

Modi Poised For 3rd Term With NDA Support After BJP Loses Majority

INDIA Bloc Pulls Off Stunning Fightback



Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was on Tuesday poised to form the government for a third consecutive term notwithstanding crushing losses in three Hindi heartland states after a bitterly fought election that was projected as a referendum on his popularity. The Bharatiya Janata Party, whose candidates had contested in the name of Modi, won or was

ahead in 240 seats and will fall short of the 272 majority mark and need the support of allies in the party-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) for government formation, a far cry from the 303 and 282 seats it had won in 2019 and 2014 respectively to have a majority on its own.

With support from BJP's key allies N Chandrababu Naidu's TDP and Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which were leading or [More on P10](#)

Unprecedented Moment In India's History: PM

Says India Will Write Fresh Chapter Of Big Decisions In Our 3rd Term

AGENCIES

Preparing to take office for a record third consecutive term, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday pledged to work with all states, regardless of the party in power, to build a developed India.

In his first speech after the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Modi laid out his vision for the third term saying it would be a tenure of big decisions and key emphasis would be on uprooting corruption.

"The fight against corruption is becoming tougher by the day. Corruption is being shamelessly glorified for political interest. In our third term, NDA will focus a lot on rooting out corruption of all kinds," Modi said.

Modi's speech did not refer to its reduced numbers in Parliament but focused on the [More on P10](#)

NC, BJP Secure 2 Seats Each, Er Rashid Triumphs In Baramulla



Observer News Service

Srinagar: The poll results of three important Lok Sabha seats declared on Tuesday sprang a big surprise with the jailed leader Er Rashid turning tables around by emerging as a 'Giant Killer'. Er Rashid defeated National Conference stalwart and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone with a huge margin of over two lakh votes.

On the other hand, NC

big-wig Mian Alaf Ahmed defeated Mehbooba Mufti with a huge margin of 2.80 lakh votes on Anantnag-Rajouri LS seat. Though the former chief ministers faced a brutal defeat in the 18th Lok Sabha elections, two National Conference (NC) candidates on Tuesday recorded a thumping win while an independent candidate and a jailed leader from north Kashmir, Engineer Abdul Rashid Sheikh turned the tables by emerging victorious. From Srinagar [More on P10](#)

VOTE SHARE IN 6 LS SEATS OF J&K AND LADAKH

SRINAGAR LS SEAT

Aga Syed Ruhullah (NC): 3, 56,866
Waheedur Rehman (PDP): 1, 68,450
Ashraf Mir (Apni Party): 65,954
NC's winning margin: 1,88,416

ANANTNAG

Mian Altaf Ahmad (NC): 5,21,836
Mehbooba Mufti (PDP): 2,40,042
Zaffar Iqbal (Apni Party): 1,42,195
NC's winning margin: 2,81,794

BARAMULLA

Engineer Rashid (Ind): 4,72,481
Omar Abdullah (NC): 2,68,339
Sajad Lone (PC): 1,73,239
Mir Mohammad Fayaz (PDP): 27,488
Rashid's winning margin: 2,04,142

UDHAMPUR

Dr Jitendra Singh (BJP): 5,71,076
Ch Lal Singh (INC): 4,46,703
GM Saroori (DPAP): 39,599
BJP's winning margin: 1,24,373

JAMMU

Jugal Kishore (BJP): 6,87,588
Raman Bhalla (INC): 5,52,090
BJP's winning margin: 1,35,498

LADAKH

Mohmad Haneefa (Ind): 65,259 votes
Tsering Namgyal (INC): 37,397 votes
Tashi Gyalson (BJP): 31,956 votes
Haneefa's winning margin: 27,862 votes

Hat-trick For BJP In Jammu, Udhampur

For the third consecutive time, people of Jammu region have reposed faith in Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) by giving thumping victory in both Jammu and Udhampur parliamentary [More on P10](#)

Setback For Former CMs Omar, Mehbooba

The defeat in Lok Sabha polls has come as a setback for the political careers of former chief ministers Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti in view of their vows [More on P10](#)

'Approaching Former Partners' INDIA Bloc To Take Call Today: Rahul

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The INDIA bloc will meet and decide on Wednesday whether to approach former partners such as the JD(U) and the TDP to attempt government formation at the Centre, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said.

"We are going to have a meeting with our partners tomorrow. These questions will be raised and answered there," Gandhi told a press conference here when asked if the Congress and its allies will approach parties that are part of the NDA to try and form a government.

He was addressing the press conference with senior Congress leaders as the Lok Sabha poll results and trends showed the BJP was set to become the single-largest party but would fall short of the magic figure of 272.

"We won't say anything without asking the opinion of our



allies. Our alliance will decide tomorrow and whatever they decide we will act on that," Gandhi said.

The Congress leader said the general election was a fight to save the Constitution.

"It was on my mind that the people of this country would rally together to save the Constitution. The first and biggest step towards saving the Constitution has been taken," he said, adding [More on P10](#)

The 'Pressure Cooker' Whistled! But Who Is Jailed Er Rashid?

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Omar Abdullah, former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, on Tuesday, June 4, conceded defeat to his nearest rival and independent candidate Sheikh Abdul Rashid alias Engineer Rashid in the Baramulla seat in the Lok Sabha elections 2024.

Engineer Rashid is languishing in Delhi's Tihar Jail for the last five years in a terror funding case.

Rashid, a former two-time MLA who heads the Awami Ittehad Party, was one of 22 candidates in the fray from Baramulla.

Rashid was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2019 on charges of terror-funding



activities, becoming the first mainstream leader to be held under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

In his absence, Rashid's

two sons- Abrar Rashid and Asrar Rashid- led his poll campaign, drawing massive crowds, especially youth, across North Kashmir. Their confidence [More on P10](#)

Can Rashid Take Oath While In Jail?

Agencies

The recent Lok Sabha elections of 2024 have brought an unusual and intriguing scenario into the limelight, with two jailed candidates, Abdul Rashid Sheikh from Baramulla constituency and Amritpal Singh from Khadoor Sahib seat, emerging victorious. In fact, Engineer Rashid has defeated former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah by a very comfortable margin.

This situation raises several questions. Will they have to give up their [More on P10](#)

'Campaign Cost Rs 27K': Son Of Rashid

It cost only Rs 27,000 to campaign and defeat National Conference leader and former chief minister Omar Abdullah from the Baramulla seat, said 22-year-old Abrar Rashid, son of jailed leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid who is leading by over 4 lakh votes. "The mandate is the victory of the people," said Abrar.

Omar Abdullah conceded defeat as the counting of votes was still underway. He said the voters have spoken and in a democracy that is all that matters. "I think it's time to accept the inevitable. Congratulations to Engineer Rashid for his victory in North Kashmir," Mr Abdullah said in a post on X. "I don't [More on P10](#)

NEET-UG Results Announced

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The results for the medical entrance exam NEET-UG have been announced, the National Testing Agency (NTA) said on Tuesday.

"The results are live, candidates can check through the website. The details of top scorers and qualifying candidates will be available shortly," a senior NTA official said.

This year, a record 23 lakh candidates registered for the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test-Undergraduate (NEET-UG), of whom over 10 lakh were male students, over 13 lakh were female and 24 under the third gender category.

Region-wise, Uttar Pradesh had registered the highest number of candidates at 3,39,125, followed by Maharashtra at 2,79,904 and Rajasthan at 1,96,139. Tamil Nadu saw 1,55,216 registrations and Karnataka 1,54,210.

In 2023, a total of 20,87,449 candidates had registered for NEET-UG and the [More on P10](#)

From Tragedy To Controversy: Ruhullah's Rise As A Politician

Syed Mohammad Burhan

Srinagar: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference senior leader Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi has bagged the coveted Srinagar parliamentary constituency.

Mehdi amassed a total vote count of 356866 to feature on the top. The senior politician is followed by Waheedur-Rehman who has a total of 168450 votes, Mohammad Ashraf with 65954 and Amir Ahmad Bhat with 15104.

Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, who has become the first-time MP from the Srinagar parliamentary constituency, is a native of central Kashmir's Budgam district.

Ruhulla succeeded his father Aga Syed Mehdi, a prominent



Shia leader of Budgam who was assassinated on 3 November 2000, in a powerful IED blast on the way to Magam along with his three security personnel and two supporters at Kanihama-Magam road, Central Budgam.

An alumnus of the Tyndale Biscoe School, Ruhullah went to Aligarh for further studies but had to leave [More on P10](#)

'Will Strive For What Was Snatched From Us In 2019'

MAJID NABI

Following his resounding victory in the Srinagar parliamentary constituency on Tuesday, National Conference candidate Syed Aga Ruhullah said that he will spare no effort to have the special status and statehood to Jammu and Kashmir restored. Ruhullah promised to uphold the people's mandate and work towards realizing their wishes. He also expressed his heartfelt gratitude [More on P10](#)

Independent Haneefa Wrests Ladakh From BJP



Agencies

Srinagar: In a setback to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Ladakh, a rebel National Conference leader and Independent candidate Mohmad Haneefa Jan won the Parliamentary constituency seat defeating his nearest Congress candidate Tsering Namgyal by a margin of 27,862 votes.

This was the first Lok Sabha

election after Ladakh was carved out as a separate Union territory in August 2019.

According to the officials Haneefa, defeated his nearest rival Tsering Namgyal of Congress and Tashi Gyalson of BJP in a triangular contest. Haneefa wrested the seat from BJP.

The winning candidate Haneefa bagged 65,259 votes, while [More on P10](#)

BJP Gets Majority Share Of Votes In J&K

Press Trust Of India

Jammu: The BJP, which is maintaining leads on two Lok Sabha seats in Jammu and Udhampur in Jammu and Kashmir, bagged the highest share of more than 24 per cent votes, as per data of Election Commission of India (ECI).

Even as the counting is in its final phase, the BJP got 24.36 per cent (12,44,404) vote share, followed by the National Conference (NC), which is leading the Anantnag and Srinagar Lok Sabha seats in the Kashmir region, got 22.30 per cent votes share (11,39,084 votes).

The Congress, which is contesting against the BJP on two seats of Jammu and Udhampur, got 19.38 per cent vote share (99, 0182), followed by Independents getting a



vote share of 23.94 per cent (12,23,161 votes). The PDP got 8.48 vote share (4,33,049 votes), it said. However, as compared to 2019, the BJP got lesser vote share. As per the ECI data, the BJP has received 46.39 per cent vote share by securing 16,48,041 votes out of total 3,479,155 votes polled in [More on P10](#)



Why, For Some, Psychotherapy Might Be A Better Treatment For Depression Than Drugs

The Conversation

During a psychotherapy session, one of my patients reported to me that the antidepressants he'd been prescribed by his GP had "killed his desire". He felt "dead inside", he told me. Unfortunately, this wasn't an isolated case. I've heard similar descriptions of the effects of antidepressants from many patients. Many say they feel like "zombies".

However, some patients report that these drugs are helpful - even essential - in the management of their mental health.

Antidepressants, known as selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs), and popular anti-anxiety medication benzodiazepines can offer a sense of hope to those suffering with debilitating mental health issues.

They can also help patients to foster a sense of confidence, optimism and belief in their own ability

to recover. Some patients feel that the medication functions as a "stepping-stone" to improved health.

Other patients complain that the side effects of the medication, which can include nausea, headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, fatigue, agitation, nervousness and weakness, can be worse than the symptoms of depression and anxiety. Many of these adverse effects are well documented by the pharmaceutical industry and written in small print in medication guidelines. But they are often not communicated by the doctor prescribing them.

Some of these side effects will wear off after a few weeks or months of taking the medication. However, others such as author and psychiatrist David Healy argue that it can radically reduce patients' quality of life.

Some of the less common - but more extreme - side effects, for example, have attracted controversy and criticism. Patients have reported



ed insomnia, sexual dysfunction, anorexia, hallucinations and suicidal thoughts. Some antidepressant drugs carry a "black box warning" about increased risk of suicide while using the medication.

It's imperative that patients are fully informed of potential risks and side effects and closely monitored for behavioural changes. Research shows that less than 1%

of the patients studied "had been told anything about withdrawal effects or dependence" by the person prescribing the medication.

While studies demonstrate that some antidepressants and anti-anxiety drugs are addictive, pharmaceutical companies insist that habit may be mistaken for dependence.

These medications are recom-

mended for short periods of up to six months - but patients can be left on them for years. Some patients report that they've had no consultations with their doctor about dose reduction or end of treatment plan.

In most cases, it's not beneficial for patients to be on antidepressants indefinitely so a plan to manage the body's withdrawal from the drug is essential. Withdrawal side effects from antidepressants can include dizziness, vertigo, flu-like symptoms, lethargy and sleep disturbances. There are also reports of psychological disturbances including anxiety, agitation, crying spells and irritability.

Doctors can interpret the effects of withdrawal from antidepressant medication as returning depression symptoms, and put clients back on medication - and, in some cases, even increase it. The patient, then, can feel caught in a cycle of symp-

toms, side effects, sickness, and medication adjustments.

While patient experience of antidepressants and anti-anxiety medication differs, what's certain is that prescriptions for these drugs is increasing alongside rising rates of mental health diagnoses. While this is making psychopharmacology one of the most lucrative and profitable industries in the world, it's a situation that concerns some medical professionals.

For example, Joanna Moncrieff, a professor of critical and social psychiatry, argues that depression diagnoses are designed to not only monitor and control behaviour but also legitimise pharmacological treatment.

Consultant psychiatrist Stephen Stahl suggests that it is not possible for some of these drugs to act on particular neurotransmitters, arguing that they "must act everywhere". Stahl suggests that side effects are the "cost of doing business."

Mediterranean Diet May Lower Risk Of Death In Women, Finds Study

Press Trust Of India

Women consuming the largely plant-based Mediterranean diet were found to be at a 23 per cent lower risk of dying prematurely, according to a new research.

The study following more than 25,000 US women for up to 25 years found that adhering to the diet reduced cholesterol, obesity and insulin resistance, all of which are known risk factors for developing metabolic disorders, including diabetes and heart disease.

The Mediterranean diet is rich in nuts, fruits and vegetables, along with whole grains and legumes. The dishes are mainly cooked in olive oil and also include a moderate intake of fish, poultry, dairy and eggs. Red meat and sweets are rarely consumed.

Adopting this diet pattern was also found to lower risk of death due to cancer in the women studied. The findings were published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA).



"Our research provides significant public health insight: even modest changes in established risk factors for metabolic diseases can yield substantial long-term benefits from following a Mediterranean diet. This finding underscores the potential of encouraging healthier dietary habits to reduce the overall risk of mortality," said lead author Shafiqat Ahmad, a researcher at the Division of Preventive Medicine,

Brigham and Women's Hospital, US.

The researchers included participants aged at least 45 years at the start of the Women's Health Study. The women responded to questionnaires and provided information on their weight, height and body mass index, along with details about their lifestyle, medical and social history. Their blood pressures were also taken.

For understanding possible biological mechanisms that could

explain the diet's health benefits, the researchers assessed over 30 biomarkers of metabolism and inflammation, including lipids and insulin resistance.

"In this large-scale cohort study of 25,315 initially healthy US women who were followed up for 25 years, we observed that higher adherence to the Mediterranean diet was associated with a 23 per cent relative risk reduction in all-cause mortality," the authors wrote.

The researchers acknowledged that the study was limited to middle aged and older well-educated female health professionals who were predominantly non-Hispanic and white.

However, the study's strengths included its large sample size and a long follow-up duration, they said.

"The health benefits of the Mediterranean diet are recognised by medical professionals, and our study offers insights into why the diet may be so beneficial," said senior author Samia Mora, a cardiologist and the director of the Center for Lipid Metabolomics, Brigham and Women's Hospital.

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No Celebrations At NC Headquarters After Omar's Defeat

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Unlike 2019, the Central office of National Conference Nawa-e-Subh wore a deserted look on Tuesday as there were no celebrations due to the defeat faced by the party's vice president Omar Abdullah from north Kashmir seat.

As per details gathered by KNO, the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) headquarters at Nawa-e-Subh remained silent and no celebration was seen despite the party winning two seats in the 2024 Indian parliament election—Srinagar and Anantnag-Rajouri.

After the announcement of NC former chief minister candidate Omar Abdullah's defeat from Baramulla, a

pall of gloom descended on the NC headquarters.

The National Conference won all three seats from Kashmir in 2019 and the party headquarters at Nawa-e-Subh celebrated the success in a grand way. However, this time, despite winning two seats, the headquarters remained silent.

Lastly, the victory of jailed leader Engineer Rashid from Baramulla coupled with Omar's defeat has cast a pall of silence over Nawa-e-Subh. Meanwhile, Omar Abdullah, in an earlier press briefing, said he intended to speak to the media after receiving his winning certificate from Baramulla, but as fate would have it, it was not to be. He accepted the people's verdict.

Mumps A Viral Disease, Vaccination Imperative: Doctors

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Mumps is a viral infection primarily affecting the salivary glands, particularly the parotid glands located near the ears, leading to their swelling. It is caused by the mumps virus, a member of the paramyxovirus family.

Speaking to KNO, doctors said that mumps is an acute disease primarily affecting children and young adults, caused by a single serotype of paramyxovirus.

They said it is a contagious disease which spreads through direct contact with saliva or respiratory droplets from the mouth, nose or throat.

Dr Showkat, a general physician at the Directorate of Health Services Kashmir (DHSK), said that the symptoms of mumps include swelling and pain in one or both parotid glands, fever, headache, muscle aches, fatigue and loss of appetite.

He said mumps are characterized by puffy cheeks and a tender, swollen jaw, resulting from swollen salivary glands under

the ears on one or both sides, known as parotitis. "Mumps spread through respiratory droplets from coughing, sneezing, or talking, and by sharing utensils or cups with an infected person," he explained.

According to Dr Sameer, mumps is often mild but can cause serious complications, especially in adults, which include orchitis (swelling of the testicles), Oophoritis (swelling of the ovaries), Mastitis (swelling of the breast tissue), Encephalitis (inflammation of the brain), Meningitis (inflammation of the membranes around the brain and spinal cord) and hearing loss.

The most effective way to prevent mumps is through vaccination with the MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine, Dr Sameer said, adding that it is typically administered in two doses during childhood.

Doctors said there is no cure for mumps and that the treatment focuses on supportive care including pain control, bed rest, fluids and fever reduction.



FESTIVITIES MARKING THE BJP-LED NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE (NDA) victory in the Lok Sabha-2024 elections at the party's Srinagar head office on Tuesday. KO PHOTO, ABID BHAT

Man Arrested In Domestic Violence Case In Srinagar

Majid Nabi

SRINAGAR: Police have arrested a man on the charges of domestic violence for brutally assaulting and injuring his wife at Harwan area of the city last evening.

The accused, police said, was arrested following a complaint by the victim at the concerned police station under the Protection of Women from Domestic Violence Act 2005.

Police said the victim suffered severe injuries after being struck on the back of her neck by her husband at her matrimonial home in Chandpora, Harwan last evening.

Identified as Tasneem Ruhi, wife of Lateef Ahmad Badyari, police said, the victim was immediately taken to Sheri Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) Soura by the police for treatment and to fulfill some necessary medico-legal formalities.

A formal case FIR no 29 of 2024 under section 498-A of Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at police station Harwan in this regard and investigation set into motion.

A senior police official informed Kashmir Observer that the accused was taken into custody the same



THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE COUPLE PERSISTED TILL DATE DESPITE WRITTEN assurances by the accused that he would never subject his wife to physical or mental abuse at her matrimonial home"

day the crime happened. He said an FIR was lodged after the victim recorded her statement before the officer investigating the instant case.

The differences between the couple persisted till date despite written assurances by the accused that he would never subject his wife to physical or mental abuse at her matrimonial home, a family member of the victim, told Kashmir Observer.

"She is traumatized after a fresh assault by her husband. We received a call from her daughter last evening that her mother is seriously injured and is lying in a pool of blood. She asked me to immediately take her to the hospital," he said.

After lodging an FIR at the concerned police station, the victim, they said, was taken to SKIMS Soura by a police team for treatment.

"He went beyond all bounds, leaving no option for us but to call the police. Due to severe neck injuries, our daughter is unable to talk. We urge the police to bring severe charges against the accused who turned our daughter's life into a nightmare," the family member added.

NIT Srinagar Organizes Annual Cross Country Run



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: The Students Activity and Sports Centre, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar organized a Cross Country Run, in which around 250 participants took active part across the three categories.

Prof. Abdul Liman (DSW) flagged off the boys' run from Nishat Garden to the NIT Campus, while Prof. Yashwant Mehta (Dean P&D) flagged off the run for girls, staff, and faculty from Duck Park to the NIT Campus.

The top three position holders in each category were awarded trophies and appreciation certificates. In the boys' category, Ravi Choudhary (Enrollment No. 2021BMME014) secured the 1st position, Aditya Kumar (Enrollment No. 2021BCIV136) took 2nd place, and Mohammad Sofiyan (Enrollment No. 2021BCIV145) came in 3rd.

In the girls' category, Pooja (Enrollment No. 2022BMCE060) won 1st place, Krite Mora (Enrollment No. 2023MHPHY006) claimed 2nd place, and Anjale (Enrollment No. 2023MELEEP001) secured 3rd place.

Among the staff and faculty, Yasir Ahmad Mir (Director's Office) took 1st place, Mustaffa Zargar

(Technical Officer) won 2nd place, and Dr. Farhad (Assistant Professor) finished in 3rd place.

Prof. Yashwant Mehta (Dean P & D) congratulated the winners and stated that such events are important to develop a vibrant academic system on the campus.

"Participating in sports activities develops valuable skills among individuals that extend beyond the playing field. The ability to plan ahead, understand consequences, make informed decisions, and learn from mistakes can be applied to various aspects of life," he said.

Prof. Mehta also appreciated the efforts of the Students Activity and Sports Centre at NIT Srinagar for organizing the cross-country run and making other arrangements for the participants.

On the occasion, Dr. Srinibash Mishra, SAS Coordinator, expressed his gratitude to the DC administration Srinagar, SSP Srinagar, SP Traffic City, SHO Nigeen, SHO Nishat and SDPO Zakura for regulating the traffic and ensuring the success of the cross-country event.

He also thanked all the security personnel of NIT Srinagar for their efficient and dedicated service in making the event successful.



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HIGHWAY STATUS

- Sgr-Jammu highway - (Open)
- Mughal Road - (Open)
- Srinagar-Leh - (Open)

 HIJRI CALENDAR 27 - Zil-Qadah 1445	PRAYERS FAJR 3:37 ZUHR 12:29 ASR 5:28 Magrib 7:41 ISHA 9:22
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This Day In History

- 754 - Friezen murders bishop Boniface & over 50 companions
- 1257 - Kraków, Poland, receives city rights.
- 1284 - Charles of Salerno is captured by Roger of Lauria during a naval battle in the Gulf of Naples, part of the Sicilian Vespers uprising
- 1288 - Battle of Woeringen: Reinald I vs Jan I
- 1305 - Archbishop Bertrand the Got of Bordeaux elected Pope Clement V
- 1507 - England and Netherlands sign trade agreement
- 1625 - Spanish troops under Spinola conquer Breda
- 1716 - England and Emperor Karel VI signs military treaty
- 1752 - Prince William of Orange becomes Knight of Garter
- 1794 - US Congress passes the Neutrality Act, banning Americans from serving in foreign armed forces
- 1798 - The Battle of New Ross: The attempt to spread United Irish Rebellion into Munster is defeated.
- 1827 - Turks capture the Acropolis and take Athens during Greek War of Independence
- 1832 - Anti-monarchist forces launch an uprising in Paris, starting the unsuccessful June Rebellion
- 1882 - Storm & floods hits Bombay; about 100,000 die
- 1902 - Emperor Wilhelm II responds to growing demands from Polish and other Slavic peoples living within German territory by calling for more 'Germanization' of the slavs
- 1916 - The Sheriff Hussein proclaims a revolt of the Arabs in the province of Hejaz, an action that undermines the Turkish Empire
- 1917 - 10 million US men begin registering for draft in WW I
- 1940 - Battle of France begins in WW II
- 1942 - USA declares war on Bulgaria, Hungary & Romania
- 1945 - USA, UK, USSR, France declare supreme authority over Germany
- 1959 - The first independent government of the State of Singapore is sworn in with Lee Kuan Yew as Prime Minister
- 1963 - State of siege proclaimed in Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini arrested
- 1967 - Six-day war begins between Israel and the neighboring Arab states of Egypt, Jordan and Syria
- 1975 - Egyptian president Anwar Sadat reopens Suez Canal (closed since 1967)
- 1980 - Soyuz T-2 carries 2 cosmonauts to Salyut 6 space station
- 1981 - World's first today in history program with editable data "TODAY", invented by Michael Butler runs for the first time on a mainframe computer
- 1984 - Indira Gandhi orders an attack on Sikh's holiest site, the Golden Temple in Amritsar
- 1988 - Russian Orthodox Church celebrates its 1,000th anniversary
- 1991 - Mikhail Gorbachev receives his 1990 Nobel Peace Prize
- 1993 - Liberian Charles Taylors rebellion kills 550 fugitives
- 1993 - Somali warlord Aidids murders 23 Pakistani
- 1995 - The Bose-Einstein condensate is first created
- 2001 - OPEC ministers agree to leave the cartel's oil production quotas unchanged for at least a month, until a scheduled emergency meeting July 3
- 2003 - A severe heat wave across Pakistan and India reaches its peak, as temperatures exceed 50°C (122°F) in the region
- 2006 - Serbia declares independence from the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro
- 2007 - MESSENGER spacecraft performs a second flyby of Venus
- 2013 - Nawaz Sharif is sworn in as Prime Minister of Pakistan
- 2017 - Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt sever ties with Qatar, citing its support of terrorist groups, Yemen, the Maldives and Libya follow suit 2017 - Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Egypt sever ties with Qatar, citing its support of terrorist groups, Yemen, the Maldives and Libya follow suit

Akhilesh Snatches Back UP in Surprise Turnaround

Press Trust Of India

Lucknow: Akhilesh Yadav's stock rose dramatically on Tuesday with his Samajwadi Party cutting the ruling BJP down to size in Uttar Pradesh.

As the trends came in, the SP was leading on 33 seats as against the BJP's 36 seats.

The tally is a spoiler for the BJP which had claimed it will sweep the state from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is an MP.

From winning five seats in the last election in partner-



ship with the BSP, Akhilesh's party in UP has dealt a body-blow to the BJP, which had in 2019 won 62 seats on its own.

Born on July 1, 1973, Akhilesh led the opposition's campaign from the front in the key political state, pairing well with Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress and Arvind Kejriwal's outfit.

This was the first general election after the death of SP patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav, and Akhilesh did not disappoint, to the extent, it now leads on more seats than won in the 2004 election.

The turnaround for the

opposition came even as Akhilesh, along with Rahul Gandhi, was disparaged as "Do ladko ki jodi" often by Modi.

The acronym PDA — Pichhde (backward classes), Dalits and Alpsankhyak (minorities) — coined by Akhilesh appears to have worked for the party.

At the latest count, the SP was ahead of the BJP even on the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat, despite Ram temple in Ayodhya being a talking point for the saffron party throughout the run-up to the election.

TMC, another INDIA bloc ally, was given the Bhadohi Lok Sabha seat in UP.

Akhilesh in his speeches decried the ruling dispensation's jailing Arvind Kejriwal, as well as JMM leader Hemant Soren, to highlight the BJP's putative highhandedness.

He praised Lalu Prasad and his son Tejaswi Yadav, who were charge in of holding the alliance's fort in Bihar.

In the fray from Kannauj Lok Sabha seat, Akhilesh took it upon him to drum up support for his wife Dimple Yadav, and three cousins, who all are in the fray.

Earlier in the campaign, Akhilesh forced the BJP to recalibrate its narrative, somewhat even sending it on a backfoot, when he retorted to the ruling party's jibe of nepotism, saying those with no family had no right to call out others.

The rebuttal sent entire BJP brass, as well as grassroots workers, to append "Modi ka Parivaar" in their social media bios.



Modi Wins From Varanasi For Third Consecutive Term, Victory Margin Lowest

Press Trust Of India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi won the Varanasi seat for the third consecutive term by defeating Congress candidate Ajay Rai.

The victory margin of Modi this time is 1,52,513, which is less than his victory margins of 2019 and 2014.



The victory margin of Modi this time is 1,52,513, which is less than his victory margins of 2019 and 2014.

In 2019, Modi's victory margin was 4,79,505. He defeated SP's Shalini Yadav that time while Congress' Ajay Rai was the runner up.

In 2014, Modi had won by a margin of 3,71,784 votes when he defeated AAP's Arvind Kejriwal.

This time, the BJP leaders were claiming that PM Modi's victory margin will create a record.

Nitish, Naidu May Dump NDA, help INDIA Bloc Form Govt: RJD

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: The RJD on Tuesday afternoon claimed that Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar and Telugu Desam Party president Chandrababu Naidu "shared a dislike for vendetta politics" which could lead them away from the BJP-led NDA.

RJD national spokesperson Manoj Kumar Jha also recalled the forecast of Kumar, who heads the JD(U), that "those who came to power will be ousted in 2024", and the efforts he made in laying the foundation of the INDIA bloc.

"We have been, formerly, in alliance with both Nitish Kumar and Chandrababu Naidu. We know they share a dislike for vendetta politics which the BJP stands for. Narendra Modi seems to be on his way out. We are hopeful that the two leaders will play a crucial role in the change of guard at the Centre," Jha told reporters here.

Asked whether leaders of his party, including national president Lalu Prasad and heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav, were in touch with Kumar, Jha cryptically replied "those who need to contact him are talking to him. Our leader Tejashwi Yadav has been saying for some time that Nitish Kumar will take a big decision around June 4".

He also made it clear, "I am making no appeal to Nitish Kumar or Chandrababu Naidu. I am only expressing my hope, given the understanding I have of their temperament".



To all our cadres in the INDIA coalition, I would appeal not to let their guard down. Counting may continue till late in the evening. We must remain vigilant

Notably, the JD(U) has put up a better than expected performance in Lok Sabha polls, establishing a lead in 14 out of the 16 seats it had contested, surpassing the BJP which had fought 17 but was trailing in five of these.

In Bihar, the INDIA bloc was leading in only eight out of the 40 Lok Sabha seats but Jha was confident that the numbers would look up for the coalition in the state, even as he complained about the tardy pace of counting.

"We have written to the Election Commission drawing attention towards the extremely slow pace of counting. Only 3-4 lakh votes have been counted till afternoon in most seats in Bihar where, on an average, about 10 lakh peo-

ple have exercised their franchise in each constituency," said Jha.

"We are confident that as the counting progresses, in many seats where we are trailing by slender margins, the picture will change. But we urge the Election Commission to carry out the exercise as per the rule book and not act on any telephone calls they may be getting from Delhi," said the Rajya Sabha MP, who has been alleging that the poll panel has often acted under pressure from the ruling BJP at the Centre.

"To all our cadres in the INDIA coalition, I would appeal not to let their guard down. Counting may continue till late in the evening. We must remain vigilant," said Jha.

Priyanka Gandhi: Congress's Talisman Who Garnered Support For Party In UP

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: She scoffed at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's barbs by delivering her own piercing jibes. She revived painful memories of her father's assassination to emphasise her family's sacrifices and patriotism. Drawing immense crowds in rally after rally, she emerged as the mobiliser-in-chief for her party.

With the Congress putting up a surprisingly good show in the Lok Sabha polls, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has cemented her position as her party's talisman.

"The Congress for a long time was in search of an effective campaigner and in the 2024 elections Priyanka Gandhi has been a revelation in the way she has responded to PM Modi. Priyanka Gandhi showed PM Modi can be countered and played a key role pan-India," said Rasheed Kidwai, who has authored several books, including "24 Akbar



Road: A Short History Of The People Behind The Fall And Rise Of The Congress".

The INDIA bloc may end up falling short of the magic mark to form government but gave the country an opposition to contend with. At 3 pm, trends showed it ahead in 230 seats and the Congress leading in 98 seats, almost double of what it got last time. Priyanka Gandhi in large part was at the centre of the Congress' action, giving a number of enduring images from this election campaign.

Who can forget her emotional outburst in Bengaluru when she lashed out at Prime Minister Modi over his "gold and mangalsutra" remarks, saying her mother Sonia Gandhi sacrificed her "mangalsutra" for the country.

BJP's Sitting Indore MP Wins by 11.75 Lakh Votes

Press Trust Of India

BJP's sitting MP from Indore Shankar Lalwani won on Tuesday by a record margin of 11,75,092 votes in a contest where NOTA created a record with 2.18 lakh voters opting for the 'none of the above' option in the Lok Sabha elections.

His victory margin is probably the highest in the country's electoral history, a BJP leader claimed.

In Tikamgarh (SC) seat, Union minister Virendra Kumar emerged victorious as he defeated his Congress rival Pankaj Ahirwar by 4,03,312 votes.

The Congress had received a jolt in the Indore Lok Sabha seat after its candidate Akshay Kanti Bam withdrew his nomination on April 29, the last date for the withdrawal of nominations. Bam later joined the BJP, prompting the Congress to appeal to the people to press the NOTA option on EVMs during polling in Indore on May 13.

Lalwani had secured victory for the first time in the 2019 elections. Virendra Kumar remained undefeated in the Tikamgarh Lok Sabha seat since 2009 and won the elections for the fourth time in a row.

Earlier, he represented Sagar Lok Sabha seat for four terms but after delimitation in 2008, he shifted to Tikamgarh.

Amritpal, Indira Assassins Son Set For Parliament Entry

Press Trust Of India

New Delhi: Radical Sikh preacher Amritpal Singh and Sarabjeet Singh Khalsa, son of one of the assassins of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, are set to make their maiden entry in Parliament, according to current trends.

On Tuesday afternoon, both Singh and Khalsa are comfortably placed against their nearest rivals from Khadoor Sahib and Faridkot parliamentary seats respectively. Political greenhorn Singh is lodged in a jail in Assam after being slapped under the stringent National Security Act (NSA) a year ago.

Both Singh and Khalsa contested the electoral battle as Independents.

The radical Sikh preacher

is the chief of the 'Waris Punjab De' outfit and he fought the election from the Sikh-dominated Khadoor Sahib constituency.

He was leading by a margin of more than 1,44,000 votes over his nearest rival and Congress candidate Kulbir Singh Zira. His father Tarsem Singh on Tuesday thanked the Almighty and expressed gratitude to the 'sangat' (community) for their overwhelming support.

"It was the 'sangat' which fought this battle," he told PTI.

From youth to women and elderly people, everyone contributed in this election, said Singh who styled himself after slain Khalistani militant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. He was arrested in Moga's Rode village on April 23 last year following an over a month-long manhunt.

Kishori Lal Emerges Giant Killer, Defeats Smriti Irani



Press Trust Of India

Congress candidate Kishori Lal Sharma emerged as a giant killer by defeating Union minister and BJP candidate Smriti Irani by a margin of over 1.67 votes from Amethi, the bastion of the Nehru-Gandhi family in Uttar Pradesh, on Tuesday.

According to the Election Commission, Irani bagged 3,72,032 votes, while Sharma polled 5,39,228 votes. The BSP candidate got 34,534 votes. Reacting to his win, Sharma expressed his gratitude to the people of Amethi and the Congress party, saying the 18th Lok Sabha election in Amethi will be the biggest example of a strong and empowered democratic country.

Speaking to reporters here,

Sharma said the political harmony of Amethi on the national stage and the beloved people of Amethi was very amazing, exemplary and at the peak.

"This victory is not of Kishori Lal Sharma, but of the entire Amethi family. I thank the people of Amethi, the Congress party, Sonia Gandhi and Malikarjun Kharge, and assure you all that I will always follow the orders, instructions and suggestions of the common people of Amethi.

"With dedication, sacrifice, love, affection and respect for all of you, I will continue to work in public interest with your support. Now, the relationship between the people and the public representative in Amethi is not only re-established with respect, but

the situation.

While one X user RJDixita shared two chubby panda cubs tumbling down a grassy slope with a caption that read "Nifty-Sensex today!", another posted a screengrab from Shahid Kapoor-starrer "Chup Chup Ke", with a caption "Investors seeing their portfolio today be like".

The meme by whoisut showed Om Puri, a businessman in that film, asking his accountant Shakti Kapoor - "35 lakh ka hamara investment hai, toh 36 lakh ka ghata kaise ho gaya?" (Our investment is of Rs 35 lakh, then how did we lose Rs 36 lakh?).

Some X users also took on TV news channels, which had telecast exit polls that largely fell



far from their predictions. Qid_Memez wrote in a post,

"Me on my way to find exit pollsters" with a screengrab from the

popular gangster drama "Gangs of Wasseypur" in which Manoj Bajpayee's gun-totting Sardar Khan is going to attack a rival.

In another meme, be_mewadi shared a clip from "Panchayat" in which the character of MLA Chandrakishore Chandu Singh, played by Pankaj Jha, tagged as "Election Commission" is seen packing up people tagged as "News Channels" onto a trolley.

When people ask Singh to join them, he replies, "Hum aayenge, zarur ayenge. Hum antim me aayenge" (I'll join, I'll join you in the end).

The TVF show on Amazon Prime became a fodder for most of the quirky memes through different shots and screengrabs.

A few users also found India's love for chai a suitable companion in gripping moments such as election results.

Desi_bhayo88 shared a screengrab from "Panchayat" season 3 with caption "Mein aur mere Pitaji election results dekhte hue", where Bhushan, aka Banrakas, asks Binod "Ek-ek chai aur bola jaye?" (Shall we have another cup of tea?).

As the trends started turning into solid gains for candidates across party lines, memes reflected the growing suspense.

X user profblackk shared a shot from Akshay Kumar, Suniel Shetty and Paresh Rawal's comedy riot "Hera Pheri".

PTI

B O T T O M

LS Elections 2024: Social Media Erupts With Quirky Memes On Counting Day

With a quip about the market's tumble here and a pun about the exit poll results there, social media memesters went into overdrive on the day of counting for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections on Tuesday.

Many netizens gave a comic tinge to the dramatic election results through memes based on popular TV show "Panchayat", and films like "Gangs of Wasseypur", "Hera Pheri", and "Chup Chup Ke" on X.

As the initial trends belied the exit poll results, the Indian stock market tumbled, with both Sensex and Nifty taking a massive hit. People found solace in sharing memes apt for

Celebrations in Kupwara as Engineer Rashid Defeats Two Top Politicians

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Celebrations broke out in Langate area of Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district after former MLA Sheikh Abdul Rashid defeated National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah by a huge margin in the Baramulla Lok Sabha seat.

Hundreds of supporters of 'Engineer Rashid', as the jailed leader is popularly known, thronged his native village Lach Mawar in Langate assembly segment of the north Kashmir district to congratulate his family, especially his sons who led his campaign.

Rashid, who is currently in Tihar jail on terror charges, emerged as a giant-slayer of the parliamentary polls in Jammu and Kashmir. He has represented Langate in the erstwhile J-K assembly twice.

Rashid's supporters -- men, women and youth -- dawned on his village after the news of his unassailable lead over Abdullah, a former chief minister, came in.



The crowd got bigger with each minute especially after Abdullah conceded defeat and congratulated Rashid. People were seen lining up in long queues towards Rashid's residence. The supporters burst crackers and raised slogans in his favour.

Rashid's brother Sheikh Khurshid thanked the people of the constituency for voting in huge numbers for him.

"This is not our win, but people's win. We are thankful to the people, especially youth and women who played an important role," he told reporters outside Rashid's residence.

He said some people might think of voters as their inheritance, "but today, a common man has shown that a voter is not anyone's inheritance and every candidate stands to win".

He assured the people that Rashid's constituency in-charges across the parliamentary seat would address their issues.

"I am hopeful as a voter that we will get a better representation in the Parliament now," he added.

The jailed leader's brother said the demand for his release from prison was now not restricted to his family.

"As a family member, we used to demand that he be released, but, now it is not just about the family, Rashid now represents 17.5 lakh people. So, the government should respect the sentiments, aspirations and the people's political representation in Parliament and release him soon," he said.

He said he has not spoken to Rashid about the results. "I do not think Rashid would know that he has won," Khurshid added.

"We miss him...but today, we do not feel it as we have seen so much love of people and their acceptance of their representative," he said.

Meanwhile, celebrations also erupted in Budgam, he native town of NC candidate Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi who won from Srinagar Lok Sabha seat.

Some celebrations were also held at Babanagri, the native village of NC's senior Gujjar leader Mian Altaf who defeated PDP president Mehbooba Mufti by a huge margin in the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha seat.

Budgam Celebrates as Aga Ruhullah Becomes First-Time MP

Agencies

BUDGAM: Thousands of people gathered in the main town of Budgam to celebrate the historic victory of Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, a senior leader of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), who has become the first-time MP from the Srinagar parliamentary constituency.

Ruhullah secured a total vote count of 356,866 to feature on the top. The senior politician is followed by Waheedur-Rehman of the People's Democratic Party (PDP) who has a total of 168,450 votes, Mohammad Ashraf of Apni Party with 65,954 and Aamir Ahmad Bhat of the Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) with 15,104.

As per the news agency, the celebrations began around 2 pm, with people bursting firecrackers, chanting slogans and waving flags. The crowd was eager to welcome their beloved leader, who was leading in the polls. The atmosphere was filled with festivity and unity, reflecting the high spirits and optimism of the community.

"I have come from Bandipora to celebrate Aga Ruhullah's win. It's not just about Budgam, but the entire Kashmir that has gotten such a leader," said Arif, a resident who had travelled from north Kashmir's Bandipora district to join the celebrations.

Another youth, Syed Tasaduk Hus-sain, said, "We are lucky to have a leader like Ruhullah. We are confident that he will do for us what no one has done so far. We have been celebrating since morning and will continue until we're exhausted."

When Aga arrived at his hometown, he was warmly welcomed by thousands of his supporters who had been waiting for him for hours.

In his speech, Ruhullah thanked everyone for their support and promised to fulfill all the promises he had made during the election campaign. He vowed to continue fighting for the dignity of Jammu and Kashmir.

The celebrations were a testament to the widespread support and admiration Ruhullah commands in the area—(KNO)

Bukhari's Apni Party, PDP Candidate Lose Security Deposit

Agencies

SRINAGAR: In their first major electoral battle, the candidates fielded by new parties launched in Jammu & Kashmir have lost their security deposit.

All the candidates fielded by Jammu & Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) have forfeited their security deposit in the Lok Sabha polls, the results of which were declared on Tuesday.

According to details available with the news agency, Muhammad Ashraf Mir and Zaffar Iqbal Manhas of JKAP have lost their security deposit as they failed to secure a minimum of one-sixth of the total valid votes polled in their respective constituencies.

While Mir polled 9.77 per cent of total votes cast in Srinagar Lok Sabha seat, Manhas secured 13.86 per cent of the total votes polled in Anantnag-Rajouri segment.

Two other candidates fielded by Ghulam Nabi Azad-led party



also lost security deposit in their respective constituencies.

While Muhammad Saleem Parrey secured a meager 2.47 per cent of total votes polled in Anantnag-Rajouri seat, Amir Ahmad Bhat polled only 2.24 per cent of votes polled in Srinagar Lok Sabha seat.

Interestingly, PDP candidate Baramulla Lok Sabha seat, Mir Muhammad Fayaz also lost his security deposit.

As per the Election Commission of India, Mir polled only 2.66 per cent of votes polled in Baramulla Lok Sabha seat—(KNO)

Will 'See' BJP In Upcoming Assembly Polls: Lal Singh After Losing Polls

Agencies

JAMMU: Accepting defeat in Udhampur Lok Sabha from Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh, Congress party's Choudhary Lal Singh Tuesday said that 'he will see them (BJP) in upcoming elections'.

"We contested the elections in the first phase, for which I got just 20 days and all the equations were against the opposition, despite that people shower their blessing and I managed 4,46,703, which shows the resentment of youth and poor against present government," he said, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), adding, "I am 100% sure the first time voters and educated class voted against the current regime".

Lal Singh also claimed that he managed to give a tough fight despite all the odds.

"Before elections he (Dr Jitendra Singh) claimed a lead of



4-5 lakh, which was reduced with effective fighting," he said. Lal Singh claimed that seats in first phases will suffer but after a few phases the discourse of election has been changed and Prime Minister's speeches derailed from the main topics to ridiculous things like 'Mujra' and INDI Alliance manage to touch people's issues and get good performance.

Singh also said that the present election acts as a launching point for upcoming assembly elections, where the Congress party will outperform and comfortably defeat BJP—(KNO)

J&K Embraces Digital Payments with 130% Surge in Transactions

Agencies

SRINAGAR: Digital transformation is fast sweeping across Jammu and Kashmir, which witnessed an unprecedented surge of more than 130% in AePS (Aadhaar-enabled Payment System) transactions.

As per the Atmanirbhar Bharat Digital Empowerment report by PayNearby, a copy of which is with the news agency, Jammu & Kashmir as the union territory witnessed a growth of over 134 per cent in value and 89 per cent in volume of AePS transactions in FY24 at retail stores.

The report further highlights that MicroATM transactions at retail stores in Jammu & Kashmir saw a 31 per cent increase in both value and volume.

This surge underscores the increasing adoption of digital payment solutions in the region, marking a significant



shift towards cashless transactions and financial inclusivity.

The AePS, a bank-led model that enables online interoperable financial transactions at point-of-sale (PoS) through the business correspondent of any bank using the Aadhaar authentication, has emerged as a pivotal tool in advancing financial inclusion efforts across the country.

The Aadhaar-enabled Payment System facilitates various banking services, including balance inquiry, cash withdrawal, cash deposit, and fund transfer, using Aadhaar

authentication.

The report also indicated a similar trend in the North-eastern states as Meghalaya tops the chart with a 1000 per cent growth in AePS transaction value and 712 per cent increase in the number of transactions, showcasing the region's rapid acceptance of financial services, followed by Nagaland and Assam.

In addition, transaction value at MicroATMs of Mizoram and Meghalaya grew by 55 per cent and 43 per cent respectively, whereas volume grew by 33 per cent and 43 per cent respectively, it stated.

Experts attribute this significant growth in AePS transactions to multiple factors, including the growing penetration of smartphones, improved digital infrastructure, and increased awareness among consumers about the benefits of digital payments—(KNO)

Azad's Flight Grounded Before Take-Off

DPAP Candidates Lose Deposits In All Three Seats

Agencies

JAMMU: The first ever elections for Ghulam Nabi Azad's Democratic Progressive Azad Party (DPAP) has proved disastrous as his party has lost from all the three seats it contested and even lost the security deposit all over.

Even before the take off, the DPAP crash landed in its own backyard.

Azad's most trusted and close aide Ghulam Muhammad Saroori has lost badly from Udhampur parliamentary constituency.

As per the data provided by the election commission of India (ECI), the DPAP candidate has only been able to get over 40,000 votes from over 11 lakh votes polled for the Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency.

Bharatiya Janata Party's candidate Dr. Jitendra Singh won with a thumping majority of over 1.24 lakh votes whereas Congress candidate Choudhary Lal Singh remained run-

ners up.

According to the news agency, Udhampur Lok Sabha seat is the home seat of former union minister Ghulam Nabi Azad, who left Congress party in 2022 due to differences with Rahul Gandhi, and he hasn't been able to get votes from his native district for his party's candidate. Azad had unsuccessfully contested the 2014 Lok Sabha elections from Udhampur seat on Congress mandate.

Saroori even lost in the Inderwal Assembly segment of Kishtwar district from where he had won three consecutive Assembly elections. This time Saroori has remained at the third place in Inderwal with Choudhary Lal Singh getting highest votes followed by Dr. Jitendra Singh.

Since the beginning of Lok Sabha elections, DPAP got the tag of playing as B-team of the ruling BJP and opposition parties like Congress and National Conference (NC) alleged Azad of fielding candidates from

Udhampur to cut secular votes which either would have gone to Congress candidates.

With the final result it has been observed that DPAP has been able to give the Congress party a dent by securing over 39,000 votes. Though the winning margin between BJP and Congress has remained over 1.24 lakh votes, these 39,000 votes would have meant nothing for Congress party in achieving the target but these votes would have certainly brought the margin below one lakh votes.

DPAP contested three out of five Lok Sabha seats of Jammu and Kashmir which included Udhampur, Anantnag-Rajouri and Srinagar.

There is nothing much for DPAP candidates of Anantnag-Rajouri and Srinagar seat Muhammad Saleem Paray and Amir Ahmed Bhat, respectively, to celebrate as both of them have also lost the security deposit. Paray grabbed 25,440 votes whereas Bhat got 15,104 votes only—(KNO)

Vertical Expansion with Modern Tech Our Focus: Director Agri



KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: The Director Agriculture Kashmir Chowdhury Mohammad Iqbal on Tuesday visited different areas of Kulgam district and took stock of the ongoing agriculture activities besides reviewing the crop status of different agriculture crops.

Speaking to the farmers at different places, Director Agriculture highlighted the importance of vertical expansion in the cultivation of different agriculture crops. He said that vertical expansion in resonance

with the latest technologies is the department's focus. He said that amid the changing climate scenario and use of land resources for non-Agriculture purposes, vertical expansion is the only way out.

Director Agriculture asked the farmers to avail benefits from HADP and other programmes being implemented by the department. He exhorted upon the concerned officers to raise awareness among the farmers regarding the different initiatives by the department. He was accompanied by some senior officers of the department.

AYUSH Deptt Organises Free Medical Camp In Budgam

Agencies

BUDGAM: Ayush Health and Wellness Centre Kenihama today organized a free medical camp under the theme 'Anaemia Mukh Bharat' at Govt High School Kenihama here.

The camp was held under the guidance of Director AYUSH department, Dr. Mohan Singh, with an aim to raise awareness about anaemia and provide necessary interventions to promote a healthier community.

Medical Officer, Ayush Health and Wellness Centre Kenihama, Dr. Nusrat Bashir and her team of medical practitioners and supporting staff provided free screenings for anaemia and other related health conditions, facilitating early detection and intervention for the local residents.

Dr. Nusrat and her team also provided expert consultations to local

residents specializing in anaemia management as well as personalized guidance and treatment plans.

During the camp, dietary counselling sessions were also provided to residents, educating them about the importance of balanced diet and other essential nutrients crucial for combating anaemia.

Speaking on the significance of this camp, Dr. Nusrat said that Anaemia is a prevalent health issue in India, particularly among women and children, leading to various health complications. She added that this Ayush and Wellness Center organized this specialized health camp to offer accessible healthcare services to the residents of this area. Pertinently, this health camp underscores AYUSH department's commitment to promoting holistic healthcare and addressing prevalent health challenges in the community.(KNS)

Disaster Response & Awareness Workshop held at GDC Ajas

Agencies

BANDIPORA: Govt. Degree College Ajas Bandipora, in collaboration with the District Disaster Management Authority Bandipora today conducted a community-based disaster response and awareness workshop.

The workshop featured presentations and live demonstrations aimed at educating students and community members about disaster management and response.

Resource persons from JK Disaster Response Force (UTDRF) DPL Bandipora and Fire and Emergency Services Bandipora led the sessions. They shared their expertise and practical knowledge on handling various types of disasters, including natural calamities and fire emergencies.

The resource persons provided

insightful presentations that covered essential aspects of disaster management, including preparedness, mitigation, response, and recovery. They emphasized the importance of community involvement in disaster response and highlighted various strategies to ensure safety and minimize damage during disasters.

Following the presentations, live demonstrations were conducted to provide hands-on experience. These included mock drills and simulations of different disaster scenarios, showcasing effective response techniques.

Participants learned practical skills which included disaster management, common regional disasters, preparedness measures, emergency response, first aid, rescue techniques, community-based risk reduction initiatives evacuation procedures, and the use of firefighting equipment.

Padma Shri Faisal Ali Applauds ECI For Successful Elections

KO NEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR: Padma Shri awardee, Faisal Ali Dar on Tuesday lauded Election Commission of India for their monumental success in the parliamentary elections of 2024.

In a statement, Dar said the tireless efforts and unwavering commitment of ECI have not only ensured a smooth and fair electoral process but have also rekindled the faith in the democratic spirit of our nation.

Dar was bestowed with the Padma Shri award, along with eight other sports personalities, in 2022. He was the brand Ambassador for SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) of the election commission of India.

He further said "Amidst a sea of misconceptions, allegations, and accusations, you have stood firm, upholding the principles of transparency, integrity, and impartiality," adding "Your dedication has debunked myths and silenced



skeptics, proving beyond doubt that the democratic fab-

ric of our country remains unblemished."

Dar added "This victory is not just about the numbers or the outcomes; it is a resounding affirmation of the power of democracy to triumph over adversity."

He added that as a proud member of the SVEEP team of the Election Commission of India, he had the privilege of witnessing firsthand the unwavering dedication and commitment of all team members. "Each member has tirelessly

poured their efforts into ensuring the smooth and steady execution of our responsibilities. I am filled with immense pride to be part of such a remarkable team, and I extend my heartfelt congratulations to each and every member for their exceptional contributions. Together, we have upheld the sacred spirit of democracy, which is the cornerstone of India's identity, ensuring that it remains preserved, unparalleled, and promising for generations to come," he added.

KASHMIR OBSERVERTM

Wednesday | 05-06-2024

An Election Like No Other

The general election is finally over, and it has delivered a verdict contrary to not just exit polls, which turned out to be sham but also against the expectations. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's BJP has lost its parliamentary majority. This monumental shift marks a significant moment in India's politics.

The seven-phase election, which began on April 19 and concluded on June 1, witnessed unprecedented voter turnout and active engagement from all sections of society. The results have shown that despite the BJP's extensive campaign and apparent dominance in the last decade, the Indian electorate remains discerning and responsive to changing socio-economic realities.

Several factors contributed to the BJP's underwhelming performance. The opposition, primarily led by the Congress and regional parties, capitalized on growing public discontent over issues such as unemployment, inflation, and the perceived erosion of democratic institutions.

The BJP's loss in key constituencies, including Faizabad, where Prime Minister Modi had inaugurated Ram Mandir, underlines a shift in voter priorities. The mandir was expected to consolidate votes for the BJP. However, the defeat in Ayodhya and other parts of Uttar Pradesh suggests that the electorate prioritized economic issues over cultural symbolism. This trend was evident as rural areas, which had previously been BJP strongholds, swung towards the opposition.

The opposition's resurgence can also be attributed to the strategic unity among various parties under the banner of the INDIA bloc. This coalition effectively communicated its narrative, focusing on Modi's alleged failure to deliver on promises of economic growth and clean governance. Leaders like Mamata Banerjee of West Bengal articulated the frustration of many Indians, criticizing the BJP's handling of socio-economic issues.

Despite the setback, Prime Minister Modi maintained a defiant stance, describing the election results as a historical feat for the BJP-led NDA alliance and thanking his supporters for their unwavering faith. Modi's message emphasized continuity and resilience, suggesting that the BJP will continue to push its agenda while seeking to address the criticisms leveled against it.

The election results signal a demand for a more inclusive and responsive governance model, one that addresses economic grievances and upholds democratic institutions. The electorate's message is clear: economic performance and governance are paramount, and cultural politics alone cannot secure electoral victories.

The 2024 Indian general election has reaffirmed the strength of Indian democracy. It has shown that the electorate is capable of transcending cultural and religious narratives to focus on pressing economic issues. As the political landscape adjusts to these new realities, the essence of Indian democracy—its ability to adapt and reflect the will of its people—continues to shine.



What's the Point?



Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat

June 5th which is celebrated as the World Environment Day every year encourages communities to take action towards environmental protection. This day also helps advocacy for policy changes at local, national and international level. As an environmental campaigner, I personally believe that World Environment Day celebrations are mere formalities for Government. Non-Governmental Organisations and educational institutions. On this day, seminars, workshops and rallies are organised and some tree plantation is done and the very next day the same people who attended such programmes violate environmental laws themselves. Let us introspect. How many among us segregate waste in our own houses and how many of us make minimal use of plastic?

Planting trees around World Environment Day (WED) programmes which continues for a week is a fad and I see all this as a mockery of the true spirit of environmental consciousness. Does anyone make resolutions, are there any goals, is there any responsibility? Do we come back to these after a year? No.

Every year on June 5th, a distinct theme is chosen to celebrate the world environment day. We discuss and deliberate on the issues of climate change, global warming, and deforestation during seminars, conferences and rallies on this day and the very next day the same participants and speakers mix all their plastic and kitchen waste in their trash bin which is then disposed unscientifically. If the World Environment Day programme doesn't make us even undertake waste segregation at household level and doesn't even inspire us to compost our kitchen waste within the premise of our houses, what is the fun to participate and speak during the WED programmes? Isn't all this a mockery when we don't even implement the basics of the Municipal Solid Waste Rules 2016 wherein biodegradable and non-biodegradable waste isn't supposed to be mixed together?

Kashmir is a massive wetland

This year, the theme of World Environment Day is "Land restoration, Desertification and Drought resilience." According to the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, up to 40% of our planet's land is degraded, directly affecting half of the world's population. The number and duration of droughts has increased by 29 per cent since 2000 - without urgent action, droughts may affect over three-quarters of the world's population by 2050. The droughts and land degradation aren't a major challenge for Kashmir valley because we face different environmental challenges.

As we see and read that the water table across India and other South Asian countries is receding and bore wells and other underground water sources are drying up, this is

opposite in Kashmir valley. Our water table is increasing in most of the places except near the river banks and streams where unregulated riverbed mining is done. Srinagar and many areas across Kashmir valley get flooded within hours of rainfall and this is because of unregulated developmental activities, urbanisation and earth-filling done for creating new highways, railway lines, developing residential colonies etc. Kashmir valley was a massive lake millions of years back and it will again become a lake in next few centuries. The water channels, streams, irrigation canals, wetlands, ponds, lakes have been choked and encroached upon. Natural seepage of water has been halted. The constant dumping of plastic waste in our water bodies and drainage system has further made this challenging and that is the reason we see massive water logging on roads in Srinagar and other towns.

The large-scale earth filling on the Srinagar Ring Road project from Galandar Pampore to Narbal has choked the Jhelum flood basin from Gallandar Kandizal to Khanda Suthsoo. The wetlands around Soibugh, Dharmuna area are also impacted by this road project and this will be disastrous in coming years

ganpora, Eid Gah, Merjanpora, Anchar, Soura and many other localities in the downtown Srinagar, have complained about the "unscientific" dumping of waste in Achan Saidapora area which is actually a wetland. This unscientific garbage dumping is causing persistent foul smell emanating from the site, causing several health issues. There is also constant oozing of leachate from this unscientific landfill site which has impacted local agricultural and other livelihood activities of the locals. The Srinagar city generates around 600 metric tons of garbage, which is collected by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and dumped at Achan Saidapora in violation of MSW Rules 2016 and Wetland Conservation and Management Rules 2017.

The NGT three-member bench headed by Justice Prakash Srivastava in its order has constituted a committee which comprises of representatives from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the National Wetland Committee of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEF&CC), the Deputy Commissioner of Srinagar, and the Member Secretary of the J&K Pollution Control Committee (JKPCC). The Deputy Com-

Unscientific waste dumping in Srinagar

As I said, the entire Kashmir valley is a wetland and finding enough degraded and arid land in this valley is a challenging task. The only safer places to create landfill sites in Kashmir valley are Karewas but due to small agricultural land holdings and higher population density we can't even afford to have landfill sites on Karewas. This is more challenging for setting up landfill sites in Budgam district as we have an airport located in the area. As per MSW Rules 2016 and other guidelines of the Civil Aviation Ministry, the airport or airforce base should be at least 10 kms away from landfill site. This means no major landfill site can be set up in any part of Budgam.

The Srinagar district has failed to acquire even 10 hectares of degraded waste land and that is the reason waste is being constantly dumped at Achan Saidapora near EidGah Srinagar for the last 35 years. This area has been a wetland and large-scale paddy farming was done in this area until 15 to 20 years back. This author has written extensively on this issue and filed several video report as well in my weekly programme Inkishaf.

NGTs intervention

This author finally filed a fresh application before the National Green Tribunal (NGT) last month and the three member NGT bench has constituted a committee headed by Member Secretary Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) to ascertain the "correct factual situation" around Saidpura Achan garbage dumping site which is used by Srinagar Municipal Corporation.

The residents of Saidapora Achan, Wan-

ganpora, Eid Gah, Merjanpora, Anchar, Soura and many other localities in the downtown Srinagar, have complained about the "unscientific" dumping of waste in Achan Saidapora area which is actually a wetland. This unscientific garbage dumping is causing persistent foul smell emanating from the site, causing several health issues. There is also constant oozing of leachate from this unscientific landfill site which has impacted local agricultural and other livelihood activities of the locals. The Srinagar city generates around 600 metric tons of garbage, which is collected by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and dumped at Achan Saidapora in violation of MSW Rules 2016 and Wetland Conservation and Management Rules 2017.

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missioner of Srinagar will serve as the nodal agency for this committee. The job of this committee is to ascertain the correct ground position and the extent of pollution caused by the illegal dumping at the landfill site in question, consequential health hazard created by it. The National Green Tribunal-NGT in its May 15th 2024 order also directed the committee to suggest remedial measures including setting up of waste processing facilities to zero down landfill and submit the report before the Tribunal within eight weeks.

Conclusion

As we often say, Charity begins at home. I believe the best way to celebrate the world environment day is to start treating our kitchen waste in our kitchen gardens by digging a small pit to process it on a daily basis. Managing waste by Urban Local Bodies or Municipal institutions is a challenging task in Kashmir valley due to our unique topography and limited waste lands to set up new landfill sites. The best way to celebrate World Environment Day is to make some commitments on this day, like carrying a cloth or jute bag for shopping, not mixing wet and dry waste in trash bins, home composting of kitchen waste and minimizing use of plastic products during our weddings. Let us give our feedback on how much committed we have been for a year and share our experiences the next year on June 5th. Let us start working from our own homes.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer. Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat is an Acumen Fellow. He is Chairman and Founder of J&K RTI Movement and is an Anant Fellow for Climate Action



Indian Stock Market and LS Elections: An Overview

Did You Know?

The historical performance of the Indian stock market, particularly around Lok Sabha election results, has shown significant volatility and varied patterns. Below are some key observations from notable election years:

1. 1991 Elections:

Pre-results: The market was anxious due to economic instability and political uncertainty.

Post-results: After a clear Congress victory under P.V. Narasimha Rao, the market responded positively, anticipating economic reforms.

2. 1996 Elections:

Pre-results: Uncertainty with no clear frontrunner.

Post-results: Markets declined due to the uncertainty and instability with a coalition government.

3. 1999 Elections:

Pre-results: Some nervousness due to Kargil War and political instability.

Post-results: Markets surged upon the victory of the BJP-led coalition, expecting continued reforms.

4. 2004 Elections:

Pre-results: Optimism due to a strong economic performance led by the NDA government.

Post-results: A surprising victory for the UPA led to a significant market crash immediately following the results due to fear of policy changes, but they later stabilized.

5. 2009 Elections:

Pre-results: Caution due to economic slowdown from the global financial crisis.

Post-results: A decisive victory for the UPA led to a dramatic surge, with markets hitting upper circuits due to the expectation of political stability and reforms.

6. 2014 Elections:

Pre-results: Optimism on Narendra Modi's pro-business approach.

Post-results: Significant market rally following BJP's decisive victory; Sensex hit record highs, driven by expectations of robust economic reforms.

7. 2019 Elections:

Pre-results: Mixed sentiments due to economic challenges, but underlying optimism about Modi's continuation.

Post-results: Positive market reaction with Sensex and Nifty reaching all-time highs as BJP secured another term, ensuring policy continuity.

General Trends

Clarity and Stability: Markets typically respond positively to clear, stable mandates, due to the expectation of continued and stable policy measures.

Economic Policies: Pro-business and reform-oriented governments often lead to bullish market reactions.

Uncertainty and Coalition Governments: Market volatility often increases with uncertain outcomes or coalition governments, reflecting concerns over policy implementation and stability.

Conclusion

The Indian stock market's performance around Lok Sabha election results is closely tied to the perceived economic policies and stability associated with the incoming government. Investors tend to react positively to decisive outcomes and reform-oriented mandates, while ambiguity and coalition scenarios often lead to apprehension and volatility.

Learn from the insights of writer and investor, founder of MI Securities and Business Partner at Sharekhan! Reach out to him at Irshad@bp.sharekhan.com for valuable knowledge on financial matters

On World Environment Day

Proper Sampling Techniques For Environmental Data

Saba Riyaz

Given the worldwide environmental issues, the significance of precise and dependable environmental data cannot be emphasized enough. The data we gather is crucial for comprehending and controlling natural resources, encompassing activities such as evaluating air quality, tracking water contamination, and examining biodiversity. Nevertheless, the accuracy of this data is greatly influenced by the sampling techniques utilized. Thorough sampling guarantees that data is a true reflection of the whole population, without any distortion or favoritism, and is strong and reliable. This is crucial for making well-informed decisions and implementing impactful environmental policies.

The primary goal of sampling is to acquire data that precisely represents the entire population. In the field of environmental studies, this refers to the process of making sure that the sample accurately represents the many types and patterns of the environment under investigation. To comprehensively assess the biological state of a forest, it is necessary to collect samples from multiple places, encompassing diverse types of plants and variable heights.

Wrong selection of sampling methods can lead to bias. Sampling bias can result in distorted data and inaccurate conclusions. Efficient sampling methods are developed to reduce bias, guaranteeing that each section of the study area has an equitable chance of being sampled. Techniques such as simple random sampling, systematic sampling, and stratified sampling are frequently used to attain this equilibrium.

Utilizing efficient sampling procedures can greatly diminish the expenses and time needed for data collecting. Researchers can achieve sustainability and feasibility in data collection by strategically choosing sample sizes and procedures, eliminating the need for extensive surveys.

Data collection in environmental research

Simple random sampling refers to the process of selecting a subset of individuals



or items from a larger population in a way that each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen. This method is commonly used in most of the surveys. In this method, every member of the population has an equal probability of being chosen. This approach is direct and effective in mitigating selection bias. Nevertheless, it

may not consistently capture the diversity of the environment.

Systematic sampling is a method of selecting a sample from a larger population in a systematic and organized manner. It involves selecting every n th element from the population, where n is a predetermined interval. For instance, collecting samples

at regular intervals of 10 meters along a straight line. This approach is straightforward and guarantees that the entire study region is covered. However, it may induce bias if there are underlying patterns in the environment that align with the sample period.

Stratified sampling is another method that includes dividing a population into separate subgroups, known as strata, based on certain characteristics. Then, a sample is taken from each stratum. This method guarantees the representation of all subgroups in the sample, which is particularly advantageous in diverse situations. Proper methodology of sample selection ensures maximum representation of the population. Subsequently, one can apply different methods for estimating the parameters like the sample mean, variance, or the ratio method of estimation under different conditions.

Case Study: Water Quality Monitoring

Examine a case study involving the monitoring of water quality in a sizable lake. The objective is to evaluate the concentrations of contaminants, specifically nitrates and phosphates. The lake is partitioned into distinct zones using stratified sampling, which takes into account factors such as depth and proximity to pollution sources like industrial discharge points. Subsequently, samples are gathered from each zone in order to obtain a full depiction of the water quality.

Advanced Sampling Techniques

Adaptive Sampling refers to the process of adjusting the sampling rate or strategy based on certain criteria or conditions. This method is more versatile as it enables modifications based on initial discoveries. For instance, in the event that elevated concentrations of pollutants are identified in a particular region, further samples might be collected from that region to acquire more comprehensive data. This method is valuable for examining dynamic and unpredictable situations.

Remote sensing refers to the collection of data about the earth's surface from a distance, typically using satellites or aircraft. Geospatial

sampling involves the systematic collection of data points or samples across a geographic area. It is one way of using Auxiliary data for estimation of ground parameters.

Technological progress has made remote sensing and geospatial sampling indispensable for gathering environmental data. Satellites, drones, and geographic information systems (GIS) enable extensive and detailed collection of environmental data on a broad scale, including information on land use changes, vegetation cover, and water quality.

Obstacles and Resolutions

Some environmental research may encounter challenges in accessing certain regions or encountering safety hazards. Researchers must meticulously devise their sampling procedures to tackle these problems, potentially employing remote sensing techniques or partnering with local specialists.

It is crucial to take into account temporal variability in sampling due to the potential changes in environmental variables throughout time. Conducting extended surveillance and collecting many samples at various points in time can effectively capture these fluctuations and offer a more comprehensive comprehension of the surroundings.

In conclusion, the need of employing accurate sampling strategies in the collecting of environmental data is crucial. Researchers can get high-quality data that informs environmental management and policy decisions by ensuring that samples are representative, unbiased, and cost-effective. The integration of traditional sample methods with modern instruments such as remote sensing will bolster our capacity to monitor and safeguard the environment as technology progresses. Appropriate sampling techniques not only enhance the precision of our environmental evaluations but also guarantee that our endeavors to protect natural resources are grounded in robust and dependable data.

Saba Riyaz is a research scholar in the Department of Statistics, Kashmir University and can be reached at saba.riyaz.syed@gmail.com

The Psychological Value of Balanced Pragmatism

Abigail Fagan

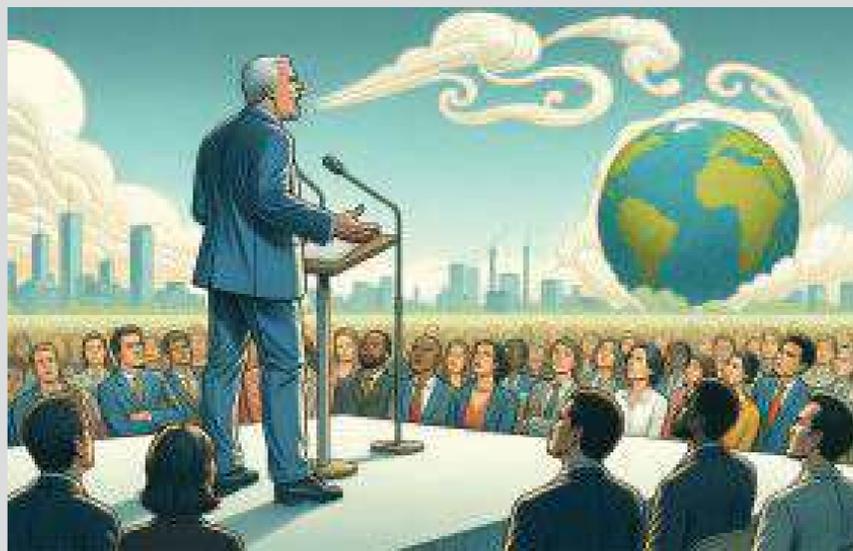
We live in an era of intense political division. Indeed, things are so deeply split, that is hard for people who have opposing views on an issue to even talk to each other. So, what kind of signals could someone with a deeply-held view on an issue send to others that would get others who disagree with them to want to engage?

This topic was explored in a fascinating paper by Curtis Puryear and Kurt Gray in a 2024 issue of the Journal of Experimental Psychology: General. They suggest that people want to talk to other people they disagree with when they have positive perceptions of them (believing that they are moral, intelligent, rational, and authentic), and that the best way to improve this perception is to use a strategy of balanced pragmatism.

Balanced pragmatism is a strategy in which people are willing to consider the views of people they disagree with (that is, they are balanced), and they seek solutions to difficult problems that will actually work (that is, they are pragmatic). The authors argue this strategy is better than either balance or pragmatism alone and also better than strategies like giving good logical arguments in favor of your own view.

The value of balanced pragmatism was tested both for perceptions of politicians as well as for perceptions of potential conversation partners.

In studies of politicians, participants viewed either videos or read



tweets by actual politicians. Both Democratic and Republican politicians were selected, so that studies could explore the impact of communication strategies on perceptions both of people you are likely to agree with and people you are likely to disagree with. Some videos were selected to display balanced pragmatism in which the politician showed openness to other views and a desire to find solutions to hard problems. Judgments of the percep-

tion of these politicians and interest in engaging with them were compared to a variety of other conditions that did not display balanced pragmatism including other videos, campaign ads, and biographies of the politicians.

The results were consistent. Overall, when judging a politician from another party, people viewed politicians more positively and were more interested in engaging with them when they used a balanced

pragmatism strategy than when they used other strategies. The balanced pragmatism strategy had little impact on judgments about politicians a person was inclined to agree with. That means that there is no negative impact of using this strategy, and it can increase engagement with people who you are likely to disagree with.

In addition to doing several studies on perceptions of politicians, the researchers also explored the

impact of balanced pragmatism on perceptions of other people you might want to talk with. One study demonstrated that when given instructions, people can display balanced pragmatism in a statement about their own views (though they don't tend to do it naturally, and they're not very good at it even when prompted). Other studies found that judgments of other people are favorably influenced by a balanced pragmatism strategy compared to giving a logical statement of your own views. That is, people found others who show themselves to be balanced and pragmatic to be more moral, intelligent, and worthy of respect than individuals who give a logical argument about their opinion. They were also more interested in engaging with people who display balanced pragmatism compared to individuals who just give a good logical argument.

These results suggest that when you're evaluating an opponent or a politician, you want to engage with someone when you think they are looking to do something productive. Just hearing someone give an impassioned defense of something they care about is often not that useful. Engaging with someone who respects your views and wants to solve problems is more likely to lead to progress. In these challenging political times, there is great value in adopting a balanced pragmatic attitude.

This article is arranged with psychologytoday.com

Low-Dose Aspirin Eases Inflammation Caused By Sleep Loss: Study



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We used a non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug because it has been shown to affect specific inflammatory pathways, which were previously shown to be dysregulated by experimental sleep restriction or sleep disturbances



ANI

A recent study discovered that low-dose acetylsalicylic acid, popularly known as aspirin, can attenuate inflammatory responses to sleep deprivation.

Study is to be presented at the SLEEP 2024 annual meeting.

The results suggest that prior treatment of low-dose aspirin during sleep restriction lowered pro-inflammatory responses compared to a placebo. Aspirin specifically reduced interleukin-6 expression, COX-1/COX-2 double positive cells in lipopolysaccharide-stimulated monocytes, and C-reactive protein serum levels.

“The novelty of this study is that it investigated whether we can pharmacologically reduce the inflammatory consequences of sleep restriction,” said lead author Larissa Engert, who has a doctorate in behavioral physiology and is a postdoctoral fellow in the department of neurology at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center and the division of sleep medicine at Harvard Medical School in Boston. “We used a non-steroidal, anti-inflammatory drug because it has been shown to affect specific inflammatory pathways, which were previously shown to be dysregulated by experimental sleep restriction or sleep disturbances.”

The researchers collected data from 46 healthy adults in a randomized placebo-controlled crossover trial with three pro-

tocols – sleep restriction/aspirin, sleep restriction/placebo, and control sleep/placebo – each consisting of a 14-day at-home phase followed by an 11-day in-hospital stay. In the sleep restriction/aspirin condition, participants took low-dose aspirin during the at-home phase and in-hospital stay. Each in-hospital stay started with two nights of an eight-hour sleep opportunity. Then, under

the sleep restriction conditions, participants were exposed to five nights of a four-hour sleep opportunity, followed by three nights of recovery sleep. The control sleep condition provided an eight-hour sleep opportunity throughout the in-hospital stay. Sleep and immunologic measures were assessed at baseline and various points throughout the study.

The data also reveal that the aspirin-induced reduction of inflammatory pathway activity in sleep-restricted participants was paralleled by decreased wake after sleep onset and increased sleep efficiency during recovery sleep, Engert noted.

“These findings show that it is possible to blunt inflammatory pathways activated by sleep restriction through preemptive administration of low-dose aspirin. This may foster the development of new therapeutics that specifically target those pathways, and do not exhibit the undesirable side effects associated with aspirin, such as bleeding and stroke. Such therapeutics could complement behavioral sleep improvement therapies to better prevent or control inflammation and its consequences in those experiencing periods of sleep deficiency,” Engert said.

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The novelty of this study is that it investigated whether we can pharmacologically reduce the inflammatory consequences of sleep restriction

'Indian Aviation Market Seeing Both Domestic, International Growth'



Press Trust Of India

DUBAI: Indian aviation is growing in terms of domestic as well as international traffic, and can show how to deal with challenges in a fast-growing market, IndiGo CEO Pieter Elbers said on Tuesday.

At a briefing on the conclusion of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) Annual General Meeting here, Elbers said it will be an important moment for India to host the AGM next year in Delhi.

Elbers is also the Chair of the Board of Governors of IATA.

IATA, a grouping of more than 330 airlines, at the just concluded AGM also discussed sustainability and net zero carbon emission target.

"We are completely aligned on (efforts to achieve) net zero emissions," IATA Director General Willie Walsh said at the briefing.

According to the grouping, Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF) is expected to account for up to

65 per cent of the total carbon mitigation needed to achieve net zero carbon emissions in air transportation by 2050.

The next AGM will be held in June next year in Delhi. The last AGM in India was in 1983.

Mentioning that it will be an important moment for India to host the AGM again, Elbers said that in the last 42 years, the world, including India, has changed.

India is today the third largest aviation market in the world and the market is growing domestically as well as internationally, he said.

"What India can bring... is how to deal with the challenges in a fast-growing market," Elbers said.

Meanwhile, in response to a query, he said IATA is working on Artificial Intelligence (AI), which has both positive and negative impacts.

Work is on to understand more about the opportunities with AI, he said and emphasised the ethical use of AI.

Industry Pins Hope On Support For Deep-Tech, Digital, AI From New Govt

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: With AI and new-age technologies set to drive transformation agenda across sectors, the new government would need to steer ahead with unwavering focus on tech and digital innovation to sustain robust growth and to realise ambitions of a 'Viksit Bharat' by 2047, experts say.

Analysts believe that Centre will continue to build on its storied success around electronics and semiconductor manufacturing, as well as digital public infrastructure while according high-priority to AI, and deep-tech domains, notwithstanding a weaker mandate for the BJP-led NDA.

Given past impetus on technology-led development, the momentum on digital payments, tech-based startups, entrepreneurship and innovation could continue, despite the likely return of coalition politics.

As such, India's tech achievements have scaled new highs, be it digital public goods, or fintech, AI or drones for various use cases.

India Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA) President Ashok Chandak said that over the past five years, the Modi government has implemented economic reforms fostering growth, particularly in the semiconductor and electronics sectors. He expects that the "trend will continue, contributing to the Viksit Bharat vision and making India a developed nation by 2047".

"IESA will present a blueprint to the new ministry, emphasising



ing incentives and initiatives for these sectors over the next five years. The goal is to enhance local value addition, reduce import dependence, and position India as a global leader in semiconductor and electronics production," Chandak said.

According to IESA, key focus areas are job creation, education, talent development, manufacturing, startup support, global collaborations, and IPR development, supported by tailored government incentive schemes.

All eyes would also be on crucial regulations that are awaiting the next logical steps -- the rules for Digital Personal Data Protection, as also crafting the framework for Digital India Act to replace the archaic IT Act, 2000.

"We expect the new government to facilitate further expansion of the digital ecosystem while addressing key challenges such as interoperability, policy frameworks, cybersecurity, financial literacy, and the digital divide. This will empower fintechs to provide out-of-the-box financial solutions to a broader audience, catalysing financial inclusion, and fast-track the adoption of AI and ML capabilities," Rishabh Goel, co-founder and CEO, Credgenics, said.

Bear Attack Makes Investors Poorer By Rs 31 Lakh Cr As Markets Suffer Worst Single-Day Fall In 4 Years

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Equity investors suffered a massive loss of Rs 31 lakh crore on Tuesday as markets went into a tailspin with the BSE Sensex tumbling nearly 6 per cent as vote counting trends showed the BJP may not have a clear majority in the Lok Sabha polls.

Erasing the record-rally of the previous trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex cracked 4,389.73 points or 5.74 per cent to settle at 72,079.05. During the day, the benchmark tanked 6,234.35 points or 8.15 per cent to hit a nearly five-month low of 70,234.43.

Markets had previously declined by over 13 per cent on March 23, 2020 when lockdown was imposed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In line with weak trend in equities, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies eroded by Rs 31,07,806.27 crore to Rs 3,94,83,705.27 crore (USD 4.73 trillion) on Tuesday.

Following the huge rally in equities on Monday, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms had climbed Rs 13,78,630.4 crore to hit an all-time peak of Rs 4,25,91,511.54 crore (USD 5.13 trillion).

"BJP falling short of a complete majority won't stop NDA from forming a new government along with its key allies. Stock markets have been expecting a complete majority for the BJP and a thumping victory for the NDA. Exit polls too cemented the expectations. Markets had factored in the best possible outcome and valuations are rich.



"However, the market is aware of the challenges associated with coalition government. Now with election results not being one-sided, we are witnessing profit-booking. We believe this profit-booking may continue for some more time," Siddharth Bhamre - Head of Research, Asit C Mehta Investment Intermediates Ltd, said.

On May 16, 2014, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies stood at Rs 80,63,812.03 crore, while it was Rs 1,50,17,577.28 crore on May 23, 2019.

In ten years, the market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms have grown exponentially by Rs 314.19 lakh crore.

On Tuesday, among the 30 Sensex companies, NTPC plunged over 15 per cent, while State Bank of India tanked more than 14 per cent. Larsen & Toubro tumbled over 12 per cent and Power Grid dived more than 12 per cent. Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, Reliance Industries, JSW

Steel and Bharti Airtel were the other big laggards.

On the other hand, Hindustan Unilever jumped 6 per cent while Nestle climbed 3 per cent. Tata Consultancy Services, Asian Paints and Sun Pharma also emerged as the gainers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap gauge tanked 8.07 per cent and smallcap index plunged 6.79 per cent.

Among the indices, utilities dived 14.40 per cent, power tumbled 14.25 per cent, oil and gas by 13.07 per cent, services by 12.65 per cent, capital goods by 12.06 per cent, energy by 11.62 per cent and metal by 9.65 per cent.

"The unexpected outcome of the general election sparked a wave of fear selling in the domestic market, reversing the recent substantial rally. Despite this, the market maintains its expectation of stability within the coalition, led by BJP as the major election winner, thereby mitigating substantial downside in the medium-term.

Exit Polls Euphoria Led To Stocks Rout; Reforms To Suffer Under Coalition: Experts

Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: The equity market tanked due to expectations of a big NDA win created by the exit polls, key market participants said on Tuesday, stressing that the India story is intact from a medium- to long-term perspective.

All of them said the markets will continue to be volatile for a good part of this week, and will await clarity on the exact number of seats the BJP and the NDA win to retain power and key portfolio allocations, they said.

Domestic brokerage HDFC Securities' Managing Director Dhiraj Relli told PTI that with a seat tally of about 240 seats with the BJP and under 300 for the extended NDA, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will not be able to carry forward reforms on land, labour, and agriculture.

The progressive steps on such critical aspects will "go on the backburner", Relli said. He was also quick to add that this will not directly impact the capital markets.

The new government, most likely to be an NDA-led coalition,

will have to forego the "intensity" of implementing the promises made in the manifesto, he said, adding that Tuesday's 5.74 per cent fall in the benchmark was a "knee-jerk" reaction after the euphoria created by the exit polls, which showed Modi regime continuing with over 350 seats.

A Balasubramanian, the Managing Director and Chief Executive of Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC, concurred saying the poll outcome came as a surprise for investors who were expecting a comfortable win for Modi.

He told PTI that the change in power dynamics will have to be watched closely, and stressed that the equity market's reaction to the results should not make anyone doubt the India story, which remains intact from a medium- to long-term perspective.

As per results and trends, National Democratic Alliance is set to have about 290 members in the lower house of the Parliament while Modi's BJP is set to have much lower numbers at about 240. These numbers are sufficient to form the govern-

ment, but make Modi rely on alliance partners to run the government, which will be a first.

Balasubramanian said from a mutual fund perspective, there will be decent fund flows in June despite the negative sentiment which is built in and advised investors to stick to disciplined approach rather than worry about timing the market.

Investors like continuity in policies, but the short-term volatility in the market should be considered as an opportunity to build the portfolio, Manish Jain, director of institutional business at Mirae Asset Capital Markets, said.

"The election results are showing a less than halfway mark for the current BJP government, pointing towards a coalition government. This will lead to dependence on allies in making key policy decisions, and sharing certain cabinet seats, which will lead to policy paralysis and uncertainty in the government's functioning," Yashvardhan Khemka, Senior Manager, Research & Analytics at Abans Holdings, said.

IATA Flags Concerns Over Probe Against Foreign Airlines On GST Charges

Press Trust Of India



DUBAI: Global airlines' grouping IATA on Tuesday raised concerns about an Indian agency probing some foreign carriers with respect to certain charges related to Goods and Services Tax (GST).

The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has started probes against some of the foreign airlines having operations in India.

At a briefing here, IATA Country Director for India Amitabh Khosla said that for now, 10 foreign airlines have been picked up for investigation and that the move was "unprecedented".

The International Air Transport Association (IATA) has submitted a detailed representation to the Indian government on the issue, he told PTI.

The airlines have received notices since October 2023.

Xie Xingquan, Regional Vice President North Asia and Asia Pacific (ad interim), also mentioned about the GST issue at the briefing on the sidelines of the IATA Annual General Meeting.

The authority is interpreting the application of the local GST law with respect to the alleged import of service from the head office of a foreign airline in relation to aircraft services made available to the branch office in India.

The costs include those related to aircraft rental, crew and pilot, and maintenance costs. Such costs would need to be cross-

charged to the Indian branch so as to be liable to GST under reverse charge.

"Airline's branch offices in India do not play any role in the crucial operations such as contracting for aircraft leased, crew and pilots, fuel and maintenance costs.

"All the operations to and from India are decided, controlled and operated by the airlines' head offices and it is not legally accurate to attribute any strategic and/or operational risks and functions to the branch offices in India," the grouping said.

During an interaction with journalists, IATA Director General Willie Walsh said taxation in India is far more complex.

He was responding to a query about some foreign carriers being probed in relation to GST charges. With some tax proposals, there could also be a situation where some airlines could withdraw from the market and the risk of double taxation, he added.

India is one of the fastest-growing civil aviation markets in the world. IATA is a grouping of more than 330 airlines that account for over 80 per cent of the global air traffic.

Modi Retaining Power Under Changed Conditions To Make Reforms Challenging: Economists



Press Trust Of India

MUMBAI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi retaining power in the general elections under "changed circumstances" will make the implementation of critical reforms challenging, economists said on Tuesday.

Economists said the results, wherein trends and leads showed the incumbent National Democratic Alliance (NDA) being set to win around 295 seats but Modi's BJP falling short of the halfway mark of 272 by itself, are a "negative surprise".

"It is likely that Narendra Modi will return as PM for a third term. However, he will have to contend with changed circumstances," a note from the domestic brokerage Emkay said, adding that the broad direction of the economic policy is unlikely to change.

Seeming to concur on the same, analysts at Swiss brokerage UBS said it expects the government to push supply-side reforms, including manufacturing, simplification of regulatory processes, labour law implementation, skill development and creating employment opportunities.

"However, we think imple-

mentation of tougher reforms, including land reforms, a big boost to infrastructure spending, divestment, farm bills, Uniform Civil Code, One Nation One Elections amongst others will be challenging," it said.

The brokerage added that these will matter a lot for the overall narrative for investor sentiment.

The note from Emkay also said that market reforms like those related to land, agriculture, and labour are now "off the table".

Privatisation and asset monetisation are also at risk, which could drag government capex in the short term, it added.

"A narrow margin victory for the BJP... could lead to faster required reforms which will further support India's growth story," private sector lender RBL Bank's Achala Jethmalani said.

Emkay said the BJP will be dependent on regional allies like Telugu Desam Party and Janata Dal (United), and will have to make policy adjustments accordingly.

Also, there will be greater demand to stimulate consumption in the economy from both the BJP and allies, it added.

DoT Defers Spectrum Auction To June 25

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: The Department of Telecom (DoT) on Tuesday postponed the spectrum auction by 19 days to June 25, as per information available on its website.

According to amendments made in the notice inviting applications for bids on Tuesday, the new date for "start of the live auction" has been changed to June 25 from June 6.

The government will auction eight spectrum bands for mobile phone services at a base price of about Rs 96,317 crore.

All the available spectrum in the 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1,800 MHz, 2,100 MHz, 2,300 MHz, 2,500 MHz, 3,300 MHz, and 26 GHz bands are part of the auction.

Reliance Jio has deposited the highest earnest money of Rs 3,000 crore for the spectrum auc-

tion, which gives the company the potential to bid for maximum radiowaves.

According to pre-qualified bidder details released by the DoT, Bharti Airtel has submitted the earnest money deposit (EMD) of Rs 1,050 crore and Vodafone Idea (VIL) of Rs 300 crore.

Companies get points based on the EMD amount they have deposited, which enables them to bid for the number of circles and quantity of spectrum they want. Higher points mean a higher capability to place bids. The spectrum will be assigned for a period of 20 years and successful bidders will be allowed to make payments in 20 equal annual instalments.

The DoT has provided an option to surrender the spectrum acquired through the upcoming auction after a minimum period of 10 years.

23 Kishtwar Women Farmers Leave For Exposure Visit To SKUAST-K

Observer News Service

KISHTWAR: A group of 23 women farmers and members of Self Help Groups (SHGs) Tuesday left for a five-day exposure tour to Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology, Kashmir (SKUAST-K).

The objective of the tour is to enable these farmers to learn best agricultural practices.

The tour was organized on the directions and guidance of District Development Commissioner Dr. Devansh Yadav by the Agriculture Department under Central Scheme ATMA and flagged off by the Chief Agriculture Officer Amjad Hussain Malik.

The exposure visit includes a special focus on saffron cultivation. The itinerary includes a

visit to the advanced research center in the Dussu area of Pampore, known for its pioneering work in saffron research.

Addressing the tour group, the Chief Agriculture Officer encouraged the women farmers to make the most of this opportunity by learning from the scientists and experienced farmers at SKUAST-K. He emphasized the importance of adopting innovative and sustainable farming practices. The CAO advised the farmers to interact with farm scientists, experts, and extension functionaries during the exposure tour to gain the latest knowledge in crop cultivation techniques.

The flag-off ceremony was attended by officials of the Agriculture Department, concerned officers, and the women farmers/SHGs.

Gold Jumps Rs 450; Silver Climbs Rs 200

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Gold prices jumped Rs 450 to Rs 72,900 per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday in line with strong trends internationally, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous session, the precious metal had closed at Rs 72,450 per 10 grams.

Additionally, silver prices climbed Rs 200 to Rs 93,100 per kg. It had settled at Rs 92,900 per kg in the previous session.



Spot gold prices (24 carats) in the Delhi markets are trading at Rs 72,900 per 10 grams, up by Rs 450 against the previous close," Saumil Gandhi, senior analyst of commodities at

HDFC Securities, said. In the global markets, spot gold at Comex was trading at USD 2,335 per ounce, up USD 15 from the previous close.

Gold rose on Tuesday as disappointing US manufacturing data raised hopes that the Federal Reserve will have room to lower borrowing costs this year, Gandhi said.

In addition, silver went up

to USD 30.25 per ounce. It had ended at USD 30.19 per ounce in the previous session.

"Gold is stuck in a range in the absence of fresh triggers and as markets look ahead to the European Central Banks policy outcome on Thursday and the US Non-farm Payroll/employment data on Friday," Pranav Mer, VP of Research (Commodity & Currency) at BlinkX and JM Financial Services, said.

Modi Poised For

winning 16 and 12 seats in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar respectively, and other alliance partners, the NDA appeared to be on course to bag around 290 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. The TDP also swept the assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh dislodging Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP.

Preparing to take office for a record equalling historic third term, Prime Minister Modi pledged to work with all states, regardless of the party in power, to build a developed India. India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru had served three consecutive terms.

In his first speech after the results of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, Modi laid out his vision for the third term saying it would be a tenure of big decisions and key emphasis would be on uprooting corruption.

It is the first time that 73-year-old Modi will be dependent on allies to be in the government since he came into politics.

"The fight against corruption is becoming tougher by the day. Corruption is being shamelessly glorified for political interest. In our third term, NDA will focus a lot on rooting out corruption of all kinds," Modi said.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge termed the poll outcome as the "victory of the people and that of democracy."

"We had been saying that this battle is between public and Modi...This mandate is against Modi. This is his political and moral defeat. It is a big defeat for a person who sought votes in his own name. He has suffered a moral setback," Kharge told reporters at the AICC headquarters flanked by Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi after the good showing by the Congress.

The elections also highlighted the revival of the main opposition Congress party under Rahul Gandhi, and the unexpected role of the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh - under Akhilesh Yadav - as a giant slayer.

The trends and results did not throw up a landslide victory by the BJP-led NDA had hoped for and what was projected by the exit polls. More than 640 million votes are to be counted in the world's largest democratic exercise.

The NDA was stirred into life mostly around elections in the last 10 years as the BJP's big majority and shrinking opposition in the Lok Sabha made its allies mostly redundant but this time around, allies will matter more than ever.

The Congress, which is part of the opposition INDIA alliance, was leading or winning 99 seats compared to 52 it won in 2019 eating into BJP's share in Rajasthan and Haryana. The INDIA bloc won or was ahead in over 200 seats.

As SP chief Akhilesh Yadav kept the INDIA bloc morale high in Uttar Pradesh, the Trinamool Congress, another key ally of the opposition alliance, was leading or winning in 29 seats in West Bengal, higher than its 22 in 2019. The BJP, which had 18 seats in the last Lok Sabha election, was ahead in 12 seats.

In UP, the BJP won or was ahead in 33 seats as against its tally of 62 in 2019 and the SP's numbers went up, largely attributed to three factors - consolidation of Muslim votes in favour of SP, smart seat sharing agreements with Congress to avoid splitting of non-BJP votes and widespread discontent with the BJP government over jobs and price rise. The SP was winning or leading in 37 of the 80 seats at stake.

Modi retained the Varanasi seat but with a reduced victory margin of nearly 1.53 lakh votes in Varanasi. In 2019, the margin was 4.79,505.

Rahul Gandhi, often lampooned by the BJP as 'Shehzada', won Wayanad (Kerala) and Rae Bareilly (UP) seats by a huge margin of 3,64,422 votes and 3,90,030 votes respectively.

The campaigning for the elections, which were conducted from April 19 to June 1 in seven phases, was marked by divisive communal issues and excessive reliance on Modi for getting votes. The prime minister held more than 300 rallies, travelling tirelessly almost every day to multiple locations.

The results also blew away the BJP narrative that it will score big in the southern states this time. It, however, returned a tally of zero in Tamil Nadu, and lost seats in Karnataka.

The BJP did make inroads in Kerala, winning a seat for the first time in a state where the Congress and the Left are the major political force, and in Telangana where it won or was leading in 8 seats. Popular Malayalam actor Suresh Gopi won the Thiruvananthapuram seat in Kerala to help the lotus bloom.

In Andhra Pradesh, BJP ally Telugu Desam Party won or was leading in 16 seats and the BJP was ahead or winning in three.

The biggest setback for the BJP, which faced a stronger challenge from the opposition, however, was in the north where, besides UP, the BJP also faced losses in Rajasthan and Haryana.

West Bengal also dealt the party a real deal, although it more than made up for the losses in Odisha.

Madhya Pradesh went fully saffron with the BJP winning or leading in all 29 seats. In Gujarat, too, BJP was winning or leading in 25 of 26 seats.

The situation was not as decisive in other states. In Bihar, the BJP was ahead in 12 and its partner JD-U in 13, a vote of confidence for its leader Nitish Kumar who swung from INDIA back to the NDA ahead of the elections. The RJD was poised to win four seats.

In Rajasthan, BJP was ahead only in 14 seats, against all 25 its alliance won last time. The Congress was ahead in eight.

Haryana also threw up a shock result for the BJP, where the party was leading only in five and the Congress in five. In 2019, the saffron party had bagged all 10.

It appeared that the election marked a return to regular politics, where voters were more concerned about bread and butter issues, especially in some Hindi heartland states where the opposition INDIA alliance managed to rally supporters around the issues of unemployment and price rise.

Maharashtra, with 48 Lok Sabha seats, saw the Shiv Sena split down the middle since the last election. The BJP, which won 23 seats five years ago, was down with leads in 11 seats, while its ally Shiv Sena could get seven.

On the other end of the spectrum, the Congress was ahead in 12 seats, up from one, and the Shiv Sena (UBT) in 19. The NCP Sharad Pawar faction could get seven seats, giving the INDIA alliance, forged together by the common dislike of the BJP, a possible 38 seats.

However, a silver lining was provided by Union ministers Nitin Gadkari and Piyush Goyal who appeared on course to easily victories in Nagpur and Mumbai North respectively.

In Odisha, the BJP was doing spectacularly well, with leads in 19 out of 21 seats, while the ruling Biju Janata Dal was down to just one. It was also ahead in the Odisha assembly elections, leading in 76 out of 146 seats, a success show in the state it had never succeeded in capturing.

In Andhra Pradesh, the Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP was ahead in 16 seats of 25, the BJP in three and the YSRCP in four.

Trends for Karnataka showed potential gains for the Congress, with leads in nine seats, up from one last time. The BJP, which got 25 seats in 2019, was ahead in 17.

Tamil Nadu seemed to be scripting another story, not ceding any space to the saffron party. The ruling DMK was ahead in 22 and ally Congress in nine, a notch higher than their 2019 positions.

Unprecedented Moment

"clean sweep" victories in assembly elections as well as Lok Sabha wins in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Modi also said that the Congress has been wiped out in several states and pointed out that the combined number of seats won by the opposition alliance was less than that of the BJP alone. Modi's victory speech at the BJP headquarters, however, was thin on politics and heavy on the future roadmap of his government, which he noted was coming for the third consecutive time, a first in six decades.

"Our Constitution is our guiding light. I want to assure that the Centre will work with all states, irrespective of the party in power there, to work towards our resolve to make India a developed country," Modi said.

The prime minister arrived at the BJP headquarters to a rousing welcome by hundreds of supporters who chanted 'Modi, Modi'. He was greeted by BJP President J P Nadda and Union Ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah on the dais.

The backdrop on the stage had 'Dhanyawad Bharat' written in various languages, including Urdu.

Modi began his speech with 'Jai Jagannath' and thanked the people of Odisha for giving BJP a clear mandate for the first time.

He also thanked TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar - his NDA allies - for the

electoral successes in Andhra Pradesh and Bihar.

The PM said people have expressed their trust in the ruling alliance for the third consecutive time and this is an unprecedented moment in the history of the country. He also expressed his gratitude to workers for their hard work.

In a post on X, PM Modi said, "The people of the country have expressed their trust in the NDA for the third consecutive time. This is an unprecedented moment in the history of India. I thank my family for their love and blessings. I assure the countrymen that to fulfil their aspirations, we will move forward with new energy, new enthusiasm, and new resolves."

"I express my heartfelt gratitude and congratulations to all the workers for the dedication and tireless hard work they have done," the Prime Minister added.

PM Modi won his third successive election from Varanasi, defeating Congress candidate Ajay Rai by a margin of 1,52,513 votes. According to latest EC trends, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) is ahead on 293 seats, while the INDIA bloc is leading in 232 seats. The BJP is ahead or has won 240 seats. The BJP had won a majority on its own in the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls, securing 282 seats in 2014 and improving its tally to 303 seats in the 2019 elections. The Lok Sabha polls were held in seven phases from April 19 to June 1.

"After 1962, for the first time a government has won the mandate for a third consecutive term," Modi said.

Modi also thanked the Election Commission for conducting the world's largest election with great efficiency.

NC, BJP Secure

Parliamentary Constituency, Aga Syed Ruhulla Mehdi emerged victorious by a huge margin of 1.80 lakh votes.

Aga Ruhulla has secured 356886 and defeated his rival from Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) with a margin of 188416 votes, who bagged 168450 votes. Apni Party candidate, Muhammad Ashraf Mir however secured only 65954 votes.

However, the NC candidate from Anantnag-Rajouri seat, Mian Altaf Ahmad Larvi bagged 521836 votes and defeated his close rival and PDP chief, who is also a former chief minister of erstwhile J&K state, Mehbooba Mufti with a margin of 281794 votes.

Mehbooba secured only 240,042 votes, followed by Apni Party's Zafar Iqbal Khan Manhas, who bagged 142195 votes only. The Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency where the close contest was expected between former chief minister Omar Abdullah and former minister and Peoples Conference (PC) leader Sajad Gani Lone however witnessed a different scene as the independent candidate and a jailed leader Er Rashid emerged victorious from the seat.

Er Rashid is a former two-time MLA from Langate in North Kashmir. He has been in Tihar Jail for five years facing terror funding charges under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). He leads the Awami Ittehad Party, but he chose to contest as an independent candidate. He bagged 472481 votes and defeated his close rival Omar Abdullah by a margin of 204142 votes, who secured a total of 268339 votes while Sajad Lone got only 173239 votes. The credit for Er Rashid's victory is being attributed to the "vigorous and emotional election campaign" run by his two sons Abrar Rashid and Asrar Rashid across the North Kashmir LS seat. The siblings emerged as crowd pullers and attracted a large number of youth to their rallies where they sought support and votes for their jailed father, which ultimately bore the fruit.

Meanwhile, the winning candidates thanked the voters for putting trust in them by casting their ballots in their favour.

Mian Altaf said that he was very optimistic about his victory. "During my election campaign, I saw the interest of people in me and was sure about my win," Mian Altaf said.

Altaf vowed to fulfil all his promises made during the election campaign. "This victory was by a very high margin. Anantnag-Rajouri was a prestigious seat in Lok Sabha elections. All eyes were on this seat," he said. Altaf thanked the people of his constituency for this opportunity.

NC's winning candidate from Srinagar Parliamentary constituency, Aga Ruhulla, said that he will strongly raise the issue of whatever was snatched from the people of J&K and also its restoration as well. "My stand cannot change in a night. I will stick to my ideology for which people have voted in my favour," he said.

On Omar Abdullah's defeat, Ruhulla said that the verdict thrown by the people had to be accepted. "I will also raise the issue of youngsters, who are behind the bars and will come up to the expectations of the people," he added.

Hat-trick For BJP

constituencies.

While Jammu has elected Jugal Kishore Sharma for the third consecutive term as Member Parliament (MP), Udhampur has sided with the union minister of state Dr. Jitendra Singh to represent them at the highest seat of governance.

The saffron wave has swept Hindu-dominated Jammu region despite the fact that anti-incumbency was in place and both the BJP candidates had to reach from pillar to post to convince people to vote in their favour.

As per the data available with election commission of India website, Jugal Kishore Sharma won the Jammu Lok Sabha seat with a margin of 135498 votes as he got a total of 687588 votes. His nearest and only strong competitor, Congress party's stalwart Raman Bhalha was able to get 552090 votes. On Udhampur seat, Dr. Jitendra Singh defeated his arch rival and Congress candidate Choudhary Lal Singh with a margin of 124373 votes. The union MoS in PMO got a total of 571076 votes whereas Congress candidates got 446703 votes.

Talking to the mediapersons Dr. Jitendra Singh said, "This is victory of people to see Narendra Modi as Prime Minister for the third term. People of Udhampur seat are lucky enough as they have become part of transformation and contributed to elect the Prime Minister. This constituency is very important and I pray to god to give me wisdom so that development works continue like it was taken up earlier."

Udhampur Lok Sabha seat went for polls during the first phase on April 19 and 1113727 votes out of over 16.23 lakh votes whereas Jammu seat went for polls during the second phase on April 26 and 1302176 votes were polled out of over 17.80 lakh votes.

"We contested the elections in the first phase, for which I got just 20 days and all the equations were against us. Despite that people showered their blessings and I managed to get 4.46 lakh votes which shows the resentment of youth and poor against the present government. I am 100% sure the first time voters and the educated class voted against the current regime," Choudhary Lal Singh said and accepted his defeat.

Out of the 18 assembly segments of Udhampur Lok Sabha constituency, Jitendra managed to get leads in 13 segments whereas Lal Singh only managed to get leads in five segments and that too of Chenab valley. The Congress candidate couldn't perform well in his own bastion of Kathua district whereas the neutral Udhampur district stood behind BJP like in 2019 and 2014.

Both Dr Jitendra Singh and Jugal Kishore Sharma have made a hat-trick of victories and have given an important two seats to BJP to get a chance to form government at the center.

Post abrogation of Article 370 in 2019, this was the first general election being held in J&K and Jammu seems to be happy with what the BJP has done.

The victory of BJP on both the seats of Jammu region is certainly going to boost the confidence of the saffron party as in a few months from now the election commission of India is expected to hold Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir in this election recorded its highest poll participation in the last 35 years. The Combined Voter Turnout at the polling stations for the entire Union Territory was 58.46 per cent.

Meanwhile, in Ladakh Parliamentary constituency, Independent candidate Haji Hanefa Jan secured 65259 votes while Congress party's Tsering Namgyal bagged 37,397 votes while BJP's Tashi Gyalson got 31,956 votes. Official figures suggested that Haji won with a margin of 27,862 votes. (KNO)

Setback For Former

not to contest the upcoming assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir till it remains a Union Territory.

While Abdullah was defeated by former MLA and terror-funding accused Sheikh Abdul Rashid by a margin of nearly two lakh votes in Baramulla Lok Sabha seat, Mufti was trounced by Gujjar leader and National Conference (NC) candidate Mian Altaf Ahmad by nearly three lakh votes in Anantnag-Rajouri seat.

With the assembly elections likely to be held before September 30 this year, the defeats have raised a question mark on the participation of Abdullah and Mufti in these elections.

Both the leaders have, at several occasions, ruled out participating in assembly elections till Jammu and Kashmir remained a Union Territory.

"I have made it abundantly clear that in the current situation that J-K finds itself in, I am not contesting the assembly elections," the 54-year-old Abdullah told PTI in an interview in April this year, adding that he had been saying this since 2020 and his position had not changed.

The PDP president has been a little more hardline in her approach on this issue.

"I am never going to participate in assembly election as long as Article 370 is not restored. Whenever I took oath as a member assembly, it was under two Constitutions - J&K Constitution and the Constitution of India - with two flags at the same time. Maybe it is foolish on my part but it is more of an emotional issue for me," Mufti said in an interview with PTI last year.

While this was the first electoral defeat for Abdullah in 22 years, 65-year-old Mufti has now lost two elections back to back. She had lost the Lok Sabha polls in 2019 and 1999 as well.

This is the first loss in Lok Sabha polls for Abdullah.

The other prominent loser in this election was PDP youth president Waheed Para, who is also facing terror charges. Para lost to influential Shia leader Aga Roohullah in the Srinagar Lok Sabha seat.

On the other hand, Kashmir has sent three first-timers to Lok Sabha this year with Rashid, who is currently in Tihar jail in a terror-funding case, emerging as the giant slayer of Kashmir politics.

The former MLA, popularly known as Engineer Rashid, not only defeated Abdullah but pushed People's Conference president Sajad Gani Lone to the third position.

Rashid (56) has been a popular figure among the people of his area in north Kashmir for raising human rights issues during his two terms as MLA from Langate in 2008 and 2014. He came a close third in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. Rashid was arrested in 2019 by the NIA in connection with a terror funding case and has been in Tihar jail since then.

Besides Rashid, National Conference leaders Mian Altaf Ahmad and Aga Roohullah have defeated their more fancied rivals Mehbooba Mufti in Anantnag-Rajouri and Waheed Para in Srinagar, respectively.

The Gujjar leader has been a minister and MLA from Kangan in Ganderbal district for several terms and his selection as candidate for the newly carved Anantnag-Rajouri seat was a masterstroke by the NC leadership. Ahmad (67), who comes from a well-respected religious family and has a huge following among the Gujjars of Jammu and Kashmir, was initially reluctant to contest but was eventually persuaded by the party leadership.

The soft-spoken politician has a reputation of being an able administrator and has delivered in the past as minister in governments headed by Farooq Abdullah (1996-2002) and Omar Abdullah (2009-2014) in Jammu and Kashmir.

Roohullah, whose first step into politics was mired in controversy, will be the first Shia from Kashmir to go to the Lok Sabha since 1971.

Roohullah's father Aga Syed Mehdi was killed by terrorists in an IED blast in 2000, forcing his young son to take a political plunge in 2002 assembly elections.

When Roohullah filed his nomination papers on the NC ticket, one of his relatives filed a complaint with the election authorities, claiming he was underage to contest the polls.

The complaint was dismissed and Roohullah won the election from Budgam seat. Both Mian Altaf Ahmad and Roohullah have not lost any election they contested so far.

The outspoken Roohullah did not hesitate to take on the party leadership when it decided to contest the District Development Council polls after the abrogation of Article 370.

And he reiterated his stand saying he will raise the issue of abrogation of Article 370 in the Parliament.

"I will raise the issue of what was snatched from us and we do not accept the decisions taken on August 5, 2019. I will vociferously take their voice to the Parliament and seek its restoration. This mandate increases my responsibility," he added.

INDIA Bloc

that it was the poor and the marginalised who stood up. "India's poorest and backward stood up to save the Constitution," he said.

He added that the Congress, and the INDIA bloc have given India a new vision, a pro-poor vision.

"The main thing this election has said, the country has said, is that we don't want Narendra Modi, Amit Shah to be running this country," he said.

He said all Congress leaders respected INDIA bloc allies and wherever the alliance fought "we fought as one". Gandhi offered special thanks to the electorate of Uttar Pradesh for supporting the Congress and "protecting" the Constitution.

When asked if he would keep the Wayanad or Rae Bareilly seat, Gandhi said he has not taken a decision yet.

On Congress candidate K L Sharma wrestling the Amethi seat from the BJP's Smriti Irani, Gandhi said the party loyalist had been working in the constituency for the past 40 years and his victory was certain.

"This seat will add to the tally to make a government led by Prime Minister Modi for the third time," he said.

In 2019, Singh defeated Congress candidate Vikramaditya Singh by a margin of 353,272 votes. In 2014, he won against former Union minister Gulam Nabi Azad by 60,976 votes and was subsequently appointed Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office.

Choudhary Lal Singh, who previously won the Udhampur seat on a Congress ticket in 2004 and 2009, posed a formidable challenge. A former MLA and minister in the PDP-Congress and PDP-BJP governments, Lal Singh rejoined Congress in March 2024.

The Udhampur constituency has been alternating between the Congress and the BJP.

Congress won six consecutive times from 1967, while BJP's Chamam Lal Gupta secured three successive victories before Lal Singh's two-term win in 2004 and 2009.

Jitendra Singh's victories mark a significant achievement, underscoring the BJP's stronghold in the region, BJP's J&K unit president Ravinder Raina said.

"We won both the seats of Jammu and Udhampur with a large margin as people have reposed full faith in BJP and its candidates under the leadership of Modi ji," he said.

The 'Pressure Cooker'

that the massive crowds witnessed in the rallies would turn into votes for Rashid, proved true on Tuesday. Despite their humble backgrounds the duo took on two political heavyweights, Omar Abdullah and Sajad Gani Lone and made the two powerful candidates bite the dust at the hustings.

A NOVICE IN POLITICS

Engineer Rashid worked as a construction engineer before he quit his job in 2008 and embarked on a political career. He led a brief electoral campaign in the 2008 Jammu and Kashmir state polls and registered a comfortable win from the Langate seat in his hometown.

In 2013, Rashid formed his own party and named it Jammu and Kashmir Awami Ittehad Party, with the slogan of Progress, Prestige and Protection. He later won the Langate assembly segment in 2014 also.

In 2019, Rashid also fought parliamentary elections from Baramulla constituency. Though he could not get victory, he fetched more than a whopping one lakh votes, a record for him - he was only 827 votes behind People conference's Sajad Lone and only 31,192 votes behind winner NC candidate Akbar Lone.

While he leads the Awami Ittehad Party, he contested these elections as an Independent.

Many believe that his simplicity of thoughts and lifestyle made him popular. Rashid wore traditional cloth, pheran, travelled in an auto rickshaw or small car, roamed without heavy security and kept himself low profile like a common man. He believed in door to door campaigns and reached to every house not only during elections but all the time.

Rashid is known for his controversial stance on various issues and is alleged to have a soft corner for the separatist movement in Kashmir, an accusation which many have alleged resonate with many of his supporters, hence the

reason for his popularity.

Even before he joined politics, Engineer Rashid was arrested by Special Operation Group (SOG) of the Jammu and Kashmir Police in 2005 and booked under the Public Safety Act (PSA) for allegedly supporting militants.

Rashid was in jail for over three months before he was eventually released on humanitarian grounds.

CONTROVERSIES

In October 2015, Rashid was assaulted by BJP MLAs inside the state assembly after he hosted a "beef party" on the laws of the government circuit house to protest against the Central government beef ban order in the country.

Later, black ink was hurled at him in Press Club New Delhi, allegedly by BJP workers, after his remarks condemning the brutal lynching of a Kashmiri trucker in Udhampur district.

He also led and participated in many protests including a few unique ones. For instance, in protest against Shopian killings he brought out cows, dogs, goats in protest with a banner that read "Kashmiri people live a less secure life in Kashmir than a street dog in Kashmir".

He even jumped in the assembly hall and was marshaled out a few times. His adversaries even mocked him saying draamebaaz and joker.

Now that Rashid has emerged victorious in the Lok Sabha elections from the Baramulla constituency, the question on everyone's minds is when, and if, he will be released from jail. This is the very representation the people voted for, and the anticipation of his release remains.

Can Rashid

seats, or will they be released to fulfil their duties? How would they even take oath?

How were jailed candidates able to contest elections? Under the Representation of the People Act, 1951, every citizen of India who is at least eighteen years old and ordinarily resident in a constituency is entitled to be registered in the electoral roll for that constituency. However, a person who is detained in prison or legal custody is not considered ordinarily resident in the location of their detention.

Despite this, the law does not prohibit such individuals from contesting elections unless they have been convicted of certain specified offences. Thus, Engineer Rashid and Singh were able to contest the elections while being incarcerated.

It is interesting to note that people who are in jail can not vote since their rights are suspended during the period of imprisonment.

Immediate disqualification on conviction

The Supreme Court of India, in a landmark judgment in 2013, held that Members of Parliament (MPs) and Members of Legislative Assemblies (MLAs) would be immediately disqualified from holding their positions upon conviction of a crime.

This decision struck down Section 8(4) of the Representation of the People Act, which previously allowed convicted lawmakers a three-month window to appeal their convictions.

If Engineer Rashid or Singh were to be convicted of their charges, they would lose their seats in the Lok Sabha immediately.

Rashid is in jail under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). He was a close aide of slain Hurriyat leader and JKPC founder Abdul Gani Lone, father of Sajad Lone. Singh, on the other hand, is a Khalistani leader in jail under the National Security Act (NSA).

Temporary release for taking oath?

Elected representatives who are in jail have often been temporarily released on bail or parole to take their oaths of office. Indian courts have consistently granted such temporary reliefs to ensure that the democratic process is upheld.

For example, in 2020, the Allahabad High Court granted parole to Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) leader Atul Rai to take his oath as a Member of Parliament. Similarly, in 2022, Samajwadi Party MLA Nahid Hasan was released on bail to take his oath as a Member of Legislative Assembly in Uttar Pradesh.

Engineer Rashid and Singh may be granted temporary release to take their oaths as members of the Lok Sabha. This ensures that they can formally assume their roles despite their incarceration.

Functioning from jail
The question of whether MPs and MLAs can perform their duties from jail is complex. Historically, there have been instances where jailed elected representatives have continued to discharge their duties from prison. For example, communication channels have been facilitated and meetings have been allowed to ensure that the constituents are represented and the elected duties are carried out.

Jailed MPs and MLAs could rely on their party colleagues, family members, and legal teams to assist in fulfilling their responsibilities. They can communicate directives and remain involved in legislative activities through these intermediaries. However, their ability to participate in parliamentary sessions and committee meetings is severely restricted.

The impact on constituents
The election of jailed candidates raises significant questions about representation and the effectiveness of governance. Constituents of Baramulla and Khadoor Sahib might face challenges in accessing their elected representatives. Although the elected MPs can provide some level of service and representation from jail, their ability to fully engage in parliamentary duties and advocacy is inevitably compromised. (inputs from PTI)

'Campaign Cost

T20 WORLD CUP

Anrich Nortje shines as South Africa hammer Sri Lanka at New York

Press Trust of India

Anrich Nortje demolished Sri Lanka with career-best figures of 4/7 as South Africa exploited the bounce on offer to secure a six-wicket win in their T20 World Cup opener in New York on Monday.

At a venue where India will play three of their four Group A league matches, Sri Lanka's decision to bat first backfired.

Nortje, Kagiso Rabada (2/21) and Keshav Maharaj (2/22) combined to take eight wickets in a dominant bowling performance as Sri Lanka folded up for 77 in 19.1 overs, their lowest T20 total.

But it was not a walk in the park for South Africa in the challenging conditions of Nassau Stadium as the Proteas had to sweat it out after Sri Lanka reduced them to 27/2 inside the powerplay.

Sri Lankan wrist spinner Wanindu Hasaranga led their bowling show with his 2/17 from three overs, taking the wickets of Quinton De Kock (20) and Tristan Stubbs (13) in successive overs.

But the lack of scoreboard pressure meant South Africa knocked off the target in 16.2 overs to get a major boost to their net run-rate.

South Africa now have two points with a NRR of 1.048 to lead the Group D standings. Bangladesh, Nepal and the Netherlands are the other teams in the group.

The in-form Heinrich Klaasen smashed Hasaranga for a massive six over long-on and followed it up with a straight boundary to bring up 11 runs in the 15th over and virtually kill the contest.

Nuwan Thushara drew the first blood for Sri Lanka in the second over when he induced an outside edge from Reeza Hendricks with an outswinger. Mathews then gave Aiden Markram some tough time and also hit the South African skipper awkwardly in the abdomen region that required some medical attention.

A spectacular six through covers from Markram broke the shackles but he was out the next over from Dasun Shanaka with Kamindu Mendis pulling off a stunning catch at slip.



Nortje bowled full tilt to lead the four-pronged pace attack and bettered his previous best T20 figures of 4/10.

Kagiso Rabada returned with 2/21, while wily left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj also relished the conditions to end

up with 2/22. The drop-in pitch at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium proved to be a

nightmare for the Lankan batters who struggled to time the ball while the outfield too was slow.

The Proteas attack, on the other hand, revelled in the friendly conditions, beginning with a first-ball wicket for Otteneil Baartman who returned with remarkable figures of 1/9 on his World Cup debut.

The rookie pacer hit the deck hard, and induced an edge off Pathum Nissanka (3) from a fullish delivery that swung away and also had some bounce.

Nortje was fast and furious and also got a wicket off his first over when Kamindu Mendis mistimed a pull to make it 31/2 inside eight overs.

There was also help for spinners, as Maharaj struck twice in successive deliveries, dismissing skipper Wanindu Hasaranga and Sadeera Samarawickrama.

Half of the side was back in the hut at the midway mark with Nortje taking his second after Kusal Mendis mistimed a pull. Veteran Angelo Mathews looked most comfortable and made a 16-ball 16 before Nortje dismissed him for his fourth scalp. Nuwan Thushara's run-out ended their innings in 19.1 overs.

With Owen Leading The Line, Pakistan Football League Gets Govt Nod



Agencies

KARACHI: The man who once used to lead the line for England was, on Monday, leading talks for the launch of a franchise league in Pakistan.

Former England and Liverpool striker Michael Owen scored for the Pakistan Football League as soon as he touched down in Islamabad, helping the project get the government's nod.

The approval came when a delegation of the PFL, which has been termed "illegal and unsanctioned" by the Pakistan Football Federation Normalisation Committee, met Inter-provincial Coordination minister Rana Sanaullah, who is also the prime minister's adviser on political and public affairs.

A statement from the Ministry of Inter-provincial Coordination

termed the meeting "a significant milestone in the government's efforts to promote sports, in line with the Prime Minister's Vision".

This is the second time Owen has come to Pakistan in a bid to launch a franchise league in the country. On his last visit in 2022, he came as the brand ambassador of Global Soccer Ventures (GSV), which has now been rebranded to PFL.

The PFL plan, according to an official statement, is to construct a "state-of-the-art soccer city stadium" in Karachi. Two years ago, GSV held a "ground breaking ceremony" at the NED University.

Those plans have been revived. Alongside Owen this time were his former England and Liverpool strike partner Emile Heskey and former France full-back Pascal Chimbonda.

The PFL has also committed to

establish academies alongside holding the franchise league.

In an event at Parliament House later on Monday, Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gilani assured his support for the PFL, which hopes to be the football counterpart of cricket's Pakistan Super League.

"Let us celebrate the spirit of football, embrace diversity, and work together to create a brighter future one where every child has the chance to chase their dreams on the football field," he added.

The PFL plans to launch its event in November this year but it faces opposition from the FIFA-appointed PFF NC. The Haroon Malik-led NC has stated it is the sole body to regulate football in the country and threatened it would open disciplinary proceedings against players and officials who decide to take part in the PFL.

Rohan Bopanna Picks N Sriram Balaji As His Partner For Paris Olympics

Press Trust of India

World number four Rohan Bopanna has picked N Sriram Balaji, who impressed with his performance at the French Open, as his partner for the Paris Olympics and All India Tennis Association (AITA) is unlikely to have any objection to the choice made by the veteran player.

The 44-year-old Bopanna wrote to AITA and also marked TOPS in the mail, conveying his decision - a development confirmed by the national federation.

Balaji and his Mexican partner MA Reyes-Varela Martinez had tested the formidable combo of Bopanna and Australia's Matthew Ebden before losing the men's doubles third round on Monday.

Balaji played well from the baseline with a strong serve backing his game and was equally impressive at the net -- a performance that would have convinced Bopanna that the player from Coimbatore is the best option for him when he returns to Roland Garros for a final shot at an Olympic medal next month.

Bopanna, only the third Indian to win a Grand Slam title, came close to winning a medal at the Rio Games but



he and Sania Mirza had lost the mixed doubles bronze match to the Czech combination of Radek Stepanek and Lucie Hradecka.

"I have sent an email to AITA," Bopanna told PTI from Paris, adding that he will comment on his choice only after hearing back from the national federation.

Yuki Bhambri, India's number two doubles player at number 52, was also in contention.

The 31-year-old Bhambri made a first round exit from the French Open with French partner Albano Olivetti but has enjoyed success on clay this season, winning the ATP 250 tournament in Munich and ending runners-up at another ATP 250 event in

Lyon with the same partner.

When contacted, AITA Secretary General Anil Dhuvar said he does not have any objection to Bopanna playing with Balaji, ranked 84, at the Paris Olympics.

"Rohan has written to us that he wants to play with Balaji. Balaji is a good player. He played well in Pakistan also, rising to the occasion. He also did well on clay at ongoing French Open. Balaji is a big server. If Rohan wants to play with him we have no objection to that," said Dhuvar.

"Let ITF publish the final list after the conclusion of French Open. Let's see if Sumit Nagal also makes it. We will have a selection committee meeting and

Bopanna's decision will be conveyed to the panel which shall take a final call." The selection panel is headed by former Davis Cupper Nandan Bal, who also hinted that they would support Bopanna.

"In my personal opinion, we should give Rohan what he wants. At the end of the day, it's his last shot at an Olympic medal and if he feels that it is better to play with Balaji, he would be sure of the choice," Bal told PTI from Mumbai.

"Still we will discuss the combination whenever AITA convenes the meeting." Former Davis Cupper Balram Singh, Mustafa Ghouse, and Sai Jialakshmi are the other members of the selection panel.

Bal said the AITA Secretary General indeed gives his input to the panel but "does not interfere in the proceedings and the decision is taken independently by the panel." The ATP/WTA rankings on June 10 will be considered for entries. The ITF has to notify all Associations about their qualified athletes by June 12.

All NOCs will have to confirm their entries to the ITF by June 19. The ITF will reallocate the unused quota places on July 8.

Rahul Dravid To Bow Out As India Coach After T20 World Cup

Agencies

Rahul Dravid said on Monday that he will leave his post as India coach at the end of the T20 World Cup after almost three years in charge.

Dravid's contract runs out at the end of the month and he will not re-apply for the job, which has been advertised by India's governing cricket body, the BCCI, since last month.

"It is going to be the last one that I am in charge of," the 51-year-old told reporters ahead of India's opening match against Ireland in New York on Wednesday.

"Unfortunately, the kind of schedules and where I find myself at this stage in my life, I don't think I'll be able to re-apply.

"I love doing the job. I've really enjoyed coaching India and I think it's a truly special job to do." The former India captain took over the team from Ravi Shastri after the 2021 T20



World Cup.

This year's edition in the United States and West Indies is his last chance to end the country's global trophy drought, which stretches back to the 2013 Champions Trophy.

Dravid oversaw India's runs to the finals of both the World Test Championship and their home 50-over World Cup last year, but they came up short against Australia each time.

"I enjoyed working with this team and it's a great bunch of boys to work with," Dravid said.

"To be very honest, I

think we've actually played really well in these tournaments.

"The World Test Championship is slightly different in terms of it's not one tournament but a whole cycle, but playing extremely well in the cycle to get to the final there again.

"The 50-over World Cup we had a great run and went into the final. I think we've been right up there with some of the best teams."

India have not won the T20 World Cup since its inaugural edition in 2007 and they have not lifted the one-day World Cup since 2011.

Gurbaz-Zadran's Opening Partnership, Pacer Farooqi's Fiery Spell Power Afghanistan To 125-Run Win

Press Trust of India

Pacer Fazalhaq Farooqi produced a fiery spell after Rahmanullah Gurbaz and Ibrahim Zadran struck half centuries in a solid opening partnership as Afghanistan began their T20 World Cup campaign with a comprehensive 125-run victory over debutants Uganda here.

Kolkata Knight Riders opener Gurbaz (76 off 45 balls) and his partner Zadran (70 off 46 balls) registered the second highest opening partnership (154) in the men's T20 World Cup as Afghanistan posted a challenging 183/5 after being asked to bat.

Left-arm pacer Farooqi (5/9) then knocked the wind out of the Ugandan batting line-up with his maiden five-wicket haul. The debutants were shot out for 58 in 16 overs.

"The kind of start we wanted as a team. Does not matter who we play, it is about the mindset," skipper and country's biggest cricket icon Rashid Khan said after the match.

"The hard work we have done in the last few weeks, the way the openers started and the way our bowlers bowled - it was a great overall team effort," Rashid, who polished off the tail, added.

"That is the beauty of this team. We have so many options and that makes it easy as a captain," world's premier T20 spinner gushed.

Seamer Farooqi was twice on the brink of claiming a hat-trick. He was lashed with the new ball.

Real Madrid Sign France Captain Mbappe On Free Transfer

Agencies

MADRID: France forward Kylian Mbappe has joined Real Madrid as a free agent on a five-year contract, the La Liga club said on Monday, ending a transfer saga that rumbled on for years before the European champions captured their newest "Galactico".

"Real Madrid C. F. and Kylian Mbappe have reached an agreement whereby he will be a Real Madrid player for the next five seasons," the Spanish champions said in a statement, fresh off their 15th European Cup triumph.

The 25-year-old captain of the French national team had announced he was leaving Paris St Germain in a video posted on social media platform X on May 10.

Mbappe will move to Real Madrid in July when his PSG contract expires on June 30 but the forward will be unveiled before joining up with the France squad for the European Championship in Germany.

Mbappe joins a star-studded side in Madrid with the likes of Ballon d'Or favourites Vinicius Jr. and Jude Bellingham, led by Italian Carlo Ancelotti -- the most successful coach in Champions League history with five titles.

Although Mbappe won several trophies at PSG, often completing domestic doubles and trebles, the Champions League has eluded him and remains the only major honour left to complete his sparkling resume.



Australia Opens Armed Forces For Non-Citizens Amid Recruitment Shortage



Agenceis

Sydney, Australia: Australia will allow non-citizens to join its armed forces, the government said Tuesday, as the sparsely populated nation struggles to meet recruitment targets.

Defence Minister Richard Marles said that from July, looser eligibility criteria would allow "permanent residents who have been living in Australia for 12 months" to serve. Citizens from Britain, Canada, New Zealand and the United States are being favoured, he added.

Australia has a coastline that would stretch one-and-a-bit times around the Earth, but a population of just 26 million.

Canberra has surged defence spending in recent years, buy-

ing fleets of submarines, jets and scores of fighting vehicles to meet mounting regional tensions.

But it has struggled to find enough pilots, mariners and troops to operate and maintain them.

Experts warn too few Australians do not have uniforms to meet even current requirements, much less a beefier military of tomorrow.

The Australian Defence Forces can today count on about 90,000 personnel, including reserves, according to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute. China's military, by contrast, has an estimated two million personnel.

Marles said growing the Australian Defence Force was "essential to meet the nation's security challenges through the next decade and beyond".

Minimum Temperature In Delhi Settles At 30.4 Degrees Celsius, Light Rain Possible



Agenceis

New Delhi: Delhiites woke up to a warm Tuesday morning with the minimum temperature settling at 30.4 degrees Celsius, three notches above the season's average.

The weather office predicted partly cloudy skies with heat-

wave conditions for the day, and added that there was a possibility of very light rain and strong surface winds.

It said the maximum temperature is expected to settle around 44 degrees Celsius.

The relative humidity at 8.30 am stood at 43 per cent, the meteorological department said.

Children Unfed, Thousands Share A Toilet: Oxfam Warns Of "Appalling Conditions" In Gaza

Agenceis

Paris: Palestinians displaced by the Gaza war are living in "appalling" conditions, with children sometimes going for a whole day without food and thousands sharing the same toilet, Oxfam warned on Tuesday.

Deadly Israeli bombardment and fighting have raged in the Gaza Strip's far-southern Rafah area near the Egyptian border in recent weeks, again displacing those who had fled there in search of safety.

More than one million people have fled Rafah for other areas, according to the UN Palestinian refugee agency UNRWA.

Oxfam said more than two-thirds of Gaza's population is estimated to be crammed into less than a fifth of the besieged territory.

"Despite Israeli assurances that full support would be provided for people fleeing, most of Gaza has been deprived of humanitarian aid, as famine inches closer," the aid agency said.

"A food survey by aid agencies in May found that 85 per cent of children did not eat for a whole day at least once in the three days before the survey was conducted," it added.

Since Israeli troops launched their ground assault on Rafah on May 6, an average of eight aid trucks per day have entered, Oxfam said, citing UN figures.

While hundreds of commercial food trucks are estimated to be entering daily, the goods on board include non-nutritious energy drinks, chocolate and cookies, and are often very expensive, it added.

"By the time a famine is declared, it will be too late," Oxfam's Middle East and North Africa director, Sally Abi Khalil, said.



"Obstructing tonnes of food for a malnourished population while waving through caffeine-laced drinks and chocolate is sickening."

In an interview with French television last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected allegations of starvation in Gaza, saying everything had been done to avert a famine.

Gazans were eating 3,200 calories a day or 1,000 more than the daily requirement, he said.

"Forced to rely on the sea" Oxfam said families in some parts of southern Gaza, like the coastal area of Al-Mawasi, designated a "humanitarian zone" by the Israeli army, were getting by with barely any water or sanitation services.

"Living conditions are so appalling that in Al-Mawasi, there are just 121 latrines for over 500,000 people -- or 4,130 people having to share each toilet," Oxfam said.

Meera, an Oxfam staff member in Al-Mawasi who has been displaced seven times since October, described conditions there as "unbearable".

"There is no access to clean water, and people are forced to rely on the sea," she said.

On Monday, sewage flooded a camp for the displaced in Khan Yunis after a wastewater pipe burst, an AFP reporter said, with some trying to scoop the filth out of their tents using plastic bottles.

The war was triggered by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel, which resulted in the deaths of 1,194 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli official figures.

Militants also took 251 hostages, 120 of whom remain in Gaza, including 41 the army says are dead.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed at least 36,550 people in Gaza, also mostly civilians, according to the Hamas-run territory's health ministry.

A Look At Key Candidates Competing For Iran's Snap Presidential Vote

Agenceis

Tehran: Eighty Iranians have registered their candidacy for the country's June 28 presidential elections, brought forward by the death of Ebrahim Raisi, but many may still be disqualified before campaigning begins.

Who has applied?

At the end of the five-day registration period on Monday, Interior Minister Ahmad Vahidi said 80 presidential hopefuls have submitted their candidacy.

They include more conservative and even ultraconservative figures than moderates or reformists, as well as a number of middle-ranking clerics and four women.

The best-known candidate is Mahmoud Ahmadinejad who wishes, at 67, to return to the post of president which he held for two consecutive terms from 2005 to 2013.

The populist politician is associated with incendiary remarks about Israel and simmering tensions with the West, particularly over the Iranian nuclear programme.

Other senior figures in the Islamic republic are also in the running: current parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, a conservative, former speaker Ali Larijani, a moderate figure, and Saeed Jalili, an ultraconservative former nuclear negotiator.

As he submitted his bid on Monday, Ghalibaf said he was hopeful that, if elected, he could resolve the problems of the country including "reduction in purchasing power, poverty, discrimination, inequality and sanctions".

Iran has been gripped by biting Western sanctions mostly over its nuclear programme but also for its human rights record and military cooperation with Russia.

The candidate list -- which is not yet final -- also includes Tehran Mayor Alireza Zakani, former central bank governor Abdolnasser Hemmati and Eshaq Jahangiri, a reformist former first vice-president.

Can all 80 compete?

Hopefuls must first be given the green light by the Guardian Council, an unelected body dominated by conservatives which vets all candidates for public office.

The 12-strong body of jurists, who are either appointed or approved by the supreme leader, has until June 11 to decide which of the candidates would be authorised to campaign for presidency.

In the 2021 election, the council only approved seven candidates out of 592 applicants, and struck down presidential bid by numerous reformist and moderate personalities. This had allowed Raisi, then a candidate from the conservative and ultraconservative camp, to be easily elected in the first round.

Faced with a limited choice, many voters shunned the 2021 polls: participation reached just under 49 per cent, the lowest rate for any presidential elections since the Islamic revolution of 1979.

Among this year's candidates, Ahmadinejad has already been disqualified twice, in 2017 and 2021, when Larijani and Jahangiri were too. According to Iranian law, to be eligible for the presidency, candidates must be aged 40 to 75, hold at least a university master's degree and be loyal to the Islamic republic.

Can a woman be elected?

No women have been allowed to run for president since 1979, but the Guardian Council in 2021 ruled that there it was not legally banned.

Stunning Blue Ant Discovered In "Himalayan Biodiversity Hotspot"

Agenceis

New Delhi: A distinct, stunning blue-coloured ant species was discovered in Siang Valley, a "biodiversity hotspot" of Arunachal Pradesh, in a new research from India.

Accompanying the 'Abhor' expedition in 1911-12, a punitive military one against the indigenous people of Siang Valley, was a team of researchers to document its natural history and geography.

After exploring and mapping large parts of the valley, the team catalogued every plant, frog, lizard, fish, bird and mammal and insects they found. Their discoveries were published in several volumes from 1912 to 1922 in the Records of the Indian Museum.

Now, a century later, researchers from Ashoka Trust for Research in Ecology and the Environment (ATREE) and a documentation team from Felis Creations Bangalore embarked on a series of journeys to the valley, a "Himalayan biodiversity hotspot", under the banner 'Siang Expedition'. They wanted to resurvey and document the region's biodiversity.

While exploring a tree hole about 10 feet up in a steep cattle track in the remote Yinku village one evening, something sparkled in the twilight. With the dim light available, two insects were sucked into an aspirator. To our surprise, we later found they were ants, the researchers

explained. The findings are published in the journal Zookeys.

Named Paraparatrechina neela, the species is "nothing like the common red, black, or brown ants," according to ATREE researchers. 'Neela' means blue in many Indian languages, which they said was a "fitting tribute" to the ant's unique colouration.

Paraparatrechina neela, the researchers described, is a small ant and less than two millimetres long, with a predominantly metallic blue body, except for the antennae, mandibles, and legs. The metallic blue is distinct from any other species in its rare genus, Paraparatrechina, they said.

While blue colouration is commonly observed in some insects

like butterflies, beetles, bees, and wasps, the authors said it is relatively rare in ants, with only a few out of the known 16,724 ant species and subspecies displaying the colour.

The ant's head is subtriangular with large eyes and has a triangular mouthpart (mandible) featuring five teeth, they said.

Representing the unique biodiversity of the Eastern Himalayas, the researchers said that the discovery of the 'Paraparatrechina Neela' contributed to the richness of ant diversity.

They added that the blue colour of the species raised "intriguing questions" - Does it help in communication, camouflage, or other ecological interactions? "Nestled

within a Himalayan biodiversity hotspot, Arunachal Pradesh's Siang Valley presents a world of unparalleled diversity, much of it yet to be explored. However, this very richness, both cultural and ecological, faces unprecedented threats," said corresponding author Priyadarsanan Dharma Rajan.

"Large-scale infrastructure projects like dams, highways, and military installations, along with climate change, are rapidly altering the valley. The impact extends beyond the valley itself, as these mountains play a critical role not only in sustaining their diverse ecosystems but also in ensuring the well-being of millions of people living downstream," said Rajan.



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