

Bihar results a 'serious political setback' for Modi: US media

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Washington: The Bihar assembly polls result is a direct and negative evaluation of the BJP's performance in the last one year, a US-based expert said today, as the American media termed the party's stunning defeat as a "serious political setback" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Unlike the AAP's victory in Delhi, which was more a reflection of the electorate's disillusionment with politicians in general, this defeat represents a much more direct and negative evaluation of the BJP's performance over the last year. It seems that there is significant concern with both the economic and social policies of the government," said Puneet Manchanda, professor of marketing at the University of Michigan.

Of the view that losing a big heartland state like Bihar is definitely a setback for the BJP, Manchanda said this could take the air out of the economic reforms just at the point where they should be gathering momentum.

"For the opposition, this victory suggests that a coalition of parties is best way to compete against the ruling party, as no single party currently has the heft to do so," Manchanda said.

The Grand Secular Alliance with 41.9 per cent votes got 178 seats in a Hosue of 243 in Bihar while the BJP-led NDA with 34.1 per cent votes could get only 58 seats.

BJP's defeat by Nitish Kumar-led coalition was widely reported by the mainstream US media, most of whom carried reports filed by news agencies.

"India's ruling party accepts loss in crucial state elections," The Washington Post said in its headline.

The New York Times in its story - titled 'Modi concedes party's defeat in Assembly elections for key State - said the Prime Minister "suffered a serious political setback" and it deprives the BJP of a "vital location" form which to spread its political dominance into northeast India including the large state of West Bengal.

- PTI