

\*Will Modi lose the next Lok Sabha election in 2019?\*

Arvind Kala, former Freelance Journalist

Yes. He's heading for a resounding defeat. Every storm begins with a few rain-drops. In the same way, signs of an anti-Modi surge are popping up India-wide.

Simultaneously, something fascinating is happening. Modi's started looking like a joke. A year ago India saw him as a visionary who would transform India.

Today he arouses sniggers. People say he does three things very competently.

He roams around, he changes his clothes three times a day, and he talks non-stop.

The message has percolated into the BJP. That they are rapidly losing ground. Signs of the BJP decline are too many to ignore.

Two days ago Nanded in Maharashtra offered a telling glimpse of Modi's decline. In civil polls there, a thoroughly discredited Congress party routed the BJP, winning 67 out of 71 seats.

Delhi has been a BJP stronghold since 1947. Delhi's Punjabis loved the BJP more than they loved their own mothers. The BJP youth wing ABVP has dominated student politics in Delhi University.

Yet it was routed by a dysfunctional youth wing of the Congress party in a student Union election. The Congress candidates beat their BJP rivals by a large 8 % margin.

The BJP was similarly beaten in JNU and in the University of Hyderabad. In Delhi's Bawana assembly poll the BJP candidate trailed 3rd behind his AAP and Congress rivals.

This setback came just weeks after the BJP registered a smashing victory in Delhi's municipal poll.

So what is happening? India is seeing huge rural and urban stress. A failed demonetization established Modi as a disaster. A failing GST is establishing him as a catastrophe.

Talking of village India first, India has 179 million rural households. They are home to desperately poor and under-nourished families.

Think of one such poor family with a cow. Modi has deprived each such family of RS 25,000. By disrupting the cattle trade India-wide.

Earlier the poor Indian farmer could sell his cow for Rs 25000 when it stopped giving milk. No longer. Now cattle buyers don't step forward lest Hindu goons lynch them.

So the farmer with an unproductive cow leaves it in some open area, and this cow becomes yet another addition to the tens of thousands of emaciated cows standing around in the countryside.

Worse, they eat up the farmer's crop. Losing him the little he has.

India has 120 million cows, according to the last agriculture census. Why would those cow-owners vote for a Modi who impoverishes them?

When Nanded voted against the BJP and Modi this week, it was speaking for all of rural India. Village voters will pulverize Modi in 2019.

About urban distress, facts speak. Mahesh Vyas is India's most respected statistician and founder of CMIE, our most credible source on the Indian economy.

Citing figures, he wrote that demonetization triggered huge job losses. Seven million of them in one year between Jan 2016 and Jan 2017. He was talking of formal jobs in the private sector.

Those seven million lost jobs means at least 28 million people pauperized, at four people per family, people who depended on those salaries to eat and live.

Today a failing GST has paralyzed commerce all over India. Small traders and manufacturers just can't cope with the paperwork.

And they can't afford the services of trained accountants.

Talking of employment, some 30,000 young boys and girls enter India's work-force EVERY DAY. No jobs. What are these young men to do except grab and rob?

So Delhi sees some 30 snatchings every day, an under-count because many victims don't even bother going to the police.

Why no-job growth, India is seeing huge job losses. Larsen & Toubro is one of India's top infrastructure Giants. It has trimmed its workforce by 14000.

HDFC bank has got rid of 11,000 staffers in three years. Yes Bank by 2500, or 10 % of it's work-force.

Job losses have occurred in the top 121 companies listed on the Bombay Stock Exchange. These companies hired 12000 fewer people in FY ending 2017 compared to FY ending 2016.

The IT sector is similarly seeing a large number of job losses. Our IT engineers haven't skilled up enough for a new age of technological change.

So Modi's position is getting precarious by the day. There's one irony about democracies. An opposition party can sit tight and regain power.

The incumbent's bungling paves the way for the opposition's return. This is happening in India now.

Three years ago Sonia and Rahul looked like a dopey mother with a dopey son on her lap. Thanks to Modi's bungling, Rahul,'s begun to look like a brilliant Einstein.

Rahul has to do nothing. Modi's speeches are digging Modi's grave. The moment he appears on ten TV channels, India sighs: Uff, fellow has started again. In short, Modi's become a tiresome bore.

There are two things about a compelling speaker. Your big talk must match with the experiences of the people listening to you.

Modi held India spellbound by kindling hope in the hearts of people. All that hope is dead. Replacing it is contempt in Indians for the grand empty speeches Modi delivers daily.