

The Modi Rath gathers Momentum

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15.03.2017

The Narendra Modi wave is sweeping across the Gangetic plains and beyond. The recent poles five states were billed as the semi-finals to General election 2019. The importance accorded to Uttar Pradesh was evident in the Prime Minister holding rallies and road shows in the seventh and final phase, holding fort in Varanasi for three days and addressing 24 meetings across the state. UP recorded a high voting % in excess of 60%, recording 66% in the second phase, reflecting the ground enthusiasm of the voter to exercise his franchise in the best democratic tradition. While the decibel levels were high, the campaign degenerated to new lows with calling names. The elections assumed importance for BJP to execute its policies and achieve several of its stated objectives.

- ▶ To get majority of the votes in the Presidential elections 2017 by itself so that the President and the Vice-President of the country can be of its choice and preferably from its ranks.
- ▶ Improve its strength in Rajya Sabha and by 2018 post the biennial elections, achieve a working majority for NDA so that a vigorous push for various reforms can be given in 2018. 2019 being the election year could only see populism.
- ▶ Despite the setback to 'Congress Mukh Bharat' with New Delhi, Bihar, Punjab and Manipur polls to move forward and bring several states into BJP fold before 2019.
- ▶ To claim the results of these polls as an endorsement to 'Note Bandi' (Demonetisation) that saw the united opposition raise

its shrill, blowing the inconvenience of the ordinary people out of proportion.

- ▶ Several steps forward in realizing the oft repeated desire of the Prime Minister to hold Assembly polls alongwith the Lok Sabha elections. The constitutional amendments required to support the move could garner winning support from itself and NDA allies.
- ▶ Operationalise GST with least hurdle with more states in its fold supporting the tax reform.
- ▶ Though not stated in Public, BJP has come to realise that the Rajya Sabha in its present composition will never allow any elected Government to quickly get into action to fulfill its manifesto. A form of proportional representation based on each party's strength in the Lok Sabha and a lower weightage based representation of the state assemblies would ensure that the Rajya Sabha is constituted alongwith the Lok Sabha and the biennial elections which have proved to open up money bags for small parties support can be avoided. The Prime Minister has too well realized that the amount of his time and that of the ministers to campaign in elections, all through the year during the five years can be conserved, if all elections except local and panchayat are held together. The exchequer would also ensure a few notches improvement in GDP from the savings and wasteful election expenditure.

Presidential Election 2017

The election would be held on 19th July 2017. The number of votes in various assemblies after the constitution of the five assemblies that went to poll is as under :

Statement of Value of Votes of elected members of the State Legislative Assemblies

Sl. No.	Name of State	Number of Assembly Seats (Effective)	Population (1971 Census)	Value of Vote of Each MLA	Total value of Votes for the State
1	Andhra Pradesh	175	25894469	148	25900
2	Arunachal Pradesh	60	467511	8	480
3	Assam	126	14625152	116	14616
4	Bihar	243	42126236	173	42039
5	Chhattisgarh	90	11637494	129	11610
6	Goa	40	795120	20	800
7	Gujarat	182	26697475	147	26754
8	Haryana	90	10036808	112	10080
9	Himachal Pradesh	68	3460434	51	3468
10	Jammu & Kashmir	87	6300000	72	6264
11	Jharkhand	81	14227133	176	14256
12	Karnataka	224	29299014	131	29344

13	Kerala	140	21347375	152	21280
14	Madhya Pradesh	230	30016625	131	30130
15	Maharashtra	288	50412235	175	50400
16	Manipur	60	1072753	18	1080
17	Meghalaya	60	1011699	17	1020
18	Mizoram	40	332390	8	320
19	Nagaland	60	516449	9	540
20	Odisha	147	21944615	149	21903
21	Punjab	117	13551060	116	13572
22	Rajasthan	200	25765806	129	25800
23	Sikkim	32	209843	7	224
24	Tamil Nadu	234	41199168	176	41184
25	Telangana	119	17608239	148	17612
26	Tripura	60	1556342	26	1560
27	Uttarakhand	70	4491239	64	4480
28	Uttar Pradesh	403	83849905	208	83824
29	West Bengal	294	44312011	151	44394
30	NCT of Delhi	70	4065698	58	4060
31	Puducherry	30	471707	16	480
TOTAL		4120	549302005	3041	549474

The value of a vote of the member of the parliament is

Lok Sabha	541
Rajya Sabha	235
	776

*

Value of each vote $\frac{549474}{776} = 708.09$ i.e. 708

* No vote for nominated members and 2 Anglo Indian representatives

There are 2 vacancies in the Rajya Sabha and 3 vacancies in the Lok Sabha which would be filled before the elections. The Assemblies have 12 vacancies. The bypolls will be held soon and all vacant seats filled by April 2017.

The total votes that can be tendered in the Presidential election are

Parliament	549408
Assemblies	549474
	1098882

Votes required to get elected - 50% + 1 = 549442

NDA Votes in Presidential Election – 2017

Assemblies

	State	BJP	NDA	Value of one Vote	Total Value
1	Andhra Pradesh	4	102	148	15688
2	Arunachal Pradesh	47	0	8	376
3	Assam	60	26	116	9976
4	Bihar	53	8	173	10553
5	Chhattisgarh	49	0	129	6321
6	Goa	13*	8*	0	420
7	Gujarat	121	0	147	17787
8	Haryana	47	0	112	5264
9	Himachal Pradesh	26	0	51	1326
10	Jammu & Kashmir	25	28	72	3816
11	Jharkhand	43	0	176	7568
12	Karnataka	40	0	131	5240
13	Kerala	1	0	152	152
14	Madhya Pradesh	165	0	131	21615

15	Maharashtra	122	75	175	34475
16	Manipur	21*	11*	18	576
17	Meghalaya	0	0	17	0
18	Mizoram	0	0	8	0
19	Nagaland	4	46	9	450
20	Odisha	10	117 (BJD)	149	1490
21	Punjab	3	15	116	2088
22	Rajasthan	160	0	129	20640
23	Sikkim	0	28	7	196
24	Tamil Nadu	0	124 (EKPS)	}	0
			11 (OPS)		
25	Tripura	0	0	26	0
26	Uttarakhand	56	0	64	3584
27	UP	++312	++13*	208	67600
28	West Bengal	3	0	151	453
29	New Delhi	3	0	58	174
30	Puducherry	0	0	16	0
31	Telangana	5	3	148	1184
			90 (TRS)		
		1405	330	238896	

* includes new coalition partners

++ including	Apna Dal	9
	Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party	4

The NDA vote share is

Total value of NDA Parliament Votes 406 x 708	287448
Total value of NDA - assembly votes	238896
	526344

The vote gap for a winning majority is	23098
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Both the Panneerselvam and Sasikala factions of the AIADMK for their own reasons, would like to be aligned with BJP. The total votes of AIADMK (both factions) is

Assembly 135 x 176	23760
Parliament 51 x 704	35904
	59664

Biju Janata Dal may also align with BJP. Its vote share is :

Assembly 117 x 149	17433
Parliament 28 x 704	19712
	37145

Even without these non-NDA parties support, BJP is well poised to see both its nominees for the President and Vice-President getting elected.

Working majority in Rajya Sabha

Time and again, during the last 30 months of NDA rule, the Government faced embarrassment in the Rajya Sabha. For the second time in a row, the motion of thanks on the President's address was passed with amendment. In 2015, it was amended on the issue of black money. In 2016, the amendments focused on the legislations passed by the Rajasthan and Haryana governments of BJP limiting the rights of citizens to contest Panchayat elections. One of the conditions specified by the legislation was that the contestant should have a toilet for the family. Before 2015, there were just three occasions in the history of the republic when the President's address was amended in the Rajya Sabha, once each during the tenure of Indira Gandhi, V. P. Singh and Atal Bihari Vajpayee. The amendments done by the Rajya Sabha in both the years undermine the government's ability at consensus building. With a belligerent opposition, in hopeless minority in Lok Sabha, Rajya Sabha was the only forum for it to assert its views. This affected the passing of the bills that required constitutional amendments like the GST. It had a deep impact on the Prime Minister that even reforms initiated by the previous government were derailed by them only because they wanted to halt the galloping progress that was initiated by him after assuming office.

The BJP has realized too soon that if it does not have an inventive approach to bring the opposition on to the same page, the only option is to consciously work to augment its strength in the Rajya Sabha. With a decisive majority in Uttar Pradesh, NDA inches closer to reaching majority in the Rajya Sabha by 2018.

The strength of the various parties in the Rajya Sabha as on date is

NDA		
1	BJP	56
2	TDP	6
3	Shiv Sena	3
4	SAD	3
5	Sikkim DF	1
6	Naga Peoples Front	1
7	RPI (A)	1
8	Bodoland People's Front	1
9	PDP (J&K)	2
UPA		
10	INC	59
11	DMK	4
12	IUML	1
13	KC (M)	1
Janata Parivar		
14	JDU	10
15	RJD	3
16	INLD	1
17	JD (S)	1
Unaligned		
18	SP	18
19	AIADMK	13
20	AITC	11
21	BJD	8
22	CPI (M)	8
23	BSP	6
24	NCP	5
25	TRS	3
26	CPI	1
27	JMM	1
28	YSRCP	1
Others		
29	Independents	6
30	Nominated	8
243		
Vacancies		
245		

Retirement Schedule of members of the Rajya Sabha in 2017 and 2018

	2017	2018
INC	2	19
TDP	0	2
JDU	0	4
BJP	5	13

JMM	0	1
IND	0	2
CPM	1	2
SS	0	2
BJD	0	2
SDF	0	1
SP	0	6
BSP	0	2
AITC	5	4
Vacant	2	0
15		60

Rajya Sabha MP's Retirement - INC, BJP

	INC	BJP
AP	2	0
Bihar	0	2
Chhattisgarh	0	1
Goa	1	0
Gujarat	1	6
Haryana	1	0
HP	0	1
Jharkhand	1	0
Karnataka	1	2
Kerala	1	0
MP	1	3
Maharashtra	4	1
New Delhi	3	0
Rajasthan	1	1
Telangana	2	0
UP	1	1
Uttarakhand	1	0
West Bengal	0	0
21		18

While the BJP would comfortably retain 16 of its seats that would see retirement during this period, the Congress can manage only four of the 21 seats it vacates. Samajwadi would see a minimum of five seats out of the six seats surrendered to BJP, while BSP will yield both the seats falling vacant to BJP. The strength of congress would deplete to 42 seats in the Rajya Sabha while NDA will move to 82. All India Trinamool Congress would retain its nine seats. NDA with the support of 13 MPs from AIADMK and 8 from BJD and a few smaller parties would manage a working majority in the Rajya Sabha by mid-2018.

Several ministers Arun Jaitley, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Dharmendra Pradhan and Prakash Javdekar would retire in 2018. Smriti Irani's term would end on 18.8.2018. Congress would lose its vocal support Renuka Chaudhary, long trusted Ahmed Patel, Rajiv Shukla, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Dr. Karan Singh and Smt. Jaya

Bachchan of SP. Sitaram Yechury, Mayawati and Derek O'Brian also retire during this period. A depleted less vocal opposition would no longer be able to stall the Rajya Sabha proceedings as was done in 2015-16.

Congress Mukht Bharat

This is a rhetoric that works more for the Congress. It's call for it to wake up from deep slumber. It has no more depth to which it can sink. For a vibrant democracy, the Congress has to soon reinvent itself. A Rahul, Sonia Gandhi Mukht Congress would soon become reality if the present trend continues in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, where elections are due by the end of the year and in 2018 in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka and Chhatisgarh. Congress is ruling just in Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Pondicherry, Meghalaya and Mizoram. Karnataka goes to polls next year and given the level of dissatisfaction against the Government, Congress is unlikely to retain the Government. Regional parties will continue to dominate in West Bengal, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The fluid state of All India Anna DMK in Tamil Nadu opens the opportunity for BJP to make its presence felt in Tamil Nadu. The pan Indian influence that BJP desires will require it to work its magic that succeeded in North India in South India as well. There can be no better time than now for that.

Target – Corruption

The added strength from these elections would fast forward Narendra Modi's oft repeated legislative changes for Benami Accounts, unaccounted foreign holdings, election reforms, etc. The political support that demonetization has given would encourage BJP to redefine political arithmetic solely on development plank burying once for all caste and religion based politics.

A turning point in the history of India. A historic mandate on the eve of 70th Independence of India augurs well for the nation. As the Prime Minister said a 8% GDP for three successive years from now will catapult India into the league of Developed Nations of the world. With an indication of a highly likely second term, Modi would like to see India join the Security Council of United Nations with full veto power. The first signs of India of our Dreams is emerging. Let us bask in that shine.

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