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On the results of the parliamentary elections in India



The lengthiest elections in India – and the world as a whole – lasting 44 days, to elect 543 deputies of the highest legislative body, the House of the People, have ended.

The marathon voting took place in seven stages from April 19 to June 1, 2024, in which almost a billion voters took part. Thus, these were the largest elections in the world, and it should be noted that they were held at a high organisational and technical level. These elections are important because the winning party or coalition (having won a minimum of 272 seats) receives the right to form a government. After all, India is a federal state with a parliamentary system and the key role is played not by the head of state (the president), but by the prime minister.

Sharp confrontation between two blocs

Just as in 2014 and 2019, this time the election campaign was distinguished by a sharp and tense confrontation between two blocs: the National Democratic Alliance, which has been

ruling in the country since 2014, led primarily by the pro-Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the pre-election Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (I.N.D.I.A.) bloc consisting of 26 opposition parties. A key role in this coalition was played by the long-ruling Indian National Congress (INC), whose leaders and prime ministers included such prominent figures as Jawaharlal Nehru, his daughter Indira Gandhi and her son Rajiv Gandhi. Currently, the leader of this largest opposition party is Rajiv Gandhi's widow, Sonia Gandhi, who is actively receiving help from her children Rahul and Priyanka. They, however, do not have the necessary political weight and the proper authority that their famous ancestors had. An important role in the I.N.D.I.A. electoral bloc was played by regional parties in power in a number of Indian states (there are 28 of them in total). It should be noted, however, that there was a lack of unity in the alliance, especially regarding the distribution of seats, and there was interparty competition during the election campaign in a number of states.

This, of course, affected the election results and undermined voters' confidence in the authority of the alliance, which was actively used during the campaign by the leaders of the ruling party and personally by Narendra Modi. Against the background of the growing popularity of the BJP and the prime minister, as well as the positive results of the government's activities over the decade in a variety of areas, primarily in the socio-economic development of the country, the absence of a charismatic opposition naturally affects the results of the vote. It should also be added that the BJP leaders very skilfully and effectively conducted the election campaign against the backdrop of obvious mistakes by the Congress and other opposition figures, who, contrary to all expectations, nevertheless managed to put up a decent resistance to the ruling coalition that has been in power since 2014. It should also be noted that the Congress and its allies from among the major regional parties managed to carry out a successful election campaign in a number of states and somewhat squeeze out Narendra Modis party, including in a number of key states of the 'Hindi belt', i.e. the traditional base of influence of the BJP.

Before and during the vote, almost all leading analysts predicted a convincing and impressive victory for the ruling alliance and, above all, the key BJP party. It was believed that the NDA would significantly surpass its record achieved in the 2019 elections when it won 353 out of 543 seats, including the BJP, which has a particularly strong position in the states of the so-called 'Hindi belt' and managed to independently push 303 deputies through and form a second consecutive government with an impressive majority. There was even an assumption that the NDA will this time be able to get around 400 seats, strengthen its position and the

BJP (282 seats in 2014 and 303 in 2019) and the opposition INC, which won only 44 seats in 2014 and 52 in the 2019 elections, can this time count on about 60–70 seats. Noting the weakness of the National Congress and the problems within the I.N.D.I.A. bloc, local experts were inclined to believe that the opposition is unlikely to significantly improve its position compared to the results of the 2019 elections, when it managed to get only 80 seats, including INC-52.

The leader of the ‘largest democracy in the world’ was re-elected for a third term

Vote processing in the 2024 elections, however, largely refuted the opinion of most experts and the victory of the ruling alliance was no longer as large and impressive as it was predicted by many during the election campaign and after the end of voting. The ruling alliance managed to win only 293 constituencies, while the opposition bloc, led by Congress, significantly and unexpectedly improved its position in the House of the People, receiving 232 seats (in the 2019 elections this number was only 94). Notably, the Congress managed to double its representation in the People’s House to 99 this time, indicating a partial recovery of its position in a number of states. Another unexpected result of the vote was the sad fact for Narendra Modi that BJP, unlike in the two previous elections, did not independently win the necessary simple majority of 272 deputies (in 2014 – 282, in 2019 – 303). This time, BJP managed to get only 240 deputies elected, which will lead to the formation not of a one-party (BJP) government as was the case after the 2014 and 2019 elections, but a coalition alliance government led by Narendra Modi. Another disappointing outcome of the elections for the BJP was the results of the vote in a number of Hindi-speaking states where the BJP lost its seats and the Congress, on the contrary, strengthened its position.

The ruling BJP was especially sensitive to the verdict of voters in the largest and politically significant state of Uttar Pradesh, where it managed to win only about 35 seats (71 in 2014 and 62 in 2019). This indicates that the deputy from this state – like all his ancestors – was the son of Sonia Gandhi, Rahul, who now has the opportunity to become the real leader of the INC.

In short, with all these different election scenarios, the well-known failures of the NDA and the BJP, as well as certain successes of the I.N.D.I.A. bloc and the National Congress, the government (this time a real coalition) will in any case again be headed by BJP, led by Narendra Modi.

The third consecutive election victory of Narendra Modi’s supporters was modest and not as impressive as expected; nevertheless, it allows the ruling alliance to continue to confidently pursue its domestic and foreign policy, based on its programme statements and priorities,

strengthening the weight and prestige of India as a global political and economic power. New Delhi intends to continue to adhere to an independent and multi-vector foreign policy as an important international player. Despite the pressure exerted by West-supporters, India has not strayed from the decades-long path of strengthening strategic and especially privileged cooperation with a reliable and priority partner that has been proven many times in practice: Russia. Along with a stable and trusting political dialogue, including at the highest level, there is an unprecedented growth in bilateral trade and economic cooperation (the trade turnover now amounts to about \$70 billion), the development of military-technical, scientific and cultural ties. Russia is grateful to the leadership of India for pursuing a balanced policy vis-à-vis the situation with Ukraine, which sets the course for further development of partner relations with Moscow, including within the framework of the UN, SCO and BRICS. This shared attitude of the two great powers and their multifaceted interaction in various fields are undoubtedly an important factor in the new multipolar world order that is now taking shape despite the resistance of the West-supporters.

Russia and India are confident headed for a successful future of their relations and intend to make their role in the international arena even more significant.

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