# India Concludes General Election Amid Tensions Over Farmers' Protests



India has concluded its extensive 47-day general election to elect members to the lower house of Parliament, or Lok Sabha. Nearly one billion voters participated from various regions, including remote areas accessible only by foot, horse, or helicopter. Results are expected on June 4, 2024.

The election marks a significant test for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), who are seeking a third consecutive term. In 2019, the BJP secured 303 of the 543 parliamentary seats, far exceeding the 272 required for a majority.

A remarkable point of contention involves the Punjab farmers, who have been protesting since February over the government's failure to honor promises related to minimum crop prices. This issue traces back to large-scale protests in 2020 and 2021, which led to the government's retraction of certain agricultural reforms. Farmers continued their demonstrations and voting in Punjab, despite feeling alienated by the administration.

The election period saw a united opposition, led by the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), challenging Modi's governance on grounds of economic inequality and alleged favoritism towards billionaire associates. Modi's rival parties have promised to address issues like unemployment, loan waivers for farmers, and support for the agricultural sector.

Modi's campaign, marked by approximately 200 rallies, concentrated largely on promoting his leadership. Conversely, the opposition has worked to persuade voters of the negative impacts of Modi’s policies on lower and middle castes.

As India awaits the election results, the political implications for Modi, particularly in regions like Punjab, remain a focal point.