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Article For Reading – Heartland murmurs: On the Haryana Assembly elections

Haryana may throw up surprises after the realignments

In Haryana, the **incumbent** Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) faces a **strident** challenge from the Congress, where campaigning for the Assembly election ends in a day. All 90 Assembly seats will go to the polls on October 5.

Though the contest appears to be bipolar, between the BJP and the Congress on the surface, a few other formations and hundreds of independents could alter the familiar patterns of voter mobilisation.

The Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), a former partner of the BJP, is in an alliance with the Azad Samaj Party (Kanshi Ram), and the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) is with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP). The Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the Haryana Lokhit Party are also in the fray. After seat sharing negotiations with the Congress failed, the Aam Aadmi Party has fielded candidates across the State. The BJP has tried to defend its track record of 10 years in power and **consolidate** the OBC voters — one third of the total — through the campaign. Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini has been presented as a symbol of the party's commitment to empowering the OBC. The BJP is also trying to get a share of the Dalit votes.

The Congress has been a favourite of the Dalits who make up 20% of the State's voters. The alliances, of the JJP-ASP and the INLD-BSP, could influence the two major voting blocs in the State — the Jats and the Dalits. The Congress has managed to sustain its offensive posture though **factionalism** threatened to derail its campaign. The party has targeted the BJP on talking points such as a threat to the Constitution, the Agnipath scheme for military recruitment, unemployment and price rise. The BJP is also facing a problem of plenty in the State. Having inducted many leaders from other parties, it is now faced with their competing claims. The BJP's victories in Haryana in two consecutive Assembly elections were largely due to the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and good social engineering that mobilised the non-Jat communities of the State. Haryana will be a test for the party on both counts this time. An absence from power for 10 years has cut the Congress some slack in the eyes of voters.

Rahul Gandhi's new role as the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha will also face a test in the State. While the BJP's regional leadership is relatively less **formidable** than the Congress's, their respective impact on the outcome can be unpredictable. The Congress also has a history of undermining its own prospects with excessive **intrigues**.

Summary –

In Haryana, the BJP faces a tough challenge from the Congress as campaigning for the Assembly election concludes, with all 90 seats going to the polls on October 5. Although the BJP and Congress are the main contenders, other alliances and numerous independents could influence the results. The JJP has allied with the Azad Samaj Party, while the INLD is partnering with the BSP. The AAP is also contesting after failing to reach a seat-sharing deal with Congress. The BJP is focusing on its 10-year track record and OBC voter base, while the Congress, favored by Dalits, is targeting issues like unemployment, price rise, and the Agnipath scheme. Both parties are dealing with internal challenges, and the election is crucial for testing the popularity of Prime Minister Modi and Rahul Gandhi's new role as Leader of the Opposition.

Vocabulary-

1. Incumbent (Noun, Adjective) पदग्राही-

Meaning – Someone currently holding a position.

Synonyms – Officeholder, Sitting officer, occupant current.

Antonyms – Challenger, Opponent, Successor.

E.g.- The incumbent mayor is running for a second term against a strong Challenger.

2. Strident (Adj) कठोर, तेज-

Meaning – Strong, insistent opinion or actions.

Synonyms – Harsh, Piercing, Raucous.

Antonyms – Soft, Subtle, Calm.

E.g.- The politician's strident speech alienated many in the audience.

3. Heartland (Noun) मुख्य भाग, मध्य क्षेत्र –

Meaning – A central or important area, particularly in a geographical or cultural context.

Synonyms – Core, Centre, Stronghold.

Antonyms – Periphery, Fringe, Outskirts.

E.g.- Candidate often focus their campaign on the Heartland, where many voters feel their concern are overlooked.

4. Murmurs (Noun) गुनगुनाहट, मंद स्वर –

Meaning – low, indistinct, or continuous sound.

Synonyms – Grumbles, Mumbles, Hums.

Antonyms – Proclaims, Yells, Clamours.

E.g.- The murmurs of the audience faded as the speaker took the stage.

5. Factionalism (Noun) गुटबाजी –

Meaning – The state of being divided into factions, or group that may be in conflict with one another.

Synonyms – Division, Sectarianism, Rivalry.

Antonyms – Unity, Solidarity, Cohesion.

6. Consolidate (Verb) एकीकृत /मजबूत करना-

Meaning – To make something stronger or more solid.

Synonyms – Strengthen, Integrate, Coalesce.

Antonyms – Separate, Dismantle, Weaken.

E.g.- The Company aims to consolidate it's various departments into a single unit to improve efficiency.

7. Formidable (Adj) प्रभावशाली, भयावह –

Meaning – Something that is difficult to overcome or deal with.

Synonyms – Intimidating, Daunting, Powerful.

Antonyms – Insignificant, Trivial, Weak.

E.g.- The formidable opponent challenged the companion.

8. Intrigue (Noun) साजिश, षड्यंत्र –

Meaning – A secret or underhanded scheme or plot.

Synonyms – Conspiracy, Scheme, Fascination.

Antonyms – Transparency, Openness.

E.g.- The rival factions intrigue against one another.

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