

Akali Dal retains Amritsar seat

The ruling Akali Dal Sunday retained the Amritsar-south assembly seat for which a by-election was held last week.

The Akali candidate, Inderbir Singh Bolaria, won the seat by a margin of 22,223 votes over his nearest rival, Navdeep Singh Goldy of the Congress.

The seat had fallen vacant following the death this March of Raminder Singh Bolaria, father of the new winner. The father had won the seat in February 2007.

Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal hailed the outcome of the by-poll.

'This is a forceful mandate for good governance and a stamp of popular approval on the futuristic vision unfolded by the SAD-BJP alliance over the past 16 months in Punjab. This is also a strong rebuff to the negative and destructive politics pursued by the Congress party and its leaders,' Badal claimed.

He also claimed that there was a significant increase in the Akali-BJP vote bank in the seat this time compared to February 2007.

Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal thanked the people of Amritsar for supporting the Akali Dal by giving the winner a higher margin of victory than in February 2007.

The chief minister praised the role played in the poll by the Election Commission (EC). He said the EC's role had 'exposed the vicious and misleading propaganda of our rivals about the fairness of the poll'.

The EC had ordered central forces for the constituency, removed Amritsar deputy commissioner K.S. Pannu and also handed over a bill of Rs.1.9 million to Badal for 'misusing' the state government helicopter, landing in adjoining Tarn Taran district while heading for election rallies in Amritsar recently.

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