

Vote for stability, don't waste it on AAP: Swaraj

Risha Chitlangia | TNN

New Delhi: In her first pre-election public meeting in the capital on Saturday, senior BJP leader Sushma Swaraj assured traders in Chandni Chowk that BJP will not introduce FDI in retail.

"In our election manifesto, it will be mentioned that we will not introduce FDI in retail. My party is against it," said Swaraj while attacking Congress for promoting 100% foreign direct investment in various sectors. "In its election manifesto, Congress has clearly stated that it has zero aversion to FDI. If it comes back to power, it will introduce FDI in all sectors, including education, defence, retail trade and insurance," said Swaraj, who had come to campaign for BJP's Chandni Chowk candidate Harsh Vardhan.

A huge stage was set up right outside Town Hall in Chandni Chowk for her meeting, which started at 7pm. While party workers and supporters waited patiently for over an hour to hear their leader, passersby stopped to hear her as she attacked Congress and Aam Aadmi Party.

In her 20-minute speech, Swaraj launched a scathing attack on Congress but refrained from attaching much importance to AAP, which has sharpened its attack on BJP and its PM candidate Narendra Modi. "Please, don't waste your ballot by voting for AAP. Only BJP can give you a stable government," she said. Urging people to vote for stable government, Swaraj said Congress knows that it will not come to power this time. "We declared our PM candidate much before the elections. As for Congress, it still doesn't know who will lead the party after Manmohan Singh,



POLL TALK: Sushma Swaraj at Chandni Chowk on Saturday

BJP to release city manifesto on April 7

Delhi BJP will release its election manifesto on April 7. Sources say the eight-page manifesto will focus on women safety, setting up of more fast-track courts for rape cases, healthcare and regularization of unauthorized colonies, among other issues. Meanwhile, the party has planned a mega rally of its prime ministerial candidate Narendra Modi on April 7. Veteran leader L K Advani will address a rally on April 6. TNN

who has announced his retirement." She also attacked Congress' "weak" foreign policy.

Seeking support for Vardhan, she hit out at telecom minister and Congress candidate from the area, Kapil Sibal. "He had said there was zero loss in 2G scam. You should give him a zero in the upcoming elections," Swaraj said. Though



Vardhan faces tough competition from AAP, source say BJP is intentionally not targeting the party. Senior leaders say by focusing on Congress, the party will benefit more. "Sibal is the sitting MP and he has done nothing for the area. He inaugurated the Chandni Chowk redevelopment project twice, but

the work is yet to start," said a BJP worker.

People clapped and shouted slogans in support of BJP as Swaraj spoke about the party's plan for the area. Many in the audience agreed with her and said at the national level, the country can't afford to have a repeat of what happened in Delhi. "We need a stable government. Congress has done much damage to our economic growth. It is time for change," said Jai Narayan, a textile dealer who lives in Shahdara. He added, "I don't live here. Although Congress has fielded a better candidate than BJP in my area (North East Delhi), I'll vote for BJP. Congress has done enough damage".

After the public meet in Chandni Chowk, Swaraj addressed another one in Sadar Bazaar in Delhi Cantt, part of Meenakshi Lekhi's constituency.

City's thumbs down to governance

ADR's Countrywide Survey Reveals People Are Unhappy Elsewhere Too

Trilochan Sastry

How different are India's two biggest metros from the rest of the country when it comes to elections and voting behaviour? How do they compare on awareness? What are the major considerations when voting? To what extent does money and crime affect them?

These questions have been answered in the country's largest ever voter survey of over 2.5 lakh voters in about 525 Lok Sabha constituencies carried out by Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR) with the help of Daksh, a Bangalore-based NGO.

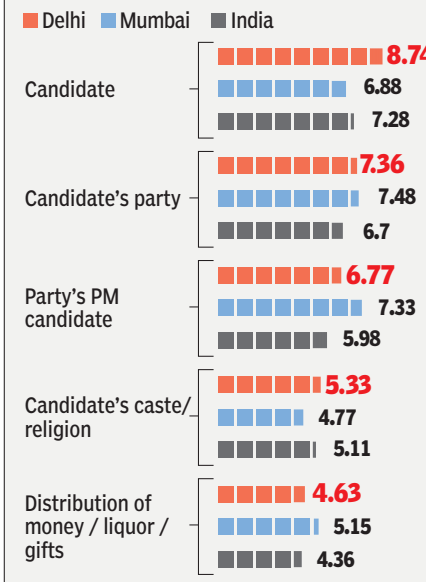
The survey also looks at how Delhi and Mumbai compare with the rest of the country on governance issues like employment, basic essential services, law and order and infrastructure. Also how do the metros' voters rate the performance on governance?

As the graphic shows, there are some significant differences. In Delhi, voters give much greater importance to the local candidate than to the party or the PM candidate. On a scale, Delhi voters give a weightage of 8.74 to the local candidate, 7.36 to the party and 6.77 to the PM candidate. Mumbai, on the other hand, gives maximum weightage to the party, followed by the PM candidate with the local candidate coming last. In both metros and rest of India, voters claim that caste or religion doesn't matter, and neither does the distribution of money, liquor and gifts.

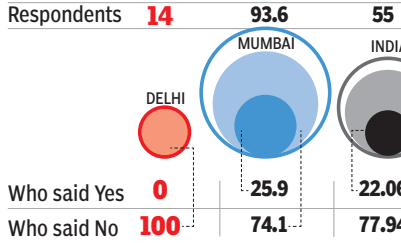
On the issue of candidates with serious criminal cases, only 14% of the Delhi respondents were willing to give an answer. All of them said we should not vote for such candidates but one is not sure if

HOW METROS VOTE

FACTOR INFLUENCING VOTING SCORE ON 10-POINT SCALE



Do you think people should vote for seriously tainted candidates? Figs in %



Those who knew Figs in %

	DELHI	MUMBAI	INDIA
'Gifts' for vote is illegal	84.7	67.2	68.7
Of candidates distributing 'gifts'	45.3	48.2	34
A candidate's criminal record is available	54.5	43.9	35.1

Why do people vote for those with serious criminal records Figs in %

	DELHI	MUMBAI	INDIA
Candidate does good work	63	67.3	68.15

this is just a pious intention. In Mumbai, however, 74.1% said we should not vote for such candidates. Mumbai is similar to the rest of the country in this respect. However, Mumbai voters seem to be open to facing this question as only 55% of respondents around India were willing to answer it compared to 93.6% in Mumbai.

On awareness of basic electoral laws and availability of information, the two metros are ahead of the rest of the country. In Delhi, 84.7% and in Mumbai 67.2% said they knew that distribution of money, liquor, gifts etc. for votes is illegal. The all India score is 68.7%. When it came to admitting they knew of distribution of gifts for votes, Delhi with 45.3% and Mum-

bai with 48.2% were ahead of the all India average of 34%. Voter awareness of the fact that criminal records of candidates are publicly available is very low with Delhi at

The top priorities that are common to Delhi and Mumbai are drinking water, healthcare, law and order, roads, public transport, security of women and lower prices

54.5%, Mumbai at 43.9% and India as a whole at only 35.1%. Asked why people vote for candidates with serious criminal records, the major reason given was that the candidate

otherwise does good work. Issues like caste, religion and spending in elections were not seen to be significant.

On voter priorities, the two metros seem to be most demanding. A list of 30 items was given to the respondents. They were to identify each issue as either very important, important or not important. Delhi found almost everything very important. The average importance score on a 10-point scale was 9.17. Mumbai had a score of 8.56 while India trailed behind with 7.69.

The top priorities that are common to Delhi and Mumbai are drinking water, healthcare, law and order, roads, public transport, security of women and lower prices. Delhi gives greater weightage to electricity supply,

schools, employment and a strong defence whereas Mumbai gives greater preference to reducing traffic congestion, trust in the MP, garbage clearance and corruption. The rest of India broadly shares these priorities with the two metros except for the demand for subsidised food through PDS/ration and higher prices for farm produce for farmers.

How do the voters' rate the performance of the government on these priorities? On all the governance parameters, the performance is rated as below average. On a 10-point scale, a score of 6.67 or above is above average and anything below that is below average. In Delhi, the average performance on the top priorities is 5.94 compared to an importance score of 9.17 on 10. In Mumbai, it is 5.12 against an importance score of 8.56 and for India it's 5.85 compared to an importance score of 7.6. People across India, including Delhi and Mumbai, are unhappy with the quality of governance.

In conclusion, people in Delhi are the most demanding, followed by Mumbai and then the rest of the country. At all places, people rate government performance well below average. Of India's top 10 priorities, Delhi and Mumbai share six, namely drinking water, health, law and order, roads, public transport, women's security and lower prices. Delhi wants better electricity supply, schools, employment and a strong defence, and Mumbai better work on reducing traffic congestion, more trust in the MP, garbage clearance and removal of corruption.

(The writer works as Professor, Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore)

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2,000 residents missing from Gzb voter list

Ayaskant Das | TNN

Noida: Residents of Ghaziabad have complained to the Election Commission and the UP chief electoral officer, alleging over 2,000 eligible voters in the Sahibabad assembly seat were not registered in electoral rolls despite having submitted online application forms as well as hard copies with the district administration.

The RWA Federation of Ghaziabad has further alleged that names of thousands of other eligible voters were left out of the list despite fulfilling all criteria.

In an online voter registration drive in Sahibabad, applications of around 2,000 voters had been submitted online, federation members said. However, owing to a technical error in the submission process, the EC asked applicants to deposit hard copies of the online forms by March 13.

"We managed to collect 1,180 hard copies within three days. But officials were reluctant to accept the forms," said federation general secretary, S K Maheshwari. They have asked EC to make alternative arrangements for the applicants.

STAGE SET FOR SONIA SHOW

Sanjay Sekhri



KEEPING VIGIL SPG personnel at Ajmal Khan Park where Sonia Gandhi will hold a rally today

JP dismisses Modi wave, says AAP has lost political ground

Ambika Pandit | TNN

New Delhi: Dismissive of his "outsider" contenders, Congress's J P Agarwal also sees no "Modi wave" in his North East Delhi constituency. He feels that BJP's national-level infighting has, in fact, left a negative impact on people's mind. The eight-time MP, who had fought from North East Delhi for the first time in 2009, also claims Aam Aadmi Party has lost ground since the December polls, especially after its chief minister Arvind Kejriwal quit in a huff over Jan Lokpal Bill.

"Parliamentary elections are different as people vote for issues and a party rather than individuals. In the Lok Sabha elections, the performance of the central government will be up for a test," said Agarwal, whose prime contenders are BJP's Manoj Tiwari and AAP's Anand Kumar.

So what will determine the voters' choice? Agarwal claims the UPA government's steps for right to information, right to food and rural jobs, and the promises of right to housing and health in the manifesto will help him.

"The performance of the sitting MP will certainly be something all voters will watch out for," Agarwal add-



BANKING ON PERFORMANCE

ed. He credits himself with making way for infrastructure projects like the Metro, a railway station in Saboli near Meet Nagar and the first Kendriya Vidyalaya project in Mandoli. He cites how Badapur Khadar village got electricity after a long wait of 60



years. He also rates himself high on accessibility.

"When I came to this constituency in 2009, I was shocked to see that even basic facilities were missing. Even in Parliament, I raised the concerns of the area, which was nothing short of backward, and demanded that such areas get special focus,"

said Agarwal.

The Modi factor doesn't worry him either. "I don't see any Modi wave in my constituency. I say this with the background of having fought so many elections. BJP as a party also has no charm for voters due to the very public infighting among its national leaders and its divisive agenda."

AAP, Agarwal admits, was undeniably a factor in the assembly polls as there was public anger over inflation, water and power. "The people decided to oust the Congress government. The situation is different now as our government is no more in power and the AAP government did not deliver on its own one of its promises in its 49 days."

The former Delhi Congress chief, however, refutes former chief minister Sheila Dikshit's allegations of "internal sabotage". "People voted for the performance of the government of the day and the party workers did their best. Victory and loss in an election are linked to various factors," he asserted.

Coming back to the Lok Sabha elections, Agarwal says both BJP and AAP candidates are "outsiders". He, however, refuses to elaborate on his chances, choosing to leave it entirely to his voters.

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