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ಪತ್ರಿಕೆಯ ಹೆಸರು : NAME OF THE NEWS PAPER: Indian Express ದಿನಾಂಕ : DATE: 7/1/2020

Tough 3-way fight in Feb 8 Delhi Assembly poll

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Results to be out on February 11

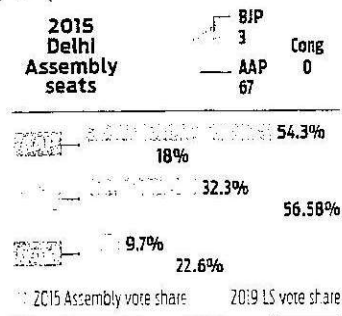
Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said the counting of votes for the February 8 Delhi Assembly elections will be taken up on February 11. The notification for the polls will be issued on January 14 while the last date of withdrawal of candidates nominations is on January 24

PARVEZ SULTAN @ New Delhi

THE Delhi Assembly elections on February 8, the counting of which will be done on February 11, will be a litmus test not only for Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal but also the Bharatiya Janata Party, which has just lost in Jharkhand, and a seemingly resurgent Congress.

For the Aam Aadmi Party, it is a must-win election as Delhi is the only state where it has a significant presence. After its meteoric rise to power in 2015, which made Kejriwal prematurely dream of the national stage, the party has found it tough to live up to its early promise.

In the Punjab Assembly elections in 2017, where the party expected to do well, it lost out to the Congress. Even in Haryana recent-



ly, the APP appeared to have punched above its weight and lost badly. With the party unable to expand much outside the national capital, the AAP has to win in Delhi if it has to remain in the political reckoning.

For the BJP also it is a do-or-die election as it would be desperate to

halt its current losing streak. The saffron party's seemingly unstoppable electoral juggernaut has lost much of its momentum, especially in the states where local issues appear to dominate over national ones and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's personal charisma.

The Congress appears to be sandwiched between the AAP and the BJP and at this stage seems to be a distant third. But given its fairly strong performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, it cannot be written off as an also-ran.

So what are the challenges before the three parties, which will vie for the honours? Political experts said while the AAP has the advantage of having a chief ministerial face in Kejriwal, it will not be a cake walk as it is likely to face a tough contest from the BJP. **PP**

Delhi polls: BJP ready to end its 21-year exile, Cong banks on Muslims

7/11/20

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IN the 2017 municipal elections, it finished second to the BJP with 26% of the votes. The party could secure only 18% of the total votes polled in the Lok Sabha elections last year, setting off alarm bells in its rank and file. It was a distant third in five parliamentary seats.

But the party has bounced back after the Lok Sabha debacle and hopes to replicate Jharkhand, where the voters distinguished between a national election and a state poll and booted out the BJP.

The AAP still has considerable goodwill among its core vote base of the lower middle class.

For the past few months now, the party has projected among other things the success stories on mohalla clinics, government-run schools, free power and water and free DTC bus rides for women.

Soon after the election announcement, Kejriwal exuded confidence of returning to power. The election would be based on the government's good work, he tweeted.

"Our entire election campaign

will be positive," said another tweet.

Bharatiya Janata Party

The saffron outfit, riding on the popularity of Modi, plans to come out with all guns blazing to end its 21-year exile from the city. It is a matter of prestige for the BJP, which swept all the seven parliamentary seats in Delhi in 2019 as well as in 2014.

Besides Modi, the party will look to benefit from the Centre's announcement of regularizing 1,731 unauthorised colonies, which house more than 40 lakh residents in the national capital. Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said his party would win 55 seats.

Congress

With nothing to lose, the Congress is fighting to regain lost ground. It was defeated in all the 70 seats in 2015. The challenge will be winning over its traditional votes, Muslims and residents of unauthorised colonies that almost entirely shifted to the

AAP.

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra said his party was ready for battle. "The tide is turning in our favour as the BJP and AAP have only made hollow promises," he said.

