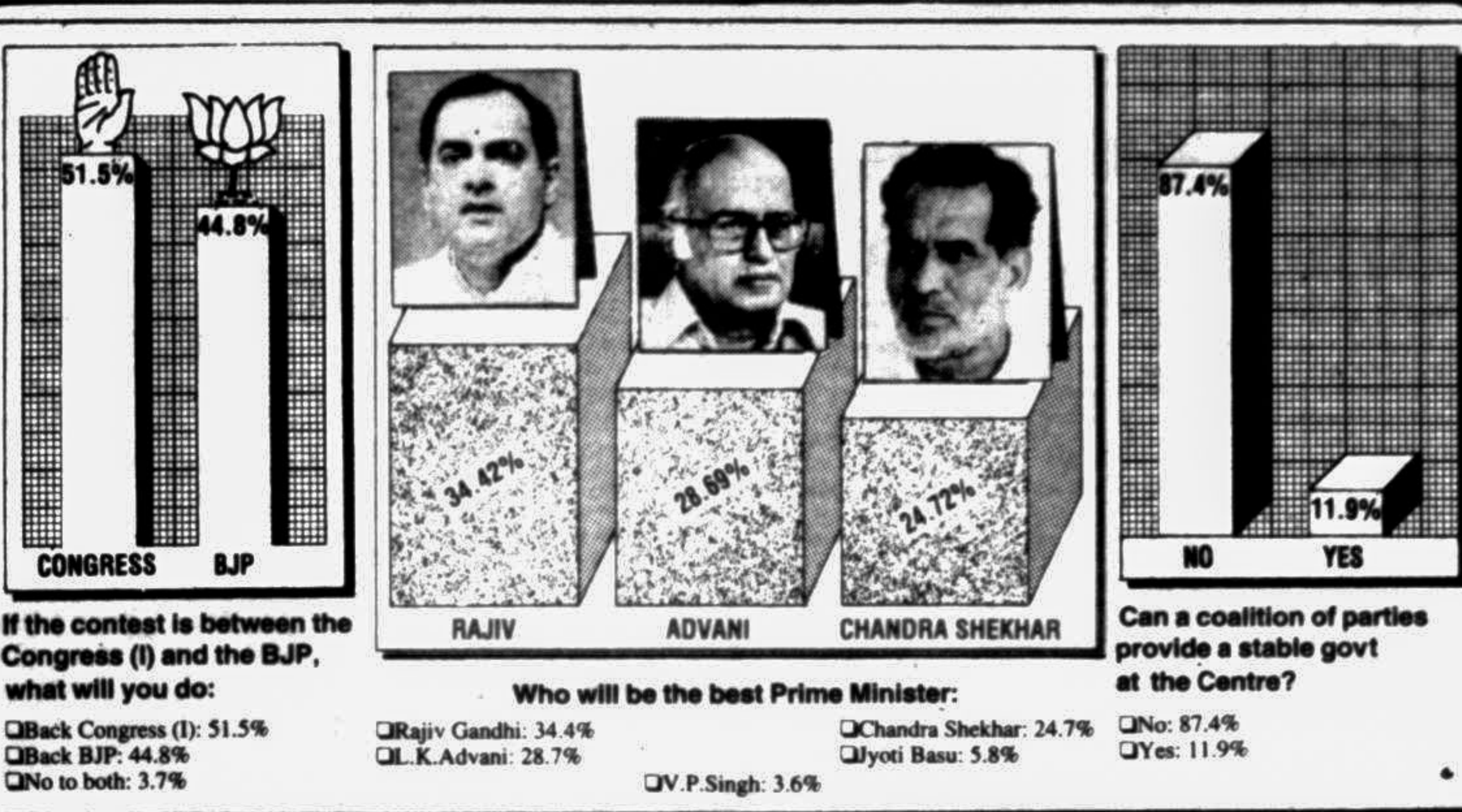


V P confident of forming govt

FATEHPUR (India), May 18: Former Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh, wrapping up his campaign for the May 20-26 Indian elections, wooed low caste Hindus and farmers today, saying he was confident of forming the next government, reports Reuter.



Calculuta: An opinion poll, conducted by leading English daily The Telegraph found Rajiv Gandhi's Congress as victor in ensuring polls.

Janata Dal loses secular character: Vajpayee

BJP fomenting communal violence, says Azad

JAIPUR, May 18: The Congress (I) General Secretary, Gulam Nabi Azad, today claimed that his party would win at least 300 Lok Sabha seats in the elections, reports Agencies.

Advani said recently, while claiming that his cadre-based, right-wing party was capable of capturing office in elections next week.

Zemin for alliance with Moscow

Chinese Communist leader Jiang Zemin said in Moscow on Friday he wanted to see a return to the Sino-Soviet alliance that existed in the 1950s before the two countries fell into bitter political rivalry, Reuter reports from Moscow.

Pretoria to crush guerilla warfare

South Africa vowed to crush any revival of urban guerilla warfare after bombers exploded two limpet mines in Johannesburg, wounding 13 people, Reuter reports from Johannesburg.

Preparation for Castro's fall

Cuban exile officials in Miami announced on Friday formation of a blue-ribbon panel to prepare plans to help the Caribbean Nation in the event Premier Fidel Castro should fall, Reuter reports from Miami.

Blasts in South Lebanon

Four people were killed when two bombs exploded inside Israel's self-declared 'Security Zone' in South Lebanon on Friday, security sources said, Reuter reports from Marjayoun.

Self-immolation in S. Korea

A young South Korean woman killed herself and a teenage high school student was rushed to hospital Saturday in two more self-immolation protests against the government of President Roh Tae-Woo, Reuter reports from Seoul.

Libya delivers 34 tanks to Lebanon

The Libyan freighter Donna Tripoli delivered 34 Soviet-made T-55 tanks to Beirut on Friday - a gift from Colonel Muammar Gaddafi to Lebanon's reviving regular army, Reuter reports from Beirut.

Caffeine helps ward off stroke effects

Caffeine in tea, coffee and cola drinks may help ward off the crippling effects of strokes, the Canadian National Research Council said on Friday, Reuter reports from Ottawa.

Nepali Congress wins absolute majority

KATHMANDU, May 18: The moderate Nepali Congress has won Nepal's first multi-party elections in 32 years, Chief Election Commissioner Surya Prasad Shrestha said today.

Israel deports 4 Palestinians from Gaza

MARJAYOUN (Lebanon), May 18: Israel deported four Palestinians today after accusing them of organising Arab resistance in the Israeli-occupied Gaza strip, security sources said, reports Reuter.

Indian Army Chief visits border Pakistan claims killing 90 Indian troops

ISLAMABAD, May 18: Pakistani troops destroyed a strategically important Indian post situated on the line of actual control in Kashmir on May 2, reports Xinhua.

18 killed in Mexican jail riot

MEXICO CITY, May 18: At least 11 people died in a riot triggered by an attempt to kill an alleged drug lord in a prison in Mexico, the government news agency Notimex said today, reports Reuter.

US to move 3,700 troops from Germany to Kuwait

WASHINGTON, May 18: A brigade of 3,700 US armoured troops will be moved from Germany to Kuwait until September while the Emirate regroups its own military in the wake of the Gulf war, the US Defence Department announced on Friday, reports Reuter.

Off the Record

Long-distance love key to healthy marriage

HONG KONG: Long-distance love produces healthy marriages, according to officials in China's special economic zone of Zhuhai, reports Reuter.

Saudi buys the largest sapphire

GENEVA: The largest sapphire ever put on auction was purchased Thursday night by a Saudi businessman for 2.3 million dollars, more than twice the pre-sale estimate, reports AP.



Egg-thrower resigns

BONN: Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who had to be restrained from attacking egg-throwing demonstrators in East Germany last week, said Friday it was fortunate that a police barrier had prevented him from getting at them, reports Reuter.

So many shoes only to promote industry

MANILA: Former First Lady Imelda Marcos says she collected thousands of shoes to promote the Philippines' footwear industry, and now is living on friends' charity, reports AFP.