

## **Delhi Assembly Election: The BJP Storms Back to Power After 27 Years**

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### **Summary**

*The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) captured power in Delhi after winning 48 of the 70 seats in the state Assembly. For the BJP, the win in Delhi follows electoral victories in Haryana and Maharashtra and cements its dominance. The Delhi results are a blow to the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) ambitions of being a national party. It also undermines the standing of AAP founder and former Delhi Chief Minister, Arvind Kejriwal.*

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) swept to victory in the Delhi Assembly election, 27 years after it had first formed government there in 1993. The BJP won 48 of the 70 seats in the Delhi Assembly, with the incumbent Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) winning 22 seats. The gap in vote share between the two parties was much less significant at two percentage points, with the BJP winning 46 per cent of the votes and the AAP 44 per cent. However, the 2025 Assembly election saw the BJP gaining seven percentage points from 2020 while the AAP's vote share fell by 10 per cent.

One of the primary reasons for the defeat of the AAP, which had been in power in Delhi for the past decade, was the significant degree of anti-incumbency and voter dissatisfaction. According to the [Lokniti-CSDS survey](#), only 28 per cent of the respondents were “fully satisfied” with the AAP government, compared to 76 per cent in 2020. At the same time, 42 per cent of the respondents were “fully satisfied” with the BJP government at the Centre. One of the drivers of voter dissatisfaction was the governance record of the AAP government. Although respondents rated the AAP government highly on public health, schools and power supply, it fared poorly on other civic amenities like roads, drainage and water supply. Thus, as much as the popular vote was against the AAP, it was also a positive vote for the BJP to improve Delhi's infrastructure.

Second, the AAP, which was voted to power in 2015 as a party committed to clean politics, suffered due to the corruption charges against several senior AAP leaders, including former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. According to the Lokniti-CSDS survey, a quarter of the respondents who did not want the AAP to return to power cited corruption as a primary factor. A fifth of the respondents also mentioned the need for change. This was perhaps one of the reasons why Kejriwal lost from the New Delhi constituency. Several other senior AAP leaders, including former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Health Minister Satyender Jain, lost. Among the AAP stalwarts, only Atishi Marlena, who had briefly replaced Kejriwal as chief minister, and Gopal Rai won.

Third, the BJP ran a well-oiled and funded campaign backed by its party cadre and central leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi. While initially the BJP's campaign was focused on the AAP's corruption, closer to the election, attention was trained on civic issues.

The BJP also matched the welfare promises of AAP and promised to continue with existing government schemes. In addition, the BJP won over a large chunk of the middle-class vote in Delhi with the Union budget, presented days before election day, containing sops for the middle class. A standard campaign line employed by the BJP in all state elections – ‘double engine *sarkar* (government)’ meaning the benefits of having the same party in power in the state and the Centre – had particular resonance in Delhi because of its peculiar constitutional status and the role played by the state’s Lieutenant Governor. During the AAP’s decade in power, there was constant friction between the government and the Lieutenant Governor, who is appointed by the Centre. In fact, a third of the respondents in the Lokniti-CSDS survey believed that the AAP was using the Lieutenant Governor as an excuse for the lack of development. With a BJP government in place in Delhi, this impediment to governance will be removed.

Finally, the Congress, which contested on its own and did not win a single seat, possibly played a spoiler for the AAP in constituencies where the margin of victory was small. There were 13 constituencies where the BJP’s margin of victory was less than the votes polled by the Congress. Indeed, in the New Delhi constituency, Kejriwal lost by 4,089 votes while the Congress candidate polled 4,568 votes.

As in most other states, the BJP ran the election campaign without naming a chief ministerial candidate. There are several candidates in the running for the chief minister’s post. They include Parvesh Verma, a former member of parliament and son of former Delhi Chief Minister Sahib Singh Verma, who defeated Kejriwal; three-time member of the Legislative Assembly, Vijender Gupta; and sitting BJP member of parliament, Manoj Tiwari. However, the BJP central leadership often nominates relatively unknown and low-profile candidates for the chief minister’s chair, along with deputies, and might do the same in Delhi.

The Delhi result is a blow to the AAP’s ambitions of being a national party and an alternative to the Congress. The party is now in power only in Punjab. The results also undermine Kejriwal’s leadership since he was very much the face of the party and the AAP’s election campaign in Delhi. For the Congress, despite its vote share having increased by two per cent in 2020 to six per cent, the party is still to recover from its precipitous fall since being voted out in 2013 after three terms in power in Delhi.

For the BJP, the Delhi result is yet another electoral success since the 2024 general election, following wins in Haryana and Maharashtra. The string of electoral victories has meant that the BJP’s relatively poor showing in 2024 has receded into the background and the opposition’s momentum has been seriously dented.

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