

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

February 2025



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 15

Issue 11

The Resurgent India English monthly published and printed by Smt. Suman Sharma on behalf of The Resurgent India Trust Published at C/o J. N. Socketed Cement Pipes Pvt. Ltd., Village Bhamraula Post Bagwara, Kichha Road, Rudrapur (U.S Nagar)
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Printed at : Priyanka Printing Press, Hotel Krish Building, Janta Inter College Road, Udham Nagar, Rudrapur, Uttarakhand

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 15

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

DELHI ASSEMBLY ELECTION: DETHRONING OF THE AAM AADMI PARTY (AAP)

The results of the Delhi assembly elections reflect the short-lived and waning influence of the AAP model in Indian politics. In the defeat of AAP and the inability of the Congress party to emerge from its self-destructive ennui, the BJP has emerged as a clear victor, gaining power in Delhi after 26 years. This victory of the BJP has come after three consecutive terms of rule by the AAP in Delhi since 2013. With both Arvind Kejriwal and his former deputy, Manish Sisodia, losing from their respective constituencies, and with Congress failing to win even a single seat, the results show that BJP was successful in making corruption under Kejriwal a key election issue in its campaign. With the new government in power, the administrative deadlock which has characterized the governance of Delhi is expected to ease.

THE BROAD RESULTS

The BJP won with an impressive majority of 48 seats in the 70-member Delhi assembly, while the AAP managed to secure 22 seats. The Congress did not get even a single seat for the third time in a row, and majority of its candidates also lost deposits.

Party	Seats			Vote share (%)		
	2025	2020	2015	2025	2020	2015
BJP	48	8	3	47.2	39.77	33.2
AAP	22	62	67	43.6	53.57	54.3
Congress	0 0	0	6.3	4.26	9.7	
Others	0 0	0	2.9	-	-	

The decline in AAP's vote share by nearly 10 percentage points as well as in its seat share shows that the party has suffered a serious decline. The Congress saw only a marginal improvement of more than 2 percentage points in its vote share. Despite the fact that the Congress was in power in Delhi between 1998 and 2013, it was completely wiped out by the AAP.

CASTE AND COMMUNITY WISE VOTING PATTERNS

This election saw the BJP being successfully able to consolidate a broad coalition of upper caste and OBC groups, even as the AAP began to face disenchantment from its traditional constituencies consisting of Muslim voters and Dalits.

Community	BJP (%)	AAP (%)	Congress (%)
Brahmin	66	26	5
Rajput	60	33	4
Vaishya/Bania	66	25	7
Punjabi Khatri	67	26	5
Jat	45	44	5
Gujjar	44	49	5
Yadav	47	50	1
Other OBCs	55	38	5
Jatav	34	59	5
Valmiki	25	67	9
Other Dalits	41	53	3
Muslims	15	65	16
Sikhs	43	45	10
Other minorities	40	50	6

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

While the BJP commanded a solid support base among the upper castes, among the OBCs it was a popular choice with the Jats. However, the Gujjars and Yadavs voted more for the AAP. Among the Dalits, BJP's penetration remains weak compared to the AAP, especially with the Valmiki Dalits who voted overwhelmingly for the AAP. It is interesting that the Sikh vote got almost split in the middle between the AAP and the BJP, with a slightly more vote going towards the BJP.

CLASS WISE VOTING PATTERNS

Class has been in an important category in a metropolitan city like Delhi. Traditionally, AAP has cultivated a vote base among poor and lower-class voters, while BJP has been perceived to be the party of choice for the rich. Since 2013, AAP's political mobilization has been based along classist patterns, including tailoring of welfare schemes. This has made polarization along class lines a major feature of Delhi politics in recent years.

	BJP (%) (+/- percent change from 2020)	AAP (%) (+/- percent change from 2020)	Congress (%) (+/- percent change from 2020)
Poor	42 (+9)	50 (-11)	6 (+2)
Lower	46 (+15)	44 (-18)	7 (+3)
Middle	47 (+8)	44 (-9)	6 (+1)
Rich	60 (+18)	30 (-17)	7 (+3)

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

As the voting patterns indicate, AAP has been able to secure the highest vote share among the poorest sections of society, while the BJP has been able to secure more vote share among

the lower, middle and rich classes. However, the voting shares of the lower and middle classes are almost divided evenly between the BJP and the AAP. It is also notable that the AAP has suffered heavy vote share losses across all classes, especially amongst the lower classes.

GENDER WISE VOTING PATTERNS

Gender has been another important fault-line in Delhi politics. Traditionally, AAP has sought to mobilize women voters in the city through a slew of welfare measures, mostly hinging around freebies in transport as well as measures resulting in household savings in terms of electricity and water.

	BJP (%) (+/- percent change from 2020)	AAP (%) (+/- percent change from 2020)	Congress (%) (+/- percent change from 2020)
Male	51 (+8)	39 (-10)	7 (+2)
Female	43 (+8)	49 (-11)	5 (+2)

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

As is clear, the BJP's victory was mainly due to male voters. While the BJP secured the highest vote share among the men, AAP secured the highest vote share among the women. However, the AAP also lost more than 10 percentage points of vote share across men and women. Part of the reason why the AAP could still secure a high vote share among women lay in the free bus ride scheme, with majority of female beneficiaries of that scheme (55%) voting for the AAP.

REGION-WISE VOTING PATTERNS

Regional divide in voting choices was also visible in this election. While the BJP outperformed the AAP in all the regions

in Delhi, it surprisingly lagged AAP in South Delhi – the city’s rich and elite region. South Delhi was the only region where the AAP performed well and lost relatively lower in terms of vote share compared to other regions.

Region	BJP		AAP		Congress		Others	
	2025 (%)	+/- from 2020 (%)	2025 (%)	+/- from 2020 (%)	2025 (%)	+/- from 2020 (%)	2025 (%)	+/- from 2020 (%)
Chandni Chowk	45.8	8.1	45.1	-10.8	7.6	2.8	1.5	-0.1
East Delhi	47.6	5.2	42	-8.4	5.7	0.1	4.7	3.1
New Delhi	47.8	10.8	43	-12.5	7.8	2.2	1.4	-0.5
North-East Delhi	44.7	7.6	45	-8.6	5.8	2.2	4.5	-1.2
North-West Delhi	48.5	8	40.8	-11.2	8.4	3.2	2.3	0
South Delhi	43.7	3.6	47.8	-6.6	5.4	3	3.1	0
West Delhi	51.3	11.1	42	-12.4	4.6	1.4	2.1	-0.1

Source: Lokniti-CSDS

The BJP’s performance was the best in West Delhi – an area that has large concentration of Jat and Sikh population in the city. It was the only region in which the party could cross the 50% vote share. In the previous elections, AAP had surpassed the 50% vote share in nearly all regions.

DISCUSSION

The results indicate that the assembly elections this time, despite being painted as a three-way contest between the AAP, the BJP and the Congress ended mostly being a direct fight between the BJP and the AAP. While the Congress was able to undercut AAP's vote share to some extent, its influence was not very major. The following trends stand out:

First, the AAP was able to secure decent performance in Muslim-dominated areas and in areas with larger numbers of poor category population. Despite this, the party's vote share did decline by 12.3 percentage points in Muslim-dominated seats and by 8.2 percentage points in areas with relatively poor population. However, AAP's decline in Muslim-dominated areas did not result in any major gains for the BJP, due to the strong performance of Owaisi-led AIMIM in two seats (Okhla and Mustafabad) and the competition posed by the Congress in Muslim dominated seats.

Second, the BJP's core base continues to be largely those areas with relatively rich population and low minority population. It was also able to successfully build a caste coalition of upper castes and OBCs.

Third, the extent to which freebies influenced the elections remains contested. This is because both BJP and AAP went out of their way to promise a variety of welfare programmes for the people, with BJP even committing to retaining AAP's existing welfare policies. This shows the deep interlinkages between freebie infrastructure and the election process.

Fourth, corruption and misgovernance have been the major cause responsible for the unraveling of the AAP. The arrest

of Kejriwal and his key ministers in the wake of excise policy scam as well as other investigations against the AAP have resonated with the public psyche. The refusal of Kejriwal to resign from the Chief Minister's post initially even after going to jail exposed a deeply selfish picture for people to judge. Even prior to the arrests, the constant tussle between the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister made a mockery of the Delhi administration. Kejriwal's constant blaming of LG for failing to take policy action began to appear more and more like an excuse for not working.

Finally, the election results are expected to have resonance in wider Indian politics. It will portend negative consequences for the AAP in Punjab – where there is already discontent due to the party's corrupt practices – and in other states where it was trying to expand, such as Goa and Himachal Pradesh. The election results have also once again brought to fore the artificial and precarious nature of the Opposition INDI Alliance, where knives have been drawn out against the Congress party once more. The public perception as well as the perception within the alliance that it is nothing more than an opportunistic temporary congregation to challenge the BJP has further fortified.

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR

Even as the Trump administration in the United States has mounted pressure on Russia and Ukraine to reach a peaceful settlement of their ongoing war, the implications of the conflict are visibly snowballing into several important strategic domain. America's shifting language indicates these implications.

First, the American focus on securing a deal with Ukraine which involves substantial American investment – entailing control – in Ukraine's rare earth elements' repository indicates the growing importance of these critical minerals in the development of the most advanced future technologies. Their control has become an important part of the strategic implications of the Russia-Ukraine war. Despite the disastrous meeting between Trump and Zelensky at the White House, compared to the relatively favourable one between American officials and Russian officials in Saudi Arabia earlier, both sides were quick to reach a new balance. Soon after the disastrous meeting, Zelensky expressed regrets and further affirmed that Ukraine is willing to enter a critical minerals agreement with America.

The importance of these minerals becomes clear from the fact that the Russian forces now occupy significant lithium deposits in eastern Ukraine, so much so that, combined with Russia's own reserves, Russia now has greater reserves of lithium than the United States. This is a reality that is eliciting deep discomfort in the US, as the expanding Chinese influence across all sectors in Russia is a challenge that US considers as its priority to curb. That is why the US has enforced sanctions

on a Russian lithium mining facility near Murmansk that China is helping Russia develop. That is also why the US has linked peace between Russia and Ukraine to a potential US-Ukraine agreement on Ukraine's critical mineral reserves. Stopping the war has become a priority to curb the growing Chinese influence across Russia.

The geopolitical competition on these critical minerals is also heating up in Russia's and China's backyard in Central Asia and is set to assume the form of a serious East versus West rivalry. The region contains many of the largest, but yet underdeveloped, rare-earth fields in the world, but its governments need outside help to develop the rare earth sector. With China already becoming the most dominant country in the region, the US and Europe have also rushed to counter the Russia-China axis in Central Asia.

Second, America's withdrawal from Europe and the rising confrontation between Europe and the United States makes it clear that the future pathway for Europe lies in strong remilitarization through revival of its defence industrial base. This will also entail a diversification of military supplies to Ukraine. The new reality marks a break from the post-Second World War era when Europe has been under the American security umbrella and has been able to navigate the Russian challenge. The recent Paris gathering of key European leaders, resulting in the affirmation of taking responsibility for its defence as well as continuing to support Ukraine against Russian aggression, reflected the new emerging consensus in Europe. Already in anticipation of European remilitarization, stocks of major European defence companies have touched a high.

Third, Trump's transactional approach towards the Russia-

Ukraine war is breeding a cycle of global insecurity. It is not only leading to a remilitarization of Europe, but also a re-thinking of pacifist choices within key American allies like Japan and South Korea. Both the countries are now in a race – where they perceive China to be a greater immediate threat – to develop their technological industrial base to overtake China. Due to ageing population and its limitations in contributing to the technology-driven economy, both countries are soliciting selected high-skilled technical labour from other countries, especially India. Interestingly, in recent times, US declared South Korea a ‘sensitive’ country – putting it on a similar list as nuclear states like India, Israel, Pakistan and North Korea – thereby fuelling speculations that the country is engaged in nuclearization. The status of a sensitive country will limit unhindered Korean access to American technology development.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The precarious ceasefire agreed to in the Israel-Hamas war has come unravelling. With Trump declaring his intention to develop Gaza into a ‘riviera’ and re-settle millions of Palestinians in other countries in the Middle East, the unpredictability of American positions is breeding new insecurities. While Israel did not respond overly warmly to Trump’s proposals, the country has been emboldened to take strong action in West Bank while continuing periodic ceasefire violations. In West Bank particularly, Israel conducted intense raids and took hundreds of Palestinians prisoners. It also threatened Hamas asking it to release all hostages.

The deteriorating situation marks a departure from the positivity that was briefly encountered when the initial ceasefire

agreement was negotiated. After having gone through the first phase, the parties are stuck at operationalizing the second phase. Much like in other areas, in this domain too, the increasingly unpredictable policies of America are breeding ideal conditions for a world full of wilderness and chaos.

TECHNOLOGICAL HORIZON

The technological race has become the defining essence of geopolitics in the present times. This is most clearly borne out by the competing attempts by China and the US to create technology-driven defence base in moves that clearly indicate the rise of a much more precarious new cold war.

In the US, the Trump administration is replicating what has been referred to as the 'Star Wars 2.0' programme. The defence system aims to replicate Israel's Iron Dome, but at a much larger and stronger scale. While Israel's Iron Dome only defends small areas against short-range, low-flying and non-nuclear missiles, the American system will defend US against intercontinental ballistic missiles, hypersonic missiles and other advanced missile attacks. It will also incorporate 'space-based interceptors, as well as lower altitude interceptors. It will also aim to develop capabilities to defeat missile attacks even prior to launch.

In parallel to this, China is also building a new massive military command post in western Beijing, which will also serve as a wartime command centre and is expected to be far larger than the Pentagon, becoming the world's largest military command centre. Satellite images show a 1500-acre construction site consisting of deep holes which are expected to house bunkers to provide protection during wars, including

a potential nuclear war. This construction is going on alongside the rapid Chinese upgradation of its nuclear weapons arsenal. Once complete, China will house, both, the world's most advanced conventional fighting capabilities as well as nuclear capabilities.

TURKEY-KURDISH PEACE SETTLEMENTS

In an unprecedented development, the decades-old Kurdish conflict appears to be on the verge of a peaceful settlement. This comes in the wake of the announcement by the jailed founder of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK), Abdullah Ocalan, that the Kurdish movement had reached the end of its lifespan and that it was time to declare a truce with the state of Turkey. Ocalan also called for the laying down of weapons and the dissolution of the PKK. This is different from past attempts at ceasefire, such as those in 2015 and 2019 which have failed, due to violations. This call is different as Ocalan has signaled the willingness to dissolve the movement and surrender altogether, thereby going beyond even a mere ceasefire.

The PKK leadership – based in Iraq – has responded to Ocalan's call by declaring a unilateral ceasefire. Detailed issues such as final disbandment, disarmament and other matters are slated to be worked out in formal meetings of the organized in a few months. These announcements have been welcomed by Turkey. However, Turkey also remains firm in its demand that all PKK-affiliated groups, including its Syrian offshoots, must disband unconditionally.

The import of this announcement by the PKK is reflected in the rapidly changing geopolitical equations across the world

and the Middle East. Three key developments have been particularly important:

First, the changing priorities of the Trump administration in the United States makes it an unpredictable ally for the Kurdish people in the Middle east. Historically, Kurdish militias have fought alongside the US to counter the expansion of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq and have also been an important western ally in checking the influence of Iran and its proxies in the region. While the Kurds have faced systematic persecution in Turkey and Turkish bombardments in northeastern Syria and in Iraq, they have broadly had the backing of the US security umbrella. With the Trump administration prioritizing withdrawal of American presence and a retreat into isolationism, the Kurds will be left without a key security anchor.

Second, the fall of al-Assad regime in Syria and the country's takeover by Turkish-backed Jolani's HTS signals that Kurdish-dominated groups like the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) will find it difficult to hold onto their strongholds in Syria much longer. Having realized these vital limitations, the SDF has already entered into an agreement with the Syrian government led by Turkish-backed Jolani. While the SDF and other Syrian groups have not responded meaningfully to PKK's and Ocalan's call for a ceasefire, the changing geopolitics of the Middle East in the post-Assad phase will be an important factor for the Kurds, reflecting that Ocalan's call is not limited merely to PKK and Turkey but spans the Kurds across the Middle East region.

Third, in terms of domestic Turkish politics, there is visible an increasing replacement of preference for armed struggle by a preference for engaging in electoral and democratic party

politics. This is visible in the rising popularity of Kurdish political parties and actors in the political arena in Turkey. Instead of winning by fielding independent candidates, the Kurdish parties are now able to win even through the institutionalized platform of their political parties, reflecting the rising legitimacy of Kurdish politics in Turkey.

THE INNER PRINCIPLE OF HINDUISM

“The inner principle of Hinduism, the most tolerant and receptive of religious systems, is not sharply exclusive like the religious spirit of Christianity or Islam; as far as that could be without loss of its own powerful idiosyncrasy and law of being, it has been synthetic, acquisitive, inclusive. Always it has taken in from every side and trusted to the power of assimilation that burns in its spiritual heart and in the white heat of its flaming centre to turn even the most unpromising material into forms for its spirit.”

Sri Aurobindo

(CWSA20: 133-34)