

SAD-BJP alliance swept to power

Cong routed, BSP humbled

Tribune News Service

CHANDIGARH, Feb 9 — After securing an absolute majority, the SAD-BJP alliance tonight raced past the two-thirds mark and was heading towards an unprecedented and historic three-fourths majority in the 117-member Punjab Assembly.

In its inexorable march towards forming the next government in the state, the SAD-BJP combine swept aside almost all before it, decimating the ruling Congress party and humbling both the rival Akali Dal led by Mr Simranjit Singh Mann and the BSP headed by Mr Kanhai Ram.

According to the latest party position, SAD, which contested 92 seats, has won 72. The BJP which contested 22 seats, won 18 and was leading in one. If the alliance maintained this trend, as seemed likely, it would pick up 91 seats in the 117-member House, well past the three-fourths majority mark of 87 seats.

The Congress, which had 87 seats in the outgoing House, faced a virtual rout but salvaged some of its prestige when the Chief Minister, Mr Rajinder Kaur Bhattal, was declared elected from Lehra Gaga constituency, defeating her nearest SAD rival, Mr Garja Singh, by a convincing margin.

But the hardliner Akali leader, Mr Simranjit Singh Mann, was not so lucky. He lost in one constituency, and was trailing in the second. In Cila Raipur, he narrowly escaped forfeiture of his security deposit when he was trounced by the SAD supreme and the chief ministerial candidate, Mr Parkash Singh Badal. He was beaten to the third place after Mr Tarsem Jodhan, sitting CPM MLA, who polled 27,500 votes. Mr Badal secured 38,522 votes, while the Congress candidate, Mr Jagdev Singh

Jassowal, lost his security deposit, polling only 4,716 votes. Mr Badal also won from Lambi constituency in Faridkot district, where he defeated Mr Gurnam Singh Abulkhurana, a Congress minister, by 28,728 votes.

But Mr Mann was trailing at third place in his home constituency of Sirhind behind Dr Harbans Lal (Congress) and Mr Kirpal Singh Libra (SAD) in a multi-cornered contest.



Parkash Singh Badal (wins)

Mr Mann's defeat is seen as a decisive and final rejection of the militant ideology he represented by the people of Punjab.

Mr Kanshi Ram and his BSP met their Waterloo in the birthplace of their party in the Doaba region of Punjab. At the time of going to the Press, the party was able to win only one of the 67 seats it contested in Punjab. Among those who lost were Mr Satnam Singh Kainth, leader of the nine-member BSP group in the outgoing assembly. The BSP supreme's boast that he would have a decisive say in choosing the next Chief Minister of Punjab turned out to be mere prattle.

The CPI which contested 14 seats under an electoral understanding with the Congress, picked up only two seats while the other Left party, CPM, failed to open its account. It had contested 26 seats. The Janata Dal which contested 27 seats met with the same fate.

The BJP which contested 22 seats in alliance with SAD picked up 17 seats and was leading in two more. Among those who romped home were Mr Balramji Dass Tandon from Raptura where he defeated Mr Raj Khurana, sitting Congress minister, by 1,091 votes in a tough contest. Capt Kanwaljit Singh, secretary-general of SAD, was elected from Banur constituency, defeating Mr Mohinder Singh Gill, Congress minister by 22,500 votes.

But the SAD-BJP combine's victory was not without bitter setbacks. Mr Sukhdev Singh Dhillon, secretary-general of SAD, lost to Mr Bhagwan Dass Arora in Sunam constituency of Sangrur district. His defeat was being attributed to bitter infighting in SAD's Sangrur unit. Another leader of SAD, Mr Balwinder Singh Bhunder, also lost in Sardulgarh constituency.

But many of Mrs Bhattal's colleagues fell by the wayside. They included Dr Kewal Krishan, Finance Minister, Mr Dilbagh Singh Daleke, Speaker and Mr Naresh Thakur, Deputy Speaker of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. Mr Joginder Singh Mann, Mr Avtar Singh Brar, Mr Raghunath Sahai Puri, Mr Partap Singh Bajwa, Mr Santokh Singh, Mr Harbans Singh Sidhu, Mr Jai Krishan Saini, Mr Dharman Pal Sabharwal, Mr Surinder Kapoor, Master Jagir Singh, Mr Gurnam Singh Abulkhurana and Mr Gulzar Singh, all ministers.

Mr Sukhinder Singh Randhawa, son of the Punjab PCC chief, Mr Santokh Singh Randhawa lost to Mr

Nirmal Singh Kahlon, a former minister, who fought as an independent from Fatehgarh Churian as he could not get the SAD symbol.

The old Congress warhorse, Dr

Party position (3.00 a.m.)	
Total seats	117
Elections held	117
Results declared	113
SAD	72
BJP	18
Congress	13
BSP	01
SAD (Mann)	01
CPI	02
Independents	06

Kewal Krishan Finance Minister, who represented the Mukerian constituency for six consecutive terms. Lost to a political novice, Mr Arunesh Shakti of the BJP by more than 19,000 votes.

In Ferozepore city constituency, Mr Gardhara Singh of the BJP won the seat defeating Mr Mukhtiar Singh Kamboj (BSP) and Dr Shavinder Kaur Johi of the Congress. A relation of Mr Badal, Dr Johi headed the Istari Akali Dal before she quit SAD and joined the Congress.

Mr Sukhpal Singh, son of the former Akali minister, Mr Sukhinder Singh, a wellknown "Khalistani" ideologue, lost to the SAD candidate in Bholath constituency of Kapurthala district. Mr Sukhpal Singh joined the Congress party shortly before the

elections with the blessings of his father.

In Patiala city, Mr Brahm Mohindra, Punjab minister, lost to Mr Surjit Singh Kohli of SAD by 12,664 votes while Capt Kanwaljit Singh, general secretary, SAD, was declared elected from Banur constituency, defeating Mr Mohinder Singh Gill (Congress), Punjab Agriculture Minister, by 22,500 votes.

Counting of votes began in Punjab in the morning and the counting trends were available by the afternoon. The first result of the day went in favour of the BJP candidate, Mr Manoranjan Kalra in Jalandhar (North) who defeated Mr Jai Krishan Saini.

From the Amritsar Central constituency, the BJP firebrand leader, Mrs Luxmi Kanta Chawla (sitting) was declared elected. She defeated nine rivals, including Prof Darbari Lal of the Congress party.

In the Patli constituency, Mr Adesh Partap Singh (SAD), a grandson of Partap Singh Kairon and son-in-law of Mr Parkash Singh Badal, was declared elected. He defeated his nearest Congress rival, Mr Sukhinder Singh by a margin of 48,485 votes.

However, an attempt by another youngman to make his political debut in the Punjab Assembly was in jeopardy. Mr Rajanbir Singh, son of the late Punjab minister, Mr Balwant Singh was trailing behind his SAD rival, Mr Upjit Kaur in the Sultanpur Lodhi constituency.

Manoranjan Kalra (BJP) was elected from Jalandhar Central defeating his nearest rival Jai Krishan Saini (Congress) by a margin of more than 19,300 votes in a 10-cornered contest.

Sadhu Singh (Akali Dal-B) won the Patiala seat defeating his nearest CPI rival Kartar Singh by a margin of more than 7,200 votes in a three-cornered contest.

Laxmi Kanta Chawla (BJP) was elected from Amritsar (Central) defeating her nearest rival Prof Darbari Lal (Congress) by a margin of more than 15,000 votes in a 10-cornered contest.

The BJP today had reasons to feel elated over the success of yet another electoral arrangement in the North, after having been successful in coming to power in neighbouring Haryana with the Haryana Vikas Party.

The party spokesperson, Mrs Sushma Swara, told 'The Tribune', here this evening that the outcome of the Punjab Legislative Assembly poll, was on expected lines and obvious.

On the other hand the Congress General Secretary, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, who led the party campaign, said the Congress should be credited for having restored peace and wiping militancy and the party takes pride in having brought back confidence in people which was more important than winning elections and forming a government.

"The Congress may have neglected the organisation but the Congress Government (in Punjab) has succeeded in making Punjab, the real Punjab as it was 20 to 25 years ago. There is no terrorism in Punjab", he said.

While the Congress leaders received the results at the party headquarters in gloom, the mood in the BJP camp was upbeat.

In fact the confidence also reflected in the BJP spokesperson statement who said doubts about the formation of a coalition with the Akalis should be removed while emphasising that the alliance was a matter of "mutual trust and confidence".

The BJP now finds itself in power in two states in the north except Himachal, and Mrs Swara was confident the party would be voted to power in the next round of Assembly elections.

Mr Gowda indicated that the United Front (UF) Government would not have much leeway for undertaking massive welfare schemes in view of the staggering financial burden due to debt servicing, burgeoning oil pool deficit and implementation of the pay panel report.

Making a brief mention of the financial constraints at the meeting, Mr Gowda said the government had to formulate the Budget taking into consideration these constraints and the financial burden of Rs 1.7 crore by next year.

Mr Gowda's remarks assume significance as these come just before

Makhan Singh (Akali-B) won the Pacca Kalan seat defeating his nearest rival Rajeshwar Dass (Congress) by a margin of more than 11,200 votes in a six-cornered contest.

Tej Parkash (Congress) was elected from Jalandhar Cantt defeating his nearest rival Surjit Singh Minhas (Akali-B) by a margin of more than 3,600 votes in a seven-cornered contest.

Mr Gulzar Singh Ranike (Akali-B) was elected from Aitari (SC) defeating his nearest rival Sardul Singh (CPI) by a margin of more than 40,000 votes in a four-cornered contest.

Balbir Singh (Akali-B) won from Nathana (SC) seat defeating his nearest rival Gulzar Singh (Congress) by a margin of more than 16,900 votes in a five-cornered contest.

Raghubir Singh (Akali-B) was elected from Kapurthala defeating his nearest rival Gulzar Singh (Congress) by a margin of more than 12,000 votes in a seven-cornered contest.

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Jubilant supporters of winning candidates dance outside the counting centre in SAS Nagar on Sunday. — A Tribune photo by Karam Singh

Mood upbeat in BJP

From K.V. Prasad
 Tribune News Service

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 — The prospect of forming a coalition government with the Akali Dal in Punjab has provided a big boost to the Bharatiya Janata Party which has managed to wipe out the Congress from all but one state in the North even as the latter put up a brave front declaring we have lost the battle but won the war.

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Spotlight

EC orders repoll

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (UNI) — The Election Commission today ordered repoll in 18 polling stations, one each in the Bagpat (Uttar Pradesh) and Chhindwara (Madhya Pradesh) parliamentary constituencies and 16 in the Sahaswan assembly constituency in Uttar Pradesh, where bypoll was held yesterday. The Election Commission sources said repolling was necessitated due to vitiated polling process in a station of 400 Khehra assembly constituency of Bagpat and a booth in the 214 Jamai assembly segment of Chhindwara.

Almatti issue

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (PTI) — The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr N. Chandrababu Naidu, met the West Bengal Chief Minister, Mr Jyoti Basu, here today and discussed the Almatti Dam controversy with him. The meeting follows the submission of a report by an experts committee, headed by the West Bengal Irrigation Engineer-in-Chief, Mr S. Ghoshal, on the controversy.

Police firing

BELLARY, Feb 9 (PTI) — The police fired in the air today at Siruguppa, about 60 km from here, to disperse a violent crowd, which set fire to shops and business establishments belonging to another community in the protest against a band playing music near a place of worship.

India lose

PRIBRAM, Feb 9 (PTI) — The Czech Republic's singles players, Petr Korda and Jiri Novak pulled off the last two singles to give the hosts a 3-2 win over India in the world group first round Davis Cup tie here today. Earlier report on page 14

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Prominent winners

Mr Parkash Singh Badal (SAD-Kila Raipur), Mrs Luxmi Kanta Chawla (BJP-Amritsar Central), Mr



Rajinder Kaur Bhattal

Adesh Partap Singh (SAD-Patti), Mr Tej Parkash Singh (Congress-Jalandhar Cantt), Mr Ranjit Singh Brah-



Capt Kanwaljit Singh

pura, Mr Avtar Henry (Congress-North), Mr Manjit Singh Calcutta (SAD-Amritsar-South).



Balramji Dass Tandon

Prominent losers

Mr Simranjit Singh Mann (SAD-A Kila Raipur), Master Jagir Singh (Congress-Naushera Pannuan), Mr Surjit Singh Minhas (SAD-Jalandhar Cantt), Mr Jai Krishan Saini (Con-



Harnam Dass Johar

gress-Jalandhar Central), Dr Kewal Krishan (Cong) Mukerian, Mr Khushal Bahl Cong (Gurdaspur), Mr Partap Singh Bajwa Cong, (Kahnua-



Simranjit Singh Mann

Cantt), Mr Surinder Kapoor (Cong) Bathinda.



Kewal Krishan

PM refuses to release names

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (PTI) — The UF steering committee has favoured "total transparency" in the government's handling of the Bofors payoff. issue as Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda rejected the demand for immediate release of the names of bribe recipients.

"I am not going to do things in a hurry. You have waited for 10 years. Can't you wait for some more time", he told newsmen in an informal chat after the inauguration of the UF office here.

Mr Gowda was asked why the government was not coming out with the names believed to be figuring in the Bofors papers brought by the CBI and the demand of Congress leaders, including Mr Arjun Singh, that the government go public with the names in the papers.

He said he had not looked into the papers and he was not scrutinising the contents of the Bofors documents received, adding that there were

agencies and officials who were doing it. "Give the CBI some more time to pursue the documents", he said. Asked whether the names of recipients would be made public soon in the coming session of Parliament, the Prime Minister said: "Everything would be done at the appropriate time". He parried questions about the expansion of his Council of Ministers, saying that this was not the time to discuss such issues.

Bofors payoffs

Meanwhile, amid a raging controversy renewed by the secret Swiss Bank documents relating to the alleged beneficiaries of the kickbacks in the Bofors gun deal, the former Army chief, Gen K. Sundarji, will be "examined" by the CBI tomorrow. The CBI sources said the 12-member special investigation team (SIT)

today gave the final touches to a long and detailed questionnaire prepared to confront the General under whose tenure as Army chief the over Rs 1400-crore deal was struck with Swedish gun manufacturer, A.B. Bofors.

CBI Director Joginder Singh, though not monitoring the progress of the investigation in the case on a day-to-day basis, instructed senior officials of the SIT to be alert during the sitting with the General, lest they miss out corollaries arising from the former Army chief's replies to the main questions, CBI sources said.

Gen Sundarji would be faced with probing questions both in the light of the statements of retired officers — Lt-Gen H.N. Kaul, Lt-Gen K.B. Mehta and Lt-Gen G.R. Malhotra — last week and information available from the bank papers, the sources said.

The General will also be asked to

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Delhi to opt for pvt power plants

NEW DELHI, Feb 9 (PTI) — In a major policy shift on Delhi Electric Supply Undertaking's (DESU) subject dependence on the northern grid, a proposal for enabling clusters of industrial units located in and around Delhi to set up captive power plants is being mooted by the Lt Governor of Delhi, Mr Tejendra Khanna.

Talking to PTI, Mr Khanna, who assumed charge last month, said that in view of the uncertain power supply from the northern grid and acute cash crunch plaguing DESU, this innovative method of encouraging captive power plants among industrial estates would ease the power supply position.

This is also in tune with the liberalisation on policy initiative proposed by the central government in the power sector to encourage private participation in power generation and distribution, Mr Khanna, who retired as Union Commerce Secretary after a long spell, said.

Asserting that the authorities would make renewed efforts to augment power generation and thereby reduce the degree of dependence of Delhi on the northern grid, Mr Khanna also sent a clear signal to DESU officials to take stern action against power thefts particularly by commercial and industrial units.

Instructions have been issued to DESU officials to disconnect power connections and seal the premises in cases where power was being consumed in a fraudulent manner, the LG said adding "we will take some tough measures" against the field staff if they are found conniving in power thefts.

Hinting at revision of power rates, the LG said "tariff adjustment" could be considered to improve recovery by DESU.

Obviously wanting to set all the wrongs right, he set his priorities as controlling of pollution, which is

turning Delhi into a gas chamber, providing a hassle-free transportation and traffic and improved power situation.

As a first step to contain vehicular pollution, the city government was contemplating constructing a "third ring road" and expressways to avoid trucks from neighbouring states passing through the national capital.

Work on the 185 km long eight-lane expressway, designed for high speed vehicular movement, would be started on October two this year.

Stating that pollution control efforts remained on top of his priorities, Mr Khanna said a vigorous campaign would be launched by next month to impound all polluting vehicles in the capital. At the same time, the new LG also has an ambitious plan to induce 500 to 1000 state-of-the-art buses to improve the public transportation system in Delhi in the next six months.



Buta Singh (Cong) trailing by over 97,000 votes in the Ropar Lok Sabha constituency.

Talks to secure hostages' release

DUSHANBE, Feb 9 (AFP) — The Tajik President, Mr Emomali Rakhmonov, is holding talks today with a top Afghan warlord in a bid to secure the release of 15 hostages, including a government minister and UN staff member, being held by Tajik gunmen.

The kidnapers' leader, warlord Bakhtrom Saidirov, seized the hostages to press the safe passage into Tajikistan of his brother, Rizvon, and his men, who are now in Afghan territory controlled by Masood.

Rizvon and his men are among Masood's most effective fighting units in his battle against Taliban militants in control of Kabul, and according to Interfax news agency, this may be complicating negotiations over their return.

The spokesman said Rizvon and his fighters could be brought to Kulyab.

Rizvon is a former top commander of Tajikistan's Islamic opposition — based in Afghanistan — who agreed to become a minister in Rakhmonov's