

All set for Karnataka poll results Sunday

The results of the Karnataka assembly elections that could alter the political equations at the national level will be out Sunday.

More than 6,000 officials at 48 centres will count the votes cast in the three-phase polls and results for all the 224 assembly seats are expected to be announced by 3 p.m., the state election commission here said Saturday.

The counting will begin at 8 a.m. in 48 centres across the state and trends should be available by 10.30 a.m., according to state chief electoral officer M.N. Vidyashankar.

Karnataka is the first state to hold polls with re-drawn constituencies following recommendations of the Delimitation Commission which has reserved more seats for the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes without altering the strength of the assembly.

Officials will employ a new software developed by the National Informatics Centre to make real-time result announcements on the Internet.

About 65 percent of around 42 voters cast their ballots in the three-phase elections on May 10, 16 and 22 to pick 224 members from among 2,241 candidates. There are 108 women contestants, majority of them Independents, not members of any political party.

The Congress is contesting 222 of the 224 seats of the assembly. It withdrew its candidate from Shikaripura in Shimoga district to make it a straight contest between former Karnataka chief minister S. Bangarappa, who heads the state Samajwadi Party, and the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) chief ministerial candidate B.S. Yediyurappa.

The Congress failed to field a candidate in one constituency as two aspirants fought for nomination and the party suffered embarrassment as the nominations of both were rejected.

The BJP has fielded candidates in all seats followed by Janata Dal-Secular (JD-S) in 219 constituencies, Bahujan Samaj Party in 217, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) 10 and Communist Party of India nine.

A majority of other candidates are independents.

Besides Yediyurappa, other chief ministerial aspirants are state Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge, former deputy chief minister Siddaramaiah, also of the Congress, and former chief minister H.D. Kumaraswamy of JD-S.

In the 2004 assembly polls, the Congress had won only 65 seats and BJP had emerged as the single largest party with 79 seats. JD-S had bagged 58.

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