

## The 'power' politics in Uttar Pradesh polls

Money and muscle are two great power factors in Uttar Pradesh politics, or so it seems, if you go by a recent survey in the state.

According to a study carried out by a voluntary organisation, Election Watch, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) topped the list of nominees with criminal antecedents, while the ruling Samajwadi Party had fielded the maximum number of millionaires in the ongoing state assembly elections that commenced April 7. The seven-phased poll will end May 8.

The average assets of Samajwadi Party and BSP candidates were estimated at Rs.16.4 million and Rs.13.6 million respectively.

Significantly, a large number of candidates including some of the multi-millionaires did not even have permanent account number (PAN), the study has pointed out.

Election Watch chief I.C. Dwivedi told reporters here Tuesday: 'According to a study carried out by us, 33.33 percent of BSP candidates were allegedly embroiled in different criminal offences.'

The BSP was followed by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Of the total candidates fielded by the party, 27.03 percent were facing criminal charges while the Samajbadi Party stood a close third with 26.5 percent candidates from the rogues gallery.

About 20.17 percent of the Congress and 18.31 percent of Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) nominees in the fray were facing criminal charges.

'This data is based on the affidavits filed by candidates with their nomination papers in the first and second phases covering 120 constituencies in 23 districts,' Dwivedi said.

Uttar Pradesh has 403 assembly constituencies spread across 70 districts.

As per these affidavits, the BSP also tops the list of having multi-millionaire candidates.

'About 35 percent BSP candidates figure in the list of the affluent, followed by Samajwadi Party (30 percent), BJP (30 percent), Congress (19 percent) and other parties (five percent)', Dwivedi said.

He did not rule out the possibility of concealment of both assets as well as facts relating to their criminal antecedents while making their mandatory declarations before the Election Commission.

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