



# ASIA MAIOR

Vol. XXXIII / 2022

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## **Asia in 2022: The impact of the Russia-Ukraine war on local crises**

**Edited by**  
**Michelguglielmo Torri**  
**Filippo Boni**  
**Diego Maiorano**

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**viella**



CENTRO STUDI PER I POPOLI EXTRA-EUROPEI “CESARE BONACOSSA” - UNIVERSITÀ DI PAVIA

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The Journal of the Italian think tank on Asia founded by Giorgio Borsa in 1989

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# INDIA 2022: POLITICAL REALIGNMENTS IN A BJP-DOMINATED SYSTEM

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*During 2022 there were three main political developments in India. First, state elections were held in seven states and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) won in five of these, confirming its enduring popularity and dominance over the country's political system. Second, several political parties started to manoeuvre in light of the 2024 general elections. The BJP restructured its executive bodies, strengthening the grip on the party apparatus by the Shah-Modi duo. The Congress sought to rejuvenate itself through a country-wide march aimed at promoting unity and against the BJP's divisive politics. And several regional parties reoriented their alliances (particularly in Bihar), in order to better their odds at surviving in a BJP-dominated system. Third, the process of involution of India's democracy continued, particularly in terms of threats to freedom of expression and minorities' rights. The economy seems to have recovered fully from the COVID-19 pandemic crisis and adapted well to the new geopolitical scenario triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. However, social tensions remain visible, in particular because of the economy's inability to create enough jobs.*

KEYWORDS – India; local elections; democracy; opposition.

## 1. Introduction

Over the course of 2022, India entered into general election mood. Several parties started manoeuvres in light of the 2024 elections. This included the BJP, the Congress and several regional parties. Meanwhile, the political landscape continued to be marked by the BJP's dominance of the political system and its repercussions, particularly in terms of the party's ability to win state elections (despite some drawbacks) and the government's enduring pursue of a Hinduisation of society and public sphere and the erosion of the country's institutions.

The economy seems to be back on its feet after the severe contraction in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Growth rates rebounded to very high levels and inflation, despite the geopolitical crisis triggered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine, remained under control. However, structural problems of India's development model remain unsolved, particularly in terms of job creation.

This article deals with political developments first, in section 2, which will analyse the results of state elections held in 2022 (Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh), the strategies that political parties adopted over the course of the year to prepare for the 2024 general elections, and the ongoing crisis of India's democracy. In section 3, the article will look at India's economic performance and discuss the job crisis, epitomized by some large scale «job riots», which took place during 2022.

## *2. Domestic politics*

The political landscape of India during 2022 was dominated by three main developments. First, there were elections in seven states, two of which were particularly important: Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh. There were also the elections for the Municipal Council of Delhi. Second, some political parties started manoeuvring in preparation for the electoral campaign which will take most of 2023, as the general elections are due by mid-2024. Third, in continuity with previous trends, the process of democratic erosion deepened, particularly in terms of minority rights. These three developments are discussed in this section.

### *2.1. Elections in the states and the enduring dominance of the BJP*

The 2022 state elections were held in two rounds, the first one in February-March (Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh), and the second one in December (Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh). The BJP was the incumbent party in six of the seven states that went to polls and managed to retain five of them. Table 1 summarizes the results across the states, whereas the tables in the appendix provide the detailed state-by-state results.

Overall, the results confirm the enduring dominance of the BJP. While it is true that the performance of the party at the state level is much less impressive than at the national level, it remains that, at the time of writing in December 2022, the saffron party is ruling (either on its own or in coalition) in 16 out of 30 local governments.<sup>1</sup> Nearly half of the population (48.7%) is ruled by a BJP government [Poddar 2022b, 9 December].

1. 28 States and 2 Union Territories which have an assembly.

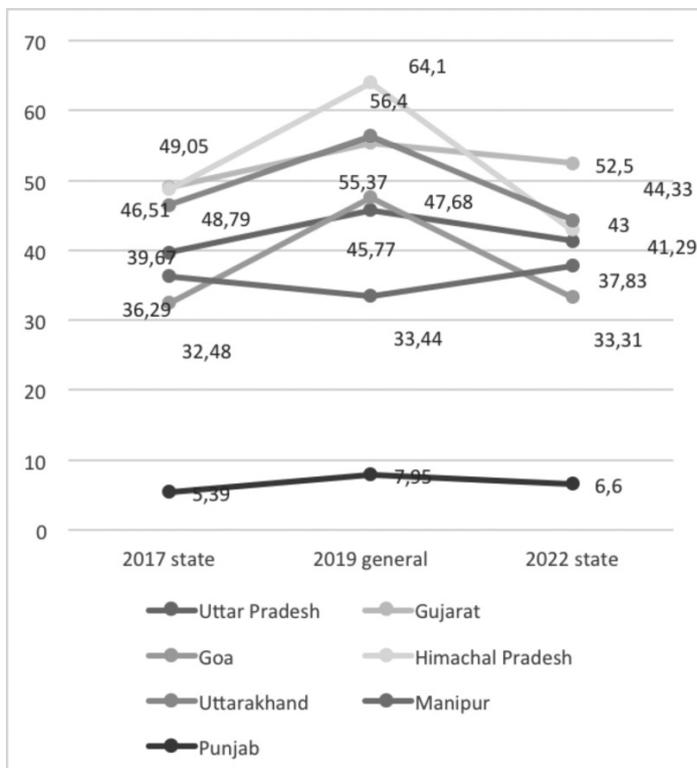
Table 1 – Summary of the 2022 state elections		
State	Incumbent	Largest Party after the 2022 elections
Goa	BJP	BJP
Manipur	BJP	BJP
Punjab	INC	AAP
Uttarakhand	BJP	BJP
Uttar Pradesh	BJP	BJP
Gujarat	BJP	BJP
Himachal Pradesh	BJP	INC
BJP = Bharatiya Janata Party; INC = Indian National Congress; AAP = Aam Admi Party		

The BJP's dominance at the state level should be qualified somewhat, however. First, the «iron law of state politics» post-2014 [Maiorano 2021a] was confirmed in this round of elections, whereby the BJP's performance in the states is significantly poorer than its performance in the national elections (Figure 1).

Except for Manipur, the curve of the BJP's performance has an inverted «V» shape, reflecting its higher electoral appeal in the general vis-à-vis the state elections. In most states, moreover, the BJP remains vulnerable, and elections are competitive. For instance, in 2022, the BJP not only lost Himachal Pradesh to the Congress; it was also replaced by the AAP as the leading party in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi, after three terms in power. Second, in six of the states where the BJP currently governs (Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh and Maharashtra), the party was actually defeated at the polls, but managed to form the government after it engineered defections from other parties [Outlook 2022b, 13 July]. The ability of the BJP to engineer defections is however a reflection of its dominance at the national level, as the party has access to a disproportionate amount of funds as well as to enforcement agencies that are directed against opposition politicians to convince them to jump ship [Maiorano 2022a].

Having said that, the BJP's performance in 2022 remains impressive, as it came on the backdrop of the economic crisis triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and, in the case of Gujarat, the inflation spike in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The BJP's ability to fend off anti-incumbency feelings was in fact nothing short of spectacular in Uttar Pradesh, where no party had been voted back to power since the 1980s – and no chief minister re-elected after serving a full term since 1957; and in Gujarat, where the BJP won its seventh consecutive election with the largest vote share any party achieved since the Congress in 1985 and the largest majority in the history of the state (156 seats, out of a total of 182).

Figure 1 – BJP’s performance (vote share) 2017-2022 in selected states



Source: Trivedi Centre for Political Data, Ashoka University

The big prize of 2022 was, needless to say, Uttar Pradesh, India’s most populous state. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath could not bank on a particularly impressive economic performance. While during the previous Samajwadi Party government from 2012 to 2017 the economy had grown at an average of nearly 7%, during Yogi’s tenure, thanks also to the pandemic, growth plummeted to an average of 2% per year. Per capita income growth, on the other hand, crashed to 0.43% per annum [Singh, Ajit Kumar 2021]. Moreover, employment rates fell sharply and the agricultural sector showed ample signs of distress [Jabob 2022, 31 January], not only with the farmers’ protests of 2021, but also as a consequence of the government’s policies aiming at banning beef, which caused a widespread stray cattle problem, which devastated crops [Maiorano 2022b].

Nevertheless, and mirroring the national electoral landscape, none of these signs of economic malady seems to have had any major impact

on voters' mind, as the BJP was returned to power with a comfortable, albeit reduced, majority (255 seats out of 403). The saffron party, while losing 57 seats as compared to 2017, in fact increased its vote share by 1.62 percentage points (to 41.29%). Significantly, the Samajwadi Party (SP), which achieved one of its best performances ever (32.06% of vote share, an increase of over 10 percentage points), won less than half the seats of the BJP (111, or 164 including its allies). This was significant as what had traditionally been a triangular (or even quadrangular) contest in the past, in 2022 turned into a bipolar contest between the BJP and the SP, as the two other poles (the Congress and the BSP), collapsed. The former's vote share reduced to 2.33% and two seats. The BSP, on the other hand, lost nearly 10 percentage points (to a vote share of 12.88%) and won only 1 seat. However, the collapse of the two previously crucial political parties of UP did not add sufficiently to the SP's vote and seat share to challenge the dominance of the BJP. In fact, ten years before, the SP had won a comfortable majority with just 29% of the popular vote, in what was a triangular contest [Sen 2022]. But the BJP's dominance and the coming into being of a bipolar party system increased dramatically the share of the votes that are needed to win a majority. At this stage, only the BJP is able to mobilize such a large segment of the electorate.

In fact, the social coalition strategy of the saffron party is the key to its dominance. The BJP's social base of support in UP was built as a local variant of the national strategy, based on winning the vote of every community except the Muslims [Chhibber & Verma 2019]. In UP, however, two other communities have strong ties to other parties and were therefore thought to be unlikely BJP voters: the Yadavs, a large middle caste strongly associated with the SP; and the Jatavs, a large Dalit caste, which formed the main support base of the BSP. Post poll-data show that the BJP's strategy worked. In fact, it worked even better than expected [Beg *et al.* 2022, 12 March]. First, the saffron party consolidated and increased its support among the upper castes, winning over 80% of their vote. Second, the BJP's support among the non-Yadav Other Backward Classes (OBCs) ranged between 54 and 66%, registering major increases since 2017 among most caste groups. Third, among non-Jatav Dalits, the BJP won about 44% of the votes (up from 32% in 2017). Furthermore, Yogi's party nearly tripled its support among the Jatavs (from 8 to 21%), on the one hand contributing in no small measure to the collapse of the BSP and, on the other hand, furthering the process of «proletarianisation» of the party [Maiorano 2019].

The SP, which had tried during the electoral campaign to dilute its image as the party of the Yadavs, succeeded only to a limited extent. In fact, it increased its support among its core supporters (Yadavs' support increased from 68 to 83%) and made some gains among other OBCs and Dalit castes (including the Jatavs). More importantly, the SP was chosen by the great majority of Muslims (from 46% in 2017 to 79%), clearly a result

of strategic voting by the community and strong sign of strong polarization along religious lines.

Overall, the results in UP offer some insights into both state and national politics. First, it seems that the social engineering strategy that successfully displaced the Congress and gave a spotlight to the BSP and the SP might not be working anymore [Verniers 2022, 5 April]. This strategy was designed to work in a multi-polar context, where winning over a large, core community and co-opting selected local elites from other castes was enough to win a sizable share of the seats. The big loser of the 2022 elections, the BSP, was relying exactly on this model, which however cannot be sufficient in a context where there is a dominant party winning nearly half of the votes. In such a context, strategic voting assumes more significance and directs votes towards the most credible alternative to the dominant party – in the 2022 elections, the SP. The latter, however, was also largely relying on a core and co-option strategy, rather than horizontal mobilization of all caste groups (like the BJP did). The SP did bank on strategic voting, but this helped only so much as to arrive a distant second.

Second, UP is perhaps the state where the parallels between the local and the national strategy of the BJP are more apparent. As at the national level, economic conditions on the ground do not appear to matter much in determining electoral outcomes. Rather, voters seem to be increasingly attracted by the BJP multi-pronged strategy based on personalized campaigns, strongman politics, welfare delivery, and Hindutva. It is likely that a similar strategy will be at the centre of the BJP's electoral campaign for the 2024 general elections.

The second particularly important electoral contest of 2022 was Gujarat, Narendra Modi's home state. While the BJP's victory was widely expected – so much so that Hardik Patel, President of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee, quit the party and joined the BJP shortly before the elections – the extent of its dominance over the state's politics was truly spectacular. The saffron party won over half of the popular vote (52.5%) resulting in the largest seat share any party ever secured (156 out of 182 seats). One obvious factor playing in favour of the BJP was the good performance of the AAP (12.92% of vote share), which transformed a bipolar party system into a triangular contest. In fact, the Congress, which had won 41% of the vote in 2017, lost nearly 15 percentage points (mostly in favour of the AAP). However, the BJP's dominance was such that in a great majority of seats, the division of the opposition hardly made a difference. In fact, the sum of the Congress and the AAP's votes surpasses the BJP in only 51 seats, indicating that opposition fragmentation enhanced the BJP's victory, but did not determine it. Another indication of the BJP's spectacular performance was the enormous margin with which the BJP won in each seat: more than 25 per centage points, on average, on the runner up [Saikia 2022, 8 December].

Overall, the Gujarat results are in line with those of UP. The winning formula relied heavily on Modi's personality – in the absence of popular state-level leaders – Hindutva and welfare delivery. This again suggests that, at least in the BJP's core regions (in the North and West of the country), this might be the message that the party will present to voters in 2024. There is another message that the Gujarat verdict offered. This is the obvious fact that, in the absence of multiple, state-level, unified anti-BJP fronts, it will be difficult to dislodge Modi's party from its dominant position in India's electoral landscape. However, as Gujarat shows, opposition parties have incentives not to unite and to fight for the second spot instead, as the AAP and the Congress did.

## 2.2. *Political adjustments with an eye to 2024*

Several political parties seemed to be starting preparations for the electoral campaign that is expected to kickstart in early 2023. The strategies varied significantly. Starting from the ruling party, in August 2022, the BJP reshuffled the Parliamentary Board (PB) and the Central Election Committee (CEC), the highest decision-making bodies of the party. The re-organisation resulted in the top echelons of the party being even more tightly controlled by the Modi-Shah duo than before, thus furthering the centralization of the party. In fact, the change in the composition of the two bodies dealt a blow to potential rival sources of power to the Prime Minister and his right (and left) hand, Amit Shah. First, Nitin Gadkari, former president of the BJP and one of the party's senior members that the RSS had been nurturing for leadership, was dropped from both the PB and the CEC. Moreover, Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, and Gadkari's arch-rival from his natal Nagpur, found a spot in the CEC. While both members of the RSS, Gadkari's exclusion was seen both as yet another blow by Modi and Shah to one of the few independent voices within the party and, perhaps more importantly, a blow to the RSS and its attempts to exert its dominance over the BJP [Deshpande 2022, 21 August]. Another prominent leader who lost its spot in the top bodies was Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chauhan (also an RSS favourite). While the reasons for its exclusion remain unclear, the effect has been to remove one of the few leaders with an independent base of support, thus tightening Modi-Shah's control over the party. It might also be that Modi and Shah killed two birds with one stone as, by dropping Chauhan, they could argue that no sitting chief minister was part of the PB, thus justifying another notable exclusion, that of UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath [Mahajan 2022, 18 August].

Less directly related to the forthcoming general elections – but certainly helping the BJP to be in a better position – was the shadowy manoeuvring, which led to the collapse of the Shiv Sena-Nationalist Congress Party-Indian National Congress coalition government in Maharashtra. In 2019, the BJP and the Shiv Sena had formed an electoral alliance, which,

however, fell apart shortly after the declaration of the results, paving the way for the somewhat eclectic alliance between former adversaries, the Congress, the Congress Nationalist party and the Shiv Sena itself. While inherently fragile, the coalition muddled through for two and a half years, until a group of Shiv Sena MLAs and Ministers, led by Eknath Shinde, rebelled against their leader and Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray. Political drama followed, with MLAs from both camps being secluded in hotels in Mumbai (Thackeray's faction) and BJP-ruled Gujarat and Assam (Shinde's faction), until, on 29 June, Thackeray threw the towel and resigned. Shinde became the chief minister, while BJP's leader Fadnis became his deputy. Most of the rebel Shiv Sena MLAs found a place in the new Cabinet. Undoubtedly, the BJP «went all out to cultivate the rebels, protect them, and win them a few more by employing investigating agencies and bringing about pressure besides allurements» [Palshikar 2022a]. Be as it may, the BJP will face the 2024 general election from a position of strength in India's second most populous state.

Finally, in September 2022, the government took over the presidency of the G20 from Indonesia. India was supposed to chair the G20 earlier on, but it first swapped with Italy, in order to make it coincide with the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of independence in 2022 and then swapped it again with Indonesia. While no official reason was given, it is likely that the government thought of using the international spotlight with an eye to the 2024 elections. Between January and September 2023, India will host over 200 meetings scattered through many locations across the country, where giant billboard will show the Prime Minister's picture alongside the Indian G20 presidency's logo, which is a lotus flower (the same as the BJP).

Turning to the opposition side, clearly things could be better. The dominance of the BJP – as in any dominant party system – constrains and limits what the opposition can achieve, especially since the saffron party does not restrain from using investigative agencies, its control over the economy and its influence over the media to further its dominance and crash the opposition. However, as Asim Ali proposed, it is possible to clearly divide opposition parties in two camps: on the one hand, crisis-ridden political parties; and, on the other hand, parties whose prospects are much brighter [Ali 2022a]. The former includes the Congress, the Left and the large «Mandal» parties of UP and Bihar. In the latter group, we find regional parties from the East and South of the country which have, so far, fended off the BJP's attempts to invade their turfs (e.g., the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal; the Dravidian parties in Tamil Nadu; the Telugu parties in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana; the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha; etc.) and the AAP, which appears to be on an expansion sprout.

The Congress party best exemplifies the crisis of the opposition, as it is arguably the party which has most suffered from the BJP's expansion. The Grand Old Party lost 40 of the 50 elections it contested since 2014 and suffered from a haemorrhage of leaders who joined other parties (mostly

the BJP) [Mishra 2022, 27 March]. At the time of writing, the Congress rules in only two states (as many as the AAP). Yet, any attempt to limit the dominance of the BJP will necessarily have to pass through the Congress. Not only does the party still commands about 20% of the national vote – long distancing any other opposition party – but there are a very high number of Lok Sabha seats where the contest is between the Congress and the BJP. In 2019, there were 186 such seats.

During 2022, there were two attempts to invert course, both of which had mixed results. First, in September 2022, the party elected a new president, the first non-Gandhi since the 1990s. The new president, 80-year-old Mallikarjun Kharge, however, can hardly be seen as a sign of deep renovation that could turn the fortune of the party. On the one hand, Kharge is widely seen as an emanation of the Gandhi family. On the other hand, his age and that of the majority of the Party Steering Committee, show how the gerontocratic structure of the party keeps exerting its influence. In fact, 75% of the members are over 60 years old and most of them either did not contest or lost their seat at the 2014 and 2019 general elections.<sup>2</sup> It is hard to imagine how the reorganization of the Congress party might boost the morale of the party workers or spark off the political imagination of (mostly young) voters.

The second noteworthy initiative of the party – or, perhaps more precisely, of Rahul Gandhi – is a country-wide march (the *Bharat Jodo Yatra*, or Unite India March), from Kanyakumari on the southern tip of India, to Jammu and Kashmir, over a period of 150 days. The initiative is significant for several reasons. First, it is the first major political initiative to specifically counter the BJP's divisive politics. Second, the march has focused on substantive issues like unemployment and growing inequalities, themes which are grounded on very bread-and-butter issues, which should resonate with many voters. Third, despite a very inhospitable media environment, which has at first largely ignored the march, it has successfully grasped attention and political rallies along the route are very well attended. Fourth, the march as a means to reach political objectives has a long pedigree in India, from Mahatma Gandhi during the freedom movement to some national politicians of the past, such as Chandra Sekhar, to numberless state level initiatives in recent times, often coronated by success. Fifth, the march's stops have become gathering points for civil society organizations which have taken the opportunity to forge alliances.

However, the yatra might fall short of rejuvenating the Congress and project a new image of the party ahead of the 2024 general elections. First, as noted by Suhas Palshikar, the Congress party organisation remained largely dormant except on the exact route of the yatra. If there were hopes that the yatra could galvanize Congress workers in the states where the

2. Rahul Verma, ISAS Panel Discussion, 4 November 2022, Singapore.

march passed, this has just not happened. «There is, on the one hand, a careful show of strength on the route of the Yatra and a deafening silence elsewhere» [Palshikar 2022b, 22 December]. Second, while the yatra focused on substantive issues and took on the Hinduization of India pursued by the BJP, it has hardly proposed an alternative vision to Modi's Hindutva-cum-welfare agenda, which, as we saw, is popular and successful. Third, the yatra is largely a one person show – Rahul Gandhi's. Whether the initiative will be sufficient to shake off Gandhi's image as a predestined politicians coming from the family accused day in day out (justly or otherwise) of being responsible for much of India's maladies, is a big question mark. In other words, in a way the yatra tries to challenge Modi on the terrain where he is more comfortable, that of a battle between personalities. And Modi has no rival in terms of popularity, resources and ability to speak to the heart and belly of the voters. Moreover, the yatra was thought to resemble more a social movement than a political one, with the result that the party seems to «speaks to citizens, but not to voters, and bypasses political questions, electoral or otherwise» [Mehta 2022, 24 December].

Finally, conversations<sup>3</sup> by this writer with people who work for political consultancies hired by the Congress party, reveal that the yatra put the party's finances under stress. According to these sources, in some states the party will not reimburse air travel to party workers anymore and only 3AC class rail fares will be booked. This, according to these sources (whose claims however could not be verified), signals deep financial distress, especially when compared to the flourishing budget of the BJP.

Other parties seem to be better placed. A first group includes regional parties in the East and South of the country. Some of these – like the Trinamool Congress in West Bengal, the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha, the Tamil and the Telugu Parties – seem to have found a potent formula to contrast BJP's Hindutva in ethno-linguistic mobilization [Ali 2022a]. In a way, the core political strategy of this party is a local variation of the BJP's national platform: by substituting religion with language, an emphasis on welfare schemes and strong (if very centralized) party organisations, these parties have been able to resist the dominance of the BJP. In fact, the saffron parties in at least some of these states (like West Bengal, Odisha and Telangana) has successfully taken on the role of main opposition party, replacing the Congress, but it has been unable to mount a serious challenge to ruling parties.

Two further parties have begun noteworthy manoeuvres in sight of the 2024 general elections. The first one is the AAP, currently in power in Delhi (where, as mentioned, it also replaced the BJP at the Municipal Corporation level) and in Punjab. As noted above, the party also performed very well in the Gujarat state elections and won over 6% of the votes (and 2 seats) in Goa in 2022, which should lead to the recognition as a national

3. New Delhi, 1-3 February 2023.

party by the Election Commission.<sup>4</sup> Since 2017, the AAP contested the elections in 18 states, although with marginal influence in most of them. What seems to be clear, however, is that the AAP is on an expansion sprout based on three main platforms, which again cannot but remind of the BJP's national strategy. First, the promotion of the «Delhi model of development» (akin to Modi's «Gujarat model»), based on free and relatively high-quality public services. Second, populist appeals, carefully tailored on local conditions. For instance, the AAP defended migrants in Delhi, but promises jobs reservations for locals in Uttarakhand [Ali 2022(a)]. Third, the AAP adopted a soft Hindutva approach, with the objective of forming a social coalition that cut across caste and class – something that the party managed to stitch together in Delhi [Banerji 2022, 11 June]. This strategy on the part of the AAP signals – together with similar flirts with Hindutva by other opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress and the Congress itself – that the BJP's political project is advancing to the stage of a hegemonic one which will be difficult to eradicate, even in a post-Modi India [Palshikar 2023b, 6 January].

Second, in August 2022 the Janata Dal (United) (JDU), one of the strongest «Mandal» parties, and an ally of the BJP in Bihar, broke off from the saffron party and formed a «grand alliance» with the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The move by chief minister Nitish Kumar is the latest twist in a convoluted story of alliances and counter alliances which have characterized Bihar's politics since Modi took office as Prime Minister. In 2013, Nitish Kumar left the National Democratic Alliance, after Modi was selected as the prime ministerial candidate, only to join hands again in 2017 [*Scroll.in* 2022c, 9 August]. The August 2022 decision seem to be dictated by electoral compulsions in sight of the 2024 general elections and the 2025 state elections. The JD(U) was probably feeling the pressure of the BJP, which, at the 2020 state elections, had surpassed the JD(U) as Bihar's largest party. The inclusion of the JD(U) in the «grand alliance» of Bihar makes it significantly «grander» than the coalition that was put together for the last state 2020 elections, which, however impressive on paper, failed to become a significant challenge to the BJP-JD(U) combine. It is rather a replication of the 2015 grand alliance which won the state elections then, only to disintegrate when Nitish Kumar decided to ally with the BJP again in 2017.

The «grand alliance» of Bihar also reminds of a similar coalition between the two Mandal parties of UP, the SP and the BSP, at the 2019 general elections, which hoped to limit the BJP's dominance in the state. In UP, it did not work, but the Bihar's grand coalition might be better placed. First, the coalition is in power, and this naturally gives them an advantage. The BJP, on the other hand, having run the state in coalition for the last five

4. This will give the AAP some benefits like guaranteed space on public TV and radio; membership in consultative committees; relaxation of campaign expenditure rules; etc.

years, will be able to exploit anti-incumbency feelings only to a certain extent. Second, caste arithmetic is more in favour of the JD(U)-RJD alliance than to its counterpart in UP. In both states, the key constituencies are the Other Backward Castes and the Dalits (being the upper caste solidly behind the BJP and the Muslims equally solidly being the grand alliances). In UP, as mentioned above, the BJP was able to make significant inroads among both communities, effectively forming a rainbow coalition which excluded only the Muslims and the core castes of the SP (Yadavs) and the BSP (Jatavs). In Bihar things are different because: a) Dalits have been brought into the fold of Mandal politics to a greater degree; b) while in Bihar too both Mandal parties have a core caste constituency (the Yadavs for the RJD and the Kurmis for the JD(U)), smaller OBCs castes (so called Extremely Backward Castes, or EBCs) have also been brought on board, chiefly through a policy of reservation for these castes, which started when Nitish Kumar first became chief minister in 2005 [Ali 2022b, 22 August]. Finally, Nitish Kumar decided to double down on Mandal politics by launching a caste census, which is scheduled to be completed by May 2023 [Mahaprashasta 2023, 10 January]. The real issue with counting castes is to have a precise estimate of the OBC population and possibly amend the reservation policy accordingly. While this carries risks for the two Mandal parties – it will probably show that Kurmis and Yadavs have acquired a much more dominant position in state's politics and administration than thought – it might also potentially expand the two parties' support base to other OBC groups or at least prevent them from joining the BJP *en masse*, as it happened in UP. There is one potential obstacle to this plan of action. The Supreme Court of India has repeatedly held that reservations cannot exceed 50% of the available spots. However, in November 2022, the Supreme Court upheld the decision by the Union Government to reserve 10% of government jobs and places in educational institutions for the so-called Economically Weaker Sections (EWS). The EWS are defined in economic and not in caste terms. However, two key legislative provisions effectively make the upper caste the real target of the new policy. First, EWS are defined as whoever has a family income of less than 800,000 rupees per year (and excluding big landlords). The income criteria would cover more than 90% of Indians, classifying them as EWS. Second, however, Scheduled Classes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST) and OBCs are excluded from reservations, on the basis that they are already benefiting from reservations. In practice, the EWS quota will give reservations to non-rich upper castes. Legal experts are divided on whether the Supreme Court's upholding of the EWS quota will put into question the 50% ceiling [Poddar 2022a, 20 November]. But what is certain is that it created a political opportunity to at least credibly show voters the willingness to push the reservation ceiling up. Jharkhand, for instance, increased reservations to 77% within days of the Supreme Court judgment. In Bihar, where the only segment of the population that is very unlikely to back the grand alliance is formed by the upper castes,

the political opportunity to play the Mandal card is particularly favourable for the JD(U)-RJD. In short, it seems that the ruling coalition of Bihar is engineering a reversal of the BJP's «all but the Muslim» strategy, but focusing on every segment of the electorate, except the upper castes.

A final point to conclude this brief excursus on the state of the opposition concerns the question of whether these parties will form a united front against the BJP in 2024. For what can be seen at the time of writing, the question is obviously on many party leaders' mind. Small steps such as backing a common Presidential candidate in 2022 were relatively successful, but the stakes were admittedly low, as the BJP and its allies had the number to elect whoever they chose. (Eventually, Droupadi Murmu was elected, the first tribal to become President of the Republic, and a woman). Other than that, some big regional parties (like the RJD, JD(U), and the Trinamool Congress) have started discussions to form a national opposition front. However, the real game will be played in the states, which is where potentially significant alliances are to be formed, if the BJP's dominance is to be seriously challenged. Moreover, as mentioned above, the role of the Congress remains important in a very high number of constituencies, while the temptation for upwardly political parties (like the AAP) to feast on the remains of the Grand Old Party – thus compromising opposition unity – will be hard to resist. The Congress party is at the same time an asset and a liability for regional parties.

### 2.3 *Further democratic erosion*

The erosion of India's democracy is now a medium-term process, which has been widely analysed.<sup>5</sup> In 2022, many of the trends and policies adopted by the Indian government in recent years continued. These included the usage of investigative agencies to target journalists, opposition members and civil society leaders [Tiwari 2022, 21 September; *Outlook* 2022c, 13 October]; the erosion of institutions, including attempts by the government to have a greater say in the appointment of Supreme and High Court judges [Jain & Chaturvedi 2023, 19 January] – reminiscent of Indira Gandhi's quest for a «committed judiciary» [Maiorano 2015]; and threats to freedom of expression [Reed 2022, 10 October], such as the arrest of Mohammed Zubair, founder of AltNews, a fact-checking website. Zubair was arrested in June 2022 on the basis of some 4-year-old tweets and kept in jail for almost a month, until the Supreme Court eventually granted him bail, noting that the UP government had effectively «trapped [him] in a vicious cycle of criminal process where the process itself has become the punishment» [Anand 2022, 26 July].

5. In previous Asia Maior issues the topic was discussed in Maiorano, 2022a; 2022b; 2021b; Torri & Maiorano 2018; Torri 2021. See also, among many others, Mukherjee 2020; Jaffrelot 2021; Kholsa & Vaishnav 2021.

In short, India's democratic erosion continues in parallel with the BJP's deepening of its dominance over the political system, so much so that one of the country's leading analysts started questioning if «*irrespective of electoral outcomes*, we are bound to witness a further weakening of the liberal norm» in the future, as an authoritarian and majoritarian form of governance that root in the minds of the voters [Palshikar 2023a, 1 January].

In this article, I will just briefly mention two somewhat new developments that have taken place during 2022 and that concern the Indian state's ongoing alienation of the Muslim minority. The first one is the spat of demolitions of Muslim homes and properties across a number of BJP-ruled states. This is not entirely new. During the emergency (1975-77), for instance, many buildings and homes were demolished as part of the «*beautification*» of (predominantly Muslim) Old Delhi. Another instance was the demolition of slums in numerous states throughout the year, to make space for urban development, which at times resulted in Muslims being displaced and struggled to find alternative accommodation because of their identity [Lobo 2015]. What seems to be new, however, is the reason why homes were demolished, that is as a form of extra-legal punishment for alleged violations of law and order.

The events in Jahangirpuri in Delhi in April 2022 are illustrative. On 16 April a procession to celebrate Hanuman Jayanti passed through the mainly Muslim area. Violence erupted. The Muslim community maintained that some Hindus tried to enter the local Mosque with a flag reciting «*Jai Shri Ram*»; the Hindus on the other hand blamed the Muslims for the violence. Be as it may, a local BJP leader, Adesh Gupta, wrote a letter to the Municipal Corporation (ruled by the BJP) asking to demolish the homes of «*anti-social elements*». The municipal authorities immediately sent bulldozers and the police to demolish – without giving notice to the residents, as per the law - «*illegal encroachments*». The Supreme Court halted the demolitions, but the bulldozers did not stop until over one hour after the Court had issued its order, despite the presence of the Mayor on site and news organisations having reported about the Court's stay [Scroll.in 2022a, 20 April]. Shops, homes and the entry gate to the Mosque were demolished. The Jahangirpuri facts were not isolated. Similar instances had occurred in BJP-ruled UP [Outlook 2022a, 12 June], Madhya Pradesh [BBC News 2022a, 15 April], and Gujarat [Scroll.in 2022b, 2 May]. The demolitions were called by three United Nations Special Rapporteurs (for Housing, Minority Issues and Freedom of Religion) a form of «*collective punishment*».<sup>6</sup>

The second (also not entirely new) development was an acceleration on the cultural project of the current establishment to demonize the Muslim community. The cultural demonization of the Muslim community is a

6. The full text of the letter is available here: <https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gId=27324>

multi-pronged strategy by Hindutva-affiliated groups and has a long history. During the yatras demanding the demolition of the Babri Masjid in the 1980s and 1990s, for instance, Hindutva groups had circulated videos and recordings. More recently, music producers created hundreds of songs with incendiary lyrics, at times blasted through loudspeakers at processions passing through Muslim areas and shared millions of times via social media [BBC News 2022b, 8 August]. There have also been several instances of political speeches explicitly calling for the killing of the Muslims [Al-Jazeera 2021, 24 December].

In 2022, this strategy was somewhat brought to a higher level through a film, *The Kashmir Files*, directed by Vivek Agnihotri. The film claims to be telling «the truth» about the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits in the 1990s, as the insurgency broke out in the Valley. The film is historically inaccurate and single-mindedly aimed at demonizing Muslims: men are shown lusting Hindu women and betraying their neighbours to support terrorism, while children are depicted branding automatic weapons and insulting Hindu Gods [Ayyub 2022, 29 March]. The film has been a record-breaking hit, also thanks to the government's tax concessions (reducing the tickets' price) and Modi's invitation to watch the film [Chowdhury 2022, 30 March]. The prime minister even congratulated the film crew in person [Hindustan Times 2022b, 13 March]. In theatres, the audience chanted nationalistic slogans and abuses to the Muslim community and triggered calls for the boycott of Muslims economic activities [The Quint 2022, 21 March].

The film is but the last example of the ongoing Hinduisation of India's public sphere, though the promotion to leading position in academia and research centres of Hindu extremists and sympathizers; the renaming of street and cities to delete India's Muslim past; the re-writing of history textbooks; or the construction of a grandiose system of temples in Varanasi – one of Modi's pet projects in his constituency – aimed at undermining the city's syncretic past [Maiorano 2022c].

### 3. *The economic situation*

The Indian economy continued to present contradictory trends. On the one hand, India recovered from the pandemic-induced recession. On the other hand, the job situation continued to remain dire. Starting with the good news, during the year ending in quarter 2 (Q2) of the financial year 2022/23 (July-September 2022), real GDP grew by 6.3% (year-on-year), one of the fastest among emerging market economies [The World Bank 2022]. This robust growth is remarkable, given the economic pain through which India's major trading partners (the US, UK, China) went through in 2022, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the ongoing global supply chains disruptions, inflationary pressures, high energy costs and higher rates of

interests. The two main drivers of growth were private consumption and investments. The former was led by upper income consumer goods (like automobiles and air travel), while the latter was sustained by government's capital expenditure (part of Modi's infrastructure push). Conversely, private investments played a minor role, as India Inc. remains cautious, given the uncertain geopolitical landscape and the Reserve Bank of India's decision to increase interest rates by 35 basis points to 6.50% [*Business Standard* 2022, 1 December]. The two major constraints on growth were government final expenditure (whose decline is almost entirely attributable to the progressive rolling out of the pandemic-related relief measures) and the sharp increase in imports (not matched by the increase in exports). On this note, while the overall balance of payment situation remains sustainable, also thanks to very florid reserves of foreign currency, trade balance with China deteriorated further, which is a source of concern more for geopolitical reasons than for economic ones. According to the latest data released by the Chinese customs, overall trade between the two countries reached US\$ 136 billion, of which US\$ 118.5 billion were Chinese exports to India.

Inflation increased in 2022, following the global trend. While this was understandably a cause for concern for the Indian government as the Consumer Price Index (CPI) remained above the RBI's upper limit of 6% for most of the year (averaging at 6.7%), in the last part of 2022 it eased down significantly and trended downward.

Finally, the rupees weakened significantly against the dollar, as did most currencies in the world. While this contributed to a higher import bill (and lower GDP growth) and depleted foreign reserves, it also sustained exports. Probably the most significant implication of a weak rupee was the (albeit small) political repercussions, as Modi had vehemently attacked the government back in 2013 when the rupee had fallen below 64 to the dollar [*The Indian Express* 2022, 17 July]. At the time of writing in January 2023, the exchange rate was about 81 to the dollar.

Looking beyond standard macroeconomic indicators, 2022 signalled the enduring difficulties of the Indian economy to create enough jobs for what is one of the fastest-growing working age population in the world. In January, riots broke out in UP and Bihar, which were described as the country's first «large scale unemployment riots» [*Hindustan Times* 2022a, 28 January]. The railways had announced some 40,000 non-technical jobs in the two states, for which over 10 million candidates applied to. When the railways announced that a second exams would be introduced to reduce the number of candidates, riots broke off, as people attacked and burned trains and other railways properties.

A few months later, India witnessed another series of unemployment riots, when the government announced a reform of the recruiting system for the army. In June, the central government announced that the «Agnipath» (Tour of Duty) will be the only way into the three wings of the Indian army.

Selected recruits will have a service tenure of four years, after which 25% of them will be permanently enlisted. None of the «Agniveers» will be entitled to a gratuity or pension [Rai 2022]. The stated objective is to lower the average age of serving soldiers, although experts questioned the limit of four years as too short to optimally utilize a soldier. A key reason, however, was probably to save money. The pension bill in 2022/23 ate up almost a quarter of the entire budgetary allocation to the Defence Ministry (and another quarter went for salaries). These figures have increased sharply since 2015, when the government implemented both the One Rank One Pension reform, and, the following year, the recommendations of the Seventh Pay Commission [Singh, Sushant 2022, 13 July]. The reform sparked off violent protests across the country. Many aspiring soldiers feared being left unemployable after four years of service [Singh, Karan Deep & Kumar 2022, 17 June]. Perhaps more importantly, the reform closed yet another source to the Holy Grail of formal employment, seen by many as the only true avenue to upward social mobility. The private sector has been unable to create stable, formal jobs, making it «hardly surprising that government jobs are a loud political demand» [Aiyar 2022, 20 June].

In fact, India's employment problem is huge and not getting better. The gravity of the situation can be seen from two angles. First, the youth's labour market; and, second, the overall participation to the labour force. According to the International Labor Organization (ILO)'s estimates, India's youth (aged 15-24) unemployment was 28.3% in 2021, up from 22.7 in 2019.<sup>7</sup> The corresponding figures for other countries are much lower: Pakistan, 9.4%; China, 11.4%; Bangladesh, 14.7%; Indonesia, 16%. The average for Lower Middle-Income Countries (to which India belongs, according to the World Bank's classification) is 18.5%. Data from the Centre for Monitoring the Indian Economy (CMIE) are even worse. In April 2022, the CMIE's data showed that the unemployment rate in the 20-24 age bracket was 42%. Unemployed people aged 20-29 represent 80% of the total unemployed. Moreover, official data (from 2017/18) show that unemployment rates are higher among the most educated, feeding frustration and, occasionally, violence [Iyer 2022, 13 May].

The second factor, India's low participation to the labour force, is equally worrying. Total labour force participation rate (LFPR) (of people aged 15 and above) declined from 58.3 in 1990 to 45.6.<sup>8</sup> Of course, part of the decline is due to the increased number of students. But this is a very partial explanation at best, as shown by comparing India's LFPR with that of other countries when they had a GDP per capita similar to India's today (US\$ 1937)<sup>9</sup>. Economist Vivek Kaul [Kaul 2023] made the comparison, which is reproduced in the table 2.

7. Data retrieved from the World Bank's website.

8. Data in this paragraph are taken from [Kaul 2023].

9. In constant 2015 US\$.

Table 2 – India’s Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) compared with other countries.	
Country	LFPR
India	45.6
China (1998)	77.3
Vietnam (2009)	76
Indonesia (2002)	66

Source: Kaul 2023. In brackets the year when the country had a GDP per capita comparable to India’s in 2021.

The gap is almost entirely explained by India’s extremely low Female LFPR, which, in 2021, was just 19%, as compared to 35% in Bangladesh, 49% in Brazil, 53% in South Korea, 54% in Indonesia, 62% in China and 70% in Vietnam. Even Saudi Arabia has a higher FLFPR (31%). Furthermore, the trend is negative, as India’s FLFPR was 30.4 in 1990. Again, part of the explanation is increased educational opportunities for Indian women. But Mody notes that a majority of women who withdraw from the labour force are over 25 and come from low-income family, pointing at a lack of job opportunities and patriarchal social norms as the best explanation [Desai & Joshi 2019; Mody 2023].

In short, India’s labour force is shrinking, despite the fact that the country is in the midst of a demographic dividend, whereby the working age population is expanding rapidly. This means that India is only very partially exploiting the window of opportunity that its demographic structure currently offers.

#### 4. *Conclusions*

The political developments of 2022 signalled that, as the country prepares for the 2024 general elections, the ruling BJP appears to be steadily in control of the situation. Despite some setbacks at the state level, the dominance of Modi’s party over India’s political system remains solid. Above all, the resounding victory of the party in UP – India’s most populous state and the key to rule the country – confirmed the trend of the last few years: the BJP is largely immune to economic setbacks and mismanagement.

The BJP, along with opposition parties, started preparations for the general elections, which took different forms. The BJP went through a rather profound re-organisation of the top echelons of party, which crystallized Modi and Shah’s control over the apparatus, largely at the expense of locally powerful party leaders and the RSS. The government also

engineered defections in key states (above all, Maharashtra), which will help the party in 2024.

The opposition parties also re-aligned themselves with an eye to 2024. The Congress's first family left the presidency of the party, while Rahul Gandhi embarked on a country-wide yatra. Both moves aimed at rejuvenating the party and both had limited success (the yatra more than the change of leadership). Some regional parties started a dialogue among themselves to form localized anti-BJP alliances, but it remains to be seen how far these will go. The past record is not promising. Still other parties went onto an expansion spree, chiefly among them the AAP, which won the elections in Punjab and performed very well in Gujarat. The latter elections, however, also showed the incentives for opposition parties to fight for the second spot, in a BJP-dominated political system.

India's democracy continued to suffer. The institutional erosion proceeded, as did the threat to freedom of expression. In this article, I focused in particular on the ongoing Hinduisation of the state and the deepening of the majoritarianism. The Muslim minority continues to be at the receiving end of the government's construction of a Hindu state.

Finally, the article has analysed the economic situation from two angles. First, the overall good performance of the economy, despite the difficult geopolitical environment. However, and second, the article has also showed the underlying socio-economic tension over an economic model that concentrates wealth creation at the top and does not generate enough jobs.

## APPENDIX

Detailed results of seven state elections held in 2022. All data are taken from the website of the Election Commission of India. The acronyms of the alliances and parties followed by the full names are given after the last table.

Table A* – Results of the elections to the Legislative Assembly of Goa 2022			
Alliance	Party	Seats won (difference from 2017)	Vote share (difference from 2017)
NDA	BJP	20 (+7)	33.33 (+0.8)
UPA	INC	11 (-6)	23.5(-4.9)
	GFP	1(-2)	1.8 (-1.7)
	Total	12	
AAP	AAP	2 (+2)	6.8 (+0.5)
AITC+	AITC	0 (-)	5.2 (+5.2)
	MGP	2(-1)	7.6 (-3.7)
	Total	2	
NCP+	NCP	0 (-1)	1.1 (-1.2)
	SS	0 (-)	0.2 (0.1)
	Total	0	
RGP	RGP	1 (1)	9.45 (+9.45)
None	IND	3	-
*Note: BJP won 20 seats and got the support of MGP to form government; AITC and SS didn't contest previous election.			

Table B – Results of the elections to the Legislative Assembly of Manipur 2022			
Alliance	Party	Seats won (difference from 2017)	Vote share (difference from 2017)
NDA	BJP	32 (+11)	37.83 (+2.73)
MPSA	INC (incumbent)	5 (-23)	16.83 (-18.57)
	CPI	0 (-)	0.06 (-0.68)
	Total	5	
None	JDU	6 (-)	10.77(-)
	NPF	5 (+1)	8.09 (+0.89)
	NPP	7(3)	17.29 (+12.19)
	KPA	2(2)	7.53
	IND	3(2)	

Table C – Results of the elections to the Legislative Assembly of Punjab 2022			
Alliance	Party	Seats won (difference from 2017)	Vote share (difference from 2017)
None	AAP	92 (+72)	42.01(+18.31)
UPA	INC (incumbent)	18 (-59)	22.98 (-15.52)
SAD+	SAD	3 (-12)	18.38 (-6.82)
	BSP	1(+1)	1.77 (+0.27)
	Total	4	
NDA+	BJP	2 (-1)	6.6 (+1.2)
	PLC	0(-)	0.5 (-)
	SAD (S)	0(-)	0.6 (-)
	Total	2	
None	SAD (A)	0	2.5 (+2.2)
	LIP	0	0.3 (-0.9)
	CPI	0	0.05 (-0.15)
	IND	1 (1)	3.0 (0.9)
	Others	0 (-2)	-
*PLC & SAD (Sankyut) are new contestants.			

Alliance	Party	Seats (difference from 2017)	Share (difference from 2017)
NDA (incumbent)	BJP	255 (-57)	41.29 (+1.62)
	AD (S)	12 (+3)	1.62 (+0.64)
	NISHAD Party	6 (+5)	0.91 (+0.29)
	Total	273	
SP+	SP	111 (+64)	32.06 (+10.24)
	RLD	8 (+7)	2.85 (+1.78)
	SBSP	6 (+2)	1.36 (+0.66)
	NCP	0 (-)	0.05 (-)
	Total	125	
UPA	INC	2 (-5)	2.33 (-3.92)
BPM	AIMM	0 (-)	0.49 (+0.25)
None	BSP	1 (-18)	12.88 (-9.35)
	JD (L)	2 (+2)	0.21 (+0.21)
	AAP	0 (-)	0.38 (+0.38)
	CIP	0 (-)	0.07 (-0.09)
	SS	0 (-)	0.02 (-0.08)
	IND	0 (-3)	1.11 (-1.46)

Alliance	Party	Seats won (difference from 2017)	Vote share (difference from 2017)
None	BJP (incumbent)	47 (-10)	44.33 (-2.17)
	INC	19 (+8)	37.91 (+4.39)
	BSP	2 (2)	4.82(-2.18)
	AAP	0 (-)	3.3% (-)
	UKD	0 (-)	1.1 (+0.40)
	CIP	0 (-)	0.04
	AIMM	0 (-)	0.03 (-)
	IND	2 (-)	-

Table F – Results of the elections to the Legislative Assembly of Himachal Pradesh 2022			
Alliance	Party	Seats won (difference from 2017)	Vote share (difference from 2017)
UPA	INC	40 (+19)	43.90 (+2.22)
NDA	BJP (incumbent)	25 (-19)	43.00 (-5.79)
LF	CIP (M)	0 (-1)	0.66 (-0.81)
	CIP	0 (-)	0.01 (-0.03)
	Total	0	
None	AAP	0 (-)	1.10 (+1.10)
	BSP	0 (-)	0.35 (-0.2)
	RDP	0 (-)	10.39
	IND	3 (1)	
	Others		

Table G – Results of the elections to the Legislative Assembly of Gujarat 2022			
Alliance	Party	Seats won (difference from 2017)	Vote share (difference from 2017)
NDA (incumbent)	BJP	156 (+57)	52.50 (+3.45)
UPA	INC	17 (-60)	27.28 (-14.16)
	NCP	0 (-1)	0.24 (-0.36)
	Total	17	
None	AAM	5 (+5)	12.92 (+12.82)
	BTP	0 (-2)	-
	AIMM	0 (-)	0.29 (+0.29)
	CIP (M)	0 (-)	0.03 (+0.01)
	BSP	0 (-)	0.50 (-0.10)
	SP	1 (+12.1)	(0.29) (+0.28)
	IND	3	-

LEGEND

- AAP = Aam Aadmi Party  
AD (S) = Apna Dal (Sonelal)  
AIMM = All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen  
AITC = All India Trinamool Congress  
BJP = Bharatiya Janata Party  
BPM = Bhagidari Parivartan Morcha  
BSP = Bahujan Samaj Party  
BTP = Bharatiya Tribal Party  
CIP (M) = Communist Party of India (Marxist)  
CPI = Communist Party of India  
GFP = Goa Forward Party  
INC = Indian National Congress  
IND = Independents  
JD (L) = Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik)  
JDU = Janata Dal United  
KPA = Kuki People's Alliance  
LF = Left Front  
LIP = Lok Insaaf Party  
MGP = Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party  
MPSA = Manipur Progressive Secular Alliance;  
NCP = Nationalist Congress Party  
NDA = National Democratic Alliance  
NISHAD Party = Nirbal Indian Shoshit Hamara Aam Dal  
NPF = Naga People's Front  
NPP = National People's Party  
PLC = Punjab Lok Congress  
RDP = Rashtriya Devbhumi Party  
RGP = Revolutionary Goans Party  
RLD = Rashtriya Lok Dal  
SAD (A) = Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar)  
SAD (S) = Shiromani Akali Dal (Sanyukt)  
SAD = Shiromani Akali Dal  
SBSP = Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party  
SP = Samajwadi Party  
SS = Shiv Sena  
UKD = Uttarakhand Kranti Dal  
UPA = United Progressive Alliance

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