

YES, NO, IT'S COMPLICATED

Will the BJP lose Rajasthan?

YES



PAWAN KHERA
is a national spokesperson of the Indian National Congress

The BJP's renewed recourse to emotive issues is an acknowledgement that it is staring at defeat

Will the BJP win in Rajasthan is like asking whether Narendra Modi will become the U.S. President. The reason for the imminent defeat of the BJP in Rajasthan cannot be attributed to a “normal trend” or “Rajasthan is a see-saw State” kind of arguments.

First, let's look at candidates. The BJP could not change the number of candidates as its central leadership would have wanted, owing to a battle between Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and BJP president Amit Shah. Mr. Shah wanted to change at least 100 sitting MLAs; Ms. Raje allowed only 45

changes.

Next, governance. Ms. Raje's government has been corrupt, non-performing and insensitive for the past five years. This government brought back memories of her previous tenure as Chief Minister (2003-2008). The mining scam, where over 600 mining leases were allotted without following due procedure, resulted in the Rajya Sabha being adjourned many times and brought shame to the State.

Employment figures
Further, according to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, the

unemployment figure in Rajasthan (13.7%) in October is more than twice the national figure (6.6%). Ms. Raje came to power promising 15 lakh jobs. She later changed “job” to “employment” and “employment” to “employment opportunities”. She proudly claimed that instead of 15 lakh jobs, her government had provided 44 lakh jobs. Her own Minister of Labour and Employment said in December last year that the the total number of jobs provided by her government stood at 2.17 lakh. A Comptroller and Auditor General report exposes her claims on employment. The Rajasthan Skill and Livelihood Development Corpora-



tion, the premier agency for skill training, could only achieve 48.90% of its target between 2014 and 2017. Placement data stands at a meagre 35.58%.

An example of the gravity of unemployment in the State can be seen from the fact that for the 18 posts advertised for peons in 2017 by the Rajasthan Assembly, among 13,000 applicants, 129 were engineers, 23 were lawyers, one was a chartered accountant and 393 were postgraduates. Farmers, daily wage earners, small businesses and traders have borne the brunt of demonetisation and the complicated implementation of the goods and services tax. Under

the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, the number of days of employment stands at 50 instead of 150.

Both Mr. Modi and Ms. Raje can see the clear prospect of a looming defeat. The renewed recourse to emotive issues is a clear testimony to an internal acknowledgement by the party that on jobs and other parameters of development, the BJP is staring at defeat.

Other failures
The list of Ms. Raje's mistakes competes with Mr. Modi's own long list. Ms. Raje's decision to merge schools with a low student count under the PMFBY, only 19,76,000 farmers benefited from the scheme.

over 5 lakh children.

Mr. Modi has not yet appointed a Lokpal, and Ms. Raje recently extended the tenure of the Lokayukta to eight years from the earlier five, causing a severe dent to the integrity of the institution.

If Mr. Modi tries to honestly find out about the actual scam in the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), he will see that in Rajasthan, two out of three farmers enrolled with the PMFBY have been left out. Of the 53,39,000 farmers of 41 tehsils in 13 districts declared drought-hit in the kharif season in 2017, and part of the rabi season in 2017-18, all of whom were covered under the PMFBY, only 19,76,000 farmers benefited from the scheme.

NO



SUDHANSHU TRIVEDI
is a national spokesperson of the BJP

History points to a promising and impressive victory for the BJP in the State

There is no question of the BJP losing in Rajasthan. The State government has taken numerous initiatives for the common man. Let me cite two examples. The first is the Bhamashah Swasthya Bima Yojana which ensures that the needy get a health cover of up to ₹3 lakh. About 22 lakh people have benefited from this scheme. The second is the work done in education. All 5,000 gram panchayats in the State now have access to schools and inter-government colleges, i.e. schools till

Class 12. That's why the pass percentage at the school level has increased substantially, and Rajasthan has jumped from the bottom of the list in education to an enviable position. Before this, students had to travel long distances to go to school and often dropped out of school as a result.

Candidate decisions
By focusing on education and health, the Vasundhara Raje government has reached out to peo-

ple who really matter. Those who are trying to malign her by saying she is not accessible or who question her style of functioning should substantiate their claims. The Congress is not able to criticise her with concrete examples. When the main Opposition party has to change its candidate three times in a crucial constituency like Bikaner, what does that tell you? At one point in time, the Leader of the Opposition went to the extent of saying he would not contest the election if the party did not review its decision on one candidate.



The central leadership of Rajasthan was forced to leave through the back door because its own partypersons were disgruntled in Delhi with the candidates. So, let's not talk about style of functioning. As far as the BJP is concerned, it has successfully rewritten history in several States.

If you go by all the pre-poll surveys, with the exception of the Delhi Assembly, these surveys got their predictions wrong as far as the BJP tally was concerned. In U.P., for example, the surveys said the BJP would not get a majority. They had

the same predictions for Tripura and Assam, but look at the results.

What has also changed in Rajasthan is the successful outreach programme of the State government. Perhaps this was missing the previous time. But this time, the message has reached the people.

Nationalist sentiment
Rajasthan is very crucial to the BJP's scheme of things. The people of the State have closely identified with cultural pride and a strong nationalist sentiment, which is in sync with the BJP's ideological position. When the Modi government at the Centre is marching ahead on the

path of development with national pride and with a strong cultural foundation, how can Rajasthan be left out?

Those who are talking about the electoral history of Rajasthan should revisit facts. Bhairon Singh Shekhawat formed two successive governments in 1990 and 1993. In 2003, the first government of Vasundhara Raje was the first BJP government of Rajasthan to get a clear majority and, in 2013, the BJP got a three-fourths majority for the first time.

So, history points to a promising and impressive victory for the BJP in Rajasthan.

IT'S COMPLICATED



YASHWANT DESHMUKH
is the founder director of CVoter International

How the Congress and the BJP use their assets will determine who will win

Rajasthan is complicated because of the intriguing split-vote phenomenon which is bound to send analysts looking for all kinds of excuses if they intend to read too much into the Assembly election, hoping to get some traction for the upcoming Lok Sabha election. When was the last time you saw any State election with the poll slogan, “*Modi tujhse bair nahin, par rani teri khair nahin*”? The nearest would be the Delhi Assembly election when the Aam Aadmi Party had placed a banner on its official website stating, “Modi for PM, Arvind for CM”. That was

also dropped after it was pointed out by the media. But you still find this slogan making its way into some newspapers. What does that tell us? It tells us that the Rajasthan voters are extremely upset with the sitting Chief Minister but they don't want to conflate it with their sentiments on the Prime Minister. And that makes Rajasthan complicated.

The issue of State leadership
Rajasthan is complicated because there is no other State which exposes the fault lines on regional leadership the way Rajasthan does. While

the voters in Rajasthan are eager to swing towards the young and energetic Sachin Pilot as a possible Congress Chief Minister, make no mistake, they are not swinging for the old guard, Ashok Gehlot. Yes, Mr. Gehlot is still popular among old Congress voters, but if that were enough, he would not have lost the election in the humiliating way that he did five years ago. The edge in any election is the swing vote, and all the votes are swinging towards Mr. Pilot courtesy the young voters. He is the prime asset for the Congress now, and Ms. Raje seems to be the prime liability for the BJP, for



there is a lot of anger against her. This seems to be straightforward as far as State leadership is concerned.

Assets and liabilities
But what makes the Rajasthan election complicated is the fact that the national leadership equation is just the opposite of this. Among the voters in the State, Mr. Modi is the prime asset of the BJP, whereas Congress president Rahul Gandhi is the prime liability for the Congress. So, it is the asset/liability cross equation that makes Rajasthan an intriguing case study.

For the Congress, it is really easy to win Rajasthan provided it under-

stands its liability clearly and uses its asset prudently. The party has to focus only on local issues and local governance. The moment it gives in to the urge of project its central leadership, it will end up snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

For the BJP, it is the opposite. It knows its liability and will play its trump card: arranging many rallies by Mr. Modi. The more the Congress deviates from the Raje versus Pilot contest to the Modi versus Gandhi contest, the more complicated it will get. In doing so, it will walk directly into the Modi trap.

Focus on local issues
Will the Congress do it? Yes and no. While its State leadership, be it Mr.

Pilot or Mr. Gehlot, is prudent enough to focus on local issues alone (just check how many statements have been made on Rafale, for example), the same can't be said about its central leadership. Mr. Gandhi's campaign is essentially focused on Mr. Modi, and while this is being seen as “aggressive” by his cheerleaders, the truth is uncomfortable. You must be wondering, why blame Mr. Gandhi when Mr. Modi's campaign is about 10 Jan-path rather than the performance of Ms. Raje or even his own Central government?


That is precisely my point. That kind of campaign is home turf for Mr. Modi. You go that way, and it will be his highway.

SINGLE FILE

Gandhi opposed Partition

Blaming Gandhi for Partition and by implication lionising his assassin is the worst form of historical revisionism

MOHAMMED AYOOB



THE HINDU ARCHIVES

I was shocked when a young Indian professional recently advised me to listen to the audiotape of Nathuram Godse's speech in the court trying him for Mahatma Gandhi's murder to get the “right perspective” on both Gandhi and Godse. An obvious admirer of Godse, he found the assassin's rant blaming Gandhi for abetting Partition convincing, thus implying that Gandhi's assassination was a legitimate act of retribution carried out by a true Indian nationalist.

It is very disturbing to hear of this revisionist version of Gandhi's assassination that by implication justifies Godse's action. It not only tarnishes Gandhi's reputation, but also flies in the face of recorded facts.

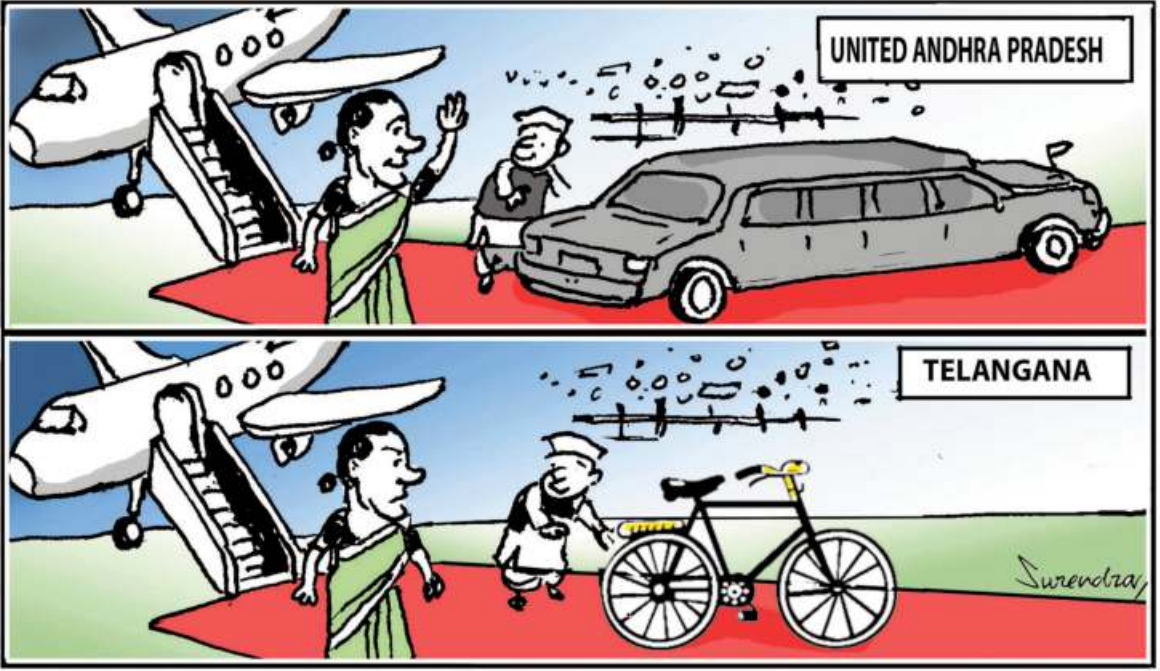
In reality, Gandhi opposed Partition until the very end. However, the Congress leadership had increasingly sidelined him by the end of 1946. By that time, Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel had come to accept the idea of Partition without even the courtesy of consulting Gandhi. Eventually, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) accepted the Mountbatten plan to divide the country.

On the morning of June 3, 1947, the day the Partition plan was announced, Gandhi told Rajendra Prasad, “I can see only evil in the plan.” Reacting to a question by a reporter whether he would undertake a fast to prevent Partition, Gandhi, uncharacteristically dejected, replied: “If the Congress commits to an act of madness, does it mean I should die?”

It is a matter of record that Patel, on the advice of States Secretary V.P. Menon, had accepted the inevitability of Partition by December 1946 and had signalled this to Nehru. Patel was convinced, as he later stated, that “if India is to remain united it must be divided”. Nehru was also eventually convinced that Partition was a necessary evil in order to neutralise Jinnah's nuisance value and to establish a strong and centralised Indian state which would not have been possible with Muslim League ministries in office in undivided Punjab and Bengal.

It is instructive to note that at the CWC meeting that accepted the Partition plan there were only two dissenters, both Muslim. Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan opposed the plan declaring, “You [the Congress] have thrown us to the wolves”. Maulana Azad, a trenchant critic of Jinnah and the Muslim League and fervently opposed to Partition, remained silent in deference to his friend Nehru who had moved the Partition resolution. Everyone else, including Prasad and Govind Ballabh Pant, voted in favour of dividing the country. Blaming Gandhi for Partition and by implication lionising his assassin is the worst form of historical revisionism. In fact, it is a crime, which all thoughtful Indians must condemn unequivocally.

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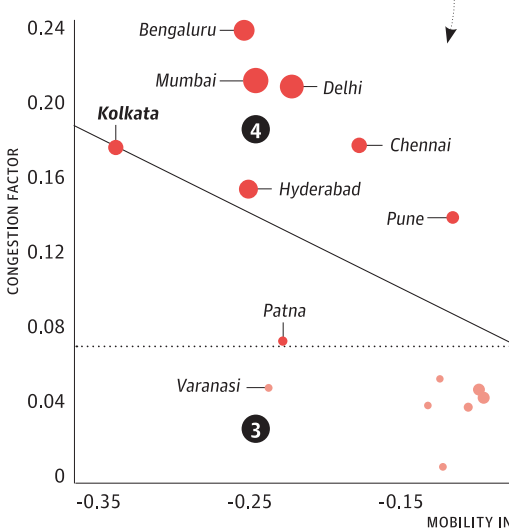
DATA POINT

How cities move

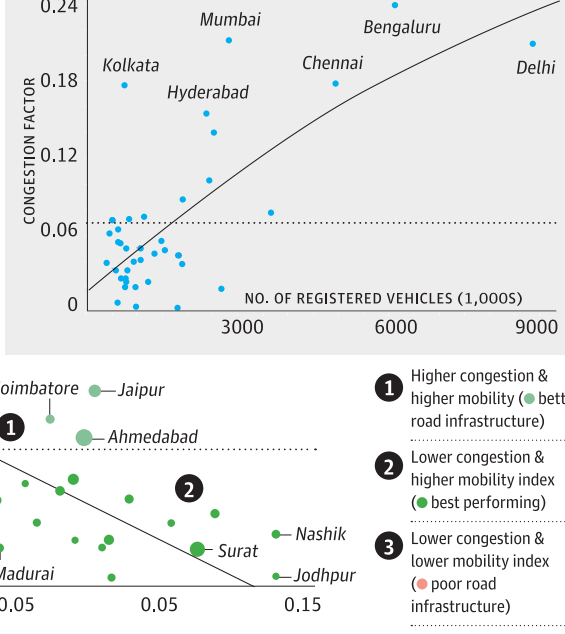
Poor road infrastructure is one of the biggest factors contributing to traffic congestion and mobility in several Indian cities, a study has found. Prottoy A. Akbar and others have devised a mobility index, which determines how fast- or slow-moving traffic in a city is. **Varun B.Krishnan** looks at the data for the most populated cities in India (above 1 million people)

What is mobility index? It is an index which factors in parameters like traffic, weather and time of the day to arrive at a number. The higher the index, the faster the city.

Chart plots congestion factor — a measure of delay caused due to traffic — against the mobility index. A high congestion factor correlates to a low mobility index



Vehicles and congestion The congestion factor is also directly correlated to the number of registered vehicles (data from 2016) across cities. The higher the number, the greater the congestion factor



Methodology | Over 2 crore trips of varying lengths and locations were simulated in 154 cities nationwide using a popular web mapping and transportation service

Source: 'Mobility and Congestion in Urban India', Akbar et. al.; published as a World Bank Policy Research Working Paper

FROM The Hindu. ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 23, 1968

Lok Sabha passes Tamil Nadu Bill

The Lok Sabha to-day [November 23, New Delhi] passed the Bill to rename Madras State as “Tamil Nadu”. The Bill will now go to Rajya Sabha for approval. There were cheers from all sides when the Chair announced that the Bill was passed. The Bill was welcomed by all sections, irrespective of party affiliations. New ground was broken when a Union Minister, Dr V.K.R.V. Rao, also participated in the debate, supporting the measure. He appealed to the ruling party in Madras to see that Hindi acquired an honoured place in Tamil Nadu. Mr. Y.B. Chavan, Home Minister, apologised to the House for his absence yesterday. He joined the rest of the House in describing the measure as a general expression of national pride. Incidentally, he disclosed that when he had a discussion on the subject, the Chief Minister of Madras, Mr. C.N. Annadurai, had thought of some other “musical name”. But Mr. Annadurai was prevailed upon by Mr. Chavan to have a name which would be understood by all. Mr. Chavan hoped the new name would bring the State one step nearer to integration of the country.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 23, 1918.

The Empire's Victory. King's Speech.

The King's speech at the prorogation of Parliament [in London] was as follows: “My Lords and Gentlemen”. The occasion on which I address you marks the close of a period which will be forever memorable in the history of our country. The war upon which all the energies of my peoples throughout my Dominions for over four years have been concentrated has at length been brought to a triumphant issue. The conclusion of the armistice with the last of the powers ranged against us promises long, honourable and enduring peace. I have already sought an opportunity of expressing publicly to my peoples and my Allies the sentiments of heartfelt admiration and gratitude with which I regard the supreme self-sacrificing devotion that led to this glorious result.

CONCEPTUAL

Blank slate

PHILOSOPHY

Also known as tabula rasa, this refers to the idea that the mind of any newborn child is equivalent to a blank slate that has nothing written over it. Thus, the proponents of the blank slate theory strongly believe that the behaviour of an adult human being is entirely the result of the various experiences to which she has been exposed over her lifetime. This is in contrast to the theory of biological determinism which states that human character is inherited at birth and cannot be influenced by the environment. The blank slate is an important idea in the controversial debate regarding whether it is nature or nurture that determines human nature.

MORE ON THE WEB

Mary Kom makes history at World Boxing Championships

<http://bit.ly/MagnificentMary>