

Numbers game politicians play!

With no clear picture emerging on political equations, top political leaders continued to have a field day Saturday predicting figures of votes for or against the Manmohan Singh government in Tuesday's confidence motion.

Leaders of the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) worked hard to get the numbers in their favour as they knew that the going was tough to reach the magical figure of 272 votes in the Lok Sabha to win the trust vote.

Congress spokesman M. Veerappa Moily said the UPA will have 280-plus votes in the confidence motion.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Vayalar Ravi also put the UPA strength at 280-plus.

But Railway Minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Lalu Prasad was more ambitious, foreseeing 291 MPs supporting the UPA. The RJD is a member of the UPA.

Steel, Chemicals and Fertilisers Minister Ram Vilas Paswan of the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) - another UPA constituent - claimed support of 281 MPs for the UPA.

On the other side of the divide, the main opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the Left parties did not claim any numbers but maintained that the fall of the government was imminent.

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