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Delhi elections: AAP sweeps aside BJP, Congress

AAP has won 67 seats with its nearest rival BJP far behind at three seats

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Anuja | Gyan Varma

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 Arvind Kejriwal thanked Narendra Modi for his greetings and said he would like to meet him soon to discuss issues related to Delhi. Photo: Sneha Srivastava/Mint

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New Delhi: In a near sweep, the [Arvind Kejriwal](#)-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday decimated the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress by recorded a landslide victory, securing 67 of the 70 seats in the Delhi assembly elections, halting the [Narendra Modi](#) juggernaut in its tracks.

Delhi election results showed that the AAP has won 67 seats—a win percentage of more than 90, a feat achieved only twice before in Sikkim and Bihar.

[Arvind Kejriwal](#), the former revenue service officer who led his party to a sensational victory, won with a huge margin in the New Delhi constituency where the BJP fielded [Nupur Sharma](#), a novice, who came second and veteran Congress leader [Kiran Walia](#) way behind at the third spot. He was later in the day elected leader of AAP's legislature party by the party's members of legislative assembly (MLAs).

The BJP's humiliation was complete with its chief ministerial face [Kiran Bedi](#) losing in the traditional stronghold of Krishna Nagar which was long held by party veteran [Harsh Vardhan](#).

The BJP won three seats.

All its veterans had to bite the dust.

The party gambled on Bedi but relied on Prime Minister Modi's image which still did not work for the party.

In an election that was billed as a referendum on the prime minister but rejected by the BJP as such, the AAP wave spearheaded by its chief Kejriwal knocked the two major parties and their veterans from their citadels.

In all elections that followed the spectacular victory in the May Lok Sabha elections, the BJP formed governments in Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and emerged the second largest party in Jammu and Kashmir with the highest vote share.

Congress, which ruled the national capital for 15 years till December 2013, has been reduced to zero. Congress stalwart and chief ministerial candidate **Ajay Maken** was pushed to the third spot in Sadar Bazar where AAP candidate was on top and the BJP at number two spot. Following the debacle, Maken resigned as Congress general secretary taking responsibility.

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The AAP's hurricane march could be gauged from the fact that it polled 54% of the popular votes while the BJP got 32.4% and the Congress 9.4%. In the last elections, the BJP had emerged as the largest party with 31 seats, the AAP 28 and Congress eight. Kejriwal formed a government with Congress support and resigned after 49 days in February 2014 over the Lokpal issue.

Kejriwal will take oath as chief minister on 14 February at the Ramlila Grounds, the platform that launched him during the days of India Against Corruption, exactly one year after he stepped down.

The scale of AAP's victory was reminiscent of the victories recorded by the Sikkim Sangram Party (SSP) which won all the 32 seats in the assembly while the JD(U)-BJP alliance won 206 of the 243 seats in 2010.

In the 1991 Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK-Congress alliance won 225 of the 234 seats while in subsequent elections the DMK-Congress alliance won 221

of 234 seats.

As the voting trends trickled in showing a massive landslide for the AAP, Modi called Kejriwal over phone to congratulate him on the victory. He assured Kejriwal of Centre's complete support in the development of Delhi.

Bedi also congratulated Kejriwal saying "full marks to Arvind".

In his address to his supporters, Kejriwal saluted the people of Delhi for doing a "wonder" by giving them a landslide victory and asked party workers not to get carried away by the mandate. "You have done a wonder. When you are on the path of truth, all the forces of universe come together to help you. I salute the people of Delhi. It's a victory of truth," he said.

BJP's defeat was all the more bitter because it had won all the seven Lok Sabha seats in the last year's general elections. The party's gamble of making Bedi its chief ministerial candidate back fired. The only saving grace for the BJP was victory of its former state unit president Vijender Gupta who won from Rohini.

Kejriwal thanked Modi for his greetings and said he would like to meet him soon to discuss issues related to Delhi. He told the prime minister that he will need the Centre's help.

Expressing happiness over the party's performance, AAP leader Yogendra Yadav said, "it was not just under class, but the middle class also voted for the AAP. The (Narendra Modi) juggernaut seems to have halted at least for now."

Hailing the AAP's performance, West Bengal chief minister **Mamata Banerjee** called the election result a turning point in the country's political situation. "Delhi election is a turning point of the present political situation. Shows political vendetta has no place in a democracy. Country needed this change," she said in a tweet. "This is a victory for the people and a big defeat for the arrogant and those who are doing political vendetta & spreading hate among people," Banerjee said in another tweet.

Reeling under the debacle, the BJP admitted that it is a "big setback" but asserted that it was not a referendum on the central government as people voted on local issues.

"We have lost badly. We accept our massive defeat with all humility. We will seriously look into the reasons. We probably feel we have faulted in gauging the mood of the people of Delhi. We will seriously think about it and take a comprehensive review of the reasons that led to this defeat," Union minister **Ravi Shankar Prasad** said. He added the Narendra Modi government treats everyone equally without any political discrimination and the same principle will apply in Delhi.

AAP's win is the first big jolt to the BJP, which has formed governments in Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Haryana after sweeping to power in the national elections in May. The BJP had announced an outsider, **Kiran Bedi**, as its chief ministerial candidate and focused its campaign on women's safety, development and better centre-state relations.

More than 67% of the voters in Delhi exercised their franchise on Saturday, which was an all-time high. The capital state has been without an elected government in the past one year since Kejriwal's government stepped down over the issue of the proposed law on an ombudsman, popularly known as Jan Lokpal.

Majority of exit polls released on Saturday after the polling, predicted a clean sweep for the AAP, a second position for the BJP and a wipe-out for the Congress. India Today-Cicero poll gave AAP 38-46 seats, BJP 19-27 and Congress 3-5. Today's Chanakya poll on News 24 channel gave AAP 48 seats and 22 to BJP. The ABP-Nielsen gave AAP 39 and BJP 28.

PTI contributed to this story.

To read the AAP manifesto, click [here](#)

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