
INDIA VOTES IN FIFTH PHASE OF ELECTION INCLUDING IN CITY WHERE PM OPENED CONTROVERSIAL HINDU TEMPLE

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Piyush Nagpal, Biswajeet Banerjee

Millions of Indians across 49 constituencies began casting ballots on Monday as the countrys six-week-long election enters its final stages with voting also being held in northern Ayodhya city, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi opened a controversial Hindu temple on the site of a razed mosque.

Mondays polling in the fifth round of multi-phase national elections across six states and two union territories is crucial for Modis ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party as it includes some of its strongholds in states like Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The polls in Uttar Pradeshs Ayodhya are seen as a litmus test for Modis Hindu-first politics, as he has hailed the opening of the Hindu temple as his governments crowning achievement.

The staggered election will run until June 1 and nearly 970 million eligible voters, more than 10% of the worlds population, will elect 543 members to the lower house of Parliament for five years. The votes are scheduled to be counted on June 4.

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