

Topic: The game called Delhi Polls 2015

Game Plan

Delhi goes to polls on February 7, and results of the keenly watched contest will be declared three days later.

Till a few months before the dates for the Delhi Assembly elections were announced, a confident BJP, riding on the Narendra Modi-led juggernaut, didn't seem to think it needed any change in strategy to win the Capital. After all, it had emerged victorious in Haryana and Jharkhand without a chief ministerial face, and Delhi, it thought, would be easy game.

But soon, realisation dawned. The first big shock came with Modi's rally held at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan on January 10, his first in Delhi since he became Prime Minister, when the party expected a one-lakh turnout but saw only 40,000 people turning up. By then, there were internal surveys of the BJP and other independent surveys that took the message to the party headquarters that the AAP would be no pushover.

Kiran Bedi, a former IPS officer and a core member of Anna Hazare's India Against Corruption team, is now the newest player on Delhi's poll scene. Suddenly, with just days left for the Assembly elections, the rules of the game had changed for both the BJP and AAP — undoubtedly the two biggest parties in Delhi's political slugfest.

Now the game of BJP is "***Fight AAP as if they are an NGO, not a political party,***" That is the reason Kiran Bedi is ushered in as CM candidate. It is done apparently to counter AAP leader Kejriwal's anti-corruption credentials and give voters a fresh face that could also deflect criticism that the party did not have a credible CM candidate in the Capital.

Hence ***AAP is hitting Kiran Bedi's Candidature by calling her Opportunist.*** AAP volunteers are going on door-to-door campaigns to talk to people about Bedi's reluctance to debate "issues important to Delhi" Moreover, television interviews of Bedi have brought out the lack of a constructive plan for Delhi and her lack of knowledge of key issues.

BJP is also hitting AAP by trying to tarnish its anti corruption stand. It claims that the party funds collected by AAP have come from dubious companies. Moreover BJP is also highlighting the facts that Kejriwal and his party took the Metro when they came to take their oath. Now the blue WagonR has vanished and has been replaced with an Innova. They pledged that they would not take the support of the BJP or the Congress but they formed the government with the Congress. Kejriwal flies executive class to Dubai to raise funds for the party.

The Opinion polls

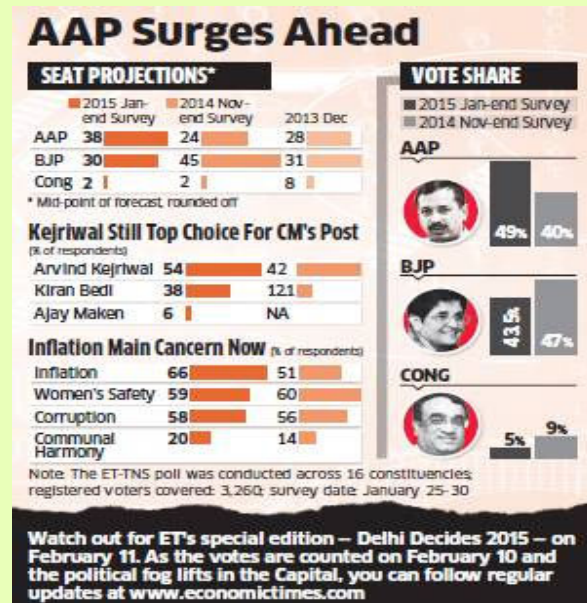
AAP will get 36-40 seats in the 70-member assembly with a vote share of 49% while BJP will win 28-32 seats, says the survey conducted in the last week of January.

The findings of the poll of 3,260 respondents in 16 assembly constituencies are in sharp contrast to an earlier ET-TNS poll conducted in November-December last year that had shown BJP comfortably romping home with 43-47 seats. AAP was forecast to win 22-25 seats then, while Congress was expected to eke out anywhere between zero and three seats. Congress is now forecast to win 2-4 seats.



Topic
Introduction

The period between the two opinion polls saw the Ghar Wapsi issue snowball into a major political controversy, the Uber taxi rape case and more recently the visit of US President Barack Obama.



(Reproduced from Economic times)

Special Comments:

Santosh Desai, a social commentator, says the momentum has shifted towards AAP in the past few days but it still is a close contest. "Kiran Bedi in her interactions comes across as inflexible, as someone who is reading out from a fixed script or trying hard to push her way. Her nomination as the party's CM candidate may have crystallized the assumption that BJP's plans for Delhi are shaky," he said

That said, BJP still has a huge strength. There is no shift in Modi's popularity. It could be early to judge. Also, BJP is throwing everything into the fight, so anything can happen," he added.

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<http://in.reuters.com/article/2015/02/03/india-election-delhi-idINKBN0L712T20150203>

<http://www.firstpost.com/politics/delhi-election-tracker-bjp-member-quits-calling-bedi-a-dictator-she-says-no-no-no-no-no-2055917.html>

<http://www.rediff.com/news/column/delhi-polls-battleground-delhi-why-aap-looks-confident/20150204.htm>