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Setback for BJP in Maha legislative council polls

Managed to win only one out of six; lost even its Nagpur seat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

THE BJP on Friday suffered a jolt in polls in Maharashtra. The party could win only one out of the six seats of the Maharashtra Legislative Council to which polling was held earlier this week. The ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) — the Nationalist Congress Party-Congress-Shiv Sena alliance — has won 4 out of 5 Graduates' and Teachers' constituencies of the Maharashtra Legislative Council.

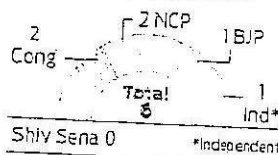
The BJP only won one seat in the polls — bypolls to the Dhule-Nandurbar local body seat — the results for which were declared earlier.

Significantly, the BJP lost in its perceived strongholds, the graduate constituencies. Its biggest loss is the Nagpur seat, a party stronghold that had been represented in the past by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari and former Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis's father Gangadhar Rao Fadnavis.

BJP leaders, including Fadnavis and Maharashtra BJP chief Chandrakant Patil, also campaigned extensively in Pune, where too the ruling coalition's candidate has won.

"The results of Maharashtra Legislative Council polls are not as per our expectations. We were expecting more seats but won only one. We miscalculated the combined power of the three parties (Maha Vikas Aghadi)," Fadnavis said while reacting on the results.

THE OUTCOME



The Shiv Sena did not win a single seat even though its alliance partners bagged four. The Sena's lone candidate lost in Amravati, where an independent candidate won. Also, the BJP lost in its perceived strongholds, the graduate constituencies

Among the ruling coalition partners, the NCP and the Congress contested two seats each and the Shiv Sena fielded its candidate in one seat. The BJP contested four seats and an independent candidate supported by the party contested in another seat.

Party	Seats
BJP	22
Shiv Sena	18
NCP	14
Congress	9
Others	3
Independent	4
Vacant	3

The NCP won the Aurangabad and Pune graduates' constituencies. The election is considered as the first electoral test for the year-old coalition of ideologically opposite parties, which has repeatedly been derided by the BJP as an unstable entity.

The five seats of the Maharashtra Legislative Council that went to polls were Pune Division Graduates' constituency, Nagpur Division Graduates' constituency, Aurangabad Division Graduates' constituency, Amravati Division Teachers' constituency and Pune Division Teachers' constituency.

Graduate constituency has selected number of voters as only graduate electors are entitled for voting on the seat.

NCP's Arun Lad and Satish Chavan registered victory from Pune Division Graduates' con-

stituency and Aurangabad Division Graduates' constituency respectively.

Earlier on Thursday, BJP's Amrish Patel won bye-election to the Maharashtra Legislative Council (MLC) from Dhule-Nandurbar Local Authorities' Constituency 2020.

Polling was held for the Dhule-Nandurbar local bodies' constituency bypoll on Tuesday, which was necessitated after sitting MLC Amrish Patel quit the Congress to join the BJP.

Congress's Jayant Dinkar Aasgavkar was leading comfortably in Pune Division Teachers' constituency. Congress candidate Abhijit Wanjari won Nagpur Division Graduates' constituency, while Independent candidate Kiran Saranaik was ahead of his rivals in Amravati Division Teachers' constituency.