

MD. SHAHID PERVEZ
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

RAIPUR, Oct. 31. — The birth of Chhattisgarh has not proved to be a peaceful affair for the chief minister on the eve of its creation today by supporters of a would-be chief minister whose candidature was not endorsed by the Congress high command.

The irony is, the successful candidate, Mr Ajit Jogi, is not even known to be a good friend of Mr Digvijay Singh. The latter had no option, with Mrs Sonia Gandhi endorsing Mr Jogi's candidature, but to ask all his MLAs including the 13 ministers from Chhattisgarh region to back him at today's CLP meeting.

The AICC spokesman was officially declared the Congress's chief ministerial candidate at 1 p.m. today. Minutes later, Mr Singh drove down to Mr VC Shukla's farm house on the outskirts of Raipur, reportedly to pacify the man who was a strong claimant for the Chhattis-

garh chief minister's chair. He was greeted with slogan-shouting Shukla supporters who soon turned violent, raining blows, kicks and chapals on the chief minister.

Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, who was here as a central Congress observer, managed to escape with a few mild blows into the safety of the house. The violent crowd, which included several women, did not attack AICC general secretary Mrs Prabha Rao, who had driven down with Mr Singh and Mr Azad.

The chief minister bore the brunt of the crowd's fury. His guards could do nothing, hopelessly outnumbered by few hundred supporters who had gathered at the farm house. Mr Singh's kurta was torn, but reports said he was not badly hurt.

Mr Singh himself has denied any such incident at all took place,

Shukla supporters beat up Digvijay

few of their colleagues, made a last-ditch effort yesterday to get their leader's candidature for chief ministership cleared, but in vain. Mr Azad and Mrs Rao today declared Mr Jogi leader of CLP in Chhattisgarh.

Mr Jogi's selection was a foregone conclusion after Mrs Gandhi decided to endorse his candidature a few days ago. She had asked Mr Digvijay Singh to ensure that he was smoothly chosen as Chhattisgarh CLP leader, party sources said.

Mr Jogi is not an MLA, and is known to have been a fierce detractor of the chief minister.

A senior Congressman loyal to the chief minister said: "Left to himself, Mr Jogi could not have managed to muster the support of more than a few MLAs. He sailed through smoothly only thanks to the Congress high command's decision

in his favour."

The Congress was afraid MLAs loyal to Mr Shukla would stall Mr Jogi's selection as CLP leader. Mr Azad and Mrs Rao held a series of meetings with MLAs from the region, even meeting each of them separately, to bring them round to the high command's view.

Jogi claim

A bearing Mr Jogi told reporters that he should not be seen to have run away from Chhattisgarh just because he shifted to Shabdol parliamentary seat the 1999 Lok Sabha election. Mr Jogi had lost that election.

He also did a volte-face when asked whether he still stands by his allegation of corruption against Mr Digvijay Singh.

A few years ago, Mr Jogi had alleged that De Beers gave him Singh Rs 50 crore for diamond prospecting rights.

Minutes after being chosen as CLP leader with Mr Singh's backing Mr Jogi did not even remember having made such an allegation.



Shukla: 'A conspiracy to spoil my image'

Seven Congress legislators loyal to Mr VC Shukla had boycotted today's CLP meeting, to register their protest against Mr Jogi's nomination. The seven MLAs, with a



Jogi: Did enmity with Digvijay forgotten

whole episode must have been a "conspiracy" to tarnish his image. He did not comment on Mr Jogi's selection as Chhattisgarh CLP leader.



Digvijay: They only shouted slogans...

insisting that Mr Shukla's supporters only shouted slogans when he went to his farm house. Mr Shukla has said he was not at home when the incident took place and that the

THE STATESMAN

1 NOV 2000

Ajit Jogi is first CM of Chhattisgarh

By Sudhir K Singh

The Times of India News Service

RAIPUR: Congress spokesperson Ajit Jogi was elected the first chief minister of India's 26th state, Chhattisgarh, and leader of the state Congress Legislature Party (CLP) on Tuesday.

The announcement was made by All India Congress Committee (AICC) observers Ghulam Nabi Azad and Prabha Rao at a press conference at the new CM's residence in the presence of Madhya Pradesh chief minister Digvijay Singh and Mr Jogi after a final round of discussions with the legislators.

However, Mr Jogi's election wasn't entirely smooth. Seven of the 48 MLAs—all supporters of veteran V.C. Shukla's candidature—failed to turn up at the meeting which began at 4 p.m. on Monday and continued till nearly 11 p.m. Angry Shukla supporters on Tuesday also raised anti-Digvijay slogans outside the venue of the CLP meeting in protest against the latter's decision to support Mr Jogi.

Chhattisgarh formally came into existence with effect from midnight on Tuesday when the newly appointed governor, D.N. Sahay, a retired DGP of the Bihar cadre, was sworn-in by the Chief Justice. The CM-elect was sworn in immediately thereafter.

Though Mr Azad refused to divulge the actual results of the election, he said Mr Jogi had been supported by "more than two-thirds" of the MLAs present. Downplaying the absence of seven MLAs at the meeting, the AICC observer said he had presided over the election of no less than 19 CMs, and it was barely in a handful of CLP meetings that all the MLAs had turned up.

The important thing, he said, was that all those who supported Mr Jogi thought him the fittest candidate in view of his long experience at the Centre and his stint as Raipur collector in the early 1980s. Predictably enough, Azad tried hard to dispel the notion that Mr Jogi was the high command's choice, but his arguments failed to convince most of those present.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

1 NOV 2000

CHHATTISGARH STATE

AREA: 1,35,194 SQ. KM.

POPULATION: 1.76 CRORE

CAPITAL: RAIPUR

DISTRICTS: 16

LOK SABHA SEATS: 11

RAJYA SABHA SEATS: 3

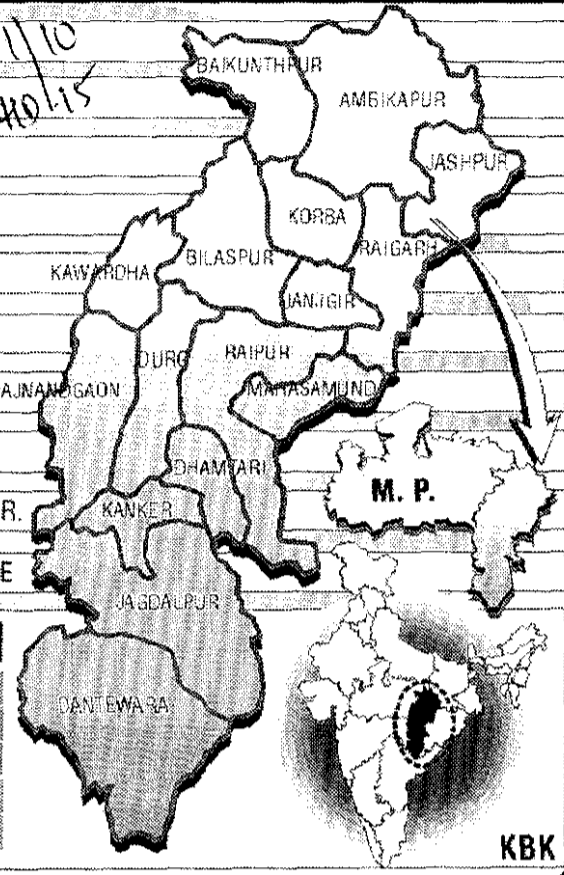
VIDHAN SABHA SEATS: 90

FORMATION: NOV. 1, 2000

FOREST AREA INCOME: 215.67 CR.

MINERAL INCOME: 413.72 CRORE

| ASSEMBLY SEATS | 90 |
|-------------------|----|
| Congress..... | 48 |
| BJP..... | 36 |
| BSP..... | 3 |
| GGP..... | 1 |
| Independents..... | 2 |



THE HINDU

1 NOV 2000

Stalemate in formation of Uttaranchal HC

11/10/99 J. Venkatesan

NEW DELHI, OCT. 31. Even as the Chattisgarh High Court is to be inaugurated tomorrow, a stalemate has developed over the creation of the Uttaranchal High Court for the new State of Uttaranchal carved out of Uttar Pradesh.

Though the new State is to come into existence from November 9 with Dehradun as its capital, it is still not clear in which city the High Court will be located.

According to highly-placed sources, the stalemate is due to demands from the Bar, political leaders and various sections of the people to locate the High Court in their towns, viz. Nainital, Haridwar, Garhwal and Mussoorie.

As there is no unanimity, the Centre is yet to take a decision in this regard, though it favours Nainital.

According to the sources, the Centre feels that the summer palace of the Uttar Pradesh Governor in Nainital has all the facilities for being converted into a High Court by providing some additional infrastructure, but it is not so in other towns.

The Centre hopes that a solution could be found out in the next few days.

Meanwhile, the segregation of the cases from among those pending in the Allahabad High Court has been completed and out of eight lakh cases, two lakhs pertaining to the Uttaranchal region would be transferred to the new High Court once it is formed.

For the formation of the Jharkhand High Court, the Government feels that there would not be any hurdle as already a Bench of the Patna High Court is functioning at Ranchi and this could be converted as the Jharkhand High Court.

Out of 90,000 cases pending in the Patna High Court around 42,000 cases would be transferred to the new High Court.

This includes the 'Rs. 900 crore fodder scam cases' as the crime was stated to have occurred in the cities and towns located in the Jharkhand region.

As a new special judge has to be appointed to deal with these cases, trial of the fodder scam cases is expected to be further delayed.

THE HINDU

1 NOV 2000

Jharkhand power struggle shifts to Patna

By Our Staff Correspondent

PATNA, OCT. 31. The battle for power in the proposed State of Jharkhand has curiously enough shifted to Patna, thanks to the differences that have cropped up between the BJP-led NDA and the JMM over the issue of heading the new Government.

The political drama apart, the Patna High Court today was upset over the failure of the Centre to file an affidavit with respect to the PILs challenging the bifurcation of the State. The court warned that it would grant a stay if the Centre failed to comply with its order by November 6.

The marriage of convenience between the BJP-led NDA and the JMM seems to be going on the rocks with the JMM president, Mr. Shibu Soren, deciding to rush to Patna and hold a meeting of legislators either tomorrow or on Thursday to decide his future action.

Mr. Soren, who is now in Bokaro, told *The Hindu* over phone that he had convened the meeting to take stock of the political crisis that had developed over the formation of the first Government at Ranchi in the light of the talks that his delegation had had with NDA leaders in Delhi yesterday.

Mr. Soren said the meeting of all his legislators would be held on Thursday if they failed to turn up at Patna by tomorrow. He parried questions on whether the talks with the NDA leaders had failed, saying that the party would first listen to what the delegation had to re-

port about its talks with the NDA leaders.

Mr. Soren was of the view that it would be necessary to see to what extent the gap had widened with the NDA and accordingly decide the JMM's path. He clarified that the JMM had never made any demand but had only been stressing the BJP and its constituents, the Samata Party and the JD(U), to honour their promise of making him the Chief Minister of Jharkhand while seeking his support last March to instal Mr. Nitish Kumar on the chair at Patna.

His general secretary, Mr. Prashant Kumar, MLA, who was one of three members who held parleys yesterday in Delhi with the Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, among others, was, however, more forthcoming. Mr. Prashant Kumar arrived here directly from Delhi instead of going to Ranchi, the proposed capital of Jharkhand State which will come into existence on November 15, indicating the party's disenchantment with the BJP and its allies.

Mr. Kumar accused Mr. Fernandes of going back on his words and also alleged that the BJP and its allies had not put forward any proposal before them and that most of them were only for public consumption.

He said the BJP stood exposed not only in the Jharkhand region but also the whole of the country vis-a-vis its promise to make Mr. Soren the Chief Minister after the creation of the new State.

So the decision of the JMM to hold its meet-

ing here is of crucial importance. All its legislators and its president will be in Patna.

While there was no word about the agenda of the meeting, the fact remains that given the background, the meeting could only serve two purposes: to put pressure on the BJP and, alternately, snap ties with NDA and hold talks with the RID president, Mr. Laxmi Prasad Yadav, in a bid to form a secular Government with the support of the Congress and Left parties.

Sources in the JMM do not rule out the possibility of Mr. Soren holding talks with Mr. Yadav. Mr. Soren had made it clear that he would sit in the Opposition if the BJP refused to make him the Chief Minister.

Irrespective of the decision that the JMM might take at its meeting here in the next couple of days, Mr. Soren is playing really tough with the BJP, particularly having demonstrated his popularity at a rally in Ranchi last week.

Even in the numbers game, his 12 MLAs have a crucial role to play as it could play on the stability of the Government if the BJP were to go with its listed allies and ignore him.

On the other hand the RID-Congress alliance has seen eagerly watching the developments waiting for an opportunity to go for the kill. It would be to Mr. Yadav's liking that the JMM has decided to hold its meeting in his stronghold allowing him to keep a better tab on the events that would unfold in the coming fortnight.

THE HINDU

1 NOV 2000

DIGVIJAY, AZAD MANHANDLED BY SHUKLA SUPPORTERS

Jogi elected Chattisgarh CLP leader unanimously

By Lalit Shastri

RAIPUR, OCT. 31. The All India Congress Committee spokesman Mr. Ajit Jogi was today unanimously elected leader of the Chattisgarh Congress Legislature Party (CLP). He would be administered oath of office as the first Chief Minister of Chattisgarh shortly after the new Governor is sworn in after midnight, the AICC observer, Mr. Ghulam Nabi Azad, said.

The proposal to elect Mr. Jogi as the CLP leader was moved by the former Madhya Pradesh Assembly Speaker, Mr. Rajendra Prasad Shukla, and seconded by the former State Minister, Mr. Mahendra Bahadur Singh.

Mr. Azad said 41 of the 48 CLP members attended today's session and that the views of all party MLAs from Chattisgarh had been taken. Enquiries later revealed that seven MLAs — Mr. Vidhan Mishra, Mr. Ganesh Shankar Vaghmare, Mr. Agni Chandra, Mr. Ghanaram Sahu, Mr. Dhanrajit Singh, Mr. Madanopal Singh and Mr. Gulab Singh — were absent. All of them are considered close to the former Union Minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, a strong contender for the Chief Minister's post.

At a press conference, Mr. Azad, flanked by the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Digvijay Singh, the AICC general secretary, Mr. Prabha Rao, and Mr. Jogi, said the democratic process had been strictly followed in the election process. All legislators had been told to elect the leader without fear or favour. They are bound by the resolution of electing the CLP leader, and he would only elect a person enjoying the mas-



The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Digvijay Singh, congratulates Mr. Ajit Jogi soon after the latter was elected the leader of CLP in Raipur on Tuesday. — Photo: A.M. Faruqi

majority support, Mr. Azad said, adding that over 90 per cent of the MLAs were with Mr. Jogi.

Mr. Azad's claim that the election had been free and fair contradicted earlier reports that the party president, Mr. Prabha Rao, had already chaired Mr. Jogi's name.

The AICC observer said Mr. Jogi belonged to the new generation of

politicians. He had left his mark as an able administrator and, given his wide experience, would be able to face the challenges that would confront the new State.

Regarding the formation of his Cabinet, Mr. Jogi said it was too early to say anything, adding: "I have just been elected and would need some time to think."

Later, Mr. Singh and Mr. Azad,

who went to Mr. Shukla's farmhouse, in a bid to pacify him were manhandled, pushed around and jeered by angry supporters of the former Union Minister.

Soon after the CLP leader's election, Mr. Singh, Mr. Azad and Mr. Prabha Rao, drove to the farmhouse. Mr. Shukla, a prominent contender for the Chief Minister's post, was not present at the CLP meeting since he is not a member of the legislature party.

At the farmhouse, frenzied supporters mobbed the car carrying the three senior leaders and began pushing them around. According to witnesses, they were soon whisked away but, during the brief scuffle, Mr. Singh instead of trying to escape took his attackers head on.

This correspondent, who reached the spot soon after the incident along with a photographer, was warned by the mob present there to leave at once or face dire consequences. Soon a large group pounced upon the photographer and snatched away his camera.

Soon after, Mr. Shukla came out and ordered the crowd to leave the premises. After the mob left, the former Union Minister termed the incident "reprehensible" and said he had apologised to Mr. Singh. It was an act committed by some lumpen elements planted there to spoil his image, he added.

Before leaving the farmhouse, Mr. Singh and Mr. Azad tried to make light of the incident by laughing it off. Their car, which was damaged in the incident, told a different story.

THE HINDU

1 NOV 2000

Make me CM or get lost, Soren tells NDA

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATNA/NEW DELHI, Nov. 1. — Mr Siby Soren today maintained that his party would rather "sit in the Opposition" if the NDA backed out from its "assurance" to make him the Jharkhand chief minister, while the BJP held its ground that the post would not go to the JMM-S.

"Accept me as chief minister or get lost," said the JMM-S chief, who arrived in Patna tonight for the party's crucial Legislature Party meeting. He, however, added: "I haven't yet shut the door of negotiations with the NDA. I am still awaiting a favourable response from Mr George Fernandes and other NDA leaders."

When pointed out that the BJP had made it abundantly clear that it would not spare the top job for him, Mr Soren said: "Who are these BJP leaders to make an announcement regarding the chief minister's post? I don't know them."

"Since the BJP is a part of the NDA, BJP leaders should have desisted from making any announcement. After all, BJP is not capable of forming

its own government in Jharkhand as the party has only 32 MLAs in the 81-member House," he said.

He maintained that Mr Fernandes and Mr Nitish Kumar had promised him the post in lieu of the support that the JMM-S extended to the NDA when Mr Kumar made a bid for power in Bihar. "The two leaders recently admitted to have given such an assurance to our delegation."

As a contingency measure, the BJP has begun to actively woo some JMM-S leaders. Surprisingly, only 8 of the 12 MLAs participated at the JMM-S Legislature Party meeting tonight. Mr Soren, however, ruled out any differences within the party.

He said he was already in touch with Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav to probe the possibility of putting up a 'secular' government in Jharkhand. "We have spoken over telephone. No one is pariah in democracy."

Mr Yadav, meanwhile, said: "Let the JMM-S take the final decision about its relationship with the NDA. I will not speak

until Guruji (Mr Soren) makes a clean break with the communal forces."

The JMM-S chief said there would be a second round of Legislature Party meeting tomorrow as today's four-hour meeting remained inconclusive. "We will take the decision only after getting the final response from Mr Fernandes, who has been authorised by the NDA to deal with the JMM-S."

As a sop to keep back Mr Soren in the NDA, the BJP has

■ Photograph, more reports on page 8

proposed that he be made the chairman of the NDA coordination committee for Jharkhand. The proposal was reportedly discussed today at a meeting between Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and the BJP's chief ministerial probable, Mr Babulal Marandi. The BJP is also ready to accommodate Mr Soren's nominee as deputy chief minister.

Mr Fernandes has reportedly assured the BJP leadership that the Samata Party will not precipitate the crisis. He is reportedly unhappy that the JMM delegation that met him recently was headed by Mr

Soren's MLA son, Mr Durga Soren, though the appointment was made in the JMM chief's name. Even the Prime Minister didn't take the delegation seriously, a BJP leader said.

Mr Soren has privately told Mr Fernandes that he is keen to get into the history books as the first chief minister of the state, even if for a few months — hinting that he is not entirely opposed to a rotational chief ministership.

Though the BJP recognises Mr Soren's contribution to the creation of Jharkhand, it does not want to hand over the new state's leadership to the JMM-S on a platter as that would mean that the party had given up its claim to represent tribals. Senior BJP vice-president and spokesperson, Mr Jana Krishnamurthy, pointed out that the BJP had 14 tribal MLAs compared to the JMM's 12.

The JMM should realise the ground realities, he said. Mr Krishnamurthy also said the mandate was in favour of the BJP and hence the party should stake claim to power. Other allies had accepted this claim, he said.

THE STATESMAN

2 NOV 2000

Every step of Centre raises suspicion in Uttarakhand

Sunita Aron
Lucknow, November 5

DISTURBING NOISES are emanating from Uttarakhand at the time of celebrations, thanks to the fragile foundation laid by the BJP high command to gratify both Kumaon and Garhwal. Therefore sharp differences have emerged between Kumaon and Garhwal groups.

A series of steps that the Centre has taken are being viewed with a degree of suspicion. If the appointment of Surjit Singh Barnala as the Governor of the new

State is seen as appeasement of angry Sikhs of Udham Singh Nagar, then by selecting Dehra Dun as the State Capital is being viewed as a move to mollify the Garhwalis. Similarly, the decision to set up the High Court in Nainital was aimed at keeping the Kumaonis in good humour.

Thus both the Garhwalis and Kumaonis feel that Uttarakhand has not been taken as one entity. Agitations have begun with Kumaonis rejecting Dehra Dun and demanding Garisain, primarily because of its location.

Veterans from Kumaon led by B.D. Sanwal, who retired as chief secretary of

UP, vociferously condemned the Centre's decision to make Dehra Dun the capital of the new state. They pointed out that the Kaushik Committee on the selection of the capital had also recommended Garisain as the capital after taking views of a cross-section of society both in Garhwal and Kumaon.

Lieutenant Colonel (Retd) Mohan Chandra Papani said the problems of six lakh people residing in Pithoragarh and Champawat districts had increased by making Dehra Dun the capital. Many in Garhwal feel that leadership of the region should be in the hands of Garhwalis.

Sangam Bahuguna, a social activist, said the contribution by people of Garhwal in the separate hill movement is immense.

Sangam Bahuguna, a social activist, said the contribution as well as sacrifice by people of Garhwal in the separate hill movement is immense.

Reservation is the other major issue that may spoil the serene atmosphere of the hills in the coming days as its major benefit will flow down to Udham Singh Nagar and Haridwar because of the concentration of SC population in the two districts.

In fact, a suggestion has already come forth to introduce quota on economic

grounds. The major areas of concern highlighted in the report of the expert group of the Planning Commission are:

- The area is under critical seismic zone
- Unemployment leading to migration from the hills
- Depletion of natural resources
- Operations of timber and liquor mafia in the area
- Acute drinking water problem as natural springs have dried or disappeared
- Social issues like demand for total prohibition may pose another challenge before the new government, especially with women in the forefront.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 NOV 2000

110-1
5/11

Soren fails to convince PM

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 4. The Prime Minister, Mr. A.B. Vajpayee this evening granted audience to the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader, Mr. Shibu Soren. The meeting is seen as a last attempt to make Mr. Soren give up his adamant demand that the JMM was entitled to have one of its leaders as the chief minister of the new State of Jharkhand.

A similar message was conveyed to Mr. Soren a few days ago by Mr. George Fernandes on behalf of the NDA. Mr. Soren had been threatening to part company with the NDA if his demand of chief ministership was not conceded (despite the fact that the JMM has only 12 MLAs, to the BJP's 32).

However, it is learnt that Mr. Soren was keen to hear for himself from the Prime Minister whether or not the JMM would be getting the coveted post.

Mr. Vajpayee is believed to have told Mr. Soren that there was no change from the NDA position as spelled out by Mr. Fernandes. Neither the BJP nor the NDA is going

to budge from its unequivocal stand. Short of the demand for the chief minister's chair, Mr. Soren was reportedly assured by the Prime Minister that the NDA was prepared to accommodate the JMM in any manner suggested by the Jharkhand leaders.

Mr. Soren told reporters that the Prime Minister has agreed to call Mr. Fernandes for consultation in order to find out whether any promises were made to the JMM in exchange for the group's support for Mr. Nitish Kumar's short-lived chief ministerial tenure. It was a dejected Mr. Soren who met reporters after his audience with the Prime Minister.

As far the leadership in Uttaranchal is concerned, it is understood that Mr. K.C. Pant, deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, is ruled out as the first chief minister of the new State. The BJP is believed to have decided that the leadership of the State should go to one of the MLAs. It is stated that Mr. Pant himself has no shown no keenness to shift to Uttaranchal.

THE HINDU

5 NOV 2000

NDA rejects Soren's claim to CM post

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Nov. 5. — The NDA today again rejected Mr Sibu Soren's demand of heading the first Jharkhand government after several meetings between Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and JMM-S leaders, said NDA sources.

The consensus view of the alliance was conveyed to Mr Soren by Samata Party leader Mr Digvijay Singh. Mr Soren said he would announce his next step tomorrow.

With 12 MLAs in tow, Mr Soren presented his case to the Prime Minister yesterday. Despite giving him a patient hearing, Mr Vajpayee did not commit anything and asked the JMM-S chief to consult NDA leaders, said sources.

The NDA convenor, Mr

JMM-S opts out of NDA

NEW DELHI, Nov. 5. — The JMM-S tonight decided to sever its ties with the NDA at the state level after the latter rejected its demand for installing Mr Sibu Soren as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand. The party declared that it would explore all possibilities of installing a non-NDA government. — UNI

George Fernandes, spoke to the Prime Minister over phone and apprised him of the latest situation today. Mr Soren maintains Mr Fernandes and his Samata colleague, Mr Nitish Kumar, had promised JMM-S the CM post if Jharkhand came into being, in lieu of JMM-S support to Mr Kumar in his bid for power in Bihar. There aren't too many takers for this claim within the alliance as the NDA government in Bihar had

resigned even before seeking a confidence vote.

The BJP central leadership has told Mr Soren that anything other than the chief minister's post is negotiable and that the NDA would appreciate it if Mr Soren remained a part of the alliance in Jharkhand.

The BJP is almost certain to head the NDA government in Ranchi. It has 32 MLAs; the Samata Party has five and the JD-U three. The NDA is also

assured of the support of another five Independents in the 81-member House.

Despite the efforts of Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav and a section of the Congress in Bihar to win over the JMM-S and make a bid for power, numbers don't favour a non-NDA government.

Together, the JMM-S, the Congress and the RJD have 32 MLAs, 10 short of an absolute majority. Even if it is assumed there will be large-scale horse trading, the advantage will lie with the formation which is invited first to form the government. With Mr Prabhat Kumar as the Governor-designate, there is hardly any doubt on who will get the first call.

■ Anxious wait for a bloody swearing in: page 8

THE STATESMAN

6 NOV 2000

Soren pulls out, swears to become CM

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 6. Having snapped ties with the National Democratic Alliance after it turned down support to form a government in the new Jharkhand State, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Soren) today asserted the party would come to power with the backing of non-NDA parties.

The JMM(S) chief, Mr. Shibu Soren, said the party was determined to form the Government and predicted that he would take oath as Chief Minister on November 15, the day the State comes into being.

Reiterating that the NDA had gone back on the promise to reciprocate in lieu of the party's support to Mr. Nitish Kumar when he became the Chief Minister of Bihar, the JMM(S) chief accused the Bharatiya Janata Party of acting in a partisan manner. The BJP's claim to the chair for being the single-largest party did not hold water, he said.

"The NDA has committed grave injustice with the JMM having gone back on the promise to support the party's candidature when Jharkhand is formed," he said.

Discounting the possibility of a split in his 12-member party, Mr. Soren asserted that with the numerical strength of the non-NDA



The JMM leader, Mr. Shibu Soren, at a press conference in New Delhi on Monday. —

Photo: V. Sudershan

allies, the JMM(S) would form the government. On the contrary, he claimed, there could be a division in the BJP ranks since it had many Adivasi MLAs.

In the 81-member House, the Congress has 11 MLAs, the Rashtriya Janata Dal nine, the CPI three, UGDP and Independents two each and the CPI-ML and MCC one each. In the NDA camp, the BJP has 32, the JD (U) five and Samata Party three, which is two short of simple majority.

Mr. Soren said the JMM MLAs were in touch with their counterparts in non-NDA parties and that he would hold talks with the RJD president, Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav, on reaching Patna. A meeting of party MLAs will be held there tomorrow. For the last two days, the JMM leader was busy seeking support. He met the NDA convenor, Mr. George Fernandes, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, on the issue.

Meanwhile, the Union Communications Minister, Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan, today asserted that NDA alliance at the Centre was stable and brushed aside Mr. Soren's claim on the Chief Minister's post. Mr. Paswan said there has to be a limit to the JMM's demand and claimed the JD(U) had to give up its right in favour of the JMM(S) when the latter fielded a candidate for the Rajya Sabha earlier this year.

PTI reports

The Defence Minister and Samata Party leader, Mr. George Fernandes, regretted the decision of Mr. Soren to withdraw from the NDA but warned that nothing can add up for him to become the Chief Minister. "However, his party (JMM-S) was never a formal partner of the NDA," he said.

RJD, Cong. may pitch in: Page 15

THE HINDU

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7 NOV 2000

Swami all set to be Uttaranchal CM

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, November 7

SENIOR BJP leader Nityanand Swami today emerged as the unanimous choice of PM A B Vajpayee and Home Minister L K Advani to be the first Chief Minister of the new hill state of Uttaranchal, which comes into existence at the stroke of midnight tomorrow.

BJP legislators will meet in Dehra Dun tomorrow to formally elect him leader of the party before he takes oath as the Chief Minister. Mr

Advani, who played a crucial role in the decision, will attend tomorrow's function marking the setting up of the new government at Dehra Dun. The party's central leadership felt that Mr Swami's candidature faced the least resistance from local legislators since he belonged to neither Kumaon nor Garhwal but the crucial plains' region.

Mr Swami also fits the demand made by the local leaders that the new Chief Minister should be from among the 11 MLAs and six councillors of the party from the hills or

from one of its three Lok Sabha and one Rajya Sabha members.

Mr Swami, who has worked as a Jan Sangh leader and later served in the Congress before returning to the BJP, is the chairman of the UP Legislative Council. With the induction of LS member B C Khanduri, who hails from Garhwal, as Union Minister of State today, the decks are cleared for Mr Swami to take over the mantle of the Uttaranchal CM.

However, Mr Swami's elevation will leave other "local" contenders disappointed and might sow seed of

dissidence in the party. Those who are likely to be upset with the decision include UP Ministers Ramesh Pokhriyal "Nishank" and Matbar Singh Khandari, and BJP legislator Kedar Singh, Union Minister of State Bachi Singh Rawat, Lok Sabha MP Manvendra Shah, and Rajya Sabha MP Manohar Kant Dhyani. The central BJP leadership had on October 31 attempted to elicit the views of BJP MPs and MLAs from Uttaranchal on the choice of the interim CM but failed to work out a consensus.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 NOV 2000

Uttaranchal is born

By C.K. Chandramohan

110-1

DEHRA DUN, NOV. 9. Uttaranchal — the 27th State of the Union — was born at the midnight hour tonight fulfilling the aspirations of nearly one crore people across the hills of Uttar Pradesh and Hardwar district.

The Akali leader and former Punjab Chief Minister, Mr. Surjeet Singh Barnala, was sworn in Governor of the new State shortly after midnight by the acting Chief Justice of Uttaranchal, Mr. Justice A.A. Desai. Immediately thereafter, Mr. Nityanand Swami was sworn in Chief Minister of the hill State amid loud cheers from people who had thronged the Parade Ground braving the November chill.

The birth of the State was preceded by the unanimous election of Mr. Nityanand Swami as leader of the Uttaranchal BJP Legislative Party, paving the way for his taking over as the first Chief Minister.

The BJP Legislature Party meeting began around 5 p.m. at the Drona Hotel converted into a State guest house-cum-MLAs' hostel. During the meeting some MLAs expressed concern over the hill people not

taking Mr. Swami's chief ministership kindly as he did not hail from the hills. These MLAs are said to be supporters of Mr. Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, a contender for the top job. They were, however, pacified by deft handling of the situation by the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi, the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Rajnath Singh and the Union Minister of State for Surface Transport Maj Gen (retd) B. C. Khanduri.

Mr. Pyarelal Khandelwal and Mr. Kailash Joshi were present as central observers. The meeting was attended by all the 23 BJP MLAs. Mr. Swami, whose name was proposed by the Uttaranchal BJP president, Mr. Bhagat Singh Koshiyari, was elected leader of the Legislative party unanimously.

Later addressing reporters, Mr. Swami said he would make serious efforts to get Uttaranchal accorded the special status due to a hill State like other Himalayan States at the earliest. Stress would be on creating the necessary minimum infrastructure in all remote villages so that people could make a decent living nearer home.

Judges appointed: Page 11

THE HINDU

9 NOV 2000

Unreasons of State

The BJP has summarily rejected Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader Shibu Soren's bid for chief ministership, opting instead for Union minister Babu Lal Marandi. So what's new in all this? Nothing at all. We have seen this over and over, except we are now supposedly in the coalition era which favours decentralisation and federalism. Indeed, when our founding fathers included Article 3 — which provides for the reorganisation of states — in our Constitution, it was in the belief that this provision would not only underline the federal character of our Constitution; the formation of smaller states was expected to result in greater decentralisation which, in turn, would make for better governance. More importantly, it was thought that smaller states would bring a greater number of marginalised minority groups — who may have lacked the numeric strength to articulate their social, cultural and economic aspirations in larger states — within the ambit of State action. Given this rationale it wasn't surprising in the least bit that after Independence, linguistic and 'nativist' movements took root all over the country — including in Bihar's Jharkhand region, in Madhya Pradesh's Chhattisgarh region, and in Uttar Pradesh's Uttarkhand region. The movements pressed for the uplift of these underdeveloped areas on the basis of the inherent 'affirmative' tilt of the constitution. However recent events have established that this logic is destined to work well only on paper.

Today, when these movements have matured and three new states — Uttarkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Jharkhand — have actually been carved out, it might seem as if the vision set out in our Constitution has been fulfilled. And that is, in fact, the tragedy. For the states might have become smaller, but the writ that runs is that of the Centre. In Jharkhand, for example, the BJP has sought to force upon the people a chief ministerial candidate who is not acceptable to major state parties like the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, RJD, the members of the Maoist Communist Centre and some others who have pioneered the Jharkhand Movement. The leaders of these state parties contend that the Centrist parties have bullied them and hijacked their movement for short term political gain. They claim that the people of the state do not identify with these Centrist political parties who, they believe, have kept them out of government and therefore the decision-making process. The story is repeated in Chhattisgarh, where the Congress disregarded popular sentiment and appointed as chief minister Ajit Jogi, a Congress party spokesman who isn't closely identified with the regional movement in Chhattisgarh. Apparently Mr Jogi was preferred over other more worthy candidates because he was acceptable to the "party high command". This practice — where the Centre does not allow state party workers and state legislators to elect or choose by consensus a leader of their own choice — not only undermines the principle of democratic governance but it also defeats the purpose of creating smaller states. Excluding the people of these regions from the decision-making process is the best way to ensure that their economic and social aspirations will forever remain a distant dream. The people will continue to wage their struggle — except this time not so much against the Centre as against its agents.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2000

THE NDA'S WOES IN JHARKHAND

THE LEADERS OF the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) could not have bargained for worse with the JMM(S) leader, Mr. Shibu Soren, insisting that the BJP agree to make him the Chief Minister or prepare itself for the eventuality of a Government of non-BJP parties in the new Jharkhand State. With as many as 32 MLAs in the State Assembly with 81 members, the BJP certainly is the largest party; and with support assured from the five members of the Samata Party and the three members elected on the Janata Dal (United) ticket (all of them had contested the February 2000 polls as a combine) there was hardly any reason for the party's leaders to even expect such serious trouble in forming a Government of their own. But then, as has been the case with the ruling combine at various levels, Mr. George Fernandes, in his capacity as convener of the NDA, seems to have assured Mr. Soren of Chief Ministership of the new State in exchange for the support he had mustered to have Mr. Nitish Kumar as Chief Minister of Bihar soon after the Assembly elections. And it was this assurance that must have given the JMM(S) with just 12 MLAs the hope of ruling the State as and when it was formed. The developments in Ranchi, indeed, are nothing but a case of obsessive concern for self-preservation, rather than any ideological unity guiding political alliances, taking its toll.

The JMM in particular and the various other platforms in the region that claim to represent the cause of the tribals are, at this stage, only a pale shadow of what they were in the past. The indulgence of the leaders of these groups in brokering deals — the involvement of the MPs who belonged at that time to the JMM in the murky affairs in the context of the July 1993 no-confidence motion against the P. V. Narasimha Rao Government for instance — betraying the cause they claimed to represent had

considerably eroded the JMM's support base in recent times. That the party, which had in the not-so-distant past held complete sway over the electoral politics in the region, has now been reduced to just a dozen MLAs with not even a single member in the Lok Sabha is only an illustration of the extent of anger the tribals have shown against such leaders as Mr. Soren. And the declaration by Mr. Soren now to the effect that he was not averse to taking support wherever it came from as long as he could become the Chief Minister of the new State only shows his inability or rather refusal to learn lessons from his own past deeds.

Be that as it may, the confidence exuded by the BJP leaders — that the JMM(S) must prepare itself to sit in the Opposition if Mr. Soren refused to accept a BJP-led Government — cannot but suggest that the party is confident that it will have a durable majority in the State Assembly. On the face of it, the BJP cannot manage the numbers without effecting a split in any one of the parties opposed to it; it could be the Congress, whose MLAs cannot otherwise expect ministerial positions in the new State unless there is a repeat of the Bihar experiment where the RJD along with the Congress manages the numbers. Given the brazen manner in which parties and their leaders have placed ministerial-office-at-all-costs high on their agenda, the turn of events in Ranchi is certainly a cause for concern. All these cannot but have an adverse effect on the governance of the new State; withdrawal of the administrative machinery and corruption at all levels have, even otherwise, taken a heavy toll on the polity in the region and this certainly is among the reasons for most parts of the new State becoming a haven for left-extreme groups. And the murky developments in Ranchi are certainly a cause for concern.

THE HINDU

8 NOV 2000

Denied Jharkhand CM's chair, Munda declines minister post

SHARAD GUPTA
NEW DELHI, NOV 7

INCENSED at being denied the post of Jharkhand chief minister, BJP vice president Karia Munda, today refused to join the Union Cabinet as Minister of State, overshadowing induction of Uma Bharti and Bhuwan Chand Khanduri.

Munda's name along with that of Khanduri, was announced by the Prime Minister's Office to be sworn in today as MoS. Munda refused to attend the swearing in ceremony saying he needed more

time to think.

Munda was apparently angry over the manner in which party had undermined his seniority. He served as MoS in Morarji Desai Cabinet in 1977 and was inducted as Cabinet Minister for Environment and Forests during Atal Behari Vajpayee's 13-day Government in 1996. "If the party could not appoint him as Jharkhand chief minister, he should at least have been inducted as cabinet minister in the Union Cabinet", said one his close aides.

Munda's agony was further aggravated due to resignation of a

much younger Jharkhand leader, Babu Lal Marandi, the Union Minister of State for Environment and Forests, last night thereby making him a certain candidate for the top slot in Jharkhand.

BJP sources claim that Marandi was a natural choice for Jharkhand chief minister after majority of BJP MLAs from the proposed state, favoured him over Munda. But, a senior BJP leader who was plumping for Munda, is learnt to have advised him to decline the cabinet berth.

"We acted in haste without
CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

INDIAN EXPRESS

7 8 NOV 2000

THE MCC MENACE

Who will rule Jharkhand? 9/4

THE principal threat to any government that is installed in Ranchi will not come from the opposition, but from the MCC and, to a lesser extent, the PWG. The former identifies the BJP as a bigger threat to its own unofficial hegemony than Sibhu Soren's JMM, primarily because its tie-up with the RJD would ensure the continuation of the kind of "soft" patronage the MCC has enjoyed some say from Laloo Yadav himself. The extent of the MCC's sway over southern Bihar can be gauged from the fact that, according to the police, it has a parallel government in five districts, a significant presence in 9 others and can put its own men in the legislature from 32 out of 81 constituencies. Police stations lie unmanned because villagers take their complaints to the MCC, primary services like health and education are rendered with the cooperation of its cadres and "taxes" to the tune of Rs 30 to 40 crores are extorted annually. Recently a group of policemen refused to take up position in a village unless their strength was increased, such is the dread the organisation inspires among those who are supposed to enforce the law. The abdication by the state of its fundamental duties towards the citizen, characteristic of Laloo raj all over Bihar, is much more pronounced in Jharkhand.

The BJP chief minister-designate, Babulal Marandi, who is on the MCC's hit list, talks about development, but it should be clear to everyone that the law and order problem has to be tackled separately. There can be no development where the basic machinery of the administration lies paralysed or is usurped by the ultra-Left. It is in this context that Sibhu Soren's threat of joining hands with the MCC and the PWG to disrupt the working of the first government of Jharkhand state is reprehensible. How can one hope to be chief minister if one collaborates with those who have dedicated themselves to subvert all recognised authority? What is needed in Jharkhand, and indeed in some areas of Bihar, is a counter-insurgency operation similar to the ones that have been carried out in Punjab and the Northeast, aimed specifically at isolating the extremists. It must be recognised that oppression is a far more powerful justification for armed revolt than ethnic or national pride. In no circumstances should the MCC's potential for damage be underestimated: they have the men and the resources and can strike at will.

THE STATESMAN

9 NOV 2000

Soren sees himself as CM, claims support of 41 MLAs

New Delhi
8 NOVEMBER

WITH BARELY a week to go before formation of Jharkhand, BJP grappled with the issue of chief ministership of the new state while JMM-S announced on Wednesday its bid to form the first government in the tribal region.

JMM-S chief Sibhu Soren, who pulled out of NDA on denial of chief ministership to him, said in Patna he was confident of getting the support of 41 MLAs and would form the first government in Jharkhand with the help of RJD, Congress and Left parties.

BJP, which, along with allies Samata Party and JD(U) has support of 40 MLAs, also claimed support of at least two independents for a majority in the 81-member House but has a difficult task on hand in choosing between two senior leaders from the region, Babulal Marandi and Karia Munda, to head the government.

Marandi resigned from the Union ministry on November 6 apparently to head the NDA government, but, Munda refused to join the Vajpayee government on Tuesday unhappy over the choice.

Party spokesman Jana Krishnamurthy said the issue of Jharkhand chief ministership "is still wide open" while party leader J.P. Mathur ruled out Munda leaving "the party at any cost".

Soren said he had also received 'positive response' from CPI, CPI-ML (Liberation), Marxist Coordination Centre (MCC).

"I am meeting the MLAs individually to impress upon them to have their own ministry to fulfil the aspirations of Jharkhand people...I am confident of providing a stable and effective government," he said. — PTI

Cong in a dilemma over courting JMM

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 8 NOVEMBER

AWARE OF the vulnerability of its flock in Jharkhand as well as conscious of the impact of aligning with the tainted JMM in any joint venture, the Congress is facing a difficult dilemma in the tribal state, which is set to come into existence on November 15.

The party, which will have 11 MLAs in the new state and must play a key role in the JMM's scheme of things if a non-NDA government is to be installed in Jharkhand, is still undecided whether it should back Mr Shibhu Soren or not. Hence, the party on

Wednesday responded back with the standard response that the "situation was still fluid" and the party was keeping all its options open.

The hesitation on the Congress' part rests on two major factors. For one, the party is clearly reluctant to join hands with the JMM, given the recent court judgment in the MPs bribery case and their association with corruption. The party had had to deftly manoeuvre itself after its former president and then Prime Minister PV

Narasimha Rao too was implicated in the case.

Secondly, there is also a view within the party that rather than assist the JMM in coming to power, it should try and work to strengthen its base in the new state. In the absence of a third credible force and the party's sizeable support base in the region, party circles contended

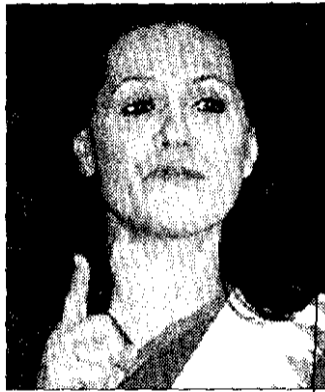
that the Congress was in a clear position to emerge as the primary rival to the BJP there.

However, party circles admitted that it was not as easy to remain aloof from the JMM. Since the BJP, even after the exit of the JMM from the NDA fold, is short of

majority by a slender margin, the Congress MLAs are most susceptible to poaching by the BJP.

All its 11 MLAs are ministers in the Babu Devi government in Bihar at present and the prospects of continuing in a similar capacity in Jharkhand would certainly be an enticing proposition.

The MLAs, most of whom were staunchly anti-Laloo, had come around to supporting the RJD at the time of government formation in Bihar only on the promise of ministerial berths.



Sonia: Tough choice

The Economic Times

9 NOV 2000

'Hills in blood', CM fights outsider label

FROM ANAND SOONDAS
Dehradun, Nov. 8: Till the BJP legislature party elected its leader this evening, Uttaranchal was on tenterhooks about the identity of its first chief minister. Only Nityanand Swami was confident.

Coming out of his hour-long morning puja, Nityanand declared: "Advani se baat ho gayi, main hi CM banoonga."

Deputy superintendent of police Vijay Gautam said the decision to provide Nityanand security was impromptu.

"Hawa mein hai ki veh CM ban rahe hain. No one has told us anything, maybe we'll have to provide security to someone else tomorrow," he said.

Gautam need not have worried. The BJP unanimously elected Nityanand as its leader in the evening, paying the way for him to be sworn in as chief minister.

Asked earlier why the BJP high command had not yet told party leaders and aspiring chief ministers in Uttaranchal about his new position, Nityanand said: "Ask those at the Centre. I know what I know."

Nityanand, who has been accused of being "non-pahari" by local leaders, said he is upset about this "whole business of roots".

The 73-year-old leader, who was Dehradun's MLA from 1969-74 and worked as deputy chairman of the Legislative Assembly from 1991-96, said he has spent almost six decades in the hills.

"I'll yesterday, no one thought I was an outsider, but today people are saying I was born in Haryana. It's not fair. Four generations of my family have lived here."

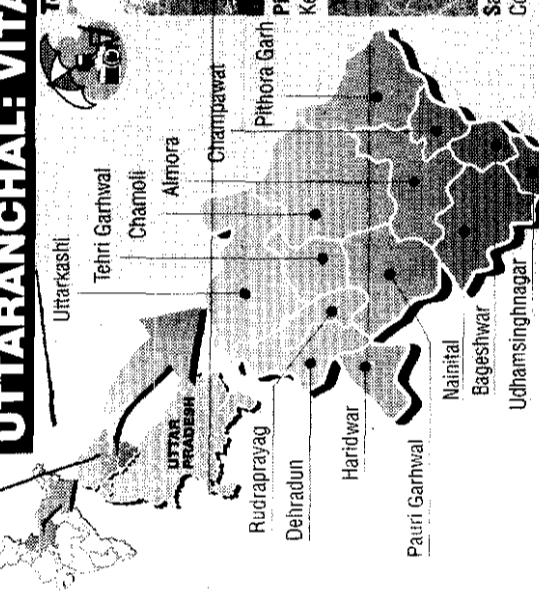
"The hills flow in my blood. I will see to it that my people don't suffer. In fact, the problem of agri-

cultural land going away from the locals is weighing heavily on my mind. A special status under Article 371 should not be ruled out for Uttaranchal. I will definitely talk of that. It's there in my mind," he added.

Nityanand, who will be taking charge of Uttaranchal at a time of financial mess and political chaos, said his first priority is to do away with the "mental divisions" of the people.

"Uttaranchal under me will be one. There will be no Kumaonis, Garhwals and outsiders, he

UTTARANCHAL: VITAL STATISTICS



Population: 70.45 lakh

| | |
|---------------------------|---------------|
| Area | 56,000 sq. km |
| No. of districts | 13 |
| Parliament seats | 5 |
| Assembly seats | 22 |
| Legislative Council seats | 8 |
| Literacy | 65% |

Forest area: 96% of Uttar Pradesh's forest cover is in Uttaranchal

Main rivers originating and passing through the state are **Ganga, Yamuna, Rikanda, Bhagirathi, Mandakini.**

Tourist hotspots



Pilgrim centres: Kedarnath, Badrinath, Haridwar, Rishikesh



Sanctuaries: Corbett National Park (Ramnagar) and Mandadevi Biosphere Reserve (Garhwal). **Auli ski resort, regarded the best in Asia.**

Uttar Pradesh will be left with very little but the Taj Mahal

Udhamsinghnagar: Controversial rich-farmers' enclave which specialises in exotic produce like strawberry. Also cultivates wheat, sugarcane and rice

Economy: Tourism and agriculture

Industry: Virtually none. Region known for a "money-order" economy—people migrate in search of jobs and send home money.

Graphic: RAJ



Vijay Dhasmana

'Advani se baat ho gayi, main hi CM banoonga'

Nityanand Swami

was arrived at after taking the opinions of Bangaru Laxman, Krishnamurthyji and Narendra Modi."

On the contentious issue of the new state's capital being shifted to Gairsain, Nityanand said those who are against Dehradun being nominated as the capital are his "sisters".

"I will talk to my sisters in the Uttarakhanda Mahila Manch, feed them *ladsoos* and *chai* and convince them that it is the right decision to have Dehradun as the capital of Uttaranchal."

youth from the hills. Nityanand will set up pollution-free industries that will provide employment to locals.

Asked about the other chief ministerial candidates like Uttar Pradesh's culture minister Ramesh Pokhriyal, Uttaranchal's BJP president B.S. Koshiari and K.C. Pant, deputy chairman, planning commission, who enjoy a strong following here, Nityanand said: "Yeh decision aise hi nahii liya gaya hain. There was a consensus. In fact, Advaniji even spoke to the others personally. The consensus

said." He is confident that Uttaranchal can "take care of itself".

"Once the political uncertainty dies, the financial crisis will get sorted out. It just needs some time," he said.

Tourism and energy generation will be promoted in the new state. "Right now, we are producing 533 mw of power when the capacity is 1059 mw. But the truth is we are capable of producing 20,000 mw of power, and we will," he claimed.

In a bid to stop the exodus of

9 NOV 2000

DREAM COME TRUE-I

Jharkhand Will Force A Social Revolution

By AK ROY

THERE is a report that the Jharkhand state will be born on the birthday of Birsa Munda (15 November) and the new Assembly and the secretariat will start functioning from the Lenin Hall of Heavy Engineering Corporation at Ranchi. This coincidence or combination is significant. Is Birsa to Lenin the path this young tribal state will adopt for its emergence?

Whatever it may be, the birth of Jharkhand after a long struggle of more than 50 years is being hailed with great enthusiasm in the area. Many hopes have been created. Jubilant tribals are moving everywhere even without knowing what exactly they have got. Though many have rushed to claim credit, the birth of this new state is due to the long struggle and sacrifices of many who passed away unheard and un-

sung with a dream for the future.

The vast mineral-rich area in the heartland of India with its plains and plateaus, hills and jungles is known as Jharkhand.

TRIBALS

It is good that the attempt to rename it Vananchal has been given up accepting an amendment in Parliament. The original demand included 18 districts of Bihar (79,632 sq km), three districts of West Bengal (26,546 sq km), four districts of Orissa (45,897 sq km) and two districts of Madhya Pradesh (31,247 sq km) with a population of about four crores.

The demand had its historic roots in the South West Frontier Agency formed by the British in 1833 clubbing all these areas with Chhotanagpur as a single unit with its headquarters at Hazaribagh. However, the present Jharkhand state is from the portion of Bihar only. It has a population of 2.14 crore of which 27.67 per cent are tribals, 15 per cent Harijans and 40 per cent other backward castes. According to the Indian Bureau of Mines (1992), Jharkhand contains 32.35 per cent of Indian coal, 23.32 per cent of iron ore, 33.85 per cent copper, 46.55 per cent mica. Although it is among the richest zones in India, it is inhabited by the poorest people. Darkness under light is Jharkhand.

Though now all communities

The author is former member of Parliament.

are campaigning for Jharkhand, the tribals remained ahead in struggle. So the claim to have a tribal as chief minister has a moral basis. The Tilka Manjhi (1784), the Ho revolt (1820), the Kol insurrection (1832), the Santhal rebellion (1855) and the Birsa movement (1900) were the



most notable phases in history. Marx in his notes on Indian history mentioned "outbreak of santals which could only be put down after seven months' guerrilla warfare in February 1856".

The demand for a separate state of Jharkhand was raised after Independence by the tribal leader Jaipal Singh who submitted a memorandum to this effect before the State Re-organisation Committee in 1956. A second memorandum was given to the Prime Minister in 1973 by the Jharkhand Party leader, NE Horo, and the third by the Jharkhand Coordination Committee leader, BP Keshori, in 1989 to the President.

REBIRTH

However, a qualitative change came to the Jharkhand movement with the formation of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha in 1972 in Dhanbad which not only added the non-tribals to the movement but also the working class of the industrial belt mostly from outside projecting a socialist ideology and adopting a programme of exploitation-free Jharkhand as the goal. Sibu Soren emerged as the leader through this organisation. At that time the struggle of Vietnam was at its peak under the banner of National Liberation Front which inspired the naming of this organisation. It may be noted that tribal insurgency being the base of Jharkhand, the concept of liberation of the people is interlined with that of separation of the area.

To meet the challenge of creating a new state, some lessons have to be drawn from the ups and downs of the Jharkhand movement. First, the feeling of Jharkhand is so strong that no manipulation from the top can control it. Even if all leaders are bought, the movement is reborn in another form. At present the Jharkhand parties are weak but not so the Jharkhand sentiment. It is the pressure from the bottom that forced national parties like BJP and Congress to form this new state to survive politically in the area. It may be remembered that the BJP could not make much head way till it included the making of a separate state (Vananchal) in its programme. The Congress faltered and thus failed to the race. So this feeling must be understood as this is the driving force behind the new Jharkhand.

Similarly, there are some genuine problems in creating the Jharkhand state for which the struggle took such a long time to attain its goal.

BOUNDARIES

These problems also have to be properly understood. Jharkhand is not a tribal phenomenon though the tribals constitute the most important ingredient. It is definitely not a secessionist movement nor a regional issue to be solved by creating smaller states.

The boundaries of the states got changed several times before in this area. In 1912 Bihar-Orissa was separated from Bengal, in 1937 Orissa from Bihar and 1956 Purulia from Bihar.

What is taking place in 2000 is different from all this. Jharkhand was a milch cow for Bihar and it benefited more by preserving the feudal order where neither agriculture could develop in the north nor could industries remain healthy in the south. And so Bihar with Jharkhand remained the poorest state in India.

Separation will force a social revolution unleashing a productive force that will help both. The separation of Maharashtra and Gujarat, Punjab and Haryana did not hamper progress and, on the contrary, accelerated the pace of progress. Why should it not happen here?

(To be concluded)

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10, 2000

UTTARANCHAL: INDIA'S 27th STATE

THE FORMATION, AT long last, of a separate State -- Uttaranchal -- consisting of the hill regions of Uttar Pradesh is certainly a fruitful culmination of the long agitation carried out by the people of the region. The movement during which the men and women from the hill districts were even willing to confront the armed might of the state -- leading to loss of lives at times -- was only reflective of the extent to which the civil and political administration in Uttar Pradesh had remained insensitive to the needs of the people. It is a fact that most parts of the new State were left to remain backward (even if it was unintentional) by the successive Governments in Uttar Pradesh leading to the alienation of the people there from all aspects of the Uttar Pradesh political culture. This took place despite such leaders as Govind Ballabh Pant, Mr. K. C. Pant and Mr. N. D. Tiwari dominating the political discourse for a long time. And for this very reason, there is bound to be a lot of expectation among the masses in the region from the new Government; after all, they do not have to wait endlessly, as they had to do all these years, on the officials and their political masters in faraway Lucknow for decisions pertaining to the problems faced in the hill regions.

This factor -- the years of neglect of the aspirations of the people in the hills -- assumes importance even now. And the formation of a new State alone cannot serve the cause unless those at the helm -- Mr. Nityanand Swami and the team he will constitute -- decide to address the task of governance in real earnest. The fact that the region had suffered for long for want of any concerted efforts at development leaves very little scope for raising resources from within for the new State Government; and hence, the

new dispensation in Dehradun will have to depend on financial assistance from the Centre in a big way. The inclusion of the terai region -- Udham Singh Nagar -- in the new State despite the objection to the idea from the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) cannot but bring cheer to the people in the hills. After all, there is no other part in the State with a stable agrarian base. This, however, is only small solace. The disaffection among the hill people against the successive Governments in Uttar Pradesh was, after all, not caused by any scarcity of food-grains. Apart from the manufacturing units set up by the various Public Sector Undertakings situated in the foothills, the new State can hardly boast of any industrial base at the moment.

The composition of the State Assembly (provisional) assumes some importance in this context. Unlike in Jharkhand and in Chattisgarh, the provisional Assembly in Uttaranchal consists of hardly any opposition. With as many as 23 MLAs in the 31-strong provisional Assembly, the ruling party may be tempted to take things easy but it can do so only at its peril. And unlike in the two other new States, the political discourse in Uttaranchal will soon get into the election mode. As it is, elections are due along with the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh in a year; and this leaves very little time for Mr. Swami and his new Cabinet. Meanwhile, there are reports about resentment within the BJP, particularly among those who belong to the Kumaon-Garwhal region, on the ground that Mr. Swami is not one among them. And given the experience in several other States -- the spectre of dissidence and faction feuds -- one can hardly rule out the possibility of feuds within the legislature party. It should be the endeavour of all to spare the new State of instability.

THE HINDU

11 NOV 2000

Choice of Jharkhand CM still open, says BJP

Independent MLA declines to support Soren citing Laloo link

AK Mishra
Patna, November 9

NOTWITHSTANDING BJP leader Babu Lal Marandi's explicit exhortation over his possible selection as the Chief Minister of Jharkhand, the national vice president of the party Kailashpati Mishra has made it clear that the chief ministerial issue still remains unresolved.

Mishra stoutly denied that the central high command had cleared the name of Mr Marandi for the coveted post.

"If no authorized person of the party had held any press briefing in this connection, how could the media report that Marandi's name has been cleared by the central leadership?" he questioned.

Mr Mishra said in an interview that the central leadership would decide the CM issue on or after November 11.

When reminded that leader of the opposition in the Bihar Assembly Sushil Kumar Modi had said that both the Prime Minister and Home Minister had given their consent to the name of Marandi, Mr Mishra said, "I don't want to comment on what others are saying. I will only say the issue is still under the consideration of the high command and

government in Jharkhand, reports PTI. Withdrawing his support Singh said that JMM by aligning with the RJD had proved that it was an anti-Jharkhand party.

Soren by suddenly switching his loyalty to the RJD chief over the chief ministership issue of Jharkhand had shown that he was power-greedy and had no sense of commitment to the people in the region. Singh told newsmen here: "Under no circumstances can we stand by the anti-statehood forces."

Without clearly stating a probability to go with the NDA, Singh said he would give his support to that government in Jharkhand, which rules the new state in accordance with the blueprint of its development, prepared by its newly floated outfit Jharkhand Vananchal Congress.

He said a nine-member committee, headed by Kashinath Shukla, would submit the development strategy prepared by his organisation to the first chief minister of Jharkhand.

Stating that he was looking for rapid economic growth of the region, an alert administration and efficient judiciary, Singh said he would give his active support to a government that can ensure all this for the new state.

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, November 9

SENIOR BJP vice-president Karia Munda, who refused to join the Government as a Minister of State met Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee today even as party leaders discussed plans to mollify him by inducting him as a Cabinet Minister.

Mr Munda, who was unhappy on being excluded from the race for becoming Jharkhand's first Chief Minister and being offered only a junior Minister's post, spent more than an hour with Mr Vajpayee.

BJP officials said Mr Munda, who is likely to have a second round of discussion in the next few days, explained why he had not taken oath as a Minister of State on Tuesday.

Mr Munda spoke to BJP vice president K. Jana Krishnamurti before he met the Prime Minister. He conveyed to the two leaders that he was upset that Mr Babulal Marandi's name was proposed for the CM's post without any consultation with him. He also denied the statement attributed to him in today's newspapers.

Later, Mr Krishnamurti said there would be no problem in choosing the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand.

"Everything will go smoothly," he said. Mr Munda pointed to the fact that he was a Cabinet Minister in the 13-day Vajpayee Government in 1996 and a Minister of State in the Morarji Desai Government in 1977.

In a bid to keep Mr Munda in good humour, the BJP officially maintained that the issue of chief ministership of Jharkhand was "still wide open as it is to be decided by the MLAs." They would meet at Ranchi on November 14.

But BJP secretary Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, who is in charge of Jharkhand, said in Patna, that the choice had already been made in consultation with all concerned and an announcement would be made at the right time.

Mr Marandi, who is tipped to take over as the new Chief Minister, said he had sent in his resignation as Minister of State following a directive from the PMO. Mr Munda had taken objection to the move as it suggested that the BJP leaders had made up their mind in favour of Mr Marandi.

George's warning

DEFENCE MINISTERS George Fernandes said law would take its own course if Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (S) resorted to violence in case their leader was not appointed as the first chief minister of Jharkhand.

"If they unleash violence, it will be unconstitutional," Fernandes said reacting to Jharkhand Mukti Morcha secretary Deosharan Bhagat's threat that there could be violence if Shibu Soren was prevented from becoming chief minister.

PTI, Chennai

a final decision on this is yet to be taken". The central leaders, during a meeting of party MLAs, MLCs in New Delhi had told them not to divulge their preference to anyone, he said.

RANCHI: Independent MLA from Bokaro, Samresh Singh today ruled out his support to JMM chief Shibu Soren to help him form

DREAM COME TRUE-II

How Lenin Is Relevant To Jharkhand

JHARKHAND is not a Mizoram or Nagaland, not only because of its vastness but because of its composition. Jharkhand is a mini India or more correctly a concentrated India. It has hills and plains, fields and jungles with a variety of people living together for ages, unshaken by history and undisturbed by politics till recently. No single community, language and religion dominates. Even the tribals are of different origins - Santhal, Ho, the Munda Australoid variety and Oraon Dravidian.

There are primitive tribals like Birhors, Pahadias now on the way to extinction. Being an industrial belt there are workers from all parts of the country. In the midst of all this diversity, there is unity and that is Jharkhand. All the people here feel exploited and discriminated. It is an "internal colony"

where everyone wants to become "free". It is this longing that unites all.

CULTURAL UNITY

In the stormy days of the seventies, this writer was startled when a minor fighting the mafia along with tribals asked why there should not be a Jharkhand in Allahabad since they were also exploiters and oppressors. This is the spirit of Jharkhand which made Dhanbad, a colliery area with less than five per cent tribals, the bastion of the Jharkhand movement.

This is not all. One of the memoranda justifying Jharkhand referred to its "historic characteristics and cultural unity now fading away due to internal colonisation". But this unity is not static. It may move in one of two ways: it may flourish by cultivating the binding forces or perish by weakening them. In which way it will move will depend on the nature of politics. With both the trends Jharkhand is not a developed nationality already existing and only to be incorporated in a state but a developing society to be nourished and guided in that direction. What kind of politics and philosophy can do that? Definitely not the existing one prevailing in the country in which communalism and casteism affect unity and integrity. This has started infecting Jharkhand where local mini-mafias have appeared.

The making of Jharkhand involves two tasks: struggle and construction. The struggle is against divisive forces and the construction of the new state. What is the divisive force that is threatening the

51-6 By AK ROY 11/11

unity of Jharkhand society and its emancipation as a coherent entity? It is the mercantile capitalism which turns society into a market constantly generating disaffection along with lust of power, acquisitiveness and consumerism.

It may be noted that capitalism in the beginning after industrial revolution devel-



oped a centripetal force dissolving petty particularisms of the feudal era and created a nation state. But this same capitalism in this era of market economy is generating a centrifugal force tearing even established nations and the states as the new scenario of the erstwhile Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, in particular Yugoslavia, present. The devalued nationalism is no more a binding force after the local capitalists have lost their anti-imperialist character being an appendage of the multinational corporations as manifested in the New Economic Policy.

SOCIALISM

So the only binding force is socialism and it is the dilution of the socialist content of our politics that has given rise to divisive forces in the country. When Lenin supported the demand of separate Ukraine state, the Russian rulers accused him of supporting separatism to which Lenin replied: "if the Ukrainians find a Soviet Republic they will not cut away, if they find a capitalist one, they will".

History has vindicated Lenin. Under socialism, Russia remained one with its 15 sovereign republics, 20 autonomous republics, eight autonomous regions and 10 autonomous areas but now is torn asunder with the return of capitalism. With self becoming supreme and the strong swallowing the weak, can different social groups remain united? The answer is "no" for Russia, "no" for India and "no" for Jharkhand.

The real enemy of Jharkhand which delayed its formation and will delay its construction

is the capitalist motivation of the exploitative system. So the future of Jharkhand is connected with the change of this exploitative system by asserting socialist values in politics. It is here that Lenin becomes relevant to Jharkhand.

Now a controversy has been created over who will be the Chief Minister of Jharkhand while the debate should have been on "how to build Jhar-

khand", whether from the top by inviting foreign capital and the multinationals or from the bottom utilising indigenous resources, both natural and human, available in the region? As the strength of the Jharkhand feeling is at the bottom connected with its land, water and forest providing the social energy for construction, the building of Jharkhand should definitely be from the bottom. It may be noted that Jharkhand is rich not

only in minerals but also in human quality. Common Jharkhandis have some basic honesty, skill and work culture that can be an asset for building any state.

CAPITAL

Character is the most precious element of Jharkhand provided that can be preserved, raising a social and moral wall (like tariff wall) around it banishing all alien culture. There is talk of attracting capital to Jharkhand while capital is lying idle here without any work order. Even technical manpower, scientists in research institutes are without work. In the new state of Jharkhand, the first task would be to form a new planning board to put forward an alternative line of development using all the characteristics of the region.

Jharkhand has everything what it needs a new philosophy to activate, motivate and inspire to produce results. Jharkhand can be built not by money but by correct ideas which would evolve combining the social spirit of Birsa and the socialist ideology of Lenin, while mercantile capitalism will create "infantile disorder" for the new state marking it a Jhagra Khan and hunting ground of all form of unscrupulous elements. A stress on socialist ideology augmenting social values already existing in Jharkhand following the path of Birsa to Lenin can transform it even under the present constitution into a number one state in India showing a new model of emancipation for the rest of the country.

(Concluded)

BORN IN UNCERTAINTY

Inauspicious signals for Jharkhand

FOR the new state of Jharkhand which is seen to be the fulfilment of a dream dating back nearly 100 years, the current uncertainty over who will head the government on 15 November is an inauspicious start. The date for the swearing in was fixed keeping in mind the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda who had led the tribals in a heroic struggle but died at an early age. If the name still inspires the tribals who have felt deprived by successive governments since Independence, the hopes are mixed with confusion as political parties are into the act of seeing how much of the spoils they can grab. This includes improbables like the Congress which will have only 11 seats in the new 81-member assembly but still imagines it can tilt the scales and in the process claim a position of advantage for itself. The claim is preposterous but that is the very nature of how politics is played in Bihar. While the Congress is virtually an adjunct of the RJD, Sibu Soren puts himself up for sale saying he is ready to side with anyone who makes him chief minister, forget the Supreme Court verdict in the JMM bribery case. Or the fact that Laloo Yadav had used him as a pawn all these years and now sounds accommodating only to retain a hand in the new administration.

The BJP cannot escape the responsibility for this uncertainty either. With 32 seats in the new House and allies who are none too dependable, it claims a majority of barely one in the new House. The last thing it can afford at this stage is an internal battle for chief ministership. But that is exactly what is taking place as Babulal Marandi heads the race with blessings from the leadership while Karia Munda sulks. The BJP has the onerous task of justifying the faith the tribals have placed in them in the last elections after their bitter experience with the Soren faction of the JMM. But development cannot get off the ground if the new state starts with a struggle for survival in the face of external and internal pressures. One can only hope that the Prime Minister will intervene so that the transition to a new era can be peaceful and full of promise. Will all selfish politicians, Sibu Soren being the foremost example, kindly disappear from sight?

THE STATESMAN

13 NOV 2000

Vidarbha and Statehood

By Mahesh Vijapurkar

11

10-12 18/10

THE POLITICAL flavour of the moment in Vidarbha, and to some extent in the rest of Maharashtra, is Statehood. Every leader — not the common man — is talking about it, including a large section in the Congress. They hope to tell Mrs. Sonia Gandhi today that public opinion favours Statehood for Vidarbha. Some have come out of the woodwork, as they do off and on, to speak again in favour of Statehood but are eliciting sharp adversarial response. That makes for a clear division of opinion at one level. Never, it must be conceded, in the recent decade has the statehood demand been pitched so high.

However, there is no public involvement in the issue; especially of the middle class in the region which is tired of politicians' public postures and grand promises. Any straw poll would indicate that the "agitation", if that is what it is, is seen more as an agenda of the leaders and not of the region's people. This is also because no credible leader has picked up the issue to generate a favourable public response and, more importantly, participation. But, is Vidarbha the real issue?

It is not that the people of the region would frown on Statehood being conferred on Vidarbha. But, are some political leaders like Dr. Srikanth Chikkar, once a Minister, concede for the them "to fail is not in our blood". Statehood will be accepted if it happens but it is unlikely that they will agitate for it.

Sampyukta Maharashtra (the larger, unified linguistic Marathi State) is even today an unfulfilled dream of the 1950s. With large Marathi-speaking chunks left with Karnataka, Belgaum and Karwar) is not any more a large emotional issue with the people. Most have begun to look, observers concede, for better options based on reason and economics and are not keen on being weighed down by any non-pragmatic emotional constraints. A region which moved into linguistic Maharashtra applying conditions is less likely to be enamoured of that concept.

Locals in Vidarbha want jobs that are

scarce, except in farming and trading, no significant investment has come in. Industrial activity is minimal and grand plans of even a New Nagpur have not attracted funds and enterprise. They have dreams of better times; they want to be on a par with rest of the world. Will Statehood be a magic wand? They are not sure. What nags them is whether this is a genuine clamour of the leaders or a mirage raised once again?

Every State Cabinet in Maharashtra has had Ministers from Vidarbha. When providing Government jobs, every leader

has dimmed somewhat because of the constraints of "the party line" of the Nationalist Congress Party — to move a resolution in the Maharashtra Legislature this winter; it also betrays the same fact: when they had an opportunity, little was achieved and now bets are being placed on Statehood as a cure for all ills. These things tend to add up to the opinion that leaders cannot be trusted.

In fact, there is no agreed, viable means of measuring public opinion on Statehood: who and how many are on which side. Mr. Sharad Pawar, easily the

Statehood for Vidarbha is seen more as an agenda of the leaders and not of the region's people.

most influential person who can either make or mar the dream of a Vidarbha State, thinks a referendum is the best way to determine which way the wind blows. But the Centre will not agree to this since it has ramifications "elsewhere", meaning Jammu and Kashmir. Others like Mr. Partha Mehta, now a Minister, thinks dissolution of the Maharashtra Assembly and elections making Vidarbha the issue would be a good bet.

Others say the opinion of the elected representatives and party leaders is enough. This suggestion comes in the main from Congressmen who often print photographs of people on the dais at a pro-Vidarbha "rally" or "meeting" and never the audience. Each of these leaders

— Mr. Vilas Motiramwar, Mr. Rajul Doshmukh, Mr. Banwarilal Purohit, Mr. Nalakrao Firtude et al — has run these conclaves separately but the audience has not grown. A bandh has been proposed for November 27 but that is a long way off. An assessment on this basis, of public opinion, is difficult.

Again, elections have not been a good barometer in the region. They never have. The BJP, despite its commitment to smaller States, could not put the Vidarbha Statehood issue in the joint manifesto

with the Shiv Sena which continues to oppose dismembering the linguistic State. In 1995, the BJP-Sena together acquired 33 of the 66 seats from the region to the Assembly? Was it because the BJP favoured Statehood and the Sena opposed it? Did the Congress do better in the last Assembly or Lok Sabha polls despite not making Vidarbha the centrepiece of the campaign? No clear answers.

The Vidarbha Rajya Sangarsha Samiti had contested elections on the Statehood issue long ago. So had the Mahavidarbha Sangharsha Samiti. ~~But they had little to show~~ (a couple of MPs and a handful of MLAs) by way of electoral gains. When Mr. Jambhantirao Dhote led the movement, it was as fierce as it could get. Now, he is a burnt-out politician who has ploughed his truth with the Shiv Sena which opposes formation of a new State. Or is it that the people had then wanted Vidarbha to be given a chance to develop under a larger linguistic State?

Which means, neither by the yardstick of an election nor an agitation has public opinion been mustered in favour of Vidarbha. Some do, however, trot out the fact that the Jazal Ali Commission on re-organisation of States conceded the viability of Vidarbha, but then, that was under the conditions then prevailing, comparing perhaps its assets with Madhya Bharat. If the leaders speak of that region's conditional merger as a big mistake, they have not yet explained why they tried little to secure justice in 40 long years of participation in an administration that ignored the region.

A lot will be said in the near future; political manoeuvres will be the order of the day. The BJP will remain smug asking the Congress to take up the issue in the Legislature. The NCP has already asked the BJP and the Congress to make up their minds before it responds because the other two parties have a better mandate by way of votes. The Shiv Sena will badger the BJP. And the people will watch and listen. Politics will be the key issue and not Vidarbha or its development.

14 OCT 2000

ETHNIC DRIVE

Left Cannot Ignore Kamtapuri Uprising

By RANJIT GUPTA

A FEW days ago, two school headmasters, Netai Das and Subash Sarkar were shot dead by activists of the Kamtapuri Liberation Organisation. Netai Das was the headmaster of Dhupguri School and a member of the CPI-M zonal committee; Sarkar was headmaster of Malbazar School and a member of the district committee of the CPI-M. The killers used stenguns and retreated through wooded areas towards Cooch Behar on motorcycles. The CPI-M reacted in the usual manner. There was a districtwide "bandh". Only the SFI and DYF were active. They attacked and ransacked the Mainaguri police station and the one at Dhupguri.

Siliguri was also affected, as was travelling south to Calcutta. A tea group representative told this writer that such local bandhs are frequent and often stop despatch of tea. It is, therefore, necessary to tell the other areas in West Bengal and India who the KLO

are, why they are killing leading members of the local CPI-M in North Bengal and how is it that they are well armed and equipped.

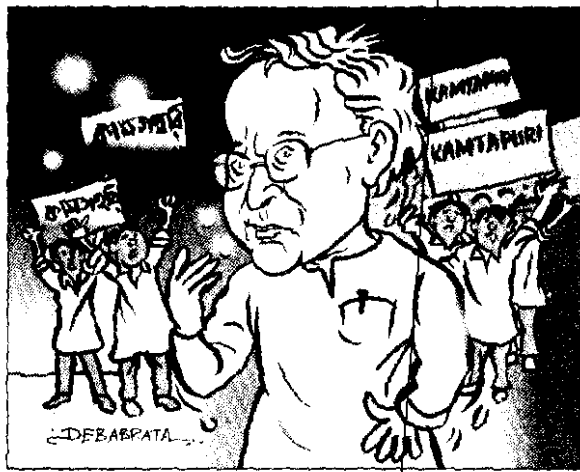
HISTORY

The Kamtapuri Liberation Organisation wants a state for themselves. Ethnically, they consist of the Koch and Mech tribes of Cooch Behar who are not different from the Rajbanshis of Jalpaiguri. Altogether they are known as the Bahes of the North of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar districts. Opposed to the Bahes there are migrant Bengalis in the region. These Bengalis are called "Bhatias" as they are known to come from the South, the land of the ebbing rivers (*bhata* in Bengali means ebb tide).

The migration has been going on for ages but in a trickle. To the East Bengal "bhadralok" class, the North did not appear to be attractive. Darjeeling was too cold, Jalpaiguri, particularly the Dooars, too wild. True, more than 150 tea estates have been planted there; the tea of the eastern Dooars and that of the Chulsa Hills are much in demand. There is a lot of money in tea but mainly for the owners and the retailers. The tea estates are labour intensive but the bhadralok would lose his "caste" in accepting paid physical chores. It is the availability of migrant labour force from the rising and barren land of the Orissa hills and the Chhotanagpur plateau which has made plantations possible. This labour force consisted of the Santhals and other Adivasi tribes who have always been on the move in search of living. Then there are "dalals" for indentured Adivasis for the tea gardens in Jalpaiguri and

Assam. These labourers moved with their women and established villages around the plantations. Such facile availability made tea owning easy for the British merchants with money to invest.

These labourers came to be known as "modesins". They did not hurt the autochthons, the trans-Teesta Bahes who were not interested in working for other people's tea in conditions of great rigour. What frightened both the Bahes and Bhatias away from tea was malaria and "black water



fever", now stamped out of the area by recent medical developments. The Rajbanshis were happy with their peasant economy; the life with the rice and cattle around was easy.

This was the situation until the tide of refugees from East Pakistan hit West Bengal and Assam. In the district of Jalpaiguri and Cooch Behar the migrants poured in. The Hindu "bhadraloks" packed up their ideologies, politics and culture and ran from communal violence into Jalpaiguri, Siliguri and Cooch Behar areas.

The guru of the Naxalites, Charu Mazumdar came. The other apostles of rural violence came — Kanu Sanyal, Biren Bose and Souren Bose. In eastern Dooars came Nani Bhattacharya and other leaders of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (which by then was a Marxist Party).

VITAL ROLE

They, however, did not perturb the Bahes. Charu and his associates had their knives out for the jotedars and big farmers only, which the Rajbangshi peasant was not. The RSP had their guns aimed at the plantation economy.

But the migration of the fifties and its consequences has threatened the Bahes society and economy. The second and third generation Bhatia migrants, harassed and destabilised, accepted the CPI-M ideology and supplied their "cadres". In return, they had priority for employment in educational institutions, in medical services and technical education. The Rajbangshi forced by population pressure to wake up from their bucolic dreams, found all doors closed against them and their children, in the areas of development professions. Not merely the demographic character of the region

changed, the autochthons were threatened by numbers and higher areas of economy and culture were barred to them.

This was done very democratically. It will have been noted that the two murdered CPI-M leaders are headmasters of schools. This, for the party, is a very important matter. The CPI-M leader as the head of a school is to ensure that teachers and clerks of the required political tilt are available as presiding and polling officers during parliamentary and assembly polls. It has to be borne in mind that in these elections right people of the Left parties are to be elected. These schools have to provide such supervisory personnel for rural democracy, for panchayat polls and for electing the Sabhadhipati. The murdered leaders had a vital role to play.

The KLO, however, heard the right noises from their own breed — the Koch and the Mech tribes and the cousinly tribe of the Bodos. The Bodos are spread from the east of Cooch Behar to Assam. The areas around the Sankosh River and the Bhutan border are not unfriendly. The Bodos from these areas keep the Kamtapuris well supplied with stenguns and motorcycles. When the Kamtapuris are under pressure, they take shelter in Cooch Behar and on the Bhutan border.

ULFA MODEL

This was not the first time that the Kamtapuris killed in Jalpaiguri. When the hue and cry dies down, they plan once again a sortie through the jungle paths to the western areas. They have a big hit list of CPI-M leaders. This will be a very unpleasant experience for Mr Jyoti Basu. The party has already lost Darjeeling in the North. The state government cannot just wish away the KLO. The human, political and physical geographies existing in the North do not portend a happy time for the party in power.

The Kamtapuris have the ULFA model for their political course and their mistakes to learn from. They have now a Students' Front. They have a periodical to publish their political thinking. They have no script. They publish their propaganda literature in a Bengali dialect, closer to mainstream Bengali speech than the dialects of the far Eastern Bengal.

Had the CPI-M accepted ethnic and cultural varieties in the state as real, they would not have had problems like GNLf separatism and Kamtapuris raising their banners. Very recently, they held in Siliguri a large hostile demonstration when deputy chief minister, Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya visited the town. Reports of such demonstration and political assassination merely add to the panic of the bhadralok.

The author is former Inspector-General of Police, West Bengal.

Congress snubs Soren, NDA set to form Govt

HT Correspondents
Ranchi/New Delhi, November 13

THE NATIONAL Democratic Alliance is all set to form the first government of Jharkhand under the leadership of Dumka MP and former Union Minister of State Babulal Marandi, who is likely to be sworn in as Chief Minister soon after Tuesday midnight.

Mr Marandi's name is expected to be formally announced soon after the NDA legislators' meeting on Tuesday afternoon. This meeting will be preceded by a meeting of BJP legislators, where Mr Marandi is slated to be elected leader.

Shibu Soren's plans to form a non-NDA government, however, suffered a death-blow today with the Congress Working Committee (CWC) deciding not to support any group for the formation of Jharkhand Government. Soren, who walked out of the NDA after being rebuffed by the BJP, had been holding consultations with the State Congress leaders in the hope of getting the party's support.

The CWC, which met with Mrs Sonia Gandhi in the chair, adopted a resolution stating that "in view of the fact that no stable Government can be constituted in the State since the number of MLAs are equally divided, we should not support any group to form the Government in Jharkhand."

The decision of two Independent legislators Sudesh Mahato and Joba Manjhi to form a group and join the NDA as its constituent under the banner of All Jharkhand Students' Union-supported United



Babulal Marandi



Shibu Soren

Gomantak Democratic Party came as a shot in the arm of the alliance today. With this, its strength has swelled to 42 in the 81 member House.

The NDA has finally emerged as the biggest group in the new Assembly, and the BJP as the single largest party, with 32 MLAs. This will give Governor Prabhat Kumar, likely to be sworn in minutes before the Chief Minister, sufficient grounds to invite the NDA leader to take oath as Chief Minister.

Mr Mahato and Ms Manjhi said they were joining the NDA "on the invitation of Mr Marandi who will be the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand". The formation of a group, they said, was necessary for ensuring that the NDA Government remained stable.

Although the BJP remained tight-lipped about the chances of Khunti MP Karia Munda becoming the Chief Minister, it is unlikely that Mr Munda will attend either the NDA meeting or the swearing-in ceremony here on Tuesday.

Sources at his official residence in Delhi told *The Hindustan Times* that Mr Munda was unwell and was unlikely to be in Ranchi on Tuesday.

Senior BJP leader and party vice-president Kailashpati Mishra said the announcement on the Chief Minister-designate would be made soon after the NDA meeting tomorrow.

"There is no confusion in the BJP over the Chief Minister's name. Today the NDA has 42 MLAs, but by the time the Council of Ministers is formed, our strength will not be less than 50," Mr Mishra said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 NOV 2000

A village remembers the unsung hero of Jharkhand

By K. Balchand

RANCHI, NOV. 14. His grave says it all. A mute testimony of the man and the lot of the tribals in general. It is truly that of an unsung hero without even an epitaph.

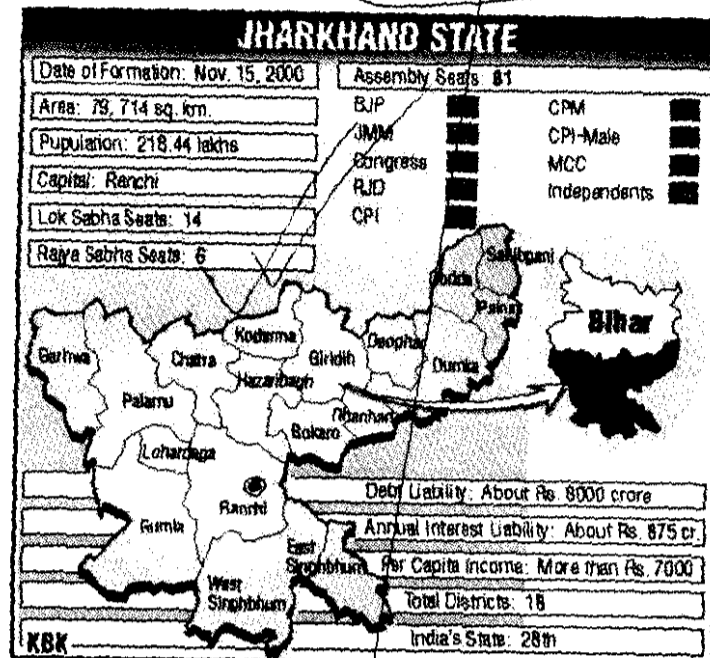
The grave is that of the hockey wizard, Jaipal Singh Munda, the tribal who successfully led the country to its maiden Olympic gold medal in 1928 and one who identified himself with the tribal aspiration for self rule in recent times by jumping into politics in 1938.

A huge stone slab is all that forms his samadhi reminding that his body had been buried in his native village of Takra along side that of his mother and below that of his father. His ancestral mud house has crumbled too.

The village that once was a hub of political activity that sought to shape the destiny of the tribals and the plateau region, now finds itself tucked away in the remoteness of the plateau and a shorn forest.

While the parties of the Jharkhand region have forgotten the contributions of the man who brought laurels for the country, the villagers still remember him with warmth and respect. The tribals of this village want that the first Chief Minister of the new State should be one who was associated with the movement spearheaded by their leader.

Jaipal Singh had launched the Adivasi Mahasabha, who was later converted into the Jharkhand Party. Simon Munda said that by not doing so, they are simply forgetting Jaipal Singh. According to Simon



Munda, the JMM president, Mr. Shibu Soren, is the rightful heir to Jaipal Singh's political legacy.

Preetam Kachhap opposed the formation of a BJP-led Government saying that it would not benefit the people or the region. Ashok Kachhap said the Marwaris and the Dikkus would strengthen their stranglehold and suppress the uplift of the tribals. No other party had done anything for the tribals in the region.

Mr. Prem Tirkey, the headmaster of the St. Paul Upper Primary

School where Jaipal Singh studied, was also of the view that only a tribal leader could understand the problems afflicting the community. The 110-year school is just as it was when set up with just three rooms where tribal kids get their education upto class five. The three teachers have not received their salaries for 30 months now. He too does not consider the BJP as a party which the tribal could identify themselves with nor regarded Mr. Babulal Marandi as a worthy tribal leader. It is Shibu Soren alone for him.

THE HINDU

15 NOV 2000

Jharkhand a reality; Marandi CM

Soren drama delays ceremony

MALINI VERMA
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

RANCHI, Nov. 14. — Jharkhand was born shortly after midnight tonight ending half-a-century old saga of struggle for a separate state with the swearing in of Mr Prabhat Kumar as its Governor. The acting chief justice of Jharkhand High Court administered the oath of office at 12.05 a.m.

But the swearing in of the chief minister was delayed by 40 minutes because Mr Sibhu Soren, accompanied by the Congress Legislature Party leader, Mr Furakan Ansari, staked his claim to form the government by showing the signatures of 36 MLAs. He said nine more MLAs were in his favour.

After an argument with Mr Soren, the Governor rejected his claim and administered the oath of office and

secrecy to Mr Babulal Marandi at 1.05 a.m.

The Governor asked Mr Soren to prove his claim on the floor of the House. Mr Marandi has been given 15 days to prove his majority.

Union ministers, Mr LK Advani, Mr George Fernandes, Mr Yashwant Sinha and Mr Sharad Yadav and Shatrughan Sinha were present at the swearing in.

Mr Karia Munda, who had staked claim for the chief minister's post, was present. The CPI, CPI-M, CPI-ML and the MCC boycotted the ceremony.

The pomp and gaiety on the occasion of the birth of the new state, carved out of 18 districts of Santhal Pargana and Chhotanagpur, was confined to the heavily guarded precincts of Raj Bhavan. It was an undeclared curfew in the rest of the city with the para-military forces patrolling the roads, lanes and by-lanes.

Securitymen were seen even on rooftops. They kept people away from celebrating the occasion. Carbine-toting policemen were seen patrolling the

city streets. However, the tribal euphoria was missing.

Earlier in the day, the NDA unani-



Mr Marandi: in the hot seat

mously elected Mr Marandi as its legislature party leader paving the way for the swearing-in of the 42-year-old BJP MP from Dumka as the first chief minister of Jharkhand.

The JD-U MLA, Mr Inder Singh Namdhari, proposed Mr Marandi's name and the Independent MLA, Mr Samresh Singh, supported it. Party vice-president, Mr Madanlal Khurana, functioning as an observer to the legislature party leader's election, announced that Mr Marandi was elected unanimously as the NDA leader in the House for there was no one to challenge him.

Forty-five MLAs were present at the legislature party meeting. "We have more than sufficient MLAs to have an NDA chief minister, Mr Khurana announced. Four Independent MLAs, including Mrs Joba Majhi, Mr Sudesh Mahto, Mr Madhav Lal Singh and Mr Samresh Singh today extended support to NDA — taking its tally to 45.

The NDA has 33 BJP MLAs (including a nominated one), five Samata Party MLAs, three JD-U MLAs besides the support of four independents.

Asked about the revolt by the senior party MP, Mr Karia Munda, who also wanted to be the chief minister, Mr Khurana said: "Mr Munda is fully

satisfied with the election of Mr Marandi as the first chief minister."

Born on 11 January 1958 in a Santhal family at Kodai Bank village of Giridih district, Mr Marandi joined the VHP in early 1980s and worked as its organisational secretary from 1983 to 1990.

He joined the BJP in 1990 and was appointed as the president of the BJP Vananchal state committee in 1995. In the last Lok Sabha elections he defeated the JMM-S chief, Mr Sibhu Soren.

Spelling out his priority soon after his election as the NDA leader, Mr Marandi said: "My government will give special emphasis on poverty alleviation in the tribal regions and development of human resources and irrigation."

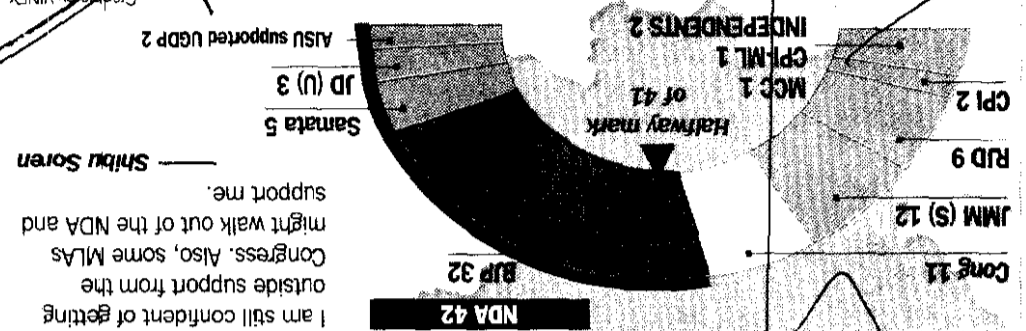
Asked about his strategy to deal with the growing influence of Naxalite outfits, Mr Marandi said: "I will invite all the Naxalite outfits for a dialogue. I will talk to them."

THE STATESMAN

15 NOV 2000

HOW THEY STACK UP

ASSEMBLY SEATS: 81
EFFECTIVE STRENGTH: 80



The NDA has the necessary majority to form a government on its own and there are no differences in the BJP over who will be the Chief Minister

Babul Marandi

I am still confident of getting outside support from the Congress. Also, some MLAs might walk out of the NDA and support me.

Shibu Soren

Edited by VINAY

MARANDI IS CM; ADIVASI EUPHORIA MISSING

Jharkhand is born

By K. Balchand

140-1
157/12

RANCHI, NOV. 14. Jharkhand, 28th State of the Indian Union, was born shortly past midnight tonight with the swearing in of the Governor, Mr. Praphat Kumar, and the Chief Minister, Mr. Babulal Marandi, whose oath-taking was delayed by half-an-hour following a last-minute drama of claim to Government formation by his rival, the JMM(S) chief, Mr. Shibu Soren.

The acting Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court, Mr. Vinod Kumar Gupta, swore in Mr. Kumar, who in turn administered the oath of office and secrecy to the 42-year-old Mr. Marandi.

But the pomp and gaiety over this historic occasion was restricted to the precincts of the Raj Bhavan. The Adivasi euphoria was missing, thanks partly to the heavy police bandobustan and around the new capital.

All entry points were blocked to prevent JMM supporters from entering the city and the administration also withdrew permission to the party to hold a rally at the Jaipal Singh Stadium.

Developments leading to government-formation were considered a major factor for the lack of enthusiasm among the Adivasis, who account for 60 lakhs of the 2.18-crore population in the State with an area of 74,677 sq.km.

Lack of enthusiasm

In contrast to what was witnessed in October last at the JMM rally, the drums and the trumpets, a primary part of Adivasi celebrations, were nowhere to be seen. The dancing troupes had not arrived. Even the business community showed little enthusiasm. Some attributed it to the sense of insecurity following threats of demonstration by the JMM and the frontal organisation of the



Mr. Babulal Marandi being congratulated by the BJP vice-president, Mr. Kailashpati Mishra, and the party leader, Mr. Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, in Ranchi on Tuesday after his election as the party's Jharkhand State Legislature leader. — Photo: Ranjeet Kumar

banned MCC, the Jharkhand Mukti Manch, which will be holding a demonstration tomorrow. People's participation was limited to lighting decorations at certain points and a few BJP activists riding the streets on motorbikes.

Munda keeps off BJP meet

Earlier, the BJP held its legislature party meeting and unanimously elected Mr. Babulal Marandi as leader and the same exercise was gone through at the NDA's meeting. The BJP swept its differences under the carpet, with the dissident, Mr. Karia Munda, staying away, citing malaria.

The BJP went through the motions under tight security to the extent that none of the senior NDA leaders was present at the joint meeting of the coalition. In fact, the meeting was held prior to the arrival of the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, and the

Defence Minister, Mr. George Fernandes, and their other colleagues who arrived for the oath-taking ceremony.

On the other hand, the JMM chief, Mr. Shibu Soren, and the RJD president, Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav, contested the claim of the NDA and alleged that the BJP-led coalition was grabbing power as part of a conspiracy against popular sentiment.

PTI reports:

The Jharkhand Pradesh Congress Committee proposed that the Congress president, Ms. Sonia Gandhi, explore the possibilities of installation of a "secular government" headed by the JMM(S). "But we are still awaiting the endorsement of our proposal by the party high command," the JPCC working president, Mr. P.N. Singh said.

Unsung hero: Page 15

THE HINDU

15 NOV 2000

Marandi sworn in as Jharkhand's first CM

Sibu Soren's last-ditch attempt to form Govt fails

Ashish Sinha

Ranchi, November 14

BABULAL MARANDI was sworn in as the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand heading an NDA Government at a glittering function sharp at 1 am at the Raj Bhawan here. Governor Prabhat Kumar, who formally took charge before the Chief Minister, administered the oath of office and secrecy to Marandi. Acting Chief Justice of the Jharkhand High Court, Vinod Kumar Gupta, administered the oath of office to the Governor.

Events unfolded in a dramatic and fast-paced manner this evening. Immediately after the Governor was sworn in, Marandi presented a list of 45 MLAs to him. Leader of the JMM Legislature Party Sibu Soren too came up with a list of 41 MLAs.

But the Governor invited Marandi to form the first Government of Jharkhand. The effective strength of the Vidhan Sabha is 81, including the sole nominated member from the Anglo-Indian community. One seat (Ramgarh) is vacant.

Union Home Minister L K Advani, Defence Minister George Fernandes,

Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, Agriculture Minister Nitish Kumar and Civil Aviation Minister Sharad Yadav attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Earlier in the day, Marandi was elected leader of the BJP Legislature Party and the NDA Legislature Party at two separate meetings.

While all 33 BJP MLAs (including the nominated member) unanimously elected Marandi as their leader, as many as 45 MLAs of the NDA ratified his election. The NDA Legislature Party included 33 MLAs from the BJP, five from the Samata Party, three from Janata Dal (United), two from All Jharkhand Students' Union-supported United Gomantwadi Democratic Party (UGDP), and two from Jharkhand Vananchal Congress (JVC).

Later, addressing the NDA legislators, Marandi said, "By electing me you have assigned me a task of immense responsibility. I am not that experienced, but with the support of such senior leaders and with your cooperation, I will do my best to realise the aspirations of the people of Jharkhand. Ours will be a Government of teamwork. My doors will always remain

open for everyone. My request to all of you will be to be accessible to the people at all times. I am sure the violence-driven atmosphere of fear prevailing in Jharkhand will dissipate within two-three months."

Marandi, who resigned recently as Union Minister, is the MP from Dumka. Khunti MP and BJP leader Karia Munda, another strong contender for the CM's post, did not attend any of the meetings.

However, briefing reporters after the BJP legislators' meeting, Madan Lal Khurana claimed Munda was "fully satisfied" with the decision and there was no dissidence in the party. Asked if Munda would join the Union Cabinet, he said it was for the Prime Minister to decide.

Samresh Singh, who joined the NDA today, expressed confidence that the number of MLAs supporting the BJP-led Government would soon go up from the present strength of 45. BJP vice-president Kailashpati Mishra had also told *The Hindustan Times* on Monday that the final strength of the NDA legislators would be "more than 50" at the time of the formation of the new ministry.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 NOV 2000

JHARKHAND: VITAL STATISTICS

Area
74,677 sq km

Number of districts: 18

Parliamentary seats: 14

Assembly seats: 82

Literacy: 52% (Women's literacy: 27%)

Population: 2.18 crore

Resources
Coal (33% of country's reserves), Pyrite (58%), Quartzite: (87%), Mica (50%), Iron Ore (34%)

Agriculture produce
Rice, Wheat, Kendu leaf

Tourist hotspots
Deoaghagh, Burha, Lodha and Hundru falls
Rajrappa: Site of Chhinnamasta temple around which Satyajit Ray wove a classic Feluda mystery

Betla National Park: Near Daltongunj, home to tigers and a rich variety of wildlife

Parasnath Hills: Jain pilgrimage centre

Netarhat: Tourist resort at a height of 1,200 m

The forests of Palamau have inspired several Bengali writers. Ray shot Aryaner Din Ratri here

Industry
Steel City Jamsheerpur, home to Tisco, will go to the new state. Bokaro has one of the country's largest public sector steel plants, Mecon is in Ranchi while scores of ancillary units have come up in Adityapur Industrial Area

THE TELEGRAPH

15 NOV 2000

JHARKHAND IS BORN

16/12 ✓
THE SWEARING IN of Mr. Babulal Marandi as Chief Minister of Jharkhand, taking place as it did on the day of the birth anniversary of Birsa Munda, may have added a symbolic flavour to the long struggle carried out by the tribal people of the region for a separate State. Although the new State consists of only the tribal dominated districts of Bihar and in this sense is just a truncated version of what its protagonists had visualised, there certainly is scope for development of the region. After all, those concerned with the development needs of the region will no longer have to look up to the politicians and the bureaucracy in faraway Patna for the redress of the grievances of the tribal people. The new State, with its rich mineral resources and vast forest tracts apart from the manufacturing centres around Jamshedpur, can certainly look forward to building a sustainable economic base. But this is possible only if those at the helm — Mr. Marandi and his team of Ministers — are willing to take up the task of governance in real earnest.

It is in this context that one must be concerned over the happenings in the political arena during the past couple of weeks. For instance, the manner in which the new Chief Minister was chosen by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), with particularly Mr. Karia Munda going into a sulk, the open "invitation" by Mr. Shibu Soren to Mr. Munda that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) was willing to play ball with him if he could bring about a split in the BJP legislature party, and reports of possible schisms in the smaller parties in the new Assembly did reflect the dominance of self-preservation instincts rather than any serious concern for the development. It was, indeed, this very tendency among the members of the political class that led the tribals in the Jharkhand region to join hands in raising the sep-

arate State demand over the years; the very fact that the ordinary tribal people were willing to take on the might of the state machinery on several occasions in the past while agitating for a separate State reflected the extent to which they felt alienated from the administrative machinery. And now with the formation of the State — their dream having come true — there are bound to be a lot of expectations from the new Government. And unless Mr. Marandi and his team rise to these expectations, the people's resentment and frustration may well lead to a further legitimisation of some of the far-Left groups operating in the region and engaged in mindless violence.

Be that as it may, the fact that Mr. Shibu Soren's hopes to lead the Government have been dashed does lead to some apprehensions. Mr. Soren's call to his ranks to "protest" the installation of Mr. Marandi had resulted in Ranchi being turned into a "battle-zone" on the day of the swearing in; add to this the possibility of the BJP's cadre stepping up their Hindutva agenda among the tribals as it happened in the Dangs district in Gujarat. All these are certainly developments that do not serve the interests of the new State. It is incumbent on the political leadership of the ruling NDA as well as the JMM (S) as also such parties as the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal not to play partisan political games. And as for the development agenda, it is important that the specific needs of the tribal people are borne in mind; large parts of the new State have suffered due to non-fulfilment of some of the basic development needs, such as primary education and health-care facilities, only because the civil administration and the political masters had remained insensitive to such needs. Any laxity in addressing these issues in real earnest could lead to trouble in Jharkhand.

THE HINDU

16 NOV 2000

HOT IN THE HILLS

New challenge to Ghisingh and CPI-M

While Subash Ghisingh is in pursuit of more funds from the Centre and meantime has suspended his demand for a separate state, some of his former associates are fomenting a movement that has alarming implications. They formed the militant wing of the GNLF during the bloody agitation in the eighties and were never reconciled to the formation of the Hill Council in 1988. They have not only surfaced under the banner of the Gorkha Liberation Organisation with violence very much on their minds as well as moral and material support from Naga militants. Their leader, Chhatre Subba, had crossed swords with Ghisingh, his former boss, on the one-point programme of securing statehood. He provides every indication that violence is his main weapon. Proof was available in a shootout with the police. While posters preaching violence have begun to appear, Subba himself has declared that the Hill Council is infructuous, councillors ought to quit and an "armed movement" is the only option.

These are dangerous portents though, in political terms. Subba may not pose an immediate threat either to Ghisingh or to the CPI-M. The point is that development programmes have not got off the ground despite the substantial funds received from Delhi. Ghisingh's attempt to have the Gorkha community declared a Scheduled Tribe is specifically aimed at augmenting the flow of cash. But if the basic task of improving civic amenities remains ignored, it will only help militant outfits gain the upper hand. With armed Nagas helping the GLO and Ufa militants helping the Kamtapuris, the prospects look grim. The Left Front needs to nip it in the bud, especially when Subba's outfit is conducting its operations close to the Bhutan border. Ghisingh's capacity to check his rival's progress is hindered by the fact that he cannot condemn the separatist movement unequivocally: that will affect his popular base. Which makes things more complex for Buddhadev Bhattacharya; he must first adopt a credible policy on Ghisingh himself.

THE STATESMAN

20 NOV 2000

MARANDI ON TEST

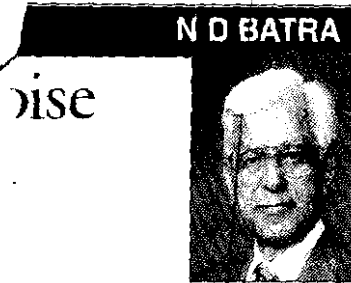
Jharkhand CM must establish rule of law

AFTER Laloo Prasad Yadav's failure to engineer defections from the Samata Party and JD-U, it was a foregone conclusion that Babulal Marandi would sail through the vote of confidence. But that looks to be only the first hurdle for the new Jharkhand chief minister. The real task of governance begins in the face of considerable hostility. The BJP is a divided house considering the fact that one section wanted Karia Munda as chief minister by virtue of his being elected MP on consecutive occasions. Marandi is seen to be Delhi's choice and the tribals for whom the exercise was meant can only be satisfied if he can deliver. In this task he has to contend with sloth and corruption of the Laloo years and the gigantic task of getting state employees to adapt to the new climate. The BJP has been winning elections by default — the disillusionment with the JMM and with Sibu Soren in particular. But there is no reason to believe that the BJP exerts the same kind of influence over the administration.

Marandi's capacity to perform will be hampered by the fact that the rule of law is virtually absent. Naxalite groups, among which the Maoist Communist Centre enjoys Laloo's patronage, have written their own rules. The police are seen to be spectators in a state where reprisal killings take place at frequent intervals. Tribals in many cases have come to regard these extremist groups as their best bet against powerful groups. Extortions, people's courts and the brazen display of musclepower have become the order of the day. Marandi's first task will be to enforce the rule of law and to set in motion a development programme. Only that will serve to win the confidence of the tribals and wean them away from the path of violence. Similarly, an emasculated police force needs to be turned into an effective instrument with recruitments from tribals. The encouraging sign is that Marandi has called for a dialogue with Naxalites in the hope that they can be persuaded to join the mainstream. Given their commitment to pseudo-revolutionary methods which have fetched them both money and power, Marandi is confronted with an uphill task and the best he can do to fend off his adversaries is to display some tact and administrative skill. His advantage is that he has Delhi's support.

THE STATESMAN

26 NOV 2000



ise

id late night stand-up field day. Referring to the erfly ballot, which led citizens to vote for the ultra-ther than for Al Gore, Bill *Incorrect on ABC*, said, "Now a Beach County were s, because not only did many to buy magazines to win, but as sex offenders." Gore- with "Sore Loserman" on a Beach County during the

violence in the USA? No political murders, no stuffing lly happens in some other

lised to be humane. Let me

Chad blizzard

THANKSGIVING is over, and as America contemplates the left-overs of the feast and the ripped-up remains of its election, the nation is in the grip of cold turkey.

Never was there a stranger Thanksgiving. America's most beloved and least digestible holiday comes between election day and Christmas, when Americans should be at their most grateful and placid.

But how do you give thanks for the gift of American democracy with a constitutional crisis looming? How can you brew up a really first-rate family row when it must pale

The main purpose of Thanksgiving old films. But this time, US TV ch on the legal punch-up for presiden screen. It is *Groundhog Day*, the every day. Every morning we w has moved on yet, w

he won; from here on, if Mr Bush is certified the winner on Sunday, Mr Gore will be fighting to claw back an



THE STATESMAN

7:00 PM

Kamtapuris threaten economic blockade of North Bengal

Kinsuk Basu
Calcutta, November 29

THESE ARE no immediate plans for a violent movement, at least not on the face of it. But if things don't change fast, the Rajbanshis of North Bengal — organised in the Kamtapur Peoples' Party (KPP) — would turn militant.

They will begin with an economic blockade that would cut North Bengal off from rest of the country — and if that didn't work, only then would they take up arms. This, in short, was the revelation of Atul Roy, KPP chief, when he spoke to *The Hindustan Times* in Siliguri recently.

The State police, of course, do not buy Roy's story. Rather, they have reasons to believe the KPP has already begun building an armed separatist movement in north Bengal. It was, evidently, this information that prompted the district police in Siliguri to carry out a combing operation in Tarbandha village in Phansidewa, Siliguri, on Tuesday.

The raid yielded a cache of illegal arms amid stiff resistance from KPP supporters, two of whom fell to police bullets during the operation.

The KPP responded with a 48-hour bandh in Darjeeling beginning today, a curtain raiser to what observers believe might be a prolonged showdown.

Roy told this correspondent the KPP might just cut off supply of tea and other agro-based products from north Bengal in the absence of a settlement of their grievances.

The party — which Roy claimed had nearly 2.5 lakh members in the three regions of Jalpaiguri, Cooch Behar and North Dinajpur — would like to speak directly with

the Centre, not Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee or Jyoti Basu. And if Delhi is unresponsive, the party would take other measures to make itself heard.

"We will take to the streets, squat on railway tracks and motivate tea garden and industrial workers to cut off supply to the plains. Efforts are on to rope in every Rajbanshi in north Bengal. The Bodos did it in Assam. We believe that once the stir takes the shape of a mass movement, we will be unstoppable," said Roy.

Preparations are already on for a massive rally on December 6 at Cooch Behar. Suggestions would be drafted into resolutions here, and the party's future course

charted. All for a separate state where Rajbanshis can have their own language, culture and identity.

"Our demand is not unjustified. If Punjabis can have Punjab, Biharis Bihar, why can't we? The Centre has created three new States. Even the Gorkhas have been offered an autonomous council. So why not

us?" asks Roy.

For all this, however, the Kamtapuris still do not have much support among other political groups.

Only a few leaders from the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha will attend the December 6 rally. They do not have support because not many know the history of the land yet, feel most Kamtapuris.

"It is a pity that many are unaware that the entire land of north Bengal including North Bengal University, the aerodrome and other parts belonged to the Rajbanshis. Over the years, we have been robbed of our possessions. Our people today are made to work as labourers on their own land," said Roy.

Buddha to meet Advani over Rajbanshi stir

NT Correspondent
Calcutta, November 29

BUDDHADEB BHATTACHARJEE will brief L K Advani on the situation arising out of the Kamtapuris' secessionist agitation in north Bengal at a meeting in New Delhi tomorrow.

"Although I will not complain against anyone in particular, I will explain in detail the real problem in north Bengal vis-à-vis the KPP and (its militant wing, the) KLO," the Chief Minister said of what will be his first meeting with the Union Home Minister since taking office on November 6.

"I will tell him (Advani) which are the parties and forces in the State that are lending moral and political support to the Kamtapuri agitation," Bhattacharjee said. "It is intriguing that certain parties and forces are sympathising with the KPP and KLO despite the fact that these organizations are hand in glove with the ULFA and ISI. It is now well-known that the KLO is being trained by ULFA and ISI in the use of sophisticated weaponry."

Without naming either the

Trinamool — which the CPI(M) has repeatedly accused of backing Kamtapuri separatists — or the Congress, the Chief Minister said: "Let the people judge for themselves which are the forces behind the KPP and KLO. They (KPP and KLO) are being pampered and incited even while they are heinously murdering and terrorising innocent people in north Bengal."

Bhattacharjee, however, admitted the Rajbanshis were faced with several socio-economic problems including land, the development of their language, education and culture, and the lack of employment opportunities. "The State Government is sympathetic to these problems. But they cannot be allowed to take the law in their hands to create a separate state. The State Government is determined to thwart their nefarious game."

According to Bhattacharjee, most of north Bengal's people despise the KPP and KLO. The KPP's 48-hour bandh call for November 29 and 30 had failed to impact on life in the area, he said.

Chhatisgarh Govt. formation, a ticklish issue

BHOPAL, OCT. 5. A debate is hotting up over the ticklish question of whether the first Government in the Chhatisgarh State should be in place by midnight on October 31 as the new State is born.

Conflicting views have surfaced in the wake of the move to hold the swearing-in ceremonies for the installation of the new Government about 8 to 10 hours after Chhatisgarh comes into being on the intervening night of October 31 and November 1.

The Madhya Pradesh Government is seeking clarifications from the Centre to avoid any constitutional tangle in the event of a time gap between the inception of the Chhatisgarh State and the assumption of office by the first Government in that State, official sources told UNI here today.

As the Madhya Pradesh Government will cease to function in the Chhatisgarh region on the October 31-November 1 night, experts wanted to know which "appropriate constitutional authority" will be in place to address any unforeseen exigency that would warrant State-level solution if the new Government is not immediately sworn-in.

"The local situation may be tackled by the lower rung of the administration concerned but who will give directions, if the situation is to be dealt with at the

State Government level," they asked.

Even the Chief Secretary, the highest ranking officer of a State Government, would be appointed only after the new Chief Minister takes over, they added.

Some experts suggested that either the Governor or the Chief Minister should assume office after midnight to avoid a constitutional crisis, they said.

The Legislative Affairs expert, Mr. Vishwendra Mehta, said it was a constitutional obligation for the new State to have a Government without creating a "vacuum".

As the matter related to the installation of the first popular Government, he said it should assume office soon after midnight.

The Former Chief Minister and senior congress leader, Mr. Shyama Charan Shukla, observed that the swearing-in of the new Government should be scheduled in such a manner so as to prevent any time lag between the formation of the new State and functioning of its first Government.

He cited the example of the ceremony for the installation of the first Government at the Centre after attaining independence at midnight in 1947. Similarly, his father Ravi Shankar Shukla was sworn-in as the first Chief

Minister of Madhya Pradesh at midnight in Bhopal in 1956.

However, some other congress leaders were of the opinion that the oath-taking ceremony should be held during the day on November 1 to ensure maximum participation of the people, who were enthusiastic about the formation of the new State and would like to share the historic moment.

Meanwhile, the process has begun for the selection of a panel of pro-tem Speakers for administering the oath to the members of the newly-constituted Chhatisgarh Vidhan Sabha.

The names of Mr. Mohinder Bahadur Singh (Basna), Mr. Rajendra Prasad Shukla (Kota), Mr. Chanesh Ram Rathia (Dharam-jaigarh), Mr. Madan Gopal Singh (Ambikapur), Mr. Jitru Ram Bhagel (Jagdarpur) and Mr. Madhav Singh Dhruv (Sinhawal), who will be the senior-most members of the Legislature of the new State, are being mentioned for the post.

The Governor will appoint the pro-tem Speakers on the recommendation of the Chief Minister, according to official sources.

They said it had been decided to have more than one pro-tem Speaker to meet any situation which may arise if any of them is appointed as a Minister or Speaker.

THE HINDU

5 OCT 200

Dehradun to be provisional capital of Uttaranchal State

Umesh Raghuvanshi
Lucknow, October 5

FINALLY, DEHRADUN becomes the provisional capital of Uttaranchal. A formal decision in this regard has been taken by the Union Home Ministry and communicated to Chief Secretary Yogendra Narain on Thursday night.

The decision regarding the permanent capital has been left to the new Government of Uttaranchal. The decision on the location of a separate bench of the new state would also be taken separately.

The Union Home Ministry in its communique has asked the State Government to start renovation work on all the identified buildings immediately. If buildings and land have to be transferred by some central government departments, the State Government may take up these cases with the respective ministries, it said.

The State Government has also been asked to keep an alternative option ready in case the central government buildings can not be vacated by November 1, 2000, the appointed day for creation of the

new State government.

According to sources, the buildings to house the residence of Governor and Chief Minister of the new State are also being identified. The venue for conducting the swearing in ceremony and the buildings to house the offices of new ministers are also being allotted. A formal decision regarding these buildings would be taken after discussing these issue in the meeting of Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs being convened on October 11, 2000.

The State Government proposes to hold the assembly session of the new State in the Vikas Bhawan building, sources said. However alternative buildings are being identified if the Vikas Bhawan is not ready by the appointed day. A decision to allot five-room government bungalows to the Ministers has also been taken.

Similarly four-room buildings or flats would be allotted to Principal Secretaries and Secretaries of the new government. A decision regarding the vehicles to be transferred to Dehradun would also be taken soon.

There are indications that

around 54 sections of the State Secretariat are also being shifted to Dehradun. The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs would also decide on the number of telephones to be diverted to Dehradun from the State Secretariat.

The Union Government's decision was also conveyed at the meeting of the Task Force which has been constituted by the State Government to finalise the modalities for the new State. It has decided to post all the heads of departments of the new State before November 1, 2000.

There are indications that the State Government may requisition many of the buildings of the Union Government.

A senior officer said a request to transfer the building which houses the office of the President's body guard in Dehradun may also be made. The State Government may also acquire Hotel Drona of the Garhwal Mandal Vikas Nigam.

The Government has allotted a sum of Rs 39 crore for renovation of these buildings, purchase of vehicles and to make preparations for the new State, he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

6 OCT 2000

5/10 NITISH STRIKES 10/10 Ominous signals to BJP in Jharkhand

AS long as the NDA held together, except the unpredictable and ambitious Sibu Soren, there were chances of a smooth transition to the new state of Jharkhand. The situation changes dramatically after the Samata Party comes out strongly in favour of Soren as chief minister. It comes from Digvijay Singh, Union minister of state for railways, but it can be assumed he is speaking for his boss and Union agriculture minister, Nitish Kumar, who in turn raised a stir by speaking in the voice of Laloo Prasad Yadav. The excuse was to press Bihar's claim for development funds but the timing was significant. The noise Nitish makes now does not explain his silence when Laloo demanded an incredible Rs 179,000 crores as compensation. He strikes when Bihar is about to witness a realignment of political forces with the BJP claiming its turf in south and Ram Vilas Paswan threatening to form his own party. Nitish and Laloo seem to have a common cause: protect their base. The best way to do this is, one, by making sure north Bihar doesn't slip out of their grasp and, two, by having a puppet like Sibu Soren in place in Jharkhand.

All this sends ominous signals to the BJP. Granted it is the largest party with 32 MLAs in a new House of 81. Even without the JMM, which has 12 MLAs, it could hope to scrape together a majority together with Samata, JD-U and Independents. The scenario changes with the virtual revolt by Samata, which has five MLAs. All it means is that Nitish Kumar and Sharad Yadav intend to exert their combined pressure on the BJP to restrain Paswan. For the record, Nitish says that it was a promise he made to Soren to secure JMM support for his short-lived government. But no one is fooled that he is consumed with moral fervour. It is undiluted ambition. There will be no complaints if the all-party core committee headed by Nitish Kumar gets down to work to relieve distress in flood-hit areas. But the chances are that it will lose its utility once the political conflicts are sorted out. The BJP should know this more than anyone else. It will be a tragedy if this results in a compromise that sees Soren in the chief minister's chair by default. The BJP has some hard choices to make, most of all whether to surrender to Nitish's dubious brand of politics. The hope must be that they will not

THE STATESMAN

10/10

EC to begin delimitation in Uttaranchal soon

LUCKNOW, OCT. 17. The Election Commission will soon take up the task of delimitation of constituencies in Uttar Pradesh in a move to complete the formation of the new State of Uttaranchal.

As the Uttar Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000, has received the assent of the President, Mr. K. R. Narayanan, and a new State of Uttaranchal is likely to be created very soon "from the appointed day to be notified by the Central Government", the Commission has written to the Uttar Pradesh Chief Secretary that it was "required to take action for the delimitation of constituencies in the State" immediately.

The EC will be requiring "requisite data like details of lowest administrative units in the State, census figures and maps of existing constituencies and other geographical and administrative units".

The Commission also asked the State to nominate immediately a nodal officer for better "coordination" with the Commission as it will have to keep in constant touch with the State Government for the task ahead. The State of Uttaranchal comprises 13 hill districts, including the pilgrim city of Haridwar and cover 22 (from one to 19 and the last three of the 124-member House) constituencies of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

Plea to Centre on capital

By Our Staff Correspondent

MEERUT, OCT. 17. The Uttarakhand Sanyukt Sangharsh Samiti (USSS)

leader, Mr. Dharendra Pratap, has urged the Centre to convene an all-party meet to decide on the place most suited for a permanent capital for the State of Uttaranchal.

Besides the involvement of money and proximity of the capital from various districts, the Government should ensure it is located in a seismically-sound area and a high-level committee of experts should be asked to go into this aspect and suggest probable sites for the capital, Mr. Pratap said.

It may be mentioned that various action groups and a faction of the Uttarakhand Kranti Dal have been opposing the move to make Dehra Dun the temporary capital and canvassing for establishment of the capital at Gairsen in Chamoli district.

Gairsen, on the Garhwal-Kumaon border was declared the capital during the Uttarakhand agitation and supported by all parties including the Bharatiya Janata Party.

However, according to experts, Gairsen was located in a highly active seismic zone and hence was not suited to be the capital.

In a separate move, several residents of the region led by the Rural Litigation and Entitlement Kendra chairperson, Mr. Avdhesh Kaushal, have appealed to the Union Government to post dedicated IAS officials to Uttaranchal to ensure "real development" of the area.

Management students have brainstorming session

By Arunkumar Bhatt

MUMBAI, OCT. 17. It is a global brain-storm of business and management here at the National Institute of Industrial Engineering (NITIE), a Union Government institution of technology, which has now branched out into the art of business of management.

Hundreds of students of business and technology schools from all over India, including IIMs and IITs and some from reputed foreign institutions such as the American MIT, the London Business School of the U.K., and the Asian Institute of Management, the Philippines, have turned up at the NITIE for the two-day annual academic fete, Prerna 2000, to hear about various summer projects of their peers and comments on them by the management gurus and captains of the industry.

The Prerna (inspiration), started in 1995, is a contest for summer projects — organised and managed by NITIE students. The participants have to submit in advance their project reports providing solutions for various management issues. After rigorous screening the very good ones among them get a chance to read them out. "The Prerna provides a forum for management students to present their thoughts to a galaxy of corporate executives," said Abishek Rao, an NITIE student.

The best participants get prizes from the sponsor companies. The

best entry in each of seven categories gets Rs. 20,000. Last year prizes worth Rs. 1 lakh were given away. The amount has been doubled this year. The jury consists of leading CEOs and management faculty. The highlight of this year is the international participation — 76 from all over the world. Over 80 institutions from the country have joined the Prerna and so have over 60 executives.

Of the seven categories, marketing management is the most keenly contested area, showing the significance of the discipline and also the career market preference. But fast catching up is the subject of systems and e-commerce. It has scaled from the last year's third position to the second one now, pushing down human resources module to the lowest level of the ladder. While finance and general management subjects have maintained their positions, materials and logistics management and production management have been chosen by a few. Many top companies have been looking forward to the Prerna for recruitment. Most of the awardees also get PPOs — pre-placement offers, beside the prize money. But that is not the only attraction for the majority of the participants. Corporate managers known for their achievement give presentations showcasing the best practices in the field to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

Uttaranchal to get lion's share of UP's wealth

Best schools, academies, universities, sanctuaries and hill stations will go to the new state

BY AMITA VERMA

Lucknow, Oct. 19: The countdown has begun and Uttar Pradesh is preparing to lose its best to the soon-to-be-created Uttaranchal state next month.

The creation of Uttaranchal will take away the best schools, academies, universities, sanctuaries, tourist spots, places of religious importance and the most economically viable power projects from Uttar Pradesh. And, of course, UP will also lose all its hill stations and summer resorts to the new state.

Residents of Uttar Pradesh will now have to travel to "another state" to enjoy the cool climes of Ranikhet, trek in dense forests of Binsar, go boating in the Nainital lake, step into the hot sulphur springs of Dehra Dun or enjoy a

shower under the Kempty Falls of Mussoorie. All these scenic spots in the hill stations will suddenly become "alien" on November 9 when Uttaranchal formally comes into being.

The Doon School in Dehra Dun that has given the country some of its best boys — including former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi — will now pass into Uttaranchal next month. So will the Welhams, Col. Browns and St. Joseph's schools.

The prestigious Sherwood School in Nainital, where Indian screen's biggest superstar Amitabh Bachchan learnt his first lessons in life, will also become a part of the new hill state, severing all its ties with Uttar Pradesh, except its history, of course.

Uttar Pradesh will lose some of the best academies and universities to

Uttaranchal too. The Lal Bahadur Shastri Academy for Indian Administrative Services that prepares bureaucrats for the country, the Indian Military Academy that serves as a lifeline for the Army and the Forest Research Institute that among the best in the country, will now have a new address — Uttaranchal.

SPOTLIGHT

The national Building Research Institute in Roorkee, the Indian Institute of Petroleum and the ONGC headquarters in Dehra Dun will be among the other losses that Uttar Pradesh will suffer with the creation of the new state.

Apart from losing nearly 65 per cent of its forest cover to Uttaranchal, UP will also be deprived of wildlife sanctu-

aries including the Jim Corbett National Park, the Rajaji National Park and the Nanda Devi sanctuary. The only wildlife sanctuary that will remain in UP will be the Dudhwa sanctuary. The breathtaking riot of colours that the Valley of Flowers presents year after year to tourists, will also become the property of Uttaranchal state.

The biggest loss that Uttar Pradesh will have to suffer on account of creation of Uttaranchal will be terms of hydropower projects. The Chhibru, Tehri, Maneri Bhal, Lakhvyar Vasi and Vishnu Prayag projects will flow into the hill state, leaving Uttar Pradesh poorer by several hundred megawatts of power.

Apart from the natural and material wealth that Uttaranchal will take away from Uttar Pradesh, the hill state will

also deprive Uttar Pradesh of places of great religious and spiritual significance. The hilltop shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath, the emerging point of Ganga at Gormukh and Gangotri, Yamunotri, Karn Prayag, Vishnu Prayag, Haridwar and Rishikesh — all of which attract lakhs of devotees every year — will become a part of Uttaranchal. So will the spiritual and ayurveda university being set up by Shantikunj in Haridwar.

Another major advantage that Uttar Pradesh will lose to Uttaranchal, will be the thrill of experiencing "winter" in summer.

Almost all districts and towns that enjoy a cold climate in the summer months in UP will pass into Uttaranchal, leaving the parent state scorching in the summer heat in the years to come.

THE ASIAN AGE

20 OCT 2000

Chhattisgarh CM race hots up

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHOPAL, Oct. 22. — The race for the chief minister's post of Chhattisgarh state has reached a crescendo in Congress circles with the formation of the state scheduled for 1 November.

The tribal Congress MLAs, who account for half of the total 48 Congress MLAs in Chhattisgarh, have been regularly holding their meetings in Bhopal and different parts of the Chhattisgarh region to press for a tribal chief minister for the new state.

They had earlier met the Congress president, Mrs Sonia Gandhi, to impress upon her that the first chief minister of Chhattisgarh state, which has a substantial tribal population, should be a tribal party leader.

About two dozen tribal, Dalit and OBC Congress legislators from the Chhattisgarh region had held a meeting at the residence of Mr Bhupesh Baghel, the Madhya Pradesh minister of state for transport, yesterday. They resolved to submit a memorandum to Mrs Sonia Gandhi once again to urge her to approve the candidature of a tribal party leader for the chief minister's post of Chhattisgarh.

Bhopal had become the nerve-

centre of hectic manoeuvrings for the past three days. Virtually all the Chhattisgarh chief ministerial aspirants - including Mr SC Shukla, Mr Vidya Charan Shukla, Mr Motilal Vora, Mr Ajit Jogi, and Mr Arvind Netam - and other state stalwarts - including Mr Arjun Singh and Mr Kamal Nath - had arrived in Bhopal in



Mr Digvijay Singh

order to lobby among the 48 Chhattisgarh Congress MLAs. These MLAs had gathered in the city to attend a special session of the undivided Madhya Pradesh Assembly during 19 to 20 October.

The scene has now shifted to New Delhi as many chief ministerial contenders and

Chhattisgarh MLAs have already left for Delhi to undertake some last-moment lobbying there.

At a meeting of the Madhya Pradesh Congress Legislature Party convened by chief minister Mr Digvijay Singh at his residence on Friday, the Chhattisgarh party legislators endorsed a proposal that the issue of the Chhattisgarh chief minister should be left to Mrs Sonia Gandhi.

No formal resolution was, however, adopted by them in this regard.

Mrs Sonia Gandhi is said to have conveyed to some state satraps on the issue that the High Command would clear the candidature of the leader who has the support of a majority of the 48 party MLAs in Chhattisgarh.

The Chhattisgarh Congress Legislature Party will hold its meeting in Raipur, the proposed capital of the Chhattisgarh state, by the end of this month to decide upon its leader.

Mr Digvijay Singh reportedly said in New Delhi yesterday that it is 'possible' that a tribal would become the chief minister of Chhattisgarh state since 24 of the 48 Congress MLAs are tribals.

Kirti Azad hurls funds charge at IOA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Oct. 22. — Former cricketer Kirti Azad today alleged that the Indian Olympic Association had committed a "foreign exchange scam" during the Sydney Olympics by making the athletes sign travellers' cheques of amounts far in excess of what they received.

Azad claimed that prior to their departure to Sydney, all the 70 Indian athletes were asked to sign traveller's cheques of up to \$5,000, but were given only \$35 per day, as sanctioned by the Centre.

"The athletes signed for an amount of Rs 1.5 crore, but they received no more than Rs 25 lakh. I wonder whether IOA would let us know what exactly they did with the rest of the money (about Rs 1.25 crore)," Azad told reporters. He urged the Prime Minister to order a probe into the "scam".

Shot-putter Shakti Singh, who was present at the press conference, backed Azad's charges.

He said having exhausted his yearly quota of foreign exchange, he would not be able to participate in the World Railways Athletics' meet in Moscow, or any other international event before 31 March next year.

The chef de mission of the Indian team to the Sydney games, Ashok Mattoo, has, however, denied Azad's charges, calling them "baseless and false". He claimed the money was meant for the entire contingent and not just the athletes.

Paswan to float new party next month

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

LUCKNOW, Oct. 22. — Union minister Mr Ram Vilas Paswan wants to give his supporters in Uttar Pradesh a "new political option". His new party will now be launched in the last week of next month.

Mr Paswan at a rally of the Dalit Sena castigated the former leaders of the Janata Dal for reducing a national party to the level of a regional party because of their selfish interests.

His hit list included former Prime Ministers Mr Inder Kumar Gujral and Mr HD Deve Gowda, Mr SR Bommai, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav and the present JD(U) chief, Mr Sharad Yadav.

Mr Paswan was speaking at the well attended rally at the Railway Stadium organised under the aegis of the Dalit Sena of which he is the national president. The rally was a part of the exercise to whip up support for the new party which Mr Paswan will launch in November. He refused to disclose the new party's name. "There is no point in remaining with a party which is sinking

because of the leader's selfish designs", he said in reference to Mr Sharad Yadav who was only interested in "saving his chair".

Mr Paswan's rally was described to be a retort to the one addressed here last month by the JD(U) chief.

Speaking from a colourful dais which had at least four ministers of Uttar Pradesh and a large number of leaders from Bihar like former Union minister Mrs Kamla Sinha and Capt Jainarain Nishad, Mr Paswan said that the rally had been held to provide a "new political option in the state and also to educate his supporters about the plans to launch a party".

As he spoke there was a giant cut-out of Dr BR Ambedkar on his right and another one of his own on the left. It was a noisy gathering with drums beating and slogan shouting. Being a former railway minister his support base among the railway workers particularly the coolies and other lower grade staff was evident as leaders of their representative organisations were among the speakers.



Mr Ram Vilas Paswan

Shibu Soren seeks 'referendum' on Jharkhand CM's post

By Sonali Das

The Times of India News Service

RANCHI: "Jharkhand kaa mukhya mantri kaisa ho?" — "Shibu Soren jaisa ho." The president of Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Shibu Soren on Sunday sought a virtual referendum



Shibu Soren

on who should be the first tribal chief minister of Jharkhand. In a "victory rally", ostensibly organised by the party at the local Morhabadi grounds to display strength to the BJP, thousands of "Jharkhandi janta" lent their voices to vote for the "Dishum Guru", as Soren is popularly known.

Ever since the BJP made it clear that the first tribal chief minister of Jharkhand would be from the party

itself and not from outside. Soren, who had staked his claim for the post, has been licking his wounds, asserting that the "Jharkhandi janta" and not any political party would decide on the CM's name. Sunday's rally, though projected to celebrate the creation of Jharkhand, was nevertheless a bid to prove his point. Interestingly, Soren had not only invited the janta's mandate but for the first time in the history of the Jharkhand movement, journalists from the national capital were invited to cover the event.

"The JMM support to the one-day-old NDA government led by Nitish Kumar in Bihar was conditional", Soren told "his people" from the dais. Sporting a green cloth on his forehead the JMM chief stormed that the support was given in lieu of the NDA's promise to create Jharkhand and make him (Soren) the first chief minister of the state. Accusing the NDA of backtracking from its word, Soren gave an ultimatum to the former which was deliberating on the issue in New Delhi to decide fast or face the consequences. The JMM would soon hold a meeting to chalk out its future strategy if the BJP failed to fulfil its promise, Soren said.

For the past few weeks, Soren has been in the limelight for sending signals to the NDA and the BJP asking who would possibly form the first government in Jharkhand. The JMM would enforce an "eco-

nomie blockade the region if he was not made chief minister, Soren has repeatedly said. The "Dishum Guru" is also gone on record to say that he would be ruling Jharkhand while claiming that the chief minister's seat would not really matter to him as he enjoyed people's support.

He has also time and again reiterated that the JMM with 12 MLAs in the assembly was still a part of the NDA. The BJP, on the other hand, has welcomed the support of the JMM in the first government of Jharkhand with speculations that Soren's son Durga Soren might be offered the deputy CM's seat in a bid to appease the party.

Significantly, Soren's spirit appeared high despite the recent order of the special CBI court to register fresh cases of corruption against the four JMM MPs involved in the infamous JMM bribery case. The JMM

leader is also an accused in the Shashinath murder case. Soren, however, rejects the chargesheets against him, saying

that "nothing has been proved as yet."

The public meeting on Sunday took off with the JMM leader paying floral tributes to the martyrs of Jharkhand and congratulating the people for achieving a separate state. Soren warned the police and bureaucracy that from now onwards officials, both police and administrative, will have to function according to the wishes of Jharkhandis or else they will have to move out of the state. The Rajya Sabha member, R K Anand, as well as almost all MLAs of the JMM also participated in the rally.

Rallyists from various parts of Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa, who started arriving in the Jharkhand capital since Saturday, lay virtual siege to the town, occupying every nook and corner right from the railway station to the venue. Slogans of "Jai Jharkhand" rent the air as armed with traditional weapons the men, women and children arrived in trains, scores of buses, trekkers, jeeps and mini buses and kept coming in till late Sunday evening.

The day being Sunday the streets were almost deserted and only the rallyists who turned out to be very disciplined could be seen everywhere. The sprawling Morhabadi ground was dotted with people scattered at the venue enjoying food and drinks.

SOREN'S CLAIM

- First CM must be a Jharkhandi
- NDA accused of backtracking
- Soren still in high spirit

THE TIMES OF INDIA

24 OCT 2000

Chhattisgarh: arduous task for Cong.

By Our Staff Correspondent

BHOPAL, OCT. 23. The Congress leadership is confronted with the vital task of resolving the Chhattisgarh State leadership issue and ensuring a smooth swearing-in of the first Chief Minister of the new State being created through the bifurcation of the largest Congress-ruled State of Madhya Pradesh.

Though the Congress will have a majority in Chhattisgarh with 48 MLAs in a House of 90, the political scenario at this formative stage is rather fragile given the conflicting claims of more than half-a-dozen claimants for power within the ruling party.

Besides Congress stalwarts like the former Chief Ministers, Mr. S.C. Shukla and Mr. Motilal Vora, along with the former Union Minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, who view themselves as the "automatic choice" for Chhattisgarh Chief Minister's post, there is a long list of MLAs, many of whom had risen overnight as Cabinet Ministers in the Digvijay Singh Government,

who are also finding themselves in the race for Chief Ministership as representatives of the regional satraps of the ruling party.

The camp close to the ruling faction in Madhya Pradesh is determined to have a Chief Minister of its choice in Chhattisgarh where the prospects of industrial growth and more particularly diamond mining and forest exploitation are enormous. It is learnt that this faction, which is close to the erstwhile ruling family of Sarguja would put its weight behind Dr. Prem Sai Singh, whose only credentials are that he is a Minister in the Digvijay Singh Cabinet and a staunch "Sarguja" loyalist. If this strategy fails to deliver the desired result, this camp may put its entire weight behind one of the Shukla brothers or the former State Minister and MP from Janjgir, Mr. Charandas Mahant, as a representative of the backward communities to counter the others in the leadership fray.

On the other side, the Madhya Pradesh Ministers, Mr. Nandkumar Patel, along with the tribal MLAs,

Mr. Chanesiraj Rathia and Mr. Mahendra Karmu, who are both tribal MLAs, have also thrown their hat into the ring though with very little support from the Chhattisgarh MLAs.

A section of the tribal MLAs from Chhattisgarh is vehemently espousing the cause of a tribal Chief Minister but at the same time it is also conveying the message that it is more important to have a tribal Chief Minister rather than going in for somebody with proven administrative skills and vision to take up the challenges of a new State during its formative stage. However, there is another large section of MLAs, representing the tribals, which is steadfast in its stand that the 23 tribal MLAs from Chhattisgarh should be kept free from all possible influences, pulls and pressures and the high command should consult them individually to assess their hopes and aspirations if it decides to go for a tribal representative as the first Chief Minister of the new Chhattisgarh State.

24 OCT 2000

24 OCT 2000

President rues silence on hate campaign

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Oct. 27: Discreet yet critical, President K.R. Narayanan expressed his concern at "national leaders" not raising their voice against the campaign of intolerance.

His interview to a Malayali newspaper is expected to raise eyebrows not just among Sangh hardliners but also cause consternation among moderates like Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Narayanan reportedly said the level of intolerance in the country was "scattered" and "worrying". He felt that silence does not help under these circumstances.

"It is not as if everyone has become intolerant. The majority of the people are tolerant. But what is happening is that important people are not condemning intolerance enough," the President said.

He felt that though condemnation may sound rhetorical, leaders will have to condemn repeatedly.

"It is very important that leaders and opinion-makers strongly argue against the spirit of intolerance where people are made to attack each other in the name of faith, language or for any other reason," he said.

Narayanan added that in decades gone by, national leaders would enunciate over and over again their disrespect for intolerance and lack of mutual respect.

"Because keeping silent when someone preaches intolerance will not help to fight intolerance," the President noted.

Barnala on Governor shortlist

FROM OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, Oct. 27: Akali leader Surjeet Singh Barnala is expected to be appointed Governor of Uttaranchal after the state formally comes into being on November 9. This is an indication that the Centre may appoint new Governors in Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand which will come into being on November 1 and 15 respectively.

The names of Dinanath Tewari, a Planning Commission member, and outgoing Cabinet secretary Prabhat Kumar, who retires on October 31, are doing the rounds for the Governors of Chhattisgarh and Jharkhand.

Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal is alleged to have met Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee and Union home minister L.K. Advani on Wednesday and recommended Barnala's name. Akali sources said Badal backed Barnala because he has been in the political wilderness since he lost the general elections.

The BJP has always acknowledged Barnala's seniority, saying other than Vajpayee, Advani and Fernandes, he is the only leader who was part of the Morarji Desai government in 1977. Apart from this, relations between the Vajpayee government and the Akali Dal have not been smooth of late because of differences over removal of subsidies and other financial packages demanded by the state.

Another reason why Barnala has been picked is because the

Centre wants to appease alienated sections of the Sikhs — whose demand that Udham Singh Nagar not be made part of Uttaranchal had been turned down — by giving the top job to a reputed leader from the community.

Kumar is being rewarded for services rendered. His tenure has not been smooth, but he managed to get large sections of the bureaucracy used to the BJP style of functioning. Though he was criticised for his passive role during the Kandahar hijack, he managed to stay in the good books of the Vajpayee government.

In legal circles, however, there is some confusion. Some sections believe a constitutional crisis is in the offing in the new states as the chief justices — who swear in the Governors — have not been appointed. The government has announced that the high courts will be located at Bilaspur for Chhattisgarh, Raipur for Jharkhand and Nainital for Uttaranchal.

The government today constituted Chhattisgarh High Court, and notified that it would function from November 1. "The notification has been issued under subsection 2 of section 21 of the Madhya Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2000," an official release said. Under the Act, Madhya Pradesh has been divided into two states.

The state re-organisation Acts promulgated by the Centre and passed by Parliament also constituted Uttaranchal and Jharkhand. The Chhattisgarh High Court is the 19th high court in the country

THE TELEGRAPH

28 OCT 2000

Civil servants up in arms against MP Govt's decision

Abhilash Khandekar
Bhopal, October 28

IT'S 'INSIDERS' versus the 'outsiders' in Madhya Pradesh. Officers of three All-India services - the IAS, IPS and IFS - who have been "arbitrarily" shifted to the newly created Chhattisgarh cadre from Madhya Pradesh are up in arms. Their main grouse is that after putting in about 20-30 years of service in this State, they are now being treated as 'outsiders' and dropped by the State Government.

The MP IAS Association president Mr B K Saha dashed off a four-page memorandum to the Prime Minister on October 27 seeking his immediate intervention in stalling the process of allocation of cadre to its members. The wronged officers want review recommendations on the cadre allocation. The memorandum also demands a joint cadre to start with, besides removal of discrepancies.

The memorandum says: "As there are reasons to believe that the manner of allotment stands

vitated, the Central Government should not rush through with any final orders that may result in irreparable damage being caused to a large number of members of the service through dislocation and uprooting". The memo objects to the ratio adopted by the

CLP meet on CM

AICC GENERAL SECRETARY Prabhakar Rau and MP Chief Minister Digvijay Singh are reaching Raipur on Sunday to attend a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party of Chhattisgarh for electing the new State's first Chief Minister. The race apparently has narrowed down to Madhya Pradesh Jai Minister Mahendra Karma and AICC spokesperson Ajit Jogi, both of whom are tribals.

HTC, New Delhi

Department of Personnel and Training (DOPT) about insiders and outsiders from observed norms of 4:1 to normative one of 2:1 and alleges that the DOPT has

New State faces capital problem

HT Correspondent
Raipur, October 28

RAIPUR IS under the spotlight but the city's people don't seem too comfortable with the glare. Raipur will soon be transformed from an old town to the capital of the new Chhattisgarh State.

The state of power-cuts and freshly dug-up roads have left the people of Raipur far from excited about their new status as residents of the capital city. Rajeev Sinha, who runs a cyber cafe in Raipur, is unhappy about the erratic power supply in the city. Customers now keep away from his cafe, he complained. Hawkers and roadside kiosk owners are unhappy too. They were forced to quit their businesses after the administration decided to widen roads.

The administration's decision to establish government offices within a radius of one kilometre has

only added to the city's woes. The new secretariat, Raj Bhawan and police headquarters are connected by National Highway 5 and that adds to the city's congestion. The city's bureaucrats are no better. District collector Ajay Turkey said he was tired of receiving calls from senior officials, anxious about their accommodation. Local MLA and Party leader B M Agarwal said he was shocked at the Madhya Pradesh Government's short-sighted decisions. I had advised Chief Minister Digvijay Singh to keep all offices outside the town to avoid unnecessary problems. Project administrator M K Raut said the administration was trying its best to make people's lives easier. From the looks of the new city, it would take a long time before people's lives are made any easier.

COUNTDOWN TO



M.P. **CHHATTISGARH**

Muslim-Adivasi factor crucial for Jharkhand

Saroj Nagi
Raenchi, October 28

RID LEADER Laloo Prasad Yadav owes his success to the 'MY' factor in Bihar—the powerful socio-political alliance of Muslims and the Yadavs. The question now is will the JMM be able to improvise on it by co-opting together an 'MA' formula that tempts the Muslims and Adivasis into a potent force in Jharkhand?

The division of the State into Bihar and Jharkhand is likely to see some changes in parties and the vote banks they command. Tribals constitute about 26 per cent of Jharkhand's population, with the Muslims accounting for nearly 10-12 per cent. The Yadav factor, fully exploited by Laloo in Bihar, accounts for another 8-10 per cent

its charm, may have to search for another ally or prop in this region.

The Left parties are perhaps the only ones who will continue to plough their lonely furrow.

In the NDA grouping too, the BJP's overarching presence contrasts sharply with the whittled down presence of the Samata and the JD (U) who would need to reinforce their alliance with their major partner for future electoral needs.

Likewise, the creation of the State has suddenly catapulted the JMM from a small party in undivided Bihar into a major regional force even though there are other Jharkhand parties snapping at its heels.

The re-prioritising in state of parties and their re-positioning in the new State would seem to provide fertile ground for rework-

ing social and political alliances. Of these, the most potent could be the Christian-Adivasi-Muslim-Backward (CAMP) line-up.

Exploited virtually by every other section of the population, the Muslim-tribal tensions at the local level spring from the economic exploitation by the Muslim trader or middlemen of the tribal worker and are believed to be local and incident-specific.

But local leaders here admit that the cobbling a political alliance of these groups would require intense ground work. It would have to surmount, among other things, efforts made by rival parties that such a combination does not emerge.

"But yes, it can be built into a powerful combination," admits CPI-ML's lone legislator Mahendra Singh.

Cong still to choose Chhattisgarh CM

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Oct. 29. — The Madhya Pradesh Congress is still divided over the choice of a chief minister for Chhattisgarh with only two days to go for the state to officially come into being.

A few days ago, a group of MLAs told Mrs Sonia Gandhi in the capital that the party would split if a tribal was not made the chief minister.

The 48-member Congress Legislature Party of Chhattisgarh will meet in Raipur tomorrow to "elect" its leader. Before leaving for Raipur today, Mrs Prabha Rao, AICC general secretary in charge of Madhya Pradesh, said it was up to the MLAs to decide on a leader.

The CLP meeting, however, is likely to authorise Mrs Gandhi to choose the first chief minister of the state.

The political situation has changed after an impending contest for the Congress president's office. Mrs Gandhi has to be very cautious while choosing a chief minister for Chhattisgarh, senior party leaders said. For, the region is facing a drought-like condition in addition to the Naxalite problem.

Mrs Gandhi was not amused by the threatening message from the group of Chhattisgarh leaders who insisted



Mr Digvijay Singh and Mr Madhavrao Scindia: still in search of the right man.

on appointing a tribal chief minister. There are six of them vying for the office. The leaders include Mr Mahendra Karma, Mr Arvind Netam, Mr Surendra K Singh and Mr Ajit Jogi.

Mr Singh is a Rajya Sabha member with a long political career and belongs to Sundergarh, which used to be a small princely state. He is reportedly emerging as a strong contender from among the tribal leaders as chief ministerial candidate.

Should the choice fall on a non-tribal, the AICC general secretary, Mr

Motilal Vora, is said to be ahead of Mr Shyama Charan Shukla, another veteran Congress leader.

Scindia: The reins of Chhattisgarh should be handed over to a person with wide-ranging political experience. Mr Madhavrao Scindia, said in Gwalior today, adds UNI. He hoped that "someone from the CLP would be elected through consensus".

Azad: The Congress observer, Mr Ghulam Nabi Azad, told journalists at Raipur's Mana airport tonight that the CLP meeting will be held at

Governor Barnala

SANGRUR, Oct. 29. — Former Union minister Mr Surjit Singh Barnala today confirmed that he was being appointed as the first Governor of the Uttaranchal state being carved out of UP. He would devote himself to the service of the people and would take care of the Sikhs settled in the region, he added. — UNI



Mr SS Barnala

SOREN MAY ACCEPT MERRY-GO-ROUND DEAL

JAMSHEDPUR, Oct. 29. — The Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (Soren) supremo, Mr Sibhu Soren said his party will reject the post of deputy chief ministership, if offered.

The JMM may, however, consider power sharing on rotation basis if any such proposal was forwarded to them.

Mr Soren, who was here to participate in a function, expressed confidence that the first chief minister of the tribal state will be from the JMM. The chief ministership of Jharkhand would be decided by National Democratic Alliance and not by the BJP alone.

He hoped that the NDA will invite him to form the first government in the new Jharkhand state.

The JMM supremo claimed that yesterday's negotiations between the NDA and the JMM in New Delhi as positive. He was hopeful of forming the government on the basis of the positive signal given to the delegation by Mr Vajpayee. The JMM delegation will hold another round of talks with Mr George Fernandes, he added. — PTI & UNI



Mr Sibhu Soren

THE STATESMAN

30 OCT 2000

30 OCT 2000

All set for ushering in Chhattisgarh

RAIPUR, OCT. 29. All is set for the birth of the new State of Chhattisgarh and installation of its first Government on Wednesday even as the unprecedented drought cast its long shadow. It is a historical irony that Madhya Pradesh' division is coinciding with the same day which saw the establishment of present Madhya Pradesh as the largest State of the country by merging different contiguous regions in 1956.

Chhattisgarh region's cord with the mother State will be snapped at the midnight on next Tuesday when both the first Governor and Chief Minister of that State will take oath in the presence of a large gathering. All preparations have been completed for the swearing-in-ceremony in the open at the police ground, Raipur.

A controversy had surfaced over the move to hold the swearing-in-ceremony in the post-dawn period of November 1 to enable maximum public participation. However, it was finally decided to administer the oath during the intervening night to avoid any possible constitutional crisis as apprehended by legal experts, who raised a question mark as to who would reign over Chhattisgarh from October 31 midnight till the new Government assumes office on November one.

It is learnt that the Centre has prepared its mind to appoint a fresh Governor in the new State of Chhattisgarh and not to ask the Madhya Pradesh Governor, Mr. Bhai Mahavir, to assume the gubernatorial offices of both the States. The new Governor, after himself taking oath, is likely to administer oath to the first Chief Minister of that State.

The name of Planning Commission member, Mr. Dinanath Tiwari, is being tipped as the Governor of the new State. Mr. Tiwari was formerly Vice-Chancellor of Guru Ghasidas University, Bilaspur. Meanwhile, political activities within the Congress, which is going to form the Government in that State with 48 legislators in the 90-member House, are in full swing. The party general secretary and Madhya Pradesh in-charge, Ms. Prabha Rau, is reaching Raipur tomorrow to attend the meeting of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP).

More than 20 of the 48 Congress legislators in the new State are tribals. Party sources said a tribal leader could be given the reigns of the party in the State in case a non-tribal was selected for the post of Chief Minister. The former Union Minister, Mr. Arvind Netaam's name is among those being mentioned for the Chhattisgarh Congress chief.

Some senior Congress leaders, who are not MLAs but are in the race for Chief Ministership, are staking claims to garner the support of a majority of legislators and are endeavouring to make the political equations in their favour. The Congress spokesman, Mr.

Ajit Jogi's supporters believe that Mr. Jogi is an experienced and capable tribal leader to take the command of the new State. Mr. Jogi's affinity with the party high command is considered to be a plus point. He has been active among the tribal Chhattisgarh legislators for the last one month. It is said that tribal legislators pledged to stick to their demand for a tribal Chief Minister at Bastar's famous Danteshwari temple in the presence of Mr. Jogi.

One view, however, is that important posts should not go to leaders, who had lost the last Lok Sabha election, the yardstick set earlier in the organisation. Supporters of Mr. V.C. Shukla point out that the senior leader was

most suited for the Chief Minister's post in view of his political experience and valuable contribution to the region. They also opine that keeping aside all differences, Mr. Shukla worked for the party even though he was deprived of the ticket in the last Lok Sabha poll. He also constituted the Chhattisgarh Rajya Sangharsh Morcha to press the Centre for early creation of the State.

All India Congress committee treasurer and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Motilal Vora's supporters believe that, as in the past, Mr. Vora could emerge as a consensus candidate in case of a dilemma over the candidate for Chief Minister. — UNI

CLP meet to elect leader today

By Our Staff Correspondent

RAIPUR, OCT. 29. The members of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) of the new Chhattisgarh State will be meeting here tomorrow to elect their leader who would assume office as the first Chief Minister of the newly carved out State being created through the bifurcation of the Central Indian State of Madhya Pradesh.

The 48-member strong Chhattisgarh CLP is a divided house with too many groups and factions angling for power. On the eve of the CLP meeting there were at least half a dozen Chief Ministerial candidates, who were busy mustering support for their cause by organizing close-door meetings of "friendly and loyal" MLAs at Durg, Bilai and Raipur.

The method to be adopted for electing the CLP leader would be the same as had been utilized earlier when Mr. Digvijay Singh was elected the CLP leader.

Some leaders who have succeeded in projecting themselves as potential candidates for the Chief Minister's post after a prolonged image building exercise include stalwarts such as the former Chief Minister, Mr. S.C. Shukla and his younger brother the former Union Minister, Mr. V.C. Shukla, the AICC Spokesman, Mr. Ajit Jogi, former Union Minister, Mr. Arvind Netaam and Mr. Motilal Vora, who was earlier a Chief Minister, State Governor and also a Union Minister.

There are also others, who lack wider acceptability but are still being propped up for the leadership race by different Congress(I) factions. For the sake of representing the tribals, and the other backward communities, some more options are being projected for the Chief Minister's post by the different Congress(I) factions of Madhya Pradesh. These options and formulas that include names of some lightweight candidates such as Mr. Mahendra Karma, Mr. Prem Sai Singh, Mr. Nandkumar Patel and Mr. Charandas Mahant are being described as part of a well thought out strategy by some

powerful Madhya Pradesh Congress(I) factions to keep at bay the claims of the established leaders. A section within the Congress party here is rather irked by the propping up of some candidates whose allegiance and loyalty to the Congress party is considered doubtful.

The Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Mr. Digvijay Singh, who was in Delhi today was expected to reach here later this evening along with the AICC observers for tomorrow's CLP meeting. Mr. V.C. Shukla has been particularly active here along with his supporters since yesterday. Mr. Ajit Jogi was expected to arrive here later tonight from Delhi.

The free-for-all campaign for leadership has taken away every candidates' edge for a clear majority in the CLP. It is under these circumstances that Mr. S.C. Shukla is stressing on the need for consensus while most of the tribal MLAs are pressing for a tribal Chief Minister. The Congress leadership will have to do a tight-rope walk to seal the leadership issue after the AICC observers end the task of taking the views of all the MLAs tomorrow. The undercurrent of the tribal sentiments are too strong but it remains to be seen whether the choice would rest on experience and merit or otherwise, if the issue gets resolved in favour of a tribal candidate.

Political observers are also concerned about the stability of the Congress Government in Chhattisgarh and are wondering whether or not the Congress set-up in the new State would meet the same fate as it had met in Goa and Uttar Pradesh.

Till this evening, the Madhya Pradesh officers belonging to the all-India services were still awaiting formal orders for their cadre bifurcation and the uncertainty in this regard was rather demoralizing for those officers who have already been told by their administrative heads that their services were being transferred to the new State.

BJP rejects JMM claim to lead govt

Governors of 3 new states named

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 30 OCTOBER

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 30 OCTOBER

THE BJP-LED alliance has conclusively rejected the JMM's claim to lead the government in Jharkhand. A meeting convened by Union home minister L.K. Advani to decide on the government formation in Ranchi was unanimous that the right to lead the government rested with the single largest party in the proposed Assembly, the BJP.

The decision to reject the JMM demand came barely hours after the latter renewed its threat to walk out of the alliance on the leadership issue.

The JMM chief, Mr Shibu Soren, claimant for the top post, had said that his party will not accept anything less than chief ministership.

An agency report quoting Mr Soren said if his party was denied the opportunity to lead the government, it will prefer to sit in the Opposition.

At the meeting on Monday, Mr George Fernandes shared the home minister's views on the matter. Mr Advani is learnt to have maintained that the chief minister's post was not negotiable as the BJP had 32 members in the Assembly compared to JMM's 12.

Earlier, party president Bangaru Laxman as well as BJP leaders from the region said the party should stake claim for forming the government.

THE GOVERNMENT, on Monday, chose former Bihar DGP Dinesh Nandan Sahay over Sangh nominee Dinanath Tiwari as the Chattisgarh governor in clear defiance of the RSS.

The government named Akali leader Surjit Singh Barnala and Cabinet secretary Prabhat Kumar as governors of Uttaranchal and Jharkhand, respectively.

A presidential communiqué said the appointments would take effect from the date the new governors assume charge.

The government's rejection of Planning Commission member Dinanath Tiwari's name, suggested by RSS chief K.S. Sudarshan, comes in the midst of a serious face-off between the Sangh and the NDA government on economic matters. Although Mr Tiwari was never in the reckoning for the governor's post, the RSS had actively pitched for his installation in the Raipur Raj Bhavan due to his proximity to the Deendayal Upadhyay clan.

But rivals and hopefuls approached the Prime Minister and home minister to convince them against picking Mr Tiwari. They alleged he was a "crony" of Congress leader Arjun Singh. It is yet to be seen how the RSS reacts to the rejection of its nominee.

STATE OF AFFAIRS

The Economic Times

31 OCT 2000

Jogi as Chhattisgarh CM

Old day ● BJP pins hope on split in Congress to stake claim

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Kalyani Shankar
New Delhi, October 30

THE BJP is open to the idea of doing a Goa in Chhattisgarh if the Congress splits. Even before the birth of the State, Chhattisgarh appears to suffer from the problems facing small States — particularly political instability.

BJP president Bangaru Laxman gave enough hints that BJP will not shy away from forming the government with other parties if the need arose. "If somebody comes and asks our help we cannot remain silent," he told newsmen here today.

"The BJP is watching the developments and at the right time we would like to bring down the Congress government," BJP senior leader J.P. Mathur said.

The BJP strategists are hoping that the Congress may split if someone is imposed as the CM by the party high command. There are quite a few contenders in the Congress including the Shukla brothers and the BJP is hoping

that the Shukla brothers may split the party to express their revolt.

With the Congress leadership making it clear that Congress Spokesperson Ajit Jogi is the emerging consensus candidate

No legal hassle

THE SUPREME Court today refused to interfere with the creation of Chhattisgarh while adjourning hearing on two petitions challenging the carving out of a new State from MP. In simple terms, it meant that the State could come into existence on November 1 without any legal hassle.

after holding formal consultations with the Congress legislators from Chhattisgarh today, the BJP's hopes are rising.

There are 90 seats in Chhattisgarh and the Congress has 48 MLAs while the BJP has 30 and the rest are independents. A total of 16 MLAs are required for a formal split in the Congress.

"Politically we would like the Congress to split and our ultimate aim is to form the BJP government," BJP strategists admitted.

The BJP is getting ready to resolve the leadership issue in the other two States, Uttarakhand and Jharkhand. Names are being finalised and BJP leadership has already taken stock of the feelings of the Jharkhand legislators and MPs belonging to BJP. The Jharkhand Mukhti Morcha legislators and leaders, who are staking a claim for the Chief Ministership have also met the Prime Minister and Defence Minister during the week-end and came up with a proposal for UP type of power sharing. But this was outrightly rejected by the PM. The BJP is making up its mind to send Mr Marandi as the CM. For Uttarakhand also, the MLAs are due to meet the BJP leaders tomorrow. Laxman indicated a final view would be taken after assessing their mood. "Ultimately it will be the PM and the Home Minister who will decide," pointed out BJP sources.

Efforts on to evolve consensus on

V C Shukla puts spoke in Cong spokesman's wheel ● Raipur hoteliers having a fit

Abhilash Khandekar
Raipur, October 30

THE AICC observers Ghulam Nabi Azad and Prabha Rau were busy till late Monday night trying to evolve consensus on the name of AICC spokesman Ajit Pramod Kumar Jogi as the first CM of Chhattisgarh.

Despite the blessing of Congress president Sonia Gandhi, the election of Jogi as the Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader may not be a smooth affair considering that Chhattisgarh stalwart V C Shukla appears to be all set to challenge the Central leadership's choice. The CLP meeting, which was scheduled for Monday morning, has now been rescheduled for Tuesday indicating that Jogi's election is facing problems from a section of MLAs.

However, after Chief Minister Digvijay Singh's declaration this morning that Jogi was his candidate, the former Raipur District Collector Jogi is expected to sail

through.

Soon after the observers' arrival in the city on Sunday night, it became clear to most MLAs that Jogi was central leadership's choice. This came as a blow to the

Governors named

CABINET SECRETARY Prabhat Kumar, who retires tomorrow, has been appointed the Governor of the new state of Jharkhand. Former Union minister Surjit Singh Barnala and former Additional DGP Bihar Dinesh Nandan Sahaya have been appointed Governors of the two other new States of Uttaranchal and Chhattisgarh, respectively.

ambitions of other aspirants, including S C Shukla, Charan Das Mahant, Mahendra Karma, Moulal Vora and Arvind Netam. Even the CM appeared to be clearly upset for having been made to garner support to one of

his ardhivals in M-P politics. "There are 24 tribal MLAs here and hence a tribal should be the Chief Minister," was how Mr Singh clarified his change in stance towards Jogi to the media persons who sought to know why he was openly canvassing for Jogi. CM's open hatred for Jogi is well-known to all since the days when the former had opposed Jogi's candidature for the PCC chief's post three years ago. Today, Digvijay Singh was seen individually approaching MLAs in support of Jogi.

Scindia's greetings: Deputy Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Madhavrao Scindia today greeted the people of Chhattisgarh and expressed the hope that the new State would make its mark on the national scene. In a message Mr Scindia said the new State would go a long way in fulfilling the aspirations of the region, particularly its tribal population. He said a daunting task awaited the new Government and the people for the creation of a prosperous State.

TRY CHECKING into any of Raipur's hotels and chances are that you'll end up disappointed. The city's hotels are all booked for the big day on November 1, when the new Chhattisgarh State will come into being.

Most of the rooms have either been booked by the district Collector or by mediamen who have arrived here to witness the occasion. The Government's protocol officer has booked more than 100 rooms of different hotels across Raipur.

Raipur's Circuit House had been a favourite with most VIP visitors. Now that the Government has decided to convert it into the Raj Bhavan, VIPs are left looking for other options. The tourism department's Hotel Chhattisgarh is the next possible choice. The Tourist Motel, a government-run hotel constructed on the banks of river Kharun a couple of decades back,

was expected to receive the tourism department's hotel is in a shambles. Private hotels are booked for the big day on November 1, when the new Chhattisgarh State will come into being.

Big names such as Usha Sharda and Mayura were expected to receive the tourism department's hotel is in a shambles. Private hotels are booked for the big day on November 1, when the new Chhattisgarh State will come into being.

COUNTDOWN TO



CHHATTISGARH

Thirteen ministers cabinet to stay at Hotel as the hotel authority they won't turn to turn favouritism. Bahujan chief Kanshi Ram, a star. These hotels sit heart of Raipur so favourite with most. Travel agencies have in on the big event. A a travel agency said chauffeur-driven c guests. We have also reserve cars to tack increase of customer oath-taking ceremon

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

31 OCT 2000