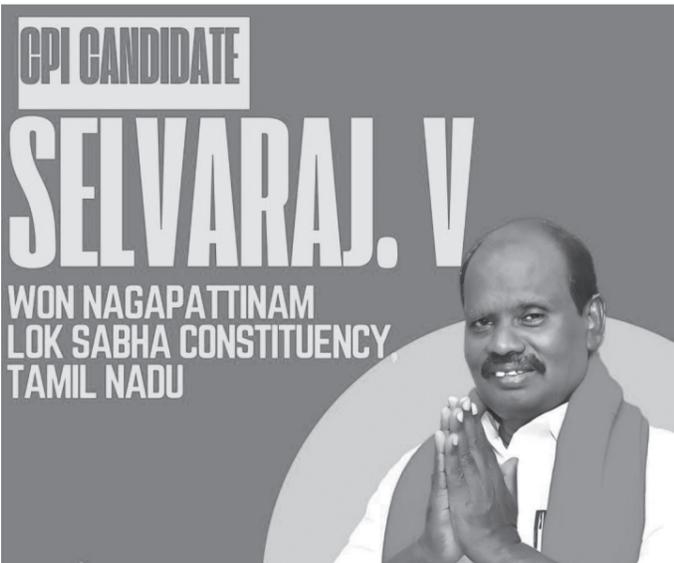


## CPI Welcomes People's Verdict



### CPI on the Elections

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on June 5, 2024:

The results of the 18<sup>th</sup> Lok Sabha election have ended the authoritarian, corporate backed communal fascist one party rule of BJP headed by the prime minister Narendra Modi. The people of India have given their verdict in defence of our Constitution and secular democratic fabric of our country and against the politics of hate, discriminations, growing unemployment, attacks on federalism, minorities, democratic and human rights and unparallel miseries of the

people with high price rise.

CPI congratulates the people for opposing and challenging the BJP by giving their verdict in defence of "Idea of India" enshrined in the Constitution.

While congratulating the parties of INDIA block for their performances, CPI believes that the BJP could have been cut more to size if there could have been better seat-sharing among the partners and united campaigns.

CPI also wants to register its criticism against

the Election Commission of India for its failure to contain the hate speeches by Narendra Modi on the issues of communal polarization.

CPI will continue to play its significant role within the INDIA block as well as in mobilizing the people of our country in defence of their fundamental rights and for a better future.

The role Left plays as a whole and CPI in particular demands proper introspection. Party will critically review the election results when detailed reports will be available.

The AITUC appeals to the working class to continue their battle more vigorously to win back and safeguard our labour rights, to defend and strengthen the public sector enterprises and public services, to intensify unity amongst workers and farmers, to raise the living standards of our unorganized/informal economy

workers, for generation of employment and for filling of already sanctioned posts, the OPS, etc. In short, to fight for the agenda of the Farmer-Worker Convention of August 2022 in Delhi. The joint trade union movement has played a significant role, it must be further strengthened in the interest of our nation and the people.

### People Firm to Save Constitution, Reject Polarization : AITUC

The following statement is issued to the press by All India Trade Union Congress as an immediate response to the 2024 Lok Sabha election results:

Dark clouds hovering over Indian democracy have been cleared by our common masses. The nation is saved from the catastrophe which kept haunting our civilization that had enriched itself with the assimilation of cultures and traditions from all over the world. Our people have saved

the motherland from the danger of dictatorship and the culture of hatred and polarisation. They have voted to save the Constitution, its core values of secular democracy, the right to dissent and freedom of expression, and respect for all religions, languages, and cultures. With the confidence that our people always had dictators could always be confronted and defeated.

All attempts by Modi to side track the agenda

of workers-farmers, the issues of unemployment for youth, right to education and accessibility, livelihood issues of poor downtrodden sections with basic rights of shelter, water, sanitation to them, and justice and dignity to women with divisive speeches, full of falsehoods, were rejected. His blatant use of state machinery, muscle power, and money power to overturn elected state governments and to install their own, came to naught.



Post Election Deliberations in CPI National Executive at Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi

An evening on January 30, 1948. Sun was setting and Gandhi was entering the prayer meeting when suddenly Godse started firing at him. After three shots, Bapu was crumbling, looking at his murderer with immense love and forgiveness, on his lips were only two words, "Hey Ram". He had no complaints against anybody.

The nation he was the creator of was to be one with many. It was not to the liking of those who were keen to keep India fragmented. They were one with British rulers and their loyalty was threatened by Bapu, the man who led the freedom struggle. It was Gandhi who identified the spreading gloom in the entire world economy. Stagnation was leading to collapse of colonialism. Bapu seized the moment and used it to serve his own purpose. We attained freedom. With great love for his people, till the last, he accepted the end, in harness.

But that was not the end. Split kept widening. A day after inaugurating the Ram temple at Ayodhya on January 22, 2024, the Union cabinet adopted a resolution, saying the "country's body was freed in 1947 but the soul has been consecrated now". Adoption of such a visceral resolution just days before January 30 this year shows that it is nothing but an attempt at the second annihilation of Mahatma Gandhi.

And the third attempt to bury Mahatma Gandhi took place last week when Prime Minister Narendra Modi said the world did not know about Mahatma Gandhi until his biographical film was made in 1982. Modi made the strange claim during an interview given to ABP News. He said Gandhi was not as known worldwide as American civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr. or former South African president and anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela.

Contrast these words of Modi as he quoted Albert Einstein saying about Gandhi way back in 1939: "Generations

## The Triumph

to come, it may be, will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon this earth."

While writing an op-ed piece for The New York Times on October 2, 2019, the same Modi Ironically had mentioned the above quote of Einstein delivered on the 70<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, 1939. In the same piece, Modi had also written about the influence Gandhi had on Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr.

For last couple of years, the country has been in the hands of the RSS who do not

### Editorial

leave any opportunity to shape with iron hands its culture and society. Gandhian vision of secular India with equal rights for all religions is today under sharp attack. There are seen massive efforts to steer the national discourse to treat Muslims as the 'other'. Hate speeches, disturbing trends to portray Muslims as anti-nationals and violent attacks on them in the name of cow protection and 'love jihad', have become frequent. These as well as the BJP government's efforts to push forward its Hindu supremacist agenda, including a citizenship law seen to directly discriminate against Muslims, have started eroding and subjugating Gandhi's vision of a secular democracy in India.

In fact, hardly ever in the past, Mahatma Gandhi's assassin, Nathuram Godse was so openly extolled and sought to be given a place in the national memory as he has been since 2014. Hindu supremacists look to Modi as the deliverer of Hindu Rashtra and Godse as their predecessor who sought to remove the main hurdle their vision of India had faced at the time. Godse's influence stems from their understanding that

his act of assassinating Gandhi was not a crime but a step towards accomplishing a sacred duty.

Gandhi was rightly called Father of our Nation by Communist Party general secretary P C Joshi, in 1945-46. Our own national movement that was aimed at building up a socio-political system had Bapu among its leaders. It was the system based on a social democratic foundation, where it had a Gramscian theoretical perspective, state power not occupied at a single evolutionary moment, but moving through a longer popular struggle at a political and ideological level. Our national movement had also played a historical role when it started adopting the ideals of our Constitution and also the space it had offered. Our national movement was a rare combination of diverse streams with various ideological and political currents that was a lesson how to unite in diversity. It was the striking power for our movement that gave us cohesion and also strength.

In 1947, when we attained freedom, it was not one but each of the forces with their own freedom of existence had a share in it, except the one who looked upon it "(...) as an act of providence that the Britishers were ruling over them." It was the observation made by Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, first chief of the Rashtriya Swayam Swak Sangh revealed in a news-report published in *The Times of India* on October 10, 1935: "The march of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh Volunteers in military order from the Town Hall to the Indian Gymkhana ground today ended. It was the tenth annual celebrations of the Sangh and RSS leaders like Dr Moonje and Dr Paranjpe were dressed in military uniform."

It is not surprising that the RSS remained in conflict with the freedom fighters, and one of its members, Nathuram Godse, went to the extent of assassinating Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948.

## Remembering Tarakeswar Chakraborti on his birth anniversary

June 03 marks the 99<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Tarakeswar Chakraborti who remained undisputed general secretary of AIBEА until his death on May 02, 2003. His far-sighted vision, his indomitable courage, his conviction, and his deter-

mination to sail through any turbulent weather were remarkable and would remain in the golden pages of AIBEА's and India's banking history. He was the leader of the first era of the bank employees movement namely AIBEА with HL

Mitra Vashu

Parvana, Prabhat Kar, and PL Syal. He was known as "Tarakda" not only in AIBEА but also among all bank leaders and employees. He was the far-sighted leader who settled the "Pension

for Bank Employees/Officer" issue in 1993-95, because the pension for bank employees is very essential and a social cause. After the sad demise of Prabhat Kar, Tarakda took over the responsibility of the general secretary of AIBEА,

a movement of bank employees. Tarakeswar Chakraborti was the main architect of UFBU. He mobilized the Bank Employees'/Officers' Unions to form a united platform to face emerging attacks in the banking industry.

# A 'Free' and 'Fair' Election!

**This is not an analysis of the movie "All We Imagine As Light" which gained wide appreciation at the Cannes Film Festival. But the movie's name should be taken as a message to the Election Commission of India. All things are not as light as ECI imagines. It is rather deeper and more serious. ECI is not meant to be a tool in the hands of any person or force. It should not bend itself to any agenda or intention, instead, ECI is responsible for being the "Chowkidar" of the democratic essence of India, the largest democracy in the world. According to Article 324 of the Indian Constitution, Election Commission's duty is to control and direct the polls in the right direction. The idea of free and fair elections is the basis on which ECI must work. It is this idea that must propel the constitutional body. They must not deviate from this ethos in any situation.**

When the Prime Minister proclaims that he is a messenger of God, a political illiterate with little knowledge of election gimmicks may believe it, but common people, never in their conscious mind can think of ECI believing and following it. Because for Election Commission the only god and religion is the Constitution. As a constitutional body, ECI has no right to consider the persons in dispensation as gods. It is a violation and a challenge to the Constitution. In all the phases of the 18th Lok Sabha elections, ECI has violated the concept of free and fair elections. This deterioration is not a sporadic event. This began from the day when members of the commission decided to surrender themselves to a government which was

hungry for absolute power. They found salvation in the Union government's decision to amend the law to facilitate the inclusion of a cabinet minister, replacing the Chief Justice of India in the panel to decide the EC members.

ECI was silent and acted frozen when there was a demand for the universalization of VVPAT due to distrust of the voting machines. The same silence was maintained when four people who belonged to BJP became unofficial members of the board of Bharat Electronic Limited, the company responsible for manufacturing electronic voting machines. ECI was silent against the criticism that arose due to this dubious appointment. There was no resistance from the Commission when the documents on the 2019 general elections were destroyed within

*Binoy Viswam*

four months (according to 94 B of Conduct of Election Rules, documents should be kept intact at least for one year). ECI is being led by the happiness they obtain from appeasing the powers to whom they have submitted themselves completely. They seldom care about the contempt that the Constitution and the people of India feel towards them.

The delay in publishing the vote statistics after polls and the difference in percentage after the late disclosure are never a concern to the ECI. The Form 17C is an important document in the polling booth. Since it is signed by the agents of every candidate at the end of polling, it is a substantial document on the number of votes polled. The statistics on the number of votes polled in every constituency can be determined very easily. Everyone knows this can be done swiftly in this electronic age. In defense of the 11-day gap in publishing the vote statistics, the ECI said in the Supreme Court that, faster disclosure of the data can result in anomalies. The very next night, due to some reasons known only to ECI and the current government, the statistics on votes appeared on the

Commission's official website.

Among the people, the thought of ECI and Union government colluding to tarnish the credibility of elections is getting confirmed. The electronic voting machine was praised for its speed and accuracy. The acclamation on both of these is slaughtered by ECI. The country witnessed how the votes went to a specific symbol irrespective of the button pressed and how a teenage boy with barely a mustache and maturity voted eight times for the "Lotus" symbol. It is so pathetic that the concept of free and fair elections is surrendered in front of a government with totalitarian tendencies. India also witnessed panic and abnormality of the ruler, when he fell into the thought of defeat. The Prime Minister of secular India sprayed communal venom without any restriction during his election campaigns.

When people and the court interfered, ECI issued a notice to the party presidents. Shame! Whatever the country witnessed during the 18th Lok Sabha election has put the credibility of the election commission in shambles. In India, a country described as the mother of democracy, numerous incidences of

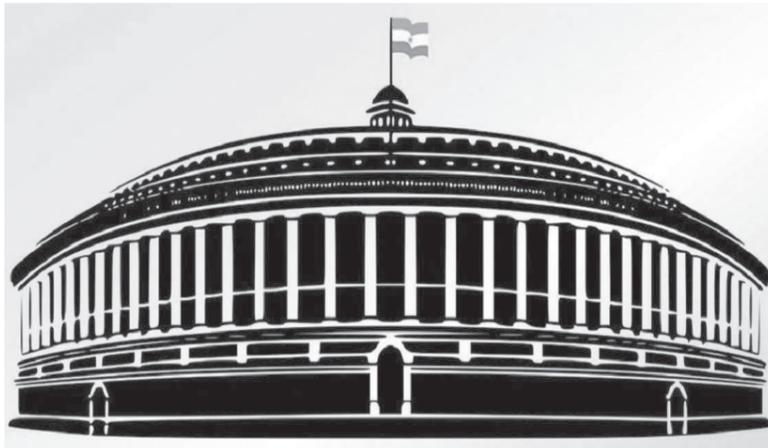
disrespecting and scorning that "mother" took place. To ensure the sacredness of the people's mandate, elections should be free and just. ECI is the constitutional body responsible for ensuring this. The Election Commission is only accountable to the people and the Constitution. It should not be the resort for people who find salvation in being "his master's voice." The general election of 2024 was a lesson to the people of India. We must think about the necessary steps to ensure that ECI functions without bias and is free of such people who serve vested interests instead of constitutional morals and ethics. Political parties may win or lose, but India and her spirit of democracy must not be defeated. An election commission that never bends its head in front of any powers except the people and Constitution is indispensable for the victory of democracy. The rightfulness and independence must be impeccable and foolproof. There are many such distinguished personalities who can perfectly fulfil this criteria. But the question raised by us is whether the people of India, the ones who rule us, have the political will or desire to find and appoint them?

# Allow Protest against Atrocities in Rafah: CPI

Following is the letter written on May 31, 2024 by Binoy Viswam, Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), leader of CPI Parliamentary Group and Secretary, National Council Member, to Amit Shah, Minister of Home Affairs, Government of India, urging him to intervene and allow to hold the protests demonstrating unwavering support to their cause:

India has been a consistent ally of the Palestinian people and has always remained committed to the just demands made by Palestine, including full statehood with pre-1967 borders. Our solidarity

with the Palestinian cause dates back to the days of our own struggle



**CPI IN PARLIAMENT- RAJYA SABHA**

for independence and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi declared their unequivocal support to the Palestinian people. People of our country share the grief of the Palestinians who are forced to live like second-grade subjects in their own

land. The bloody war against Palestinians has already claimed more

than 37000 Palestinian lives including women and children.

The horrors unleashed by Israel in Rafah very recently have enraged the entire world and people all over the globe have come together in demanding an

immediate ceasefire and putting an end to the humanitarian catastrophe

created by Israel. People in India have condemned the killings and the Indian Ministry of External Affairs has called the loss of 45 lives in Rafah "heartbreaking" in an official communication. In this context, the All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation (AIPSO) and Palestine Solidarity Committee have given a call for a protest against Israeli genocide in Rafah, at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on 1st of June, 2024.

The protest demon-

stration is a way of communicating our concern and solidarity with the suffering people of Palestine in their hour of need. The demonstration will be attended by peace-loving people from Delhi and will be entirely democratic. Despite this background and India's unwavering support to the Palestinian cause, the Delhi Police have denied the organisers permission to hold the demonstration. Through this letter, I urge you to intervene in this matter so the protest demonstration, consistent with the position of the Government of India and the sentiments of India people can be held and our solidarity to the Palestinian people could be conveyed.

## *What the Others Say...*

### **Rise and Rise**

On Monday, the Indian stock markets soared to record highs during early trade. The BSE Sensex opened 2,622 points or 3.5 per cent higher at 76,583. The Nifty rose 3.58 per cent to 23,338. The rally was across the board. The BSE small- and mid-cap indices also hit fresh highs. The small cap index ended the day up 2.05 per cent, while the mid cap index closed 3.54 per cent higher. Public sector stocks also registered impressive gains – the BSE PSU Index was up 7.67 per cent, while the Nifty PSU Bank index was up 8.4 per cent. The Indian rupee also strengthened to a two-month high of 83.14 against the dollar. And the Nifty VIX, a fear gauge, which had risen sharply over the past few weeks, indicating investor nervousness, fell on Monday by almost 15 per cent.

There are several triggers for this rally. On Saturday, the exit polls indicated a return to power of the ruling dispensation with a comfortable majority. Investors are likely to have been enthused by the prospects of continuity in governance – political stability often begets policy stability and continuity. A day before that, the National Statistical Office had released data which showed that the Indian economy had grown at 8.2 per cent in the last financial year – this estimate surpassed expectations of most analysts. Moreover, the economic momentum is likely to have continued in the weeks thereafter.

How Indian markets behave now will be determined by the

results of the national elections and the policy expectations from the next government.

*Courtesy: Indian Express*

### **Churn in South Africa hits ANC's prospects**

For the first time since it helped end South Africa's era of apartheid, the African National Congress (ANC) has failed to secure a simple majority in last week's general election, whose outcome is being seen as a reflection of the people's anger over the failure of successive administrations to deal with unemployment, crime, corruption and massive inequality in society. The future of the ANC and President Cyril Ramaphosa now hinges on negotiations with other parties that picked up significant vote shares. To remain in power, the ANC could team up with two former party leaders – former president Jacob Zuma, a scandal-tainted populist who heads the new MK party, or Julius Makena of the Economic Freedom Fighters party. Both, however, have radical Left-wing reform agendas. Or the ANC will have to make the difficult choice of joining hands with the John Steenhuisen-led Democratic Alliance, a party that opposes policies favouring only the Black population.

The ANC's decline is similar to that of the Congress – both parties saw major splits after their top leaders bowed out – Jawaharlal Nehru for the INC and Mandela for the ANC – and their successors failed to meet the aspirations of a new generation of voters or stall a decline in values. For India, a strong and stable South Africa is crucial because of the role the country plays in the Global South and at multilateral platforms such as Brics.

*Courtesy: Hindustan Times*

## Biden Invites Netanyahu to Address US Congress

# Israeli Prime Minister Not Booked for War Crimes

The news that Benjamin Netanyahu, the Prime Minister of Israel, has been invited to address a joint session of US Congress has come at a time when the International Criminal Court (ICC) is seeking warrants against Netanyahu and other Israeli and Hamas leaders for "war crimes." This invitation gives him the status of an honoured guest for which he is very excited as per the reports. As head of the government of Israel he is responsible for the death and misery of thousands of hapless children and women. Inviting him to address the Congress session has exposed the hypocrisy of the US administration that has been talking of humanitarian assistance to the war affected people on one side and supplying huge cache of arms to Israel in the name of self-defence from Hamas.

No wonder Israel has condemned the ICC judgment. The US President Joe Biden himself termed the ICC prosecutor's application for arrest warrants as "outrageous" stating that the US "will always stand with Israel against threats to its security." Secretary of State Antony Blinken said that he fundamentally rejects the ICC Prosecutor equivalence between Israel and Hamas and that the United States has been clear since well before the current conflict that that ICC has no jurisdiction over this matter.

It is interesting to note that human rights attor-

ney Amal Clooney who is among the experts who advised the ICC prosecutor to seek the arrest warrants, in a statement said "I served on this panel because I believe in the rule of law and the need to protect civilian lives. The law that protects civilians in war was developed more than 100 years ago and it applies in every country in the world regardless of the reasons for a conflict." The human rights lawyer who happens to be wife of actor George Clooney wrote of her participation in a letter on the website of the couple's Clooney Foundation for Justice.

The decision to invite Benjamin Netanyahu has been rejected in strong words by Bernie Sanders who is American politician and senior US senator from Vermont and who is himself Jewish. The ICC is right, Sanders has said. "Netanyahu is a war criminal. He should not be invited to address a joint meeting of Congress. I certainly will not attend."

It is well known that Netanyahu promoted Hamas to counter moderate Palestinian leadership and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. In an article in the Times of Israel published on 8th October 2023, Tal Schneider, a Political Correspondent at The Times of Israel said that for years, Netanyahu propped up Hamas.

Dr Arun Mitra

Now it's blown up in our faces. Various governments headed by Benjamin Netanyahu took an approach that divided power between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank – bringing Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas to his knees while making moves that propped up the Hamas terror group. The idea was to prevent Abbas – or anyone else in the Palestinian Authority's West Bank government – from advancing toward the establishment of a Palestinian state says Tal Schneider.

Now Israel has rejected US proposal for a ceasefire and end to war in Gaza. US President Biden has said the new proposal for a Gaza truce is "a roadmap to an enduring ceasefire and the release of all hostages", adding that "it's time to end this war." At least 36,379 Palestinians have been killed and 82,407 wounded in Israel's war on Gaza since 7th October 2023. Prime Minister Netanyahu released a statement following Biden's remarks, claiming that Israel is still committed to "the elimination of Hamas' military and governmental capabilities," in addition to bringing home all hostages.

Netanyahu's talk of finishing Hamas is a farce. Release of hostages could have been done

long back through negotiations. Defying all the international appeals the Israeli Defence Forces have attacked Rafah creating havoc in the area. As a result there is unprecedented humanitarian crisis in Gaza. Israel is continuously ignoring international opinion for free transport of humanitarian assistance to the war affected people. The UN has warned several times that there is spread of hunger and diseases. Situation is getting worse in the absence of medical aid as Israel has destroyed most of the hospitals, which is a complete violation of international conventions. All this points to Netanyahu's bent of mind to annihilate the Palestinians.

Experts warn that 1.7 million people are internally displaced, mostly women and 600,000 children in the Rafah area alone, and they need food assistance, shelter, healthcare, education, water, sanitation and hygiene.

Till now "189 United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) staff have been killed by Israel since October 7, 2023 – the highest number of UN staff killed in any conflict since the UN's founding in 1945." Multiple UNRWA facilities have been targeted, besieged and demolished by the Israeli military, in apparent violation of the principle of the inviolability of UN premises, the experts said.

The UN has repeatedly warned that at this existential time for millions of Palestinians in Gaza, who are enduring famine coupled with unfathomable humanitarian conditions, UN operations and facilities must be protected.

It is time for the global community to act and develop broad vision. World has suffered too much when we get carried away and develop hatred towards others on the basis of ethnic or religious identities and even become ruthless towards others forgetting all humanitarian values. We have the examples of death of 800,000 people in Rwanda in tribal violence in a matter of just 100 days. South Asia has seen killings on communal lines several times. World community was unable to save Jews and others from Nazi crimes but the times have changed. We can save the people of Gaza or anywhere else during internal or external strife.

Our inaction can be disastrous. The Military Industrial Complex has its own interests of making profit. But the present day world has its moral duty to stop wars anywhere otherwise this would have serious consequences including use of nuclear weapons. It is duty of all the countries, who are signatories to the UN Human Rights Charter to come forward for restoration of peace in Gaza. Let the peace lovers world over rise to the occasion to save our planet from another catastrophe.

# Conquerors have been Conquered

The results of the current election are a serious blow to RSS-BJP combine. Though they succeeded in coming to power for the third time, the shivers sent by the INDIA bloc are something they have not yet recovered from. Despite the tall slogan “ab ka baar 400 paar” NDA managed only a comfortable position and their dream of forming a government with a herculean majority was shattered. The Opposition was able to advance its position in comparison with 2019 polls. The upcoming parliament sessions will not be unilateral affairs of the BJP. For the past ten years, parliament was a factory that manufactured laws. There were no discussions and Opposition was heckled and suppressed by the Union government. The two terms of NDA marked the least number of sitting days since 1952. The 17th Lok Sabha functioned for 230 sitting days. Of all the Lok Sabhas that completed the full five-year term, the 16th Lok Sabha (331) and 17th Lok Sabha (230) are the shortest full-term Lok Sabha since 1952.

There is no doubt that this electoral battle was fought by the poor who completely abide to the Indian Constitution against the powerful safe-front government. It was one of the most significant battles in the history of independent India. The people of India have succeeded in sending a message that their voice cannot be ignored, they cannot be shamed for promoting the class advantage of the comprador bourgeoisie and their capitalist friends. Indians, especially the rural population across the country, should be commended for not falling into Modi's provocative communal trap and continuing to maintain communal peace and harmony till the end of the election process. It is also a sign of the caution of urban intellectuals and academics to avoid treating Dalits, the poor, and the proletariat as naive pawns of the Hindutva project.

The fact that Modi received a significantly reduced mandate not

only highlights the collapse of the Modi myth but also emphasizes broader implications. Modi's recent reduction in power has clearly shown that the Indian Hindus are fed up with his divisive plans. Nevertheless, the 241-seat margin of the BJP indicates that Modi's divisive politics still holds some influence. However, Verdict 2024 also shows that the battle against right-wing forces remains a major focus in Indian politics. Ever since winning in 2019, RSS and Modi have been attempting to portray Hindus as completely polarized and communalized, and willing to support the BJP. These election outcomes have entirely invalidated that belief.

Modi is a politician who has feelings of inferiority and a belief in his own god-like status. Modi's assertion that he was not born biologically but was instead sent by God was met with widespread mockery, including among his own supporters. He dis-

## Drona

respected the idea of motherhood while trying to secure victory in the election. Everything has gone wrong.

Examination of the Indian ruling class reveals a strong preference for authoritarian leaders, leading to a predominantly right-wing orientation. The business elite has a long history of flirting with fascism. There are numerous individuals like Hitler and Mussolini, among others. The wealthy and capitalists have mainly conflicted with the poor and working class. Since gaining independence, wealthy individuals and capitalists in India have been using the government's resources to manipulate and maintain power over the population. Preventing them from taking part in elections and using their right to vote has proven to be highly successful tactics for the wealthy and capitalists.

The results from Uttar Pradesh especially Faizabad a refreshing news for secular democratic and progressive forces. Ayodhya, a representation of RSS's Hindutva revival, did not heed the call of the self-proclaimed Hindu Heart King, Narendra Modi. The voters of Ayodhya destroyed two myths at once: Modi's efforts to build the Ram temple did not ignite Hindutva enthusiasm, and it showed that Modi is not the only representative of Hindutva. The results from UP had triggered the cyber-Hindutva handles

were they blabbered about Hindus betraying Hindus and being ungrateful. Such people who can be categorized as “andhbhakt” are a real boon to RSS. These people with a limited understanding of Indian history and ground reality will never understand how much secularism is entangled in the hearts of Indians. The results in Faizabad invoke the memory of how Nehru won the 1950-51 elections and defeated the communal campaign led against him by Karpatri Maharaj. Despite Karpatri Maharaj's venomous campaign people of India and UP especially sided with secularism and progressive thinking.

Some specialists and scholars are attempting to portray the outcome as a setback rather than a loss. A compelling discussion has been initiated in the public sphere: What is the reason behind some Indians supporting Modi for a second term? Which Indians are the ones who wish for his return? Clearly, the wealthy, upper middle class, and capitalists are portraying him as the hero of modern India in order to safeguard their class interests. The right-wing groups aim for powerful military and financial strength. True economic independence and narrowing the wealth disparity would be extremely distasteful to them. The BJP's consolidation of the economy aligns with Hitler's political ideology.

Let us now inspect some election data; BJP lost 14 of its stronghold

seats it won in the last three elections. 37 per cent of BJP's sitting MPs who recontested, lost the elections. NDA lost 15 per cent votes in West while INDIA gained 11 per cent in Hindi heartland. In rural areas, BJP lost a considerable number of votes. It is to be remembered that BJP fought this election with a sound economic condition boosted by electoral bonds, and corporate funding. Along with the cyber-Hindutva army, the mainstream national media which showed open bias toward BJP also helped them in the campaign. On the other end, the INDIA bloc had to fight venomous communal propaganda, hate campaigns, blatant lies and misinformation, the animosity from institutions including ED, CBI and ECI. Considering this reality, the current results are not just a setback but is clear defeat for BJP-RSS.

The Opposition must now analyze the catchment area of their campaign and identify the pockets where their campaign for development and welfare failed to penetrate. The alliance and unity must be broadened and enhanced. The strategies must be sharpened so that the 2029 elections will be the complete restoration of the idea of democratic, secular, and socialist India. The autumn of Modi-Shah duo will have a cascading effect on the total future of BJP. The considerable increase in the strength of Opposition parties in Lok Sabha will obstruct Hindutva forces from materializing their agendas.

# India's Unemployment Rate Getting Alarming High

*The discredited NDA government has been claiming without any supportive evidence that the employment is growing in its tenure. The young voters of this great democracy have rejected the communal politics of the RSS-BJP government in the recently concluded national elections. Instead the main issues before the nation today is unemployment, price rise, preservation of the values of the Constitution and of course corruption by the ruling regime.*

The latest data of CMIE shows that India's youth unemployment rate has reached the alarming level of 45.4 per cent – among the highest in the world. This is doing deep and wide damage. For the sake of the country we must not hide behind slogans, must put politics aside and take corrective measures.

Young Indians, the unemployed are so disheartened they are turning to drugs, addiction to which is growing across north India and not just in Punjab. National Crime Records Bureau data shows that in 2018, three unemployed youth committed suicide every two hours; in 2022, it increased to two suicides per hour. Yet the claim of a "surge in employment" continues to mount during elections.

Between 1983 and 2023, there has been no period that has seen jobless growth, forgetting that jobless growth in India or any developing country for that matter is impossible. People must work to survive in all low- and low-middle-income countries, especially if the working age share of population is constantly rising.

Labour force surveys in India use two definitions of employment: principal status (PS) and subsidiary status (SS). PS is defined as work over 182 days in the last 365 days; so even PS work could be part-time, just as SS work (defined as 31-181 days in the past 365 days) will be part-time.

For a developing country characterised by extremely high levels of time related under-employment, it would be bizarre to leave out SS or short-duration employment. So it is a bit rich for the authors to advise labour economists, who have studied India for decades, that only PS employment should be studied. That is a recipe for completely misunderstanding an i n -



formalised economy's labour market – 85 per cent of India's enterprises are actually "informal" or unorganised.

We are then informed that the "fastest increase in employment has been from 2017-18 to 2022-23 when about 80 million additional employment was reported". What is not revealed is that 60 million of this has been in agriculture – a reversal of the process of structural change underway from 2004 to 2019, when the absolute number of workers in

agriculture fell.

In an economy where 42 per cent of the workforce was producing 15 per cent of its GDP, agri-productivity is already so low that the last thing the farmers themselves want is to work in farming. No development economist worth his salt regards the growth of agricultural employment as "employment". Even less if there is an increase in farm employment from 42 per cent to 45 per cent in just three years (2020-2023), from 200 million to 260 million.

The authors note that "the employment growth has been highest for women during this period, by more than 8 per cent annually". They dismiss the argument that they returned due to in-

creasing distress. They claim: "With falling fertility rates, improved access to water, energy, etc., they are those involved in care- and home-related work." However, such work is not employment, they misinterpret.

The authors admit that wages have been stagnant in 2017-18. Second, the piece is devoid of any recognition of the kind of wages available in agriculture. We have shown (rb.gy/ydeaba) that wages have stagnated in

real terms in the last 10 years in all sectors.

But the distress is greater than that. We estimated the number of workers with daily wages/salary in agriculture earning up to '100: they were 99.8 million in 2017-18, and had risen to 127.1 million by 2022 (at 2012 constant prices). An additional 63 million were workers in agriculture earning wages of '100-200 in 2017-18, it remained 63 million in 2022. In other words, 190 million of the 247 million workers in agriculture received these kind of wages. If such wages do not indicate distress, what must they earn to denote presence/absence of distress?

Women (and men) leaving agriculture (with mechanisation gathering momentum) had been a hugely important development in the process of structural transformation since 2004. By contrast between 1996 and 2004, agricultural output had stagnated, and so had incomes. Like earlier, a recent surge of women employment in agriculture/allied activities is purely informal and in precarious forms, characterised by low or no wages, long hours, and little job security. This not only perpetuates gender inequalities but also reinforces the cycle of poverty for women/families.

Girls and women leaving agriculture has historically been seen as a process that accompanies an economy transitioning from low- to low-middle-income status (in accordance with a U-shaped relationship observed [by Goldin and others] between per capita income and female labour force participation, across countries).

Indian enrolments of



**STUDY & STRUGGLE**

C Adhikesavan



children in schools, especially of girls, increased sharply between 2004 and 2015. Child labour fell, and female labour force participation rate again fell further.

However, some women returning to agriculture are now taking up livestock rearing as an option; but all this is unpaid family labour. That is causing the so-called "surge in employment". There has been a surge of 30 million workers in agriculture as unpaid family labour, and of 5 million in urban areas; a majority are women. Also, there is a sharp increase in own account workers among women in agriculture. By and large, this is due to reduced effective demand as remittances to rural areas fell.

India already had the highest open unemployment in 45 years in 2017-18. Worse, the pandemic-induced economic downturn led to widespread job losses, reducing effective demand. Manufacturing employment, a significant share of it unorganised and in rural areas, fell after the double shocks of demonetisation and unplanned GST. Manufacturing employed 60 million in 2012; it was down to an average 56 million for three years (2017-18 to 2019-20), before recovering above the level prevailing a decade earlier, only after Covid.

Laxman Atmaram Katdare, more famous as 'KR', was born on June 20, 1904 in Kakambar, taluka Chiplun, district Ratnagiri, Maharashtra. He was an unusual comrade in more ways than one. He was a rock-like foundation to the party apparatus and party centre in Bombay and at all India level during the British days as also later. While outstanding leaders like Dr G Adhikari, S V Ghatge, P C Joshi, Ajoy Ghosh, C Rajeshwara Rao and others became well-known names, justifiably, KR was the key to many success stories of the party and of the individual leaders. He was ever reliable and dependable.

During the underground days he assumed several names, one of them being Kamlakar Rao. When he was arrested in 1949, news appeared in the party press: 'Com KR is arrested'. Since then 'KR' stuck to him permanently.

He shifted to Bombay when he was only eight years of age and stayed in Girgaum. He loved to study but due to adverse economic position of his family, he had to leave schooling after class sixth. He was particularly attracted to engineering. So he began to study at home itself. In 1935, the VJTI (Veermata Jijabai Technological Institute), Bombay (Mumbai), began a course of radio diploma for private students sitting for exams from outside. KR took the exams and passed the diploma.

By the time WW II had started, KR had become prominent as a Communist, but also as a technical engineering expert. So much so that he was invited several times by the British officer Jenkins to help in the technical issues in war efforts. He offered him a job in the British submarines going to Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia etc to collect intelligence against the Germans. But KR by this time was already fully committed to and burdened with party responsibilities. So, he politely declined the offer.

## 'KR': Unusual Bedrock

Anil Rajimwale

### Meeting with classical music maestro VD Paluskar

Katdare was deeply attached to and fond of the Indian classical music. He never missed any opportunity to attend programs of classical Indian music since his childhood. He came to know the famous classical singing maestro the famous Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar in the course of these programs. All India Sangeet Parishad (all India music conference) was held in 1928 in Bombay. Paluskar asked KR to form a volunteer corps for the program. KR did the job very well and was greatly appreciated.

KR had a huge collection of tapes of classical songs of many

movement that he came in contact with SV Ghatge. An office was set up in Bombay to coordinate the work of non-cooperation struggle. KR worked in that office as its secretary. Initially, Ghatge was not much interested in the Gandhian tactics but later he gradually came to understand Gandhiji and his philosophy much better. The movement brought KR's school days to an abrupt end.

After having chanced upon a book on land reforms in Soviet Russia, KR conveyed to his uncle that this would soon happen in India also. He told his uncle that it would be better if the family landholdings were distributed among the tenants, otherwise they would be taken

Adhikari was momentous. It was Dange who introduced KR to Adhikari. Adhikari said: "If you are prepared to sink yourself completely without any leadership aspirations, then come." Katdare was not the kind of person to aspire for limelight or entertain any ambitions. In fact, he tended to keep away from limelight. He specialized in underground 'tech' work and tried to build the necessary infrastructure for the party in the most adverse conditions in the underground days of British rule, at a time when there was severe paucity of funds. At that time, the CPI was banned and operated from 'underground'. KR was a crucial key to the UG apparatus. His work included ferrying leaders from place to place, delivering sensitive documents, organizing tech apparatus etc. He was expert in communication because of his training in the VJTI, particularly in the radio communications.

KR told with a twinkle in his eyes: "You know it was me who typed and cyclostyled that all important document, *Communist No. 1* of Dr Adhikari, which set the alarm bells ringing in the corridors of power. It was all done secretly with an old typewriter and was copied in a British club where there was a machine. None could catch us."

He kept looking after his family even after his father died. He did many part-time jobs. His invisible hands made it possible for leaders like Adhikari, Joshi, Dange and others to continue their party work. It was KR who master-minded Dr Adhikari's escape from Bijapur jail in the 1930s.

### UG den in a workshop

KR opened a radio repair shop in Girgaum, Bombay. In fact it was an underground meeting place, where such fa-

## Biographies of Communist Leaders-110

Anil Rajimwale

prominent singers for over a period of sixty years. He could describe details of the singers and their contributions and practically knew about every tape.

During 1910-20, women did not take part in music and singing, particularly in Goa. Ladies from the affluent sections did not take part in such programs. Almost all the classical singers used to come from Goa. It was in this background that Sharda Bhate began her music classes. The class had the nameplate with the following words: "For women of affluent class only"! Thereafter, the women from higher families also began to join the classes and even to give programs.

### In non-cooperation movement, 1920

KR took an active part in the non-cooperation movement of 1920. It was in the course of this

over, as happened in the Soviet Russia!

He stated later: "I can't pretend that I fully grasped what I read. But I was very much impressed by the events in Russia, and was fully convinced that the same will happen in India also."

### Inspired by SA Dange

He got much-needed motivation from the early Marxist work by the great working class leader and theoretician SA Dange: from his *Gandhi vs Lenin*. It was this work that inspired him to participate more actively in the NCO. Later on he was to help launching of famous weekly *The Socialist* edited by Dange, collect funds for Girni Kamgar Union, and hoist first red flags. KR joined the 'Marxist League', an organisation of young Marxists.

### Meeting Dr Adhikari

Katdare's meeting with Dr

# of Party Apparatus

amous names used to meet, as Acharya Narendra Dev, Jaiprakash Narain, Nargis Batlivala, Hathi Singh (brother-in-law of Pt Nehru), Prithvi Singh Azad, and many others. He acquired a lathe machine, a drilling machine, and used the scrap and other material to manufacture parts of a printing press! He made proof press and sent them to Bengal and Andhra also. It just cost Rs 80! This came handy at a time when the party had severe lack of funds. That is how he helped the PPH (People's Publishing House) too to come into being.

problems of logistics, many of which KR had to solve. Among them was arranging car for transport. Many old vintage cars were tested, and one among them was ultimately chosen! KR's technical knowledge always came handy!

## Setting up New Age printing press

Ban was lifted on CPI during the WWII. Party needed a newspaper at this hour. KR sold whatever he could, even his workshop and other assets. He thus raised seven thousand rupees, a big amount those days. KR purchased from this

to Afghanistan, ultimately on way to the Soviet Union and Germany, despite their differences with him. Subhash's messengers contacted the CPI headquarters in Bombay for this mission, and ultimately the party agreed. Communists like Achhar Singh Cheena, Teja Singh Swatantra, Bhagat Ram Talwar, as also, Talib were involved in the expedition.

Behind the scenes, KR also was actively involved. He was a close friend of Talwar, together discussing many things. KR even stayed with his family later on. KR used to keep communication between Talwar and the PHQ in Bombay, travelling several times between Bombay, Peshawar and Kabul.

## Celebrating Independence Day, 1947

India's freedom was celebrated in CPI office, Raj Bhuvan, Bombay, on August 15, 1947 on a grand scale. The whole building was decorated with festoons, flags and lights. Meetings were held and speeches given. KR was in the midst of it all. Neon lights sparkled everywhere. Amar Sheikh's songs reverberated. Thousands of people blocked the road from Raj Bhuvan. That indeed was a memorable day.

## Facing extreme tortures

KR underwent extreme tortures during the British period as well as after independence. He was arrested in 1949, and the police used 'third degree' on him. The Police wanted information on the whereabouts of BTR and other leaders. His tortures began at 7 pm and continued till 3 am. Officer Nagarwala headed the police team. KR was beaten on his stomach severely but his yoga practice helped him face up to it: he would withdraw his stomach inside and face the beatings.

Nagarwala understood this and stopped the beatings.

## During BTR period

KR carried a big load of UG work during the BTR period. It was due to him that many leaders and cadres could be saved from the police. He was arrested in 1949, interned in Arthur Jail and other ones. He was released only in 1952.

He helped the technical preparations of several party congresses like those of Madurai, Amritsar etc.

## Doing constructive work

After release in 1952, KR was without work, proper place and assignments. He had lived long decades in a city like Bombay, and also in Delhi. So now he wanted to go back the calm rural surroundings with green foliage and running river waters.

So he shifted to Kulgaon-Badlapur, near Bombay itself, on way to Ambernath. He really felt a kind of home-coming.

Here he did lot of constructive and reform work. He got water including potable water supplied to 10 villages around. With the rise in population, railway station and other amenities were demanded and granted. Water tanks were built. Several tenements were planned and constructed. Pest control projects were prepared helped by the local comrade Hattangadi, who was also an entomologist.

KR contacted his old friends and collected Rs 50, initially, went to the families of the Adivasis and collected fifty boys. He then began to get more money. One with a meager capital was he had started a school without fees. It quickly became popular.

By the beginning of 1960s, the school evolved into a college. It is out of these efforts that Adarsh Vidya Prasarak Sanstha (model education institution) came into being in Kulgaon. Before going to Moscow in the 70s, KR resigned from the chair-

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New Age Weekly



Left to Right : Coms. K.R., Rashid and Govind Vidyarthi

His UG tech was so efficient that he could even keep a track on the British intelligence, and thus prevent any possible harm to the top party leaders.

KR tested many duplicating and cyclo machines and other gadgets: English, Japanese, German etc and used them for party printing and duplicating work. Those days, the Gestetner and Remington machines were popular and dependable, varieties of which KR collected from various sources and used them meticulously.

## First party congress, 1943

The first CPI congress took place in May-June 1943 in Bombay. There were lots of

money a 'double royal size stop cylinder paddle machine'. That is how the New Age Printing Press came into being.

People used to be astonished at this kind of efficient press functioning. The correspondent of the American *Time and Life*, Margaret Burke White, came to see things for herself and took photographs. They were later published in the journal.

Comrades used to go to important places like VT and Churchgate stations in several groups and sell the party paper.

## Helping Subhash Bose's escape

Communists were mainly instrumental in helping Subhash Chandra Bose escape

# Health of Nation in Dire Situation

**H**ealthcare is the government's responsibility, especially at a time when the health of the nation is in a dire situation and more than 97 crore people in the country can't afford even healthy food as per the World Bank Atlas. In this backdrop, the Health of the Nation 2024 report released by Apollo Group coinciding with World Health Day on April 7, should be alarming for all. It said that India has become the cancer capital of the world; one in every four people can't even sleep well; one in five between 18-25 years of age is depressed; almost 80 per cent of young adults of 18-30 years have very high-stress level manifesting as anxiety, obesity, fatigue, insomnia, lack of stamina and low productivity; two in three moving toward high blood pressure; one in three have pre-diabetes; one in ten have uncontrolled diabetes and so on.

The report has come out at a time when India is going to have its next government and therefore is likely to acquire a special significance. Though PM Modi and the RSS-BJP clan have been claiming that they had done marvellous work in protecting the ailing Indians, the dire situation itself is self-explanatory that their claims are false, their

performances were dismal, and they are yet not ready to accept that healthcare is government responsibility. If we go through NITI Aayog Annual Health Index 2023, which covers the year 2020-21 and tracked the achievement of States and Union Territories, we clearly see that Opposition-ruled states generally have performed better than the

## Our Correspondent

BJP-ruled states. Performance score among larger states shows Kerala was at the top with a score of 77.53, followed by Punjab 65.83, Tamil Nadu 64.05, Gujarat 62.71, Maharashtra 61.76, Himachal Pradesh at 61.84, Jammu and Kashmir 61.02, Andhra Pradesh 60.84, Karnataka 59.39, Telangana 56.12, and Chhattisgarh 52.69. From the bottom at the performance list among larger states are Uttar Pradesh with a score of 34.44, Rajasthan 37.35, Bihar with 39.10, Odisha with 40.19, Madhya Pradesh with 40.77, Uttarakhand 44.61, Assam with 45.84, and Haryana 47.59.

It goes without saying that opposition political parties that are mostly part of the INDIA bloc

have performed better than the BJP governments. Union Territories are under direct Central rule by PM Narendra Modi, but Delhi is at the top of healthcare performance which is ruled by AAP government under CM Arvind Kejriwal which is under detention by the Enforcement Directorate. Kejriwal government has done commendable work in opening Mohalla Clinics and providing better healthcare facilities to common people who can't afford treatment. AAP is now also ruling Punjab, whose healthcare performance is improving fast though it is just second in performance in the country after Kerala which is ruled presently by the Left with the highest performance score.

Though healthcare performance in Rajasthan has been among the worst, the Congress-led government has lately created a history by bringing legislation for "right to free treatment". It is the duty of the coming ruling powers to have universalized and free public health centres such as hospitals, clinics, primary health centres, mobile healthcare units, dispensaries and health camps. Free healthcare will include examination, diagnostics, treatment, surgery, medicines, rehabilitation and palliative care. Such guarantee by the INDIA bloc is significant at a time when medical treatment has become increasingly costly under Modi re-

gime of the last 10 years and has become unaffordable for the majority of the people in the country. Congress has said that budget allocation for health will be increased step by step every year to achieve four per cent of total expenditure by 2028-29. It should be noted that it was only around 2 per cent in 2023-24 under PM Narendra Modi. The Union health budget was 0.35 percent of GDP in 2023-24, and it was 0.42 percent in 2022-23 and 0.56 percent in 2021-22. It is also significant that Congress has promised that all manufacturers of medicines will be under strict scrutiny for maintaining quality and following good manufacturing practices. We know by now that several medicine manufacturing companies were under investigation for low quality medicines but no actions were taken against them after they gave political donations under Modi's Electoral Bond Scheme, which the Supreme Court of India has declared unconstitutional.

Left Front in Kerala has already done a commendable job in healthcare, guaranteeing the "right to health and free treatment" is likely to be included in the common minimum programme of the INDIA bloc. There is a health emergency for the nation, and every citizen must weigh political parties' performance and guarantees and scrutinize it in the upcoming time.

## 'KR': Unusual Bedrock...

*from centre page*

manship of the institution.

### Helping party centre in Delhi

KR helped PPH in the centre, organizing accounts as also regarding press matters. He stayed long years helping Dr Adhikari when the latter was compiling documents of history of CPI. KR was instrumental in contacting many old comrades and revolutionaries including those residing abroad for documents and details. KR was alike friend to Dr Adhikari. KR maintained the Microfilm

Section of CPI in Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi, when Doc was collecting materials on CPI history.

KR had huge number of real stories to tell: he was practically an encyclopedia of the underground history of CPI, as also of other events. He led a highly disciplined life, with strict daily routine to the minute.

KR and Doc (Dr Adhikari) often visited Himalayan mountains for trekking, tourism and study. They used to be accompanied by Kalidas Sikdar of Central Party School and Krishna, visiting remote places.

In the 1970s, Lok Vangmaya Griha was established as a branch of the PPH. KR was appointed as one of the two directors, along with Eknath Bhagwat. He worked as member of party's Central Auditing Commission from 1966 to 1982. Dharani Goswami was the coordinator. K Murugesan and Kishori Prasanna Sinha also worked in it at different times. They used to submit audited reports for the party and the PPH every year.

**'KR' passed away on April 23, 1997 at the age of 88.**

**T**he Morena party's leader ship holed up in the Hilton Hotel in Mexico City was in a state of quiet shock: they knew they were going to win Mexico's presidential election, but not by that much. As results trickled in yesterday evening, it became clear that the long-expected victory was a drubbing. So far, Claudia Sheinbaum holds a thirty-point lead over her conservative rival, Xóchitl Gálvez, 58.3 percent to 28.7 percent, with third-party candidate Jorge Álvarez Maynez coming in at 10.5 percent. According to projections made by the National Electoral Institute, Sheinbaum's final total was expected to fall within a range of 58.3–60.7 percent, outperforming all but a pair of final pre-election polls.

## Triumph of Left in Mexico

Kurt Hackbarth

(together with the state legislatures it controls). And not only did Morena win the all-important mayorship of Mexico City with candidate Clara Brugada, the Morena coalition is also set to pick up at least six of the eight governor's races up for grabs.

To put Morena's victory in perspective, Sheinbaum is on course to best Andrés Manuel López Obrador's 2018 landslide victory of 53 percent by some five to seven points where he received a historic total of thirty million votes, Sheinbaum will have received some thirty-five million. Similarly, Gálvez was running about ten to twelve points behind the conservative party's total in that election. In 2018, the conservative parties

Sheinbaum racked up the miles, holding three times as many rallies as Gálvez. Where Gálvez veered from one uncosted policy proposal to another, Sheinbaum rolled out a hundred-point program that includes extending social programs and scholarships, continuing annual minimum-wage increases, consolidating Mexico's push toward national health care, building a million affordable homes on a rent-to-buy plan, constructing seven long-distance train lines, avoiding the maquiladora experience of the 1990s by mandating that companies investing in the "nearshoring" phenom-

scattershot series of attacks that got nastier over time. Gálvez, playing to the hilt a go-negative campaign strategy, attacked everything from her character to her family to her record as Mexico City mayor, winding up with a series of dog-whistle insinuations about Sheinbaum's Jewish heritage. Sheinbaum also refused to be goaded by those who repeated that she was going to be a puppet of outgoing president Andrés Manuel every time someone would try to insist on the need to create a more individualistic image — as if she were marketing a new brand of cereal or detergent — Sheinbaum would calmly explain that she represents a social movement and that her administration will

campaign of media and bots that attempted to paint Andrés and Morena as being in collusion with drug cartels. This is only a chapter in a nonstop media onslaught that sneered and slandered its way through Andrés's administration without deigning to learn a thing about what was happening underneath its very limited radar.

For the election, a gaggle of foreign journalists touched down in Mexico City, marveling that such a "machista" country could be electing a woman president — and so comfortably. Once again, all of the comfortable tropes — election of state, voters bought off by social programs, a religious populace in thrall to the "handpicked successor" of a messianic leader — were trundled out, anything to avoid granting agency to Mexican voters or seeing what has been happening on the ground: a policy-driven process of party realignment in which working-class voters, scattered across parties in the 2018 election, have concentrated in Morena while maintaining the party's cross-class coalition largely intact.

After a victory acknowledgment in the Hilton, Sheinbaum made her way to Mexico City's main square, the Zócalo. There she paid homage to the social movements of the past, from workers to students, teachers to farmers, and read out the names of women who have played pivotal roles in Mexico's history. As the latest member of that list, Sheinbaum will have an enormous electoral mandate, even larger than Andrés Manuel López Obrador.

## CLAUDIA SHEINBAUM BECOMES MEXICO'S PRESIDENT

According to the institute's fast count, the landslide was expected to carry over into Congress as well, with MORENA and its allies winning up to 380 of 500 seats in the lower house, the Chamber of Deputies, and up to 88 of 128 seats in the Senate. This would put the center-left coalition within range of its ambitious goal of achieving a qualified majority of two-thirds, which would allow it to pass constitutional reforms on its own

Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and National Action Party (PAN) ran separately; this year, they ran in coalition. But instead of adding in numbers, the coalition wound up subtracting.

True to her scientific background, Sheinbaum ran a disciplined, methodical campaign. Taking nothing for granted despite holding a virtually unchanged lead since announcing her candidacy,

enon provide higher wages and benefits, and — in what is certain to continue raising the shackles of multinational energy interests — a public sector-led energy transition building on Mexico's state-owned oil, electricit

y, and lithium companies.

Throughout the campaign and over the course of three debates, Sheinbaum refused to be goaded by opposition candidate Gálvez's

proudly be the Segundo Piso, or second floor, of Mexico's Fourth Transformation. And she did it all with the poker-face persona that served her in good stead as mayor of Mexico City — one that, eschewing the attempt to force a lofty oratorical style, asserted her authority with understated consistency both in interviews and on the stump. Voters approved.

Sheinbaum's victory also came despite a coordinated international

# Majoritarianism Losing its Illusion

**T**he perception of superiority surrounding Narendra Modi has unexpectedly collapsed. The election outcomes on declared on June 4, 2024, were disheartening for Modi, who has often referred to himself as “Sent with a purpose” and set an ambitious slogan of ‘Abki baar, 400 paar’ (This time, above 400). However, this slogan may have had unintended consequences as the prospect of such a massive majority sparked apprehensions among the underprivileged about potential changes to the Constitution.

At age 73, Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have achieved remarkable success compared to other political parties. It seems they are on track to secure a third consecutive term for Modi as Prime Minister. Modi, himself, considers this accomplishment as a monumental milestone in India’s history. Nevertheless, despite the possibility of his party losing some seats in Parliament, they may have to work together with smaller parties within their coalition to form a government.

Modi, who could become only the second Indian PM to secure a third consecutive term, hailed it as a historic milestone in India’s history. In contrast to it, the BJP lost many seats and has fallen short of a simple majority. It is leading by a small margin in the 543-seat Parliament, but does not have the required 272 seats by itself. However, its coalition partners have picked up extra seats.

The election results are a setback for Modi, who has always won majorities in previous elections as Gujarat’s

chief minister and India’s prime minister and has been a dominant figure in Indian politics for the past 10 years.

This outcome also represents an unexpected comeback for the Opposition Congress-led Indian National

Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDI-Alliance), going against earlier predictions of its decline and differing significantly from both exit polls and pre-election surveys.

When the results became clear, the stock markets in the country experienced a sharp fall. Opposition parties who had joined forces to “protect the nation’s democracy” celebrated the outcome. Although Modi strengthened his grip on power in India, he discovered his politi-

*Girish Linganna*

cal influence had its limits. He effectively made the election all about himself, even though it is typically fought on a constituency basis.

In a statement released on X, Modi expressed his optimism and announced that his coalition had secured a third term. He described this achievement as a remarkable milestone in the history of India.

A lenient interpretation of the outcome for Modi would suggest that

humbled by the voters’ decision and the necessity to collaborate with coalition partners who do not hold the same Hindu-nationalist beliefs as he does.

The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) and the Janata Dal (United) will, indeed, be kingmakers in the formation of the new government. With 16 seats in Andhra Pradesh and 12 seats in Bihar, respectively, these parties hold considerable influence in determining the formation of the next government. Their commitment to secularism is

indicating that the 74-year-old Naidu is likely to secure another term as the state’s chief minister.

The second BJP partner, Janata Dal (United), from Bihar, is led by Nitish Kumar, who has a reputation for frequently changing his political affiliations. Despite serving as Bihar’s chief minister nine times, his coalitions have often failed, resulting in the termination of his terms. However, Kumar has consistently bounced back by forming new alliances.

The biggest blow for PM Modi’s party came from Uttar Pradesh. With 80 parliamentary seats, UP wields significant influence in national politics and is often seen as the key to Delhi, the seat of the central government. It is noteworthy that both Modi and the Congress’s Rahul Gandhi hold seats in this state.

The defeat in the Faizabad constituency highlighted how some of the major initiatives of the prime minister had failed to resonate with the voters. The Faizabad constituency is significant as it is the site of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The temple’s grand inauguration, planned just before the election campaign, was expected not only to consolidate Modi’s Hindu supporters, but also attract new followers.

Some BJP workers noted that the party’s emphasis on the Ram

**The biggest blow for PM Modi’s party came from Uttar Pradesh. With 80 parliamentary seats, UP wields significant influence in national politics and is often seen as the key to Delhi, the seat of the central government**

his party’s victory at the local level was possible only because of his personal efforts, despite its unpopularity. Alternatively, it could indicate that his carefully nurtured image has reached its peak and he can no longer evade the public’s dissatisfaction that eventually catches up with most politicians.

It is unclear how Modi will respond to the situation. He may intensify his efforts to suppress any opposition to his authority, or he may be

particularly important, as it raises hopes among those who oppose Prime Minister Modi’s efforts to prioritize Hinduism in India’s governance.

Naidu, a technocrat who served as Andhra Pradesh’s chief minister three times and played a crucial role in promoting India’s technological capabilities, made a comeback after being incarcerated for several weeks on corruption allegations last year. Additionally, his party is leading in the state elections of Andhra Pradesh,

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# Extreme Heat Waves : Result of Global Warming, Climate Change – Part I

*Diary of  
International  
Events*

*C. Adhikesavan*

*Let us recall the summer season two years ago. Year 2022. It was called the hottest Summer ever. Many Indian states were under 'severe' heatwave. Temperatures breached 45 degrees Celsius (113 Fahrenheit) in at least 9 cities. That year, it was so hot in India that it broke the 122-year-old record. But then came the Summer of 2023. The summer season was so scorching hot that scientists said it was the hottest summer in the last 2000 years. The intense northern hemisphere summer heat drove wildfires across the Mediterranean, buckled roads in Texas, and strained power grids in China.*

But then we come to the year 2024. The First month of this year was Earth's Warmest January on record. February 2024 was the 9<sup>th</sup> Consecutive hottest month ever recorded. March 2024 hottest ever recorded. April 2024 hottest month ever recorded. The last 11 months on Earth, have been record-breaking in terms of heat. The scorching heat that you must bear today is not normal. You are not alone.

Last month, in South India and the entire Southeast Asia, record-breaking heat waves have been seen. Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia everywhere, there were such unbearable temperatures. In the Philippines, the heat index had crossed 53 degrees Celsius. In Uttarakhand, there were forest fires. In the first week of May, forest fires were seen in Odisha, Chhatisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, and Jharkhand.

Heatwave warnings are being issued all over the country, even in places like Kerala, where there are no heat waves usually. Blistering heat continues to take a toll on people's lives in the state. And now temperatures have been soaring above 46 degrees Celsius in North India. An intense heat wave grips north, Central, and Western India.

Global warming and climate change are the main reasons behind all this. But they are not the only reasons? The other two reasons causing this and what is the solution



at the local level. What can we do to avoid this heatwave?

First, we need to understand that such extreme weather events are not only seen in India or Southeast Asia but also every nook and corner of the world. What happened in South America this month? At least 83 people are dead after days of heavy rain in Southern Brazil and more than a hundred are missing. Another 1,23,000 people have been displaced by floods. There were devastating floods in Brazil in which more than 1,50,000 people were displaced. Entire cities were submerged.

What is happening in South Africa? We are witnessing a terrible drought. The Southern Africa region is experiencing a severe drought with many families unable to cater for their daily needs like food. Such kind of drought was in 1947 say the local elder people. So, this is not a normal circumstance. A drought unparalleled in the past several decades. That is why many southern African countries are seeking 5.5 billion dollars from the rest of the world to cope with EL Nino.

To prevent a situation

of starvation. There is one weather event behind all this destruction which is considered the biggest cause. EL Nino. It is a natural cycle of the Earth's climate that is seen every 5-7 years. However, due to climate change, it is becoming more extreme year after year. The full name of this cycle is EL Nino Southern Oscillation. In short, it is called ENSO.

According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), this is the second biggest cause that changes the climate of the earth. And on the first place, is the relationship between the Earth and the Sun, Earth's revolution around the

Sun, which causes the seasons to change.

Winter following summer and summer following winter. But after that effect, EL Nino has the second biggest impact.

What is EL Nino? It is something that can be seen in the Pacific Ocean. The Pacific Ocean is the world's largest and deepest ocean, lying between Asia and the Americas. Imagine, this ocean is like a tub, a bathtub, water keeps moving from one side to another. When you move your hand in the tub, the wa-

ter sloshes from one side to another and then gets back to the first point. Similarly, winds blow over the Pacific Ocean flowing from east to west. These winds are called Trade Winds and most of the time, they move from the Americas to the direction of Asia and Australia. Because it is based on Earth's rotation.

You must have read about the Coriolis effect in school. Since Earth rotates from West to East, due to this Coriolis effect, the Trade Winds flow in the opposite direction. Due to this, normally, the water on the surface of the Pacific Ocean starts flowing to-

wards the West. It means it starts flowing towards Australia. And when the water on the surface starts flowing in that direction, in the east, the water below the surface level of the sea starts rising to the surface. That is, near South America, the water from the depths of the sea rises towards the surface. This is called Upwelling. The water that rises from the depths of the ocean, is much colder comparatively and has more nutrients. Because of this, fish and marine life also benefit. So, in this normal situation, the hot water goes to Australia, and the cold water comes to South America. When water is hot, it evaporates more easily. Because of that evaporation, clouds are formed and more rain is seen near Australia. But now, imagine that these Trade Winds have weakened. These winds are not flowing as strongly over the Pacific Ocean. What will happen? The upwelling will be weak, it will be almost non-existent. The hot water on the surface will consistently remain hot. The clouds that were supposed to bring rain to Australia can rain anywhere over the Pacific Ocean. So, the Australian region will become very dry. This is the phenomenon of EL Nino which is like a regular cycle. But this is not a regular cycle. Sometimes it happens every 4 years, after 5 years, and sometimes after 7 years. But when EL Nino happens, it lasts for 6 to 12 months. But during the EL Nino, the weather patterns of the world changed. – To be continued...

# Flight Cancellations Affected 1.5 lakh People

**S**ince December 2023, hundreds of cancellations and poor on-time performance of airlines have left thousands of people stranded at airports across India. Between March 31 and April 3 this year, 150 Vistara flights were cancelled and 200 flights were delayed by more than two hours. On May 8, Air India Express canceled 90 of its 360 flights. Similar cancellations, though not at this scale, were recorded across many large airlines at various points this year. The recent crisis to hit the aviation industry is fuelled by the unavailability of crew. In the case of Air India Express, about 200 cabin

crew reported: "sick". In the case of Vistara too, crew unavailability was cited as the reason. There has been a mismatch between demand and supply of crew amid the expansion of the network.

The new troubles have come just as the aviation industry has started shrugging off the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in record losses for all airlines. During the first few months of the pandemic, in 2020, passenger flow came to a halt as airlines were grounded. In later months, passenger flow trickled in as airlines had to follow pandemic-related protocols. Despite

that, airlines continued to pay salaries, airport fees, and aircraft and engine rentals and thus faced heavy losses. Later in 2022, when passenger flow returned to pre-COVID-19 levels, aviation fuel prices shot up. Airlines continued to suffer since passing on the fuel price to customers was not an option. In January 2024, five per cent of IndiGo's flights, 3.4% of SpiceJet's flights, and about two per cent of Air India's flights were cancelled. Even in the month prior, cancellations ranged between one per cent and two per cent for these airlines.

While the cancellation rate may statistically appear insignificant, the

absolute number of passengers affected even when 1-2% flights get cancelled in a month is staggering. For instance, in the four months between December 2023 and March 2024, 1.5 lakh passengers couldn't travel due to cancellations. When an airline with a significantly higher number of scheduled flights cancels even 1% of its flights, the number of passengers affected too is considerably higher. which explains the bigger boxes for IndiGo. In total, since January 2022, 6.5 lakh passengers have been affected by cancellations. Cancellations result in a demand for refunds by passengers.

Data show that the refund process has not been smooth. In 2022, across many months, over 25% of the total complaints were about refunds. In 2023 and 2024, this share reduced to 15%, which is commendable given the high number of cancellations. But problems persist. The on-time performance of airlines has also been drastically falling in the past two years. In December 2023, the on-time performance of all major airlines fell to the lowest level in two years (SpiceJet: 30%, Air India: 47.6%, IndiGo: 60%). The poor on-time performance continued in 2024 as well. In the last two years, 45 lakh passengers have been impacted by this issue.

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# Majoritarianism Losing ...

from page 12

Temple may have alienated many Hindus from the lower castes. The Opposition accused PM Modi of favouring upper caste interests, which they argued limited opportunities for disadvantaged Hindus to overcome long-standing oppression. This perspective was highlighted in a BBC report.

To counter potential losses in his northern stronghold, or the Hindi heartland, Modi aimed high for this election. He wanted to make inroads in the more prosperous southern regions of the country. He made some progress in Kerala. However, overall in the South,

he found it challenging to surpass the 29 seats his party had secured out of 129 in the previous election.

One of the biggest setbacks for the BJP in southern India was that it seemed to have failed once again to win any of the 39 seats in Tamil Nadu. Modi had campaigned vigorously in Tamil Nadu, even spending two days meditating in a coastal town as the election drew to a close.

India has a history of chaotic coalition governments, although some in the early-1990s and 2000s were instrumental in bringing about economic reforms. If the BJP forms

the government, it will have to rely on its allies and will need to adopt a more collaborative and consultative approach. This reliance makes the government vulnerable to collapse if the allies feel ignored. The party, once seen as all-powerful, now depends on its allies, unlike in 2014 and 2019.

The election outcomes will revitalize the Congress-led Opposition, which has often faced criticism. The INDI Alliance remained intact despite facing turbulence in February when one of its key leaders, Nitish Kumar, withdrew from the alliance before later rejoining the BJP.

The future appears promising for the Opposition as the BJP currently holds around one-third of India's 4,000+ state Assembly seats and they have previously been defeated by regional parties. In the next 14 months, five states are scheduled to hold elections, all of which could witness intense competition.

India requires significant efforts and reconciliation moving forward. The economy is experiencing growth, primarily driven by government expenditure. However, inequality is also increasing. To sustain this progress, there is a need for higher private investment and increased consumer spending. It is crucial for

the lower-income and middle-class populations to have more disposable income to stimulate economic activity.

Modi has faced backlash for marginalizing Muslims, who have experienced a disproportionate amount of violence. His government has been accused of suppressing dissent, resulting in prominent Opposition leaders being imprisoned under what they claim are fabricated charges. However, third terms in office have often presented challenges for many leaders, as unexpected and unpredictable events can veer governments off their intended course and disrupt their plans.

## On Record ...

Uttar Pradesh, where the BJP won big in the past two Lok Sabha elections, is witnessing a neck-and-neck battle between the NDA and INDIA bloc of the Congress and Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party. The SP was leading in 36, BJP in 32 and Congress in 9 seats in Uttar Pradesh, according to the Election Commission of India's latest data.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is leading in Varanasi, and so is Rahul Gandhi in Rae Bareilly. Union minister and BJP leader Smriti Irani is trailing Congress's Kishori Lal Sharma, a Gandhi family loyalist. – The Indian Express, June 5.

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Taking a dig at Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai over the election results, DMK workers came to the party headquarters with a goat with Annamalai's photo hung around its neck. In Coimbatore, DMK workers distributed mutton biryani. Annamalai is mockingly called "aadu" (goat) in Tamil Nadu by his critics. As the latest trends showed, K Annamalai was trailing by over 1 lakh

votes. DMK's Ganapathy Rajkumar P was leading, getting over 1.2 lakh votes. – India Today, June 5.

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"We worked really hard, we fought for this, but Ram Mandir consecration did not convert into votes," says Tiwari, the BJP's counting agent for

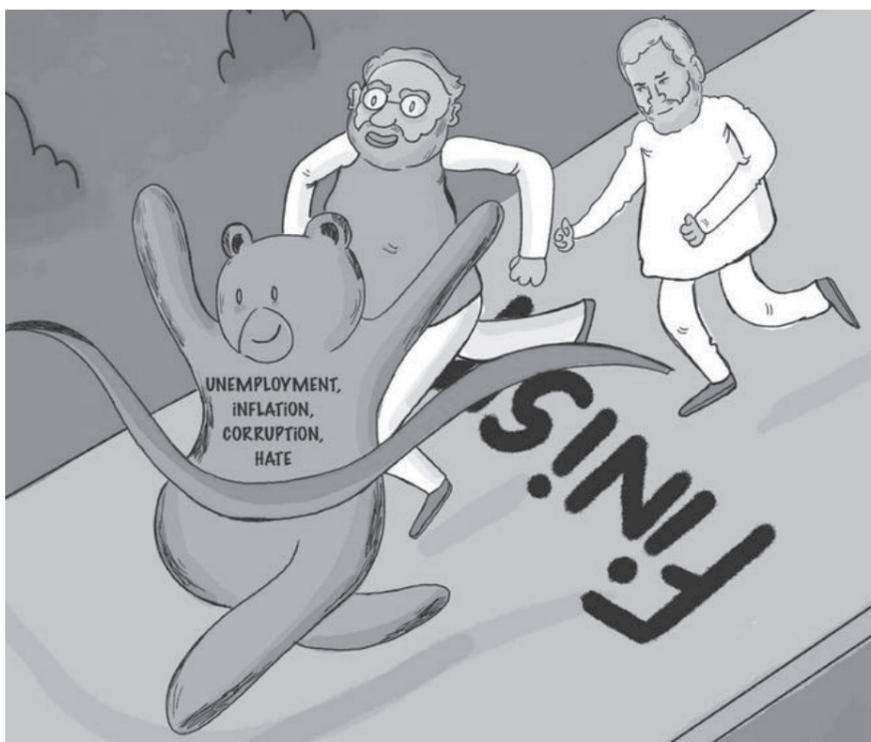
for an election that defied all exit polls predictions and saw the BJP falling well short of its own goal of 370 seats, the loss in Ayodhya was particularly stark. "There were local issues that took centre stage. Many villages in Ayodhya were angry with the land acquisition that was happening around the temple and the airport.

Also, the BSP votes were transferred to the SP because Awadesh Prasad is a Dalit leader," says Tiwari. – The Indian Express, June 5.

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The Bharatiya Janata Party will form its third government at the Centre in a row. The party won 240 seats, which is 32 short of a simple majority in the Lok Sabha. The Congress nearly doubled its 2019 seats tally as it won 99 seats. In 543 seats that went to polls, 15 Muslim candidates won the Lok Sabha polls, including former India cricketer Yusuf Pathan, who defeated Congress veteran Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury in Baharampur. The BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) emerged as the largest alliance in the Lok Sabha elections, easily crossing the majority figure of 272, even as the saffron party fell well short of its target of winning 370 seats on its own and more than 400 with its allies. – The Hindustan Times, June 5.

– Compiled by C. Adhikesavan



the seat. Barely four months after the consecration of the Ram temple – among the BJP's key ideological projects and one of its biggest calling cards this election – the party lost the Faizabad Lok Sabha seat of which Ayodhya is a part. Even

## NDA Emerges Loser, While Democracy Comes as Winner

**D**emocracy is the biggest winner in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as the results declared on June 4 underline the diversity in the political views of the largest democracy of the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was the one man mascot of the ruling party BJP has got his biggest rebuff from the 64.2 crore voters who exercised their franchise in the seven phase 18th Lok Sabha elections from April 19 to June 1 this year.

Prime Minister campaigned continuously in the last two months in support of his party slogan is baar 400 paar for NDA out of which the BJP's target was 370. A big hype was created throughout the country that the BJP was sure to achieve that through June 4 results. The final position is that the NDA tally is hovering around 290 and the BJP's own figure around 240 which is more than sixty seats below its 2019 Lok Sabha level. It is also 42 seats below its 2014 tally of 282. In 2024 Lok Sabha elections, INDIA bloc is only sixty plus seats behind NDA.

Prime Minister had tried to polarise the nation on communal lines. He also made virulent attacks on the Congress and the regional parties with the slogan of putting the same party at the centre and the states. The resurgence of the regional parties as evidenced in the poll

results gives a guarantee that the BJP's objective of centralising all powers by eroding federalism will not succeed. The coming days will be tough for the new government which will be led by the minority BJP party.

What are the takeaways from the 2024 Lok Sabha results?

First, the stature of Narendra Modi is diminished. He was trying to project himself as a Viswaguru and a sort of Messiah indicating his invincibility. He has been sent by God to do his work till 2047. He was depending on the convincing majority of BJP in the elections to spread the myth among his supporters and the common people.

That has been totally busted. Narendra Modi has been turned into a normal politician now who will be under tremendous pressure from his NDA allies in the formation of the

*Nitya Chakraborty*

Government and the BJP's programme of more Hindutva has got a jolt. The fall in seats of the BJP turning it into a minority in the Lok Sabha will lead to turmoil in Sangh Parivar. PM and his close aides in the Party acted unilaterally in the recent months concerning poll strategy to the chagrin of RSS and other units of the Sangh Parivar. PM will have to face the wrath of these Hindutva forces who were waiting to get their agenda completed during the third term of Narendra Modi. Modi has failed in their eyes.

The second takeaway is that the BJP has been trounced in the Hindi speaking states. It was devastation for the saffron camp as far as the Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana are concerned. The Party has retained Madhya Pradesh in full but that has been due to the weak Congress leadership in the state and the former chief minister Kamal Nath's flip flops over joining the BJP. The entire organisation was in a mess in Madhya Pradesh. Under an able Congress leadership, the

party could have performed much better in the state.

Hindi heartland states are the main strength of the BJP and this is taken as the party's core strength since the area belongs to its Hindutva base. The collapse of the party in the leading state Uttar Pradesh is sure to lead to rethinking among the BJP top bosses including the chief minister Yogi Adityanath. Yogi's future is at stake as he was the main leader of the BJP in undertaking the campaign in UP. Samajwadi Party under Akhilesh Yadav has done a big

turnaround and what is significant is that the Congress-SP alliance has clicked in Uttar Pradesh. It has to be taken forward in the coming days for the coming battles in the state culminating in the next assembly polls in 2027.

Also, there is no straight line regarding the regional parties also. TDP has gained vastly while YSRCP, BRS and the BJD have lost. But still, on the whole, the regional parties have gained in many states and that is very positive for strengthening the federal polity of India. In 18th Lok Sabha elections,

the NDA's vote share was 46 per cent, 2 percent less than 2019 figure while INDIA bloc's vote share in 2024 polls was 41 per cent recording a 8 per cent rise. This downslide in BJP votes is linked to the diminution of Narendra Modi's standing in the last days of the campaign.

Infact, INDIA bloc was quite close to the door of power in 2024 elections. 2024 could have been another 2004, but that has not happened as yet. That is a reality. INDIA leaders must meet now to appraise the situation honestly and work out the strategy. Their main task is now to strengthen the unity of the bloc members to take on BJP which is falling with Narendra Modi's diminished stature. The BJP is battered, Narendra Modi is not that strong. The NDA partners are not tied up with the BJP. For tactical reasons. Veterans like Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray can talk to the NDA partners like TDP, JD(U), Shinde Shiv Sena for a coalition. If any opportunity arises to deny third term to Narendra Modi in a democratic manner, that should be pursued. The game is still not over in favour of BJP.