

## INDIAN-RUN KASHMIR

# Pro-autonomy party wins in local elections

Kashmir's biggest political party opposed to India's stripping of the region's semi-autonomy won the most seats in local elections, official data showed Tuesday, in a vote seen as a referendum on the move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government five years ago.

National Conference, or NC, won 42 seats, mainly from the Kashmir Valley, the heartland of the anti-India rebellion, according to the data. Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party secured 29 seats, all from the Hindu-dominated areas of Jammu.

India's main opposition Congress party, which ran in the elections in alliance with the NC, succeeded in six constituencies.

The vote will allow Kashmir to have its own truncated government and a regional legislature, rather than being directly under New Delhi's rule.

But there will be a limited transition of power from New Delhi as Kashmir will remain a "union territory" — rather than having statehood, as it did before 2019 — and will have India's Parliament as its main legislator.

— *Associated Press*