

2014 at a glance

Politics in 2014

You made us proud!

NaMo sweeps 2014 Lok Sabha elections



'Acche din aane wale hain' (good times are ahead) - the slogan that captivated the imagination of millions of people looking for a change in the government at the centre. For the first time in thirty years, a party on its own got an absolute majority; the BJP also got an absolute majority. The National Democratic Alliance crossed the 300 plus mark. This victory was remarkable because most political pundits had ruled out the possibility of single party majority in future stating that coalition politics and government is going to stay in India for ever.

Some of the reasons that led to this magnificent victory are economic conditions prevailing in the country, corruption cases surfacing one after the other over the last two years, high rate of employment and the aspirations of the youth. India's once-impressive economic growth, averaging above 8 per cent over the last decade, slowed to below 5 per cent while inflation rocketed into double digits. The BJP and Modi, who has run the state of Gujarat for 12 years, maintained Gujarat as a model of success.

His victory can also be termed as the victory of technology. The party ran a tech savvy campaign that engaged voters directly through social media. Narendra Modi tweeted daily whereas his main rival from the Congress Rahul Gandhi shunned social media.

The rise and fall of AAP

The Aam Admi Party surprised us all by winning twenty-eight out of the seventy assembly seats in Delhi. Though BJP won the maximum number of seats (32), it was AAP that captivated people's imagination. However,



this euphoria was shortlived as in a hasty decision, Arvind Kejriwal, the Chief Minister and the leader of AAP resigned in what can be called as hasty decision. Both the ascent and descent of the party and its leader has been very rapid and beyond comparison.

Arvind Kejriwal has perhaps realized that raising the expectations of the people against corrupt practices of the government is easy, but bringing about a change in the system is not as easy as raising a slogan in the streets. During his forty-seven days tenure, he failed to realize that the same people who voted in his favour were disenchanted with his way of functioning. Dharnas and threats by the head of the state almost on a daily basis turned away the citizens from the leader.

Is Aam Admi Party a turning point in Indian democracy? Too early to comment, wait for the upcoming Delhi elections to gauge the mood of the voters.

Who has black money?



One of the major issues that the BJP highlighted during its election campaign was the issue of black money. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised to bring back every penny of black money from abroad once the BJP is voted to power. The government announced that it has received the list of black money account holders, but named only three out of the seven hundred people in the list. Those named are industrialist Pradeep Burman from Dabur Group, bullion trader Pankaj Chimanlal Lodhiya and directors of mining firm Timblo Pvt Ltd.

The stance taken by the government on this issue seems ambiguous. The government on the one hand, cannot disclose all the names mainly on account of the fact that it cannot afford to disregard and break various treaties with foreign countries on double taxation. The government has also made it clear that all foreign accounts held by an Indian may not be illegal.

Angry over government's flip flop and selective disclosure of names, the Supreme Court ordered the government to submit to it the list of illegal account holders which the government has complied with. However, the major question who has the black money and who is in the list

Mangalyan Best Invention of 2014: Time

Mangalyaan has been named among the best inventions of 2014 by Time magazine which described it as a technological feat. Mangalyaan is among the 25 'Best Inventions of 2014' listed by Time magazine that are "making the world better, smarter and in some cases a little more fun."

Developed by the Indian Space Research Organisation, the Mars spacecraft cost India just USD 74 million, less than the budget for the multi-Academy Award winning science fiction thriller film Gravity. Time said at that price, the Mangalyaan is equipped with just five onboard instruments that allow it to do simple tasks like measure Martian methane and surface composition.

India's Mars mission represents a technological leap for the South Asian nation, pushing it ahead of space rivals China and Japan in the field of interplanetary exploration. India now has the distinction of becoming the only country to reach the orbit of Mars in its first attempt. More than half the missions to Mars have failed, either crashing or going off course. China's Mars mission of 2011 was among the failures.



Mary gives first boxing gold to India



Mary Kom is the first Indian woman boxer to clinch a gold medal at the Asian Games. She is the five-time world champion and Olympic bronze-medallist, who had won a bronze when women boxers made their debut at the 2010 Asiad.

Mangte Chungneijang Mary Kom was born to a poor tribal family in Manipur's Kangathei village. Between attending school, caring for her younger siblings and playing all kinds of sports including hockey, football and athletics (but not boxing), Mary Kom worked in the fields and helped her parents. The Manipuri mother-of-three has been christened 'Magnificent Mary' by the International Boxing Association for her unprecedented feats.

In 2010, she had the honour of bearing the Queen's Baton in the opening ceremony run at the 2010 Commonwealth Games in the stadium. She has also been awarded the prestigious Arjuna Award in 2004, Padma Shri Award in 2006 and the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna in 2009 for her achievements in Boxing. In 2010, she was voted India's Sportswoman of the Year. Mary Kom also became the International Boxing Association's Ambassador for Women's Boxing in 2009.

Nobel Peace Prize for Satyarthi

Kailash Satyarthi, Nobel Peace Prize winner of 2014, gave up his career as an electrical engineer to start 'Bachpan Bachao Andolan'. The organisation launched a historic Nathdwara temple entry march in 1988 where Dalits were strictly prohibited for 400 years. Kailash Satyarthi and five Dalit bonded labourers were brutally beaten up by orthodox priest.

He is also credited with establishing Rugmark, now known as Good Weave, in 1994. It is a kind of social certification for child labour free carpets in South Asia. He is the first India-born person to have been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize and the seventh Indian Nobel laureate. Mother Teresa, who was born in Albania, was the first Indian Nobel peace prize winner. She was honoured in 1979.

Born on January 11, 1954, in Vidisha, located near Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, Kailash Satyarthi, showing great personal courage and maintaining Gandhi's tradition, has headed various forms of protests and demonstrations, all peaceful, focusing on the grave exploitation of children for financial gain.



Ugliest terror attack on education

We have not yet forgotten the Beslan terror attack on school children in the year 2004. In yet another barbaric act, the Pakistan Taliban on December 16 attacked students of an army school in Peshawar killing 136 school students and a total of 140 dead in the attack. Pak Taliban accepted the responsibility of killing the school students in retaliation to the army offensive in North Waziristan and Khyber. The overwhelming majority of the victims were students at the army public school, which has children and teenagers aged up to 16.

This is the deadliest single attack in the history of Pakistan Taliban. The Taliban said the gunmen had been equipped with suicide vests and at least three explosions were heard inside the high school at



the height of the massacre. This is not the first incident of Taliban attack on school children. Malala Yousafzai, Nobel Peace prize

winner of 2014, was also singled out by Talibans and shot at as she was on her way to school.