

# Current Affairs

## A Lesson Learned: Anil Shrivastava ‘Musafir’

In case you don't follow the international news, something amazing happened in India last week. Mr. Narendra Modi's party, BJP which can be compared to the Republican Party here won more than 80% seats in India's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh (UP). To give an idea of its magnitude, UP with a population of nearly 200 million people will rank as the fifth most populous nation in the world (if it were an independent country), next only to China, India, the United States of America and Indonesia.



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What is amazing is that before BJP's resounding victory last week, UP was always run by the Congress Party of India and other leftist parties (equivalent of the Democratic Party here) as a welfare state where its large but impoverished Muslim and Dalit (previously known as lower caste) population depended on freebies bestowed on them by their rulers. Finally, the Dalits and Muslims realized that they had merely been used as vote banks by the leftist liberal parties for the last 69 years of India's existence as a free nation. The lack of employment opportunities and perpetual backwardness worsened the matters for the youth.

'Women votes' was a great factor in BJP's victory too. The Dalit women were fed up with a lack of protection against rapes and other heinous crimes against them and almost no conviction of the criminals. The criminals ruled the state as the government existed on their mercy. The Muslim women were fed up with male dominance who could divorce their wives just by uttering the word

'talaq' (meaning divorce) three times. The BJP and Modi government promised to consider a change that will make this practice illegal in India.

The phenomenal victory of the BJP in Uttar Pradesh has surpassed the figures projected by various exit polls, and has almost fooled political pundits. The outcome can rightly be viewed as a tectonic shift in the country's political landscape, whose aftershocks will continue to reverberate across the political spectrum.

The BJP's also got the votes of folks who were fed up with pseudo-secularism, fanning the discontent among the majority about the perceived restrictions on the free articulation of Hindu socio-religious practices. The myth of a consolidated vote-bank along the caste and communal divide was debunked.



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Does sound familiar? The electorate enjoyed the jibes, the mocking style of Mr. Modi who is always at his eloquent best at the election rallies and excels in the use of the language of the common man, but as it turns out, the voters have reflected on the issues of development, of peaceful, harmonious, living with members of other communities, of an overwhelming desire to have opportunities while choosing their rulers. Mr. Trump can learn a few pointers from Mr. Modi to refrain from bitterly divisive discourses and make an attempt to soften his hateful words with decent homilies. The rest is up to the American consciousness. The Indian experience can work for them as 'lesson learned.'