

Modi celebrates 'record' win in opposition-held West Bengal

In Kerala, the Congress party-led alliance ousted the ruling Communists

● MK Stalin of Tamil Nadu lost his seat in major electoral shock

● Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma celebrated a "hat-trick" of wins

AFP | Kolkata, India

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi claimed a "record" victory yesterday in key elections in opposition-held West Bengal state after official trends and partial results showed a thumping majority for his Hindu nationalist party.

Votes were still being counted under tight security in the state of more than 100 million people, one of five states and territories that held elections in April and May where results were also being announced on Monday.

The results should put Modi on a stronger footing while he battles a series of economic and foreign policy challenges, including high unemployment rates and a pending US trade deal, ahead of a general election in 2029.

In keenly fought West Bengal, where Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has never won before, the party was leading in 156 of the 293 seats and had won 48 others, according to the Election Commission of India.

"The 2026 West Bengal As-



India's Prime Minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Narendra Modi (2L) waves to supporters as he arrives at party headquarters in New Delhi

sembly Elections will be remembered forever," Modi said on social media. "People's power has prevailed and BJP's politics of good governance has triumphed."

"BJP's record win in West Bengal would not be possible without the efforts and struggles of countless Karyakartas (workers) over generations," Modi said.

Senior party leaders and thousands of supporters celebrated on the streets of the state capital Kolkata, joyously swaying to victory tunes.

The BJP, the ruling party in the

national parliament, waged an aggressive campaign to dislodge the powerful regional party of firebrand leader Mamata Banerjee, in power in West Bengal since 2011.

Scuffles broke out outside several counting centres in the state, and police used batons to control the crowd. Past elections have resulted in violence.

This campaign was marked by protests over the removal of millions of names from voter rolls, billed as removing ineligible voters but which critics said was skewed against marginalised and

minority communities.

'New face'

Veteran politician MK Stalin, chief minister of the southern state of Tamil Nadu, lost his seat in another major electoral shock.

Stalin's ruling

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) came a distant second behind a party floated by the actor-turned politician C. Joseph Vijay.

Vijay, 51, one of India's most bankable actors, launched his TVK party in 2024 on the plank of youth employment and good governance in Tamil Nadu, a key industrial hub with more than 80 million people.

Results showed that Stalin, 73, had lost in his Kolathur stronghold to TVK's V.S. Babu.

The trends indicated a surprise result for TVK in a state where most exit polls had suggested Stalin's DMK would return to power. "This result (in Tamil Nadu) shows that the youth want a new face. It is not just anti-incumbency," political scientist Ramu Manivanan told AFP.

"Vijay as an actor has a large female fan base as a cinema star. All that has influenced the outcome," Manivanan said.

In neighbouring Kerala, the Congress party-led alliance ousted the ruling Communists, bagging 63 out of 97 seats.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi thanked the people of Kerala for

a "truly decisive mandate".

He also heaped praise on party workers for ensuring a "hard-fought, well-run campaign".

The BJP returned to power in the northeastern state of Assam and in the small coastal territory of Puducherry, where it was a part of the ruling coalition.

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma celebrated a "hat-trick" of wins in the state of more than 31 million after the BJP sealed victory for the third successive time.



India conducts the world's largest democratic exercise, with over 900 million eligible voters participating in elections to the Lok Sabha, overseen by the Election Commission of India.

Voting is done using Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs), and elections are often held in multiple phases to manage the country's vast size and population.

Two dead after car ploughs into people in Germany's Leipzig: mayor



Members of the emergency services work at the scene where a car ploughed into people on a street leaving at least two dead and several injured, in the city centre in Leipzig, eastern Germany

Leipzig, Germany

A car ploughed into people on a street Germany's eastern city of Leipzig yesterday, leaving at least two dead and several injured, authorities said.

The driver was arrested after the vehicle careered from a main square down a major city centre street, close to historic sites.

Leipzig mayor Burkhard Jung confirmed two people had died, adding: "We still don't really know the motivation. We

don't know anything about the perpetrator."

Leipzig fire service chief Axel Schuh also gave a death toll of two.

Two people were also seriously injured and two others were "affected," he said.

Police said in a post on X that the car ploughed into people on Grimmaische street and then "fled the scene".

But they later arrested the driver, adding that "there is currently no further danger from him".

Police deployed in large numbers along with firefighters, emergency medical personnel and two helicopters.

Germany has faced a string of car-ramming attacks in recent years.

In December 2024, at least six people were killed and hundreds wounded in a car-ramming attack on the Christmas market in the eastern city of Magdeburg.

There have also been similar attacks in Munich and Berlin.

Passenger jet clips lamppost, truck while landing at Newark

AFP | New York, United States

A United Airlines jet with 231 passengers and crew escaped a major disaster Sunday after one of its wheels clipped a lamppost and truck on a highway while on final approach to land in New Jersey.

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) officials said the Boeing 767 landed safely at Newark Liberty International Airport after arriving from Venice, Italy, and the agency would investigate the incident.

A preliminary investigation from New Jersey State Police said "while a United Airlines Aircraft was approaching the runway, a landing tire and the underside of the plane collided with a pole and a tractor-trailer."

"The pole then struck a Jeep" that was also traveling the highway, state police said.

No injuries were reported on the plane, and the delivery truck driver was taken to the hospital with minor injuries and released, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey said in a statement.



United Airlines flight 169 was carrying 221 passengers and 10 crew members when the incident on a section of road near the airport runways occurred around 2 p.m. local time on Sunday.

The H&S Bakery truck "was unscathed" but "the wheel of the commercial plane crashed into the driver's window," according to Chuck Paterakis, a senior vice president for the company, who added "the truck driver suffered small cuts from the incident."

Paterakis also told TV broad-

caster ABC everybody in the incident was very fortunate "because it could have been the opposite of what happened, and a little help from God went a long way tonight for everybody on the plane, and including the driver."

United Airlines said in a statement it plans to "conduct a rigorous flight safety investigation into the incident and our crew has been removed from service as part of this process."

Aircraft manufacturer Boeing did not immediately respond to AFP's request for comment.