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4-1 for BJP..

which was subsequently withdrawn, did not appear to have any major impact on the fortunes of the saffron party. According to Election Commission data, the BJP won or was leading in bulk of the 113 seats in western UP where it was thought to be on a sticky wicket.

"People have buried the politics of caste and religion by ensuring the victory of BJP and its allies in Uttar Pradesh under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," Adityanath said at the state BJP headquarters in Lucknow where excitement was palpable with the party workers dancing to popular tunes and throwing gulal at each other.

Bulldozers -- real as well as miniature versions -- were at the centre stage of the celebrations at the BJP office in the state capital as they figured in the poll campaign in a reference to the action taken against criminals and what the state government calls buildings linked to the 'mafia'. SP leader Akhilesh Yadav, a former chief minister, had called Adityanath a 'Bulldozer baba'.

The Samajwadi Party (SP), which made a vigorous bid for power with Akhilesh Yadav attracting huge crowds at campaign rallies, won 75 seats and was leading in 36, a significant jump from the 47 last time.

Adding to the saffron party's tally, BJP ally ACPA Dal (Sonepal) won 9 seats and was ahead in three. The BSP, which barely made a campaign splash, was leading only in one seat with a total vote share of 12.7 per cent.

The BJP increased its vote share in almost all the states that went to polls including a marginal rise in Punjab, where it just managed to win two seats.

In UP, the BJP's vote share rose to 41.8 per cent as against 39.67 per cent in 2017 assembly elections, an increase of 2.13 per cent.

The vote share of the SP increased from 21.82 per cent in 2017 to 32.02 per cent.

The BSP had a vote share of 22.23 per cent in 2017 and the Mayawati-led party won 19 seats.

The first set of Assembly elections in 2022, seen as a pointer to general elections two years away, was also the AAP's stepping stone out of Delhi.

In the 117-member Punjab Assembly, the AAP won 92 seats, Congress 18, SAD 3, BJP 2, BSP and Independent won one seat each. In terms of vote share, the AAP won 42 per cent of the total votes cast, as against 23.7 per cent it had won five years ago.

The strong AAP wave in Punjab saw many bigwigs losing -- including SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and his father Parkash Singh Badal, Congress' Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi from both the seats he contested, former chief minister Amarinder Singh who left the Congress to join hands with the BJP and Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu.

The Congress vote share slumped in Punjab from 38.5 per cent in 2017 to 23 per cent, with the party holding on to just 18 seats as against 77 seats it had won five years back.

"First this revolution happened in Delhi, then in Punjab and it will now happen all over country," Kejriwal said at the AAP party headquarters in Delhi.

"In the coming days, AAP will become a national force...the party will emerge as the national and natural replacement of Congress," party leader Raghav Chadha added while addressing workers at a rented accommodation of its chief ministerial candidate Bhagwant Mann in Sangrur.

From a comedian to the chief minister-designate, Mann, who has come a long way in a political career of just over a decade, said the oath-taking ceremony of the new Punjab cabinet will be held at Khatkar Kalan, the ancestral village of legendary freedom fighter Bhagat Singh in Nawanshahr district.

In the 2017 assembly polls in Punjab, the Congress had ended the SAD-BJP combine's run by bagging 77 seats. The AAP had managed to get 20 seats, while the SAD-BJP had won 18.

"Humbly accept the people's verdict. Best wishes to those who have won the mandate. My gratitude to all Congress workers and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. We will learn from this and keep working for the interests of the people of India," former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said on Twitter.

Belying predictions of a fractured mandate, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has been able to deliver victory for the BJP which is coming to power for the third time.

The BJP, which bagged 20 seats, said it has received letters of support from the Maharashtra Gomantak Party (2 seats) and three Independent MLAs, enabling the ruling party to cross the simple majority mark of 21.

The BJP won big in Uttarakhand getting 45 seats to retain power and was ahead in two in the 70-member Assembly even as incumbent CM Pushkar Singh Dhami lost by 6,579 votes in Khatima, a seat he had been winning for the last two consecutive elections.

Throwing a spirited challenge to the BJP as the Congress poll campaign head for the state, Harish Rawat, a former chief minister, could not pilot the party's return to power in the state nor could he save his own seat of Lalkuwa. The Congress won 17 and was leading in two.

In Manipur, the BJP won 31 seats and was leading in one in the 60-member assembly.

Modi lauds 'Jeet...

directions, Modi said.

He also hit out at opposition parties without directly naming them for trying to save the corrupt following action of institutions acting independently against them and expressed concern that critics have invoked caste, religion and region in their efforts to impede probe.

People should shun such voices, Modi said, asserting that his government is not only expected to work with integrity but also act against those who have been involved in corruption.

He said he is not against any individual or any particular family, but his concern is about democracy.

Central agencies' action against some opposition leaders, recently in Maharashtra, have drawn sharp criticism of the Modi government from their parties.

Modi also slammed rivals for augmenting fear among Indian students stranded in war-torn Ukraine and their families, and accused them of using regionalism to target "Operation Ganga", launched by his government to evacuate students, most of whom have been brought home.

The BJP's win in the four states where it was in power augurs well for the country in its 75th year of independence and shows people's faith in the party's policies and its vision for the country for the next 25 years leading to the nation's centenary year of freedom, the prime minister said.

Referring to Punjab, another state that went to polls and where the Aam Aadmi Party has notched up a massive victory leaving its rivals, including the BJP, far behind, Modi lauded his party's workers for their hard work under adverse circumstances. This portends well for Punjab and the country, he said.

"The (four) states results strongly vindicate BJP's pro-poor and pro-active governance. Earlier, people could not reach governments for basic amenities such as electricity, gas and water. Now we are delivering the poor their rights," the prime minister said, asserting that he will not rest until the poor get their due.

Lauding BJP workers for ensuring an early Holi by making the party victorious in four states, Modi said its votes share has increased in Manipur, Uttar Pradesh and Goa even though it was in power in the states.

All exit polls were proven incorrect in Goa, and the people of Goa have given the BJP the chance to serve them for the third consecutive time, he said.

In Uttar Pradesh, people have reelected a chief minister for the first time after he had served a full term and also for the first time in 37 years, brought the same party to power again, he said.

UP result heralds new political culture under PM Modi: Dr Jitendra

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Union minister Jitendra Singh ON Thursday said that Uttar Pradesh Assembly election result heralds a new political culture under Prime Minister Narendra Modi which is in tune with the aspirational democracy of a new India.

He said the new political culture is guided by the spirit of reaching out to the deprived and providing them with benefits of equitable development with ease of living, empowerment and esteem, without any bias or prejudice.

Singh, the Minister of State for Personnel, said

that Uttar Pradesh has broken many a jinx of the past.

For example, he said, over the last half-a-century, the Congress manipulated people into believing that any political party which has been in power for five years necessarily faces anti-incumbency and this phenomenon has to be taken in stride as a norm.

The BJP under Modi has vindicated that elections can be fought and won with pro-incumbency vote and this is something which I had been predicting during the UP election campaign as well, Singh said.

However, under Modi, this trend has been done away with and the BJP proved to the world that election could be fought and won by rising above these biases and focussing

on development, providing security to the insecure, empowering the weaker section, providing benefits to the deprived and ensuring equal justice and respect for all, he said.

Singh said he had predicted during the election campaign that in Uttar Pradesh, the BJP will get the support of a large number of silent women voters, including Muslim women, who may not openly say so.

Similarly, he said, during the campaign young girl students from all religions and castes used to tell us that before the BJP government came, their par-

ents would not allow them to step out of the house all alone but now they felt absolutely secure.

Counting is underway for Assembly elections held in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur.

The BJP raced towards a second straight win in Uttar Pradesh and dominated the score chart in three other states -- Uttarakhand, Manipur and Goa -- while the Aam Aadmi Party announced its national presence with a landslide victory in Punjab, according to the election trends and results declared so far.

Similarly, he said, during the campaign young girl students from all religions and castes used to tell us that before the BJP government came, their par-

choice of food and the manner in which it is prepared is vital for good health.

Vivek Bhardwaj said that Unani Medicine is very popular in J&K and for its further promotion and development, the Union Government is making concerted efforts including introduction of MD in Unani Medicine at RRIUM, Srinagar and BUMS at the first Government Unani Medical College of J&K.

Professor Talat Ahmad and Professor Akbar Masood appreciated the role of CCRUM in research and development in Unani Medicine and urged to expand collaborations with other institutions for interdisciplinary research in Unani Medicine.

Professor Asim Ali Khan delivered the welcome address while as the inaugural session was concluded with vote of thanks by Dr M. A. Qasmi.

During the inaugural ceremony, Dr. Mohan Singh, Director Ayush, J&K entered into memorandum of understanding with Morarji Desai Institute of Yoga, New Delhi for establishing two Regional Yoga Therapy and Training centers at Government Ayurvedic Hospital Jammu and Government Unani Hospital, Shalteng, Srinagar with the approval of Department of Health and Medical education.

Through these centers YCB certified Yoga Professions will be produced and Yoga will reach each and every household of J&K. Yoga has found global acceptance as a remedy for physical & mental disorders and its introduction at grass-root level in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir will tremendously help in improving the health indicators.

During the inaugural session of the conference a live Yoga session was also conducted by Yoga instructors of Directorate of Ayush, J&K.

A video documentary with the theme "Jammu & Kashmir main Ayush kay badhtay kadam" was also streamed during the conference emphasizing the role and importance of Ayush Sector at Primary, Secondary and Tertiary care for improving Health indicators in UT of J&K. The Documentary also highlighted the achievements of Ayush in the UT of J&K with special focus on regimental therapies a Specialized mode of treatment in Unani System of Medicine.

The inaugural session also witnessed release of conference souvenir and eight books published by the CCRUM, release of two Unani e-books, distribution of YCB certificates among felicitate yoga instructors and live yoga performance besides release of CCRUM Apps and presentation of NABH Accreditation Certificate to RRIUM, Srinagar.

Later, a panel discussion and scientific sessions were also held during which a number of national and international experts and luminaries from the field of health sciences shared their knowledge, experiences and expertise.

No breakthrough in...

seek a solution to humanitarian issues caused by the war.

He said Moscow is not ready to offer a cease-fire. He said: They seek Ukraine's surrender. This is not going to happen.

Kuleba said the last thing he wanted was to kill hope for Ukrainians seeking safe passage out of cities besieged by Russian bombardments and attacks.

Cong's ideological fight...

a lot due to price hike and unemployed youth without jobs", she added.

She said that Jammu and Kashmir suffered the most under BJP rule and it lost statehood.

J&K Bank wins...

by Zonal Heads Tabassum Nazir and Arshad Hussain amidst good gathering of valuable customers, senior citizens, local businessmen and other officers of the bank.

Speaking on the occasion, MD & CEO said, "We are pleased to dedicate these new business units to serve the people. These have been suitably resourced and equipped to provide best financial services and state-of-the-art banking facilities to the people."

Expressing hope that the business units shall further strengthen the Bank's bond with the people, he urged the participants to avail the benefits of the Bank's various products and schemes that have been designed to meet their specific requirements. "We are committed to empower the people especially youth by financing their viable business ventures and other self-employment projects", he said.

On the occasion, MD & CEO also acknowledged the commitment and dedication of Bank staff. However, he advised them to ensure quality services to customers while making sure that the Bank's business registers positive growth every day.

Two terrorists killed...

Hazratbal shrine on the banks of the famous Dal Lake. The shrine houses the relic of Prophet Mohammad.

Inspector General of Police (IGP), Kashmir, Vijay Kumar said one of the militants was a Pakistani and termed his killing a "big success".

"We were monitoring him. His aim was to attack the shrine guard and snatch his weapon. He fired at the police party, which retaliated. In the firing, the Pakistani militant was killed," Kumar told reporters outside the shrine complex.

The slain ultra was identified as Manzoor alias Haider alias Hamza. He was affiliated with proscribed outfit LeT, the IGP said.

"He was an associate of top LeT/TRF commander Mehran. His killing is a big success," he said.

Kumar said Manzoor was active in Srinagar for the past six months. He was involved in several killings. A video in which he talked about attacking senior officials had gone viral.

On the two terrorists who fled, the IGP said, "We are tracking them. We hope to neutralise them soon."

Kumar said the terrorists were trying to use religious places to take shelter and stir emotions to create a law and order issue.

"His (the Pakistani terrorist's) aim was to enter the mosque, engage with the security forces, spread news and stir religious sentiments of the people and create a law and order problem. But we will not let them (militants) succeed in that," he said.

Asked about the recovery of the body of an Army soldier in Budgam, the IGP said the police are investigating the incident from all angles.

"We are probing both the angles, the terror-crime angle or maybe there was some fight because of personal animosity and he was murdered," Kumar said.

The soldier, Sameer Ahmad Malla, was found dead in an orchard in Kashmir Valley's Budgam on Thursday, three days after he went missing.

His body had no bullet marks but showed signs of blunt injuries, officials said.

141 people stranded...

said. Giving a break-up, the officials said that 39 people were flown from Jammu to Kargil, 16 from Kargil to Jammu, 12 from Kargil to Srinagar and 38 from Srinagar to Kargil.

Pawan Hans transported 36 people from Srinagar to Kargil, they said.

The air force has been operating C-17, C-130 and AN-32 aircraft regularly to air-lift stranded passengers in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh due to the closure of the 434-km Srinagar-Leh national highway owing to heavy snowfall in January.

J&K highway closed...

with the rest of the country, at Nachlana near Samroli, the officials said.

Men and machinery from road clearance agencies are working on clearing the highway, they said. "No fresh traffic was allowed either from Jammu or Srinagar in view of the closure of the highway," the officials said.

The people are requested not to travel on the highway till the clearance work is completed, they said.

Aircraft-shaped balloon...

officials said. Such balloons have been found floating frequently along the International Border and the Line of Control.

J&K reports 35 new COVID cases, Ladakh 5

STATE TIMES NEWS

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir recorded 35 fresh COVID-19 cases on Thursday, taking the infection count to 4,53,382, officials said.

The death toll from the pandemic remained unchanged at 4,749 as no new fatality was reported in the last 24 hours, they said.

Fourteen of the fresh cases were from Jammu and 21 from Kashmir division of the Union Territory, the officials said.

The officials said Jammu

district recorded a maximum of 13 new cases.

Thirteen of the total 22

districts in the Union

Territory did not report any fresh cases.

There are 293 active

cases in the union terri-

tory, while the number of

recoveries stands at

4,48,340, the officials