

Bihar steals Modi's firecrackers: Pak media

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Islamabad: Leading Pakistani newspapers today ran front-page stories on Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led BJP's rout in the key Bihar polls, in which Pakistan figured as a major issue during campaigning that saw party president making the controversial "firecrackers would go off" remark.

A day after BJP's "thumping" defeat in the crucial polls, editorials and commentaries here said Pakistan was "more than usually interested" in the assembly elections amid protests against Pakistani singers and calls for major Muslim Indian film stars to "return to Pakistan".

"Modi's cow politics was put out to pasture" as Bihar gave a resounding verdict against his party's "campaign to pit Hindus against Muslims over beef eating", 'The Dawn' reported under the headline 'Bihar steals Modi's firecrackers'.

"The hefty score of 178 seats in the Bihar 243-member assembly for Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's grand alliance demolished virtually all poll predictions," it reported.

The article termed as "shooting from the hip" BJP president Amit Shah's recent controversial remarks that "firecrackers would go off in Pakistan" if his party lost in the Bihar assembly polls.

"The extremism and religious intolerance that was on the rise after Narendra Modi came to power in India received a setback as the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) suffered a thumping defeat in the Bihar state assembly elections, The News International, reported under the front-page headline 'Modi's BJP bites the dust in Bihar for its extremism'.

It said that Modi had turned the Bihar poll into a test of his popularity, addressing dozens of rallies and promising voters billions of dollars for development in a poor state where two-thirds of the population does not have access to even electricity.

"The defeat is also a setback to his plans to push major economic reforms through the national parliament where his BJP lacks a majority," it reported.

In an editorial, the newspaper called the rout of the BJP-led coalition in the polls as "arguably the first good news to come from India in the last few months".

"The clampdown in Kashmir, cross-border firing, the beef ban, violence against religious minorities, protests against Pakistani singers, sports persons and diplomats, and calls for major Muslim Indian film stars to 'return to Pakistan' have become the hallmarks of Modi's new shining India.

"There was little surprise then that when Bihar, a state of over 100 million people, went to vote, neighbouring Pakistan was more than usually interested," it said.

- PTI