনের মধ্যে পাঁচটিতেই জিতেছেন কংগ্রেস প্রার্থী। উত্তর-পশ্চিম মুম্বইয়ের অভিজাত এলাকায় বিজেপির সজয় নিকপমকে হারিয়ে জয়ী হয়েছেন প্রবীণ অভিনেতা সুনীল দত্ত। অভিজাত দক্ষিণ মুম্বইয়ে বিজেপির জয়ন্তীবেন মেহতাকে হারিয়ে জিতেছেন

কংগ্রেসের নির্দীপ দেওরা। এই দু'টি কেন্দ্রের আক্কেরী, বাহ্মা, জুহু, ভিলেপারলে, মুম্বাদেবী, নারিয়ান পরেফের মতো উচ্চবিস্ত এলাকার মানুষের সঙ্গে আপাত দৃষ্টিতে কোনও মিল নেই ধারাতির বস্তি এলাকার। কিন্তু উত্তর-মধ্য এবং দক্ষিণ-মধ্য মুম্বইয়ের নিম্ন মধ্যবিস্ত মানুষ ও বস্তিবাসীরাও একই রকম ভাবে মুখ ফিরিয়ে নিয়েছেন বিজেপি-শিবসেনা জোটের দিক থেকে। উত্তর মুম্বইয়ের শিঞ্জি এলাকা বিজেপির হেভিওয়েটে প্রার্থী ও কেন্দ্রীয় পেট্রোলিয়াম মন্ত্রী রাম নাইককে হারিয়েছেন রাজনীতিতে সবে হাতেখড়ি হওয়া অভিনেতা গোবিন্দ।

দক্ষিণ-মধ্য মুম্বইয়ের নাগপাতা অঞ্চলের বস্তি থেকেই এক সময় উঠে এসেছিলেন দাউদ ইব্রাহিম। সেখানে শিবসেনার মোহন রাওলেকে হারিয়েছেন এন সি পি-র সচিব আহির। এশিমার সবচেয়ে বড় বস্তি ধারাভি উত্তর-মধ্য মুম্বই কেন্দ্রের অন্তর্ভুক্ত। সেখানে শিবসেনার প্রার্থী ও গত লোকসভার শিবকার মনোহর জোশী পরাজিত। এক মাত্র মুম্বই উত্তর-পূর্ব আসনটি জিততে পেরেছেন বিজেপির কীরীট সোমাইয়া।

অঞ্জোর বিদায়ী মুখ্যমন্ত্রী চম্ভাবু নাইডুর স্বপ্নের শহর হায়দরাবাদেও বিজেপি জোটের অস্তিত্ব সাফ। অথচ শাইনিং ইন্ডিয়ায় ভারতের যে মুখ তুলে ধরতে চেয়েছিল বিজেপি, চম্ভাবুর হায়দরাবাদ তার সার্থক দৃষ্টান্ত। বকরকে রাস্তাঘাট, বিদেশি বিনিয়োগের হাতছানি সম্বন্ধে হায়দরাবাদের দু'টি লোকসভা আসনেই হেরেছেন বিজেপি জোট প্রার্থী। সেকেন্দ্রবাদ আগের বার বিজেপির দখলে থাকলেও এ বার সেখানে কংগ্রেসের কাছে পরাজিত হয়েছেন বিজেপির বড়াক দত্তায়েয়। পুরনো হায়দরাবাদ চম্ভাবুর নতুন মানচিত্রে নিজের জায়গা করে নিতে পারেনি। অন্য বারের মতোই এবারও সেখানে জিতেছে বিজেপি বিরোধী কট্টর

মুসলিম দল এম আই এম। তামিলনাড়ুতে বিজেপি-এডিএমকে জোট বিরাট বিপর্যয়ের সম্মুখীন হয়েছে। শহরের অভিজাত এলাকা মধ্য চেন্নাইতে জিতেছেন প্রয়াত কেন্দ্রীয়মন্ত্রী ও ডিএমকে নেতা মুরাসোলি মারানের পুত্র দয়ানিধি মারান। দক্ষিণ চেন্নাইতে জিতেছেন ডিএমকের টি আর বাবু। জয়লালিতার সঙ্গে বিজেপির আতাতকে মেনে নেননি তামিলনাড়ুর জনগণ। চেন্নাইয়ের তিনটি আসনের একটিও দখল করতে পারেনি বিজেপি।

কলকাতা বরাবর বাম বিরোধী ঘাঁটি বলে পরিচিত। কিন্তু সেখানেও দীর্ঘ দিন পরে বিজেপির সহযোগী তৃণমূল কংগ্রেসকে হারিয়ে কলকাতা ও শহরতলির পাঁচটি আসনের মধ্যে চারটিতেই জিতেছে সিপিএম। একমাত্র দক্ষিণ কলকাতা আসনটি তৃণমূল নেত্রী মমতা গিরেছে তাঁর জয়ের ব্যবধান। কলকাতায় বিজেপির একমাত্র আসন দমদমে এর আগে দু'বার বিপুল ভোটে জিতেছিলেন তপন সিকদার। কিন্তু এ বার সেই 'নিরাপদ' আসনটিও কেড়ে নিয়েছে বামফ্রন্ট। কলকাতার পার্শ্ববর্তী হাওড়াতেও জিতেছেন বামফ্রন্ট। যাদবপুরে সিপিএম প্রার্থীর কাছে হেরে গিয়েছেন ওই আসনের দীর্ঘদিনের সাংসদ কৃষ্ণা বসু। কলকাতা উত্তর-পূর্ব ও উত্তর-পশ্চিম কেন্দ্র দু'টি দীর্ঘ দিন পর বামফ্রন্টের দখলে।

উন্নয়নের নিরিখে হায়দরাবাদ বা মুম্বইয়ের সঙ্গে অনেক তফাত কলকাতার। এই পাঁচটি শহরের মানুষের নিজস্ব সমস্যাও অস্বহীন। তবু অসুস্থ একটি ব্যাপারে মানচিত্রের দুরত্ব মুছে দিয়ে এই পাঁচটি শহর আজ একটি অবস্থানে। এই শহরগুলির বাসিন্দারা কেউই এন ডি এ-র উজ্জ্বল ভারতের বিজ্ঞাপনে মুগ্ধ হননি।

10 MAY 2004

BATTLEZONE BENGAL

Electorate 1.7 crore

Male voters 2.47 crore

Female voters 2.26 crore

Seats 42

Candidates 555

(51 more than in 1999)

Women

Left Front contesting seats

Trinamool

BJP

Congress

BSP

Rest independent

Mamata Banerjee, Pranab Mukherjee, Ajit Panja, Subrata Mukherjee, Somnath Chatterjee, P.R. Das Munshi, A.B.A. Ghani Khan Chowdhury, Sudip Bandyopadhyay



A special observer, 126 observers, 2 lakh polling personnel, 180 companies of central forces, 41 ASPs, 188 DSPs and 6,560 ASIs, 37,859 constables, 30 platoons of RAF

Hypersensitive booths

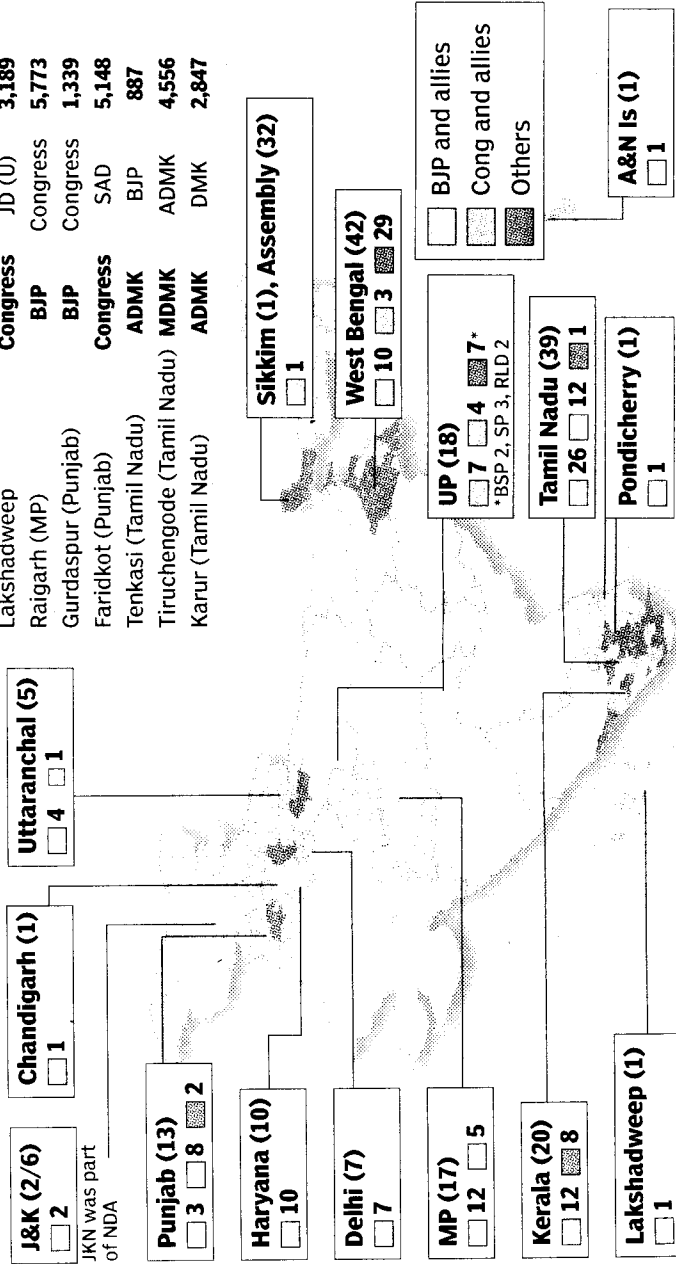
Total booths in Kolkata (all sensitive)

Graphics: SANJAY

State of Play: 182 seats in 16 states and UTs

The fourth phase is crucial for the NDA to touch the magic figure of 272

Only for seats voting in phase 4

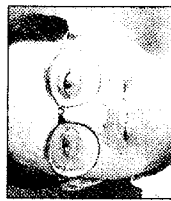


Anything can happen

Name	Winner	Runner-up	Margin
Chandigarh	Congress	BJP	5,449
Chandni Chowk (Delhi)	BJP	Congress	1,995
Ladakh (J&K)	JKN	Congress	2,090
Chirayinkil (Kerala)	CPM	Congress	3,128
Lakshadweep	Congress	JD (U)	3,189
Raigarh (MP)	BJP	Congress	5,773
Gurdaspur (Punjab)	BJP	Congress	1,339
Faridkot (Punjab)	Congress	SAD	5,148
Tenkasi (Tamil Nadu)	ADMK	BJP	887
Tiruchengode (Tamil Nadu)	MDMK	ADMK	4,556
Kanur (Tamil Nadu)	ADMK	DMK	2,847



Ajit Singh Baghatpat (UP)



P. Chidambaram Sivaganga (Tamil Nadu)



Jayaprada Rampur (UP)



Jyotiraditya Scindia Guna (MP)



Kalyan Singh Bulandshahr (UP)



Maneka Gandhi Pilibhit (UP)

Graphics: VINEY



'Natural' leader Cong silent on leadership

Party prepares ground for hard bargaining

K. SUBRAHMANYA

New Delhi, May 10: The Congress today asserted it would be the natural claimant to lead a non-NDA secular government at the Centre, positioning itself for hard bargaining if the numbers in the new Lok Sabha are in its favour.

The significant articulation over the leadership issue — the first time by the party — came from spokesman Abhishek Singhvi at the All-India Congress Committee headquarters just as polling for the final round ended at 5 pm.

"We are confident that there will be a non-NDA secular government led by the Congress party," he said.

Singhvi, however, maintained a tactical silence on who would head a government led by the Congress. If the party gets a majority on its own, the candidate would obviously be Sonia Gandhi, he said. However, hard-pressed the party to reach anywhere near the magic figure of 272.

About the possibility of the Congress supporting some other

party or leader to form a government in case of a hung Parliament, Singhvi said "it is hypothetical and speculative".

Singhvi iterated that there was no place for a third front. Nor would any other party in the Opposition or a combination of parties have enough numbers to stake claim to the leadership of a non-NDA government, he added.

The spokesman said the focus of a Congress-led government would be on employment and agriculture, "the two most neglected" areas in the past few years.

Anand Sharma, another spokesman, said a non-NDA secular and stable government headed by the Congress was inevitable.

"After the fourth round of voting, it is clear that people of India have decisively rejected the BJP-led government.... Our assessment is that the NDA is not getting majority," he said. "In this situation, formation of a Congress-led secular and stable alternative is inevitable."

Sonia, who interacted with senior colleagues during the day to deliberate on post-poll strategies, remained non-committal.

"We should wait till results are out," the Congress chief said as she emerged after casting her vote at the Nirman Bhavan booth in New Delhi constituency this morning.

Her son Rahul and daughter Priyanka, too, preferred not to speak much.

Rahul, who made his electoral debut from Amethi, which his mother vacated, said senior members of the party would decide on the issue. "My personal view is that the Congress party's governing body (working committee) will look into the issue," he said after casting his vote at the Nirman Bhavan booth.

Priyanka maintained that power was "not important" for her mother, brother and herself.

"My mother is doing her job (as Congress leader) to the best of her capacity. It (power) is not a priority for any of us," she said.

Both Rahul and Priyanka sounded optimistic about the Congress making a return to power at the Centre. "We have put our heart into the campaigning. Three days remain for the results. Let us see," Priyanka said.

EXIT POLLS: STATE BY STATE

TAMIL NADU

	NDA	Cong+
TT-STAR News	8	31
Aaj Tak	5	34
Sahara	11	28
Zee	14	25
NDTV	8	31

BENGAL

	NDA	Cong+	Left
TT-STAR News	10	2	30
Aaj Tak	7	7	28
Sahara	8	3	31
Zee	14	5	23
NDTV	9	4	29

MADHYA PRADESH

	NDA	Cong+
TT-STAR News	26	3
Aaj Tak	24	5
Sahara	26	3
Zee	21	8
NDTV	26	3

UTTAR PRADESH

	NDA	Cong+	SP	BSP	Others
TT-STAR News	36	11	17	15	1
Aaj Tak	30-31	7-8	28-29	12-13	1
Sahara	29	8	-	-	43
Zee	28	11	21	19	1
NDTV	28	10	26	15	-



A woman shows her marked finger after voting in Theog, near Shimla, on Monday. (PTI)

Delhi BJP shrugs off exit polls

OURSPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 10: The votes have been sealed in the EVMs. And the exit polls have said the clean sweep the BJP had started to take for granted in the seven Delhi seats is history.

But Delhi BJP chief Harsh Vardhan says he is as confident as ever that history will be repeated.

Hours after polling came to an end in Delhi — President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was the first to exercise his franchise at a booth in the presidential estate — Vardhan insisted all was fine. Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's magic would work as well this time as it had in 1999 when the BJP swept the Lok Sabha polls in the capital with all seven seats in its kitty, he said.

"There is a strong undercurrent in all sections of society in Vajpayee's favour," he said. "I have this feeling, based on the reports received from party colleagues active in the field, that the exit polls would be proved wrong.... We will definitely perform very well," he said, sitting alone in the Delhi

BJP's deserted office.

A kilometre away, the Delhi Congress office appeared more lively. A dozen cars were parked outside and middle-rung leaders made it a point to update state unit chief Chaudhary Prem Singh on the exit polls. "It would have been deserted if the party wasn't doing as well," said a Congress leader. "They can come success and the power that comes along with it."

The capital witnessed about 50 per cent polling. One Election Commission official described the polling as "one of the most peaceful" in recent times. There was, however, one reported incident from Delhi Sadar, where BJP candidate Vijay Goel accused Congress activists of beating up a party worker.

Three BJP ministers — Jagmohan, Sahib Singh Verma and Goel — are hoping to retain their seats. Jagmohan is contesting from the New Delhi constituency, home to the country's most powerful people. But he faces a tough job as the Election Commission agreed to let slum dwellers he had relocated elsewhere in the capital to vote in this constituency.

CEO told to enforce two-wheeler curb

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, May 9. — The Election Commission this afternoon sent a message to the CEO stating that its restriction on two-wheelers should be strictly enforced.

The state's liberal interpretation of the EC's directives had upset the special observer, Mr Afzal Amanullah, and forced him to write to the EC stating that it was a "blatant violation" of the Commission's order by the state administration and a "gross mockery" of democracy.

When asked about the state's interpretation, the special observer refused to make any comment.

The directive required the state to impose "reasonable restrictions" on plying of two-wheelers for the 48-hour period beginning 5 p.m. this afternoon till 5 p.m. on Monday, when the polls close.

Left to interpret the EC's directive, the state government chose to allow convoys of four motor-cycles to ply during the period of reasonable restrictions".

The letter added that the EC's order follows a demand by non-Left

parties for a ban on two wheelers as they are used by some parties to intimidate voters.

A complaint has reached the CEO's office from Mr Nitish Sengupta, Trinamul Congress candidate from Contai, that hooligans are already using motorcade to intimidate voters.

The CEO said today that both in Kolkata and the districts the police have been asked to be more vigilant to ensure compliance of the EC's order restricting the movement of motorcycles.

Meanwhile, the chief secretary and the home secretary yesterday briefed all district magistrates about the state's interpretation of the EC's directives.

They, along with the CEO, reviewed the state's poll preparedness and the law and order situation.

For the first time, Air Force personnel have been deployed for surveillance in the PW, MCC infested districts. Today, an Air Force helicopter was used for dropping police and polling personnel in the PW and MCC infested areas at seven points in Purulia, Bankura and West Midnapore districts.

The CEO was instructed by the

EC to take stringent measures, even suspending polling personnel or presiding officer, in case of dereliction of duty.

If returning officers ignore complaints of booth jamming or dereliction of duty on the part of polling personnel or presiding officers, observers have been told to straightaway complain to the EC or CEO.

The CEO said about 180 companies of central para military force were deployed in the sensitive polling stations.

Moreover, nine companies of state Armed Forces have arrived from Chattisgarh and Orissa, besides 14,000 home guards from Orissa and Bihar. About 730 polling personnel from Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar would be deployed in Cooch Behar, Durgapur, Arambagh and Panskura. He said all polling personnel have reached the polling stations.

In all, 4,74, 35, 674 voters will exercise their franchise in 48,775 polling stations all over the state. This year there are about 355 candidates, 34 of whom are women.

The chief secretary asked all DMs to set up mobile medical units near polling booths.

Telecom watchdog to vet law following complaints of unsolicited appeals

Cell hardsell under poll

M. RAJENDRAN

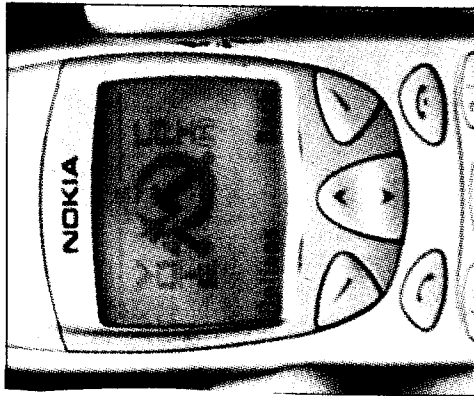
New Delhi, May 10: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and other candidates who have been making their sales pitch through unsolicited calls on the cellphone could be in trouble for violating the model code of conduct.

The Election Commission has asked the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India to convene a meeting to discuss the legal and technical issues related to calls made by Vajpayee and other candidates to voters on mobile and fixed-line phones.

Subscribers have complained to telecom operators that they have received these calls even on the day of polling. Election Commission rules require campaigning to end 48 hours before polling day.

This is the first time that political parties have tapped mobile phone subscribers — either through calls or SMS.

Cellphone users, especially those who have been roaming (travelling outside their home cellular circle), are furious because the calls are unsolicited and amount to spamming and because they have to pay a small charge to receive them while roaming. Those travelling abroad were particularly upset be-



A cell displays a CPM appeal. (AFP)

panel scanner

cause most calls came to them late at night and they had to pay to receive them.

A senior Election Commission official said: "We have asked the telecom regulatory body to examine issues that could be violation of the model code of conduct. Internally, we are examining whether the calls made on the day of polling to voters over the phone amount to campaigning beyond the deadline."

"The regulator would examine the Telegraph Act and explain whether it amounts to violation of the model code of conduct. A meeting will soon be convened to discuss this and a few other issues," the official said.

Trai will also examine the impact of the calls on the telecom network. Election Commission officials said if all political parties decide to start making phone calls to potential voters, there could be havoc.

The issue of whether the voter has a right to privacy that would allow them to bar calls from political parties also needs to be explored, the authorities said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 7

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EC asks for action replay in Chhapra

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI, PATNA 10 MAY

RJD president Laloo Prasad Yadav on Monday suffered a major setback when the Election Commission countermanded election in the Chhapra Lok Sabha constituency where he was pitted against Union civil aviation minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy. And if Mr Yadav fails to wrest the Madhepura seat — the second constituency he is contesting — from Sharad Yadav, he will be forced to watch the government formation game from the margins

Citing large-scale and "silent" booth-capturing, inadequate deployment of the Central paramilitary forces, massive mob violence that not only affected the poll but also instilled a sense of fear among the voters, with the connivance of polling personnel as the grounds, the EC exercised its powers under Article 324 of the Constitution as well as Sections 58(A)(2), 58(2) and 135A of the Representation of Peoples' Act to declare the April 26 poll in all Assembly segments in Chhapra as null and void. Deputy election commissioner A.N. Jha told newsmen that polling for the entire constituency would be held afresh on May 31 under strict security arrangements to be detailed in a separate order shortly.

With the odds being against Mr Laloo Yadav's getting elected from Madhepura, the delaying of polls in Chhapra could

marginalise his position as a kingmaker in the event of a hung Parliament. An angry Laloo Yadav on Monday almost conceded his apprehensions about a victory in Madhepura when he reacted against the EC order alleging that "they do not want to see me in the Lok Sabha." However, he maintained that the countermanding of poll in Chhapra would not affect the result, which he claims would go in his favour.

"Let them bring in an army to conduct the elections. Even then, it will make no difference to the result... I was winning then and I will win again," he said. His opponent, BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy, however, welcomed the EC order as a "victory for democracy."



LALOO: POLL REWIND

In its order declaring the election in all polling stations of Chhapra as null and void, the Election Commission has cited the report of its two-member team that visited the constituency on May 2 and 3, apart from the inputs it received from the returning officer and the election observers, to detail the massive irregularities committed on polling day.

"There were no proper and adequate security arrangements for maintaining a peaceful atmosphere in the constituency... the police forces were found by the observers sleeping in Police Lines awaiting deployment till the mid-day on the date of poll... the miscreants had an unobstructed field-day to capture the booths," the Commission said in its order.

Big bite in last lunge at pie

The last leg of the general elections covers 16 states and Union territories and accounts for 182 seats, the largest chunk in the four-phased marathon.

Of the seats going to polls on Monday, the NDA holds 83 seats, the Congress and allies 51, the Left 39, the Samajwadi Party three and others six. But a crucial fact behind the figures have changed — the DMK, which was with the BJP last time, is now with the Congress. A look at the key states:

Tamil Nadu

Thirty-nine seats in the state and one in Pondicherry give their verdict. In 1999, these 40 seats had proved the pollsters' nightmare. In Tamil Nadu, the DMK held 12 seats, the ADMK 11, the PMK five, the MDMK four, the BJP four, the Congress two and the CPM one. The Pondicherry seat is held by the Congress.

Jayalalitha has teamed up with the BJP and all other parties are with the DMK. The DMK-led Democratic Progressive Alliance is a formidable combination — all the parties together had a 57.73 per cent vote share in 1999. The vote share of the ADMK and the BJP in the last election was about 33 per cent. This, together with strong anti-incumbency, could point to a sweep by the DMK-led front. But a small swing in votes towards the ADMK could help it pick up some seats.

Seats to watch: Mayiladuthurai, where Mani Shankar Aiyar is contesting; Sivaganga, the seat of P. Chidambaram.

Bengal

Bengal's 42 Lok Sabha seats go to the polls on Monday. In 1999, the Left Front's tally was 29 of which the CPM had 22, the RSP three, the Forward Bloc two and the CPI two. On the other side, Trinamul Congress has eight seats, the BJP two and the Congress three.

Election 2004 may be a contest between A.B. Vajpayee and Sonia Gandhi in the rest of the country, but the CPM is hoping that the performance of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee will help it wrest at least two seats in Calcutta. Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul is counting on what it perceives as an undercurrent of



anti-incumbency against the Bhattacharjee government.

The Congress is banking on five seats in Muslim-dominated Murshidabad, Malda and North Dinajpur districts. The party got

a morale-booster in Darjeeling after GNLFC chief Subhas Ghisingh announced his support.

Seat to watch: Jangipur, where Pranab Mukherjee is trying to beat his election jinx.

Uttar Pradesh

The BJP will attempt to consolidate the slight lead it gained in the last round when the remaining 18 seats in Uttar

Pradesh go to polls.

The seats are spread over the west and the Rohilkhand region. In 1999, the BJP had picked up just four although both areas were considered its

strongholds after 1991. This time, the party has to reckon with the formidable alliance forged by the Samajwadi Party and the Ajit Singh-led Rashtriya Lok Dal.

Seats to watch: Bulandshahr, where Kalyan Singh is in the fray; Pilibhit, where Maneka Gandhi is contesting for the first time under the BJP banner.

Madhya Pradesh

For the Congress, things cannot get worse. Out of the last 17 seats voting, the Congress is confident of only two. After the second round, the party appeared to be in the fight in at least 12 seats but the central leadership took no notice. No senior leader campaigned and there was an acute resource crunch.

Seat to watch: Rajgarh, where Digvijay Singh's brother Laxman Singh is contesting as the BJP nominee.

Kerala

The Congress-led United Democratic Front has the edge over the Left Democratic Front. As the two fronts have a thin vote margin between them, a minor swing can cause a difference in seats. Exit polls have galvanised the Congress. The Left has been caught in a bind trying to explain its ties with the Congress.

Seat to watch: Thiruvananthapuram, where Union minister O. Rajagopal is trying his luck.

Delhi

Another make-or-buy state for the NDA. The BJP holds all seven seats at present. But the Congress could benefit from the goodwill for Sheila Dixit.

Seat to watch: Chandni Chowk, where good *bahu* Smriti Irani takes on legal eagle Kapil Sibal.

Punjab

A close contest in most of the 13 seats with the Shiromani Akali Dal-BJP alliance enjoying a thin edge, thanks mainly to anti-incumbency.

Seat to watch: Amritsar, where Navjot Singh Sidhu is making his debut.

Haryana

The Indian National Lok Dal is facing anti-incumbency as the state's 10 seats vote. Another handicap for the ruling party is that it is no longer in alliance with the BJP. In 1999, the two were allies and, helped by Kargil, had bagged five seats each. This time, it is a win-win situation for the Congress.

Salute to Ratnamala

Abheer More such poll observers needed

Ratnamala Rawla, Election Commission observer for Rasansol Lok Sabha seat, has our compliments for ordering arrest of five polling officials of a polling booth in Jamuria for indulging in false voting. As an honest poll observer she did her duty justly and fearlessly, when she found Bijoya Baidyakar with her voter's identity card in hand crying outside a booth for not being allowed to enter and vote. Someone else had already cast her vote, presumably by false identification papers. The NVF guard on duty also confirmed that the presiding officer, an LIC branch manager, had colluded with the booth's polling party to ensure false voting. Ratnamala suspended polling. She was within her right to do so, despite Biman Bose, CPI-M politburo member and Left Front chairman singling her out by name and threatening poll observers like her would be "caught by the scruff of their neck and thrown out of polling booths and politically conscious voters would drag them to the nearest police station". Her name figured among six EC observers against whom the CPI-M had complained to the CEC, "crossing their jurisdiction". Biman had also used choice epithets for Ratnamala being an over zealous observer. Yet on election day she did her duty conscientiously without getting unnerved by Marxist threats. Our compliments!

The dubious role of polling staff in encouraging false voting has raised doubts about fairness of successive elections in West Bengal. *The Statesman* on election day carried several reports of how genuine voters with voter's identity cards were not allowed to vote in three Kolkata parliamentary constituencies and also disallowed from casting tender votes. When voters like Ashis Das of 45 Shyamabazar Street tried to exercise their franchise Marxist hoodlums following Biman's directive, caught them by the scruff of their neck and threw them out of polling booths. No help was forthcoming from the state CEO's help-line. Polling could have been free and fair if other observers did their duty conscientiously like Ratnamala. But it needs courage and conviction which seemingly are in short supply.

THE HINDU

Grab observers by their collar'

KOLKATA, May 8. — West Bengal may not witness a peaceful election on Monday if the mood of CPI-M leaders and their allies in the Left Front is anything to go by.

"If poll observers cross their jurisdiction on polling day... if anonymous people ask questions inside polling stations, they'll be caught by the scruff of their neck and thrown out... people will drag them by their collar to the nearest police station," LF chairman Mr Biman Bose said

today. As if holding someone by the collar is a civilised act, Mr Bose added: "But no one will misbehave with them."
"A section of people

and fair poll in Bengal. We appeal to all not to fall into their trap." What the LF chairman was clearly hinting at was that Central observers should stick

minister said yesterday the government had no complaints with the EC. But Mr Bose's statement was a clear signal to CPI-M cadres that the party

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(Central observers) are hatching a conspiracy to spoil the tradition of free

was giving them a free hand to counter the EC. Interestingly, the chief

— SNS



If poll observers cross their jurisdiction on the day of the election... people will drag them by their collar to the nearest police station.

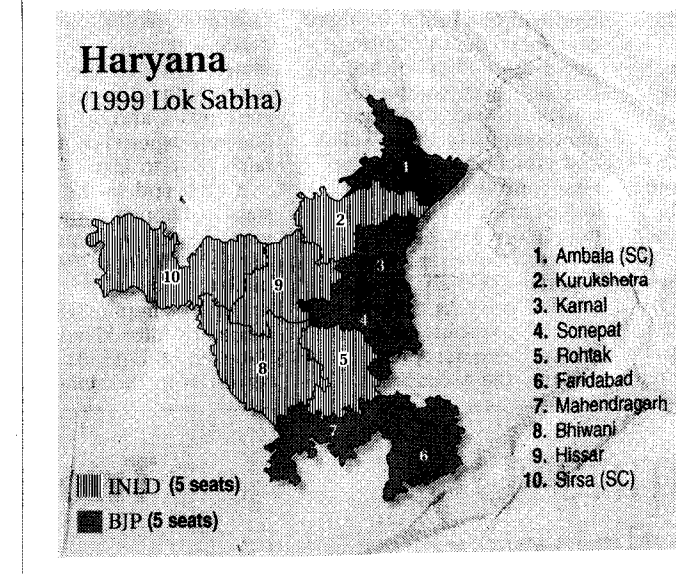
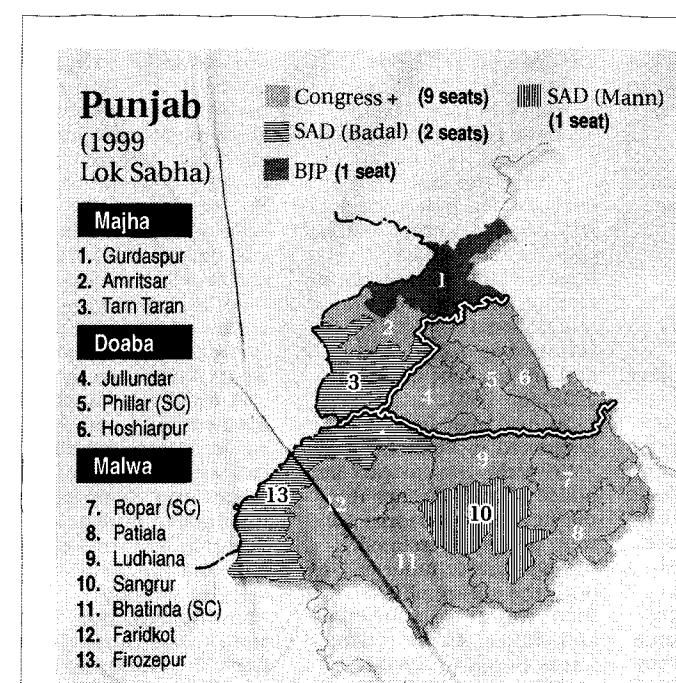
In Punjab and Haryana, ruling parties up against the wall

In Haryana, it is advantage Congress, but in Punjab, the party is likely to be at the receiving end, says Yogendra Yadav

Will the NDA manage to offset its sure losses from Haryana with the help of possible gains in Punjab? Or, will the Congress turn the multi-cornered contest in Haryana to its advantage to offset losses in Punjab? This must be the question that occupies the strategists of the two leading formations as they head for the final round of polling. Once a part of the undivided Punjab, both these States have followed a political trajectory that is quite independent of each other. But there is one thing common to the electoral contest in both these states. The ruling parties in both the States find themselves up against the wall, with indications that the swing factor as well as the alliance effect is working to their disadvantage.

Last time the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) and the BJP combine swept the Lok Sabha polls by winning all the 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana. Both the parties won five seats each, as the BJP had managed to secure a better deal in the alliance than its ground strength indicated. This time both the parties have only losses to look forward to as they face the electorate separately. The relations between the two allies were never smooth but the final break-up happened before the Lok Sabha elections when the State BJP unit felt, reportedly against the advice of the party's central leadership, that it could improve its long-term electoral prospects by contesting on its own. No doubt, the BJP has gained some support in the State but has not quite outgrown its image of a party of the urban traders and immigrants from Punjab. This cruel realisation is beginning to dawn upon the party's leadership as it finds itself in a tight corner in the electoral contest. The BJP should be happy to secure a couple of seats in the State, though its tally could be reduced to a nought in the worst-case scenario.

The ruling INLD appears to be at the receiving end of a strong anti-incumbency backlash. Unlike most other States, this sentiment does not seem to be driven by a perception of non-performance on the developmental front. In relative terms the performance of the Government on the routine developmental and civic amenities front is not seen to be worse than its predecessors. What is really driving the voters away from the ruling party is the autocratic manner in which Mr. Chautala and his sons have ruled the State. There is scant regard for democratic norms and procedures, whether in the legis-



Graphics by Varghese Kallada

lature or within the party. Stories of wanton display of autocratic power, use of political power for looting public and private resources, use of the State police and private musclemen to silence critics and routine humiliation of bureaucrats and ministers by the Chautala clan are the stuff of everyday gossip in the state. The party still enjoys considerable support among the Jats, the largest and the most powerful agrarian community that accounts for one-quarter of the State's electorate, but the unrest among the peasants may take some of that away. Besides, being too popular among the Jats is not an asset in Haryana, for it fuels a sense of caste discrimination and consolidates other communities against them. The INLD is conscious of the challenge this time in view of the Assembly elections that are due in less than a year. Mr. Chautala is doing everything possible, including fielding both his sons, in this election. Ground reports and various polls indicate that the going may be tough for them. In any case, the

INLD is not a party that any opponent can take lightly and is in serious contest in half the constituencies of the State. The Haryana Vikas Party of Bansi Lal is also in the fray and is hoping to take away a chunk of the Jat votes from the INLD, but its strength has been reduced over the years and it does not appear to be in the contest except in a couple of constituencies. The Congress seems to be the biggest beneficiary of this four-way contest. Ironically the party has done pretty little in the past four years to deserve this gain. The faction-ridden State Congress has witnessed ugly battles for leadership between the Bhajan Lal faction and the factions led by Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Birender Singh. Yet, despite its decline in the 1990s, the Congress has retained more than 30 per cent vote share in the State. It is the only party in the State that enjoys a support that cuts across all the major castes and

PUNJAB Akali disunity benefited the Congress in 1999

Party	Lok Sabha elections						Assembly elections 2002
	1996		1998		1999		
	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Votes (%)
Congress	2	35.1	0	30.3	9	44.4	37.0
Shiromani Akali Dal (Badal)	11	38.1	10	40.9	2	31.3	31.4
BJP	0	6.5	3	11.7	1	9.2	5.7
SAD (M)	0	3.9	0	2.7	1	3.4	4.7
SHSAD (Tohra)	---	---	0	---	0	4.6	---

Note: In 1996, the SAD (B) and the BJP had an alliance. The seats and votes of SAD (B) include that of its alliance partner the BJP, which won three seats. In 1998, the Congress had an alliance with the CPI and the CPI (M), hence the votes for the Congress include that of its allies. In 1996, the SAD (B) had an alliance with the BJP. It had also contested against the Janata Dal (Jalantihar) and supported one independent candidate in Phillaur. Both these allies won their seats. The votes for SAD (B) include those of these two allies. In 1999, the Congress had an alliance with the CPI and the CPI (M), hence the votes for the Congress include that of its allies. In 1999, the SAD (B), the DBSM and the BJP had an alliance. The votes of the SAD (B) include that of the DBSM. In the 2002 Assembly elections, the Congress and the CPI had an alliance, hence the votes of the Congress include that of its ally. In 2002, the SAD (B), the DBSM and the BJP had an alliance. The votes of the SAD (B) include that of the DBSM.

HARYANA Multipolar contests have produced varying outcomes in each election

Party	Lok Sabha elections							
	1991		1996		1998		1999	
	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)	Seats	Votes (%)
Congress	9	37.2	2	22.6	3	26.0	0	34.9
INLD	0	25.4	4	19.0	4	25.9	5	28.7
HVP	1	5.4	3	15.2	1	11.6	0	2.7
BJP	0	10.2	0	19.7	3	18.9	5	29.2
BSP	0	1.8	0	6.6	1	7.7	0	2.0

Note: The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) contested as the Janata Party in 1991, the Samata Party in 1996, the Haryana Lok Dal in 1998 and the INLD in 1999 and the 2000 Assembly elections. The Haryana Vikas Party (HVP) and the BJP had an alliance in 1996 and 1998. The INLD and the BSP had an alliance in 1998. The BJP and the INLD had an alliance in 1999 and 2000.

BATTLEGROUND

Congress to pick nine of the 10 seats in the State. Assuming that the INLD has lost votes since the last Assembly elections, the Congress can hope to achieve a similar division of votes, except that the BJP may get substantially more than the 10 per cent votes it won in 1991. A swing of 4 percentage points, which reflects that situation, could translate into a tally of nine seats for the Congress. The actual outcome may not be that lopsided due to the presence of many heavyweight candidates. But the Congress has a definite advantage in Haryana.

In Punjab, the story is the reverse of Haryana. Here the Congress is at the receiving end of the alliance effect and the swing factor. The Congress faces its traditional rival, the Akali-BJP alliance. The last Lok Sabha elections saw the same line-up, but with a crucial difference. The Akali Dal was divided between the official wing led by Prakash Singh Badal and the rebels, the SHSAD, led by the late Gurcharan Singh Tohra. The rebel faction did not win any seat, but it took nearly five per cent votes away from the SAD. That made a crucial difference as the Congress won nine out of the 13 seats in the State. The Akali-BJP alliance won only three, while one seat went to Simranjit Singh Mann, representing yet another Akali Party. If the SHSAD had not split the Akali votes, the Akali-BJP alliance would have won two more seats. Since then the SHSAD has merged with Badal's SAD and the Akali Dal-

Akalis need a 4 percentage point swing to sweep the State

What happens if...	Seats in 2004 elections		
	Cong.	SAD (B) +BJP	Others
...it is repeat of Lok Sabha 1999	7	5	1
...there is 1 pp* swing against the Congress	6	6	1
...there is 2 pp* swing against the Congress	4	8	1
...there is a 3 pp* swing against the Congress	3	9	1
...there is a 4 pp* swing against the Congress	0	12	1

*pp = percentage point

Congress needs a 4 percentage point swing to sweep the State

What happens if...	Seats in 2004 elections		
	Congress	INLD	HVP
...it is repeat of Assembly 1999	5	4	1
...there is 1 pp* swing against the INLD	5	4	1
...there is 2 pp* swing against the INLD	6	3	1
...there is a 3 pp* swing against the INLD	7	2	1
...there is a 4 pp* swing against the INLD	9	0	1
...there is a 10 pp* swing against the INLD	9	0	1

BJP alliance is back to its natural strength. The real strength of this alliance has been the fact that it brings opposite social bases together. The BJP in Punjab is the party of caste Hindus, mostly based in the urban centres of the State. The Akali Dal has represented the rural Sikhs, mainly the Jat Sikhs who are the largest and the most powerful community in social and economic terms. Paradoxically, the fact that the two parties represent very different segments of the society makes it a very harmonious alliance, with little incentive for any partner to poach into each other's territory. Earlier the State had a distinct regional voting pattern: the Akalis did their best in the Malwa region while the Congress dominated the Majha and the Doab region. But the years of political turbulence in the State have redrawn the political geography and given the Akalis' the same level of support across the three regions. The Congress is the only party that secures a decent vote share among all sections of society. It tends to

make up for its disadvantage among the Jat Sikhs by securing a huge lead among the Dalits, both Hindus and Sikhs, who constitute about 28 per cent of the State's population. This is the advantage that the Congress pressed home in the Assembly elections of 2002 when it successfully dislodged the Akalis from power. The Congress was not touchable any more for the vast majority of Sikhs, as it was for many years after Operation Blue Star. The election also signalled a return to normal politics in the State where questions of development and interest fulfilment taking centre stage, thus displacing questions of identity, alienation and terrorism that dominated State politics for well over a decade.

The Akali-BJP alliance's possible return this time has nothing to do with the agenda of those troubled days. Their campaign has systematically targeted the Amarinder Singh Government in the State for its style of government and for ignoring the interests of the farmers. The Government has not helped itself by appearing to pay more interest in going after Badal and his family than in attending to its routine duties. The ugly and ongoing feud between the Chief Minister and his deputy Rajinder Kaur Bhattal has also damaged the Congress. The Congress has retained its alliance with the two Communist parties. But their ground strength has been considerably eroded during the decade of the insurgency. The Congress could have benefited more with an alliance with the BSP that has a significant presence among the Dalits of Doab region.

In the absence of any such support the Congress faces a tough situation. After the merger of the SHSAD, the starting point of the race is 7:5 in favour of the Congress. A swing of 2 percentage points away from the Congress would make it 8:4 in favour of the Akali-BJP combine. Another two points, a total swing of 4 percentage points from the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, could give the NDA all but one seat from the State. The only consolation for the Congress here is that it may make up for these losses in the neighbouring State of Haryana.

The author is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi and Co-Director of Lokniti, a research programme of the CSDS. This series of essays in The Hindu has benefited from the research support, analysis and insights from Abhay Datar at the CSDS. Unless otherwise specified, the data presented in this series has drawn upon the Data Unit of the CSDS which houses one of the largest data sets on democratic politics anywhere in the world. Himanshu Battacharya of CSDS provided computer support and ran special analyses programmes for this series. The author also wishes to acknowledge the inputs received from colleagues in the Lokniti network from all over the country!

Chapra on hold, EC for repoll in 232 booths

Laloo meets EC, claims Bihar polls peaceful

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI | MAY 8**

CHAPRA can wait a few more days. The Election Commission has, meanwhile, made up its mind on repolling in 232 polling stations in 14 constituencies in Bihar. Repolling will be held on May 10.

Even as the EC cited time as a reason why a decision on Chapra has not been taken, sources said repolling could be held in 150-odd booths there.

JD(U) chief Sharad Yadav,

who is contesting against RJD's Laloo Prasad Yadav from Madhepura, is luckier than BJP's Rajiv Pratap Rudy as repolling in 15 Madhepura polling stations has been ordered.

Repolling has also been ordered in 92 polling booths in Munger, followed by 39 in Banka, 20 in Khagaria, 18 in Saharsa and 13 in Begusarai. EC sources said the two-member fact-finding team which went to Chapra on Sunday and Monday after complaints of large-scale rigging and violence, is yet to submit its report. While Rudy may be sulking over Chapra, Laloo came to Nirvachan Sadan to complain about the "filmy" rigging charges being labelled against RJD activists in Bihar.

After a nearly 30-minute



Express photo

Laloo Yadav after meeting the CEC in New Delhi on Saturday

meeting with the three-member commission, Laloo said polling was peaceful in Bihar this time "and the credit goes to the Election Commission, state government and Laloo Prasad Yadav".

"Union Minister Rajiv Pratap Rudy and other NDA ministers have raised a hue and cry and misled the commission that there were irregularities in Chapra," he said, adding it was their "old habit to save their face from the ignominy of defeat".

Asked about his opinion on the BJP demand for countermanning of polling in Chapra, the RJD chief, who is locked in a fierce contest with Rudy there, said the NDA leaders had submitted false

reports to the Commission.

"We have told the commission that it was free to hold repoll in those polling booths where it felt there was rigging. We are not making any demand as polling was peaceful," Laloo, who was accompanied by party MP Prem Gupta, said.

On his allegation that BSF personnel were found helping the voters in two polling stations in Madhepura to cast their ballots, Yadav demanded that action should be taken against those securitymen as their role could lower the credibility of the paramilitary forces.

He said the EC gave him a patient hearing and promised to take appropriate decision. "I am fully satisfied with EC's assurance," he added.

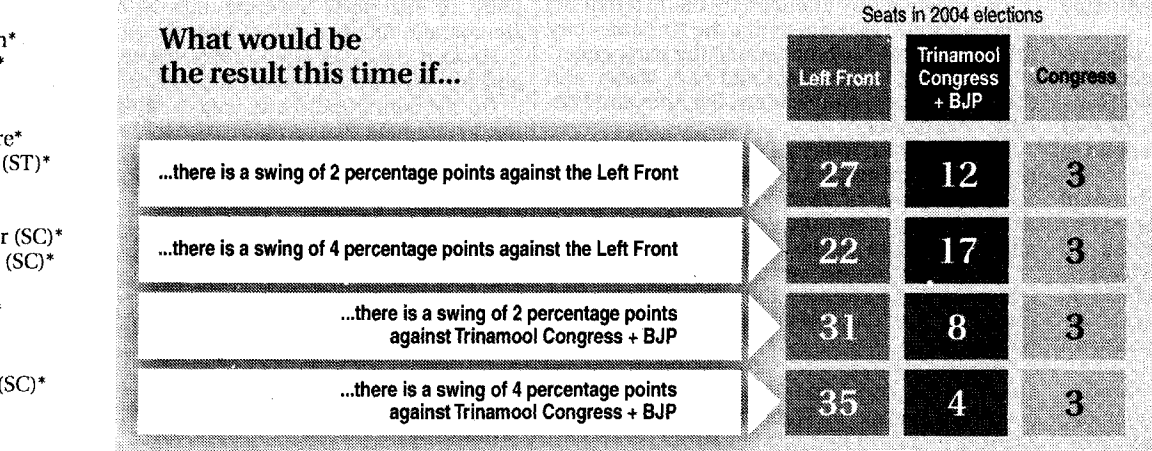
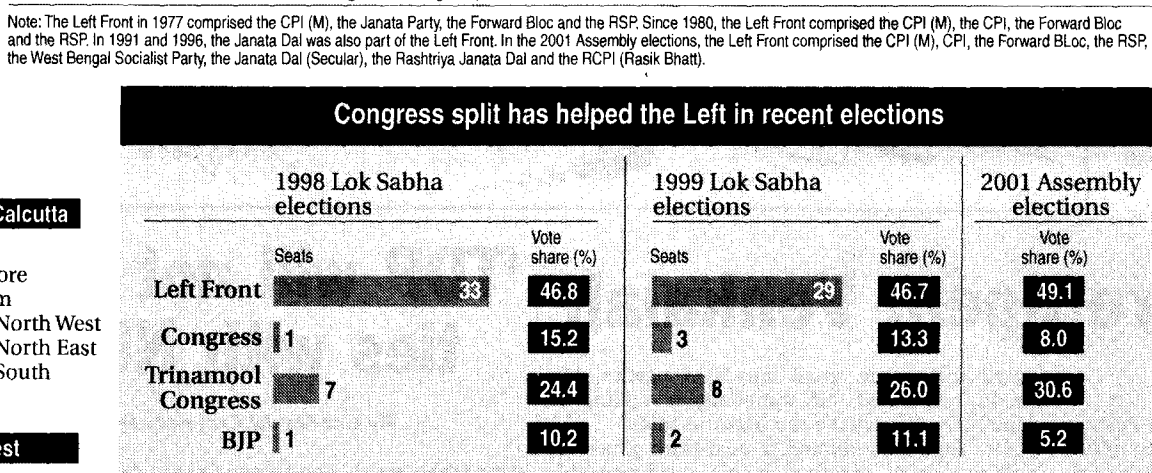
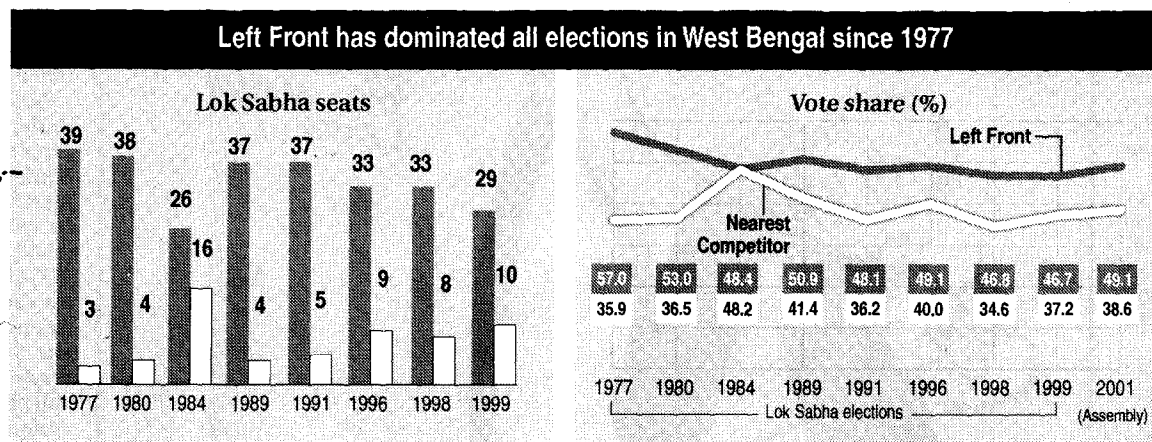
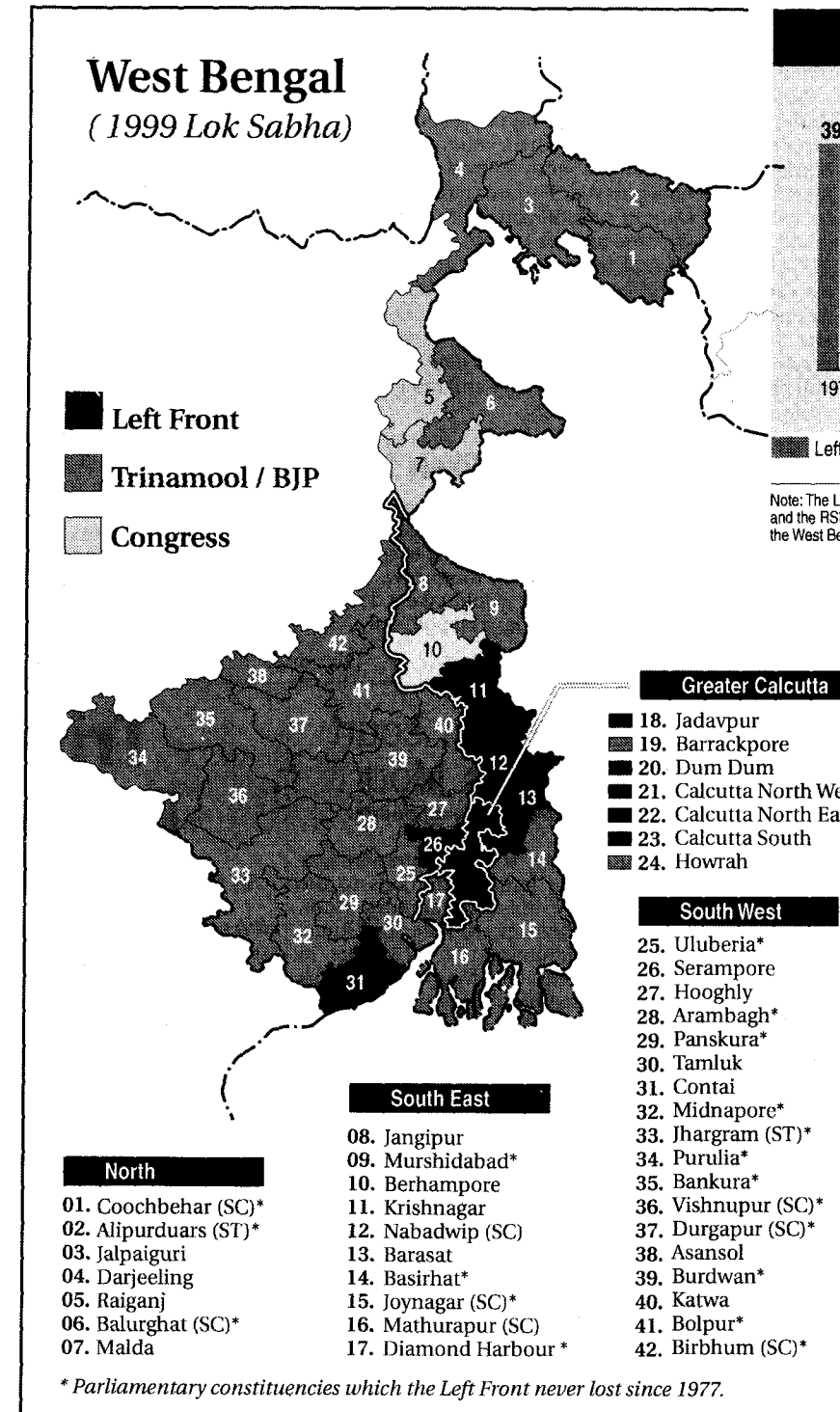
Left is right in West Bengal once again

There is little comfort for the BJP in West Bengal as the CPI (M)-led front seems ready to ward off the challenge posed by the Opposition once again, writes Yogendra Yadav

West Bengal offers little comfort to the BJP leadership, now desperately looking for every single additional seat in the States that go to the polls in the final phase on May 10. The BJP and its ally, the Nationalist Trinamool Congress, won 10 Lok Sabha seats between themselves in the last parliamentary elections in 1999. Going by current indications, they should be happy if the alliance can retain these seats. No big surprises are expected in this State that accounts for 42 Lok Sabha seats. Much of the political excitement is about a few seats changing hands.

This is not how the trend appeared a few years ago. The split in the West Bengal unit of the Congress and the formation of the Trinamool Congress by Mamata Banerjee had given a new sense of purpose and energy to the anti-Left Front forces in the State. Ms. Banerjee's decision to enter into an alliance with the BJP seemed to be paying off, notwithstanding all its complications and tensions. The alliance prevented the Left Front from reaping electoral benefits of the split in the Opposition votes. The Trinamool-BJP alliance won eight seats in its very first appearance in 1998 and then raised the tally to 10 in the 1999 elections. This was no small achievement in West Bengal where the Opposition tally has not touched double digits in the last 25 years except during the Rajiv Gandhi wave in 1984. Slowly but surely Ms. Banerjee's political fortunes appeared on the upswing. The NDA would have definitely looked forward to major gains in the next Lok Sabha elections in 2004.

All this changed with the 2001 Assembly elections. The elections seemed to offer the best ever chance for the anti-Left forces in three decades. A section of the media created an impression that the 25-year-old Left Front regime was about to be dislodged; opinion polls and exit polls confirmed this impression. This was clearly the moment of Ms. Banerjee's glory. And then came the election results. The Left Front coolly walked away with yet another overwhelming victory in its bag with a two-thirds majority. Ms. Banerjee responded with disbelief, allegations against the Election Commission and a series of actions that have diminished her political stature and power. These included moves intended to cut to size her own colleagues within the party that resulted in cutting down the support base of



the party itself. She has snapped her short-lived and unproductive alliance with the Congress in the Assembly elections to come back to the BJP, but it is not the same kind of an alliance that challenged the Left Front.

This is not the first time the Left Front has warded off a potential challenge. Ever since the Left Front changed the political landscape of the State with its famous victory in the 1977 elections, it has encountered many challenges. The first major shock came in the 1984 Lok Sabha elections when the Congress matched the Left in terms of vote share and picked up 16 seats, mainly in the urban areas. But the Left Front ensured that it remained a one-time exception and that things were back to normal by the 1987 Assembly elections. Besides, this was the period when the decline of the Congress

started all over the country. The State unit of the Congress started getting its act together in the 1990s, only to be thwarted by the intense factional fighting in the party that culminated in the split following the 1996 Lok Sabha elections.

Thus, despite a fair degree of accumulated resentment against the Left Front rule, there is little political consolidation of the opposition to the Left. The Left manages to secure anything between 45 per cent and 50 per cent of the votes polled, while its main opponent tends to remain below 40 per cent. A lead of about 10 percentage points is usually enough to give the Left Front more than 30 of the 42 Lok Sabha seats. The unbroken electoral success of the Left Front across eight Parli-

amentary and six Assembly elections is a record unmatched in any other State by any other party. The Congress' dominance in Maharashtra and Karnataka pales in the face of this enviable record. This record also gives lie to the routine theories of an-

ordinary Bengali, is one of the most powerful organisational structures in any contemporary democracy. The party units work right down to the polling booth level with meticulous planning and ruthless execution of those plans.

The awe and fear of this machine is what invites allegations of "scientific rigging" levelled very often against the Left Front. While there is undoubtedly some element of truth in these allegations, and this may explain some of the unusual margins of victory, it would be absurd to suggest that the Left Front's electoral victories can be attributed to these malpractices, rather than a popular mandate.

This may be a factor to keep in mind this time since the Election Commission is taking some very unusual steps to ensure free and fair elections in the State.

While Ms. Banerjee and Ajit Panja look secure in their seats, the other Trinamool candidates may have to struggle to retain their seats. The BJP cannot look forward to much gains here, while the Trinamool hopes to offset any losses by doing well in new seats such as Asansol and Coochbehar. If the Left Front loses a couple of percentage points votes, it might lose a couple of seats. On the other hand, if Ms. Banerjee's support has declined since the last Lok Sabha elections, the NDA's tally may come down by a few seats.

BATTLEGROUND

ti-incumbency being the natural reflex of the Indian voter. While Opposition disunity has helped the Left, it would be incorrect to explain its dominance merely in these terms. Underlying this amazing political record is a very astute organisational consolidation of the radical social transformation brought about by the Left Front governments in its early years. The land

reforms brought about by the Left changed the power relations in rural West Bengal and created a large constituency of potential supporters of the Left. The radical zeal of the Left Front Governments has subsided since then. The ideological clarity and consistency has long ago given way to pragmatism and some confusion. The moral high ground that a Left political activist used to occupy in mainstream politics is no longer available to them, with frequent report of large-scale corruption and use of strong-arm tactics.

Advani seeks vote for speedy development

Lalit Shastri
VIDISHA

The Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, today sought votes for the Bharatiya Janata Party on the basis of the performance of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government at the Centre and for speedy development of the country.

Mr. Advani said the people should elect the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance back to power at the Centre to enable the country to join the ranks of the most developed nations by 2020.

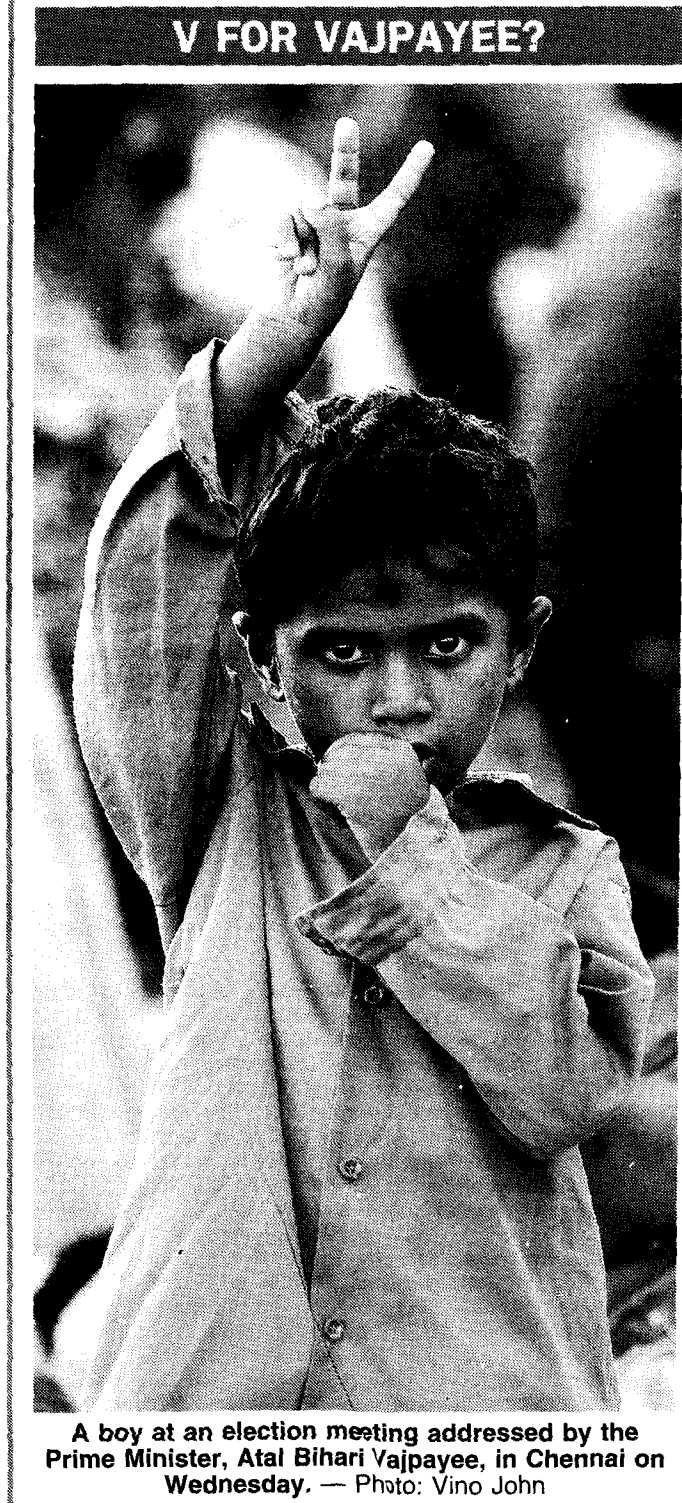
He was addressing a meeting here to solicit votes for the BJP national general secretary, Shivraj Singh Chauhan, who is seeking to retain his Vidisha Lok Sabha seat. Earlier today, Mr. Advani addressed rallies at Itarsi (Hoshangabad) and Jhabua.

He said the country had made tremendous progress since Mr. Vajpayee became the Prime Minister six years ago. "There is no comparison between what has been achieved under the BJP-led NDA Government at the Centre and the 45 years of Congress rule since Independence."

He said it was unfortunate that the people had suffered the scourge of poverty and faced crises on the power and roads front all these years "when most other countries, barring those in Africa, have moved on the fast track of development. This is something that has baffled the civilised world."

The BJP, at its Mumbai session in 1995, had resolved that Mr. Vajpayee would be the Prime Minister if they got the opportunity to form the Government. This promise was fulfilled in 1998 and the country had made great strides on the development front under Mr. Vajpayee's leadership.

"He has been the Prime Minister for six years. He is still the Prime Minister and would continue as Prime Minister for the next five years," Mr. Advani asserted.



A boy at an election meeting addressed by the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in Chennai on Wednesday. — Photo: Vino John

Uniting Leftist radicals as an electoral force

Pratim Ranjan Bose
SILIGURI

Three decades after the naxalite movement fizzled out, Kanu Sanyal is working on a different agenda. Once, one of the closest aides of Charu Sanyal, the mastermind behind the naxalite movement and the creation of the CPI(M), his mission now is the unification of splintered naxalite groups.

His aim is to make Leftist radicals a force in the electoral politics of the country and Kanu Sanyal, now officiating general secretary of the CPI(M), denounces those outfits which are opposed to elections — such as People's War and the Maoist Communist Centre — for "practising terrorism".

Last December, three groups — the CPIML (Unity Initiative), CPI Union M-L and his own Communist Organisation of India Marxist (COIM) — were merged into the CPI M-L following long deliberations. Mr. Sanyal is now in an advanced stage of negotiation with the CPI M-L Red Flag. The latter has a presence pockets of Kerala, Chattisgarh and Karnataka. "I am hopeful of a merger shortly," he says adding that "the inclusion of Red Flag would be a real boost to the whole initiative."

The septuagenarian Communist believes the formation of splinter groups has weakened Leftist radicals as a viable alternative in electoral politics. Mr. Sanyal has been in the "wanted" list for years and has remained behind bars for a good part of his political life. "I do not know the exact number of such [radical Left] factions, but they must run over 20," he says. While the CPI M-L Liberation, which contesting in 70 seats in this election, did not respond the call for merger, responses are said to have been favourable from the Bengal based CCR and PCC-CPIML of Santosh Rana. "The unification would make our presence felt in at least 13 to 14 states," he says. Mr. Sanyal regards the naxalite movement of 1960s as a direct outcome of the aimlessness of Communist Party of India (at least with regard to electoral politics), the general restlessness of the times and the misguided leadership of Charu Mazumdar. He now looks forward to making the unified CPI M-L a force to reckon with in electoral politics.

However, this is easier said than done. Having fielded five candidates across the country — in Darjeeling and Jhargram in West Bengal, Ranchi in Jharkhand, Moradabad in Uttar Pradesh and Parvatipuram in Andhra Pradesh — Sanyal is now running from pillar to post to give whatever support he can to his candidates. "We will come nowhere near victory," he confesses. "We have no money."

CANDIDATE WATCH

Padmaja Venugopal, Congress candidate, Mukundapuram Lok Sabha seat

She is one of the much talked about names in Kerala currently. Padmaja Venugopal, daughter of the veteran Congress leader, K. Karunakaran, entered the fray from the Mukundapuram Lok Sabha constituency with several advantages and a lot of disadvantages. Being the daughter of the former Chief Minister has opened several political paths for her. Her journey up the Congress hierarchy has been smoother than that of her brother and State Electricity Minister, K. Muraliedharan, who is contesting the Wadakkancherry Assembly by-election.

"She has enough political qualification to contest in the elections," Mr. Karunakaran had once said in her defence. The veteran politician should know, having created political space for her. With just a few women joining politics, the slot is secure for her. Besides, she belongs to the forward caste Nair community, with roots in Malabar. Given Kerala's unique communal configuration, the last mentioned is significant. Besides, she has been fielded in a constituency that has elected Congress candidates during the best and worst of times.

Ms. Venugopal's disadvantage is that she has had to compete with her brother in politics. Many believe that the problems in the party and in the Karunakaran faction are on account of their rivalry. There have been several occasions when the conflicting interests of his two children could have put Mr. Karunakaran in a dilemma despite the care he took to ensure that their paths did not cross. It was therefore natural that Mr. Karunakaran worked overtime for securing the party ticket for Ms. Venugopal in the Lok Sabha election, as Mr. Muraliedharan had become a State Minister.

She has also had to live through the pre-election controversy regarding the undue preference given to Mr. Karunakaran and his family members in ticket distribution. (Mr. Karunakaran was elected unopposed to the Rajya Sabha last month). As Mr. Karunakaran's

daughter, she was placed a few paces ahead at the starting line, but appears to be facing hurdles that has been raised by yards on the electoral track.

Her candidature has created bitterness among partymen and at one point of time, the Congress high command even toyed with the idea of changing the candidate at Mukundapuram. Yet she got the ticket because it formed part of the overall package to restore unity in the beleaguered Congress. "There is no basis for the charge that three members of Karunakaran's family were given ticket. Only two are in the fray, Muraliedharan and myself. We are in politics not on the basis of nominations and it is for the people to give their verdict," she says.

Ms. Venugopal is not worried about the pre-election row. "It is a homecoming of sorts for me. I have already made a mark in the constituency in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections while handling my father's campaign. I am familiar to the people in this constituency, which has been a stronghold of the party."

Ms. Venugopal is also not worried about the factionalism in the Congress. "The situation will change as the campaign picks up steam. I am finding it easier relating myself to leaders of various factions." She is facing Lonnapan Nambadan, who is contesting as an Independent under the CPI (M) symbol.

Mr. Nambadan was a Minister in the 1987-91 Nayanar LDF Government, representing Irinjalkuda. Ms. Venugopal's campaign got a boost when the Chief Minister, A.K. Antony, and Mr. Karunakaran appeared on the same platform to inaugurate her election convention. "This has set the right mood for electro-neering," she said.

— Girish Menon

50-55 per cent polling in third phase

● Turnout highest in Nagaland at 85 p.c.

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, MAY 5. An estimated 50 to 55 per cent of the 107 million voters exercised their franchise in the third phase of the Lok Sabha elections today in 83 constituencies spread over Bihar (12), Uttar Pradesh (30), Madhya Pradesh (12), Rajasthan (25), Arunachal Pradesh (2), Nagaland and Jammu and Kashmir (1 each).

With today's voting, polling is complete in 360 constituencies. The final phase of polling on May 10 will involve 183 seats.

The Deputy Election Commissioner, A.N. Jha, told reporters that polling was by and large peaceful except for some stray incidents. In Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, the poll percentage ranged between 52 and 55, while in Bihar it was 45-50. In Uttar Pradesh, 50 per cent of the votes were polled and the highest turnout of 85 per cent was recorded in Nagaland. Jammu and Kashmir recorded the lowest voting of 16 per cent. In Arunachal Pradesh, about 50 per cent of the votes were cast.

Mr. Jha said there were 11 clear cases for repoll in Rajasthan, including one in Udaipur, four each in Jhalawar and Pali and two in Bharatpur. There were reports of poll-related malpractice in Dausa, where the late Congress leader, Rajesh Pilot's son, Sachin, is in the fray, but they were yet to be verified. In Etawah in Uttar Pradesh, there were

three incidents of booth capturing, mob violence and damaging of electronic voting machines (EVMs).

In Lucknow, from where the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, is contesting, there was 35 per cent turnout till 3 p.m., and the overall voting percentage was likely to be about 50 per cent. There were no major incidents in Lucknow and in Mainpuri, from where the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav, is contesting. Similar was the case in Allahabad, the constituency of the Human Resource De-

In praise of EVMs: Editorial
on Page 10

velopment Minister, Murli Manohar Joshi, and Madhepura in Bihar, where the RJD president, Laloo Prasad Yadav, and the Union Minister, Sharad Yadav, are contesting.

Mr. Jha said that while no poll-related deaths were reported, two home guards were killed in an accident in Etah district of Uttar Pradesh. In Jammu and Kashmir, one person was killed, seven security personnel and some civilians were injured in a grenade attack in Bijbehara in Anantnag. While 3,160 of the 7,068 registered migrant voters exercised their franchise in the Jammu region, 31 out of 93 turned out in Delhi and 352 out of 878 voted in Udhampur.

In Tikamgarh in the Khajuraho constituency of Madhya Pradesh, there were two incidents of either EVMs being taken away or their control units being damaged. In another incident, 25 persons captured a polling booth and cast about 50 votes. Chhindwara, which witnessed clashes between Congress and BJP workers on Tuesday, and Balaghat did not report any incident today, Mr. Jha said.

In Bihar, there were incidents of mob violence, resulting in snatching of EVMs and destruction of the machines in some places. There were also incidents of violence outside polling booths.

No incidents were reported from Nagaland. In Arunachal Pradesh, there were reports of some problems in operating the EVMs but they were soon rectified.

Mr. Jha did not say when a decision on Chapra would be taken. "We will let you know when we take a decision," he said when asked about the demands by the BJP, the BSP and the SP for countermanding the polls in that constituency.

On the Lucknow stampede incident, he said the Commission would take a decision soon. To a question on how any decision by the Commission would be meaningful as the elections in Lucknow had been completed, Mr. Jha said, "You wait and see when a decision is taken."

7 6 MAY 2004

THE GLADIATORS

Phase 3

Prominent contestants and main opponents in the third

UTTAR PRADESH		BIHAR	
Lucknow Atal Bihari Vajpayee (BJP) Ram Jethmalani (Ind)	Kanpur Akhilesh Yadav (SP) Ramanand Yadav (BJP)	Madhepura Lalu Prasad Yadav (RJD) Sharad Yadav (JD-U)	Katihar Tara Singh (NCP) N K Choudhary (BJP)
Allahabad Murli Manohar Joshi (BJP) Kunwar Rewati Raman (SP)	Kheri Vinay Katiyar (BJP) Ravi Prakash Verma (SP)	Kishanganj Shahnawaz Hussain (BJP) Taslimuddin (RJD)	Shahdol Sushil K Modi (BJP) Subodh Ray (CPM)
Mainpuri Mulayam Singh Yadav (SP) Bairam Singh Yadav (BJP)	Agra Raj Babbar (SP) M L M Fatehpuria (BJP)	Banka Digvijay Singh (JD-U) Girdhari Yadav (RJD)	Purnea Pappu Yadav (LJNSP) Uday Singh (BJP)

J&K

Anantnag
Mehbooba Mufti (PDP)
Mehboob Beg (JKN)

63 Lok Sabha constituencies polling in the 3rd phase on May 5, 2004

RAJASTHAN		MADHYA PRADESH	
Bikaner Dharamendra (BJP) Rameshwar Lal Dudl (Cong)	Barnar Manvendra Singh (BJP) S R Choudhary (Cong)	Chhindwara Kamal Nath (Cong) Prahlad Singh Patel (BJP)	
Churu Bal Ram Jakhar (Cong) Ram Singh Kaswan (BJP)	Jhalawar Dushyant Singh (BJP) Sanjay Gurjar (Cong)		
Udaipur Girja Vyas (Cong) Kiran Maheshwari (BJP)			
Jalore Bala Singh (Cong) S Sushela (BJP)			
Dausa Sachin Pilot (Cong) Kartar Singh Bhadana (BJP)			

THE STATESMAN 5 MAY 2004

Test for BJP in high-yield zone

LOOK PRIME MINISTER, IT'S NO LAUGHING MATTER



(Left) Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee with Mamata Banerjee at the rally in Calcutta. Sonia Gandhi at Dhulian in Jangipur constituency while campaigning for Pranab Mukherjee. (See Page 9) Pictures by Pabitra Das and Amit Datta

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, May 4: An exit poll-stung BJP's campaign carpet bombing will be tested in the polls to 30 Uttar Pradesh seats tomorrow, as will be Atal Bihari Vajpayee's strategy of soliciting minority votes combined with some friendly fire directed at the rival Samajwadi Party.

Also on test, though to a far lesser degree, will be the effectiveness of the Nehru-Gandhi family's latest flagbearer Rahul Gandhi as a campaigner.

Although polling is being held in 83 seats across seven states, the big battle is in Uttar Pradesh because this is where the BJP stands to win or lose a fair number. It is important also because in the opening round, in which 32 seats in the eastern part went to the polls on April 26, the party was shown in exit polls as not doing too well.

In Bundelkhand in the south-west to Avadh in the centre and the Doab region towards the west, which vote tomorrow, the party has juggled caste equations to keep a pan-Hindu identity while taking care not to instigate communal polarisation.

In meeting after meeting, Vajpayee has sent out the message that the BJP is not an anti-minority party. In Calcutta today, he again appealed to the minorities to vote for the BJP.

At the same time, he has tried to take minority votes away from the Samajwadi Party by suggesting that it is "ideologically close" to the BJP, hoping that at least some would go away to the Congress, which he targeted for the bitterest attack.

The other strategy the BJP used was to enlist the resources

of the Sangh and replicate the Rajasthan experiment of "micro-management" — successful in last year's Assembly elections — in constituencies it lost to the Samajwadi Party or the Bahujan Samaj Party narrowly in 1999. Sources said "micro-management" essentially means adding to its caste vote by neutralising competing candidates or propping up those who would bite into the Opposition's share.

In tomorrow's round, there are eight seats where winning margins in 1999 were less

UP CLOSE

Seats in Uttar Pradesh which could change hands on a 2% or less swing. Polling in these seats is being held today

BJP	3228
Bihaur	1063
Fatehpur	4515
Kheri	4207
Misrik	8057
Jalesar	105
Ghatampur	11664
Hamirpur	

Figures represent the margin of victory in 1999

Election Commission can act fast.

In this state, however, it is not the BJP so much but ally Janata Dal (United) that is in the contest in most of the 12 seats in this round.

Of the seven states going to the polls, the BJP has its governments in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Arunachal Pradesh and is part of the coalition governing Nagaland. Sources said the party is comfortable in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh because the governments there are new and face no anti-incumbency feelings.

But in both, its chances of improvement are narrow because in Rajasthan it already has 16 out of 25 and in Madhya Pradesh it holds nine of the 12 seats where elections will be held tomorrow.

Its stakes in Uttar Pradesh are higher in this round than in the last, and not because fewer seats are going to the polls on May 10. In as many as seven seats BJP's winning margin was less than 12,000 while the scope for wresting such marginal seats from others is also narrow at only three.

The stakes are equally high for regional players like the Samajwadi Party and the BSP. Mulayam Singh Yadav's aspirations to play kingmaker, if not the king, depend on whether he can hold on to the 13 seats he won out of the 30 last time.

Not a big actor in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress would be looking to see if the multitudes Rahul pulled in the area from Farukhabad to Kanpur mean anything by way of votes. In Farukhabad, its candidate, Louise Khursheed, is locked in a straight fight with Samajwadi Party MP Chandrabhan Singh.

than 12,000. If the BJP's strategies work, it could wrest six seats, a number that it would probably not expect in any other state voting tomorrow. If it doesn't work, it stands to not only not win these six, but also lose two, where its own winning margins in 1999 were narrow. (See chart)

In Bihar, the party plans to use booth management in a big way by having vigilante committees for every booth to check irregularities as well as record instances of booth-capturing and rigging on the spot so that the

Of wafer thin margins and intricate alliances

Although the two fronts in the State are of roughly equal strength, the electoral dice is loaded in favour of the UDF, says **Yogendra Yadav**

A couple of weeks ago, political analysts would refuse to be drawn into a detailed discussion of the electoral prospects in Kerala this time. The result, they would say, is not going to throw up a big surprise. It is all a matter of a couple of seats going this way or that. And in any case, no matter which way the verdict goes, it makes little difference to the numbers game in Parliament. All the 20 Lok Sabha seats in the State are bound to count against the NDA coalition. The last couple of weeks have seen a subtle change. With robust projections of both the leading alliances falling short of majority, and the possibility of a Congress-led alliance backed by the Left having a go at government formation, the exact numbers for the Congress alliance and the Left are no longer merely a matter of statistical interest. It may make a crucial difference, especially if the Left manages to touch a figure of 50 seats this time, a real possibility if it retains its nine seats in Kerala. Kerala would then decide the relative clout that the Left may be able to exercise in Delhi.

Unlike much of north India, elections in Kerala are not about a highly volatile electorate swinging from one pole to another. Every election is about fine-tuning a very delicate balance of social and political forces. Therefore it is first necessary to understand this balance of forces, before getting into how this electoral contest might change the balance and in whose favour.

The main contest in Kerala is between the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and the Left Democratic Front (LDF) dominated by the CPI (M). Besides the Congress, the UDF includes the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) that commands strong loyalty among the Muslims in the Malabar region in the north and the two factions of the Kerala Congress that have represented the Christian interests. The LDF includes the CPI (M), the CPI, the RSP and a few Left supported Independent candidates in seats where the LDF has historically been weak. Both the alliances expand in the Assembly elections to include other smaller parties, but the line up remains fairly standard for the Lok Sabha elections. Between them, the two coalitions account for about 90 per cent of the total votes in the State, with each of these getting at least 40 per cent or so. That leaves a floating vote of about 10 per cent or so whose swing makes all the difference to the final outcome. Since

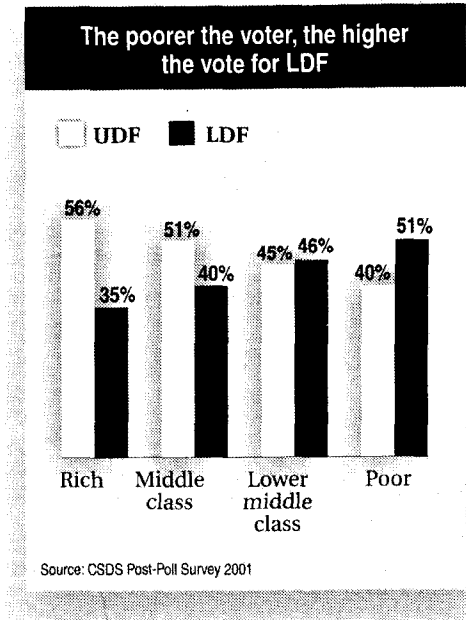
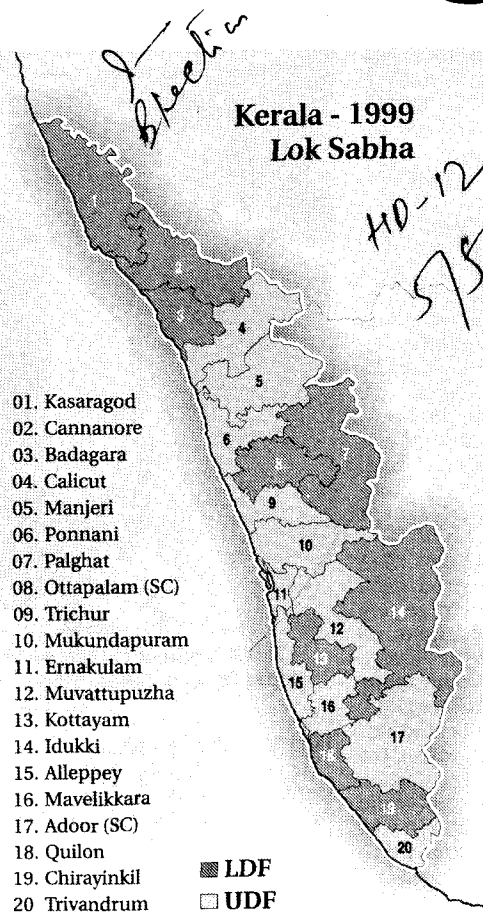
1989, the BJP has tried seriously to obtain a toe-hold in the State and has secured between five to eight per cent votes, but has not succeeded in winning a single Lok Sabha or Assembly seat.

Underlying this familiar and stable bipolar competition is a very carefully worked out and intricate pattern of political and social alliances. As in so many other things, Kerala was ahead of the rest of the country in anticipating political developments. Kerala experimented with seat adjustments and electoral alliances in the 1950s and came to have full-fledged fronts by 1960s. No doubt the State went through two decades of political instability and social turmoil, but this period also saw politics acting as an instrument of social transformation. The UDF and the LDF in its current shape came into being in 1980 and have continued thereafter with minor fine-tuning. The rest of the country is still struggling to learn how to run coalitions in the way they are run in Kerala. While much of the country went through a cycle of national electoral waves, Kerala's elections were very much bound by the State context. The rest of the country followed course in the 1990s as the State became the effective arena of political choice even in the Lok Sabha elections.

But there is one respect in which Kerala is not an exception to the rest of the country's politics. Notwithstanding the high literacy and the political awareness, caste-community identity of the voters in Kerala tells you as much about their voting behaviour as it does in, say, Uttar Pradesh or Bihar. In fact, the entire balance of UDF and the LDF hangs on the caste-community arithmetic. Kerala has two large religious minorities. Christians constitute about 19 per cent of the population, internally divided into several sects and churches. Among the 'upper caste' and dominant Syrian Christians, the UDF bags more than three-fourths of the votes, while the other Christians are evenly split between the two fronts. The Muslims constitute about 23 per cent of the State's population and are concentrated in the northern districts of Malabar. The two Lok Sabha constituencies of Manjeri and Ponnani are among the handful of Muslim majority seats in the country. The Muslims too have

their caste distinctions but they are more or less united in their disinclination to vote for the communists. The UDF gets anything between two-thirds to three-fourths of their vote through its ally, the IUML. Following the demolition of the Babri Masjid, there was an attempt to create an alternative to the established leadership of the IUML, but it failed.

The Left's inability to win the confidence of the two largest minorities, a fact acknowledged by E.M.S. Namboodiripad himself, has meant that the LDF has to gather much of its



Graphics by Varghese Kallada

Small swings will see UDF sweep while LDF requires larger swings for the same

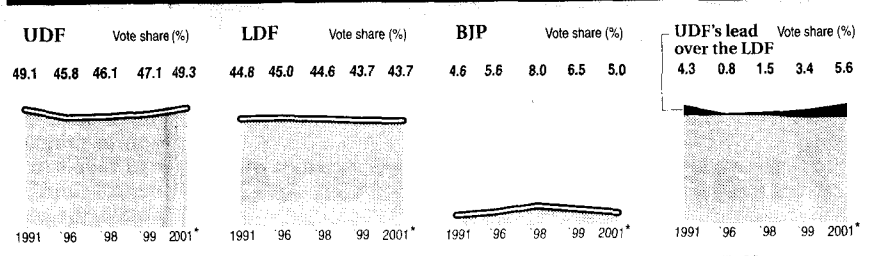
What happens if...	Seats in 2004 elections	
	UDF	LDF
...the results of Lok Sabha elections 1999 are repeated	11	9
...there is a swing of 1 pp* in favour of UDF	16	4
...there is a swing of 3 pp* in favour of UDF	20	0
...there is a swing of 1 pp* in favour of LDF	10	10
...there is a swing of 3 pp* in favour of LDF	6	14
...there is a swing of 5 pp* in favour of LDF	4	16
...the results of 2001 Assembly elections are repeated	18	2

*pp= percentage point

UDF enjoys an edge over the LDF in the Lok Sabha...

Lok Sabha Seats	2004 elections		
	UDF	LDF	BJP
1991	16	4	0
1996	10	10	0
1998	11	9	0
1999	11	9	0

...but this is based on a small difference in votes



Note: Composition of UDF: Congress, Muslim League, Kerala Congress (Mani), JSS, RSP (B), Kerala Congress (Jacob), CMPKSC, Kerala Congress (B), UDF supported Independents. Composition of LDF: CPI (M), CPI, JD (S), NCP, Kerala Congress, RSP, Indian National League, Left supported Independents. *Assembly elections

Group	UDF (%)	LDF (%)	BJP (%)
Upper castes lean towards UDF and also the BJP			
Nairs	44%	35%	16%
Other upper castes	54%	30%	14%
Christians, especially Syrian Christians back the UDF			
All Christians	66%	20%	---
Syrian Christians	71%	18%	---
Overwhelming support for UDF among Muslims			
Muslim OBCs	59%	30%	1%
Other Muslims	68%	30%	2%
LDF has huge lead among Ezhavas, other OBCs and Dalits			
Ezhavas	25%	63%	7%
Other OBCs	34%	54%	7%
Dalits	33%	61%	1%

Source: CSDS Post-Poll Survey 2001

BATTLEGROUND

support from the remaining 60 per cent of the electorate and that its perch is always more precarious than that of its counterpart in West Bengal. Historically, the LDF has drawn its principal support from the backward and Dalit communities among the Hindus that became politically conscious through a series of self-respect movements and were successfully mobilised by the communist movement. The biggest single group here are the Ezhavas, traditionally

this intense political competition. C. K. Janu, an Adivasi activist, is contesting the elections this time to draw attention to the plight of the Adivasis. It could be argued that the pattern of voting in Kerala is not principally along caste-community lines; there is indeed a strong class pattern to voting for the two alliances on the expected lines: the lower the class, the higher the vote for the LDF. But that is mainly because different caste-communities are placed differently on the class ladder.

This sociology of voting on caste-community lines is a stable and enduring fact of Kerala's political life. In this sense Kerala's electoral landscape is very similar to the voters alignment in many western democracies. This stability enables one to speak of 'safe' and 'marginal' seats in the State in a way that one does in Britain. This stable alignment has meant that both the Fronts have a stable and secure base to begin with. But this has not meant any complacency in political competition; if anything political competition is more intense in here than most other States in India. Since political competition is for a small proportion of unattached or floating voters and a few marginal seats, a small proportion of votes changing hands can make all the difference. Compared to any other State in India, Kerala is most sensitive to small swings in votes.

Paradoxically, the salience of the caste-community factor in the voting pattern does not result in the salience of caste as a factor in election issues and campaigning.

Caste-community patterns merely form a familiar backdrop to electoral competition. The fierce competition for the unattached votes takes place on the basis of issues, national and local. The proportion of floating voters is the highest among the educated upper caste voters and the least among the Dalits. Another complicating factor is that the discerning Kerala voter tends to distinguish between the issues in the national and the State level polls. The UDF therefore always enjoys an edge in the Lok Sabha polls, since it can claim to be a player at the national level in a way that the Left is not.

the State unit was involved in unseemly factional fight between the Karunakaran and Antony factions, embarrassing even by Congress standards. The Congress leadership managed to patch up matters finally by accommodating Mr. Karunakaran's son and daughter. Both of them are in the electoral fray this time: daughter Padmaja is contesting the Lok Sabha polls from Mukundapuram, while his son Muraleedharan is involved in a prestigious Assembly by-poll from the Wadakkancherry constituency. While their performance would reflect on the popularity of Mr. Karunakaran, it seems that the UDF may have saved itself from a major setback in this elections because of this conflict. At any rate the LDF does not seem to be succeeding in making an election issue out of this. The LDF is focussing more on the voters' disaffection with the functioning of the Antony Government that is more than half way through its undistinguished tenure. The Congress is trying to press its natural advantage in a Lok Sabha poll, that it represents a national alternative to the BJP. The LDF is trying to question the Congress' capacity to challenge the BJP in any effective manner.

The BJP is trying hard to open its account in the State and is enthused by the reception that L.K. Advani's Bharat Uday Yatra got in the State. Opinion polls indicate that the BJP may increase its vote share throughout the State and is set to cross its own record vote share of eight per cent in 1998. But it is not clear if the party can convert these into a seat. The BJP has done best in Kasargod and Trivandrum constituencies located at the northern and the southern tips of the State. In the Trivandrum constituency it had managed to secure 20 per cent votes in the last election. The party has put Union Minister O. Rajagopal in this prestigious contest and will be hoping that he will touch 30 per cent, so as to have a real chance of winning the first ever seat for the BJP. While the BJP is known to have transferred its votes to the UDF in some select cases, it is possible that the UDF and the LDF may resort to selective vote transfer to keep the BJP out.

All in all it is a very tough contest as usual. All the seats except Trivandrum and Muvattupuzha are witnessing a direct contest between the UDF and the LDF. Although both the fronts begin with a position of near equality in terms of their tally last time, the dice is loaded against the LDF.

A swing of one percentage point in favour of the UDF can take as many as five seats away from the LDF. A swing of only two percentage points can wipe out all the LDF seats and give them to the UDF. The UDF is also vulnerable to small swings, but is not so precariously placed. A swing of three percentage points will mean a loss of five seats for the UDF, while some of its seats can withstand even a five per cent swing. Only a brave man can forecast a contest as close as this.

This time the Congress opened the campaign on a defensive note, for

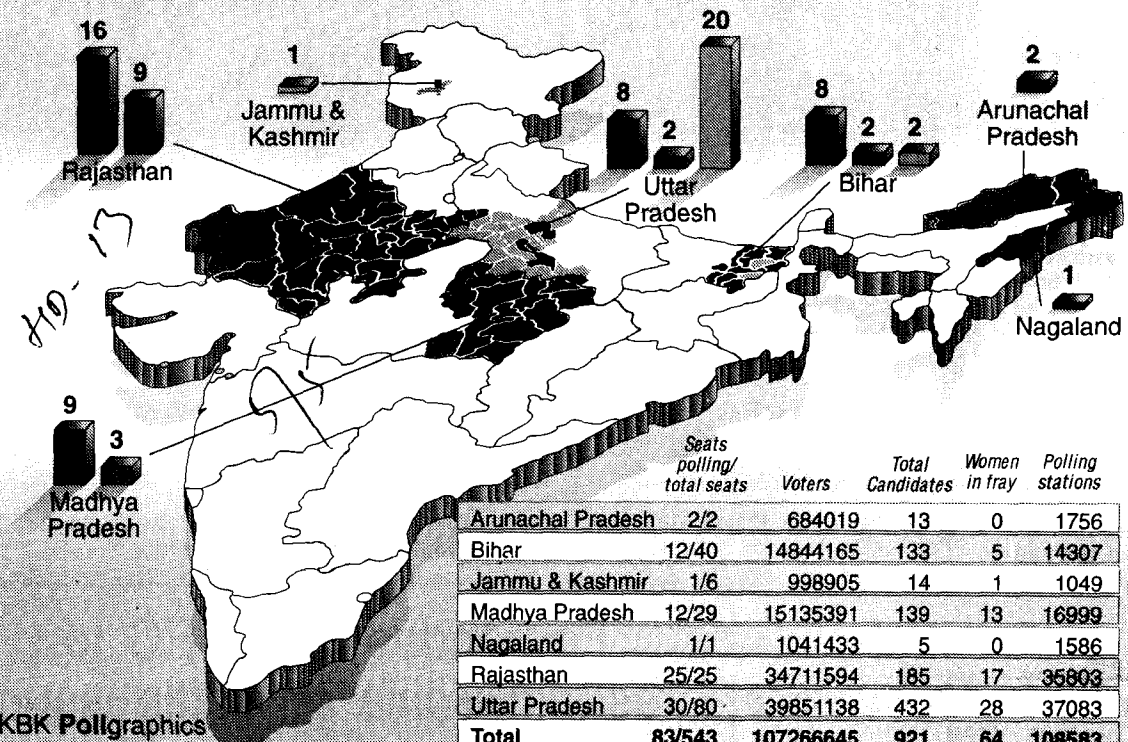
POLLING TODAY

May 5, 2004

83 Lok Sabha seats polling in third phase

1999 outcome of seats going to polls today

■ BJP+ (BJP, JD-U & ABLC) = 41 ■ Cong+ (Cong & RJD) = 19 ■ Others = 23



	Seats polling/ total seats	Voters	Total Candidates	Women in fray	Polling stations
Arunachal Pradesh	2/2	684019	13	0	1756
Bihar	12/40	14844165	133	5	14307
Jammu & Kashmir	1/6	998905	14	1	1049
Madhya Pradesh	12/29	15135391	139	13	16999
Nagaland	1/1	1041433	5	0	1586
Rajasthan	25/25	34711594	185	17	35803
Uttar Pradesh	30/80	39851138	432	28	37083
Total	83/543	107266645	921	64	108583

KBK Pollgraphics

THE HINDU 5 MAY 2004

EC seeks FIR against Mehbooba

Takes Note Of NC's Allegation That She Intimidated Voters On April 26

Times News Network & Agencies

New Delhi: Complaints and threats by the National Conference against ruling PDP president Mehbooba Mufti have finally worked with the Election Commission ordering the Jammu and Kashmir government to file an FIR against her for allegedly intimidating voters during the April 26 phase of polling in the state.

EC spokesperson A N Jha told reporters here on Tuesday that the FIR would be filed under section 171(c) of the IPC. The decision was taken after the full commission met earlier in the day. It was alleged that Mehbooba—who is contesting from the Anantnag Lok Sabha constituency which goes to the polls on Wednesday—had gone from booth to booth intimidating voters. At one point, she had even allegedly re-



moved the veil of a woman voter inside the polling booth at Burn Hall School.

The National Conference had filed a detailed complaint with the EC in this regard. It had alleged misuse of powers by Mehbooba in moving around several booths along with her security guards. The NC had even gone to the extent of threatening to boycott the remaining phases of the polls in the state if the EC failed to take note of its complaint. The state election office then conducted an inquiry and submitted its report to the EC.

In Srinagar, Mehbooba said the EC move was an attempt to appease the opposition National Conference. She told TNN that she would defend herself at the appropriate forum and reiterated that the woman whom she had unveiled was an imposter come to cast the vote of some other genuine voter.

Opinion polls give BJP front slight edge

By Our New Delhi Bureau

NEW DELHI, MAY 3. Opinion polls conducted by two television channels today, ahead of Wednesday's election in 83 constituencies, gave a slight edge to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its allies. However, a clear verdict remained elusive.

The NDTV-Indian Express opinion poll projected 245-265 seats for the BJP and allies. After the April 26 exit poll, the network had confined the BJP-led front to a band of 235-255. The network's opinion poll gave the Congress and its allies 180-200 seats, down from 190-210 in the exit polls. Others were projected to get 95-115 against 100-120 in the exit polls.

The slight shift in favour of the BJP and allies was attributed to intense campaigning by these parties.

The Star News-C-Voter opinion poll shows no change, compared with the exit poll, in the overall projection for the BJP

and allies — it stands at 267-279. The Congress and its allies register an improvement at the expense of others. The opinion poll says the Congress' overall haul will be between 169 and

low end of the range projected for the NDA will be an improvement over its tally of 41 of these seats in 1999. The Congress had got 20 in 1999.

In Uttar Pradesh, the NDTV

and allies. The network claimed that the Lok Janshakti Party of Ram Vilas Paswan was successful in transferring its votes to the RJD combine; resulting in a gain of 12 seats at the expense of the BJP.

The Star opinion poll in Bihar shows the 12 seats where elections are due on Wednesday sticking to the 1999 pattern. The NDA is set to win eight and the Congress alliance three seats. Overall, the NDA will get 26 seats and the Congress alliance 13, according to the Star opinion poll.

The NDTV opinion poll gives the BJP 11 of the 12 seats in Madhya Pradesh where elections are due on Wednesday. Star gives the BJP 10 and the Congress two.

In yet another straight fight in Rajasthan, NDTV gave the BJP 21 seats as against four to the Congress.

As for Star, its opinion poll gave the BJP 18 of the 25 seats and the Congress seven.

Seat projections ahead of third phase

NDTV - Indian Express		Star News	
BJP & Allies	245 - 265	BJP & Allies	267 - 279
Congress & Allies	180 - 200	Congress & Allies	169 - 181
Others	95 - 115	Others	88 - 100

181, an improvement over the exit poll projection of 160-172.

The others' tally is shown as coming down from 97-109 to 88-100. Star said this preference now for a "national party" was a fallout of the exit polls indicating the possibility of a hung Parliament.

The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is expected to get 48-56 of the 83 seats and the Congress 12-20 seats in Wednesday's election. Even the

opinion poll indicated that the BJP was likely to gain three seats to notch up a tally of 30 out of the 80 seats. The BJP gains at the expense of the Samajwadi Party, which gets 23 seats (down three) as against the Bahujan Samajwadi Party's 17 (plus three) and the Congress' nine (minus two).

In Bihar, the NDTV opinion poll gave the Rashtriya Janata Dal and allies 21 of the total 40 seats as against 18 for the BJP

EC keen on Chapra repoll

Mohan Sahay
in New Delhi

May 4. — The Election Commission would “prefer” to order “substantial” repolling than countermand the Chapra poll. But there are questions whether repolling in a large number of booths, will “violate the spirit” of the Representation of People’s Act. Clause 2 (b) of Section 58 A of the Act says that countermanding is justified if a “large number” of polling booths are affected.

EC sources said that the

Shoot orders

PATNA, May 4. — Amid shoot orders against booth grabbers and sealing of Indo-Nepal borders, the stage is set for polling in 12 Lok Sabha constituencies in Bihar tomorrow. — PTI

two-member investigating team of Mr KJ Rao and Mr Ananth Kumar has found evidence of irregularities in “at least 300” of the 900-odd polling booths in Chapra. The EC legal cell is reportedly of the opinion that ordering repolling in that many booths will raise

a question whether, as per the Act, countermanding is not the better option.

The EC has deferred a decision on Chapra because Mr Laloo Yadav, a contestant from this seat, which went to polls on 26 April, is also contesting from Madhepura, which goes to polls tomorrow. EC sources said that a decision on Chapra before the Madhepura election may have “prejudiced” the poll process. Repolling or fresh polls in Chapra may take place on 10 May if the EC takes a decision on these lines.

Marxists 'warn'

CEC: Control your observers

Statesman News Service

KOLKATA, May 4. — The Left Front called an emergency meeting this morning and went all out against the Election Commission. It accused the body of "singling out" West Bengal and named two Central observers as among a "section of officers from outside the state" who have "gone beyond their jurisdiction in their line of duty".

Activities of some Central observers were foremost on the agenda at today's meeting. "These observers have a right to move freely, but some of them are behaving in a manner that cannot be called impartial. We demand that the CEC keeps them under control," LF chairman Mr Biman Bose told reporters after the meeting.

"The EC has never acted like this in the past 25 years. Mr TN Seshan used to say a lot of things but even he never behaved in this manner," Mr Bose said.

"It's only in West Bengal, besides J&K and Assam, that the EC has deployed polling officers from other states. The overall scenario in those states is different and there is also a lack of manpower. This is clearly an act of discrimination," he said. "The EC should be impartial and try to ensure that people have faith in the body. The Front feels that these acts are an insult to the people of the state and go against their emotions," he added. Accusing the Trinamul of heaping the EC with false allegations against the ruling Front, Mr Bose said, "Lies and Trinamul are two sides of the same coin. The EC should not have been influenced."

Later at a press conference Mr Bose said, "West Bengal is an advanced outpost of democracy and democratic movement... We have worked for the people and we oppose the Centre that exports foodgrain to the USA to be used as fodder for pigs when men and children are dying of starvation in some states. To these men a human child is worth less than a piglet (*shuyorer baccha*)."

He accused Mr TS Krishnamurthy of making a "silly statement" at Raj Bhavan during his recent visit that there is no harm if some Bengali observers from other states visit West Bengal.

ON THE HIT LIST

- Central observer in Ranigunj, Ratnamala Rowla: LF has alleged that she went to different Assembly segments and said she would see to it that the CPI-M does not come to power. She also allegedly asked people why they vote for the CPI-M, whether they are paid to vote and whether CPI-M cadres capture booths. "She is trying to scare away voters but I invite her to stay during the counting of ballots. What she has done will help us win. She has no idea about Ranigunj, the voters or even elections. She should be sitting wearing a necklace (*mala*) of jewels (*ratna*).
- Central observer in Diamond Harbour, AYR Krishna Rao: LF has alleged that he is giving direct orders to senior police and administrative officers in South 24-Parganas and asking them to act only on his instructions. "Observers have no such rights. They can only report to the EC," Mr Bose alleged.
- Team of Central observers in Katwa: LF has alleged that some people who later identified themselves as Central observers went to voters in booth numbers 138, 139 and 140 and asked them if CPI-M cadres use guns during elections. They also allegedly wanted to know which parties people vote for.
- Central observers in Bishnupur: LF has alleged that officers had asked voters whether they are paid to vote for the CPI-M.
- The media too: The LF has alleged that some TV channels and newspapers are presenting distorted news to influence voters.

CEO reaction: Reacting to the LF's allegations, the state chief electoral officer, Mr Basudeb Banerjee, said: "It's not the observers who run elections at the lowest level, but the returning officers." He, however, wasn't as reassuring for the observers who have earned the Marxists' ire. Mr Banerjee said he'd sought their comment and "forwarded the report to the EC". He said that he'd received "around four complaints" against observers so far.

THE STATESMAN

7 5 MAY 2004

EC sending team to Chapra

● BJP complains of rigging

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 29. The Election Commission is sending a two-member team comprising K.J. Rao, Consultant, and Ananthakumar, Director, for an on-the-spot assessment and inquiry into alleged incidents of "booth-capturing" in the Chapra constituency in Bihar. The Rashtriya Janata Dal leader, Laloo Prasad Yadav, is contesting from this parliamentary constituency and the Civil Aviation Minister, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, BJP, is his rival candidate.

The Commission had earlier said that it had called for reports from the Returning Officer and the Observers for deciding the question of re-election in Chapra and a decision would be taken on receipt of the reports.

The Commission has also received reports from Siwan of alleged rigging by Mohammad Shahabuddin, who is contesting on the Rashtriya Janata Dal ticket, and no decision has been taken on repolling in this constituency.

Sources said the decision to send a special team to Chapra was taken since the Commission found discrepancies in the Observers' and Returning Officer's reports. Further, it also took a serious note of the action of the Chapra police in registering a case against Mr. Rudy for "booth-capturing" without its prior approval. Mr Rudy has already got bail in this case.

Earlier, a National Democratic Alliance delegation met the Commission and pleaded for

countermanding the polling in Chapra and also sought additional security forces for the May 5 elections in Madhepura, where the senior Janata Dal (U) leader, Sharad Yadav, is contesting against Mr. Laloo Yadav.

The NDA team, led by the BJP general secretary, Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, complained before the Commission that in Chapra there was largescale violence and rigging by RJD supporters and demanded re-election in the entire constituency.

After the meeting, Mr. Naqvi told reporters that the delegation also demanded the countermanding of polls in the Ghazipur Lok Sabha constituency in Uttar Pradesh, which saw violence on the polling day on April 26. Also, Special Observers should be sent to 14 Lok Sabha constituencies in Uttar Pradesh and eight in Bihar in view of the sensitive nature of the seats.

He alleged that the RJD leader was "promoting lawlessness" in Bihar and the Congress, which preached democratic values, was siding with those who violated democratic norms. On the filing of FIRs against Mr. Rudy on charges of "booth-capturing," indulging in scuffle, theft and intimidating voters during the April 26 poll by the Bihar police, Mr. Naqvi said that it was merely aimed at countering the complaint before the Commission. He charged the Samajwadi Party with intimidating voters in some places in Uttar Pradesh.

FIRs against Rudy: Page 11

30 APR 2004

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DATEMAN

Chapra comes under EC scanner

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI, April 29. — The Election Commission today ordered an inquiry into a host of complaints of largescale violence and malpractices during polling in the key Chapra constituency in Bihar where Union civil aviation minister Mr Rajiv Pratap Rudy is locked in a bitter tussle with RJD supremo Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav.

A two-member EC team, comprising adviser Mr KJ Rao and principal secretary Mr Ananth Kumar, will visit Chapra and hold a detailed inquiry on 2 and 3 May, EC sources said. The team will hold discussions with all the candidates from the Lok Sabha seat and also those who seek to give evidence before it about the happenings in the constituency on the polling day — 26 April.

Asked why the inquiry was being ordered, sources said the Commission wanted to satisfy itself about the genuineness of the complaints.

The team is expected to submit its report to the Commission soon after its return.

Mr Rudy and the BJP, as well as the NDA, have demanded countermanding of polls in the constituency. Mr Rudy met the Commission yesterday demanding repoll in the constituency alleging largescale rigging by supporters of the RJD chief.

The EC decision came on the same day when Bihar Police said they have registered two cases against Mr Rajiv Pratap Rudy, the BJP candidate, and his bodyguards, and charged them with booth grabbing, indulging in scuffle, theft and intimidating voters during the poll on 26 April.

The officer-in-charge of Amnour police station, Mr Ravi Ranjan Pandey, said over phone that the cases (28/2004 and 29/2004) were registered on the complaints of the presiding officer, Mr Ragho Prasad of Taraiya's booth No. 168 and an RJD activist, Mr Rajiv Singh.

Interestingly, the SP (Saran), Mr

Ganesh Kumar, was not aware of the cases lodged against Mr Rudy. "I am ninety-five per cent sure that no case was registered against the Union minister till yesterday," the SP said when contacted. Mr Rudy has accused RJD activists of indulging in large-scale violence and booth grabbing during 26 April's poll in Chapra.

In the case No. 28/2004 of 26/04/2004, Mr Rudy is alleged to have conspired with his bodyguards, including one Mr Ojha who had allegedly indulged in booth capturing, firing and intimidating the voters, Mr Pandey said.

Reacting to the lodging of the FIRs, Mr Rudy said today they were "false and politically motivated" and challenged the authorities to arrest him. He wouldn't apply for bail, he added.

Repoll violence

Barring an incident of a clash injuring five persons at a booth in Maharijani, repoll at 416 other polling stations spread over 15 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar was peaceful today.

POLL PUNISHMENT



A bogus voter is punished during Thursday's repoll in Hajipur, Bihar. — PTI

0 APR 2004

Rudy demands Chhapra repoll

New Delhi

28 APRIL

9/4/2014
29/4

BJP candidate in Chhapra Lok Sabha seat in Bihar, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, on Wednesday approached the Election Commission seeking countermanding of the election in the sensitive constituency where he is pitted against RJD supremo Laloo Prasad Yadav. A BJP delegation including

party MP Balbir Punj and state leaders met Deputy Election Commissioner Noor Mohammad and complained that there was large scale violence including killings and destruction of EVMs by RJD workers in the constituency.



Mr Rudy, who is also a Union Minister, said though the Com-

Rudy Jolt: Arun Jaitley talks to Rajiv Rudy after a press meet in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

mission termed 800 polling stations as "sensitive", proper security was deployed only in 200 booths and the remaining booths were left unprotected.

He said that the delegation also submitted to the Commission evidence in the form of photos and video on the large scale violence in the constituency on the polling day. Claiming that "democracy is being murdered in Chhapra where a reign of terror prevails," Mr Punj said the election had been reduced to a "farce". Mr Rudy said that the Commission gave a patient hearing. — PTI

The Economic Times

29 APR 2014

Rudy to EC: Countermand Chapra polls for violence

New Delhi: Union minister and BJP leader Rajiv Pratap Rudy on Wednesday approached the Election Commission seeking countermanding of the Lok Sabha elections in Bihar's Chapra constituency, where he is pitted against RJD supremo Laloo Prasad Yadav. A BJP delegation met deputy election commissioner Noor Mohammad and complained of large-scale violence including killings and destruction of EVMs by RJD workers in the constituency.

Though the EC had termed 800 polling stations as "sensitive", proper security was deployed only in 200 booths and the remaining were left unprotected, said Rudy. The delegation submitted with the EC photos and video clippings of the large-scale violence. Referring to the elections in Bihar, JD(U) president and defence minister George Fernandes said, "The farce of election that used to happen in Bihar continues even today.. I do not understand what the EC is doing and how it is performing the duties that it has been given."

On Tuesday, too, a BJP delegation led by party general secretary Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi had called on the EC and demanded countermanding of elections in Chapra. Meanwhile, accusing the Samajwadi Party chief of splitting the secular vote bank by fielding candidates "everywhere, including Bihar", RJD supremo Laloo Prasad Yadav on Wednesday said that in case of a hung parliament a non-BJP, non-NDA government would be installed "minus Mulayam Singh Yadav".

"Already the PM has indicated that Mulayam Singh is very near to him. With the collusion of the BJP, he (Mulayam) has set 'vote-batwa (vote-splitting)' candidates everywhere, including Bihar," the RJD leader said. Categorical stating that Mulayam was not part of the secular alliance, the Bihar leader pulled out taking his support. "He is not anti-BJP." Agencies

55-60% turnout in phase two

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 26. Sporadic incidents of group clashes, booth capturing and damaging of electronic voting machines (EVMs) marked the second phase of polls held in 136 Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 11 States. An estimated 55 to 60 per cent of the 172 million voters exercised their franchise.

Polls were also held for the Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa Assemblies.

The Deputy Election Commissioner, A.N. Jha, told presspersons here that the polling was by and large peaceful, barring some incidents of violence in Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur and Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr. Jha said Andhra Pradesh recorded the highest voter turnout of 68 to 70 per cent and the Srinagar-Badgam constituency in Jammu and Kashmir the lowest at 21 per cent. Poll-related violence claimed six lives — two each in Andhra Pradesh and Jharkhand and one each in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

He gave the voter turnout (in per cent) in other States — Assam 65-70, Bihar 55-60, Goa 55, Karnataka 55-60, Maharashtra

55, Orissa 65, Uttar Pradesh 45-50, Jharkhand 55 and Manipur 55.

Mr. Jha said that repolling, wherever necessary, would be held on April 28. Repolling was likely to be held in 62 to 65 polling stations in Andhra Pradesh and some places in Karnataka, Manipur and Orissa.

To a question, he said there was no specific complaint from Rae Bareilly, from where the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, is contesting.

On the Bharatiya Janata Party's demand for repolling in an entire Assembly segment of Chhapra constituency in Bihar, where the Rashtriya Janata Dal president, Laloo Prasad Yadav, is contesting against the Civil Aviation Minister, Rajiv Pratap Rudy, he said the Commission was awaiting a report from the Returning Officer.

In Andhra Pradesh, two persons were killed and several injured in clashes between party workers. In Bihar, one person was killed in Chhapra and there were minor incidents in different places. In Jharkhand, there was a mine blast in the Dumka constituency and in Lohardaga, an Assistant Sub-Inspector and a teacher were killed in extremist violence. In Ghazipur, Ut-

tar Pradesh, one person was killed outside a polling station.

Mr. Jha said a Magistrate was arrested in Pratapgarh, Uttar Pradesh, for influencing voters. In Jammu and Kashmir, there were only minor incidents. There were by and large no major incidents in Orissa, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Assam and Goa, but there was some trouble in Bishnupur district, part of the inner Manipur constituency.

The Deputy Election Commissioner said there were complaints of several names missing from the electoral rolls in Maharashtra, especially in Mumbai. Describing the development as unfortunate, he said the Commission would probe the matter.

THE HINDU launches today its edition from Tiruchirapalll, the fourth in Tamil Nadu and the twelfth in all. This is aimed at serving Tiruchi and its neighbouring districts better with a more extensive coverage and earlier delivery of copies.

BJP on course, just about

Exit poll lifts Cong, only just

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 26: The BJP and its allies might sneak past the halfway mark in the Lok Sabha despite gains by the Congress in the second phase, suggest the findings of an exit poll.

According to the projection made by The Telegraph-STAR News-C-Voter exit poll, the NDA is set to bag between 267 and 279 seats, the Congress combine 160 and 172 and others 97 and 109.

The forecast implies that if

EXCLUSIVE
The Telegraph
STAR NEWS
EXIT POLL

the NDA's tally is on the lower side of 267, it will need the support of only six more MPs to reach the 273 mark and if it is on the upper reach of 279, it will give the coalition a wafer-thin majority. But even 279 means a loss of 24 from its 1999 tally of 303.

The prediction for the second phase, which saw a higher turnout of 55-60 per cent and less violence compared with the first round, puts the Congress among the big gainers, but the projected seat accretion has not brought it even within striking distance of power.

However, the party looks set to claw back from the record low of 112 seats in 1999. The others, which are not part of either coalition and include the Left, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, are slated to remain in the double digit or just about cross it. This tally would be a decline from the 128 seats they picked up in 1999.

In make-or-break Uttar Pradesh, which hosted its first round, the BJP is expected to lose one seat from the 13 in 1999 in the seats that went to polls today. The Congress could make unexpected

gains by doubling its 1999 tally of three seats, while the two regional players, the Samajwadi and

the BSP could pick up eight and five each.

Analysts believe the Congress' gain accrued at the expense of the BJP and the Samajwadi, aided by the ripples set off across eastern Uttar Pradesh — where today's polls were held — by the presence of Priyanka Gandhi and the debut of Rahul Gandhi. The response prompted Priyanka to hint today that she might campaign outside the state.

If the final count reflects the exit poll projections, it would appear a section of the Brahmin and Muslim votes shifted to the Congress significantly for the first time since 1991 in the state. The BJP feels that if one part of the "trend" — the division of Muslim votes — persists in other regions of the state, it will help the party and rein in the Samajwadi.

The Telegraph-STAR News poll — based on data culled from 25,000 respondents spread over 72 regions in nine of the 11 states which went to polls today — inferred that the NDA would make its maximum gains in Karnataka by bagging 20 of the 28 seats.

In Bihar — where the alliance among Laloo Prasad Yadav, the Congress and Ram Vilas Paswan was supposed to make big gains — the NDA is projected to limit its loss to eight seats and hold on to 20, restricting the rival alliance's tally to eight. Polling for 12 more seats in Bihar will be held in the third phase.

In Maharashtra, the Congress-NCP-RPI combine is expected to get 27 of the 48 seats and the BJP-Shiv Sena 19. NCP leader Sharad Pawar's ambiguous statement on Sonia Gandhi's leadership and a hint that he could consider being part of a third front government do not appear to have dented the alliance's chances.

Pawar kept up the pressure on the Congress today, too, saying "wider acceptability mattered more than majority in coalition politics".

The exit poll predicted a change of government in Karnataka and Andhra and the exit of cyber-savvy S.M. Krishna and N. Chandrababu Naidu.

QUOTE

You must be crazy to think I will vote, who wants to die?

MOHAMMED ISMAIL
A SRINAGAR RESIDENT

THE FORECAST

TT-STAR News

	NDA	Cong
Phase I	80	53
Phase II	68-80	38-50
Phase I+II	148-160	91-103
Overall projection	267-279	160-172

Aaj Tak

	NDA	Cong
Phase I	93	44
Phase II	51	56
Phase I+II	144	100
Overall projection	266	175

Sahara

	NDA	Cong
Phase I	83	52
Phase II	70	49
Phase I+II	153	101
Overall projection	NA	NA

Zee

	NDA	Cong
Phase I	69-73	41-45
Phase II	54	46
Phase I+II	123-127	87-91
Overall projection	NA	NA

NDTV

	NDA	Cong
Phase I	70-80	50-60
Phase II	235-255	190-210
Phase I+II	305-335	240-270
Overall projection	NA	NA

Includes allies

PEACE DIVIDEND DOES NOT GET SRINAGAR TO POLLING BOOTHS



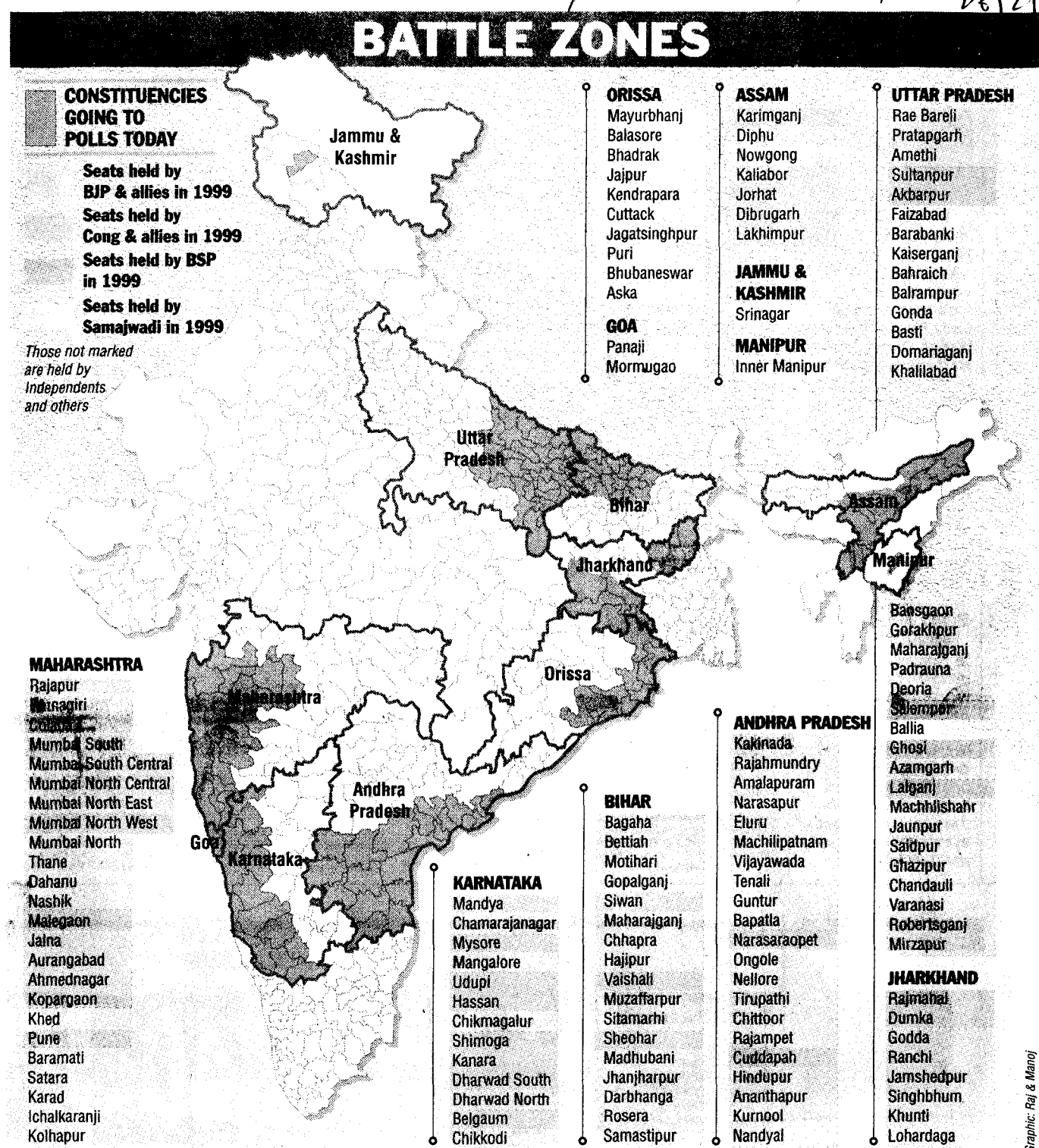
A voter tries to hide her face outside a polling booth in Chadoora, west of Srinagar, on Monday. (Reuters)

THE TELEGRAPH

27 APR 2004

Mulayam renews secular stamp

J. Bleeker (15) 7-1 26/21



KAY BENEDICT

New Delhi, April 25: Even before the second phase of the elections is over, dealmaker Harkishen Singh Surjeet, the 87-year-old CPM general secretary, has taken the field, issuing old friend Mulayam Singh Yadav a desperately-needed secularism certificate.

Worried by statements made by the BJP, carrying post-poll alliance overtures to him, the Samajwadi Party chief rushed to the CPM, seeking a gesture that would reassure minority voters in Uttar Pradesh about his commitment to secularism on the eve of polling.

Surjeet, eager to hold Mulayam Singh in the anti-BJP camp, obliged in a give-and-take deal. While Mulayam Singh received the certificate he was looking for, he had to give an assurance he would not prop up an Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led government if the National Democratic Alliance falls short of majority.

"In my recent meetings with Mulayam Singh Yadav and yesterday's meeting with Amar Singh, both the leaders have categorically assured that the SP continues to remain committed to the anti-communal plank and in defence of secularism," the CPM leader said in the statement.

Sources said Mulayam Singh has been in touch with Surjeet over phone and on Saturday, his lieutenant Amar Singh called on the CPM general secretary to assure him of the party's commitment to secularism.

"In their interaction with me, both the leaders sought to dispel fears on this count and termed the propaganda launched by George Fernandes and other NDA leaders as deliberate and mischievous," Surjeet said.

Describing assertions by Vajpayee and Fernandes as a "well-thought of strategy", Amar Singh said they were trying to sow confusion among minorities, on whose votes the party has fed in its charge towards victory.

Much to Mulayam Singh's discomfiture, former Prime Minister V.P. Singh today appealed to voters in Uttar Pradesh to elect the Congress. He suggested tactical voting by the minorities, saying they should back the Samajwadi or the Bahujan Samaj Party in seats where the Congress candidate was not strong enough.

The sources said there is a perceptible change in the minorities' attitude to Mulayam Singh, who has been seen to be edging closer to the BJP since he became chief minister after the Mayavati government fell. Having burnt its finger twice by teaming up with Mayavati, the BJP had only Mulayam Singh as potential ally in a state where it cannot hope to win on its own.

Of more urgency is to ensure that if the NDA run freezes below the majority 273 mark — as many of the exit and opinion polls are suggesting — Vajpayee can explore the possibility of Mulayam Singh's support.

The Samajwadi chief himself has been trying to dispel the impression of his being close to the BJP. In an interview to a television channel, he ruled out support to a BJP candidate for prime ministership, explaining that his party's backing for a non-BJP candidate would be decided after the elections.

"We cannot support BJP. When we are ruling out support to that party, then there is no question of having a BJP candidate for the post with our support," he said.

WINK & NUDGE

BJP woos Mulayam

- Vajpayee says BJP and Samajwadi Party are ideologically close
- George Fernandes chimes in: Vajpayee and Mulayam have no major differences



Mulayam gets jittery

- Samajwadi chief fears these statements will dent his minority support
- Runs to CPM for secularism certificate and gets one

Round Two: BJP cramped for space to improve

The second act of Elections 2004 will unfold on Monday in 136 seats spread across 11 states, including Uttar Pradesh.

The twin tasks for the BJP and its allies which now hold 87 of these seats: protect their flanks in saturation zones and make incursions into enemy territory. For the Congress combine, the easy round is over and it is time for a gruelling grind to take the tally beyond the 26 it has now.

Uttar Pradesh

The heartland begins the battle from its political frontline: east-

ern Uttar Pradesh. The cradle of Mandal and Mandir politics, the region has 32 of the state's 80 seats.

If the BJP belies forecasts and retains 13 seats, it can hope to improve its tally in the rest of the state. But the Congress is eyeing at least three BJP seats, hoping to push up its tally from three. A belt where socialists still strike a chord, Mulayam Singh Yadav is optimistic of getting 11 seats, a gain of one.

Seats to watch: The dynasty double — Amethi, Rahul Gandhi's debut seat, and Rae Bareilly,

where Sonia Gandhi is in the fray.

Bihar

Another state where the BJP will have to guard the territory it snatched in 1999. Seventeen of 40 seats give their verdict. Most are in areas where the pact between Laloo Prasad Yadav and the Congress could have an impact.

If the Opposition alliance works, the NDA could lose a considerable number from the 13 seats it won last time. The Opposition has sitting MPs in four seats and has won over Ram

Vilas Paswan, who took Hajipur in 1999 with the NDA.

Seat to watch: Chhapra, Laloo Prasad vs Rajiv Pratap Rudy.

Maharashtra

Twenty-four seats in Konkan and western Maharashtra vote. The BJP-Shiv Sena group holds as many as 15 seats. The Congress-NCP alliance — which separately won nine seats in 1999 — looks formidable but the fight is tougher than what it faced in Vidarbha in the first round.

Seat to watch: Mumbai North, Govinda vs Ram Naik.

Andhra Pradesh

The battleground shifts to 21 seats in the south coastal belt and Rayalseema, tough terrain for the Congress after friendly Telengana. But if the anti-incumbency factor spreads, the Congress hopes to push up its tally to 12 from two. That will leave the NDA 10 down at nine.

Karnataka

One of the few states where the BJP hopes to break new ground. The 13 seats in the second round are in areas where the BJP could

challenge the Congress.

Jharkhand

The NDA again has to play guard. It has six seats to protect while the Congress has only two.

Orissa

A saturation belt, where the BJP holds all the 10 seats. Any change is a gain for the Congress.

Assam

The NDA with one seat is keen to spread its reach but the Congress looks strong in four of the seven constituencies.

Clearing the mist in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh

The NDTV exit poll of the Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka Assemblies is a robust though not conclusive indicator of what is in store for the two States, says Yogendra Yadav.

A few days ago this column had described the current contest in Andhra Pradesh as the "mother of all uncertainties." While the Karnataka Lok Sabha picture had become fairly clear, the Assembly elections scenario was far from clear. The NDTV-Indian Express forecast has cleared the mist considerably. This forecast is based on an exit poll in the areas where the elections are over and an opinion poll in the areas that are still to go to polls. The sample size is good enough for us to take its conclusions seriously. Yet it is not the final assessment, for the final picture will become clear only after the second round of polling in the two States on April 26. In the meanwhile, we can only infer from the existing data and think carefully about the range of realistic scenarios.

First, the big picture. The NDTV-Indian Express poll gives the first robust indicator that the Chandrababu Naidu regime is on its way out. The seats forecast gives a range: 140-160 for the Congress alliance and 120-140 for the TDP-BJP alliance. While it keeps open an outside possibility that both the alliances may get tied at 140, it happens if the Congress

gets the lowest of its range and the TDP gets the highest of its range. For, significantly, the poll reports a 6 percentage points swing away from the ruling combine in the first phase of polling, all to the advantage of the Congress alliance. This information is crucial to what we can expect in Karnataka.

In that State, the poll clearly places the Congress first with a range of 110 to 120 in a 224-member House. The BJP is estimated to be way behind with only 60-70 seats leaving the third player, the Janata Dal (Secular), with 25-35 seats. The poll reports a 5 percentage points gain for the JD (S) in the vote share across the two phases in the State. This gain comes from the losses suffered both by the BJP and the Congress. Two firm conclusions can be drawn from this evidence. There is clear 'ticket splitting' of an unprecedented order in the State: voters are voting different parties in the Lok Sabha and the Assembly elections. The BJP gains from this at the Lok Sabha level, while the Congress is the gainer at the Assembly level. This also puts at rest the speculation that the BJP was catching up at the Assembly level and was going to be the winner. This forecast does not settle the question of who will form the Government. The Congress is expected to barely cross the majority mark and could well fall below this. That could mean a hung Assembly.

While we are wiser about both these States, we need to read into this information to see precisely what can happen. Let us take Andhra Pradesh first, where the picture was unclear for two reasons. First, there was a sense that pre-election opinion polls were not capable of capturing adequately a new political party such as the Telangana Rashtriya Samiti (TRS) and were perhaps underestimating the vote share of the Congress-TRS combine. This suspicion seems to be well founded. Successive rounds of opinion polls have

BATTLEGROUND

reported higher and yet higher vote share for the Congress-TRS-Left combine. It could be that the alliance was gaining popularity, but a good deal of it could be because the polls had initially underestimated the Congress-led alliance.

The second reason was the possibility of a regional divide. It was not clear if the whole State would vote as one or if Telangana would vote differently. This also opened the possi-

bility of Andhra and Rayalaseema voting in 'retaliation'. As of now, this question is not fully settled. But there does not seem to be much evidence to support the hypothesis of a split verdict in the State. While the first phase of polling in the State included the whole of Telangana, it was not confined to this region. A small portion of northern coastal Andhra also went to the polls. The available evidence suggests that this region has

also swung against the TDP-BJP combine in about the same way as has Telangana. North coastal Andhra has traditionally voted against the Congress and therefore gains for the Congress-led alliance here indicate that there may not be a strong regional divide. At any rate, we can rule out a 'retaliatory vote' in this region that may favour the TDP-BJP alliance.

If we take the 6 percentage points swing in favour of the Congress and its allies for granted, it would mean that they already control 107 of the 147 seats that went to polls on April 20. That leaves a range of possibil-

ities for the remaining 147 seats. The best case scenario for the TDP-BJP alliance would be that it remains unaffected by the negative swing in the portions of the State that go to the polls on April 26. This is an unlikely scenario, given the trend seen so far from north coastal Andhra, but even if this were to happen, the TDP-BJP alliance does not obtain a majority. It would win 98 seats of the remaining 147, but still end up with only 131, leaving the Congress alliance with narrow majority of 153. If even a small portion of the negative swing in the first phase is to spill over to the second, the TDP's fate is sealed. A

mere two percentage points swing against the TDP-BJP alliance in the second phase will take the Congress to 171 and a 4 percentage points swing in the same direction will take it to 189. In case the swing against the TDP in the second phase is the same as reported in the first one, it could mean a Congress wave, resulting in the party crossing the 200-seat mark with its allies. The going is very, very tough for Mr. Naidu.

Karnataka presents the possibility of a nail-biting finish. And it all depends on how H.D. Deve Gowda's JD (S) performs. The poll indicators confirm the ground signals that the JD (S) has gained during the campaign. The poll reports an overall gain of 5 per cent, for there is no regional divide in the two phases of Karnataka. Assuming that the poll may have underestimated the third party, a standard problem with opinion polls, we can examine a range from 5 to 9 percentage points gain and see its consequences in terms of seats. If the swing is 5 percentage points, and more at the expense of the BJP than the Congress, the Congress may scrape through and secure a majority. But if the gains of the JD (S) come mostly or entirely at the expense of the Congress, the ruling party could slip below the majority mark of 113. The same equation obtains even if the gains for the JD (S) are higher. A swing of 7 or 9 percentage points in favour of the JD (S) does not give Mr. Gowda's party very many seats, but it can bring the Congress below the majority mark. In this sense the JD (S) has emerged as a crucial third player in Karnataka and a lot will depend on whose votes this party takes away. If the final outcome is a hung Assembly, something that cannot be ruled out, the JD (S) could become an important player in its own right. One final warning: many areas of Karnataka are likely to witness triangular fights that can be very difficult to forecast. One should be prepared for surprises here.

SWINGS IN ANDHRA PRADESH AND KARNATAKA

Andhra Pradesh: TDP cannot come to power unless it gains in the second phase

Baseline for Phase-1: 147 seats

Seats in Assembly elections 2004

	TDP+BJP	Congress + TRS + Left
Assuming a 6 pp swing, as forecast, against TDP / BJP	33	107
Using this baseline what happens in Phase 2 if...		
...pattern of voting same as in 1999	131	153
...there is a 2 pp swing against TDP / BJP	109	171
...there is a 4 pp swing against TDP / BJP	91	181
...there is a 6 pp swing against TDP / BJP	79	201

Note: Since the exit poll shows that a swing against TDP-BJP translates into direct gains for the Congress alliance, all the swings are calculated accordingly. So a swing of 2 percentage points has been calculated by deducting 2 percentage points from TDP-BJP votes in all the Phase 2 constituencies and adding the same to the Congress or its allies. pp = percentage point.

Graphic by Varghese Kallada

Karnataka: Everything depends on how much the JD (S) gains and at whose expense

Seats in Assembly elections 2004

	Congress	BJP + JD (U)	JD (S)
Swings as estimated by exit / opinion polls*	117	57	18
What happens if...			
If JD (S) gains 5 pp but there is a 3 pp swing against the Congress and a 2 pp swing against NDA	110	66	17
If JD (S) gains 5 pp at the expense of the Congress	92	83	20
If JD (S) gains 7 pp at the expense of everyone else	113	60	22
If JD (S) gains 9 pp at the expense of everyone else	112	59	24

*5 pp for JD (S), 2 pp against Congress and 3 pp against NDA

Note: Since JD (S) base is concentrated in Old Mysore region, this calculation spreads the swings disproportionately. The gains of JD (S) in Old Mysore are assumed to be double, as compared to the other regions. pp = percentage point.

BJP complains to EC over advertisements

By J.P. Shukla 19/16

LUCKNOW, APRIL 21. The Bharatiya Janata Party today sent a representation to the Election Commission demanding action against the Samajwadi Party for seeking votes in the "name of religion and caste."

It cited the advertisements released to some Urdu newspapers with the heading "Samajwadi Party and Who?" which

appeared to Muslims to vote for the SP in return for the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mulayam Singh Yadav's stand vis-a-vis the Babri Masjid issue.

The senior BJP leader, Om Prakash Singh, alleged here at a press conference that the SP was trying to disturb communal harmony. This was a clear-cut violation of the model code of conduct.

Mr. Singh said that another

advertisement released to some Hindi newspapers tried to provoke certain castes.

The advertisements were issued on behalf of an organisation "Kshatriya Jagran Manch" the identity of which was not clear.

Some Muslim leaders have also taken exception to the advertisements in the Urdu newspapers, especially the one in which the sacrifices made at

2-Steelman (L.S.)
Karbala were equated to the sacrifices made for the community by Mr. Yadav.

The Shia cleric of Lucknow, Kalbe Jawwad, demanded that it be immediately withdrawn and Mr. Singh should apologise.

Leaders of the Milli Council and the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board have also expressed their outrage at the advertisement.

Exit polls see door shut on cl

Take Suniel, give Sunjay

ANAND SOONDAS

Mumbai, April 20: Sunjay and Suniel are friends — more than friends, really. Sunjay Dutt has a joint bank account with Suniel Shetty's wife Mana.

When the two actors are seen on either side of the poll divide — Suniel campaigning for Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Nirupam against Sunjay's father — the obvious conclusion would be: "Cluck, cluck, politics has destroyed another friendship."

But think again.

Two days ago, an emotional Sunjay dropped in on a meeting being addressed by his father Sunil Dutt, the Congress candidate for Mumbai Northwest, in Andheri. In "Munnabhai" style, he told the gathering to thunderous applause, "Votes bole toh inko dena. Yeh kaun keh raha hai? Munnabhai keh raha hai (Vote for him. Who's saying this? Munnabhai)."

The hero of *Munnabhai MBBS*, the hugely popular movie, was mobbed.



The Sena was not amused. Only days ago, it had announced Sunjay would not campaign for the Congress — that he had given his word to Bal Thackeray.

Nirupam said the actor had stabbed him in the back. Sena sources said other leaders, too, were "upset with Sunjay's behaviour". "After what Balasaheb did for him during the riots (of 1993) he should have shown some courtesy towards the party that helped him in his time of need," a senior party leader said. Arrested for possessing an AK-47, Sunjay was treated with kid gloves at Thackeray's instance.

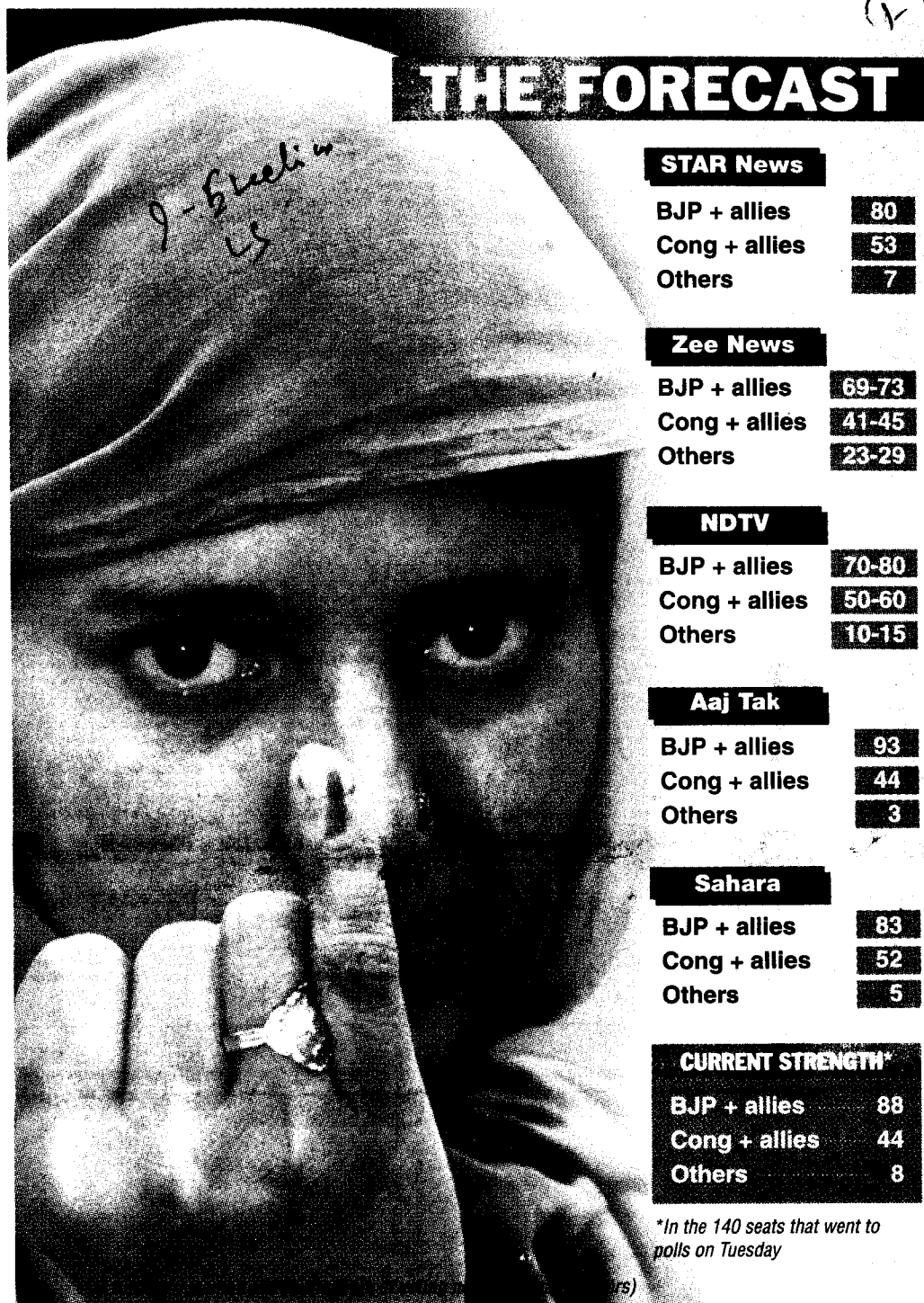
Stung Sena leaders today announced triumphantly Suniel Shetty would campaign for Nirupam. What better revenge for Sunjay's so-called "betrayal"?

Not quite, said a friend of Suniel, who insisted it was only an attempt to save Sunjay further trouble by assuaging the Sena. "He just wants to balance things out. The message is that if Sunjay is campaigning for his father and the Congress, Suniel will do so for Nirupam and the Sena. *Panga nahi hoga* (There will be no clash between the two)."

Sunjay has also tried to clear the air by saying that his appeal to voters to back his father should not be seen politically. "I just went to meet my dad whom I haven't seen for the last two months," he said. "I was missing him and I wanted to see his face. What I said was not planned.."

Wouldn't Thackeray be angry with him for campaigning for the Congress? "Balasaheb is above all this. Moreover, my family and I can never forget what he has done for us," Sunjay replied.

Sunjay and Suniel are so thick they are like brothers, say industry sources. Suniel is very protective of his friend, that's why the joint account. Sunjay cannot withdraw more than Rs 5,000 at one go from the account because, according to Suniel, "Sunjay is so innocent and gullible that everyone fleeces him and he doesn't even know what is happening."



THE FORECAST

STAR News

BJP + allies	80
Cong + allies	53
Others	7

Zee News

BJP + allies	69-73
Cong + allies	41-45
Others	23-29

NDTV

BJP + allies	70-80
Cong + allies	50-60
Others	10-15

Aaj Tak

BJP + allies	93
Cong + allies	44
Others	3

Sahara

BJP + allies	83
Cong + allies	52
Others	5

CURRENT STRENGTH*

BJP + allies	88
Cong + allies	44
Others	8

*In the 140 seats that went to polls on Tuesday

Tallies hold, give or take a few

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 20: Exit poll results for the first phase of the Lok Sabha election held today unfolded more or less according to script with all forecasts suggesting little change in the balance of power between the two major groups, one led by the BJP and the other by the Congress.

Bloodied by violence across the country from Manipur in the Northeast to Jharkhand in the east and Jammu and Kashmir on the northern tip with 20 deaths, the election saw a low turnout of 50-55 per cent.

If the exit polls, conducted by the Hindi news channels STAR, Aaj Tak, Zee and Sahara and NDTV, which beams in Hindi and English, prove correct, the BJP-led alliance's tally should remain around the 1999 score of 88 and the Congress and its allies' around 44.

The forecasts for the BJP and allies ranged from 69-73 at the lowest end on Zee to 93 pre-

dicted by Aaj Tak.

STAR and Sahara were nearly the same. The BJP and allies were expected to get 80 seats according to the STAR poll and the Congress group 53. The respective numbers on Sahara were 83 and 52.

Zee's projection for the Congress camp was also on the lower side at 41-45. NDTV also released a range, 70-80 for the BJP and allies and 50-60 for the Congress camp.

Aaj Tak gave the Congress and allies 44 seats, unchanged from last time, as it predicted a gain of five for the rival side.

Zee TV predicted a substantial loss, between 19 to 15 seats, for the NDA. It said the BJP-led alliance is likely to get between

69 and 73 seats and the Congress and partners between 41 and 45. The Zee gave a large chunk of 23 to 29 seats to others.

The exit polls showed that

while anti-incumbency hit the Congress in Karnataka and the Telugu Desam-BJP combine in Andhra Pradesh and to some extent in Assam, in Maharashtra the ruling Congress-NCP alliance might have bucked the trend. In Gujarat, where the BJP had 21 of the 26 seats and the Congress five, nothing much is changing.

In the STAR poll, the Congress was expected to gain 13 seats in Andhra Pradesh with the other side losing 10. But, then, since the first round of polls were held in the Telengana region, where the Congress was expected to do well because of its alliance with a regional party, the results may not be representative of the entire state.

If N. Chandrababu Naidu was being buffeted in Andhra, in neighbouring Karnataka, his counterpart S.M. Krishna was far-

ing no better. STAR gave the NDA 10 seats and the Congress only four. In both states, Assembly elections are also being held, but projections were mostly unavailable today. Some are expected tomorrow.

But the Lok Sabha exit polls would leave Naidu and Krishna shaky in their chief ministerial chairs.

In Jharkhand, of the six seats that went to the polls today, STAR gave three each to the Congress and the BJP alliances. Zee showed the BJP ahead in five and Aaj Tak in four seats.

STAR gave four to the Congress and allies and seven to the BJP-Janata Dal (United) in 11 Bihar seats. For Orissa, the projection is nine for the BJP combine and two for the Congress.

The cloud over publicising the results of exit polls was lifted today with the Election Commission virtually ruling out a ban for now. "The commission feels that regulation of exit polls can only be done through legislation," a spokesman said.

QUOTE

Indeed, it is a party for all of us

UJJAGAR SINGH
who voted in a booth near the International Border

Demolition brainwave after burning crores

Flyover down the drain

SHANKAR MUKHERJEE

Calcutta, April 20: After seven long years, the government has realised the Kidderpore flyover has a design fault. The half-finished flyover, which has so far cost Rs 4 crore, will be completely demolished to pave the way for reconstruction.

Instead of standing on twin columns, as now, the flyover will stand on a single column to allow construction of two parallel roads under it.

The Hooghly River Bridge Commissioners (HRBC), the project's implementing agency, has prepared a Rs 34-crore reconstruction plan and hopes to start work in a couple of months. The modified project is expected to be completed in two years.

The Assembly subject committee on transport, at its meeting on Monday, slammed HRBC officials for their "inefficiency and lack of foresight" which led to waste of time and public money. "At least Rs 4 crore has gone down the drain in the past seven years. Besides, it has caused inconvenience to the local people and traffic disruption. Who will compensate the loss?" asked the chairman of the subject committee, Sadhan Pande.

"HRBC officials and engineers, entrusted with the construction, have failed miserably. I have already brought the matter to the notice of chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee," he said.

Flyover construction was flagged off in 1997 with a cost estimate of Rs 20 crore. It was meant to have taken off around Fancy Market on Garden Reach Circular Road and come down near the approach road to Vidyasagar Setu and was scheduled to be completed by 2000. However, after three years, only a portion of the flyover could be built near the Kidderpore-end. That was where it was left, not to be touched again.

A number of shanties have come up on it. "We undertook a thorough scrutiny of the work done and detected some technical faults. If the construction is carried out in accordance with the existing plan, a number of problems will arise and defeat the very purpose for which



The Kidderpore flyover. Picture by Amit Data

the project was undertaken. Hence we have decided to construct the flyover anew," said HRBC vice-chairman Sadhan Banerjee.

He added that construction was started without keeping in mind the need to build two parallel roads under the flyover. "We will also have to change the building technology to ensure speedy construction as well as use of less space. These considerations have prompted us to modify the scheme," Banerjee said.

He would not blame anyone for the lapse. "I cannot say who was at fault or why the construction was delayed as I took over only a year ago."

HRBC engineers do not want to admit that it was a fault. "We are modifying the plan to get a better result. As the construction was started hurriedly at that time, the problems were overlooked," they said. The flyover will now be built with pre-fabricated material as was done in the AJC Bose Road and Gariahat constructions.

50-55% polling in first phase

● 18 killed in violence ● Booth-capturing, smashing of EVMs

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 20. Violence, booth-capturing and smashing of electronic voting machines marked the first phase of polling held for 140 Lok Sabha seats in which an estimated 50-55 per cent of the 175 million voters exercised their franchise. The constituencies are spread over 13 States and three Union Territories.

Elections were also held for the Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa Legislative Assemblies.

The Deputy Election Commissioner, A.N. Jha, told presspersons that polling was by and large peaceful, barring stray incidents of violence reported from seven States — Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir and Manipur and in all 18 persons were killed.

Mr. Jha gave the break-up of the voter turnout (in per cent): about 55 in Andhra Pradesh, 60 in Assam, 55-60 in Bihar, 45-50 in Gujarat, 40 in Jammu and Kashmir, 55-60 in Karnataka, 40-45 in Maharashtra and 45-50 in Manipur.

He said the turnout was 50-55 per cent in Meghalaya, 55-60 in Mizoram, 50-55 in Orissa, 50 in Chhattisgarh, 45-50 in Jharkhand, 45-50 in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, 65-70 in Dadra Nagar and Haveli and 60-65 in Daman and Diu. The percentages were only tentative. Mr. Jha said that repolling, wherever necessary on account of booth capturing or smashing of the EVMs, would be held on April 22. A decision on the number of booths needing repolling would be decided tomorrow.

Six cases of disruption of polling by left-wing extremists were reported from Andhra Pradesh. Six EVMs were either taken away or snatched in separate incidents. In five cases, polling was stopped because of problems with the EVMs. In Karnataka, four incidents of group clashes took place — two each in Srinivaspura and the Assembly segments of the Kolar Lok Sabha constituency.

He said that in the Hazaribagh constituency in Bihar, where the External Affairs Minister, Yashwant Sinha, was contesting, left-wing extremists attacked a polling booth following which the presiding officer ran away. In Kodarma, one EVM was damaged and taken away by militants. Polling was delayed at some places in Dhanbad and Bokaro because of defects in EVMs and these were replaced. Similarly, in Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Jammu and Kashmir, polling was disrupted in some booths because of violence or the snatching of the EVMs. However, by and large polling through EVMs was good.

In Assam, polling was obstructed in two booths in Kokrajhar. In some places, there were attempts to damage EVMs. Three polling stations in Mangaldoi constituency were damaged. Large-scale obstructions by militants were reported from Manipur's Chandel and Senapati districts. In Manipur, repolling would be held in 103 polling stations. Despite a cyclonic storm, polling was normal in Mizoram. No untoward incidents were reported from Maharashtra, Daman and Diu, the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Meghalaya. In Chhattisgarh, extremists in Bastar and Dantewala snatched 17 EVMs.

Polling was by and large peaceful in Gujarat. Attempts to capture a booth were reported from the Khera Parliamentary constituency and Junagarh.

'Exit polls are on'

The Commission today virtually ruled out imposing any ban on telecast or publication of the exit polls in between the first and last phase of elections. To a question whether the Commission was contemplating imposing a ban on the exit polls, Mr. Jha said, "the exit polls are on. We have not put any restrictions". He, however, said the Commission had sought legal opinion on whether a legislative course of action could be taken for regulating these polls.

It might be recalled that after the Commission asked the Government to bring an ordinance to ban exit polls, the Attorney-General, Soli Sorabjee, felt that such a ban would be unconstitutional and suggested that the Commission could bring in some regulations. But the Commission has put the ball back in the government's court for a decision in this regard.

Swamy's complaint

To a question, Mr. Jha said the Commission had sought a report from the CEO, Tamil Nadu on the Janata Party president, Subramanian Swamy's complaint against the AIADMK candidate, T.T.V. Dhinakaran, contesting from the Periakulam constituency alleging that Mr. Dhinakaran was holding a passport issued by another country and was therefore ineligible to contest the polls.

POLLING MAGISTRATE DIES IN DHANBAD, LAST ■ CP THAKUR'S VOTE CANCELLED

55 per cent turnout amid stray violence

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 20. — The first phase of the 14th Lok Sabha election witnessed an average 55% polling in 140 constituencies spread across 13 states and three Union Territories, considerably lower than the average in earlier elections.

Polling was marred by violence and bomb blasts in Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, J&K, Gujarat and Manipur. The Election Commission said three persons, including a polling magistrate, were killed — two in Jharkhand and one in J&K. But agency reports put the toll at 20.

The EC said repolling would be held on 22 May at all places where EVMs were snatched or damaged. The EC is still receiving such complaints and the decision on the number of booths where repolling will be held will be taken by tomorrow evening, said deputy election commissioner Mr AN Jha.

Giving a tentative break-up of state-wise polling, Mr Jha said Andhra Pradesh had 55% polling, Assam 60%, Bihar 50-55%, Gujarat 45-50%, J&K 40%, Karnataka 55-60%, Maharashtra 45-50%, Meghalaya 50-55%, Mizoram 55-60%, Orissa 50-55%, Chhattisgarh 50%, Jharkhand 45-50%, Dadra and Nagar Haveli 65-70%, and Daman and Diu 60-65%.

Voting was also held for 344 Assembly seats in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa.



DEMOCRACY IN ACTION? Policemen beat up an alleged underage voter at a polling station near Gaya on Tuesday. — AFP

Incidents of large-scale violence were reported from Manipur. At least four jawans were killed in attacks by separatists. Bad weather and landslides delayed the polling process in at least 70 polling stations.

In Andhra Pradesh, Naxalites disrupted polling in at least six places. Four incidents of group clashes that led to booth capturing in the Kolar

seat were also reported.

In Bihar, at least half-a-dozen booth capturing incidents, and three incidents of bomb blasts were reported. Six people were reportedly injured. The vote of Union minister and the BJP candidate for Patna, Dr CP Thakur, was cancelled on the ground of breach of secrecy.

In Jharkhand, Naxalites and police had an encounter, in which a police-

men was killed and a booth capturer injured. A polling magistrate died in a landmine blast in Dhanbad. Foreign minister Mr Yashwant Sinha escaped unhurt when his car was attacked by criminals on Hazaribagh-Bishnu Garh Road. Four persons, including a journalist, died in J&K, where elections were for Jammu and Baramulla.

More reports on pages 4, 5 and 6

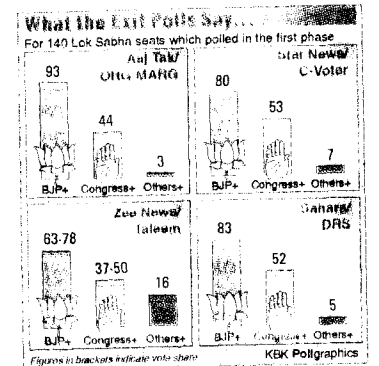
Exit polls put NDA ahead

NEW DELHI, April 20. — Exit polls conducted by major TV networks placed the NDA ahead of the Congress and its allies in the 140 Lok Sabha seats that went to polls today.

While *Aaj Tak* put the NDA on top with 93 seats, seven more than its 1999 tally, *Zee TV* put the figures between 63 and 78. The Congress and allies have been projected to get 44 seats (one less than the last time) by *Aaj Tak*. *Zee TV* predicted the Congress and its allies would bag 37-50 seats, while 16 seats will be bagged by 'Others.' *NDTV* projections put the NDA at 75, the Congress and allies at 53, and 'Others' at 12.

The *Sahara* exit poll showed the BJP-led combine getting 83 seats and the Congress 52. 'Others' will get 5 seats. *Star News* projected the BJP-led combine would get 80 seats and the Congress and allies 53 seats.

By and large, the exit polls showed a sweep for the BJP in Gujarat and a neck-and-neck contest in Maharashtra. While *Aaj Tak* showed the BJP getting 23 of the 26 seats in Gujarat, *Zee's* tally for the party was between 18 and 20.



In Maharashtra, the BJP-Shiv Sena is to get 11 seats, *Aaj Tak* said. *Zee* projected 10 to 12 seats for the Congress-NCP and 6 to 8 for the BJP-Shiv Sena. In Andhra Pradesh, of the 21 seats where polls were held today, *Aaj Tak* gave 8 seats to the TDP-BJP and the rest to the Congress and allies. *Zee* gave the Congress 10-12 seats and the TDP-BJP 8-10. In Bihar, both *Zee* and *Aaj Tak* put the NDA tally at 9 and the Congress-RJD tally at 2-3 seats.

Aaj Tak showed the Congress getting 2 seats in Orissa and the BJP-BJD ahead in 9 seats. *Zee* gave the BJP-BJD 5-9 seats and the Congress 3-5. — SNS

No plan to ban exit polls: EC, page 10

CONGRESS CRITICISES EC FOR EXIT POLL INDECISION

Elections for 14th Lok Sabha begin

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 19. — After a largely lacklustre campaign, decision time has come around for the first phase of the great Indian democratic exercise, the first time this millennium Indians will decide who they want at the country's helm.

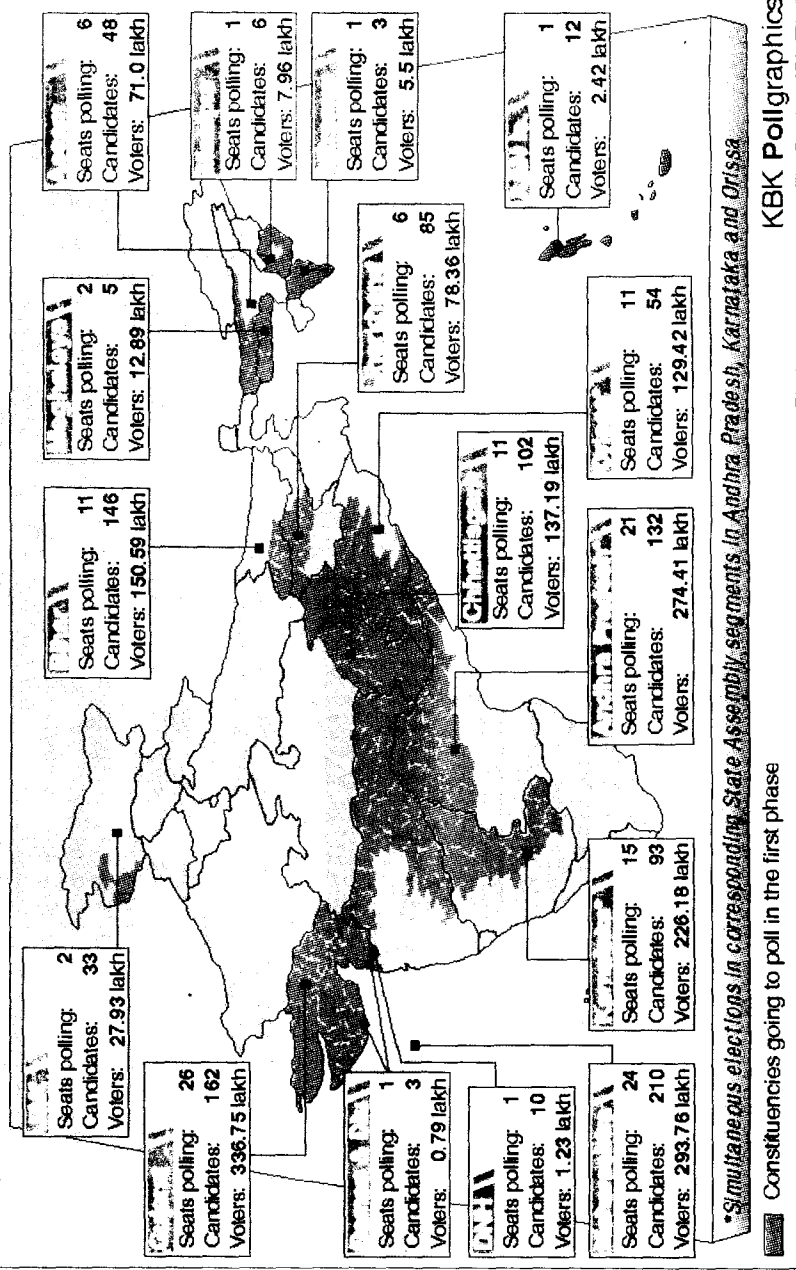
(While private TV channels have geared up to air exit polls, the Congress today blamed the Election Commission for having "failed" to discharge its constitutional obligation of taking a stand in favour or against political parties' demand to ban exit polls. "There is still time left for the panel to discharge its responsibility. Or else the party would decide what to do next," Congress spokesman Mr Kapil Sibal said.)

In a campaign largely dominated by the personality of a handful of leaders, the ruling NDA has sought to turn the election into a referendum on who will lead the country, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee or Mrs Sonia Gandhi.

Polling starts at 7 a.m. on Tuesday to enable around

POLLING TODAY April 20, 2004

● Lok Sabha constituencies: 140 ● States & Union territories involved: 16
● Candidates: 1104 ● Electorate: 1756.38 lakh



*Simultaneous elections in corresponding State Assembly segments in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Orissa

KBK Pollgraphics

7.56 crore voters in 13 states and three Union Territories to exercise their franchise — 1,104 candi-
dates will try their luck in their representatives in 147 in Orissa. EVMs are being used across the country for the 14th Lok Sabha. National elections will be

IN THE FRAY

	AMIT JOGI Mahasamund (Chhattisgarh)		VC SHUKLA Mahasamund
	GIRIDHAR GAMANG Koraput (Orissa)		YASHWANT SINHA Hazariabagh (Jharkhand)
	JAPA REDDY Miryalguda (Andhra Pradesh)		

held for the first phase in Assam (6 seats), Andhra Pradesh (21), Bihar (11), Gujarat (26), Jammu and Kashmir (2), Karnataka (15), Maharashtra (24), Manipur (1), Meghalaya (2), Mizoram (1), Orissa (11), Chhattisgarh (11), Jharkhand (6), Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (one each). The first phase will cover all constituencies in Gujarat and Chhattisgarh. A security blanket has been thrown over sensitive areas, particularly in Naxalite-affected Andhra

Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Orissa, Bihar as well as militancy-hit J&K, where polling will be held for Jammu and Bara-mulla seats. The EC has identified 66,317 polling stations as "sensitive", including 22,585 as "hyper-sensitive" for Tuesday's polls. Bihar and Jharkhand top the list, with around 80 per cent of the booths declared as sensitive or hyper-sensitive. In Gujarat, 10,492 of the 36,826 booths have been described as sensitive.

More reports on pages 4 and 5

Lucre and liquor flow in pre-poll Andhra

Stanley Theodore in Hyderabad

April 19. — Liquor, money and cricket kits have flooded Andhra Pradesh on poll eve. An unprecedented number of such inducements, that candidates wanted to distribute to voters, have come to light. In some places however, rival party cadres destroyed them.

In Tandur in Rangareddy district police seized Rs 1 lakh worth of liquor. In Godavarikhani, Karimnagar district, police seized over Rs 1 lakh from a TDP woman activist. In Payakaraopet, Visakhapatnam district, an Independent candidate Ms Sumana was caught carrying 2,200 saris for distribution among the electorate.

In A. Madab TDP leader and Zilla Parishad leader Mr Shyam Sunder was caught distributing money to the voters. In Anantapur district liquor loaded in textile minister Mr N Kistappa's car was seized. Rs 15,000 worth of liquor was seized in Bhimdevurapalli in Karimnagar.

In Nalgonda a lorry carrying cricket kits for distribution allegedly by Tungathurthi TDP candidate Mr S Venkateshwar Rao was discovered after it turned turtle. In Khammam 185 cricket kits worth over Rs 60,000 was seized before TDP workers could distribute them. Rs 9.5 lakh in cash was seized from another TDP leader while another 120 cricket kits were seized in Buggaram, Karimnagar district.

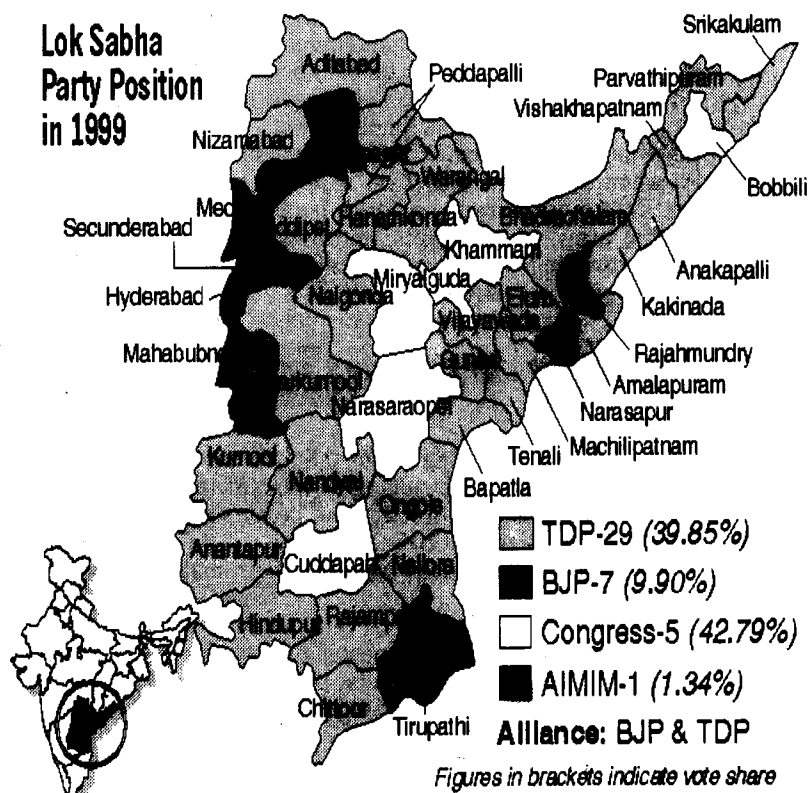
Congress candidate from Anakapalle Mr Nandgopal's workers allegedly distributed 24 cricket kits. Police are perusing a similar complaint against Vizianagaram leader Mr B Satyanarayana. In Tirupati a lorry load of cricket kits allegedly for Congress candidate Mr Chinta Mohan was confiscated.

In Miryalguda, Congress and TRS workers, on hearing news that TDP workers were taking liquor in a van, attacked the vehicle and smashed the bottles. The bottles that survived the attack were carried away by local residents. In Nalgonda district the CPI led the police to a rice mill where Rs 1.5 lakh worth of liquor had been stored.

ANDHRA PRADESH

Seats: 42

Lok Sabha Party Position in 1999



ELECTORAL HISTORY 1952-1999

Voter Turnout (%)		Party Performance						
Year	State voter turnout	Year	Largest party	Seats won	Vote (%)	Second largest	Seats won	Vote (%)
1952	44.8	1952	Congress	14	40.1	PDF	7	28.2
1957	61.2	1957	Congress	37	51.5	CPI	2	12.0
1962	69.14	1962	Congress	34	48.0	CPI	7	21.0
1967		1967	Congress	35	46.8	SWA	3	13.8
1971		1971	Congress	28	55.7	TPS	10	14.3
1977		1977	Congress	41	57.4	BLD	1	32.3
1980		1980	Congress	41	58.2	INCU	1	7.2
1984		1984	TDP	30	44.8	Congress	6	41.8
1989		1989	Congress	39	51.0	TDP	2	34.5
1991		1991	Congress	25	45.8	TDP	13	32.3
1996		1996	Congress	22	39.7	TDP	16	32.4
1998		1998	Congress	22	38.5	TDP	12	32.0
1999		1999	TDP	29	39.85	BJP	7	9.90

Total Seats: 1952: 25 • 1957 & '62: 43 • 1987 & '71: 41 • 1977 onwards: 42
 AIMIM-All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen; INCU-Indian National Congress Urs;
 BLD-Bharatiya Lok Dal; TPS-Telengana Praja Samiti; SWA-Swatantra Party;
 PDF-Peoples Democratic Front

KBK Pollgraphics

Stampede snips Atal show frills

RADHIKA RAMASESHAN

Lucknow, April 13: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee will file his nomination on Thursday as scheduled but has directed his local campaign manager, Shiv Kumar, to keep it "subdued and low key" because it will be three days after the stampede deaths.

Accordingly, the Uttar Pradesh BJP has decided to perform a small *havan* in Vajpayee's central election office, after which he will file his papers at the district collectorate. Only party president M. Venkaiah Naidu and Pramod Mahajan, the general secretary in charge of the state, will accompany him. BJP workers have been asked to keep away.

Lalji Tandon, Vajpayee's constituency minister and the protagonist of yesterday's tragedy, is expected to remain in the background, BJP sources said.

The original plan was to have a "grand" *havan* after which Vajpayee would have led a procession, with a band of drummers and shehnai and nagada players. Four floral arches were to be erected on the route and each time Vajpayee stopped, he was to be showered with flowers. He would have wound up the event by addressing a public meeting.

A day after Vajpayee's visit, Tandon began a drive to contain the damage after he was reportedly told off by Mahajan. The BJP spin doctor, who dashed to Lucknow from Varanasi for a

few hours today, asked Tandon why he thought it expedient to gift saris in the midst of electioneering, the sources said.

Shortly after Mahajan left, Tandon went into a huddle with Lucknow BJP leaders and representatives of the RSS to assess the fallout.

Later, he visited the families of some of the victims and marshalled the services of the BJP's women's wing to console the bereaved. A contingent led by Kusum Rai, Kalyan Singh's confidante, was with them all night, said Sanjay Choudhury, Tandon's public relations chief.

Apart from giving Rs 50,000 each to the victims' families, the BJP also paid for the cremation of those who could not afford it.

Asked if the tragedy would hurt the BJP's prospects in Lucknow, Choudhury said: "No, not at all. Those who came to the function were our committed supporters. Each year, Babuji (as he calls Tandon) distributes blankets in winter and saris in summer. The same recipients show up because they are brought by our workers."

As a former urban development minister Tandon had worked for Lucknow's slums, Choudhury claimed. "The people came from such slums and the good work Tandon did will outweigh the negative fallout of the tragedy."

As for the buzz about organiser Brajendra Murari Yadav's allegedly dubious antecedents,

both Shiv Kumar and Choudhury sounded defensive. "I didn't know him well enough," pleaded Kumar. Choudhury added: "He was a friend of Tandon but not a BJP member."

The sources conceded that Yadav was "useful" in galvanising votes. He was apparently "influential" in two Assembly segments: Lucknow (west), which is Tandon's, and Mahona, a semi-rural constituency. Yadav is originally from Mahona but moved to a more upscale area after becoming prosperous.

The sources admitted they would have to work "overtime" in the two segments to keep their votes. Yadav, they claimed, has been avoiding Tandon since yesterday.

Seizure powers for censor EC

R. VENKATARAMAN

New Delhi, April 13: The Supreme Court today settled the row over political advertisements by empowering the Election Commission to monitor these and seize equipment of errant networks.

The poll panel would thus be the "sole authority" to certify political ads, none of which could be telecast without its clearance, ruled the three-judge bench led by Chief Justice V.N. Khare.

Both the content of the ads and the transcript would have to be submitted to the poll panel or its nominated official for clearance. Article 324 of the Constitution empowers the panel to oversee, control and conduct the elections, the bench pointed out.

Last week, the poll panel had suggested to the court to limit political ads to registered and recognised parties and poll can-

didates, and a seven-day preview for the ad content in the wake of an apex court interim order banning offensive ads.

The panel, however, was reluctant to do the screening itself, preferring the government as the monitor.

Empowering the panel with seizure powers today, the bench said: "If the EC, while monitoring the cable networks and TV channels throughout the coun-

try, came across any infringement of this court's order, it could direct seizure of the equipment of the TV channel or the cable operator showing the illegal advertisement."

The panel can also appoint sub-committees in the states to look into grievances of non-certification of ads by the district magistrate or his nominee, who are authorised to screen the advertisements.

If the sub-committee's decision is unacceptable, the aggrieved party must approach the Supreme Court and none else, the bench said.

The apex court order shall remain in force till the elections are over on May 10.

The controversy broke with the Kamakshi Education Trust releasing an ad with an obvious reference to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi's Italian origin and another put out by Shahji Enterprises that made out Atal Bihari Vajpayee to be a police informer during the Quit India movement and L.K. Advani a Pakistani.

Now parties, candidates and "other persons", including organisations like the "trusts" mentioned above, wanting to telecast an ad would have to submit an affidavit to the Election Commission to help weed out "surrogate" ads.

THE RULES

• **What to submit:** Ads, production cost and telecast charges. Trusts or similar bodies to file details about themselves and for whom ads are made

• **When to submit:** Two days before telecast for April 20 polls. Three days ahead for other phases. One week in advance for those other than parties or candidates

• **Who will monitor:** Poll panel. Grievance should be addressed to the Supreme Court

• **When to stop:** 48 hours before polling



14 APR 2001

THE STATESMAN

PM's nomination to be a 'low-key affair'

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 13. — The Prime Minister will file his nomination for the Lok Sabha elections in Lucknow on 15 April but the event will be distinctly low-key. In view of yesterday's stampede in the Uttar Pradesh capital which led to the death of 21 women, the BJP has also called off the rally Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee was expected to address after filing his nomination.

It will be a toned down affair, the party general secretary and spokesperson, Mr Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, said. BJP president Mr M Venkaiah Naidu, party general secretaries Mr Pramod Mahajan and Mr Naqvi, and the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister, Mr Kalyan Singh, will be among the others present on the occasion.

Mr Lalji Tandon, at whose birthday function the "saree stampede" took place has few admirers in the BJP though nobody dares rub him the wrong way because of his proximity to the Prime Minister. His detractors now hope he will be eased out of the public glare.

Few BJP leaders are ready to speak against Mr Tandon but many privately feel that he should not be part of public functions for the sake of the party's image. It remains to be seen how "an image conscious Vajpayee reacts" and whether Mr Tan-

don will hog the limelight on the nomination day.

Mr Tandon's detractors describe his clout as disproportionate to his stature. He has been acting as the Prime Minister's political manager and represents one of the Assembly segments that fall under the Lucknow Lok Sabha constituency.

The BJP, however, officially defended Mr Tandon saying there was nothing wrong in his attending a birthday function. The Opposition should not politicise the death of innocent victims, Mr Naqvi said. Denying that Mr Tandon was the Prime Minister's election agent, he said the Congress should be better equipped with facts. Mr Vajpayee had not appointed anyone as his election agent; the process would begin only after he files his nomination from Lucknow, Mr Naqvi added.

Sources said Mr Tandon had never acted as Mr Vajpayee's election agent. Till the 1999 Lok Sabha elections, Mr NM Ghatate — his old friend and jurist — used to be the election agent. This time though there was talk of Mr Tandon being named one, the sources said.

When asked why the BJP was talking of compensation if it had nothing to do with the function, Mr Naqvi said the party had collected money for those killed in a stampede in a BSP rally as well. These were humanitarian issues and should be dealt



Victims of Monday's stampede in Lucknow being cremated on the Gomti banks on Tuesday. — PTI

with as such, he said. The Prime Minister cancelling his rally in Mahasamund (from where Ajit Jogi is contesting) and Mr LK Advani wishing Mr Jogi a speedy recovery were instances that showed the BJP gave priority to human values, Mr Naqvi said. **Editorial: Birthdays & deaths,** page 6

Opp memo to EC

NEW DELHI, April 13. — All major Opposition parties today sought immediate action by the Election Commission against those involved in organising the saree distribution function in the Prime Minister's constituency, Lucknow, that led to a stampede and the death of 21 women.

Calling it a violation of the model code of conduct, the Opposition parties also demanded appropriate action against all those who were responsible for the mismanagement at the function.

A delegation comprising leaders from the Congress, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal-S, CPI-M and CPI met Election Commissioner Mr G Gopalaswami, and gave him a memorandum on the Lucknow incident. It is a "blatant violation of the model code by the leaders of the BJP in the Prime Minister's constituency. They have organised free distribution of sarees to induce the voters making use of the occasion of the birthday of Shri Lalji Tandon, a prominent leader of the BJP," which led to the tragic death of innocent women, the Opposition parties wrote to the EC. They also quoted Section 4 of the model code of conduct which says that "all parties and candidates shall avoid scrupulously all activities which are corrupt practices and offences under the election law, such as bribing of voters, intimidation of voters". The Election Commissioner informed the Opposition leaders that the EC has already sought a report from the UP chief secretary. — SNS

অটলের কেন্দ্রে বিপর্যয় বিশৃঙ্খলা বিজেপি নেতার অনুষ্ঠানে. মৃত অন্তত ২১

লখনউ, ১২ এপ্রিল— প্রধানমন্ত্রীর নির্বাচন-তদারকির দায়িত্বপ্রাপ্ত, বিজেপি নেতা লালজি ট্যান্ডনের জন্মদিন উপলক্ষে আয়োজিত এক শাড়ি বিতরণ অনুষ্ঠানে পদপিষ্ট হয়ে ২১ জন মহিলা প্রাণ হারিয়েছেন। অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর নির্বাচনী কেন্দ্র লখনউয়ের চন্দ্রশেখর পার্কে আজ দুপুর আড়াইটে নাগাদ এই দুর্ঘটনা ঘটে। আশঙ্কা, পদপিষ্ট হয়ে দু'টি শিশুও মারা গিয়েছে। আহত হয়েছেন আরও বহু মহিলা। তাঁদের কিং জর্জ, বলরামপুর ও সিভিল হাসপাতালে ভর্তি করা হয়েছে। দুর্ঘটনার খবর পেয়ে ঝাড়খণ্ডে নির্বাচনী সফর থামিয়ে লখনউ চলে এসেছেন বাজপেয়ী। বিমানবন্দর থেকে তিনি সোজা চলে যান কিং জর্জ মেডিক্যাল ইউনিভার্সিটিতে। সেখানে দুর্ঘটনায় নিহত ও আহতদের আত্মীয়স্বজনকে সাহায্য দিয়ে বাজপেয়ী তাঁদের ঋণ্য রক্ষা করতে বলেন। এই দুর্ঘটনার তদন্ত হবে বলেও জানান তিনি। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর ত্রাণ তহবিল থেকে নিহতদের নিকটাত্মীয়কে এক লক্ষ টাকা দেওয়া হবে বলেও জানান বাজপেয়ী।

ভোটের ঠিক আগে অটলের কেন্দ্রে এই দুর্ঘটনা দিল্লিতে রাজনৈতিক চাপানউতোর তৈরি করেছে। দুর্ঘটনার রাজনৈতিক ফায়দা তোলার চেষ্টা শুরু করেছে কংগ্রেস। তাদের দাবি, বিষয়টি নির্বাচনী আচরণবিধি বহির্ভূত। অবিলম্বে এ ব্যাপারে নির্বাচন কমিশনের নজর দেওয়া উচিত। সি পি এমের পলিটব্যুরোর সদস্য অনিল বিশ্বাসও বলেছেন, স্বয়ং প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কেন্দ্রে যে ভাবে বিধিগতঘটনার ঘটনা ঘটেছে তাতে বুঝে নিতে অসুবিধা হয় না, অন্যত্র বিজেপি ও জেট শরিকেরা কী করছে। অন্য দিকে, বিজেপি বিষয়টিকে আপাতত খামাচাপা দিতে চাইলেও বাজপেয়ীর ঘনিষ্ঠ হিসাবে পরিচিত ট্যান্ডনের বিরুদ্ধে ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করছেন দলের শীর্ষ পর্যায়ের বেশ কিছু নেতা। তাঁদের বক্তব্য, খোদ বাজপেয়ীর কেন্দ্রে এই ঘটনা একেবারেই অনভিপ্রেত।

শাড়ি বিতরণ অনুষ্ঠানে প্রায় দশ হাজার মহিলা জড়ো হয়েছিলেন। তাঁদের অনেকের সঙ্গেই নানা বয়সের শিশু ছিল। কী ভাবে দুর্ঘটনা ঘটল, সে বিষয়ে বিভিন্ন বিবরণ পাওয়া যাচ্ছে। এক প্রত্যক্ষদর্শী জানিয়েছেন, অনুষ্ঠানের এক উদ্যোক্তা ডি ডি লক্ষ্য করে একটা শাড়ি ছুঁড়লে ধাক্কাধাক্কি শুরু হয়। কিন্তু কয়েকজন প্রত্যক্ষদর্শীর বক্তব্য অনুযায়ী, অনুষ্ঠান শেষ হয়ে গিয়েছে, এবং কাউন্টার থেকে গিয়ে শাড়ি সংগ্রহ করতে হবে এই ঘোষণার পরেই ধাক্কাধাক্কি শুরু হয়ে যায়। আশা কুমারী নামের এক মহিলা জানিয়েছেন, প্রথমে ছ' মাসের একটি শিশু মার কোল থেকে পড়ে যায়। তাকে বাঁচাতে গিয়ে পদপিষ্ট হয়ে মারা যান মা-ও। ডি এম অনুরাধা শুল্লা, এস এস পি রাজীব রঞ্জন বর্মা রাজীব রঞ্জন বর্মা ও অন্যান্য উচ্চপদস্থ পুলিশ ও সরকারি কর্মীরা হাসপাতালে গিয়ে হতাহতের সংখ্যা নির্ধারণ করার চেষ্টা করছেন।

দুর্ঘটনার পর ঘটনাস্থলে গিয়ে দেখা যায়, চারপাশে অসংখ্য চটি-জুতো ছড়ানো। এক পাশে ডাই করে রাখা বিতরণ না-করা শাড়ির প্যাকেট। অনেকেই অভিযোগ জানিয়েছেন, পরিস্থিতি নিয়ন্ত্রণে আনতে পুলিশ যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা নেয়নি। এস এস পি জানান, অনুষ্ঠান আয়োজন করার জন্য উদ্যোক্তারা সংশ্লিষ্ট কর্তৃপক্ষের কাছ থেকে অনুমতি নেননি। নির্বাচনের মুখে অনুষ্ঠান করার উপর নানা ধরনের নিষেধাজ্ঞা জারি করা হয়েছে। এই পরিস্থিতিতে প্রশাসনের অনুমতি না-নিয়ে অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করার জন্য উদ্যোক্তাদের বিরুদ্ধে যথাযথ ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে। ট্যান্ডন দুর্ঘটনার সময়ে ঘটনাস্থলে ছিলেন না। প্রয়োজনীয় সতর্কতা অবলম্বন করা সত্ত্বেও এই দুর্ঘটনা ঘটায় তিনি দুঃখ প্রকাশ করেছেন। বিনা অনুমতিতে অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন প্রসঙ্গে ট্যান্ডনের মন্তব্য, তাঁর জন্মদিন উপলক্ষে তাঁর শুভাকাঙ্ক্ষী ও বন্ধুরা এক ঘরোয়া অনুষ্ঠানের আয়োজন করেছিলেন মাত্র।

লখনউয়ে এক সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার টি এস কৃষ্ণমূর্তিও জানিয়েছেন, রাজ্যের মুখ্য সচিব ডি কে দেওয়ানকে শাড়ি বিতরণ অনুষ্ঠান সম্বন্ধে অনুসন্ধানের নির্দেশ দেওয়া হয়েছে। মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মুলায়ম সিংহ যাদবও কমিশনার ডি সি লখাকে ঘটনার তদন্তের নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন। মৃতদের পরিবার-পিছু এক লাখ, গুরুতর আহতদের জন্য ৫০ হাজার ও আহতদের জন্য ২৫ হাজার টাকার অনুদান ঘোষণা করেছে রাজ্য সরকার। এই খবর পি টি আই-এর।

নয়াদিল্লি থেকে স্টাফ রিপোর্টার জানাচ্ছেন, দুর্ঘটনাটি কেন্দ্র করে বিজেপির প্রবল সমালোচনা শুরু করেছে বিরোধীরা। আজ কংগ্রেস মুখপাত্র আনন্দ শর্মা বলেন, “এই ঘটনা থেকেই বোঝা যায় বিজেপি এবং প্রধানমন্ত্রী কী ভাবে ভোটটা লড়ছেন। যে জনসমর্থনের দাবি ওঁরা করছেন তা যদি সত্যি হত, তাহলে নিজের নির্বাচনীক্ষেত্রে গিয়ে এই শাড়ি বিতরণের কি আবশ্যিকতা ছিল?” তাঁর প্রশ্ন, “এর আগে কি কখনও মহিলাদের প্রলুব্ধ করার জন্য এইভাবে শাড়ি বিতরণ হয়েছে? নির্বাচনী প্রচারের জন্য যদি দরিদ্র পরিবার বলি হয় তাহলে তার জবাবদিহি সংশ্লিষ্ট দলের করা উচিত।” তিনি বলেন “লাশের উপর চড়ে ভোট পাওয়ার চেষ্টা করা এবং গরিবকে লোভ দেখানোর এই ঘটনা খুবই লজ্জাজনক।” আনন্দ শর্মা জানান, কংগ্রেস নেত্রী সনিয়া গান্ধী এই ঘটনায় গভীর শোক প্রকাশ করেছেন।

এর পর পাঁচের পাতায়

Opinion polls can't be banned: AG

Endorsing His View, Law Ministry Can Take Regulatory Measures

New Delhi: Attorney-general Soli J Sorabjee has shot down the Election Commission's proposal for an Ordinance to ban publication of opinion and exit polls during the period of election. Such a move would violate the fundamental right to free speech, he said.

Within hours of receiving Sorabjee's opinion, the Centre on Thursday "endorsed" his view and told the EC to take appropriate steps. The law ministry told the poll panel that it could take regulatory measures under Article 324 of the Constitution.

"The government has accepted the opinion given by the attorney-



"An ordinance to ban opinion and exit polls would hit at the root of the fundamental right to free speech" — Soli Sorabjee

general who while expressing against a total ban on exit/opinion polls has suggested some regulatory measures," law minister Arun Jafley said.

The EC, after holding an all party meeting, had recommended to the Centre on April 6 for promulgation of an Ordinance to ban opinion and exit polls as "publication of the results of such polls during the period of election has the effect of influencing the minds of electors." Rejecting the idea, Sorabjee said that whatever be the basis of the idea for the proposed ban, the government could not resort to an Ordinance since such poll surveys were being conducted for last many years.

Therefore, it was difficult to conclude that circumstances impel the necessity for urgent and

immediate action for the issuance of an Ordinance, he said.

Terming as "highly debatable" the constitutionality of the proposed Ordinance, Sorabjee favoured upholding the fundamental right to free speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution and said the proposed Ordinance would hit at the root of the fundamental right.

He said it was a well settled principle that right to free speech guaranteed under the Constitution included the right of the people to know, the right to receive information and the right to disseminate information. PTI

Alliance walks temple trapeze

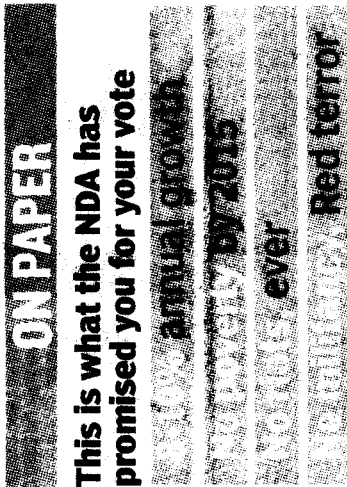
HT 1 of 1
 g-Sheela DS
Cow slaughter ban on agenda ■ Vajpayee says he's still the boss

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 8

THE NDA today released its "agenda", showing a strong clear BJP influence in its departures from the past, yet going through contortions to somehow create an impression of independence.

The alliance — which had put Ayodhya, Article 370 and the uniform civil code on the back burner in the 1998 and 1999 elections — spoke of a central law for a ban on cow slaughter and suggested that an early and amicable solution to the Ram temple wrangle would "strengthen national integration".

NDA convener George Fernandes made great play of the wording. The alliance hadn't asked that a temple be built, he kept stressing — it had merely said a solution would strengthen national integration.



Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, who released the document, continued the 'balancing act', saying the temple — despite its inclusion in the manifesto — would not be a poll plank. "The Ram temple is a public and national issue that cannot be ig-

nored," Vajpayee explained. "We want the issue to be resolved either through a negotiated settlement or by a court verdict that will have to be honoured by all. We do not want to take the issue any further or make it an election issue."

Key ally and TDP president Chandrababu Naidu, however, claimed he hadn't an inkling that the temple would find a mention in the manifesto — though NDA convener George Fernandes had two days ago revealed that it would. Naidu said he hadn't been consulted and declared that it would have been better to keep such issues out of the manifesto.

After the release, Vajpayee again made it clear he held the reins of the BJP. He was asked about his recent comment that without deputy L.K. Advani's nod he would not have occupied the top slot, and an earlier remark that the party wanted to move forward under Advani's leadership. "It isn't the time for me to leave," Vajpayee coolly said.

The NDA agenda spoke of "development, good governance and peace" for the next five years.

See also Final Countdown

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

EC suggests ordinance to ban opinion polls

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 7. Backed by the consensus at an all-party meeting held yesterday that opinion polls should be banned from the date of notification of the election process, the Election Commission today wrote to the Centre to explore the possibility of bringing in the ban, if necessary, by means of an ordinance. *File & Liaison (GOS)*

Sources said that since all the parties were of the view that when a general election was held in different phases, the results of exit polls should also not be permitted to be published or telecast until the close of polling in the last phase of the election, the Commission was left with no alternative but to ask the Centre to enforce the ban before the first phase of polls on April 20.

Confirming the receipt of the communication from the Commission, Union Law Ministry sources said that "the Government is examining the matter." Sources in the Commission said that initially it was thought that clarification could be sought from the Supreme Court, which in 1999 had held that the Commission had no power or authority under Article 324 of the Constitution to regulate or ban exit and opinion polls.

Law Ministry sources said that the Government was considering various options, including promulgation of an ordinance, to enforce the ban.

However, the Government was also wary of the fact that the ban should not be construed as infringing on the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under the Constitution. Therefore a balance had to be struck between press freedom and reasonable restrictions, the sources added.

THE HINDU

8 APR 2004

7 APR 2004

Parties seek ban on opinion polls from the date of notification

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● 'Do not publish exit poll results till the last phase is over'

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, APRIL 6. Participants at an all-party meeting convened here today by the Election Commission were unanimous that opinion polls should be banned from the date of notification of the poll process.

All the parties were also of the view that when a general election was held in different phases, the results of exit polls should not be permitted to be published or telecast until the close of polling in the last phase of the election. There was a consensus that opinion and exit polls influenced the minds of the electorate and hence should be banned. Representatives of six national and 18 State political parties attended the meeting. Later in the day, the Commission said that in the light of the views expressed, it was reviewing the matter in detail and would make its recommendations shortly.

However, on "personalised attacks" in the election campaign, there was a difference of opinion. All the parties sought a clear definition of "personal attack" stat-

ing that the reference to it in the model code of conduct was not clear on several aspects.

The Bharatiya Janata Party said that while it favoured a ban on personal attacks, including character assassination, the "foreign origin issue" was not covered under the ambit of personal attack. The BJP leader, Vijay Kumar Malhotra, said that "it is the core political issue for his party." The Election Commission should ban opinion polls on the first day of the poll notification. Since the notification had already been issued, opinion polls should be banned with immediate effect, he said.

The Congress spokesman, Kapil Sibal, told reporters that the parties felt that opinion polls were meant to create "opinion making polls" in favour of a certain party. As for exit polls, he said they should be allowed only after the votes in the last phase of the elections are cast.

Mr. Sibal said the Commission should clarify what constituted a personal attack. Whatever the Commission said

would be acceptable to the Opposition-parties. If the Commission felt that attacks of a personal nature were being made, then it should intervene *suo motu*. The parties on their part would see to it that no personal attacks were made during campaigning. The Commission would call a meeting of all parties again and give its views.

Mr. Sibal said that no astrological prediction or betting about the likely results should be allowed and there should not be any constituency-level opinion polls, Mr. Sibal said.

On the issue of telecast of political advertisements, the Commission said that since the matter was pending before the Supreme Court it would give its opinion after the Court pronounced its verdict.

The CPI secretary, D. Raja, said money power was playing a major role in the polls and in the absence of state funding, major political parties were using black money and corporate funds. He wanted a level playing field so that the smaller parties espousing the cause of the poor were not discriminated. On personal at-

tacks, he regretted that some leaders even went to the extent of demanding DNA tests for the children of certain leaders and hence there must be a proper definition of what constituted personal attacks.

Nilotpal Basu (CPI-M) also wanted a ban on opinion and exit polls. The central committee member of the CPI (Marxist-Leninist), Brij Bihari Pandey, said the Commission must take action against any personal attacks not only at the national level but also at the constituency level.

The general secretary of the Janata Dal (United), Javed Raza, sought a ban on exit and opinion polls saying they caused "confusion" and could influence the results.

The sample base used for such polls was "limited" and unknown.

The All-India Forward Bloc secretary, G. Devarajan, said all the opinion poll surveys must be banned the moment the announcement of polls was made. Exit polls could be conducted but the result should be released only after the polls.

EC ASKED TO DEFINE 'PERSONAL ATTACKS'

Parties for ban on opinion polls

2- meet in (US)

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, April 6. — The Election Commission today said it would soon take a decision on banning opinion polls after political parties recommended such a ban.

The EC will give its recommendations to the government as it cannot on its own issue a direction to ban opinion polls. It is exploring various options, including issuing an Ordinance by the government as suggested by parties, during an all-party meeting here today. Some parties even demanded a ban on publication of seat-to-seat opinion polls and reporting astrological predictions of polls.

The EC met all national and state-level parties this morning to evolve a consensus on the controver-

sial issue of opinion and exit polls and publishing the results of such surveys by various organisations.

The representatives of six national and 18 state-level parties, who attended the meeting, unanimously demanded a ban on opinion polls once the elections are notified. They said exit poll results should be declared only after all phases of elections are over.

While the Congress advocated a ban on opinion polls after election notification and publishing of exit poll results only after the last phase of polling is over, the BJP took a guarded view on it. Saying "it has no objection on opinion poll ban", the party maintained that all the polls announced so far are correct.

In 1999, during the 13th Lok Sabha polls, the EC had banned publication

and telecast of opinion and exit polls for a month — from the day campaigning ended in the first phase of polling to the last phase. The ban was subsequently lifted following a Supreme Court order, which stated that the EC was not the proper agency to monitor and enforce such restrictions.

On the issue of "personalised attacks", all parties asked the EC to give a clear definition of the term. The Congress maintained that raising the foreign origin issue was a personal attack and asked EC to take suo motu action against it, Mr Kapil Sibal said after the meeting.

The BJP, while favouring a ban on personal attacks, said raising the foreign origin issue is not a "personal attack" but a core election issue.

Logo war: Congress ad offends LIC, SBI

g-Steelman (US)

SFA 7/9

NEW DELHI, April 6. — In the wake of the controversy over television advertisements another problem has arisen, this time for the Congress. The Life Insurance Corporation of India and the State Bank of India have taken offence to the Congress using their logos and emblems without permission in a three-page advertorial in a widely-circulated magazine.

Both public sector organisations have written to Orchard, the agency involved, for the unauthorised use and violation of the standard norms of the Advertising Standard

Council of India, one of them demanding an unqualified apology. In a letter written today, an LIC official said, "Using our brand image for furthering the cause of any other company/irm/party without permission is a clear infringement of the self-regulation norms in advertising and also the right and privileges of the party..." The letter also called for an apology "to be published in the same periodical prominently at your own cost... failing which, we would be constrained to take such other steps..."

Congress spokesman Mr Anand

Sharma today said he had "no information about the alleged misuse of logos".

The LIC logo has been used in a double-spread that speaks of the Congress successes. This is part of a three-page advertorial called "The 2004 Lok Sabha Polls: A Clear Choice" and containing "An overview of Congress achievements." This includes taking credit for the Green Revolution, establishing leading education institutions like the IITs and IIMs, turning India into a leading industrial power and using IT to "bring the nation clo-

ser". It also takes credit for "creating our magnificent Constitution". In small print, it says: "Issued by the All India Congress Committee."

In a similar letter, an SBI official has called the using of his corporation's logo "an infringement of our copyright." It has also called for a clarification "to be published at your cost in the same magazine". The SBI logo has been used in the same page as the Congress election symbol, the hand with the slogan "Congress ka haath, aam aadmi ke saath." — **Srinjoy Chowdhury**

Personal attack can be declared poll offence: SC

Our Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI, April 5. — The Supreme Court (coram, Khare, CJ, Sinha, Kapadia, JJ) today warned that it would not hesitate to declare "personal" attacks during campaigning an electoral offence even as the Election Commission said it would prefer a complete freeze on political ads "for this election" and sought more time to draw up a mechanism to monitor them. "We want fair-play. We don't want any personal attacks. This is not democracy. Otherwise, we will make a judge-made law to declare it an electoral offence," Chief Justice Mr VN Khare observed during resumed hearing today on an SLP, filed by the I&B ministry, challenging the Andhra High Court order of 23 March permitting political ads.

On its part the EC, charged with the task of monitoring political ads to establish whether they fell short of the standards by the Supreme Court on Friday, today said that it would prefer a complete freeze on all political ads at least for the forthcoming elections. "A freeze is important for this election as implementation is difficult," EC counsel Mr KK Venugopal stated.

"Such bans exist in Germany, France, Ireland, UK and Austria," he pointed out. "These have also been challenged and have withstood the scrutiny of the courts," he added.

Mr Venugopal also sought time till Thursday to come up with a scheme to monitor whether political ads being telecast by TV channels and cable operators fell foul of the law of the land or were "immoral, indecent and hurt religious susceptibilities" or were "shocking, disgusting or revolting". The Supreme Court granted it the time and asked it to consider whether it would need to go in for some sort of pre-censorship or post-censorship.

The court also asked the Union to offer EC all help in drawing up such a mechanism after the EC counsel drew its attention to the magnitude of the task involved. "The full EC debated the matter and has come to the conclusion that it involves many difficulties," Mr Venugopal said.

He reeled off statistics to show that there are 53 private channels broadcasting news, 33,000 cable operators, 10 major multi-service operators, six major national parties, 45 recognised state parties, 702 registered but unrecognised parties in the country.

He asked EC to clarify the legal position on whether expenses incurred by the party on ads were to be included in calculating the individual's poll expenses. However, the Solicitor-General, Mr Kirit Raval, appearing for the Centre argued that the I&B ministry was in appeal before the apex court only on the Andhra High Court stay on Rule 7(3) of the Cable TV Network Rules.

THE STATESMAN

6 APR 2004

SC warns 'electoral offence' tag on ad

■ Gives EC until Thursday for guideline on ad ban

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 5

THE Supreme Court today said it may have to consider slanderous advertisements, encouraged by political parties, as an electoral offence. The court was replying to the Commission's appeal for time till Thursday to formulate guidelines to monitor the ban on telecast of political advertisements offensive to viewers.

"We do not want any dirt or dust on the electronic media. The position of the EC is vital for holding proper elections," the court said on its ban on surrogate advertisements. "We want fair play. We do not want one political party to remark against the other. We do not want one leader to remark against the other if it is political mudslinging."

The court warned that it intends to make political mudslinging an "electoral offence", meaning anybody guilty could be disqualified even after being elected from his or her constituency.

The observation came from a bench comprising Chief Justice V.N. Khare, Justice S.B.



Three days' time to put up a "broad guideline" to stop surrogate ads

Sinha and Justice S.H. Kapadia, which gave three days' time to the election Commission to put up a "broad guideline" to stop surrogate political advertisements on TV channels and cable networks. Solicitor-general Kiriti Raval, appearing for the Centre, said everyone welcomed the apex court's April 2 order as they "want the elections to be clean".

When the Special Leave Petition filed by the Centre challenging the Andhra Pradesh High Court order came up, senior counsel K.K. Venugopal, appearing for the EC, asked for three days' time, saying the commission's task involves 55 TV channels,

33,000 cable operators, major multi-service cable operators, six national parties and 702 registered but unrecognised political parties. Monitoring the ads telecast by these multi-farious agencies would be a gigantic task, he said. The bench asked him to submit the manpower requirements by Thursday so it could direct the Centre to arrange for it.

Venugopal pointed out that there were laws in force in countries like Germany, Denmark, Norway, Switzerland and Austria which prohibited political advertisements and these laws have been upheld by their apex courts. Counsel for Gemini TV, Harish Salve, countered his claim, saying none of the countries has a complete ban.

On the expenses and payment by cheques, Solicitor-General Kirit Raval said the Centre did not contemplate this aspect when it came in appeal in this instance. Venugopal said there was a provision in this regard in the Representation of Peoples Act but it was later deleted by an amendment. He requested the bench to address this aspect when the case comes up on Thursday.

SC makes poll panel arbiter on political ads

Our Legal Correspondent S. V. Srinivasan

NEW DELHI, April 2. — The Supreme Court (coram, Khare, CJ, Sinha, Kapadia, JJ) today did not ban political advertisements on TV, but directed all cable operators and channels to refrain from airing ads that don't "conform to the law" or "offend morality, decency and religious susceptibilities". It made the Election Commission the final arbiter of whether any ad fell short of the standards.

"Neither should the ads be shock-

ing, disgusting or revolting," the court said while passing an interim order that replaces the 23 March interim order of Andhra High Court allowing all political advertisements.

The court also issued notices to all respondents, including *Gemini TV*, after attorney-general Mr Soli Sorabjee pointed out how the High Court had "hurriedly" stayed a Central rule through an interim order.

Mr Sorabjee also drew the court's attention to the political "mud-slinging" on TV. "Some of the advertise-

PM resents personal attacks

NEW DELHI, April 2. — Taking exception to personal attacks during electioneering, the Prime Minister tonight said: "I am in politics, electoral politics. But I never ever imagined I'll have to become a participant in the dirty politics prevailing at present." — PTI

ments are revolting and disgusting. These have brought political speech to a new low," he said.

The court also asked the EC to get back to it by Monday with the modalities of monitoring such ads. The court will also arbitrate on Monday whether the expenses on such TV ads should be included in the candidate's poll expenses.

CEC Mr TS Krishna Murthy said the issue would be discussed at the all-party meeting scheduled on 6 April.

The Centre appeared relieved after the verdict, for it will now have no role in monitoring the controversial advertisements.

Lok Sabha Elections 1999: Results at a Glance

Total Seats: 543

HARYANA
Seats: 10
INLD 5
BJP 5

PUNJAB
Seats: 13
Cong 8
SAD 2
BJP 1
Others 2

J&K
Seats: 6
NC 4
BJP 2

UTTARANCHAL*
Seats: 5
BJP 4
Cong 1

U.P.
Seats: 80
SP 26
BJP 25
BSP 14
Cong 9
Ind & Oth 6

BIHAR
Seats: 40
JD(U) 18
BJP 12
RJD 6
Cong
Others

RAJASTHAN
Seats: 25
BJP 16
Cong 9

HIMACHAL
Seats: 4
BJP 3
HVC 1

DELHI
Seats: 7
BJP 7

M.P.
Seats: 29
BJP 21
Cong 8

MEGHALAYA
Seats: 2
Cong 1
NCP 1

ASSAM
Seats: 14
Cong 10
BJP 2
CPI-ML(L) 1
Ind 1

MAHARASHTRA
Seats: 48
SS 15
BJP 13
Cong 10
NCP 6
Others 4

GUJARAT
Seats: 26
BJP 20
Cong 6

SIKKIM
Seats: 1
SDF 1

ARUNACHAL
Seats: 2
Cong 2

CHHATTISGARH*
Seats: 11
BJP 8
Cong 3

GOA
Seats: 2
BJP 2

TRIPURA
Seats: 2
CPM 2

NAGALAND
Seats: 1
Cong 1

ANDHRA
Seats: 42
TDP 29
BJP 7
Cong 5
AIMIM 1

JHARKHAND*
Seats: 14
BJP 11
Cong 2
RJD 1

MIZORAM
Seats: 1
Ind 1

MANIPUR
Seats: 2
MSCP 1
NCP 1

KERALA
Seats: 20
Cong 8
CPM 8
MUL 2
KEC-(M) 1
KEC 1

TAMIL NADU
Seats: 39
DMK 12
ADMK 10
PMK 5
MDMK 4
BJP 4
Cong 2
Others 2

KARNATAKA
Seats: 28
Cong 18
BJP 7
JD(U) 3

ORISSA
Seats: 21
BJD 10
BJP 9
Cong 2

W. BENGAL
Seats: 42
Left Front 29
Trinamul 8
Cong 3
BJP 2

UNION TERRITORIES
Chandigarh Cong
DNH Ind
Daman & Diu Cong
Lakshadweep Cong
A & N Islands BJP
Pondicherry Cong

* Chhattisgarh, Uttaranchal and Jharkhand were parts of M.P., U.P. and Bihar respectively in 1999

KBK Pollgraphics

THE STATESMAN 5 12 2004

Centre lobs ad ball back to EC court

5-1
Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 29. — The Centre has lobbed the election advertisements hot-potato back to the Election Commission saying the Model Code of Conduct should be used to regulate ads. The EC has called an all-party meeting on 6 April to discuss the issue.

In a letter to Mr AN Jha, Deputy Election Commissioner, the Centre today requested it to consider regulating election ads under the model code as they are only being aired because of the elections. The Centre has offered assistance to help to regulate and monitor these ads.

During a high-level meeting today, senior officials examined the election advertisement by the Kamakshi Education Society that the Congress has criticised and the one by the Saajhi Viraasat Trust that allegedly cast aspersions on the Prime Minister, Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee, keeping in mind the Cable Television Network Rules 1994, that does not allow political and religious ads.

The committee, comprising members of the information and broadcasting, human resources development and law ministries, said the provisions relating to Rule 7 — the relevant clause — related to advertisements for goods and services and could not be applicable. Under Rule 7(3), political advertisements were specifically prohibited. Since they were completely banned, there are no norms to regulate them. Yet, both ads are part of the current election process. As a result, keeping in mind the Andhra High Court's order, which has recently allowed political ads on television, the Centre felt the issue needed to be referred to the Election Commission. The Centre believes that the

2' 20/3
9-6/20/04 (15)
ads could be regulated under the Model Code of Conduct.

Private TV channels' stand: The Indian Broadcast Foundation, of which virtually all channels are members, has decided that advertisements containing personal attacks on leaders of any political party would not be accepted. This would apply to advertisements from any society, trust, political party or candidate. The IBF said that as for political discussions and speeches, editorial control would be exercised.

We're Indians at heart: Rahul



AMETHI, March 29. — Brushing aside attacks on his family, particularly his mother Mrs Sonia Gandhi on her foreign origin, Mr Rahul Gandhi today said "our hearts are Indian" and these criticisms did not bother him. "Our hearts are Indian. They beat for India. You can abuse us, you can kill us but it will still beat for India," an emotional and nostalgic Rahul, who is contesting the coming Lok Sabha elections from Amethi constituency, told reporters in an informal interaction as he kicked off his election campaign. — PTI
Details, photograph on page 4

Centre adds EC twist to poll ads

J. Bhattacharya (L.S.)

*Sr. A
29/3*

Call for restraint

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, March 26. — Political parties want to buy time-slots in Doordarshan for their poll advertisements, but the Centre has advised a clearance from the Election Commission before airing them.

Senior Prasar Bharati officials have been in touch with the Centre to find out the exact legal position on the issue, and the advice has been to go to the EC. "It's not a matter of Cable Act. Three-four years ago, the EC, after an all-party meeting, decided it would not show election advertisements," an official pointed out. Since then, and even after the recent Andhra High Court judgement, the EC has not come up with a notification saying political advertisements can be shown. This has left a grey area, DD officials feel, and without a clarifi-

PATNA, March 26. — The CEC, Mr TS Krishnamurthy, today advised political parties to exercise restraint in poll advertisements. "We can't stop parties from giving ads, but we do expect them to not to make personal attacks," he said here. He was replying to a reporter's query about what action the EC proposed to take on Congress' complaint about an ad shown on private TV channels, pointing to Mrs Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin. — SNS

cation the scope for misunderstanding will persist. Privately, an official said, political advertisements could be on television but it would be easier if the EC did say so unequivocally.

Political parties are keen on advertising on DD, because of its reach. In non-cable homes, it's the only channel and will certainly be watched. On the other hand, all cable-channels have fragmented viewership and there's considerable competition. In any case, no cable-channel has the reach of DD.

Also, a large portion of

DD viewers will have less access to other media.

CEC warns Bihar

The CEC, Mr TS Krishnamurthy, today sought to dispel all doubts and fears from people's minds while speaking to reporters in Patna, saying the EC was very much alert with regard to the situation in Bihar. He said he has asked the state government to replace four DMs and three SPs already and people shouldn't have any fear or doubt while going to the polling booths.

'NDA will be back, Congress may dip below 100'

9.6 billion (L.S) 98-1 2973
 ■ THE INDIAN EXPRESS NEW DELHI MARCH 26 | Survey done from March 8-15 of largest sample size ever shows BJP will do well in states where it won recently

PRANNOY ROY,
YOGENDRA YADAV,
I P BAJPAI, NAMRATA
GUPTA, SABA SIDDIQUI &
DORAB SOPARIWALA
 NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

mid-March opinion poll, jointly commissioned by *The Indian Express* and NDTV and conducted by A C Nielsen, a leading market research agency.

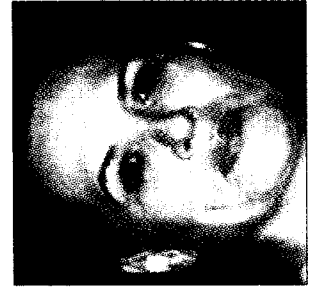
The fieldwork for the poll was conducted between March 8 and March 15. The sample size of 45,578, spread over 207 of the 543 Lok Sabha constituencies, is the largest ever sample for a published poll.

The NDA's return to power is primarily a result of the significantly im-



proved performance of the BJP in most of the states where it has no allies.

The states where it is expected to perform particularly well are Rajasthan, MP and Chhattisgarh,



states where it performed very well in the recent Assembly elections. Karnataka is another state that may yield good dividends to the BJP. Thus, the BJP is expected to increase its tally

and its share of the NDA seats—but will be far away from its optimistically hoped for 300 mark.

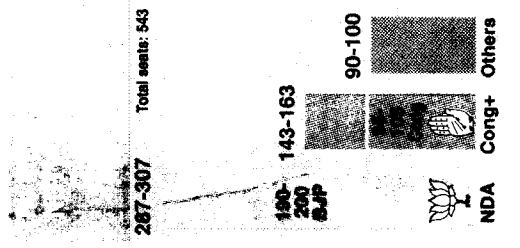
While most of the BJP's allies are likely to hold their positions, the biggest setback to the alliance is likely to come from Tamil Nadu. Jayalithaa, the leader of the alliance, is unpopular in Tamil Nadu.

Moreover, the DMK-led alliance has the caste combinations on its side and is expected to sweep the state. In fact, had the BJP held on to its earlier al-

Methodology

- Poll carried out in 207 constituencies, 18 states that account for over 90% of the 543 LS seats
- In each constituency, three Assembly segments were selected at random
- In each, four polling booths selected at random
- In each booth area, 18-20 interviews conducted in homes
- For the voting intention question, respondents given a mock ballot paper on which party symbols set out. They were asked to mark preference and put the ballot paper in a mock ballot box

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



27 MAR 2004

A.P. High Court suspends rule banning telecast of political advertisements

By Our Legal Correspondent

HYDERABAD, MARCH 23. A Division Bench of the Andhra Pradesh High Court today suspended the operation of Rule 7(3) of the Cable Television Network Rules, 1994, which formed the basis for the recent directions by the Election Commission prohibiting advertisements by political parties on television.

With this interim order, the EC direction is also suspended, paving the way for electioneering by parties through the electronic media.

The Bench, comprising the Chief Justice, Devinder Gupta, and Justice G. Rohini, was dealing with four writ petitions filed by ETV, Gemini Television, MAA TV and IN cable network. The petitioners contended that the prohibition was contrary to the High Court's earlier judgment. They said it was violative of Article 19(1) (g) of the Constitution, which protects the citizens' right to practice any profession or to carry on any occupation, trade or business.

The EC informed the court that it only sought to implement the rule. The court specifically asked the Union of India regarding the constitutional validity of the impugned rule. After hearing all the parties, the Bench passed the interim order.

Shot in the arm for TDP

S. Nagesh Kumar reports:

The High Court verdict is a shot in the arm for the ruling Telugu Desam Party in Andhra Pradesh. Having invested heavily both in terms of money, material and manpower in making several television programmes as part of its election campaign, the TDP may now pull out all stops in launching a blitzkrieg on the small screen. The Congress, on the other hand, has mainly chosen the big screen as part of its multi-media campaign.

The ban on political (and religious) advertisements has been in force since 1994 when the Cable Television Networks Rules were framed

and subsequently given legislative backing through the Cable Television Networks (Regulation) Act, 1995. But it really came into focus last month when the Election Commission and the Union Government blamed each other for imposing the ban.

Welcoming the High Court order, the State Information Minister, S. Chandramohan Reddy, said that it would help the candidates and political parties in their campaign. The use of cable television by political parties was quite common in the West because of its cost-effectiveness, he added.

A private channel has been providing air time on payment for up to two hours a week for the TDP's 'Dial your party president' programme in which the TDP president and Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, interacted live with the district leaders.

This programme was cancelled after the announcement of the election schedule. Once the election campaign started hotting up, some local TV channels began giving live coverage to Mr. Naidu's political engagements. Almost all his public meetings and even the release of the TDP manifesto were telecast live, an activity the TDP justified on the ground that there was no ban on live telecast of news events.

The International Women's Day celebrations on March 8, organised by the NTR Memorial Trust, was telecast live by several channels. The State Congress Committee lodged a complaint with the Chief Electoral Officer but the TDP contended that the TV channels had volunteered to telecast it live. They could not, however, explain how Mr. Naidu anchored the programme.

Our New Delhi Legal Correspondent reports:

Asked by presspersons whether the Election Commission would move the Supreme Court against the Andhra Pradesh High Court ruling, the Deputy Election Commissioner, A.N. Jha, said "the Commission will study the order before deciding on the future course of action."

JD(S) to challenge Court order: Page 14

Exit polls: all-party meet called

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, MARCH 23. Even as the poll process is being set in motion tomorrow with the filing of nominations for the first phase of elections on April 20, the Election Commission has convened an all-party meeting here on April 6 on the controversial issue of banning exit and opinion polls between the first and last phase.

The Deputy Election Commissioner, A.N. Jha, told presspersons that the Commission would seek the views of all recognised national and regional parties since the Supreme Court had restrained it from implementing its September

1999 guidelines to control the publication and telecast of opinion and exit poll surveys. Asked if the Commission would seek any clarification from the apex court on the issue, he said, "If anything has to be done, it will be based on the consensus in the meeting."

Mr. Jha said the Commission had sought comments from the All-India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on a complaint by the Democratic Progressive Alliance regarding the "personal attacks" purported to have been made by the Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, Jayalithaa, against the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, in her election campaign.

The DPA had also sought action against the AIADMK for attacking Ms. Sonia in its election manifesto.

He said comments had also been sought from the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam on a complaint by the AIADMK alleging that the DMK had collected election funds from aspiring candidates in excess of the limit prescribed by the Commission for each constituency.

Asked what action the Commission could take, he said, "There are ample provisions in the [model] code to prevent political parties from indulging in personalised attacks during campaign. We are examining the various complaints. Wait and see."

HC reverses poll panel TV advt order

SNS & PTI

Surrogate scene

NEW DELHI/ HYDERABAD, March 23. — About a month after the Election Commission declared there would be no political advertisements on television before the Lok Sabha polls, the Andhra Pradesh High Court today issued an interim order reversing the decision.

Reacting, the Information and Broadcasting ministry, which had earlier said the Cable Act did not allow political or religious advertisements, said it would first look at the order tomorrow and then, refer the issue to the law ministry. Only then would the Centre decide whether to go to the Supreme Court to appeal against the Andhra Pradesh High Court's order or not. A decision is likely in a few days.

The Centre is also looking at the Election Commission's decision on the subject. After all, it was the EC which took the decision to ban polit-

NEW DELHI, March 23. — Even as the case for allowing election advertisements on TV and radio was reopened today, surrogate election advertising sparked a controversy. The Congress targeted a TV ad released by the Kamakshi Education Society. The ad shows (black and white) footage from the freedom struggle, clips of every major pre-Independence-era leader and of the Cellular Jail. — SNS

Details on page 4

ical advertisements for this campaign, going back on its decision in the last Assembly polls. But the EC did not appear to be in a tearing hurry to take a decision, saying it would have to examine the court order first. Also, it seemed to put the ball in the government's court, saying it was the government that made the laws.

Television channels, while optimistic, are now waiting for a clear directive from the Election Commis-

sion. Many political parties are ready with ads — they can be aired immediately after the EC's directive.

In its order today, the Andhra HC said the ban was discriminatory and violative of the right to freedom of trade and business. The order was passed by Chief Justice Mr Devender Gupta and Mr Justice Rohini, based on a petition filed by Gemini Television Network, which challenged Rule 7 (3) of Cable Network Regulation Act invoked by Information and Broadcasting ministry and the Election Commission to ban telecast of political advertisements.

The court observed, the order amounted to discriminating between print and electronic media and was also violative of the right to freedom of trade and business, counsel for petitioner Mr Ramakanth Reddy said. Authorities can only impose "reasonable restrictions" under Article 19(2) of the Constitution and stop telecast of a programme if it threatens national security or flares up communal violence.

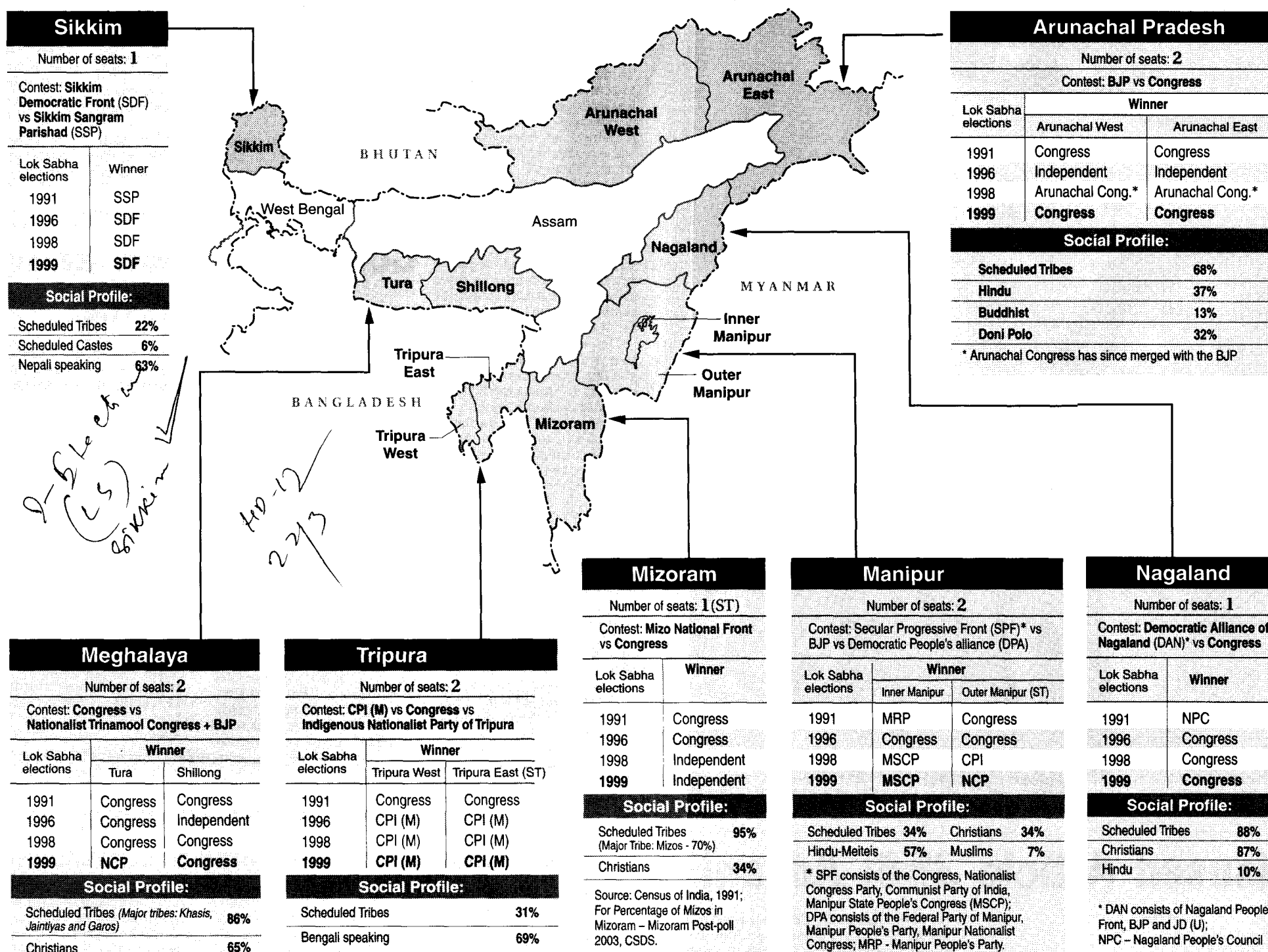
Shifting alignments could affect Northeast

The shifting political alignments in the region have implications for both the Congress and the BJP; while the former faces the possibility of a total wipe-out, the latter is poised to establish a toe-hold here, writes Yogendra Yadav

The coming Lok Sabha elections are being held in the hill states of the Northeast in a changed political context. In the last five years, all these small States have witnessed a change in the nature of the political competition leading to a shift in the established political alignments. There are several reasons why such a fundamental change is so little noticed outside these States. All these seven States ('The Seven Sisters' minus Assam plus Sikkim) account for only 11 seats in the Lok Sabha that do not make much difference to the numbers game at the Centre, for the contest here does not principally involve the two major contenders in Delhi.

Add to this the usual apathy and ignorance of the opinion makers about the Northeast, and you begin to see why we know so little about the fundamental changes in the region. An educated and 'well-informed' Indian would be hard put to place each of these States on the map of India, or to say one line on what distinguishes Meghalaya from Manipur or Mizoram. Very few people know that the first elections based on universal adult franchise were held in Manipur, much before the Indian Constitution came into force. Or that Mizoram has one of the highest literacy rates in the country and that Meghalaya is among the States that witness the highest electoral turnout in the country.

If the region does get some attention in the national media this time, it would be because the contest in the Northeastern hill States may have implications for both the Congress and the BJP. For the Congress, the Northeast is yet another instance of the decline and fall of the Congress party. The Congress' presence in every state of the Northeast was testimony to its national presence. In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, an election Rajiv Gandhi lost badly, the Congress picked up as many as 10 out of the 11 seats here. It has been a downhill journey ever since, with the Congress down to 3 and 4 seats in the 1998 and the 1999 elections respectively. This time it is likely to go down further and may even face a total wipe-out, despite the fact that it is the ruling party in Meghalaya and Manipur. The numbers may not matter a great deal, but the symbolic significance of the loss of the Northeastern hill States cannot be overes-



Graphic by Varghese Kallada

timated. The Congress' losses are not going to be the BJP's gain, at least not directly. The BJP is yet to open its account in these states. It may do so this time in Arunachal Pradesh. But more than the number of seats the ruling party may win this time, what matters is the fact that it may have friends and allies all over the Northeast and thus gain a toe-hold in an area considered difficult for the BJP. Whether the BJP succeeds in retaining power at the Centre or not, it will have one success to its credit: the BJP will have become as much a national party as the Congress has been in the post-independence period.

Yet the true significance of the electoral verdict in the Northeastern States must not be reduced to its implications for national politics. The linkages of political actors and formations to the 'national' political parties have often been tenuous, strategic and short-term. Like the rest of the country, the substance of politics in these States is very regional, if not local. In many ways the States of the Northeast have followed the same path that many other States have followed in the last decade or

so: political fragmentation, rise of regional parties and the politics of ethnic identities. That is why it is necessary to understand the electoral contest and the eventual outcome in its local political context.

Sikkim is the only State in this group that will have Assembly elections along with the Lok Sabha elections this year.

This State experienced its own unnoticed Mandal revolution in the 1994 Assembly elections when the Sikkim Democratic Front led by the little known Pawan Kumar Chamling upset the monopoly of Nar Bahadur Bhandari's Sikkim Sangram Parishad. The rule of the traditional social elite was replaced by that of the majority Nepalese-speaking backward community represented by Chamling. Since then, the SDF has won all the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections and has of late developed a strategic partnership with the NDA at the Centre. This has helped Chamling secure Scheduled Tribe status for many new communities, some-

thing he would like to cash in on in these elections. The SSP still remains a force to reckon with and will try to create an anti-incumbency sentiment. The Congress used to be a third and not so insignificant force

BATTLEGROUND

earlier, but has ceased to be so of late.

Arunachal Pradesh, by contrast, has been dominated by the Congress ever since the franchise was granted to this State in the mid-seventies. Initial attempts to establish regional political parties failed and the Congress established its hegemony. A revolt by former Congress Chief Minister Gegong Apang seemed to have made little difference to the party in the 1999 elections, since the Congress won the Lok Sabha and the Vidhan Sabha elections in style. But Apang, then the lone Arunachal Congress MLA in the Assembly, struck back last year by engineering a wholesale defection of Congress

MLAs and forming an Arunachal Congress Government. Since then his Arunachal Congress has merged itself with the BJP, a move that has little to do with ideology and is yet another instance of the necessity in the politics of the Northeast to have friends in Delhi.

This merger may prove to be tenuous, or it may not. One must remember that Arunachal Pradesh has the most active conversion from indigenous religions to Hinduism and the widest acceptance of Hindi in the Northeast. In any case, the merger of the Arunachal Congress with the BJP gives the BJP its first possibility of securing representation from the Northeastern hill States.

P. A. Sangma's rise to importance in national politics and his plans to create the Northeast People's Forum, a coalition of regional parties, had brought an added significance to his home State of Meghalaya. His departure from the NCP and the inability of the forum to take off has eclipsed much of his stature.

He faces a serious challenge in his own constituency Tura. Sangma has joined hands with Mamata Banerjee to form the Nationalist Trinamool Congress that is aligned with the NDA.

The BJP is yet to acquire any base in the State where personalities tend to play a role in Lok Sabha elections. Shillong, the other seat from Meghalaya, is a traditional Congress stronghold and remains one of the best bets for the party this time, if it does not want a complete wipe-out in the state. Here too, the Congress faces a challenge from an alliance of regional parties that are partners in the Congress-led coalition that rules the State.

All the other States have seen State Assembly elections in the recent past and the pattern in the Lok Sabha elections may not be very different. Mizoram went to the polls in December, along with the four North Indian States.

The ruling Mizo National Front, the political front representing the ex-insurgents who took on the might of the Indian Army and finally arrived at the historic peace accord of

1987, has come back to power by defeating the Congress and the newly formed Zoram National Party.

The MNF, ideologically one of the least likely friends of the BJP, is one of the recent additions to the NDA. The BJP has little base of its own here. The Congress has paid the price of persisting with the discredited leadership of Lalthanhawia and lost the elections. The MNF begins the Lok Sabha election with an advantage here.

Tripura has a very different ethnic composition, compared to the rest of these States. In this State waves of migration have reduced the indigenous population to a minority. The Scheduled Tribe population is merely 31 per cent now, while the Bengali-speaking immigrants are 69 per cent of the population. The CPI (M) has enjoyed a strong base among the immigrants and a weaker base among the tribal population.

But the sum total is good enough to ensure a hegemony for the CPI (M) in Tripura. The party has won both the Lok Sabha seats here in the last three national elections. The Congress is way behind the CPI (M), though it has enjoyed some support among the tribal voters. The Indigenous National Party of Tripura seeks to represent the exclusivist demands of the tribal population and is alleged to have connections with the insurgent forces.

The INPT combined with the Congress in an attempt to dislodge the CPI (M) in the Assembly elections held in 2003. The attempt failed and so did the alliance. Now the INPT has formed an alliance with the BJP, much against the wishes of the local BJP unit. The ruling CPI (M) continues to have the upper hand here.

Yet another unlikely alliance has come about in Nagaland, where the Nagaland People's Front, comprising the Nagaland People's Council, the BJP and the JD (U), succeeded in dislodging the much despised Congress government led by S. C. Jamir in the Assembly elections held in 2003. The NPC is said to have indirect support from the NSCN (I-M) faction of the insurgents who are currently negotiating peace with the Government of India.

The Congress had won the sole Lok Sabha seat in Nagaland last time, allegedly by less than fair means. But that was a different time. It faces a distinct disadvantage this time.

Manipur too has gone through a political upheaval since the last Lok Sabha elections. The Naga peace talks threatened the territorial integrity of Manipur and the state was up in flames, quite literally.

The development created an ethnic divide between the majority Meitei community, Hindu Vaishnavites, who live in the valley and a small minority of Naga tribes who are concentrated in the hill areas adjoining Nagaland. In the subsequent Assembly elections held in 2002, the Manipur State Congress Party lost badly and the Congress emerged the biggest party and formed the Government.

This time the Congress and the CPI have come together to fight the Lok Sabha elections. The BJP has a presence in the State, thanks to a split in the MSCP, in which the sitting MP from inner Manipur also crossed over to the BJP. While it would be difficult for the BJP to defend the seat, the multi-cornered contest in Manipur could throw up surprising results.

Note: Social profiles of communities do not add up to 100% because people from different religion

100-1
2/3

EC stops Modi's yatra

By J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, MARCH 20. Even as the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, started his "Narmada yatra" this morning, the Election Commission shot off a letter in the afternoon to the Chief Electoral Officer of Gujarat to stop the yatra forthwith. Mr. Modi launched his 280-km long "Narmada Pujan Yatra" from Ahmedabad to the Sardar Sarovar dam site in Kevadia in Narmada district for performing puja at the Narmada river in the night. The yatra was taken by Mr. Modi as part of celebrations of the Narmada Control Authority's decision to increase the height of the Narmada Dam to 110 metres.

Soon after Mr. Modi began his yatra, the Congress sent a letter to the Chief Election

Commissioner alleging blatant violation of the model code of conduct by Mr. Modi. It accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of trying to derive political advantage in the coming Lok Sabha elections and said the permission to raise the dam height was given on the condition that there should be no celebration in the name of the dam.

Commission sources said the decision to order cancellation had been conveyed to the Gujarat CEO as the yatra violated the model code of conduct, which was in force from February 29 when the poll schedule was announced. The Congress spokesman, Kapil Sibal, briefing presspersons here welcomed the Commission's decision.

Yatra was almost over: Page 10

BJP's consolidation will be hard to break in Chhattisgarh

The BJP's real success in consolidating its base in

Chhattisgarh has been in dividing the adivasis, who constitute about 32 per cent of the population. Yogendra Yadav on the new equations in this former Congress bastion.

When Chhattisgarh votes in its first Lok Sabha elections, the verdict may institute a new political pattern as well. All indicators point to the emergence of the Bharatiya Janata Party as the natural party of governance in the State that was once considered a fortress of the Congress. If that happens, the BJP and the Sangh Parivar would have taken a big step towards realising their long-term objective of capturing the entire adivasi belt that cuts through the middle of India from Gujarat to West Bengal, passing through Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Jharkhand.

The BJP's rise in the State is neither sudden nor surprising. Chhattisgarh was one of the last areas to move out of the system of Congress dominance. While the party lost in many places in the Hindi heartland, Chhattisgarh was one of the regions swept by the Congress in the 1991 elections in the aftermath of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination. The party won all the 11 seats in this region of Madhya Pradesh with more than a 10 percentage-point lead over the BJP.

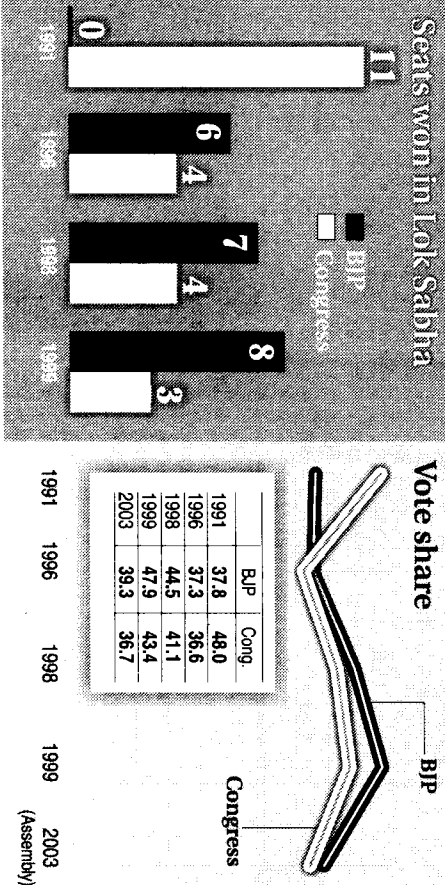
Since then, however, the BJP has started reaping the political dividends of the years of work put in by the Varvasi Kalyan Ashrams and various other Sangh Parivar organisations; and it has improved its position in each Lok Sabha election. Its tally has risen from six to seven and then to eight in the last three Lok Sabha elections. Its lead over the Congress has also increased every time, from less than one percentage point in 1996, to three points and then four points in the next two elections. The Assembly elections held in this period did not fully reflect this

CHHATTISGARH 1999 Lok Sabha results

- NORTH**
1. Surguja
 2. Raigarh
 3. Jangir
 4. Bilaspur
- CENTRAL**
5. Sarangah
 6. Raipur
 7. Mahasamund
 10. Durg
 11. Rajnandgaon
- SOUTH**
8. Kanker
 9. Bastar



Decline and fall of the Congress in its erstwhile bastion



Small swings can make a big difference to both parties

Note: The results of the 2003 Assembly elections are the basis of these calculations. Calculating one percentage point swing for a party means adding it to a party's vote share in each constituency and deducting it from other parties in proportion to their strength.

Scenario	BJP	Congress
...it is a repeat of the Assembly elections 2003	7	4
...there is a swing of 2% for Congress	6	5
...there is a swing of 4% for Congress	4	7
...there is a swing of 2% for BJP	8	3
...there is a swing of 4% for BJP	10	1

BATTLEGROUND

unexpected wipe-out in the southern tribal region, the Congress could well have returned to power. Alternatively, if the Congress had not suffered a split leading to the exodus of the group led by Vidya Charan Shukla or had it worked out an alliance with the BSP, the BJP would not have secured a majority.

The Vidhan Sabha election verdict helps us see the nature of the social alliance worked out by the BJP to reach its current position of power in the State. The long dominance by the Congress in the State was based on its hold over the adivasis, Dalits and the Other Backward Castes, who

The poorer the voter, the higher the vote for the Congress...

Group	BJP	Congress
Rich	47%	42%
Very poor	28%	41%

BJP does better among men, Congress more popular with women...

Group	BJP	Congress
Men	43%	32%
Women	34%	42%

BJP has managed to split adivasis, besides retaining the upper castes...

Group	BJP	Congress
Upper caste	52%	33%
Upper OBC	42%	29%
Lower OBC	44%	37%
Dalits	24%	44%
Adivasis	36%	36%
Muslims	24%	68%

Note: Figures reflect the support the leading parties enjoy among the various social groups.

Source: Post-poll of Chhattisgarh Assembly Elections Study 2003, CSDS

shift to the BJP, but gross in this region with the help of they constitute one-some developmental work. Now, the by 12 per cent of the region may swing back to supporting State's population, the BJP.

If one takes the outcome of the re-argued in this category too the BSP dam- aged the Congress. The Congress still cent Vidhan Sabha elections as the draws more votes from women and baseline, the contest in Chhattisgarh from the poor, but it is not clear how appears very evenly poised. If the much of this support is committed to same pattern is repeated in the Lok the party. The State's adivasis are con- Sabha elections, the BJP will pick centrated in the northern and south- seven of the 11 seats in the State, one its real success has been in dividing the adivasis, who constitute about 32 per cent of the population. The esti- mated of the Centre for Study of De- veloping Societies for the Assembly election suggest that the BJP got as much votes among the adivasis as did the Congress. The Dalits did not

ages to wrest two percentage points from the BJP, it will pick up an additional seat. A four per cent swing in favour of the Congress will reverse the tally to make it 7-4 in its favour. However, the reality on the ground is not as the comfortable for the Congress as the statistics might show. A victory in an Assembly election normally has its spillover effect on a party in the Lok Sabha polls if they are held within a few months. Even if the first victory is slender the ruling party tends to expand on its lead in the subsequent elections. The BJP Government in Chhattisgarh is still in its 'honeymoon' period. Anticipating the Lok Sabha elections, it has unveiled a number of populist schemes: supply of salt to adivasis at 25 paise a kg, free gas connection to 50,000 below-the-poverty line (BPL) families, a full meal for Rs. 5 at the state-sponsored 'dal-bhat' centres and the waiver of farmers' loans up to Rs. 3,000. It has also announced a scheme to give adivasis patras for the forest lands they dwell upon. It is true that the schemes are far from perfect and that their implementation is rather tardy. The Supreme Court has already stayed the scheme of giving patras to adivasis. Yet the announcement itself may matter more than implementation in such a short period. At any rate, it would be very unusual for the electorate to decide to punish the new government at this stage.

That is not all. The Congress organisation has taken a serious beating after the defeat in the Assembly elections. The former Chief Minister, Ajit Jogi, who ran the Congress in an autocratic style during the elections, was suspended immediately afterwards for indulging in horse-trading of the elected MLAs. He remains in a state of suspended animation and so is the Congress. In comparison, the BJP resolved its leadership conflict without as much damage to the party organisation.

The party's confidence level can be gauged from the fact that it is thinking of fielding Dilip Singh Judev who was caught on tape allegedly accepting a bribe, in the Lok Sabha elections.

The BJP's national leadership is leaving nothing to chance and is making efforts to ensure that much of the 7 per cent votes that went to the Nationalist Congress Party in the 2003 Assembly elections will now come to the BJP. Arvind Netam, the adivasi leader, and Mr. V.C. Shukla, the former Congress stalwart who formed a party of his own after breaking ranks with Sharad Pawar's NCP, have joined the BJP. The combined effect of the newly-formed BJP Government, the declaration of the NCP and the demoralisation of the Congress could be more than the State Congress can handle. It has to come up with something miraculous to save a few seats in Chhattisgarh.

Graphic by Varqhesse Kallada

The BJP's challenges in a traditional stronghold

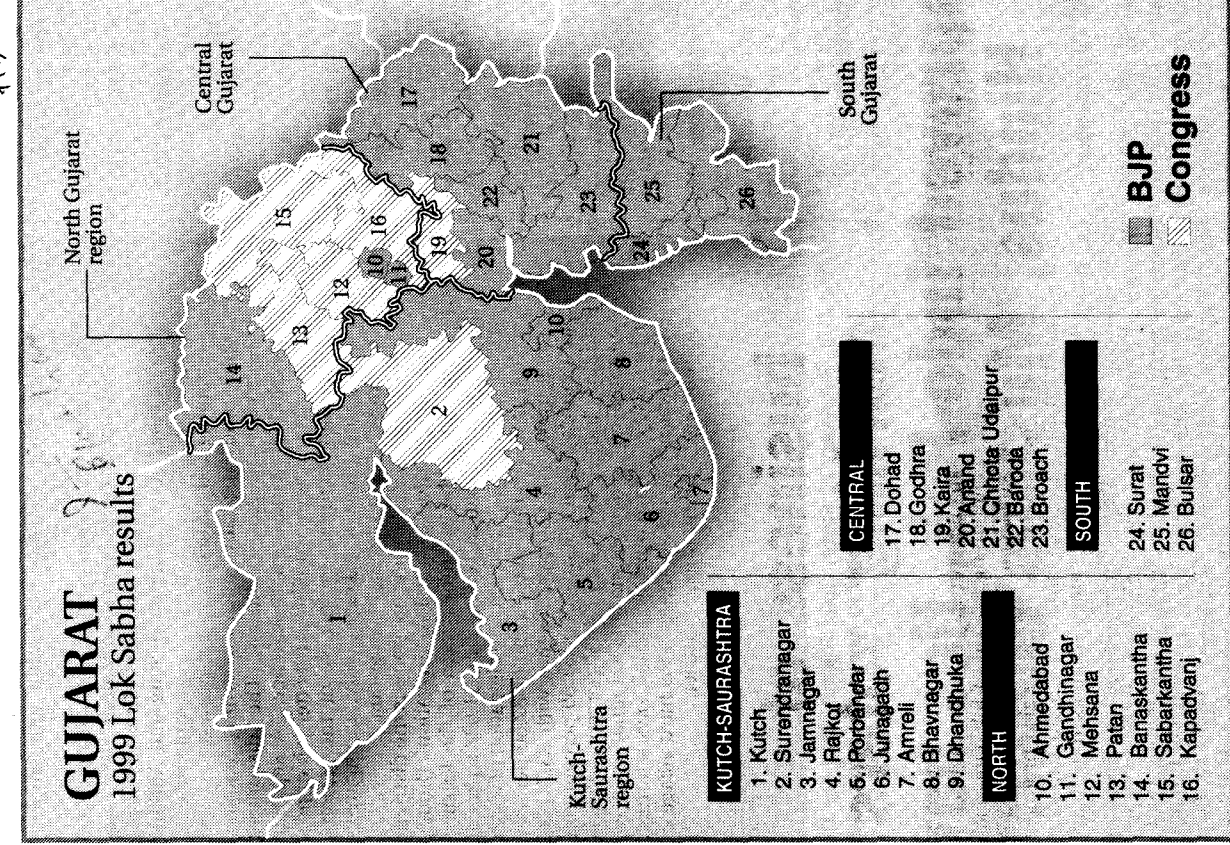
For many in India and abroad, this is the first national election since 'Gujarat'. The electoral verdict will be keenly analysed to see how far it reflects the 'Gujarat effect'. For Gujarat, however, the Lok Sabha elections of 2004 may have a very different meaning. This election is the first opportunity for Gujarat to put the events of 2002 behind and return to normal politics. In many ways then, it is a contest between 'Gujarat', the unfortunate metaphor for politics of hatred and Gujarat, the real state with ordinary people, routine problems and everyday politics.

Going purely by statistics, the ruling BJP is sitting quite pretty in Gujarat. The BJP has dominated this state like it has nowhere else in the country in the last 15 years or so although this was never a traditional stronghold of the Jan Sangh or the BJP. An 'also ran' in Gujarat politics till the mid-1980s, the BJP had a spectacular rise in the late 1980s. A series of caste and communal riots in the mid-1980s prepared the ground for the collapse of Congress dominance and the extraordinary success of the Ramjanambhoomi movement; Advani's rath yatra crystallised support for the BJP and the disintegration of the third political force, the Janata Dal, helped the BJP to institutionalise its dominance.

Beginning with the Lok Sabha elections held in 1991, the BJP has recorded overwhelming victories in every Lok Sabha and assembly election held in the state. Every time it has secured a handsome lead of about 10 percentage points and won about 20 of the 26 seats in the state. Like the BJP regime in Bihar and the Left Front in West Bengal, the BJP regime in Gujarat has bucked the anti-incumbency trend for well over a decade.

But statistics, as usual, do not tell the whole story. The fact is that anti-incumbency sentiment has been knocking on the doors of the BJP, ever since it came to power in the state in 1995. But the party has managed to avoid facing it every time. Its very first ministry was brought down by internal dissensions, when Waghela revolted against the party. The mid-term elections held in 1998 saw the anti-incumbency mood of the voters directed against the short-lived government of the 'Khajurias', the BJP rebels, and thus help the BJP score an overwhelming victory.

Dissatisfaction with the new regime started soon after the 'Kargil' elections in 1999 and the party fared badly in the local elections of 2000. That was followed by a change in guard and the coming of Narendra Modi in 2001. The rest was bloody history, leading to the BJP's spectacular victory in the Vidhan Sabha elections of 2002. It is after a long time that the BJP is facing a 'normal' election; this time round it is not riding an emotional wave like the Khajuria revolt, Kargil or Godhra and the massacres that followed it. It could



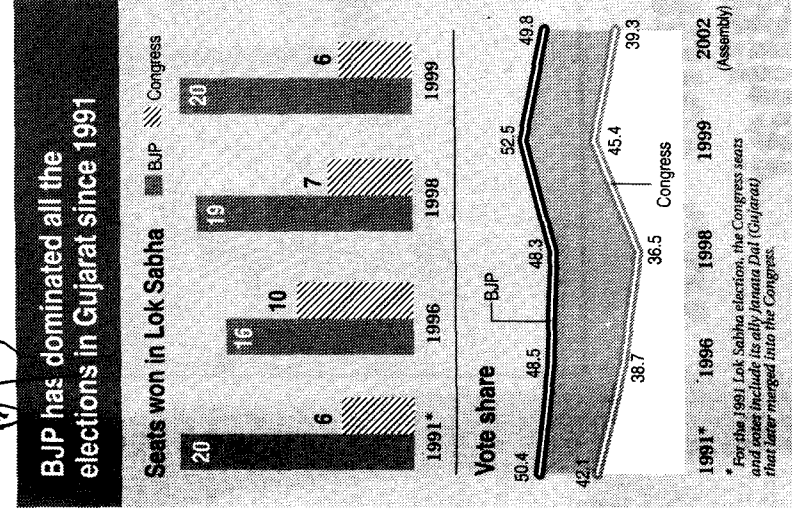
Graphic by Varghese Kallada

be tough going for the party.

A simple analysis of the voting patterns indicates that the BJP's situation may not be as comfortable as it appears. If it is able to repeat its performance in the assembly elections of 2002, it could of course pick up as many as 24 seats out of 26 and beat its own previous record. But if it starts slipping downwards, it faces a steep slope. A loss of merely two percentage points vote share across the state for the BJP would mean a loss of five Lok Sabha seats and corresponding gains for the Congress. That would bring the BJP at the same level as in the last parliamentary elections. A drop of another two points for the BJP would mean a change of hands in as many as seven more constituencies: the Congress would win 14, leaving the BJP with 12. Another two point negative swing would tilt the scale entirely in favour of the Congress, giving it 18 seats. A swing of up to 4 to 6 percentage points is not unusual in Indian elections, if the

government is somewhat unpopular. There are several chinks in the BJP's armour in Gujarat. While the party has maintained an overall lead in the state, a close look at the regional patterns shows that the BJP has steadily lost ground in the two areas considered its stronghold. The BJP came to power initially with strong backing from the Kutch-Saurashtra region that accounts for nine Lok Sabha seats and north Gujarat that ac-

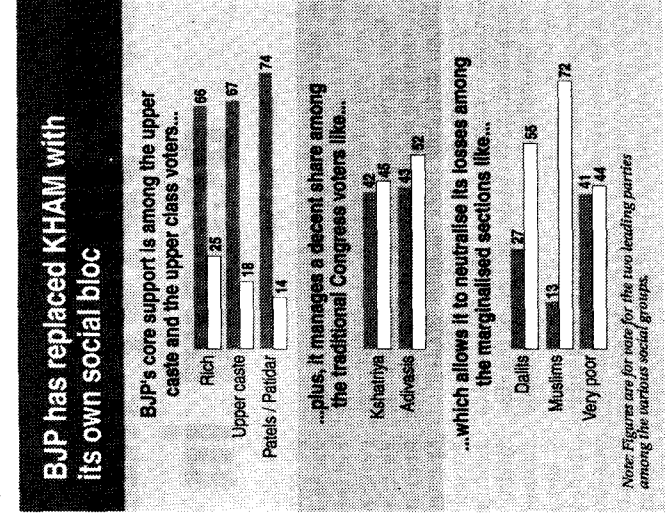
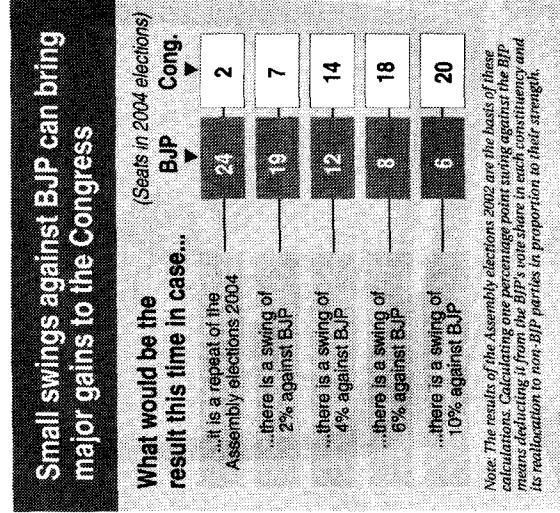
counts for seven. Over the years, the party's massive lead in these two regions has come down. Shankarsinh Waghela's rebellion weakened the BJP in the north, while the poor record of governance and Keshubhai Patel's disaffection has started telling in Kutch-Saurashtra. The BJP made up for this in the 2002 elections with the help of huge gains in the riot-



BJP has steadily lost its lead over the Congress in Saurashtra and North

Region	Lok Sabha		Assembly	
	1991	1996	1998	2002
Saurashtra	12.7	15.1	21.6	10.1
North	15.6	18.9	15.9	0.4
Central	1.4	-6.4	-5.3	5.9
South	-4.8	9.5	14.4	18.5
				0.9

Note: Figures indicate the percentage point lead of the BJP over the Congress. In terms of vote share. Negative sign (-) indicates that the BJP trailed behind the Congress.



Source: Pre-poll survey of Gujarat Assembly Elections Study 2002, CSDS

The BJP's position in Gujarat may not be as comfortable as it looks. Over the years it has lost ground in Kutch-Saurashtra and in the northern regions of the State. If the Congress can get its act together, there is no reason why it can't increase its tally, writes Yogendra Yadav.

BATTLEGROUND

affected traditional Congress bastions of Central Gujarat and some areas of the north. But with the leveling of the electoral terrain, the BJP is vulnerable to small swings against it and will be struggling to retain its hold in the rural, agriculture dominated areas of Saurashtra and the north.

The BJP's carefully orchestrated social alliance also faces a challenge. The BJP displaced the Congress' invincible KHAM (Kshatriya-Harijan-

The most significant opportunity for the Congress comes in the shape of widespread disquiet among the farmers on the issue of higher electricity charges. Ironically, the protests against the higher power tariffs were led by a Sangh Parivar's outfit, the Bharatiya Kisan Sangh. While the BJP has managed to patch up the differences with the BKS, the issue has neither been redressed nor has it disappeared. The state BJP has witnessed serious dissensions. The disaffection of Keshubhai Patel and Suresh Mehta, both ex-CMs is no secret. Another influential and currently sidelined BJP leader Purushottam Solanki has made his intentions known by demanding more tickets for his Koli community and by declaring that the 'community is above the party'. Factional tensions within the BJP has prevented Chief Minister Narendra Modi from expanding the ministry or even making appointments to corporations ever since his swearing-in. The BJP has also suffered reverses in some Nagarpalika elections since the assembly elections.

The real question is whether the Congress is in any position to take advantage of these opportunities. The last time the Congress tasted an election victory in the state was in 1985 during the Rajiv wave. Ever since the BJP's ascendancy in the state, the Congress has shown little signs of organisational strength, ideological consistency or moral authority to take on the BJP, a failure that was evident during the last assembly elections. The only person who has shown the capacity to take the BJP on is Shankarsinh Waghela, the ex-RSS man, whose move to form a 'Shakti Sena', an RSS-like organisation, drew flak from within the Congress party. He is currently sidelined and has been replaced as the state Congress chief by B. K. Gadhavi, a political lightweight considered close to old guard leaders like Madhavsinh Solanki and Amarsinh Chaudhary. If the Congress can improve its organisational state and distribute the tickets carefully, it can still take advantage of the opportunity and push the BJP tally down. But this depends mainly on the Congress' ability to get its act together and translate the difficulties of the BJP government into an electoral opportunity for itself.

Otherwise, it could well become the BJP vs. the BJP and the voters' resentment or disenchantment could take the form of non-voting. After all, Gujarat holds the dubious distinction of recording the lowest turnout in any major state in recent times, when turnout in the Lok Sabha elections touched a low of 36 per cent in 1996. That could upset many of the calculations offered above.

The real challenge for the Congress leadership is to present the party as a meaningful political alternative to the BJP, to persuade potential non-voters to vote for itself, rather than stay at home.

Parties Bring Band Of Warriors To Limelight

BJP announces list of 156 for LS poll show

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 14 MARCH

THE BJP on Sunday announced its A-team for defending the title in Battle 2004 and Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, the ruling NDA's spearhead, will seek re-election from his Lucknow seat.

Deputy prime minister L.K. Advani and 83 "sitting" MPs figured in the list of 156 nominees released by the party. While the deputy prime minister will seek to renew his lease over Gandhinagar, former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Kalyan Singh has been fielded from Bulandshahar.

While deciding on the nomination for the politically crucial Uttar Pradesh, where the stage is set for a four-cornered contest, it opted for the safe route and awarded tickets to 27 of its "sitting" MPs. Only one MP, Chattrapal Singh, was asked to make way for Mr Kalyan Singh in Bulandshahar.

This marked a departure from the hitherto accepted practice of factoring in the findings of its in-house surveys in nominations. The survey had talked about major anti-incumbency disadvantage for eight of its sitting MPs from Uttar Pradesh.

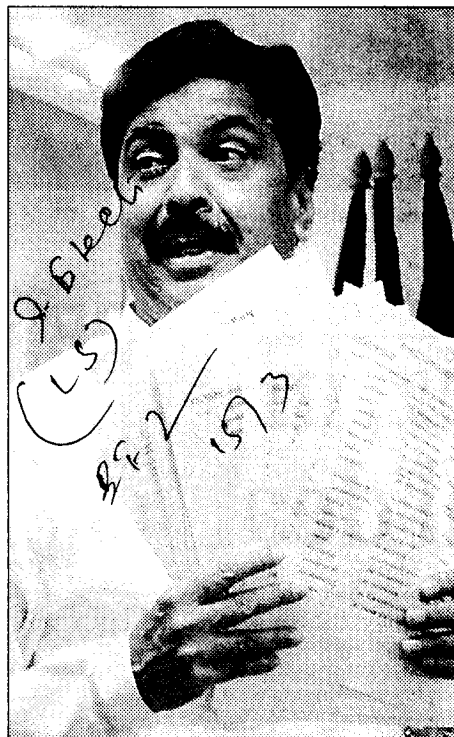
Given this the decision to renominate these party leaders indicated an assessment in the party that the Vajpayee factor may not be enough to overcome any possible rebellion in the wake of seat distribution. At the same time, the decision to announce 54 of its nominees from UP was also reflective of a confidence in the BJP about its prospects in the politically crucial state.

With four-cornered contest in the state all set to unleash a clash of caste loyalties, the BJP is banking on the social marginalisation and the upper caste distrust for the Congress and the BSP.

In Uttar Pradesh where the Congress has failed to garner the support of the BSP, the party could be pushed to the edge by the two identity-based parties, the SP and Ms Mayawati's outfit.

But, BJP leaders acknowledged that the UP list could bring it some bad publicity as the party's state president, Vinay Katiyar, deserted the nucleus of the Hindutva movement, Faizabad, for a seat dominated by his Kurmi brethren, Lakhimpur Kheri.

In Maharashtra, the BJP took care to minimise the effect of anti-incumbency by axing four leaders who had represented Bhandara, Chimur, Beed and Ahmadnagar. Petroleum minister Ram Naik will



NAME GAME: BJP general secretary Pramod Mahajan releasing the list of candidates contesting in the polls at the BJP HQ in New Delhi on Sunday. — PTI

contest from his traditional North Mumbai seat, while junior minister in power, Jaywantibehn Mehta will seek re-election from South Mumbai.

Mr V.C. Shukla, who merged his Rashtriya Jantantrik Dal with BJP on Saturday, has been nominated from Mahasamund in Chhattisgarh. Maneka Gandhi, who joined the party recently, has been fielded from Pilibhit. Lalitha Kumaramangalam, sister of the late Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, would be contesting from the lone seat in Pondicherry.

In Delhi, the party has renominated all the six sitting MPs. While Vijay Goel has shifted to Sadar seat, earlier held by Madan Lal Khurana prior to becoming a legislator, no name has been announced for the Chandni Chowk seat.

The Economic Times

15 MAR 2004

প্রথম পর্যায়ের নির্বাচনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি রাষ্ট্রপতির

নয়াদিল্লি, ২৪ মার্চ— দেশের ১৫টি রাজ্যের ১৪১টি আসনের জন্য আজ নির্বাচনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করলেন রাষ্ট্রপতি আব্দুল কালাম। লোকসভা নির্বাচনের প্রথম পর্যায়ে ওই ১৪১টি আসনে ভোট গ্রহণ করা হবে। রাষ্ট্রপতির এই বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারির সঙ্গেই আজ নির্বাচনী প্রক্রিয়ার সূচনা হল। তবে শুরুতে মাত্র ১২ জন প্রার্থী মনোনয়নপত্র জমা দিয়েছেন। এঁদের অধিকাংশই আবার নির্দল প্রার্থী। মহারাষ্ট্র থেকে মোট ৬ জন আজ তাঁদের মনোনয়ন পত্র জমা দিয়েছেন। এঁদের মধ্যে দু'জন কংগ্রেসের, এক জন রাষ্ট্রীয় সমাজবাদী পার্টির ও বাকিরা নির্দল। কर्नाटक থেকে মনোনয়ন জমা দিয়েছেন ৩ জন। এছাড়া ত্রিপুরা থেকে দুই ও মণিপুর থেকে এক জন মনোনয়নপত্র দাখিল করেছেন।

পাঁচ পর্যায়ে বিভক্ত লোকসভা নির্বাচনের প্রথম পর্যায়ে ২০ এপ্রিল গুজরাত, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর, মিজোরাম, দাদরা ও নগর হাভেলি, দমন ও দিউ, ছত্তীসগড়-এ এবং বিহার, মহারাষ্ট্র, ঝাড়খণ্ড, অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশ, কর্নাটক, অসম ও মণিপুরের কিছু অংশে ভোট হবে।

ইতিমধ্যেই অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশের ২৯৪ আসনের মধ্যে ১৪৭টি, কর্নাটকের ২২৪টির মধ্যে ১২০টি ও ওড়িশার ১৪৭টির মধ্যে ৭৭টি আসনের জন্য ওই রাজ্যগুলির রাজ্যপালেরা নির্বাচনী বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করেছেন। — পি টি আই

THE 13TH LOK SABHA

How the country voted in 1999

The three battlegrounds

Western Front

State	Total seats	Seats won in Lok Sabha elections 1999				
		BJP	BJP allies	Cong.	Cong. allies	Others
Punjab	13	1	2	8	---	2
Rajasthan	25	16	---	9	---	---
Gujarat	26	20	---	6	---	---
Maharashtra	48	13	15	10	1	9
Madhya Pradesh	29	21	---	8	---	---
Chhattisgarh	11	8	---	3	---	---
Goa	2	2	---	---	---	---
Karnataka	28	7	3	18	---	---
Kerala	20	---	---	8	3	9
Total	202	88	20	70	4	20

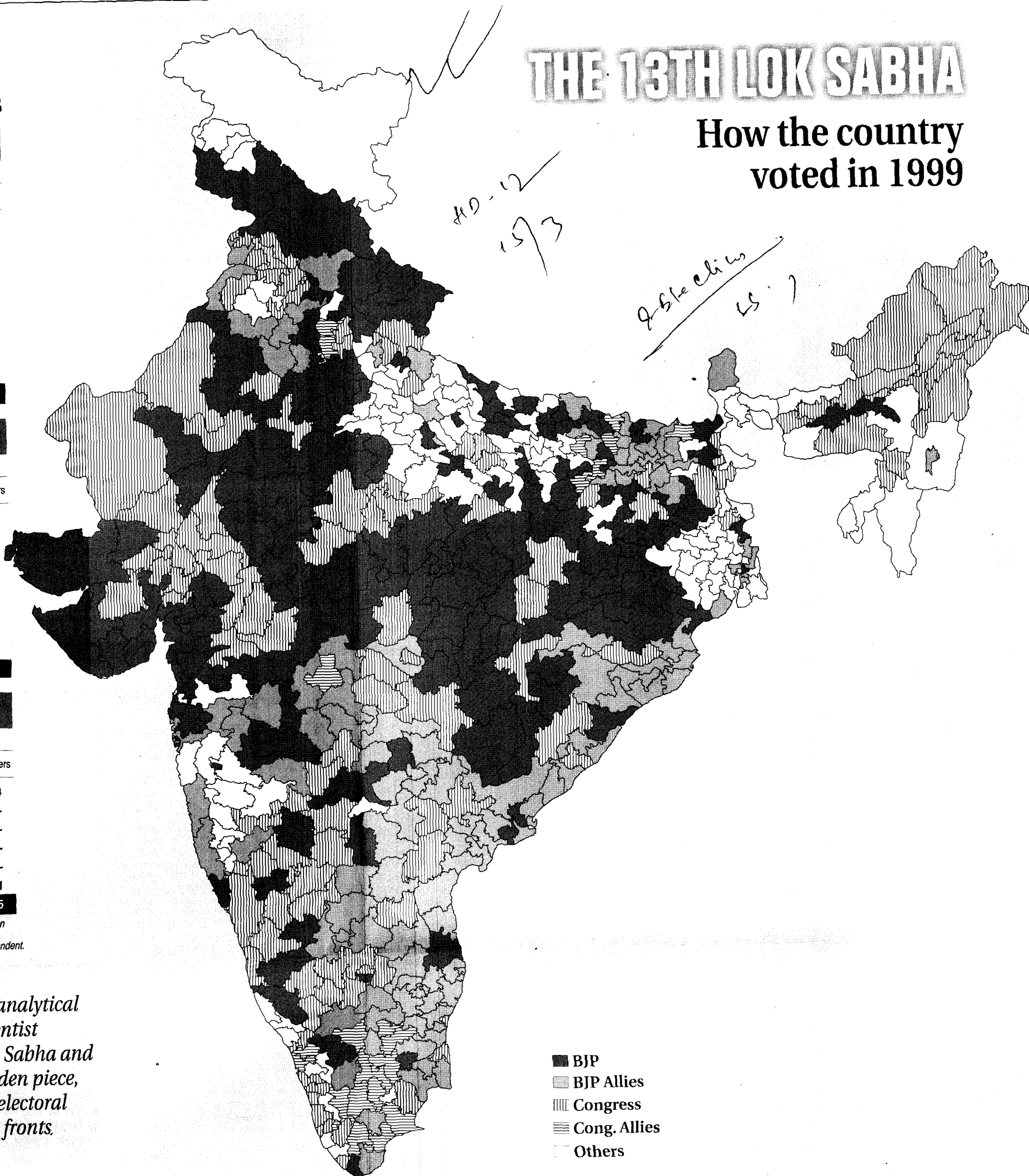
Eastern Front

State	Total seats	Seats won in Lok Sabha elections 1999				
		BJP	BJP allies	Cong.	Cong. allies	Others
Tamil Nadu	39	4	22	2	10	1
Andhra Pradesh	42	7	29	5	---	1
Orissa	21	9	10	2	---	---
West Bengal	42	2	8	3	---	29
Jharkhand	14	11	---	2	1	---
Bihar	40	12	18	2	6	2
Assam	14	2	---	10	---	2
North East	11	---	2	4	---	5
Total	223	47	89	30	17	40

Northern Front

State	Total seats	Seats won in Lok Sabha elections 1999				
		BJP	BJP allies	Cong.	Cong. allies	Others
Jammu & Kashmir	6	2	---	---	---	4
Uttaranchal	5	4	---	1	---	---
Haryana	10	5	5	---	---	---
Himachal Pradesh	4	3	1	---	---	---
Delhi	7	7	---	---	---	---
Uttar Pradesh	80	25	3	9	2	41
Total	112	46	9	10	2	45

Note: The seats add up to 537. These tables exclude Chandigarh, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshadweep, Pondicherry, Dadra & Nagar Haveli, Daman, Diu. Of the six, four went to the Congress, one to the BJP and one to an Independent.



- BJP
- ▨ BJP Allies
- ▤ Congress
- ▥ Cong. Allies
- Others

Graphic by Varghese Kallada

Starting today, we begin a series of analytical articles by well-known political scientist **Yogendra Yadav** on the coming Lok Sabha and State Assembly elections. In his maiden piece, Yadav takes a bird's eye view of the electoral prospects of the two major political fronts across the country.

Never mind the pollsters, the race is still open

IF THE media were to decide elections, the general elections to the 14th Lok Sabha would be a pointless exercise. The verdict is already out: the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party-led National Democratic Alliance is sure to return to power. Almost all sections of the media have said this from the day the NDA decided to advance the polls. Two serious nationwide surveys have supported this forecast, though in varying degrees. Add to this the umpteen number of newspaper articles, views of poll pundits and the astrologers. The *hawa*, as they say, favours the ruling coalition.

I am not convinced of this established wisdom. I am not convinced that it is a one-sided race all the way, that the NDA's majority is a foregone conclusion and that the Congress is about to slip down to its worst-ever performance. I am not sure that the electoral race can be called at this stage, and that even if one were to call it at this stage the results would be quite what the media think to be the case. This is, of course, not to say that there is no substance in the conventional wisdom. Nor do I dismiss the two nationwide surveys published by *India Today* and *Outlook* (I do not include in this category some other purely urban opinion polls that are hard to take seriously). It is just that years of watching elections has convinced me of the value of political commonsense and has taught me to disregard hype.

Before I set out my reasons for not subscribing to the prevailing wisdom about an NDA victory, let me first note what I believe to be valuable in this wisdom. First, it is true that the ruling coalition does not confront an electorate in a mood of total rejection

of the sort we saw in the national elections of 1977, 1980, 1989 or 1996. The absence of a strong 'anti-incumbency' mood at the end of a nearly full term of the government is no mean achievement.

The second element of truth in the prevailing wisdom is related to the first. It is true that at the core of this achievement for the NDA is the image of the Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, in the eyes of the public. All the opinion polls so far have shown that his image has remained remarkably unaffected by the various scams and scandals that have taken place in the last five years. He is in any case substantially ahead of the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, the only other name in the race.

And finally, there is no doubt that the organisational capacity of the BJP election machinery is way ahead of the Congress. This was clearly in evidence in the way Congress lost the Assembly elections in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. The Congress may have recovered somewhat, but there are signs of the same in the Lok Sabha elections as well: the BJP is a well-oiled machine, while in the Congress the left hand does not know what the right is doing.

The question therefore is, what conclusions can one draw from these facts. It would be fair to conclude from these facts that the ruling NDA is not headed for an electoral debacle or a wipe-out of the kind many ruling parties have faced in the past. One could also conclude that the BJP-led alliance is better placed to exploit the electoral opportunities that present themselves than its rival.

But, to my mind, all this is not enough to conclude that the NDA is headed for a repeat of its perform-

ance and is sure to come back to power. For this to be true, one has to produce evidence that there is not only no anti-incumbency mood against the NDA, but also that there is a positive sentiment, something of a 'feel good' factor across the country. One has to demonstrate that the preference for Vajpayee will prevail over other considerations in the voting decision. One needs to show that the BJP is already so close to the magic number that its organisational advantage is enough to make the difference. I have not yet seen evidence that convinces me on these counts. Therefore I remain an agnostic, as far as the final outcome is concerned, and wait for more reliable evidence.

A fundamental flaw in thinking about what is going to happen in this election is that we tend to see things through old frames while the political realities have changed on the ground. Gone are the days of nationwide swings in favour of one party leading to waves or sweeps in elections. Ever since 1996, the Lok Sabha elections are no longer a single nationwide race — for all practical purposes the general election now is 28 electoral races being held simultaneously; the national-level verdict is nothing but the sum total of all the State-level verdicts. A State is the effective unit of political choice even in Lok Sabha elections.

Therefore, the most useful way to think about electoral prospects is to look at each State separately and assess the type of party competition, nature of social alliances and the current electoral scenario. That is

what I propose to do in this series of articles. The question therefore is not whether the NDA has an advantage at the national level. That it undoubtedly has. The real question is whether the BJP and its various allies can convert this advantage into seats in each State. That remains an open question. Before we turn to each State in this series, let us begin with an overview. It may be useful to think of the coming electoral battle in terms of three battlegrounds and group all the States accordingly into one of the three types of contests.

The 'Western Front,' from Punjab downwards right up to Kerala including the whole of old Madhya Pradesh, represents the zone of opportunity for the NDA. This is where it is likely to put up a good show and record gains in terms of votes and seats.

The 'Eastern Front' includes all the States on the eastern coast from Tamil Nadu to West Bengal and extends to Bihar and Jharkhand on the

one hand and the North-East on the other. The NDA had hit a peak here in the last election and faces an uphill task of cutting its losses to a minimum in this zone.

And finally, there is the 'Northern Front' comprising Uttar Pradesh and a group of small States in the northwest. This zone is smaller than the other two but this is where the real uncertainty lies and where the real battle will be fought.

The principal nature of the political contest in the Western Front is that of the Congress versus the BJP. The NDA had bagged 108 of the 202 seats in this region in 1999 with the BJP alone getting 88. The Congress on the other hand won 70 seats with its allies adding another four. The BJP has allies only in Punjab and Maharashtra, while the Congress has allies only in Maharashtra and Kerala.

The BJP enjoys an advantage in this direct face-off with the Congress. The Congress regimes in Punjab, Maharashtra, Karnataka and Kerala are well past their honeymoon period, while the BJP has the advantage of freshly elected regimes in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and to some extent in Gujarat. However, the NDA cannot expect to gain a large number of seats here compared to its performance in 1999. Except Punjab, Karnataka and Kerala, the NDA did very well in this entire belt. While the NDA votes may improve in Maharashtra, the Congress-NCP alliance may reduce the NDA's tally. In Kerala, the BJP is still far short of converting any gains of votes into seats. All in all, the NDA cannot expect to add more than 20 seats to its existing tally of 108 in this zone.

On the Eastern Front, the NDA will be engaged in a defensive battle. Here the contest involves principally the allies of the BJP and other regional political parties. Barring Jharkhand, none of the States will witness a direct BJP-Congress contest. Here the NDA had peaked in the previous Lok Sabha elections winning 136 of a total of 223 seats, of which 89 went to the BJP's allies.

The NDA, particularly the BJP's allies, has a lot to lose here. It nearly swept Andhra Pradesh, Orissa and Jharkhand last time and will need to do exceptionally well to retain those seats. The nature of the anti-NDA coalition in Tamil Nadu and the state of the BJP's allies in Bihar and West Bengal will make it difficult for the NDA to repeat its performance in these States. The only place where the NDA can hope to retain and improve its position is Assam and other northeastern States, but then all of them account for only 25 seats. The NDA would be lucky if it contains its losses to about 40 seats. In a worst-case scenario, the losses for the NDA could go up to 60 seats or more.

That leaves the Northern Front, which itself can be divided into Uttar Pradesh and a group of small States in the northwest. The second group, comprising Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Haryana and Delhi, accounts for 32 seats of which the Congress won only one last time. The BJP swept this region, winning 21 seats with its allies picking another six.

This time it will be very difficult for the BJP to repeat this performance, especially after the split with the Indian National Lok Dal in Haryana. In Uttar Pradesh, which should be seen as a region in itself, the situation is

still unclear since the alliances are yet to be firmed up. In any case, the BJP does not have big gains to look forward to here and should be content if it can retain the 25 seats it has now. If the Congress-BSP alliance does not take place, the SP can hope to add to its tally at the expense of the rest. If the BSP and the Congress do come together, the combine could inflict considerable damages on both the SP and the BJP. The NDA cannot possibly improve upon its tally in the northern zone; its losses may vary from none to a loss of up to 20 seats.

The final overall outcome will depend upon how the electoral battle on all the three fronts plays itself out. This is not the place or the stage to speculate on what the final outcome will be. But if the scenario presented above makes any sense, at least three types of outcomes are possible. The first scenario is that of the NDA coming back with a majority, perhaps a reduced majority. The second is that of the NDA falling short of majority by a small number, say up to 20. In that case the anti-NDA parties would still be considerably behind the NDA and the latter could draw upon some unattached parties such as the SP to form the Government.

But if the NDA does poorly in any two of the three battlegrounds, especially if the Congress-BSP alliance comes about, a third possibility is also open. The combined strength of the Congress, its allies and the Left could cross the majority mark. All the three scenarios lie within a very small range and can come about with a mere 50 seats changing hands. But the political consequences of the three scenarios are radically different. It is still an open race.

BATTLGROUND

A BJP victory appears to be a foregone conclusion if the media and the opinion polls are to be believed. But that is really not the case.

পরীক্ষার জানিয়ে দিল নির্বাচন কমিশন

আডবাণী আইন মেনে যাত্রা করতেই পারেন

১৯৫৪
১৯৫৪

বঙ্গালোর, ৪ মার্চ— ভোটের মুখে উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীর 'ভারত উদয় যাত্রা'য় আপত্তি নেই নির্বাচন কমিশনের। আইন মেনে তিনি যদি যাত্রা করেন তাহলে কমিশনের কিছুই করার নেই বলে আজ জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার টি এস কৃষ্ণমুর্তি। তিনি আজ সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, "আইন খুবই স্পষ্ট। যতক্ষণ না আইন ভাঙা হচ্ছে ততক্ষণ নির্বাচন কমিশনের কিছু করার নেই। আইন লঙ্ঘিত হলে সংশ্লিষ্ট রাজ্যের পুলিশ প্রয়োজনীয় ব্যবস্থা নিতে পারে।" উল্লেখ্য, আডবাণীর যাত্রার ফলে দেশে সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি বিনষ্ট হবে, এই আশঙ্কায় নির্বাচন কমিশনের হস্তক্ষেপ দাবি করেছিল বিজেপি-বিরোধী দলগুলি।

এ দিকে, আজ নয়াদিমিত্তে তাঁর যাত্রা নিয়ে বিরোধীদের আপত্তিকে 'মনগড়া' বলে উড়িয়ে দিয়েছেন উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। তাঁর দাবি, বিরোধীরা যে ভীত এই সব ওজর-আপত্তি থেকে সেটাই বোঝা যাচ্ছে। ১০ মার্চ কন্যাকুমারী থেকে আডবাণী যে 'ভারত উদয় যাত্রা' শুরু করবেন তাকে ঘিরে দু'টি বিষয়ে বিতর্ক দেখা দিয়েছে। প্রথমত, প্রধানমন্ত্রীর দফতরের দিকে লক্ষ রেখেই যাত্রা করছেন আডবাণী এমন অভিযোগ উঠেছে। দ্বিতীয় অভিযোগ, এই যাত্রার ফলে দেশের সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি বিনষ্ট হবে। খুব সচেতন ভাবে এই দুই অভিযোগের জবাব দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করেছেন আডবাণী। যাত্রার বাহনে এক দিকে বাজপেয়ীর ছবি যেমন রাখা হচ্ছে, তেমনি মুসলিমদের ছবিও থাকছে।

কৃষ্ণমুর্তি আজ বলেছেন, "গণতান্ত্রিক ব্যবস্থায় রাজনৈতিক দলগুলি মিছিল বা যাত্রা করতেই পারে। তাতে আপত্তির কিছু নেই।" আইন ভাঙা বলতে তিনি ঠিক কী বোঝাতে চাইছেন জানতে চাওয়া হলে মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার বিরক্তির সুরে বলেন, যাত্রা

নিয়ে গবেষণা করতে তিনি এখানে আসেননি। পাশে বসা নির্বাচন কমিশনার বি বি ট্যান্ডন অবশ্য বুঝিয়ে দেন যে, ধর্মীয় ও সম্প্রদায়গত ভাবাবেগকে আঘাত করতে পারে এমন সব কিছুকেই আইন লঙ্ঘন হিসাবে গণ্য করবেন তাঁরা।

কৃষ্ণমুর্তি বলেছেন, জনপ্রতিনিধিত্ব আইনের নিরিখেই আডবাণীর ভারত উদয় যাত্রাকে বিচার করছেন তাঁরা। তাঁর কথায়, "এই আইন বা ভারতীয় দণ্ডবিধি যদি লঙ্ঘিত হয় তাহলে আমরা নিশ্চয়ই বিষয়টি পুলিশের গোচরে আনব।"

আজ সকালে আডবাণীর সঙ্গে দেখা করেন বি জে পি সভাপতি বেক্সাইয়া নাইডু। ভারত উদয় যাত্রার প্রস্তুতি নিয়ে তাঁদের মধ্যে কথা হয়। এ ছাড়া, তাঁর ভোপাল, বিদিশা, রাঁচি ও গয়া সফরের ব্যাপারেও উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রীকে অবহিত করেন নাইডু। অর্থমন্ত্রী যশোবন্ত সিংহও এসেছিলেন তাঁর হায়দরাবাদ, বঙ্গালোর ও মাদ্রাসার সফরের ফলাফল জানাতে। ভারত উদয় যাত্রায় সামিল হবেন কিনা জানতে চাওয়া হলে নাইডু বলেন, যাত্রা শুরুর সময় তিনি হাজির থাকবেন।

রাজনৈতিক দলগুলিকে নির্বাচনী আচরণবিধি পুঙ্খানুপুঙ্খ ভাবে মেনে চলার নির্দেশ দিয়েছে নির্বাচন কমিশন। কৃষ্ণমুর্তি আজ বঙ্গালোরে বলেন, কমিশন কড়া নজর রাখছে এবং আচরণবিধি লঙ্ঘিত হলে কঠোর ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হবে। সরকারি অফিসারদের নিরপেক্ষতা বজায় রাখতে নির্দেশ দেওয়া হয়েছে বলেও জানিয়েছেন তিনি। এন সি পি-র নির্বাচনী প্রতীক নিয়ে খুব শীঘ্রই সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হবে বলে এ দিন মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার জানান। কংগ্রেসের সঙ্গে জোট বাঁধা নিয়ে শরদ পওয়ার-পি এ সাংমা মত বিরোধের পর দু'পক্ষই প্রতীকের দাবিদার।

—পি টি আই

DECISION SOON ON NCP SYMBOL

P. & H. (CL)

EC rules out action against Advani's yatra

By Our Special Correspondent

BANGALORE, MARCH 4. The Election Commission has ruled out any action against the proposed "Bharat Uday Yatra" of the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, as long as it did not violate any law. He is set to launch a countrywide election campaign in two phases from March 10.

At a press conference here today, the Chief Election Commissioner, T.S. Krishnamurthy, said that there was no move to act against the yatra. The press meet, addressed by Mr. Krishnamurthy and the two Election Commissioners, B.B. Tandon and N. Gopaldaswami, followed a series of meetings they held with various political party leaders, the Chief Secretary, K.K. Mishra, the Director-General of Police, T. Madiyal, and other officials.

Mr. Krishnamurthy said the Commission would soon decide on the allotment of the party symbol to the Nationalist Congress Party. The matter was in the final stages. Asked which of the two groups — headed by Sharad Pawar and P.A. Sangma — would get the symbol, Mr. Krishnamurthy said: "Your guess is as good as mine."

UNI, PTI report:

Mr. Tandon said that electronic voting machines (EVMs) would be used for the first time in the entire Lok Sabha elections and added that

sufficient machines would be installed in all the States.

"The EVMs will reach there well in advance," he added. The machines would be guarded by paramilitary forces once the polling was over.

Mr. Gopaldaswami said district authorities had been instructed to provide additional lists of voters as enrolment of voters was still on in many places. The Commission also directed the authorities to provide the political parties with electoral rolls in the next 72 hours.

For the first time, the Commission will set up helpline centres in urban conglomerates and district units with facilities such as telephone lines and complaint books.

It will initiate action based on information available in these centres.

Mr. Krishnamurthy, replying to a question about disqualified candidates, said the Commission would shortly put up on its website the names of 3,300 of them, announced recently.

Separate queue for senior citizens

The Election Commission was considering a proposal to have a separate queue for senior citizens for the coming elections and would decide on it soon. "We are examining the proposal ... how it could be implemented. We will take a decision soon," he said.

৪ পাতায় • 'সুখের হাওয়ায়' আদবানি বেসুরো! • আদবানির রথ গেল কন্যাকুমারিকায়।

'ভারত উদয়'-এ কত খরচ? হাইকোর্ট

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি, ৩ ফেব্রুয়ারি— 'ভারত উদয়' প্রচারে কত খরচ হল? প্রশ্ন তুলে দিল্লি হাইকোর্ট বলেছে, খরচের হিসেব এবং সরকারের কোন বিধি মেনে খরচ করা হল তা আগামী সপ্তাহে জানাতে হবে! প্রধান বিচারপতি বি সি প্যাটেল ও বিচারপতি বি ডি আমেদের বেঞ্চ দুটি জনস্বার্থ আবেদন গ্রহণ করে আজ কেন্দ্রের কাছে জবাব চেয়েছে। অন্যতম আবেদনকারী বেকার যুব ঐক্য আন্দোলনের সাধারণ সম্পাদক আইনজীবী চঞ্চল ঠাকুর অভিযোগ করেছেন, 'ভারত উদয়' প্রচার বিশেষ একটি দলের স্বার্থে। দেশের বা জনগণের স্বার্থে নয়। আজ দিল্লিতে থেকেই গ্রাহকদের বাড়ির ফোনে শোনা যাচ্ছে প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কণ্ঠস্বর ও ভোট দেওয়ার অনুরোধ। বেজে ওঠা ফোন তুললেই ওপাশ থেকে রেকর্ড করা কণ্ঠস্বর, 'নমস্কার, ম্যায় অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী বোল রহাঁ হাঁ।' ২৫ ফেব্রুয়ারি কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের তরফে 'ভারত উদয়' প্রচারের পক্ষে বলা হয়, সরকার কী কাজ করেছে, কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে সাফল্য পেয়েছে, কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে সাফল্য এখনও অধরা থেকে গেছে তা জনগণকে জানানোর

অধিকার সরকারের আছে। আগের সব সরকারই এভাবে প্রচার করেছে। আমেরিকা ও ব্রিটেনে এভাবেই প্রচার চলে। আচরণবিধি জারি না হওয়া পর্যন্ত সরকার নিজের সাফল্যের বিবরণ দিতে বিজ্ঞাপনের দ্বারস্থ হতে পারে। সরকারি কৌশলি সঞ্জয় জৈনের সওয়ালের ভিত্তিতে দিল্লি হাইকোর্টের ডিভিশন বেঞ্চ নির্বাচন কমিশনের কাছে জানতে চায়, এ বিষয়ে তারা কোনও নির্দেশ জারি করেছে কিনা। ডিভিশন বেঞ্চ মনে করে, জনগণকে জানানো উচিত, তবে তা জনগণের পয়সায় নয়। বেকার যুব ঐক্য আন্দোলনের আইনজীবী সিদ্ধার্থ মৃদুল তাঁর আবেদনে বলেছেন, 'ভারত উদয়' প্রচার যেহেতু একটি বিশেষ দলের স্বার্থে, তাই প্রচার বাবদ খরচ হওয়া টাকা সংশ্লিষ্ট দলের কাছ থেকেই আদায় করা উচিত এবং সরকারের দায়িত্বশীল ব্যক্তিদের শাস্তি হওয়া উচিত। এদিকে, কেন্দ্রীয় আইনমন্ত্রী অরুণ জেটলি আজ বলেন, 'ভারত উদয়' প্রচারের ব্যয় ২০০৩-০৪-এর বাজেটেই বরাদ্দ হয়েছে। বিরোধীরা ৭০০ কোটি টাকা ব্যয়ের যে অভিযোগ করেছেন তা ভিত্তিহীন। সব মিলিয়ে খরচ দাঁড়াবে ৬৫ কোটি।

Advani off to another yatra

Opp slams 'provocative campaign', appeals to EC

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, March 2

THE FIRST, in 1990, had brought V.P. Singh's government down. The second, in 1997, built the momentum for the following year's ride to power. Now L.K. Advani is set to hit the road again — only this time, the yatra will not witness a strident cry for change from a fiery chariot.

In keeping with the status of a ruling party with a well-oiled poll machine, the five-week, 8,000-km journey through 15 states will come on a specially-fitted bus.

The Opposition, however, thinks that despite the incumbency factor, 'Bharat Uday Yatra' could see as much wrath and fury as the earlier rath yatras.

The CPI(M) said the ride would be a "provocative campaign" as the BJP leader had asserted there was an "intrinsic" link between this yatra and the previous ones.

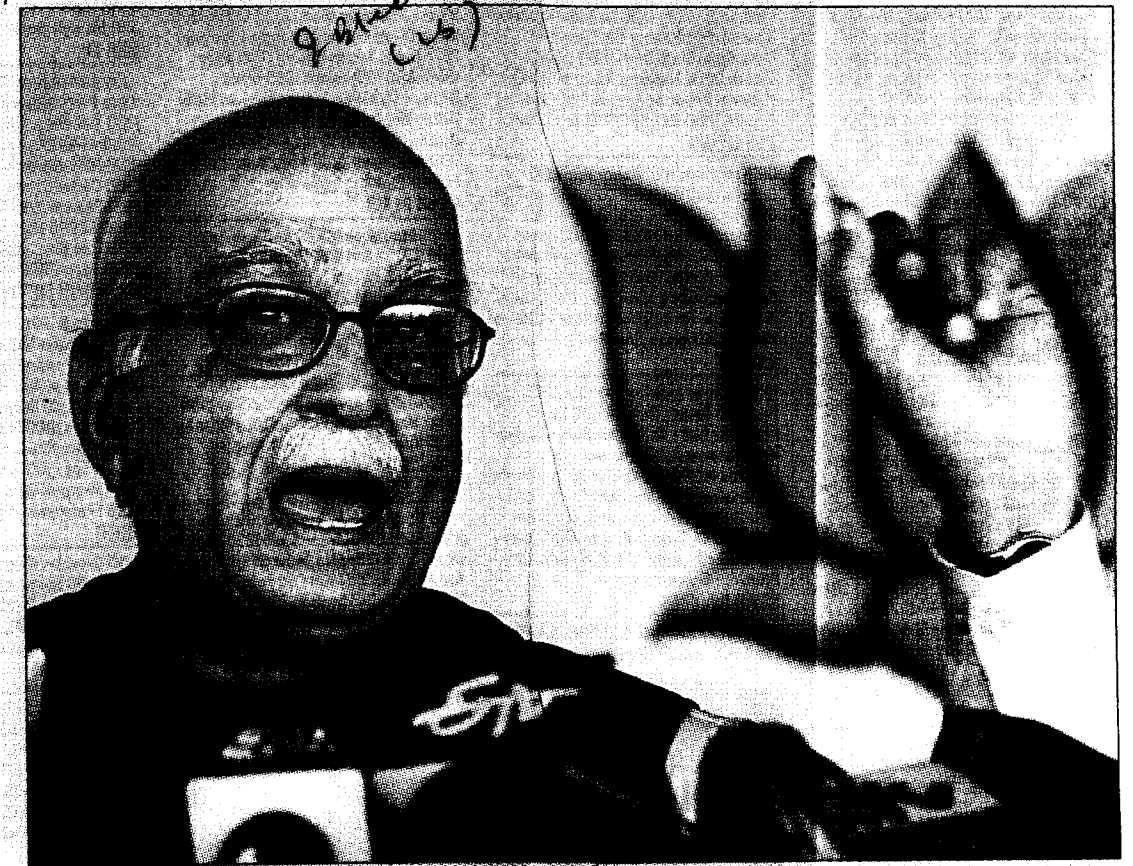
RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav said the yatra is aimed at "fomenting communal passions" ahead of the polls. It will bring out in the open the BJP's hidden agenda of Ram and Ayodhya.

The Congress urged the Election Commission to act against the BJP and Advani for "violating" the model code of conduct by announcing the yatra at the "cost of the taxpayer's money".

Code or no code, Bharat Uday, in its latest edition, is certain to be back on television. A number of senior party leaders, including Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee, will join the yatra at various places. Vajpayee will receive Advani in Amritsar and meet the yatra again in Lucknow — his constituency.

The first phase of the yatra will start from Kanyakumari on March 10 and end in Amritsar on March 26, after travelling 4,125 km. The second phase will begin from Porbandar, Mahatma Gandhi's birthplace, on March 30 and end in Puri on April 14, covering a distance of over 3,700 km.

Announcing his plan at the party headquarters here, Advani said the thrust of his yatra would be to highlight the NDA government's achievements and the "tremendous pace of development" during the past five years in comparison with the Congress' achievements in 50 years.



JOURNEY MAN: L.K. Advani at a news conference in New Delhi on Tuesday, announcing the Bharat Uday Yatra. AP

POLL POT

BSP BRIBE ROW

BSP expels Rashid Alvi, its biggest leader after Mayawati and Kanshi Ram. Alvi had accused Maya of taking money against nominations

SUPPORTING ACTOR

After watching a starcast of Bollywood celebrities jump on the BJP bandwagon, Cong pulls one back on its rival by roping in Shakti Kapoor

HELP LINE

Election Commission mulls over NGO's proposal that separate queues should be formed for elderly voters at every poll booth

Conceived and organised by party general secretary Pramod Mahajan, the yatra will be flagged off by BJP president M. Venkaiah Naidu. Sources said party leaders were trying to rope in Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa to attend the flag-off.

The yatra will pass through Naxalite-dominated areas in Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh as also Ayodhya. In all, it will visit 121 Lok Sabha constituencies. During the course of its first phase, the yatra will pass through Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana before ending in Punjab. In the second phase, it will pass through Gujarat, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh and Orissa.

See also Pages 4 & 5

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

সরকারি বিজ্ঞাপন বন্ধ, তবে নতুন বিতর্ক উঠল

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৯ ফেব্রুয়ারি— ভোটের দিন ঘোষণা করা মাত্র সরকারি বিজ্ঞাপন বন্ধ হচ্ছে বটে, কিন্তু রাজনৈতিক বিজ্ঞাপন নিয়ে নতুন বিবাদ মাথা চাড়া দিল।

বিষয় হচ্ছে— বৈদ্যুতিন মাধ্যমে রাজনৈতিক দলের প্রচার না-করা। এই ব্যাপারে সম্প্রতি কেন্দ্রীয় তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রকের কড়া সমালোচনা করেছে নির্বাচন কমিশন। একই সঙ্গে সংবাদমাধ্যমের একাংশের ভূমিকাও রেহাই পায়নি কমিশনের কাছে।

কেন্দ্রীয় তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রী রবিশঙ্কর প্রসাদের বক্তব্য ছিল, নির্বাচন কমিশনের আপত্তিতেই টিভি চ্যানেল বা রেডিওতে কোনও রাজনৈতিক দলের প্রচার চলবে না। মন্ত্রীর মন্তব্যে ক্ষুব্ধ মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার তরুণই সুবাইয়া কৃষ্ণমূর্তি সাফ বলেন, “কেবল টিভি আইনেই তো বলা রয়েছে, কোনও ধর্মীয় বা রাজনৈতিক প্রচার চলবে না। এই আইন তো কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারই তৈরি করেছিল। আমরা তো নতুন কোনও আইন বানাইনি? বর্তমান যে আইন, সেটাই মেনে চলার কথা বলেছি।” এর পরে তিনি কেবল আইনের সেই অনুচ্ছেদও পড়ে শোনান, যেখানে বলা রয়েছে বিজ্ঞাপনের নিষেধাজ্ঞার কথা।

এই নিয়ম মানা হচ্ছে কি না, তা নজর রাখার দায়িত্বও নির্বাচন কমিশনের ঘাড়েই ঠেলে দিতে চেয়েছিল কেন্দ্রীয় তথ্য ও সম্প্রচার মন্ত্রক। বলা হয়েছিল, কোনও চ্যানেলে নির্বাচনী প্রচার হচ্ছে কি না, তা দেখার জন্য মন্ত্রক উপযুক্ত অবস্থায় নেই। এই মনোভাবকেও খারিজ করে দিয়ে পাঁচটা দায়িত্ব মন্ত্রকের কোর্টেই আজ পাঠিয়ে দিয়েছে কমিশন। কৃষ্ণমূর্তির পাশে বসে অন্যতম নির্বাচন কমিশনার বি বি ট্যান্ডন বলেন, “এই আইন তৈরি করেছে সরকার। আইন রক্ষার দায়িত্বও তো সরকারের। আমাদের দায়িত্বের প্রশ্ন কোথা থেকে আসছে।” সংবাদমাধ্যমের একাংশও কেন মন্ত্রকের কথা শুনে খবর প্রচার করছে, তা নিয়েও প্রশ্ন তুলেছে কমিশন। কৃষ্ণমূর্তির মন্তব্য, “আমি আশা করব, এর পর থেকে আপনারা ভাল করে বিষয়টি পড়ে নিয়ে লিখবেন।”

ভোটের দিন ঘোষণা হয়ে যাওয়া মানে পর মুহূর্ত থেকেই নির্বাচনী আচরণবিধি চালু হয়ে যাচ্ছে। ফলে সরকারি বিজ্ঞাপনও বন্ধ করে দিতে হবে ভোটের ফলাফল প্রকাশ পর্যন্ত। বস্তুত ‘ভারত উদয়’ এবং বিভিন্ন মন্ত্রকের বিজ্ঞাপন নিয়ে ইতিমধ্যেই কমিশন ও সরকারের মধ্যে ঠোকাঠুকি লেগেছিল। মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনারের পদে আসা ইস্তক কৃষ্ণমূর্তি সংবাদমাধ্যমকে বলেছিলেন, জনগণের পয়সায় এই ধরনের বিজ্ঞাপন ভোটের আগে বন্ধ হওয়া উচিত। কিন্তু আইনগত ভাবে কোনও সমস্যা না-থাকায় বাজপেয়ী সরকার মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনারের এই মনোভাব অগ্রাহ্য করে লাগাতার বিজ্ঞাপন দিতে থাকে। আজ সম্ভবত সেই কথা মাথায় রেখেই কৃষ্ণমূর্তি হাল্কা কটাক্ষও করেন। ভোটের দিনক্ষণ ঘোষণার পরে তাঁর বক্তব্য শেষ করার সময়ে তিনি বলেন, “নির্বাচনের সময়ে ভারত যেন উজ্জ্বল হয়।”

বস্তুত, ভোটের দিন ঘোষণা পর্যন্ত অপেক্ষা না-করে লোকসভা ভেঙে দেওয়ার পরের দিনই যাতে নির্বাচনী আচরণবিধি জারি করা যেতে পারে, তার জন্য কমিশনের চেস্তার কথাও আজ উল্লেখ করেছেন কৃষ্ণমূর্তি। তিনি জানিয়েছেন, কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের কাছে একটি প্রস্তাব পাঠানো হয়েছে যাতে লোকসভা ভাঙার সময় থেকেই আচরণবিধি জারি করা যায়। এ ক্ষেত্রে রাজনৈতিক ঐকমত্যের প্রয়োজন রয়েছে বলেও তিনি মন্তব্য করেন।

সাংমা ও পওয়ারের ফয়সালা: আসল এন সি পি-র মর্যাদা এই ভোটে কে পাবে, তা নিয়ে এখনও কোনও চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত নেয়নি কমিশন। এক প্রশ্নের জবাবে মুখ্য নির্বাচন কমিশনার বলেছেন, “যথা সময়ে এই বিষয়ে আমরা সিদ্ধান্ত নেব।” আজ থেকে ভোটের জন্য নতুন কোনও রাজনৈতিক দলের নথিভুক্তি বন্ধ হয়ে গেলেও পওয়ার বা সাংমার ক্ষেত্রে কোনও সমস্যা নেই। কমিশনের মুখপাত্র এ এন বা বলেছেন, “যে সব আবেদন আমাদের কাছে ইতিমধ্যেই জমা পড়েছে, তাদের স্বীকৃতি পেতে সমস্যা নেই। নতুন কোনও আবেদন গ্রহণ করা হবে না।”

Code of conduct clips Advani's wings

Gabriel Vaz

TUMKUR 29 FEBRUARY

TAKEN by surprise by the early announcement of the poll schedule by the Election Commission and the consequent enforcement of the model code of conduct, Deputy prime minister L K Advani had to give up his IAF helicopter and travel by road for his pre-poll campaign in Karnataka.

Mr Advani, who flew from Bangalore to this town this morning by an IAF helicopter to launch his Atal Sandesh Yatra, had to send back his chopper soon after getting news about the announcement of the four-phase poll schedule by the Election Commission at Delhi. Abruptly curtailing his pub-

lic meeting, he travelled in BJP state president Ananth Kumar's private car to Bangalore and flew off to coastal Mangalore by a privately chartered helicopter to address his second pre-scheduled public meeting.

A batch of eight journalists, who had accompanied the deputy prime minister from Delhi and a flown with him from Mumbai to Bangalore by a special IAF aircraft, were packed off in cars back to Bangalore to join Mr Advani in his onward journey to Mangalore.

"I was expecting the poll schedule to be announced probably on Monday. I was totally taken by surprise. We have to abide by the model code of conduct once the poll schedule is announced," he re-

marked after curtailing his speech in less than 15 minutes.

"However, the need to travel by road to Bangalore has come as a blessing in disguise," he said pointing out that he would now get an opportunity to "personally taste the feel-good experience" of travelling in the just completed Bangalore-Tumkur stretch of the four-lane national highway forming part of the golden quadrilateral project.

Without displaying any rancour at the poll panel's move to check use of official machinery for political campaigning by suddenly announcing the election schedule on a Sunday, the BJP strongman predicted that the NDA would come back to power with greater strength.

Termining the ensuing poll battle as an examination faced by students at the end of their academic terms, Mr Advani said the BJP-led NDA regime was confident of coming out first class braving the toughest of challenges. "We have shown that it is possible to notch up achievements in five years that could not be done in 50 years," he said claiming that the rate and pace of laying national highways had dramatically grown to a phenomenal 11 kms a day since 1998 against the 11 kms a year prior to 1998.

"Suraj-Suraksha-Vikas (good government), security and development) are the three key issues that will give another term to Vajpayee regime," he said pointing out that the country had the

worst record of political instability during the decade of 1988-98 with seven prime ministers against a single prime minister in the six years since 1998. "Mr Vajpayee will return as prime minister for another five-year term taking his tenure to 11 long years," he declared. Though he did not directly refer to senior Congress leader and former Karnataka chief minister S Bangarappa's imminent admission into the BJP, Mr Advani said people from all parties and different walks of life were joining his party. "We have displayed BJP acceptance by the people, who have given a mandate for good governance and development. Within a short span, India has become a nuclear power."

J. Blewinn (L.S.)

Electronic India to vote in four-phase poll

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb 29. — Elections to the 14th Lok Sabha will be held in four phases, over three weeks, from 20 April, the Election Commission announced here today. The model code of conduct, valid for the entire period until the constitution of the 14th Lok Sabha, came into effect from this evening across the entire country.

Releasing the schedule and ending weeks of speculation, the EC said the general elections would be held on 20 and 26 April and 5 and 10 May, along with Assembly polls in four states — Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa and Sikkim. Counting of votes will be held across the country on 13 May, except in Andhra Pradesh where it may be advanced "by a day or so".

While polling will be three-phased in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, it will be two-phased in Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Manipur and Orissa. All other states and Union territories, including West Bengal, will have a one-day poll. Releasing the schedule after a meeting of the full commission, Mr TS Krishnamurthy, said polling for six constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir would be spread over all the four dates.

This is the first time that electronic voting machines will be used in all Lok Sabha constituencies, as well as in the Assembly constituencies in the four states. In all, 10.75 lakh EVMs will be used to conduct the nation-wide polls. Notifications for the four stages of Lok Sabha polls will be issued on 24 and 31 March and 8 and 16 April respectively. The last dates

Let India shine in elections



The CEC at the press meet

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 29. — Chief Election Commissioner Mr TS Krishnamurthy had sharp words for plenty of people today, from the I&B minister to the US state department, from bureaucrats to the media.

"Let India shine in the conduct of elections", the CEC said, showing, undoubtedly unwittingly, how much the government's campaign may have caught on. He voiced his "surprise and shock" over statements made by "certain ministers" on the ban on political advertisements in TV and radio. "We're only implementing a law enacted by Parliament and had not taken a decision on our own", he said. "It's the EC's interpretation that the campaigns (India Shining and Uday Bharat) should end with the implementation of the model code of conduct."

The minister in the cross-chairs was obviously I&B's Ravishankar Prasad, who had briefed the media on Friday on the "EC ban".

"There've been gross misstatements that the EC acted irresponsibly," Mr Krishnamurthy said. On the State Department report that said India is a flawed democracy, he said: "The first step towards a flawless democracy is the conduct of good elections. India has a better record than any other country."

for filing of nominations will be 31

March, 7, 15 and 23 April. Scrutiny of nominations is scheduled to be conducted in five phases — on 1, 2, 8, 16 and 24 April. The last dates for withdrawal of candidatures are 3, 5, 10, 19 and 26 April.

In all, electorate of 543 constituencies will vote for the 14th Lok Sabha. Polling on Day I (20 April) will involve 141 constituencies, spread across 16 states and UTs. On Day II (26 April), 137 constituencies will vote in 11 states. On Day III (5 May), 83 Lok Sabha seats will go to polls in seven states. On Day IV (10 May), elections will be held across 182 seats in 16 states.

Around 67.5 crore voters will elect their representatives for the Lok Sabha, while about 14 crore people will elect their MLAs in the four states. While the Andhra Pradesh has 294 Assembly constituencies, Karnataka has 224, followed by Orissa (147) and Sikkim (32).

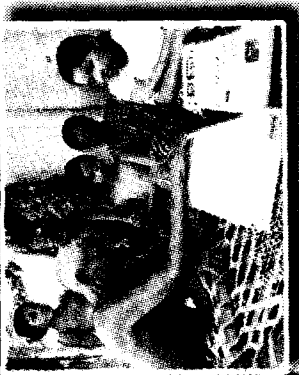
Mr Krishnamurthy, flanked by the two election commissioners Mr BB Tandon and Mr N Gopalaswamy, said the entire poll process would be completed by 25 May, by which time the new Lok Sabha would be constituted. The 13th Lok Sabha was dissolved on 6 February.

Mr Krishnamurthy said the dates for the polls had been finalised keeping in mind school examinations, festivals and holidays, as also the availability of teachers for poll duty and school premises for polling stations.

The EC specially took into account the total availability and the time required for movement of security forces from one part of the country to another, and the special requirements of insurgency-afflicted states.

More reports on pages 4 & 5

INDIA DECIDES



20 April 16 states, 141 constituencies
26 April 11 states, 137 constituencies
5 May 7 states, 83 constituencies
10 May 16 states, 182 constituencies
Jammu & Kashmir Four-day poll
Bihar and Uttar Pradesh Three-day poll
Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Jharkhand, Karnataka, MP, Maharashtra, Manipur and Orissa Two-day poll
Other states & UTs One-day poll



Too late for BJP, too early for Congress?

■ BJP leaders while saying 13 (results are on 13 May) is lucky for them (see page 4) may have wanted earlier elections. The Prime Minister had said in Hyderabad that a new government will be in place by April. The party has always apprehended that time will take the shine off the "feel good" factor.



■ Congress leaders said they were "fully prepared" but they may have wanted the dates to be postponed (see page 4)

even further. For one, no consensus on an Opposition prime ministerial candidate has emerged. Key alliances, such as the one with the Bahujan Samaj Party, are yet to be firm up, and the Congress would have wanted more time to stop defections by senior leaders (see page 4)

Alliance Dalliance



BJP partners
Andhra Pradesh — TDP-BJP
Arunachal Pradesh — BJP
Assam — BJP
Bihar — JD(U)-BJP
Delhi — BJP
Goa — BJP
Gujarat — BJP
Haryana — BJP
Himachal Pradesh — BJP
Jammu and Kashmir — BJP
Jharkhand — BJP
Karnataka — BJP
Kerala — BJP
Madhya Pradesh — BJP
Maharashtra — BJP-SS
Manipur — BJP
Meghalaya — Sangma-BJP
Mizoram — MNF-BJP
Orissa — BJD-BJP
Punjab — SAD-BJP
Rajasthan — BJP
Tamil Nadu — AIADMK-BJP
Tripura — Trinamul-BJP
Uttar Pradesh — BJP
Uttaranchal — BJP
Bengal — Trinamul-BJP

Congress partners
Tamil Nadu: Cong-DMK-Left
Andhra: Cong-TRS-Left
Kerala: Cong-Muslim League & smaller parties in the United Democratic Front
Maharashtra: Cong-NCP-Left
RPI & smaller groups
Bihar: Cong-RJD-Left-NCP

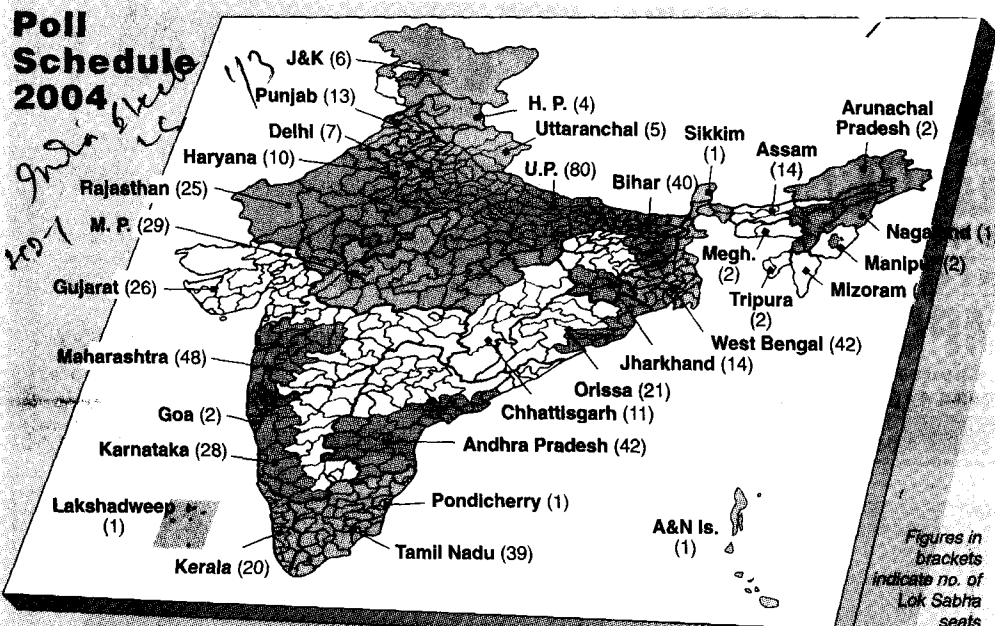
Young voters, young leaders

his cousins Rahul and Priyanka lay claim to. Beyond the so-called 'first family' of Indian politics, the BJP probably takes the honours in terms of choices for 'generation now'. Arun Jaitley, Summa Swaraj, Narendra Modi, Uma Bharati, Venkaiah Naidu, Pramod Mahajan, Shah Nawaz Hussain and Vasundhara Rajwar are part of the inner core of the party's decision-making apparatus. They have emerged as the party's role models or the future, who can attract the younger voter.

The Congress, meanwhile, can bank on Digvijay Singh, who has emerged as much more than a regional satrap, PR Das Munshi, Salman Khursheed, Jairam Ramesh, Jyotiradiya Scindia and Sachin Pilot. The young leaders on whom the CPI-M is banking include Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, Sitaram Yechuri, Prakash Karat and Suhasini Ali. The Samajwadi Party is depending on Akhilesh Yadav and Amar Singh.

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb. 29. — The population eligible to vote for the 14th Lok Sabha will be the youngest ever, with an estimated 70 per cent of the 67.5 crore voters, that is 47.25 crore, aged below 40 years. To make them the 'natural' choice for a wide cross-section of voters, the BJP has pulled off a coup of sorts by netting Varun Gandhi, a political greenhorn, but heir to much the same legacy that



Phase	Date	States/UTs	Parliamentary Constituencies
Phase I	20th April	16	141
Phase II	26th April	11	137
Phase III	5th May	7	83
Phase IV	10th May	16	182

Simultaneous elections for Legislative Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Orissa & Sikkim will follow the schedule of the corresponding Parliamentary Constituencies

KBK Pollgraphics

THE HINDU

1 MAR 2004

পশ্চিমবঙ্গে নির্বাচন

প্রথম পাতার পর

দাঁড়িয়ে কমিশনকে বিস্তর কাঠখড় পুড়িয়ে দেশ জুড়ে ভোটসূচি তৈরি করতে হয়েছে। কৃষ্ণমূর্তি স্বীকারও করেছেন, “প্রথমেই দেখা হয়েছে, বিভিন্ন স্কুল-কলেজে পরীক্ষার কী সূচি।

স্কুলবাড়িগুলির সঙ্গেই শিক্ষকদের যাতে ভোটের কাজে পাওয়া যায়, তা সুনিশ্চিত করতে চেয়েছি। বিভিন্ন রাজ্যের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ সামাজিক বা ধর্মীয় উৎসব, ফসল কাটার মরসুম প্রভৃতি বিষয়গুলিও নজরে রেখেছে কমিশন।”

এ বারের নির্বাচনে সারা দেশের সমস্ত ভোটগ্রহণ কেন্দ্রেই বৈদ্যুতিন যন্ত্র ব্যবহার করা হবে। এ ছাড়া, এই প্রথম লোকসভার প্রার্থীদের সবাইকে হলফনামা দাখিল করতে হবে মনোনয়নপত্র জমা দেওয়ার সময়ে।

হলফনামায় নিজের সম্পত্তির হিসাবের সঙ্গে অপরাধ-সংক্রান্ত ইতিহাসও (যদি থাকে) জানাতে হবে। নচেৎ মনোনয়ন বাতিল করা হবে।

অন্য দিকে, সচিত্র পরিচয়পত্রের ব্যবহারের উপরে জোর দিচ্ছে কমিশন। তবে যেখানে কমিশনের দেওয়া পরিচয়পত্র নেই, সেখানে অন্য পরিচয়পত্র নিয়ে ভোট দিতে সমস্যা হবে না বলে কমিশন জানিয়েছে। প্রার্থীদের প্রচারের খরচ প্রতিদিন রাখতে হবে এবং অন্তত তিন বার

তা কমিশনের প্রতিনিধিদের কাছে জানিয়ে দিতে হবে।

এত কিছু আয়োজনের পরে বেশি মানুষ যাতে ভোট দিতে ঘর থেকে বেরোন, তার জন্য খোলাখুলি আবেদন করেছেন কৃষ্ণমূর্তি। সাধারণত লোকসভা নির্বাচনে ভোট পড়ে ৫০ থেকে ৫৫ শতাংশ। ভোটারদের বিশেষত, যুবাদের কাছে তাই কৃষ্ণমূর্তির আবেদন, “আপনারা ভোট দিতে এসে আপনাদের দায়িত্ব পালন করুন। আমরা সমস্ত সহায়তা করব।” ভোটার-তালিকা সংক্রান্ত বিভিন্ন প্রশ্নের উত্তর দিতে কমিশন ‘হেল্পলাইন’ চালু করেছে। বণিকসভা সি আই আই ভোট-সচেতনতা বাড়াতে কমিশনকে সাহায্য করতে চেয়েছিল।

কৃষ্ণমূর্তির মতে, এই প্রথম বাণিজ্যিক জগত থেকে এ ভাবে সাহায্যের হাত এগিয়ে এসেছে। ভবিষ্যতে এতে ভোটারদেরই লাভ হবে।

ইতিমধ্যে দেশের অধিকাংশ রাজ্যেই নতুন ভোটার তালিকা প্রকাশ হয়ে গিয়েছে। বাকি রয়েছে ওড়িশা, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীর, উত্তরপ্রদেশ, দিল্লি এবং রাজস্থান। কমিশন বলেছে, ওড়িশায় ১ মার্চ, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরে ৬, দিল্লি এবং রাজস্থানে ৮ এবং উত্তরপ্রদেশে ২০ মার্চ তালিকা তৈরি হয়ে যাবে। এ বারের তালিকায় মোট ৬৭ কোটি ৫০ লক্ষ ভোটারের নাম রয়েছে।

'NDA violated code of conduct'

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, February 9

THE CONGRESS on Monday charged the NDA government with violating the spirit of the model code of conduct while accusing it of "rapacious plunder" of the public exchequer with its advertisements on the "India Shining" campaign.

Since the Union Cabinet had decided on January 27 to dissolve the Lok Sabha, the party argued that the model code of conduct should be deemed to have come into effect since then and not as it usually happens after the announcement of the election schedule.

"Any expenditure to project the government's achievements is not only improper, but also outrageously immoral", spokesman Jaipal Reddy said, even as he welcomed the Chief Election Commissioner's appeal to parties to follow the model code and asked the government to "desist" from the "perverse" practice of misusing the taxpayers' money. He charged that the



Sonia Gandhi walks with supporters at a rally venue in Kaudiram near Gorakhpur on Monday. AP

Centre was spending more than Rs 500 crore on ads, with even the Planning Commission "strangely" coming out with one.

Meanwhile, kicking off the Congress poll campaign

in UP's Deoria, Sonia Gandhi blamed the Centre for the plight of farmers and increasing unemployment in the country. She appealed to the people to vote for the Congress and to oust the

NDA government.

Sonia said she had decided to tour eastern UP because she was aware of the deplorable condition of the farmers and the people of the region.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES 10 FEB 2004

LS poll dates only after review of rolls, says EC

Press Trust of India
Coimbatore, January 18

Alliance: Moves and counter-moves

ELECTION COMMISSIONER T.S. Krishnamurthy on Sunday said that the Election Commission will decide the date for Lok Sabha polls only after a proper review of the progress in preparation of electoral rolls and photo identity cards in all the states.

The EC will convene a meeting of all chief electoral officers in the first week of February to review the progress and then finalise the dates, Krishnamurthy told reporters here.

Terming as "incorrect" press reports that elections to the Lok Sabha will be held after 45 days of its dissolution, Krishnamurthy said: "We should get prepared, discuss the various options and only after reviewing the ground realities can we decide the dates."

When asked whether the polls will be held in five-phases, as was done during the last elections, he said: "We would like to reduce that." This will, however, depend on the availability of paramilitary forces and weather conditions in different states.

The EC will try to hold elections on a single day in all the states, except in Jammu and Kashmir, where climatic conditions are not conducive for holding polls in one day, Krishnamurthy said. To a question about doing away with the provision of allowing a member to contest from two constituencies and fixing an upper age limit for the candidates, he said: "There is no such proposal and the status quo will continue."

Electronic voting machines will be used throughout the country in the coming Lok Sabha polls, he said, adding steps to rationalise and reduce the number of polling stations had been taken for the purpose.



BJP: While truck with Mayawati or Mulayam is totally ruled out, the party is still open to an alliance with Jaya. The party is also evasive on the issue of Kalyan Singh's return to the BJP



CONGRESS

Having reached an understanding with the DMK, Congress president decided to go the extra mile and travel to Chennai to seal the election pact

SOME STATS

An analysis of the election results from 1991 onwards shows:

74 Constituencies have not elected a sitting member for the LS for the second term

40 MPs have won last five consecutive LS polls

LOK SABHA Deputy Speaker P.M. Sayeed holds the record of getting elected 10 times, the runner up is the CPM's Somnath Chatterjee who has won nine elections. (PTI)

QUOTE



Vajpayee is the great grand-father of all world politicians — be it Bush, Putin or anybody who are in their 60s.

Pramod Mahajan

DA gift as polls loom

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

KOLKATA, Jan. 17. — Taking a cue from the NDA government at the Centre, the state government too has announced a package full of pecuniary sops, arguably with the polls in mind and in spite of the financial crisis the state is facing.

Finance minister Mr Asim Dasgupta today announced the release of two instalments of the pending DA for teachers and non-teaching staff of government-aided institutions, panchayat and municipal employees and employees of all government undertakings with effect from 1 January 2004. This will cost the exchequer Rs 30 crore and benefit 5.6 lakh people, apart from 1.8 lakh retired employees. Two installments of DA for employees directly under the state government were released in July 2003.

Another 14 per cent letters of credit (40 per cent in total) will also be released under the non-Plan head for repair work in sectors like roads, irrigation, drinking water and select fields of engineering. This would cost Rs 156 crore at the minimum, the finance minister said. Sanction for Rs 126 crore is also likely under the Plan head of state

THE MOVE

- Two instalments of pending DA for teachers and non-teaching staff of govt-aided institutions, panchayat, civic and government undertaking employees — with effect from 1 January

THE IMPACT

- To cost Rs 30 crore
- To benefit 5.6 lakh people and 1.8 lakh retired employees

Budget to facilitate the PWD's constructing new roads.

Talking about the Supreme Court ruling disqualifying teachers for gratuity, Mr Dasgupta said: "Teachers receive gratuity as per Death-cum-Retirement Benefit Rule 1985 in our state. We will not discontinue this benefit."

The minister admitted that the sops would increase pressure on the exchequer, but asserted that today's move had nothing to do with the next polls. "We had committed that we would pay two instalments of pending DA to teachers within the current fiscal, much before the polls were in the scenario," he said.

THE STATESMAN

18 JAN 2004

For Atal, April is the coolest month

BJP ends speculation on poll dates but loses PMK as a partner

Shekhar Iyer
Hyderabad, January 12

PRIME MINISTER A.B. Vajpayee on Monday decided to go for early elections to the Lok Sabha, which he hoped would be completed by April. He directed Finance Minister Jaswant Singh to seek a vote-on-account in Parliament "at an early date" to authorise public spending beyond March 31 till a new government was in place.

Vajpayee made the announcement as soon as the BJP's National Executive adopted a political resolution recommending to the government that it call elections "as early as possible".

He said, "The recent NDA meeting has authorised me to take a final decision about advancing the elections. Now the responsibility is mine. The NDA is ready. The BJP is ready. The hour of deciding has come. The decision can be only one."

BJP president Venkaiah Naidu announced that the party's campaign would begin as early as January 23, the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose.

Directing Jaswant Singh to present a vote-on-account at an early date, Vajpayee said, "I hope that a new government would be in place in April."

Parliament is likely to be convened from February 3-6 for passing the vote-on-account.

The government will begin consultations with the Election Commission in this regard very soon. The PM said, "The party has made its recommendation in unambiguous terms, that we should seek the people's renewed mandate so that we can march even more confidently towards our goal of making India a developed nation by 2020."

Jan 12
Vajpayee ends speculation on poll dates

Jan 11
PM presses early poll buzzer

Jan 10
Elections by March-end, says Mahajan

Jan 9
Mini-budget Part-II follows

Jan 8
NDA asks PM to decide on poll dates. Mini-budget Part-I offered

Jan 2
BJP will contest 350 seats, says party top brass

Dec 27
Polls can be held in May, says EC

Dec 25
BJP hints at budget skip for early polls

Dec 23
Vajpayee hints at early polls at BJP parliamentary meet

And a new govt in the same month...
But May-end or early June seems a more realistic time. A number of factors are likely to contribute

POLL ROLLS aren't ready
EC will hold elections with revised rolls. In UP alone the revision process won't be over till March 23

There aren't enough EVMs
1.5 lakh more EVMs needed. Even if the purchase proposal is cleared in January, delivery could take till April

There are election LAWS
21 days must pass between the poll notification and voting. April-end or early May seems earliest possible

And issues of LOGISTICS
3-phase polls likely. Add state polls, and the process will take 21-28 days. Probable completion in May-end

CHIEF ELECTION Commissioner J.M. Lyngdoh on Monday sidestepped questions on whether the poll panel was in a position to conduct the Lok Sabha polls by April.
The chief election commissioner then drove off without answering any more questions. "Speak to the people who are running the elections,"

PTI, New Delhi

Lyngdoh is non-committal

all sections of society," he said.
BJP general secretary Pramod Mahajan will be in charge of the party's national campaign committee, which will be set up soon.
Former Union minister V.P. Goel will head a team to mobilise resources for the elections while Law Minister Arun Jaitley will be the convener of a team that will draw up the BJP's Vision Document for the next five years.
With Rajnish Sharma

Related reports on Page 4

The BJP govt is anti-people... the time has come to overthrow it. You will get a chance to do so in the polls. I'm sure the people will give their verdict.
— Sonia Gandhi

"The situation is in our favour, we've won the confidence of our people... The BJP is ready. The hour of reckoning has come. The decision can only be one."
— Atal Bihari Vajpayee

GRAPHIC: MANOJ

13 JAN 2004

Formal decision at BJP meet likely

March to early polls

g. election 5/1 6/8
11/1/09

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, Jan. 10. — The BJP today drew curtains on speculations about possible advancement of the Lok Sabha polls as general secretary and spokesman Mr Pramod Mahajan said here that the party wanted the elections to be held in March. "Everybody in the country knows that elections are round the corner. There's no more suspense," he said at a Meet-the-Press programme.

Mr Mahajan, obviously, did not confirm reports on political calculations that had prompted the main ruling party at the Centre to advance the polls. He would only say that September, when the elections are due, "is the worst month to hold polls".

The comments came before party office-bearers met in the evening to finalise the agenda for the two-day national executive meeting, starting tomorrow, during which a formal decision on the issue may be taken.

The BJP, he said, wants elections within 45 days of the dissolution of the Lok Sabha. If the House is dissolved in the last week of January or first week of February, elections can be announced by 15 February and the process can end by March-end. "By *Makara Sankranti* (15 January), the people would know about the fate of the 13th Lok Sabha." He indicated that while March-end was the preferred time, the party was not averse to an April or a May poll.

On the Election Commission's role in announcing the poll schedule, Mr

ON DYNASTY, DR SINGH...

HYDERABAD, Jan. 10. — Mrs Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin and her ability will be a key poll issue for the BJP, Mr Pramod Mahajan said. "We've the captain and the team. We don't know who's on the other side," he said referring to confusions over who would lead a Congress-led coalition.

On Mr Somnath Chatterjee's statement that Dr Manmohan Singh could be the Congress' PM candidate, he wondered how could the Left do such a turnaround after slamming the former finance minister for his policies. On Mrs Priyanka Vadra, he said: "Some leaders are not happy with the mother, they may opt for the daughter." — SNS

Mahajan said: "It's the duty of the EC to ensure free and fair polls and also to give a popular government to the people at the earliest. The two duties are not exclusive to each other. We'll, however, not force the schedule on the EC."

Among the key issues the BJP will talk about during the campaign, the first is leadership. "We've Mr Vajpayee who is head and shoulders above other politicians of the day, whose popularity can only be compared with that of Nehru." The party will also harp on performance. "We've proved stable and have all round performance for everyone to see."

EC meets, to gear up for early polls

10/1/04
9-5-11-04
Kumar for state

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 9. — The Election Commission today directed states and Union Territories to fine-tune the poll machinery in view of possible advancement of the Lok Sabha polls, and decided to use electronic voting machines across the country.

Addressing a day-long meeting of chief electoral officers, chief election commissioner Mr JM Lyngdoh said electoral rolls should be ready by March-end. The CEOs were told that the ongoing exercise of revision of rolls should be completed within a month, and efforts should be taken to remove bogus voters from

the list by bringing transparency through gram sabhas.

Mr Lyngdoh said EVMs should be ready and placing of orders for replacements and training of staff should be over by 15 February.

The panel is also understood to have asked the CEOs to follow the model code of conduct when it comes into force. The meeting discussed steps to find alternative polling staff if teachers were not available in enough numbers for the duty, and to streamline the monitoring system of expenditure incurred by the candidates. It was also decided to set up a centralised information centre to disseminate poll-related information.



Mr JM Lyngdoh (right) and election commissioner Mr TS Krishnamurthy at Friday's meeting in New Delhi. — PTI