

Delhi Assembly elections on Feb 8, counting on Feb 11

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Delhi will go to polls for a new Assembly on February 8 when voters will decide whether to give the AAP another shot at power or go with the BJP, which is out of power in the national capital since 1998. The Congress, which was at the helm for 15 uninterrupted years till 2013, may remain a distant third, as the party is

perceived to have lost its momentum after relegating the AAP to the third position in the Lok Sabha elections held in April-May last year. The counting of votes will be held on February 11. An opinion poll by ABP News-CVoter has projected an outright win for the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP. **Full report on Page 7**

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AAP is confident that it will retain power for another term

SHEMIN JOY
NEW DELHI, DHNS

Delhi Assembly will go to polls on February 8 when voters will decide whether to give Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) another shot to power or to choose the BJP, which is out of power in the national capital since 1998.

Congress, which had uninterrupted 15 years in power till 2013, may score a distant third, as it is perceived to have lost its momentum after relegating AAP to third in the Lok Sabha elections held in April-May last year.

Announcing the elections, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said the counting of votes will be held on February 11. AAP, which had a 49-day term in 2013 and now finishing a five-year term, is confident that it will retain power for another term riding on its performance while BJP, which is drumming up its campaign, hope to dethrone the Arvind Kejriwal-led party.

Confident of returning to power, Kejriwal said one should vote for AAP only if they think that his government worked and no government ever dared to say this.

On the other hand, BJP president and Home Minister Amit Shah said people can be "fooled once not always".

In 2015 polls, AAP halted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's unassailable juggernaut when it thrust a humiliating defeat

on the BJP by reducing it to just three MLAs in the Assembly. AAP had then won 67 seats while Congress did not win a single seat.

However, the 2019 Lok Sabha elections saw Congress clawing back to prominence by garnering 22.51%, coming second in five of the seven Lok Sabha seats and relegating AAP to the third position even as BJP won 56.56% votes and all the seven seats.

While the pitch for Delhi's full statehood during in the Lok Sabha polls did not gather much support, the AAP is going to polls highlighting its decision to provide 200 units of electricity and 20,000 litres of water free every month, installation of CCTVs across Delhi and opening of 'mohalla clinics' (neighbourhood clinics) as its trump cards.

AAP has also tweaked its strategy keeping in mind the elections soon after the Lok Sabha polls by choosing not to target Modi and even supporting the BJP-led NDA government's move on scrapping special status of Jammu and Kashmir. It was also accused of not being vocal about the protests against Citizenship Amendment Act.

BJP is hoping that the central government's decision to regularise over 1,400 unauthorised colonies will fetch them votes and seats. Congress, on the other hand, hopes to win some seats, with its senior Delhi leaders managing to hold on to their turfs.

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