

CongRACE Ahead in Himachal, BJP Sweeps Gujarat

Prakriti and Jovan
Edited by Saishree

PUNE: The BJP swept Gujarat in the 2022 assembly elections decimating the Congress but lost in Himachal Pradesh, with the state continuing its tradition of not voting a ruling party back to power. The Congress won 40 of the 68 legislative assembly seats, with the BJP taking 25. But the vote-share swing was only a small 0.9%, with the Congress and the BJP's respective vote shares being 43.9% and 43%. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) failed to make any mark in the state, where independent candidates won three seats - in the constituencies of Hamirpur, Dehra, and Nalagarh - who were all BJP rebels. Congress won both the urban and rural constituencies in the state capital Shimla, with former Chief Minister Virbhadr Singh's son, Vikramaditya Singh emerging victorious from Shimla rural.



Congress's Sunder Singh Thakur celebrates.

The voting for all the seats in the state was held in a single phase on November 12. In a meeting held among the 40 Congress MLAs after the Congress win, it was unanimously passed to leave the decision to select the Chief Minister of the state to the party high command. Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu has been named as the new Chief Minister and Mukesh Agnihotri will be his deputy.

The state's outgoing Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur won from the Seraj assembly seat by 38,183 votes. BJP's Dhavinder Singh also defeated six-time Congress MLA Asha Kumari in Dalhousie by 9,918 votes. Mandi witnessed the victory of BJP's Anil Sharma, the son of former Union Minister. BJP's campaign in the hill state, led by PM Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, focused on a double-layered growth at the Centre and state level, where the Centre

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Modi Magic at work, BJP retains power as Congress succumbs, AAP fails to win big



PM Modi holds mega road show after triumph in Gujarat.

Prakhar and Swara
Edited by Sudeshna

PUNE: BJP won a historic 156 out of the 182 seats in the recently concluded Gujarat assembly elections, results for which were declared on 8th December. The three-way election turned out to be a massive win for the ruling party. New entrant Aam Aadmi Party managed to bag only five seats but secured a vote share of 12.91%. Congress, the traditional opposition in the state, managed only 17 seats.

In this election, key constituencies Saurashtra and Kutch pivoted BJP's standing. The 2017 elections had BJP securing 4 seats

in Kutch while Congress bagged two. This time all six constituencies were swept by the ruling party, evicting Congress from its stronghold in Rapar.

In 2017, considerable losses in Saurashtra restricted BJP's seat count to 99. In 2022, the party bagged 40 out of 48 seats contested. The region being dominated by the OBC and Patidar community, yielded a vote share of 45.37% for Congress in 2017. The party won 28 seats that year as opposed to 3 in 2022. This dip can be attributed to the defection of 10 MLAs to BJP. AAP on the other hand managed to win 4 seats which is more than what Congress won.

Congress' dramatic fall from 77 seats in 2017 to a mere 17 in a span of five years led the party to lose its stronghold in the tribal areas of the state and those reflecting a Muslim minority. The vote share shrank from 42.97% to 27.28%.

The loss comes at a time when Rahul Gandhi is on his "Bharat Jodo Yatra." Despite a strong showing in the last assembly elections, there were no prominent rallies or roadshows by the party's national leadership (except one by Rahul Gandhi). Even the Bharat Jodo Yatra was not scheduled to pass through Gujarat during the election times.

The Aam Aadmi Party came in with the vigour of being an alternative to the long ruling BJP. Though the party managed to get only five seats and secured 4 of its 5 seats from rural areas.

AAP failed to secure wins for its CM candidate, Isudan Gadhvi, and party's State Chief, Gopal Italia; both lost to BJP candidates. AAP, however, did manage to penetrate BJP's stronghold. The decline of Congress in the region opens an opportunity for AAP to emerge as the primary opposition.

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CONNECTING THE DOTS... ART, ELECTION AND POLITICS

Taking Campaigning Global with the G20 Summit in Indonesia

Akshay and Darshita
Edited by Sudeshna

PUNE: Prime Minister Narendra Modi was 'vocal for local' at the last G20 summit held in Bali, Indonesia in November, where he presented Indian gifts to the world leaders. Interestingly, most of these 'gifts' came from Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh which were due for their legislative assembly polls in November-December. While addressing the Indian community in Indonesia, PM Modi also used anecdotes that promoted Gujarat.

The gifts included "Patan Patola" scarf from Patan, "Mata ni Pachedi" from the Ahmedabad region, "Pithora" folk art from Chhota Udaipur, a Kangra Miniature painting,



PM's artisanal gifts at the G20 summit in Bali.

Agate bowls from Khambhat/Kutch, "Kanal brass set" from Kullu and Mandi, a Kinnauri shawl from Kinnaur and a silver bowl from Surat.

BJP won seats in many of the constituencies where the gifts were from. Rajendrasinh Mohansinh Rathva won from Chhota Udaipur, a hub for Pithora folk art. Arvind Shantilal Rana, Purnesh Modi, and Kantibhai

Himmatbhai Balar won from Surat East, West, and North respectively, the region famous for its silver bowls.

Former Chief Minister of Gujarat, Bhupendrabhai Patel won from Ghatlodiya, Hardik Patel won from Viramgam and Patel Harshadbhai Ranchhodbhai won from Sabarmati which are constituencies under Ahmedabad, famous for Mata ni Pachedi. Six constituencies in Kutch, the region that has its association with the Agate bowl, got BJP into power.

In Himachal Pradesh, Pawan Kumar Kajal won from Kangra which is quite famous for its Kangra Miniature Paintings. Anil Sharma won from Mandi which which has its

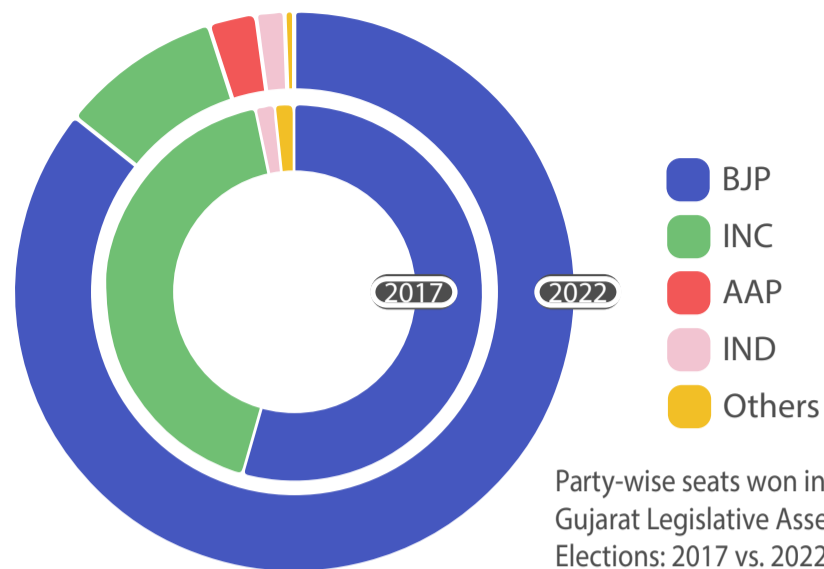
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BJP Sweeps Gujarat: The Seventh Reign

The Gujarat win marks an unprecedented holding of the BJP in the state for over two decades. Since 1998, the party has won every assembly poll in Gujarat and has managed to secure above 100 seats each time except in 2017. The low tally in 2017 is credited to the introduction of GST and an agitation by the Patidars.

The party fielded 15 national leaders including 3 chief ministers to campaign. By addressing 31 rallies and conducting roadshows spanning over 50 km, PM Modi's feat in Gujarat is a big win for the BJP and its stance in the quarter-finals, the 2024 Central Elections.

Despite not fielding a Muslim candidate since 1998, the BJP won 17 out of 19 Muslim-majority seats, while Congress having previ-



ously dominated these seats managed to win only 2. Only one Muslim candidate, Imran Khedawala, won from Jamalpur-Khadia on Congress' ticket even with a 9% Muslim population in the state.

The Godhra seat was also secured by the BJP amidst the com-

munally sensitive discussions in the region. Chandrasinh Raulji, who controversially remarked on 'Sanskari Brahmins' in Bilkis Bano case won the seat by a margin of thirty-five thousand votes.

The party amassed a landslide victory in Muslim-dominated con-

stituencies despite the All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) in play. Headed by Asaduddin Owaisi, AIMIM contested polls looking to tap into the Muslim vote bank but failed to secure a vote share of more than 17.36% in any seat, with their best performance in Bhuj.

Winning 34 out of 40 previously Congress-dominated seats, the ruling party extended its stronghold to the tribal constituencies as well. Having won 15 seats in 2017, Congress managed to win only 2 this time.

This election also marked BJP's first Christian candidature in 20 years. Mohanbhai Konkani, who contested from the Vyara constituency and won, defeating four-time Congress MLA, Punabhai Gamit.

ART, ELECTION AND POLITICS

association with the Kanal Brass Set.

The gift connect did not reflect in many constituencies where INC came into power. Kiritkumar Chimanlal Patel of INC won from Patan, a hub for Patan Patola and Jagat Singh Negi of INC won from Kinnaur, famous for Kinnauri Shawls. Sundar Singh Thakur of INC won from Kullu, famous for Kanal Brass while Chiragkumar Arvindbhai Patel of INC won from Khambhat, the region of the Agate bowls.

The global campaigning did not end with gifts, PM Modi also used anecdotes with Gujarat as its reference while Addressing the Indian community in Bali on 15th November. "There are many people from Gujarat who are involved in Gems, Diamonds, Mines, and even farming in Indonesia," he remarked. While sharing his anecdote on Kite flying, PM Modi said, "I remember the fun I had flying kites with President Joko Widodo. We both went to fly kites. It was wonderful. I have a lot of experience flying kites on Sankranti in Gujarat. And I know that people also fly a lot of kites on Sankranti in Indonesia."

While talking about Mahabharata, he added, "The people of Bali grow up with the stories of Mahabharata. And I have grown up in Dwarkadhish, the land of lord Krishna, in Gujarat. The kind of faith that the people of Bali have



Agate Bowl amidst PM's G20 gifts.

for the Mahabharata, the people of India have the same affinity for the people of Bali." PM Modi further remarked on the Ram Mandir and the association of Rama and Vishnu in Bali with that of India.

PM Modi referenced the Statue of Unity and Narendra Modi Stadium in Motera, Ahmedabad, and said, "Now India doesn't think small. If it builds a statue, it is the biggest in the world. If it builds a stadium, it will be the biggest in the world." He also spoke about an agreement between Gujarat Ayurvedic University and Universitas Hindu Indonesia about Ayurveda.

While motivating the community to join the Pravasi Bhartiya Program in Indore, he urged people to visit for the kite festival and quoted, "You must join the Pravasi Bhartiya Program in Indore and adjust your dates accordingly. When you come to Indore, there is a kite festival in Ahmedabad. Is it possible that people from Indonesia will not take part in the kite festival?"

CongRACE Ahead in HP

would aid in the state's development. But Congress bagged the majority victory despite BJP's rigorous campaigning and rallies done by the Prime Minister himself. In reaction to the defeat, PM Narendra Modi tweeted, "I thank the people of Himachal Pradesh for the affection and support for the BJP. We will keep working to fulfill the aspirations of the state and raise people's issues in the times to come."

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra was one of the key people during the election campaign for Congress, in the absence of her brother Rahul Gandhi. The Congress' campaign was based on majorly 10 guarantees, including bringing back the old pension scheme which was scrapped in 2003. Another issue on which the poll was fought by Congress included the apple farmer's protests in the state, in response to which the Congress assured adequate representation of farmers in deciding their crop prices, as a part of their "10 guarantees" campaign. In response to the unemployment issue and uproar against the Agnipath scheme in the hill state, the party also promised jobs to the youth. On their victory, both current Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge, and former Congress President Rahul Gandhi reassured that the promises made to the people of Himachal Pradesh will be fulfilled.

Promises in the Congress Manifesto

- Himachal, Himachaliyat aur Hum: Bringing back the old pension scheme.
- Providing jobs to the youth
- Rs. 1500/ month to women
- 300 units of free power
- Adequate representation of farmers and fruit growers in deciding the prices of their produce
- Rs. 600 crore start-up fund for the youth
- Building 4 English-medium schools in every assembly
- Free treatment through mobile clinics in every village
- Cow-dung selling price at Rs.2/Kg

Silver Lining in AAP's Gujarat Debacle

Kruti and Tanveer
Edited by Aishwarya

PUNE: Even as its much-hyped debut in Gujarat assembly elections turned out to be damp squib, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which managed to win just five seats, entered the elite club of select national parties in India. How? Thanks to the 12.91% vote share it garnered in the Gujarat state assembly elections.

The AAP has state governments in Delhi and Punjab, and has Assembly seats in Goa and Gujarat. It was an uphill task to register its presence in a state dominated by the BJP for 27 years, still AAP won the votes of 41 lakh people in Gujarat.

Arvind Kejriwal held a press conference on August 30, 2022, revealing his plan to contest in Gujarat Assembly elections. The Chief Minister of Delhi visited Gujarat multiple times during the course of the campaign. The AAP put together a team of leaders and workers at a grass-roots level. AAP's CM candidate Isudan Gadhvi, and party's state chief Gopal Italia both conceded defeat to the BJP.

What helped AAP garner this support After the Punjab state election, the AAP publicised its Delhi model of governance in Gujarat as well. It promised to implement the old pension scheme if voted to power, which the Bhagwant Mann government did in Punjab this year. Its election manifesto also included other promises like: Mohalla clinics in every village and ward, being run by the Kejriwal government in Delhi; 300 units of free electricity every month; 15 lakh government jobs along with Rs. 3000 monthly unemployment allowance; and a monthly allowance of Rs.1000 for women.

It took ten years for the Aam Aadmi Party to be recognised as a national party. The BJP won the fourth most number of seats when they contested in Gujarat for the first time in 1980. On the other hand, the AAP finished in the third spot in their Gujarat debut in 2022. The AAP has received country-wide recognition for its work in Delhi and Punjab. As they continue to build themselves throughout India, the citizens will be looking at a strong party to vote for in the upcoming elections.

The Patidar Effect

After 2017 revolt, Patels back with BJP, help in historic win

Manav and Harshita
Edited by Sudeshna

PUNE: No political party in Gujarat can ignore the Patidar community. The Patidars constitute around 15% of the total population and have always been central to all the elections in Gujarat. The landslide victory of the BJP in 2022 is being closely linked with the support of the Patidar community considering the party won almost every seat that had a Patidar representative.

Setback from the Patidar community in 2017 was a primary contributor to BJP's low tally in the elections. A revolt led by Hardik Patel demanded reservations for the Patels and pitted the Patidars against the BJP government. However, Hardik Patel himself joined the BJP in June this year and contested as a BJP candidate. This swayed the Patels back towards BJP and the party won all 16 seats in the seats dominated by the community.



Hardik Patel in Gandhinagar

Historically, in its long tenure, the BJP has had Patels at the apex. From Keshubhai Patel to Bhupendra Patel the party has had Patel chief ministers except for PM Modi and ex-CM Vijay Rupani.

The Saurashtra region where BJP won 40 out of 48 seats as compared to merely 7 won by the Congress and AAP combined is also a Patidar-dominated constituency. 41 out of 48 Patidar candidates of the BJP won from their constituen-

cies while the Congress and AAP couldn't match up with votes within the community.

The 103rd amendment of the constitution under which the Economically Weaker Sections were given 10 percent job reservation turned the tide in favour of the ruling BJP. The selection of Bhupendra Patel as the Chief Minister after Vijay Rupani also swayed a lot of Patidars votes back to BJP.

With Patidar politics in the state, the community made it clear that their support is no less than a verdict. Hardik Patel, leader of the former Patidar Agitation who left Congress and joined BJP in 2022, won the seat of Viramgam. For the 2022 Gujarat legislative Elections, many Patidar candidates were given tickets to contest. The BJP fielded 41 Patidar candidates while Congress fielded 40. The Aam Aadmi Party also gave tickets to many Patidar candidates.

CM for a Second Term: A Lookback at Bhupendra Patel's Journey

Surabhi and Noopur
Edited by Aishwarya

PUNE: Bhupendra Patel took oath as the Chief Minister (CM) of Gujarat in the Oath taking ceremony at Gandhinagar, today. After breaking his own record by winning 1.92 lakh votes as opposed to the 1.17 lakh votes in the 2017 election, Patel has entered the spotlight once again.

Bhupendra Patel's journey started from 1995 when he became a member of Memnagar Palika till the year 2006. He was also elected as the president of Memnagar Palika in 1999-2000.

He fought his first Ahmedabad Municipal corporation (AMC) election from Thaltej ward in 2010 and went on to become AMC's standing committee chairman twice. Patel graduated from the Government Polytechnic, Ahmedabad with a diploma in Civil Engineering.

Patel's role in managing Anandiben Patel's campaign in the 2012 assembly elections brought his management skills to the forefront. This time, in the 2022 elections, Patel contested from the same Ghatlodia constituency. Coincidentally, this constituency was the same from which Anandiben Patel had



won the elections of 2012.

He is known for holding a clean and non-controversial image throughout his political career. In fact, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has praised him on several occasions and describes him as "mrudu ane makkam" (mild and firm). During the peak of the pandemic, he ran a tiffin service for more than 1000 COVID-19 patients at the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital.

He came to power only last year when BJP replaced Vijay Rupani and elevated Patel to the

CM post in a surprising move. It is believed that Patel, who hails from the Kadva Patidar community was promoted to Chief Minister in order to woo the agitating Patidars.

One of the strongest statements he made in public was that his government "had no problem with what anyone ate" after BJP leaders protested against non-veg being sold on the streets. He is fondly referred to as "Dada" by many, as he is a devout supporter of Dada Bhagwan's Akram Vignan movement.

First Time Contesters in Gujarat

AAP level pegs Congress, AIMIM fails to hold ground



Arvind Kejriwal (Left) and Asaduddin Owaisi (Right)

Druti and Iccha

Edited by Sudeshna

PUNE: Several parties contested for the first time in BJP's home ground, Gujarat. AAP and AIMIM made their debut in Gujarat Politics altering the dynamics for long-term players BJP and Congress.

While the 2022 Gujarat Assembly Elections mark BJP's winning streak in Gujarat for the 7th time, the newly contesting AAP has made its mark in the state. AAP bagged 35 lakh votes which converted 6 seats for the party in Gujarat and has emerged as a runner-up for around 30 seats. Chaitar Vasava from Dediapada, Bhupendra Bhayani from Visavadar, Sudhir Vaghani from Gariadhar, Hemant Ahir from Jamjodhpur, and Umesh Makwana from Botad were among the candidates who secured a 13% vote share for AAP.

The Aam Aadmi Party, with two state governments and a municipal corporation under its umbrella, has managed to withstand the two stalwart parties in the country, BJP and Congress, in the span of a decade of its establishment.

AAP struck Congress' Aath Vachan campaign and put forth

their Delhi-Punjab governance model while addressing hyper-local issues. This helped the party in constructing a function of its own in a political arena ruled by the BJP.

The All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) also marked its debut in Gujarat by announcing candidature for 14 seats. They targeted constituencies that had a sizeable Muslim majority. AIMIM campaigned with a focus on developing education, civic amenities, and upliftment of the economically backward classes.

In November 2022, Asaduddin Owaisi, the president of AIMIM, flew in from Hyderabad (AIMIM's base) and conducted a public meeting in Surat. Despite Owaisi's Gujarat visits and public meetings, their agenda was questioned by some Muslim communities themselves. Congress dominated the regions which they targeted with AIMIM winning 0 seats and a vote share of 0.3%.

AIMIM has been called 'BJP's B team' as their candidature in Congress-led areas has crossed out Congress' votes resulting in BJP getting these seats.

win would never be possible without the exceptional hard work of our Karyakartas, who are the real strength of our Party."

He later tweeted "The results of Gujarat have proved that BJP is another name for trust." In another tweet, he said, "By voting for the BJP in large numbers, the youth have shown that they are neither going to be swayed by casteism nor familyism. Their heart can be won only by vision and development and BJP's politics is based on these two."

Arvind Kejriwal tweeted

Vasavas Collide: Chotubhai loses to BJP

BJP's 1st Win in Jhagadia amidst BTP father-son conflict

Shalaka and Khushi

Edited by Sudeshna

PUNE: The seven-time MLA Chotubhai Vasava lost from his stronghold constituency in Jhagadia, marking BJP's first win in the seat. Defeated by Ritesh Vasava by a margin of 23,500 votes, Chotubhai lost what had been BTP's safe seat for 31 years.

After his son Maheshbhai Vasava, a BTP leader, chose to run for the same seat, Chhotubhai Vasava, a sitting MLA from the Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP), decided to run independently. Maheshbhai eventually decided to withdraw from the race to "rescue the family" and contested from Dediapada instead.

While Maheshbhai Vasava won the Dediapada seat, one of the two won by BTP, the heated political contest between father and son turned voters away in the Jhagadia Assembly constituency. Chhotubhai Vasava, whose family is reputed to have ruled the predominantly tribal region for around fifty years, received 66,433 votes, while Ritesh Vasava won with 89,552 votes.

78-Year-Old Chhotubhai Vasava belongs to the tribal community (ST) and is one of Gujarat's most recognizable tribal figures. Scheduled Tribes constitute over 73 percent (1,73,196 voters) of the population in Jhagadia, with roughly 2,36,829 rural voters.

In 1990, Chhotubhai Vasava won the seat from the Janata Dal, then the Janata Dal (United), and retained it consecutively 7 times. He joined Janata Dal in 1990 and left in 2017 after JD allied with the Bharatiya Janata Party in the state of Bihar. In 2017, he created the Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) with his son, Mahesh Vasava. For five terms, Chhotubhai won the MLA seat on a Janata Dal (United) ticket. He defeated BJP's Ravibhai Vasava in 2017 and won the seat again with a margin of 48,948 votes.

The buzz around this highly discussed father-son conflict proved to be beneficial for the BJP. Amidst its sweep in the Gujarat elections, BJP triumphed in a constituency it wasn't able to touch previously, marking the end of BTP's legacy in Jhagadia.

Twitter MODified as BJP Wins Big in Gujarat; Congress Wins Himachal



Amit Shah
@AmitShah

ગુજરાતે પોકળ વચનો, રેવડી અને તુષ્ટીકરણની રાજનીતિ કરનારાઓને ફગાવીને વિકાસ અને જન કલ્યાણને ચરિતાર્થ કરવાવાળા @narendramodi જીની ભાજપને અભૂતપૂર્વ જનાદેશ આપ્યો છે.

આ પ્રયંડ જીતે બતાવ્યું છે કે દરેક વર્ગ પછી તે મહિલાઓ હોય, યુવાનો હોય કે ખેડૂતો હોય દિલથી ભાજપની સાથે છે.

Translated from Gujarati by Google

Gujarat has given an unprecedented mandate to the @narendramodi Genie BJP, who is committed to development and public welfare by rejecting those who politicize empty promises, reveries and appeasement.

This hard win has shown that every section be it women, youth or farmers are with BJP whole heartedly.

2:07 pm · 08 Dec 22 · Twitter Web App



Rahul Gandhi
@RahulGandhi

हम गुजरात के लोगों का जनादेश विनम्रतापूर्वक स्वीकार करते हैं।

हम पुनर्गठन कर, कड़ी मेहनत करेंगे और देश के आदर्शों और प्रदेशवासियों के हक की लड़ाई जारी रखेंगे।

Translated from Hindi by Google

We humbly accept the mandate of the people of Gujarat.

We will reorganize, work hard and continue fighting for the ideals of the country and the rights of the people of the state.

5:08 pm · 08 Dec 22 · Twitter for iPhone

Darshita and Akshay

Edited by Sudeshna

PUNE: Twitter is flooded with tweets and reactions from top politicians and political parties after BJP's win in the Gujarat elections and Congress' Himachal Pradesh win.

Shortly after the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh election results were announced, PM Narendra Modi tweeted a part of his speech, "To all hardworking @BJP4Gujarat Karyakartas I want to say - each of you is a champion! This historic

government will be relentlessly dedicated to the overall development and welfare of Gujarat in the years to come. Jay Jay Garvi Gujarat."

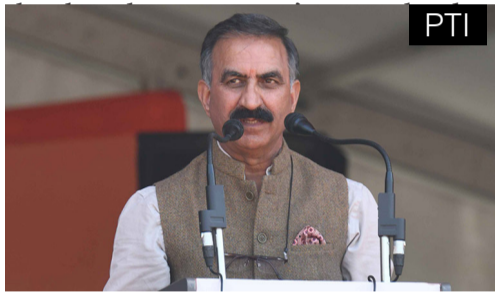
Jairam Thakur tweeted, "We accept the mandate with humility. Special thanks to the respected Prime Minister and the central government for their valuable cooperation in the last five years. Thanks for the five years given by the people of the state for service. We will always be ready for the all-round development of Himachal."

In a tweet, Bhupendra Patel expressed his delight at the BJP winning the elections in Gujarat, "Adopting the mantra of Honorable Mr. Narendrabhai Modi "Sauno Saath, Sau Vikas, Sau Vishwan, Sau Pryasa" Mantra, Gujarat has consistently shown faith in the Bharatiya Janata Party. This double-engine

SS Sukhu becomes Himachal's 15th CM

Shrutika and Shubhiksha
 Edited by Aishwariya

PUNE: Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, former Himachal Pradesh Congress Committee Chief, was sworn in as the 15th Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh on 11th December. The victory comes after his name was cleared by the party high command a day before, ending two-days' in-fighting for the post. The decision came a day after newly elected Congress MLAs passed a resolution authorising the Congress central leadership to choose



Former Congress chief Sukhvinder Singh

the legislature party's next leader.

Sukhu, a fourth-term MLA from Nadaun in Hamirpur district, won the constituency after defeating Vijay Kumar from BJP by a slim 3% votes. Sukhu is also the first to become CM from the lower Himachal region.

Pratibha Singh, Congress MP for Mandi and Mukesh Agnihotri, MLA from Haroli constituency, were the contenders

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Himachal's 'Rivaaj': Trend or Coincidence?



Congress workers celebrates the party's victory in Himachal Pradesh Assembly election

Shiva and Swarna
 Edited by Saishree

Pune: The Indian National Congress won the state elections of 2022 in Himachal Pradesh with a majority of 40 seats out of 68, whereas the BJP won 25 seats. In line with the state's 'rivaaj' (tradition) of electing the opposition every election, the people of Himachal Pradesh elected for Congress, voting out the BJP, which came into power in 2017, defeating the then Congress government headed by Virbhadra Singh. As it did in Uttaranchal in February this year, the BJP was hoping to break this anti-incumbency trend, seen in Himachal Pradesh since 1985. But it failed to break the cycle. The reason behind such a trend is the sort of dual-party competition between the two leading national

parties to seek the attention of the people by giving them the promises that the previous government lacked. Political analyst Dr. Sajjan Kumar said, "There is nothing like the utopian law of election." There are a lot of factors that affect governance, a few of which are that the ruling party acts on the plank of governance and the opposition party acts as a watchdog, which helps the people understand the style of rule for both parties and ultimately helps the people understand that the governance of the ruling party is not bad, but the opposition party, which was in power before the ruling party, was not bad in governance either, making the people want to give the opposition another chance as well.

There is an aspirational index of the party's electorate, which

basically means that the people expect more from the parties competing.

When the parties compete for power around the same materialistic quantum, the people of the state will experience the yen of expecting more, which makes them view the ruling party as inept, and ultimately, they will want to give the opposing party a chance at governance of the state since the people do not have a minimalistic but a broad ideology for the overall administration of the state.

The former chief minister of Himachal Pradesh, Jai Ram Thakur, stated in one of his campaigns that a double-engine government presiding within the state as well as the centre will help in resolving the issues of the state. However, the people thought otherwise. "Jairam Thakur was considered a novice in the leadership plank, who is seen as a chief minister [but] does not have the persona of a chief minister." "This was the average perception across Himachal about Jai Ram Thakur," stated Dr. Sajjan Kumar. Furthermore, he also mentioned how absurd the outgoing Chief Minister sounded when he pitched the idea of a "double engine" government resolving

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AAP Bags MCD Elections, Ends BJP's 15-Year Reign

Swara and Prakhar
 Edited by Navya

PUNE: The MCD elections took place on 4th December 2022, and the results for the nation's Municipal Corporation came out on 7th December. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the state's ruling party came into power with 134 seats, ending Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) 's 15-year run with a vote share of 42.05%. The Indian National Congress fell to a single digit securing only nine seats. In 2017 when the elections were held in 270 seats, BJP came to power with a thumping majority bagging 181 seats. AAP took on the role of primary opposition with 48, while Congress had 30 seats to its name. This was seen as a failure for AAP, which was in power in the state assembly with a sweeping majority but failed to



AAP workers celebrate the Delhi MCD election results

gain respectable ground in MCD.

Close Calls

The election was hard fought, with 10 wards being decided by a margin of fewer than 200 votes. All 10 wards were won by AAP. The

The highest margin of victory was in Chandni Mahal, with 17134 votes, while the closest margin was 44 votes from CR Park. Both the seats were won by AAP, showcasing the party's ability to win heavily contested seats as well as dominate in

the strongholds- despite Congress and AAP dominating Muslim Majority constituencies. The riot-hit North-East Delhi areas slipped from AAP's hold and went to BJP. Out of the 19 seats in the zone, 12 were won by BJP, followed by AAP's four and Congress' 2. One seat went to an independent candidate. BJP's strategy to tap into the Muslim vote bank by fielding candidates from the Pasmada Community, i.e., a marginalized section of Muslims, failed. All four Pasmada candidates lost from Chauhan Banger, Quresh Nagar, Mustafabad, and Chandni Mahal, respectively.

Loss Of Security

Out of the contesting candidates, 784 lost their security deposit on failing to secure the required minimum of one-sixth votes. 370 independent candidates also failed to secure their security deposit

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AAP Bags MCD Elections, Ends BJP's 15-Year Reign

Congress, with 188 candidates, has the most such among political parties, followed by BSP with 128 candidates. However, this is an improvement from 2017, when a total of 1790 candidates lost their security deposit. Congress saw a drop off in its vote share from 21.09% in 2017 to 11.68% this year. It is surprising for a party to have ruled a state for 15 consecutive years and then fall off in a fashion that Congress has. The party hit rock bottom while securing single-digit seats and having 188 of its candidates lose security.

Riches of MCD: The approved annual budget for the 22-23 financial year for MCD stands at 15000cr. The average assets of the candidates were 2.27cr in 2022, while the average assets in 2017 were 1.61 cr. Ramdev Sharma, who contested elections from Ballimaran Ward no. 79, turned out to be the richest candidate with assets worth 66.9cr. While the poorest candidate was Kusum Yadav. The independent candidate reported assets worth rupees two thousand. 150 candidates disclosed assets worth over 5cr. The list of rich candidates is topped by BJP, with the average assets of its candidates being 4.04cr. Followed by AAP at 3.74cr. The lowest being of Congress at 1.98 cr. Though MCD and its candidates are rich in money, the same can't be said about education. 56% of the candidates have education between the 5th to 12th classes. Only 36% have completed class 12th or graduation. 60 candidates have been declared illiterate.

Women Candidates: A total of 1349 candidates contested the elections this year, out of which 709 were women and 640 were men. Around 55% candidates of AAP that won were women. Three women independently secured wins. In 2017, 49% of the total candidates were women, while the participation improved to 52% in 2022.

Voter Turnout: Turnout dropped by almost 3 points when compared to previous years. In the richer and urban localities, most let go of the elections with only 45% of votes polled. It was in the rural, northeast Delhi and the Muslim-dominated belts that turned out to vote. This is a big factor in

AAP's victory. The population of these belts likes the idea of free electricity and mohalla clinics opened by the AAP government. BJP, on the other hand, is known to have its base among the urban upscale. The trends also showed a larger turnout among the reserved category voters as opposed to the general category. The highest voter turnout was in the Bakhtawarpur ward in north-west Delhi at 65.7%. While the lowest was in Andrews Ganj ward at 33.74%. The lowest turnout was recorded in the rich areas of South Delhi.

Though AAP managed to get the majority, one underlying story is the party's failure to secure seats under minister Manish Sisodia and ex-minister Satyendar Jain's constituencies. AAP lost all 3 of Jain's and 3 out of 4 Sisodia's. All 6 seats were bagged by BJP. This shows though BJP lost the elections, the party continues to enjoy support.

Issues and Solutions: Landfills and sanitation were crucial factors driving the polls. AAP, on multiple occasions, attacked BJP on the failed garbage removal and sanitation projects. Both parties have mentioned these in their manifestos. With Kejriwal promising to make 16 new landfills, it is interesting how the new regime deals with Delhi's waste problems. There had been a major conflict between the government of the state and MCD as to what the responsibilities and jurisdiction of each were. With AAP in power in both assembly and MCD, the future is hopeful.

Himachal's 'Rivaaj'

the issues of the state, as the problems lay within the governance of the BJP within the state. Sajjan Kumar talked about few of the problems such as inflation, unemployment, corruption, and many promises that were made but never fulfilled, mocking the demands of the government employees. When asked about the reason why the people of Himachal Pradesh renounced their faith in the incumbent government, Sajjan Kumar stated, "You cannot afford to antagonise the government employees in a state like Himachal," as the government employees hold a dominant position within the state.

SS Sukhu becomes Himachal's 15th CM

for the CM's seat. The three candidates were active in the election campaign committee but ultimately the congress cadre favoured Sukhu. The Congress high command's no-MP decision swiftly ushered Agnihotri to the Deputy Chief Minister seat.

The 58-year-old politician is a law graduate and was a member of the Youth Congress during his college years. From 1998 to 2008, he served as the President of the Himachal Pradesh Youth Congress. His experience as a youth congress member and Shimla councillor propelled him to the party's forefront. His path from humble beginnings eventually led him to become the HPCC chief in 2013 to break the party's factionalism.

Sukhu's association with the party from the grassroot level gained trust and confidence from Rahul Gandhi. His six year tenure

as HPCC head often led to ideological clashes with veterans like Virabhadra Singh. His involvement in both local body and state assembly garnered him support of party workers and common people. This played a crucial role in overruling Pratibha Singh's demands for a place in both State Assembly and Lower House.

Sukhu's ascension as the CM of Himachal creates tension between Singh loyalists and Sukhu's supporters. This has prevented the possibility of the state becoming a ground for family politics, something INC is looking to actively change. "...Nobody will break away from Congress but from BJP. They only set the narratives. In the time to come, 6 to 7 BJP MLAs can come to Congress," he said to ANI.

A Win for Trans Representation

*Auhona and Garima
Edited by Navya*



PUNE: Bobi Kinnar, popularly known as Bobi Darling, who contested from Sultanpuri for the Aam Aadmi Party, becomes the first transgender member of the Municipal Cooperation of Delhi after winning the election on Wednesday.

The 38-year-old, born and brought up in Sultanpuri itself, is known for her extensive social work as the President of the Hindu Yuva Samaj Ekta Awam Anti Terrorism Committee (Delhi unit). She is known for actively speaking up about gender identity and its challenges.

Bobi Kinnar had been associated with the Anna movement, during which she came in contact with Delhi CM and AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal. As a teenager, she was associated with the transgender community as a wedding dancer, but her focus gradually shifted towards social work.

Adequate representation of

the queer community in Indian politics is an extremely important step towards inclusivity and the voting rights the transgender community were granted in 1994. But very few trans individuals have been able to make it through the odds and create a political identity in India.

Shabnam 'Mausi' Bano was the first Indian transgender MLA after being elected as a member of the Madhya Pradesh state legislative assembly (1998-2003). She is known for her prominent activism against poverty, corruption, and discrimination against transgender people, as well as for extensively raising awareness about HIV AIDS. Following this, in 2000, Asha Devi won the seat of the Mayor of Gorakhpur Municipal Corporation (Uttar Pradesh). But unfortunately, in 2003, her post was declared invalid on the grounds that her seat was reserved for females. Similar is the case of Kamla Jaan, who was elected as the Mayor of Katni town (Madhya Pradesh) in 2002. During her tenure, Madhya Pradesh High Court upheld the order of the Election Tribunal, which nullified the election of a 'hijra,' saying that it is a seat reserved for a female candidate and a male can not contest for it.

It was as late as **Turn to Page 7**

First Transgender Member of MCD

2014 when the Bombay High court stated that a transgender individual could contest elections from a seat reserved for women candidates. But then, the Supreme court of India recognized that every Eunuch and an intersex person has the right to a self-identified third gender. The judgment was made under the landmark case between the National Legal Service Authority and the Union of India.



Bobi Kinnar talking to the press.

In 2015, Madhu Kinnar, who belonged to the transgender community, held the post of the Mayor of Raigarh. In 2016, Gopi Shankar Madurai contested the Tamil Nadu legislative election. In 2019, Apsara Reddy was appointed as the national general secretary of the All India Mahila Congress. Sneha Kale and Jatin Mummy are two other transgender individuals who contested the Mumbai Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

BJP, Cong get 2 Seats Each in Bypolls

Prathamesh and Divya
Edited by Saishree

PUNE: In the bypolls held for the Lok Sabha seat of the Mainpuri constituency of Uttar Pradesh and the assembly constituency seats of various states across India, the BJP and Congress levelled the score by securing two assembly seats each, whereas the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) settled for one each.

In Mainpuri, Dimple Yadav of the Samajwadi Party (SP) achieved a landslide victory with a lead of 2.8 lakh votes over her opponent, Raghuraj Singh Shakya of the BJP. The bypoll was necessitated following the death of SP chief Late Mulayam Singh Yadav. Dimple Yadav, his daughter-in-law and wife of Akhilesh Singh Yadav, managed to retain the seat, allowing SP to retain its hold on the high-profile Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat.

Though the BJP failed to grab the Mainpuri Lok Sabha seat, it managed to catch hold of the Kurhani assembly constituency seat in Bihar. Following a close race, BJP candidate Kedar Gupta defeated Janata Dal United (JDU) candidate Manoj Singh Kushwaha by a margin of 3645 votes. Four months after parting ways, the BJP and JDU faced each other for the first time on the electoral ground.



Dimple Yadav, daughter in law of late Mulayam Singh Yadav

Bypoll Dec 2022

Mainpuri Lok Sabha (UP)	Dimple Yadav (SP)
Rampur (UP)	Akash Saxena (BJP) defeated Asim Raja (SP)
Khatauli (UP)	Madan Bhaiya (RLD) defeated Rajkumari (BJP)
Kurhani (Bihar)	Kedar Gupta (BJP) defeated Manoj Singh Kushwaha (JDU)
Bhanupratappur (Chattisgarh)	Savitri Manoj Mandavi (INC) defeated Brahmahanand Netam (BJP)
Padampur (Odisha)	Savitri Manoj Mandavi (INC) defeated Brahmahanand Netam (BJP)
Sardarshahar (Rajasthan)	Anil Kumar Sharma (INC) defeated Ashok Kumar (BJP)

A by-election was scheduled after RJD MLA Anil Sahni was declared ineligible due to being convicted in a fraud case. Uttar Pradesh witnessed by-poll assembly elections in 2 constituencies- Khatauli and Rampur. Khatauli saw Madan Bhaiya of the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) and Rajkumari of the BJP going head-to-head, where the RLD won with a margin of 22143 votes. Akash Saxena of the BJP won by a solid lead of 34136 votes over Mohd. Asim Raja

of the SP in the Muslim-dominated constituency of Rampur. The Rampur constituency observed the absence of a Muslim MLA for the first time since attaining independence.

Congress managed to secure another seat by winning the by-election assembly election in Bhanupratappur, in its stronghold of Chattisgarh. Savitri Manoj

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Rising Trend in Candidates with Criminal Records: ADR

Sumana
Edited by Aishwariya

PUNE: Indians have a sense of privilege for being the largest democracy in the world. But what happens when the protectors of this republic are the lawbreakers themselves? Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has pointed out a rising trend in the candidates with criminal records contesting the Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh state assembly elections in 2022. In Gujarat's Phase 1 polls, 167 out of 788 candidates have criminal cases against them, whereas in 2017, 137 out of 923 candidates had criminal antecedents. This means the percentage of candidates with criminal cases against them has gone up from 15% to 21%.

As for serious criminal cases, the general proportion went up from 8 per cent to 21 per cent.

from 8 per cent to 21 per cent.

In a telephonic interview with The Ink, Jagdeep S. Chhokar, co-founder of ADR said, "There is a constant hike in every election, in every party, every year. In 2004, Lok Sabha had 24 per cent of its members having criminal cases against them. In 2009, it got 30 per cent. During 2014, it was 35 percent and in 2019, it is 43 percent. The hike is not only for the candidates but also for those who got elected." AAP tops the list

The newly contested party in the Gujarat elections phase 1, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) tops the list in the party-wise criminal cases with 32 (36%) candidates out of 88 having cases of felony followed by 35 per cent from Congress, 29 per cent from Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) and 16 per cent

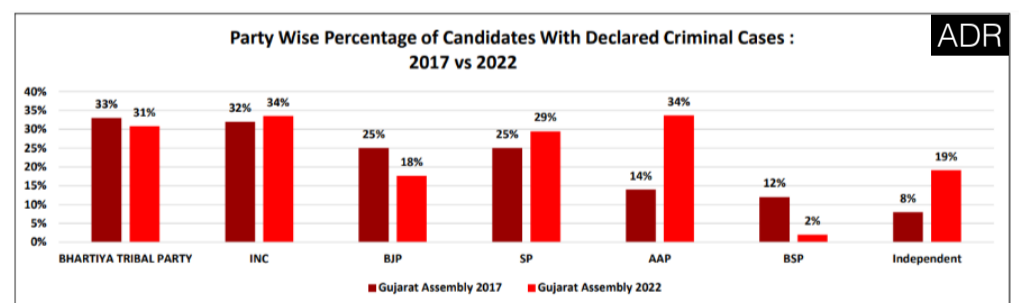


Figure: Party Wise Percentage of Candidates with Declared Criminal Cases: 2017 vs 2022

Tribal Party (BTP) and 16 per cent from Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

But why such a sudden reduction for the ruling party?

"It can be seen that during the elections, if the ruling party does anything wrong, the election commission does not take any action, whereas for the other parties, it takes prompt action. In other words, they allow the ruling party to do whatever they want. If they continue to support one party, the other party won't be able to win. It is no longer neutral anymore. More like

pushing democracy to some sort of dictatorship", Chhokar explained. As far as serious crimes go, the assessment shows 26 out of 88 (30%) candidates are from AAP, 18 out of 89 (20%) from INC, 11 out of 89 candidates (12%) from BJP, and 1 out of 14 candidates (7%) from BTP have provided a declaration in their affidavits.

The combined analytical paper based on the research done on both phases shows that out of 1621 candidates, 330 (20%) gave a self-declaration of having criminal offences or records. Turn to Page 8

BJP, Cong get 2 seats each in bypolls

Mandavi of the INC easily defeated her BJP opponent Brahmahanand Netam by a margin of over 21000 votes. The by-election assembly election in the Padampur constituency of Odisha held due to the death of the incumbent MLA, Bijaya Ranjan Singh Bariha, saw Barsha Singh Bariha, his eldest daughter, contest for the post in his stead from the BJD.

Bariha won with a thumping majority of 42,679 votes against the BJP's Pradeep Purohit. The Congress had the greatest decline this time around, coming dangerously close to becoming a non-entity by gathering a vote share of only 3594 through their representative Satyabhushan Sahu.

The Congress Party maintained its hold on Rajasthan by receiving 90915 votes in the Sardarshahar constituency. The Congress candidate Anil Kumar Sharma won by a margin of 26852 votes over the BJP's Ashok Kumar. This election was necessitated by the death of the incumbent Congress MLA, Bhanwar Lal Sharma.

From Close Calls to Gaping Gaps

*Mrinalini and Sanjana
Edited by Navya*

PUNE: The Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh State Assembly Elections results were declared on December 8. The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress scored majority seats in the respective states. Various candidates contesting in either state won by minimal and maximum vote margins; certain constituencies saw marginal differences of over a lakh while a few saw a difference of votes below a hundred. In Himachal, the Congress swerved around the BJP and took the lead by a few seats while the latter had a whopping majority in Gujarat.

HP Margin: Out of the 68 constituencies that participated in the Himachal Pradesh General Election To

Rising Trend in Candidates with Criminal Records

criminal offences. In 2017, the figure was 253 (14%) candidates out of 1815 candidates. The severe crime declarations section saw a surge of four per cent higher than the prior one. A total of 192 candidates have been charged with serious crimes including homicide, first-degree murder, rape, etc. AAP leads the list with 61 candidates out of 181, shortly followed with 60 in Congress out of 179 candidates, 32 in BJP out of 182 and 8 out of 26 in BTP. For the serious cases, AAP stays consistent with 43 declarations, Congress with 28, BJP with 25 and 2 in BTP. 'Winnability' is the root cause of all problems

"The root of the problems lies with the political parties giving tickets who have such awful profiles. Political parties give the tickets on the basis of a concept called 'Winnability': that is, they want their candidates to win whether they are criminals or not. If their assessment is, this person with a criminal record will win the election they will give them a ticket. And, when every party is doing that, the voter has no choice but to vote for these profiles only", Chhokar said. The Gujarat elections consolidated

Vidhan Sabha, 15 candidates elected to the Legislative Assembly secured less than 2,000 votes. Among others, Congress contestant Suresh Kumar from Borhanj secured his seat with less than 60 votes. Similar accounts of INC candidates winning their assigned constituencies with minimal margins have been recorded in the Congress-led State. Winning candidates from the constituencies of Sri Renukaji, Darang, Rampur, Sujapur, Shillai, Bilaspur and Sri Naina Deviji all received less than a thousand votes. However, as opposed to 2022, candidates from 18 constituencies garnered less than 2,000 votes in the 2017 Himachal state polls.

The BJP, despite winning by the highest margin in Seraj with 38183 votes, trails behind the Congress by winning only 25 seats. All in

survey shows 44 (24%) constituencies out of 182 have been declared as red alert constituencies where three or more candidates were accused of being involved in culpable activities. In 2017, it was 35. "That is how these people get elected. And sadly, the entity which is violating the definition of democracy is the political parties themselves", he added.

In Himachal Pradesh elections, the comparative study between the timeline of 2017 and 2022 shows a visible jump in the fractions. As for the winning candidates, 28 candidates (41%) of 68 candidates have declared criminal charges against them. In 2017, the figure was 32 per cent. About 18 percent of the winning candidates have declared for being involved in severe malicious tasks, which is a six per cent hike from survey results of 2017.

With a majority win, Congress tops the list of having the majority of criminal activities of 23 (58%) candidates out of 40 along with BJP with 5 (20%) out of 25. On the other hand, 23 percent of the successful candidates from congress and 12 percent of the BJP have declared serious criminal violence against them.

Recently, the civic polls in New Delhi have roared AAP's victory and the statistics of the criminal records too. Around 17 percent of elected members have criminal charges against them and another eight per cent have serious charges. Lawmakers have become Law-breakers

"The whole procedure has to be stopped by the parliament. And parliament itself has 43 per cent of the members having criminal charges against them. Therefore, those people who can stop this, are the ones who are behind this. Lawmakers have become law-breakers. If this continues, the future of democracy will be very weak and dark. Even today some people feel that there is no real democracy," said Chhokar.

While the Election Commission of India (ECI) orders, "It shall state, in bold letters, on criminal cases pending against the candidate"; this is not something to be proud of. And the astonishment arrives when candidates glorify their saga of violating laws in front of the masses just to become their next favourable leader. This definitely reflects the irony of the situation that Indian politics is currently in .

Const. No.	Constituency	Leading Party	Winning Candidate	Margin
5	Bhathtyat	Congress	Kuldeep Singh Pathania	1567 ↓
34	Balh	Bjp	Inder Singh	1307 ↓
57	Sri Renukaji	Congress	Vinay Kumar	860 ↓
30	Darang	Bjp	Puran Chand	618 ↓
66	Rampur	Congress	Nand Lal	567 ↓
37	Sujanpur	Congress	Rajinder Singh	399 ↓
59	Shillai	Congress	Harshwardhan Chauhan	382 ↓
48	Bilaspur	BJP	Trilok Jamwal	276 ↓
49	Sri Naina Deviji	BJP	Randhir Sharma	171 ↓
36	Bhoranj	Congress	Suresh Kumar	60 ↓
29	Seraj	BJP	Jai Ram Thakur	38183 ↑
16	Kangra	BJP	Pawan Kumar Kajal	19834 ↑
67	Rohru	Congress	Mohan Lal Brakta	19339 ↑
6	Nurpur	BJP	Ranbir Singh	18752 ↑
15	Nagrota	Congress	R.S. Bali	15892 ↑

all, the Congress won 40 seats with 43.9 percent (18,52,504 votes) and the BJP, 43 per cent votes (18,14,530).

Gujarat Margin: According to the latest data from the Election Commission of India, 22 candidates from the BJP won elections in their respective constituencies by a margin of more than 80,000 votes in the Gujarat Assembly elections. The winning candidates had an upper hand over the trailing candidates by a large

margin. Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel, who ran on the Ghatlodia ticket, won with the largest margin of victory of 1,92,263 votes. Patel was followed by Sandip Desai, who defeated AAP's Prakash Contractor on the Choryasi seat by a gap of 1.86 lakh votes.

There have been constituencies where the winning margin was narrow in measurement. Virendrasinh Bahadursinh Jadeja of BJP won the Rapar constituency by a margin of 577 votes. Bhachubhai Dharamshi Aarethiya of the Congress Party was trailing quite closely for the Rapar constituency. Following this, another close call for the win was Chudasama Vimalbhai Kanabhai, who was running for the Somnath ticket. The Congress won this seat by a margin of 922 votes

The idea of this thematic issue is inspired by the short internship stint that the journalism batch of 22-24 did with News18 on Dec 7-8, 2022