

STATE ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS IN INDIA

BJP's invincible image gets tainted

AGENCIES

BJP has failed to breach Mamata Banerjee's fortress in West Bengal and drew a blank in Kerala in the latest state assembly polls.

But the wins in Assam and Puducherry have failed to cover its huge embarrassment in West Bengal.

The relentless campaign and heated war of words for the last one year by Team Modi-Shah, effectively made the West Bengal polls a national election.

Considering BJP's incredible performance in 2019, where it more than doubled its vote-share and ended up just 3 percent behind the Trinamool, most of the pundits felt that the BJP could improve its tally in the assembly polls.

As it turns out, not only did the BJP not manage to consolidate on its 2019 gains, it failed to even hold on to that vote share. Despite all its money power, its dominance over both mainstream and social media, its heavy-hitting leaders, its attempts at polarisation, the party couldn't even improve on what it had achieved two years ago.

Has the Modi government's poor performance with the deadly second wave of Covid made it lose ground amongst Bengal's voters? Or the Bengal rejected the divisive tactics by the ruling party?

In the major reasons for its failure to win, BJP leaders point out that the lack of a local face as a chief ministerial candidate



Supporters of Chief Minister of West Bengal state and the Chief of Trinamool Congress (TMC) Mamata Banerjee celebrate after the initial poll results, amidst the spread of the Covid-19, in Kolkata, India, yesterday.

PHOTO: REUTERS

hurt them, but more importantly an over dependence on TMC defectors for both organisational heft and as candidates didn't go down well with the electorate.

Heavyweights like Rathin Chakraborti, Baishali Dalmiya, Prabir Kumar Ghosal who switched tents before the election failed in the voting contest.

The answer is not clear at moment as details of the voting haven't been released

yet. But it gives a clear signal to institutions across the country that Team Modi is not invincible.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya credited Mamata for the TMC's astounding performance in Bengal elections, and said his party would introspect the poll results.

"The TMC won because of Mamata Banerjee. It seems people have chosen Didi. We will introspect what went wrong, whether it was organisational issues, lack of face, insider-outsider debate. We will see

what went wrong," he said.

And challenges for the BJP are, now, both organisational and existential.

In Assam for example, the BJP's victory has thrown up the interesting conundrum of just who should be the new chief minister — sitting Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal or Health and Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who is the BJP's power house in the northeast holding its alliances in several States together, and managed to steer the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests away from politically harming the BJP in the State.

Senior party leaders have been saying that the party's parliamentary board will be taking a view on the matter, meaning that a question mark is hanging on the issue.

The big issue, however, is more deep, and that has to do with the gigantic second wave of Covid-19 that is battering India. And while the jury is still out whether the second wave of Covid-19 and the long drawn out polling schedule had a bearing on the TMC victory and the BJP's loss, next year's electoral calendar is looming large.

Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh, two States that are being battered by the pandemic and a health and governance infrastructure that is tottering and failing are scheduled to go to polls next year. Both are states that have sitting BJP governments, and the party's own fortresses will be under siege.

Tamil Nadu: DMK unseats AIADMK

Ruling LDF set to retain Kerala; BJP fails to win a single seat

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The opposition DMK-Congress alliance was heading for a big win in the 234-member Tamil Nadu assembly, according to polls results.

Till filing this report, the DMK and its allies were leading in 149 seats including Congresses 16. The ruling AIADMK was leading in 85 seats including its alliance partners PMK and BJP (3). The majority mark stands at 118.

The DMK has not been in power in the state for a decade, and this time the party and the AIADMK are contesting without their towering leaders, J Jayalalitha and M Karunanidhi whose deaths have brought a huge change in the political landscape.

Tamil Nadu's most iconic leaders J Jayalalitha died in 2016, and M Karunanidhi in 2018. Their absence has left a huge political vacuum that many have raced to fill.

"This has been an unprecedented election because of the pandemic. We are watching closely and frankly expected to perform better than what we are seeing so far," DMK's Manu Sundaram told NDTV.

"The people saw this election as a choice between the BJP and BJP-controlled alliances and that of the DMK, which stands to oppose the BJP and its ideology," he added.

The ruling CPI(M)-led LDF is set for a historic return to power, trends from the Election Commission at 6:00 pm show. Out of the 140 Assembly seats, the LDF is currently leading in 97 seats out of which it has won many. The Opposition UDF, which won 47 seats, is down by four seats. The BJP, which had one seat in the outgoing Assembly, is not likely to have an MLA in the Assembly.

By getting re-elected, the LDF is all set to make history by becoming the first state government in Kerala in the last 40 years to buck the trend of the state unseating an incumbent government in every five years. In the assembly elections in 2016, the LDF had bagged 91 seats.

Mutations may 'evade immune response'

India experts tell gov't

REUTERS, New Delhi

A forum of scientific advisers set up by the Indian government has told authorities about minor mutations in some samples of the coronavirus that could "possibly evade immune response" and require more study, a leader of the forum has told Reuters.

However the advisers said while they were flagging the mutations, there was no reason currently to believe they were expanding or could be dangerous.

Scientists are studying what led to the current surge in cases in India and particularly whether a variant first detected in the country, called B.1.617, is to blame. The forum of advisers, known as the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genetics Consortium, or INSACOG, has now found more mutations in the coronavirus that it thinks need to be tracked closely.

'Let us stand united'

Karen rebels urge other ethnic armies to unite against Myanmar junta; 7 more killed in anti-coup protest crackdown

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A prominent rebel group in eastern Myanmar yesterday appealed to other ethnic armies to unite against the military, as the country enters its fourth month under a junta regime.

Myanmar has been in turmoil since civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi was deposed in a February 1 coup, triggering a mass uprising across the country that killed more than 750 people.

Security forces yesterday opened fire on some of the biggest protests against military rule in days on yesterday killing seven people, media reported.

The protests, after a spell of dwindling crowds and what appeared to be more restraint by the security forces, were coordinated with demonstrations in Myanmar communities around the world to mark what organisers called "the global Myanmar spring revolution".

As security forces have deployed deadly violence against civilians to suppress a persistent anti-junta movement, some of Myanmar's myriad ethnic armies have spoken out against the military.

Among the most prominent opponents is the Karen National Union (KNU), which has admitted offering shelter to fleeing dissidents



in the territory they control along Myanmar's eastern border.

Clashes have escalated in Karen state between the KNU's fighters and the military. Yesterday -- after five days of air raids by military -- the vice chief of staff for the KNU's armed wing wrote an open letter calling for all ethnic Karen fighters to unite, regardless of their loyalties.

"Never has there been such a great opportunity during the 70-plus years of revolution. Take advantage of this and fight against the Burmese military dictatorship," said Lieutenant General Baw Kyaw Heh.

"In our generation, let us stand united... to escape the military dictatorship."

Baw Kyaw Heh also called for unity among ethnic Karen fighters in the Border Guards Forces (BGF) -- a subdivision of Myanmar's military made up of former ethnic insurgents.

Myanmar has more than 20 ethnic rebel groups, many of whom hold territories in the country's border regions. A messy struggle over autonomy, control of drug production and natural resources has long pitted them against each other and the military.

Sonowal or Sarma?

BJP in a fix over Assam leadership after polls win

AGENCIES

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its regional allies are set to retain power in Assam, overcoming the challenge of a combined opposition led by Congress.

The ruling BJP-led NDA is surging ahead of the Grand Alliance spearheaded by the Congress, and is inching closer to another victory, as per the data available on the Election Commission website. Assam has a 126-member assembly and 64 seats are needed for a simple majority.

The ruling BJP-led NDA in Assam has won 48 seats and is leading in 24 assembly seats, while the Grand Alliance led by the Congress has won 24 seats and is leading in 27 seats.

Despite the BJP's expected win in Assam, it seems the party is not going to have an easy time deciding its chief minister



nominee. Usually, the BJP projects an incumbent chief minister in places where it is trying to retain power, but it has not announced Sarbanand Sonowal as its chief ministerial candidate in Assam.

While Sonowal, who enjoys a clean image, managed to beat the so-called fatigue against his incumbent government, Himanta Biswa Sarma has also emerged as the face of the BJP in the last few years. His management of the Covid-19 situation and his leadership as the finance minister have helped the BJP secure a clear lead over the Congress-led combine in the state.

Sarma is considered the backbone of the BJP in the northeast region and believed to enjoy Amit Shah's confidence when it comes to the party's affairs in the region.

Office of the Superintending Engineer Chattogram PWD Circle-1. e-Tender Notice. e-Tender is invited in the National e-GP System Portal. Tender ID: 574736. Name of works: Establishment of Modern Microbiology Laboratory with PCR in Chattogram Medical College Hospital under the project of COVID-19 Emergency Response and Pandemic Preparedness.



Biden policy shows hostile US intent

Says North Korea, vows response

REUTERS, Seoul

North Korea lashed out at the United States and its allies in South Korea yesterday in a series of statements saying recent comments from Washington are proof of a hostile policy that requires a corresponding response from Pyongyang.

The statements, carried on state news agency KCNA, come after the White House on Friday said US officials had completed a months-long review of North Korean policy, and underscore the challenges US President Joe Biden faces as he seeks to distance his approach from the failures of his predecessors.

In one statement, a Foreign Ministry spokesman accused Washington of insulting the dignity of the country's supreme leadership by criticizing North Korea's human rights situation. The human rights criticism is a provocation that shows the United States is "girding itself up for an all-out showdown" with North Korea, and will be answered accordingly, the unnamed spokesman said.

In a separate statement, Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the Department of US Affairs of the Foreign Ministry, cited Biden's first policy speech to Congress on Wednesday, where the new president said nuclear programs in North Korea and Iran posed threats that would be addressed through "diplomacy and stern deterrence."

Kwon said it is illogical and an encroachment upon North Korea's right to self-defence for the United States to call its defensive deterrence a threat. "His statement clearly reflects his intent to keep enforcing the hostile policy toward the DPRK as it had been done by the US for over half a century," he said, using the initials for North Korea's official name.

Kwon said US talk of diplomacy is aimed at covering up its hostile acts, and its deterrence is just a means for posing nuclear threats to North Korea.

Now that Biden's policy has become clear, North Korea "will be compelled to press for corresponding measures, and with time the US will find itself in a very grave situation," he concluded.

গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার. বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়. কক্সবাজার দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ. www.forestsouth.coxsazar.gov.bd. মোঃ হুমায়ুন কবীর. পরিচিতি নং-১৩১৫৯. বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তা. কক্সবাজার দক্ষিণ বন বিভাগ. ফোনঃ ০৩৪১-৬২০৯৫. ই-মেইল নং: dfocoxsazarsouth@gmail.com

খুলনা প্রকৌশল ও প্রযুক্তি বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়. খুলনা-৯২০৩. ভর্তি বিজ্ঞপ্তি. অত্র বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়ের পোস্ট গ্রাজুয়েট প্রোগ্রামে (এম.এস.সি. ইঞ্জি/এমইউআরপি/এম.এস.সি./এম.ফিল ও পি-এইচ.ডি) ২০২১ শিক্ষাবর্ষের জুলাই সেমিস্টারে সিলেব ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ইলেকট্রিক্যাল এন্ড ইলেকট্রনিক ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, মেকানিক্যাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, কম্পিউটার সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ইলেকট্রনিক্স এন্ড কমিউনিকেশন ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, ইন্ডাস্ট্রিয়াল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং এন্ড ম্যানেজমেন্ট, এনার্জি সায়েন্স এন্ড ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, বায়োমেডিক্যাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, আরবান এন্ড রিজিওনাল প্ল্যানিং, লেদার ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং, গণিত, রসায়ন এবং পদার্থ বিজ্ঞান বিভাগে Online এর মাধ্যমে ছাত্র-ছাত্রী ভর্তি জন নিম্নবর্ণিত শর্তে বাংলাদেশের প্রকৃত নাগরিকদের নিকট হতে নির্ধারিত বরমে দরখাস্ত আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।