

# What India's election result means

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- After seven long electoral phases that took place across India, the mother of elections in the world's largest democracy ended on Sunday, with the results being declared on Tuesday. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, led by Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and its coalition partners, the National Democratic Alliance, secured 292 seats, whereas the Indian National Congress and its multi-party Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance secured 234. The result was a reality check for the ruling party.

Several steps taken by the Modi government since 2014 have strengthened relations between India and Taiwan, although the former's "one China" policy and the geopolitical situation do not allow it to recognize Taiwan as a country.

Though limited in political engagement, in the decade since 2014, when Modi became prime minister, and Taiwan's New Southbound Policy was implemented by then-president Tsai Ing-wen (蔡英文) in 2016, nonpolitical ties between the two sides have increased significantly.

In Taiwan, multiple Indian events marking major festivals such as Diwali and Holi are also held, which then-minister of foreign affairs Joseph Wu (吳釗燮) attended at India's de facto embassy, the India Taipei Association.

Since 2020, there has been growing acceptance of Taiwan among Indian policymakers. In August 2022, when China launched military exercises around Taiwan, Indian Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Arindam Bagchi expressed concerns about the unilateral attempt to change the "status quo" in the region.

Additionally, the recently concluded memorandum of understanding on bringing Indian workers to Taiwan was seen as a welcome step in boosting bilateral relations.

Modi also expressed his grief on the loss of life and property due to an earthquake in Taiwan.

Modi has also expressed sincere gratitude to President William Lai's (賴清德) well wishes on X. Such bonhomie between the two sides is set to increase.

For Taiwan, the re-elected Modi government would provide consistency to bilateral ties. In states like Gujarat and Tamil Nadu where Taiwanese companies have invested significantly, the power equation remains unchanged, which brings stability to Taiwanese interests.

In the past, Taiwanese manufacturers have raised concerns about complicated rules in India, which present challenges to Taiwanese investment. Having a continuity government in India would assure Taiwanese investors.

Although India has not voiced support for Taiwan at the World Health Assembly, the inclusion of Taiwan in the India-co-launched Internal Solar Alliance is something to hope for. As Taiwan faces power crises each year, its inclusion in the grouping can lead to a free exchange of ideas and technology.

The increase in cooperation between the two on education has also been one of the strongest pillars of the relationship. With the increase of Taiwan Education Centers in India to 33, it has also helped in bridging ties from the bottom up.

Additionally, there have been visits by Indian high-school principals to Taiwan followed by online interactions between students, which has led to further understanding between the two cultures.

COVID-19 assistance from Taiwan, followed by the recent opening of a Taiwan Tourism Information Centre in India, and the planned opening of Taiwan's representative office in Mumbai, which would provide ease of access to the Taiwanese and Indian business communities, are further examples that reflect growing nonpolitical ties which look set to continue.

However, although India and Taiwan have had the same party remain in power after their respective elections this year, challenges remain in furthering ties.

Questionable remarks by former minister of labor Hsu Ming-chun (許銘春) in March about the government's preference for certain Indian workers caused a significant stir, forcing her to apologize.

As foreign minister, Wu remained hopeful of securing a free-trade agreement with India, and it will be interesting to see how the new administrations in India and Taiwan work toward fulfilling this goal.

With the growing ties between the two, one cannot stop echoing Wu's remarks: "to me, the world is divided into two types of people: those who are going to fall in love with India and those who already have. I believe you all know I fall in the latter camp."

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The ancient Chinese military strategist Sun Tzu (孫子) said “know yourself and know your enemy and you will win a hundred battles.” Applied in our times, Taiwanese should know themselves and know the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) so that Taiwan will win a hundred battles and hopefully, deter the CCP. Taiwanese receive information daily about the People’s Liberation Army’s (PLA) threat from the Ministry of National Defense and news sources. One area that needs better understanding is which forces would the People’s Republic of China (PRC) use to impose martial law and what would be the consequences for living under PRC

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