

AAP effect: Traders to form Aam Vyapari Party in Maharashtra

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Sanjay Jog | Mumbai December 12, 2013 Last Updated at 23:48 IST



Taking a cue from the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) impressive performance in the Delhi assembly election, traders from Maharashtra plan to form the Aam Vyapari Party (AVP) and make their debut in the ensuing Lok Sabha elections. The party aims to take up various issues faced by traders including local body tax (LBT), high electricity tariff and trade licence fee.

Viren Shah, president, Federation of Retail Traders Welfare Association (FRTWA) told Business Standard “Even though AVP will be a party of traders, the issues to be raised will also be concerning the common man. The decision to form AVP was unanimous among traders though the necessary formalities are being worked out in this regard. It will be done in a month after talking to various traders' bodies. AVP will contest Lok Sabha and assembly elections in Maharashtra but the number of seats will be fixed in the days to come.” He made it clear that AVP will not align with any party but contest on its own.

Shah said that Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP's historic victory in the Delhi assembly elections had prompted members of the federation to explore an option of forming a party of traders. “Our biggest challenge is to abolish LBT and Octroi in Maharashtra to root out corruption. Despite protests, hunger strikes and several representations to the Congress-led government since the last two years, the government has not responded positively. Besides, due to the high power tariff, it is quite difficult to do business in the state,” he informed.

Further, AVP will raise the present state of affairs in housing and water supply. Shah alleged that the common man could not afford a house in Mumbai in particular, due to the alleged nexus between builders and the government.

Politicians were allegedly supporting non-tax paying encroachers for vote bank politics.

According to Shah, AVP would bat for the abolition of the trade licence fee, especially since traders were already paying VAT, service tax and income tax. “The abolition of licence fee is needed, as traders have to get more than 35 licences after payment of bribes,” he noted.