

# Biharis show India's way

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Bihar election has been dubbed by many as a referendum of his government.

Indian media both television channels and newspapers have therefore been carrying out post-mortem of the battle's outcomes since Sunday with determination of the results.

Some Indian media in the last two days listed a number of reasons for the humiliating defeat of the BJP and a stunning win for the Grand Alliance-led by Nitish Kumar and Lalu Prasad Yadav.

Their analyses have pointed out BJP leaders' communal and arrogant remarks they have made in the run up to the elections.

The issue of intolerance has dominated the national debate during the five-phase elections in Bihar. A large number of artists writers and others have returned their awards to protest against what they called an "atmosphere of rising intolerance" in the country, reports The New Indian Express.

"Amid growing countrywide concern over rising intolerance and Hindu hardliners running amok, Mr Modi and Mr Shah raised the sensitive issue of cow slaughter and consumption of beef- the cow is regarded as sacred but polarizes the opinion in Hindu-majority India," says BBC in a report.

The way the BJP leadership had campaigned it was clear that it tried to overcome the caste configuration of the Grand Alliance with Hindu consolidation by invoking the beef controversy.

BJP chief Amit Shah's remarks firecrackers would be burst in Pakistan if it were to lose in Bihar were also part of the campaign to gain Hindu majority.

ZEE News in a report says relatively insignificant party leaders have made a huge dent on BJP's image by making series of controversial statements. The party leadership -- at least in public -- has been reluctant to take action against such leaders, it continues.

India TV in a report echoes the same views of Zee news and says intemperate language of some of the BJP leaders seems to have backfired.

For example, some media mentioned remarks of Union Minister VK Singh's remarks he mad after tragic death of two kids.

The children -- two-and-a-half-year-old Vaibhav and 11-month-old Divya -- had died after their house was set on fire, allegedly by members of an upper caste community at a village in Haryana near Delhi at the fag end of October this year. Their father, who sustained burn injuries to save them, said petrol was poured through the window and the house was set on

fire.

Union Minister General VK Singh said the government cannot be held responsible for the murder of the two Dalit children in Haryana. And in an afterthought that landed him in controversy, added, "If someone throws stones at a dog, the government is not responsible".

His remarks sparked huge controversy and protests. The opposition demanded his resignation and registration of a case against him under the SC/ST Act for allegedly using "casteist" and "inhumane" remarks.

Reports of Zee News and India TV say RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's comment on the need of rethinking over caste-based reservations was a key issue during the election.

According to the New Indian Express the polarization debate is also said to have consolidated minority votes in favour of Grand Alliance.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's inability to rein in loud mouths in the party and RSS and the national debate on intolerance has also been listed by Zee News as one of the factors for the BJP's defeat.

Times of India in report listed 10 reasons for the Grand Alliance's victory. One of the reasons point out about trust deficit between Muslims and the BJP. It says there are 15 percent Muslims in Bihar and they were always going to be a challenge for the BJP.

The division of Muslim votes was a big plus for the BJP during the 2014 general elections. However, the coming together of Lalu Prasad and Nitish Kumar helped consolidate the Muslim vote and acted as a force-multiplier in the assembly elections. Moreover, incidents like the Dadri lynching and other rows over beef, may have further motivated Muslims to vote against the BJP," says Times of India.

Popularity of incumbent Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, BJP's failure to project a CM candidate and its lack of leadership has also been cited as reasons for the win and defeat.

Zee News says the BJP's campaign was centred around one man -- Narendra Modi. It may be the same for the Mahagathbandhan as Nitish Kumar was clearly its face.

"But there was one big difference -- Modi is Prime Minister and would go back to Delhi after polls but Nitish Kumar was the Chief Minister and will continue to be in Patna. The lack of a credible CM candidate appears to have cost the BJP dear," says Zee News.

In the electioneering the slogan of the Grand Alliance "Bahari versus Bihari" drew attention. The "outsider" campaign stuck, particularly as it was just Modi and Amit Shah

whose hoardings were put up and only as an afterthought were other leaders given any space.

**SETBACK FOR MODI: US MEDIA**  
BJP's defeat by Nitish Kumar-led coalition was widely reported by the mainstream US media, most of whom carried reports filed by news agencies.

"India's ruling party accepts loss in crucial state elections," The Washington Post said in its headline.

The New York Times in its story titled "Modi concedes party's defeat in Assembly elections for key State said the Prime Minister "suffered a serious political setback" and it deprives the BJP of a "vital location" form which to spread its political dominance into northeast India including the large state of West Bengal.

The Wall Street Journal felt BJP's loss to rival Janata Dal (United) is a "major blow" that could undermine Modi's economic agenda.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party suffered a defeat in pivotal state elections, a political blow that could make it harder for his government to move ahead with its economic agenda," the financial daily reported.

"Whether the bruising defeat will prompt a change in the tone or tack from the Modi administration, beyond a possible cabinet reshuffle, is the hotly debated question," the popular National Public Radio said.

## CHALLENGES AHEAD

The BJP needed a win in Bihar to boost PM Modi's chances of building the parliamentary strength he needs to push through key reforms. The government is in a minority in the Rajya Sabha, upper House of the parliament, which is selected on the basis of parties' strength in state assemblies.

The Bihar loss has dashed the BJP's hopes of increasing its tally in Rajya Sabha, where the NDA has less than 60 lawmakers in a House of 250. Bihar will send 10 lawmakers to Rajya Sabha between 2016 and 2018, says NDT reports.

The loss is also expected to place a question mark on PM Modi's capability to lead the party in states where the BJP faces structured alliances. He was the face of the NDA campaign and had addressed nearly 30 rallies in Bihar, it continues.

The Bihar results will have impact on the five crucial upcoming state elections in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Assam to be held in 2016.

BJP Parliamentary Board has started analysing the reasons for the defeat.

"We try to learn from every election. Give us some time. We will take corrective measures," BJP leader Ram Madhav said on Sunday.

Cabinet Secretary Shafiqul said an amendment has been incorporated in the law to replace the words "political party" with "registered political party".

The meeting gave the nod to the draft of the Insurance Corporation Act-2015.

About the trial in Rajon and Rakib murder cases, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina told the cabinet that the sensational cases should be disposed of promptly as delay in trials deprived people of justice, said ministry sources.

Migrant rights groups said there were flaws in the existing labour recruitment system which resulted in labour abuses.

## OTHER MEETING ISSUES

The cabinet yesterday also approved the draft of the Local Government (Municipality) (Amendment) Act-2015. Under the proposed law, a

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## recruitment.

However, Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agency (Baira) opposed the move saying that Synerflux would "monopolise" the recruitment.

"We want that all the recruiting agencies would be involved in the recruitment," Baira President Abul Basher told The Daily Star.

Although the name of Synerflux was not mentioned in the draft of the G2G Plus deal, it stated that a Malaysian outsourcing company would manage the recruitment, said ministry sources.

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## KL defers new deal

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the next three years.

According to the draft of the Government-to-Government Plus (G2G Plus) MoU, Malaysia would employ Bangladeshi workers in construction, plantation, industries and service sectors.

Currently, it recruits Bangladeshis only for plantation sector under the G2G system. Some 10,000 were hired in the last two years.

Following the declaration in June, several Malaysian companies allegedly lobbied the two governments to win contracts for management and monitoring of the recruitment system, according to media reports.

There were complaints that relatives of Malaysian ministers were backing the companies. Malaysian outsourcing firm Synerflux was short-listed by Malaysian government for processing workers'

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