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JPNN/New Delhi/Feb 10, 2015/In a near-sweep, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) today decimated BJP and Congress by recording a landslide victory and is set to secure 66 of the 70 seats in the Delhi Assembly elections, halting the Modi juggernaut in its tracks. The AAP has already won 12 seats and is leading in 54 seats as the counting of votes progressed and is set to win more than 90 per cent of the seats, a feat achieved only twice before in Sikkim and Bihar. Arvind Kejriwal, the former Revenue Service officer who led his party to a sensational victory,

won with a huge margin in the New Delhi constituency where the BJP fielded Nupur Sharma, a novice, who came second and veteran Congress leader Kiran Walia way behind at the third spot. The BJP's humiliation was complete with its Chief Ministerial face Kiran Bedi losing in the traditional stronghold of Krishna Nagar which was long held by party veteran Harsh Vardhan. The BJP has so far won two seats and was leading in only one more. All its veterans had to bite the dust. The party gambled on Bedi but relied on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's image which still did not work for the party. In an election that was billed as a referendum on Prime Minister Narendra Modi but rejected by BJP as such, the AAP wave spearheaded by its chief Arvind Kejriwal knocked the two major parties and their veterans from their citadels. In all elections that followed the spectacular victory in the May Lok Sabha polls, the BJP formed governments in Maharashtra, Haryana, Jharkhand and emerged the second largest party in Jammu and Kashmir with the highest vote share. Congress, which ruled the national capital for 15 years till December 2013, has been reduced to zero while the INLD was ahead in one seat.

Congress stalwart and Chief Ministerial candidate Ajay Maken was pushed to the third spot in Sadar Bazar where AAP candidate was on top and BJP at number two spot. Following the debacle, Maken resigned as Congress General Secretary taking responsibility. The AAP's

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hurricane march could be gauged from the fact that it polled 54 per cent of the popular votes while BJP got 32.4 per cent and the Congress 9.4 per cent. In the last elections, the BJP had emerged as the largest party with 31 seats, the AAP 28 and the Congress 8. Kejriwal formed a government with Congress support and resigned after 49 days in February 2014 over the Lokpal issue. Kejriwal will take oath as Chief Minister on February 14 at the Ramlila Grounds, the platform that launched him during the days of India Against Corruption, exactly one year after he stepped down.

The scale of AAP's victory was reminiscent of the victories recorded by the Sikkim Sangram Party (SSP) which won all the 32 seats in the assembly while the JD (U)-BJP alliance won 206 of the 243 seats in 2010. In the 1991 Assembly elections in Tamil Nadu, the AIADMK-Congress alliance won 225 of the 234 seats while in subsequent elections the DMK-Congress alliance won 221 of 234 seats. As the voting trends trickled in showing a massive landslide for AAP, Modi called Kejriwal over phone to congratulate him on the victory. He assured Kejriwal of Centre's complete support in the development of Delhi. Bedi also congratulated Kejriwal saying "full marks to Arvind." Maken, whose party has been decimated in the elections, resigned as Congress General Secretary taking full responsibility for the debacle. In his address to his supporters, Kejriwal saluted the people of Delhi for doing a "wonder" by giving them a landslide victory and asked party workers not to get carried away by the mandate.

"You have done a wonder. When you are on the path of truth, all the forces of universe come together to help you. I salute the people of Delhi. It's a victory of truth," he said. The defeat for BJP was all the more bitter because it had won all the seven Lok Sabha seats in the last year's general elections. The party's gamble of making Bedi its Chief Ministerial candidate back fired. The only saving grace for the BJP was victory of its former state unit president Vijender Gupta who won from Rohini. Kejriwal thanked Modi for his greetings and said he would like to meet him soon to discuss issues related to Delhi. He told the Prime Minister that he will need the Centre's help. Expressing happiness over the party's performance, AAP leader Yogendra Yadav said, "It was not just under class, but the middle class also voted for AAP. The (Narendra Modi) juggernaut seems to have halted at least for now." Hailing AAP's performance, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee called the election result a turning point in the country's political situation.

"Delhi election is a turning point of the present political situation. Shows political vendetta has no place in a democracy. Country needed this change," she said in a tweet. "This is a victory for the people and a big defeat for the arrogant and those who are doing political vendetta & spreading hate among people," Banerjee said in another tweet. Reeling under the debacle, the BJP admitted that it is a "big setback" but asserted that it was not a referendum on the central government as people voted on local issues. The party also said that Delhi's loss is a "collective failure" of the party and the defeat cannot be thrown on any single individual, seen as an

Kejriwalled BJP, Cong run for cover, AAP storms to 'Historic Delhi Victory' BJP reduced to 3 Cong-0

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attempt to deflect any blame on Modi.Agency