

# A victory for Opposition: Congress ✓

By Javed M. Ansari

NEW DELHI, DEC. 19. Having succeeded in getting its motion expressing disagreement with the Prime Minister's statement passed in the Rajya Sabha, the Congress today claimed that the Opposition had won the battle of wits against the Government on the Ayodhya issue. "This is the first time a Prime Minister has been censured in such a manner, and the credit must go to the Opposition," said the senior Congress leader, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee.

Congress leaders said the Government had initially refused to accede to the Opposition demand for a discussion under Rule 184 in the Lok Sabha and Rule 170 in the Rajya Sabha, which entail voting. However,

after a prolonged parliamentary impasse it was forced to agree to a discussion in both Houses under the provisions demanded. "After an eyeball to eyeball confrontation, it was the Government that blinked," said a CWC member.

Talking to reporters after the motion moved by him was passed in the Rajya Sabha, Mr. Mukherjee drew a parallel between a somewhat similar motion moved in 1978 against the Morarji Desai Government following differences between the then Prime Minister and his deputy, Charan Singh. The demand in 1978 was for a commission or a parliamentary committee to look into the acts of omission and commission alleged by Singh, which the Government had rejected.

HP-1 20/12  
"This time we have succeeded in showing that at least one House of Parliament disagrees with the Prime Minister's statement," the Congress leader said. The Opposition was aware that even after its defeat the Government was not morally bound to quit, "but we have at least succeeded in censuring the Prime Minister". This was the only constitutional avenue available to the Opposition to register its disapproval.

On the discordant noises on the issue from within the NDA and the BJP, he said, "the Prime Minister says we will abide by the court verdict while one ally asks for Muslims to be disfranchised, while the VHP says the temple will be built at the disputed site itself."

THE HINDU

THE HINDU

20 DEC 2000

# Govt to seek NDA nod on EC plan for women quota

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, DEC 22

**V**IRTUALLY throwing its hand in hammering a consensus on providing Women's Reservation Bill, the Government today said it would seek an agreement of NDA constituents on Election Commission's alternative proposal that political parties agree to provide a fixed percentage of election tickets to women and then approach opposition for a consensus.

Home Minister L K Advani said the Commission's proposal might not result in 33 per cent reservation for women in Lok

Sabha and State Assemblies, but definitely ensure that at least 20 to 25 per cent women got elected.

Speaking at a book release function here, Advani said, "If a consensus is achieved, we will approach the Congress and Left parties which have, so far, favoured the Reservation Bill and not the Commission's proposal. The EC proposal under the present circumstances appears to be the only option." Informal consultations were already on with NDA allies, including TDP, on the Commission's suggestion, he added.

Though the Government endorsed the Commission's suggestion to fix a percentage for women

candidates for elections seeing it as the only way out of the deadlock over the issue, Congress and Left parties insisted that the bill, seeking to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies, be taken up in its present form. Samajwadi Party, BSP and RJD leaders bill in the Lok Sabha, Advani told reporters the Commission's proposal would entail an amendment in the Representation of the People's Act and not a Constitution amendment required for the bill.

Meanwhile in Indore, Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) politburo member Sitaram Yeshuri alleged that the

NDA Government was not able to take up the women's bill in the Lok Sabha as it was not serious on the issue.

"When the Government, in spite of differences over the patent bill or insurance bill, was successful in tabling them, then why it always fails to present the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lower House of Parliament?", Yechuri asked.

"Certainly, inner contradictions within the BJP, specially of Union Sports and Youth Welfare Minister Uma Bharti and others are responsible for it," Yechuri told reporters here.

## from the front page

### Govt to seek NDA nod

On the Government's failure yesterday again over the tabling of the bill, he said, "Had the Government been serious over the issue it could have tabled the bill on the floor of the house."

About the recent statement of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee on Ayodhya issue, the CPM leader alleged that the statement

was given to reap political mileage in the coming elections in Uttar Pradesh and added that such attempts would bring instability in the country.

On the Government's initiative of a ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, Yechuri alleged that it has been done at the behest of the United States.

INDIAN EXPRESS

23 DEC 2000

# Kerala HC order on hartals stayed

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, Oct. 16. — In a major relief to political parties, the Supreme Court today stayed a Kerala High Court judgment directing the Election Commission to deregister parties which call and enforce hartals using force, and issued notices to the Centre and the EC.

Hearing two petitions filed by the Congress and CPI-M, a three-judge Bench, comprising the Chief Justice, Mr AS Anand, Mr Justice RC Lahoti and Mr Justice Shivaraj V Patil, stayed two directives given by a Division Bench of Kerala High Court on 1 June, 2000 asking it to take action against political parties forcing hartals on public.

The Supreme Court also issued notices to the state of Kerala, director general of Kerala Police and the petitioner before the Kerala High Court Institute of Social Welfare.

The High Court had directed the EC to take a decision on complaints against a party calling for hartal, and after a fair hearing, take a "decision for deregistration of that party or organisation, if it is warranted by the circumstances of that case."

Appearing for the Congress, former attorney-general, Mr K Parasaran, said the question of law was whether the High Court was competent under Article 226 of the Constitution to direct the EC to start proceedings for deregistration of a political party when under the Representation of People's Act there was no provision for deregistration.

In 1997, Kerala High Court had held that calling of bandh

and the enforcement of that call was illegal and unconstitutional. This judgment was upheld by the apex court.

Petitions were filed in Kerala High Court complaining that coercion was used for implementation of hartals called by political parties and that though the apex court had made a distinction between hartals and bandhs, a hartal accompanied by threats of violence would be unconstitutional.

After hearing the parties, the High Court had declared that the "enforcement of a hartal call by force, intimidation, physical or mental and coercion would amount to an unconstitutional act and a party has no right to enforce it by resorting to force or intimidation."

Appearing for the CPI-M, senior advocate, Mr Rajiv Dhawan, said the power to deregister was a drastic power and Section 29 (a) of the RP Act, which provided for registration of political parties, did not include the power to deregister a party.

Giving an example, the Congress said a party may call for hartal and its implementation through peaceful means. Merely because its implementation at one or two places was done the way bandhs were enforced at the spur of the moment, initiating deregistration process against the party would be uncalled for.

"Even if a political party calls for a peaceful demonstration, some other miscreants could use force and land the political party in trouble, which will have a drastic consequence and democratic rights would stand infringed," it said.

THE STATESMAN

17 OCT 2000

# National and State parties

By P. P. Rao

*Proliferation of political parties has been the bane of Indian politics from the beginning. It is necessary to bring down their number in the interest of effective governance.*

THE ELECTION Commission has announced that the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has ceased to be a National Party, but accepted its status as a State Party in Kerala, Tripura and West Bengal. The CPI(M) was recognised as a National Party in terms of the Election Symbols (Reservation and Allotment) Order, 1968, and had enjoyed the status since then. The Symbols Order was issued by the Election Commission in exercise of its powers of superintendence, direction and control of elections conferred by the Constitution and the power of registration of political parties under Section 29 A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, and Rules 5 and 10 of the Conduct of Election Rules which require the Election Commission to specify symbols and allot them to candidates at elections.

Symbols are either reserved symbols — those reserved for recognised political parties — or free symbols. The Symbols Order classifies recognised political parties as National Parties and State Parties. To become a National Party, a party should be a recognised political party in four or more States. If a party is a recognised political party in not less than four States it will have the status of a State Party in the States concerned. The definition of 'State' includes Union Territories. There are now 25 States and 7 Union Territories. In 1968 when the Symbols Order was published, there were only 16 States and 9 Union Territories. Therefore the norm of 4 out of 25 States adopted worked out to about one-sixth. Today the norm in relation to 32 States works out to one-eighth. Neither the ratio of one-sixth nor of one-eighth can be regarded as a rational basis for classification as a National Party. 'National' means in relation to the nation as a whole; not a few States. Parties whose strength is visible only in just two, three or four States will not be justified in claiming the status of a National Party. It would not be appropriate to grant the status of a National Party unless an outfit is a recognised party in at least one half of the States including the Union Territories. A political outfit which is recognised in more than one State and in less than one half of the States including the Union Territories may be recognised as a Multi-State Party, a separate

changes in the election law may be worth attempting.

In addition to amendment of the Symbols Order, 1968, provide for a three-fold classification of political parties and limiting the status of National Party to those recognised as political parties in at least half the States, which can be done by the Election Commission itself, a simple amendment to the Representation of the People Act, 1951, stipulating that no candidate shall be declared elected unless he has secured at least 50 per cent of the total votes polled in the constituency and if no candidate secures at least 50 per cent, there should be a runoff to elect one of the first two candidates in the first round would go a long way in promoting the country's unity. To secure 50 per cent of the total votes polled in a constituency, the candidates as well as their parties will necessarily have to seek the votes of all communities and castes. Consequently, the sway of communalism and casteism in politics will vanish. It will also pave the way for the emergence of, if not a two-party system, at least two large combinations of political parties. Such polarisation of political parties will impart stability to the government.

Last year, the Law Commission suggested, *inter alia*, reducing the number of political parties by making a provision that any political party which obtains less than 5 per cent of the total votes shall not be entitled to any seats in the Lok Sabha or any Assembly. This is a salutary suggestion. Proliferation of political parties has been the bane of Indian politics from the beginning. It is necessary to bring down their number in the interest of effective governance. Another proposal made by the Law Commission is to bar independent candidates from contesting an election. No democracy can function without political parties; more so parliamentary democracy. There need be no room for independents. Yet another important recommendation made by the Law Commission is regulation of political parties by law which is a long felt necessity. Unless regulated by law the political parties will continue to remain a law unto themselves. In 1994, the V. R. Krishna Iyer Committee also made a specific recommendation to this effect for ensuring inner party democracy in each and every

Arunachal Pradesh with the symbol "Haldhar within Wheel (Chakra Haldhar)". It has now ceased to enjoy this status. The name Janata Dal and its symbol "Chakra (Wheel)" have also been frozen as the Commission was not in a position to recognise one of the two rival groups led by Mr. H. D. Deve Gowda and Mr. Sharad Yadav as the Janata Dal. However, taking note of the poll performance of the two groups it found that the Janata Dal (United) has qualified for recognition as a State Party in Bihar and Karnataka and the Janata Dal (Secular) in Karnataka, subject to the registration of the two parties under Section 29-A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Periodic review of the status of political parties by the Commission is warranted. The Supreme Court has upheld the power of review. It cannot be contended that once a political party is recognised as a National Party, it shall be allowed to enjoy that status for ever. The status of National Party is secured by satisfying the conditions specified in the Symbols Order. It lasts as long as a party continues to fulfill the said conditions. The Election Commission has discharged its duty by reviewing the position of the CPI(M), the Janata Dal and the Janata Party. It is difficult to find fault with the Commission's decisions.

Our country has been facing serious problems of governance at the Centre of late, with too many political parties, most of them small, local or regional entities, which cannot be expected to have a national perspective, sharing power. Any political party which enjoys the status of a recognised political party in a majority of the States is bound to have a national outlook and formulate national policies in contrast to regional parties or single-State parties. It is not easy to transform the present multi-party system into a two-party system. It is equally difficult to make the political parties give up their caste and religion based politics. Even so, a few

## An open letter to Bangaru Laxman

Dr. Subramanian Swamy

THE HINDU

10 OCT 2000

## ANOTHER PARTY?

side Paswan to float his own outfit

**A**FTER attacking his JD-U colleagues for neglecting their home state and behaving like "national leaders", Ram Vilas Paswan has announced that he will be floating a new "national" party by November. Though he is vehement that his move is not aimed at rivals in the JD-U and the new party would "not weaken any of the other alliance partners", no other motive can be construed, and there can be no other result of his action. Paswan has been highly critical of other ministers from Bihar — Sharad Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Yashwant Sinha in the recent past and has been trying to project himself as the only minister with the interest of the state at heart. His criticism has hit home, with Nitish Kumar trying to counter Paswan with an all-party core committee to prepare a document for an economic package for Bihar. Nitish Kumar too would like to emerge as the alternative to Laloo Yadav and so he is not ready to let Paswan have his way too easily.

Paswan's decision to float a party stems from his desire to hold on to his Dalit votebank. The BJP selecting their first Dalit president — Bangaru Laxman — has obviously frightened him into taking the step. But so as not to put all his eggs in one basket, and not endanger his ministry, Paswan insists that his new party will be a part of the NDA government. So then what is the need to cut yet another segment out of an already tiny party? Paswan's answer is the lack of organisational elections in the JD(U). The announcement of a possible new party may also be just a pressure tactic to hold organisational elections and give Paswan a bigger share of the cake. Come November and his bluff will be called.

THE STATESMAN

UNFIT TO RULE <sup>sr-b</sup>Sibu Soren looks for the best bargain <sup>NS/E</sup>

IT is a measure of the total lack of principles on which political battles are fought that neither the NDA or the RJD-led alliance have made an issue of the two charge-sheets against the leading claimant to the chief minister's chair in the new Jharkhand state. One concerns the murder of a personal assistant that is nearly two years old; the second relates to pay-offs during the Narasimha Rao regime that goes back to an earlier date. The charges could not be more serious. In both Sibu Soren is out on bail and this should have removed him from consideration as chief minister despite the fact that the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha with 12 seats in the new assembly is capable of tilting the balance either way. Laloo Prasad Yadav had to step down when the charge-sheet was filed in the fodder scam case; that he installed his wife in his place on advice from prime minister Gujral reflects sadly on the latter but this was another matter. Laloo, who treated Soren with contempt the moment he had no use for him, is only too eager to use him again to retain his hold over the new state. The NDA, on its part, speaks in different voices: one section claims that with the largest tally of 32 seats in the 81-member House, it must set up its own tribal candidate. But its leaders including Keshubhau Thakre and KN Govindacharya who took part in a "training camp" in Ranchi for the new Jharkhand legislators were more circumspect — understandably. They could not afford to drive Soren into Laloo's arms since the scales are evenly balanced.

All this places the JMM chief in a comfortable bargaining position. Soren has been known to blow in all directions depending on the lollies offered to him. Right now he will settle for nothing less than chief ministership citing a quid pro quo he had struck for supporting the short-lived Nitish Kumar government. But as November approaches and clearer signs are available on who is ahead in the race, there is every possibility of the disgraced Jharkhand leader, hardly acceptable to his own people after the scams against his name, will settle for the best available bargain. Public memory may be short but it is a commentary on law enforcement in the country that he feels he can escape the law. It would be unfortunate if the Jharkhand dream realised after a struggle of half a century were to be sullied by an adverse verdict. Soren can't take a leaf out of Laloo's book by setting up an alter ego in the CM's chair while he fights his legal battles. With a fragmented party behind him and devoid of trusted lieutenants, he is driven by personal ambition alone. That is not the mark of a leader who can inspire confidence. Soren is not the chief minister Jharkhand needs to make a new beginning.

THE STATESMAN

25 AUG 2000

# Shibu Soren holds the key to JMM, NDA ties

HT Correspondent  
Patna, August 25

26/9/1988

SHIBU SOREN is no mood to settle for anything less than the Chief Minister's post. And if the BJP wants to hold JMM (Soren) back in the NDA fold, it will be at the cost of shedding its claim on the hot seat.

The JMM (S) chief, known as Gurujee, with only 12 MLAs, is in an unenviable bargaining position and holds the key for Jharkhand's future government.

Not surprisingly then, Gurujee, hitherto condemned for his alleged involvement in the JMM bribery case and discarded politically, is the most sought-after leader these

days by both, the NDA as well as the opposition led by Congress and Rashtriya Janata Dal.

Even as permutations and combinations are being worked out for the formation of government of the new Jharkhand State, various political parties are emphasising on having a tribal leader as the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand with Shibu Soren into consideration.

In fact, Soren has emerged as the patriarchal figure of the Jharkhand politics and efforts by a section of NDA to impose its own tribal leader Babulal Marandi on the Chief Minister's saddle have been vehemently opposed by the JMM (S).

Party supremo Shibu Soren

blurted out against the BJP for maintaining a studied silence over the leadership issue and denying the natural claim of the JMM (S) to form a government in Jharkhand.

The JMM (S) leader has issued an ultimatum to the BJP to settle the issue by this month-end otherwise his party would be free to chart an independent course to

achieve their long-cherished goal of ruling the Jharkhand State. Though his threat has not been taken seriously by the NDA, the Opposition, led by Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Laloo Prasad Yadav, has justified the claim of the JMM (S) and offered his party's unconditional support in forming the Government in the new State.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

26 AUG 1988

# Bikram faces partymen's ire

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

MIDNAPORE, Aug. 27. — Mr Bikram Sarkar, newly elected Trinamul MP from Panskura, was howled down by his own party supporters as he reached Neradeul in Kespur for coming so late in his trouble-torn constituency.

He was asked to go to Khetua where thousands of his party supporters had taken shelter.

The MP, however, refused to oblige them and drove back to Calcutta.

Armed CPI-M supporters today chased away Trinamul supporters from Bela, Maharajpur, Rajgram and 10 other villages and cornered them in just one village at Khetua in Kespur sub-division, adds UNI. At least 150 houses in these villages belonging to Trinamul supporters were looted by the CPI-M supporters today.

**SNS adds:** Seven CPI-M workers were arrested from Chhatragunge office of the party in Chandrakona in connection with yesterday's murders and loot in Trinamul-BJP-dominated Simla, Ganhcha, Bolghata, Akatkola and Raghunathpur.

Of the seven CPI-M men, Mr Nanda Pora and Gokul Bhunia were also accused in the murder case of BJP activist, Abhijit Bhokta, at Kolla, a neighbouring village on Tuesday.

Kespur wore a deserted look on the second day of the indefinite bandh called by Trinamul demanding transfer of the Midnapore SP and improvement in law and order situation in the district.

The villagers of the violence-hit villages have escaped to some "safer" place. About 400 people have taken shelter in make-shift camps and the offices of the Trinamul and BJP at Chandrakona town, said Mr Basanta Modak, BJP's mandal president. The hoodlums had raped five women, charged Mr Modak.

**One killed in firing:** One person was killed and five injured when police fired 15 rounds to quell a mob during a demolition drive at Mohtabpur in Midnapore town today. Seventeen policemen were injured, three vehicles badly damaged and one police truck was set on fire.

THE STATESMAN

28 AUG 2000



# Paswan to float party by Nov

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

BHUBANESWAR, Aug. 30. — Mr Ram Vilas Paswan today announced that he would form a new national party by end of November, and the party's first electoral test would be in Bihar where it would contest the panchayat elections.

The new party would continue to be "part of the NDA, and will not weaken any other alliance partners", he stressed, when asked if the move was aimed against Mr Sharad Yadav, Mr Nitish Kumar and other NDA leaders.

Asked if he was scared the BJP was eating into his Dalit vote bank, Mr Paswan said "it is not a question of votebanks". He was ready to sacrifice his votebank for the state and the nation's sake, Mr Paswan added.

Justifying the move to float a new party, he said it was unfortunate that the Janata Dal (U) had not held its organisational elections and had not convened a meeting of its national executive.

A rally would be held in Delhi on 23 November, and the party would not be named Dalit Sena. It had to be a more widely acceptable name, for people tended to associate the expression 'Dalit Sena' with casteist politics, he said.

In a veiled reference to the neglect of Bihar and states like



Ram Vilas Paswan

Orissa, Mr Paswan said the United Front government had taken several steps to accord priority to the backward states. Railway zones had been marked out and everything except the territorial jurisdiction had been notified, but now some of these zones were being neglected, he said. "People of Orissa and Bihar feel they have been neglected, and we will convey this feeling to the Prime Minister", he said.

In Cuttack, the Dalit Sena convention caused much embarrassment to the BJD-BJP government, with some resolutions adopted in the presence of a couple of BJD ministers clearly going against the state government's policies.

Much to the discomfiture of the BJD ministers, the Dalit Sena moved some resolutions

which were endorsed by their leader, Mr Paswan.

The Dalit Sena criticised the BJD-BJP government's move, for instance, to enter the liquor trade and float a corporation. It declared that it would launch a statewide agitation against the move.

The state sports minister, Mr Ranendra Pratap Swain of the BJD, had no option but to assure the members that the state had not yet finalised its liquor policy.

But the Dalit Sena leaders, including the state unit vice-president, Mr Jugal Naik, said, it is most unfortunate that the state was making a brazen effort to trade in liquor and earn money at great social expense. "What is the social cost involved, and why should the government enter such a trade", he asked. The Dalit Sena resolved to press for reservation even in the private sector in view of shrinking job opportunities in the public sector and the general drift towards privatisation.

The convention expressed concern over the looming threat to natural rights of people on land, water and forests due to inroads made by multinationals.

It called upon the people to forge a peoples' front to brave this affront and stake their claim on water, land and forests.

THE STATESMAN

31 AUG 2001

## Ban MDMK, says Jayalalitha

By Our Special Correspondent

CHENNAI, JULY 4. The AIADMK general secretary, Ms. Jayalalitha, today demanded a ban on the MDMK and the arrest of its leader, Mr. Vaiko, for holding an "anti-national conference" which she said, supported the outlawed LTTE.

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Attacking the Union Ministers and Chief Ministers for attending the Erode conference, Ms. Jayalalitha said the Chief Minister, Mr. M. Karunanidhi, who equated himself with Mr. Vaiko, and the MDMK with the DMK, should also be arrested. The DMK too should be banned for the same reason.

Accusing the BJP-led Government of being indifferent to the situation, Ms. Jayalalitha asked for the immediate dissolution of the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly for passing the autonomy resolution. Otherwise, the demand for autonomy would "spread like wild fire," leading to fragmentation of the country.

Accusing the MDMK of engaging in "anti-national activities", she urged the President to call for a "proper clarification" from the BJP-led Government on the participation of the Union Ministers in the conference. Support to those who voiced separatism only reflected the "ineptitude" of the Central and State governments.

Noting that photographs of the LTTE chief, Mr. V. Prabhakaran, were sold at Erode, she wanted to know how the police could allow this. "What other proof is needed to show how ineffectual the Karunanidhi regime has become?"

The conference had turned out to be the "debut for the disintegration of the unified Indian subcontinent." She wondered how there could be a "heroic salute" for the banned LTTE and how Mr. Vaiko could be hailed as the "Prabhakaran of Tamil Nadu."

Criticising the pro-Eelam sentiments expressed at the meet, Ms. Jayalalitha said: "It is Mr. Karunanidhi's yearning to fashion a separate Tamil nation with the portion carved out from India (Tamil Nadu) annexed to another portion carved out from Sri Lanka and then anoint himself as the President of such a State. It is also his ambition to make Prabhakaran the generalissimo of that state, with the LTTE functioning as the Tamil nation's army."

Though the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee, had said the formation of Tamil Eelam could not be supported by India, Mr. Vaiko and the PMK founder, Dr. S. Ramadoss, had stated in the presence of the Union Home Minister, Mr. L.K. Advani, that only the creation of Eelam could resolve the ethnic conflict.

THE HINDU

5 JUL 200

## Swamy criticises Jaswant's statement

By Our Staff Reporter

**MADURAI, JULY 4** Janata Party president, Dr. Subramanian Swamy, has "termed as false and hypocritical" the statement of the External Affairs, Mr. Jaswant Singh, that Indo-Israel relations were "stunted from developing" due to Muslim opinion in the country.

In a statement here today, Dr. Swamy said that Mr. Singh had conveniently forgotten that the BJP in the Lok Sabha had held up the proceedings for three days in the first week of January 1991 when the Chandra Shekar Government tried to improve relations with Israel. Earlier, he said, Mr. Vajpayee, as External Affairs Minister, had obstructed the then Prime Minister Morarji Desai's move to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel, after the Camp David Accord in 1978.

He alleged that it was not the Muslim opinion that inhibited Indo-Israeli relations, but the then powerful Soviet lobby in India with which Mr. Vajpayee had sought to curry favour. "To blame Muslim opinion now for the delay is a typical communalist double-think of the BJP," he said.

THE HINDU

MADURAI

# Cong councillor in Trinamool

HT Correspondent  
Calcutta, July 5

**CONGRESS COUNCILLOR**  
Samsujjaman Ansari today joined the Trinamool, taking the party's strength in the Calcutta Municipal Corporation to 67.

Mamata Bannerjee's party is now only four short of a majority in the 141-member CMC. Today, she produced Ansari before reporters.

Ansari, who said he had full confidence in Mamata's leadership, did not rule out the possibility of some more Congress councillors crossing over to the Trinamool.

"I hope other Congress councillors too would join Mamata Banerjee. It would only make the anti-Left forces stronger. This would also honour the sentiments of the electorate, which has largely voted against the Left in the CMC election," he added.

Mamata, however, refused to dub Ansari's crossing over to her party a defection. She was not try-

ing to engineer defections from the Congress, she insisted.

The Trinamool supremo said her party did not field a candidate against Ansari, who won from Ward 135, for there was a *Mahajot* in that ward. It was a reciprocal gesture. There is nothing abnormal in Ansari joining the Trinamool.

By the same logic, she refused to interpret Ansari's decision to change sides as an instance of horse-trading by her party.

"He was a *Mahajot* candidate and truly belonged to us." Instead, she accused the CPI(M) of horse-trading, but was confident that her rival's "evil designs" would never succeed. "I hope that the anti-Left forces would help us win the mayoral poll."

She did not think that the anti-defection law could be applied against Ansari and the newly-elected councillor was threatened with losing his CMC membership. "Since the mayoral

election is to be held through secret ballot,

the question becomes redundant. Moreover, anti-defection law comes into effect only a month after the election", she argued.

Anasari's surprise crossover to the Trinamool came as a big jolt to the Congress. PCC vice-president Saugata Roy condemned the "defection" and said that such lack of political ethics was shocking.

He considered it even more unfortunate, since the Congress had already decided to abstain from the mayoral election - a move that is likely to help the Trinamool to form the CMC board.

Roy said that his party would charge Ansari with flouting the anti-defection law and said he was certain to lose his seat. The issue, he said, would be taken up at a meeting convened by PCC chief A B A Ghani Khan Chowdhury tomorrow.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

# Missile test is trial by fire for India too

By Harvey Stockwin  
The Times of India News Service

HONG KONG: The launch of the modified Minuteman missile from Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, could indirectly result in strengthening the missile threat which India faces.

Similarly, the performance of the interceptor missile launched from Kwajalein Atoll in the central Pacific, could impact upon Indian missile policy. If the planned interception fails, as it has, and even if President Clinton hands the decision over to his successor, China may well seek to sustain clandestine proliferation activities about which the U.S. will complain but India will probably remain silent.

Welcome to the highly-complex world of missile power politics in which India is a player even if New

Delhi has much less to say on the subject than Washington DC.

In Beijing, chief U.S. arms control negotiator John Holum is negotiating with his opposite number, vice-foreign minister Wang Guangya, on a whole range of missile-related issues. Not the least important aspect of the talks is that Holum will be presenting the latest American evidence that China is continuing to assist Pakistan in the development of its missiles.

The Chinese of course deny this. If they can sustain that denial and prove their case, it will put the Chinese in a stronger position to push their other missile-related positions—notably the American abandonment of its missile defence plans. Those plans would, if successfully implemented, quickly make China's current small strategic missile

forces potentially redundant.

The Americans of course deny that the defence system would be aimed at China. They insist it is aimed at more unpredictable states such as North Korea. But given the realities of geography, it seems unlikely that missile defences would have the time or the ability to decide whether incoming missiles came from North Korea or from northeastern China.

But if the Americans can show that their charges regarding Pakistan are far from baseless, it will probably have a beneficial effect on the talks: the Chinese bluff will have been called. Beijing will have to make a deal if it is to head off sanctions-loaded legislation being passed by the U.S. Congress.

China will also have to show much greater willingness than it has

displayed so far to abide by the MTCR. The Vandenberg-Kwajalein test would inevitably have a fall-out on Indian policy—and, perhaps, reduce the frequency with which Indian leaders naively hail “greatly improving relations” with China.

Even though the test has failed, the Chinese may not wait to see how the heated and extensive debate on the missile defence scheme within the U.S. plays itself out before deciding to move ahead. India will ultimately have to decide whether to place its faith in Sino-American arms control negotiations securing Indian objectives, such as a reduction of Chinese and Pakistan missile forces, or to assume that an arms race between U.S. defensive capability and Chinese offensive capacity is all but inevitable.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

29 JUL 2001

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## A SERIOUS SETBACK

1/2

AT AN IMMEDIATE level, the conviction of Ms. Jayalalitha in the Pleasant Stay Hotel case is a serious setback for the AIADMK leader, who has repeatedly dismissed the many corruption charges against her as trumped up and part of a sordid witchhunt launched by her political opponents. At a more general level, it could be yet another illustration of the welcome trend that the law — which has seemed relatively ineffective against the rich and the powerful — is finally beginning to catch up with the politicians of this country. Being the first Chief Minister to be declared guilty under the Prevention of Corruption Act, and that too of charges as serious as criminal misconduct and conspiracy, the AIADMK leader will carry a heavy political stigma if she is unable to clear her name with an acquittal at the doors of a higher judicial forum.

In his ruling, the Special Judge, Mr. V. Radhakrishnan, held that Ms. Jayalalitha had conspired along with former Local Administration Minister, Mr. T. M. Selvaganapathy, and senior bureaucrat, Mr. H. M. Pandey, to illegally relax the building rules for the benefit of the Kodaikanal-based Pleasant Stay Hotel. In some ways, the origin of this case lies in a writ petition before the Madras High Court; as early as 1995, a Division Bench of the Court had ruled that Ms. Jayalalitha's Government had displayed a "total lack of application of mind" in granting special building exemptions to the hotel. Ms. Jayalalitha's conviction in this case has closely followed her discharge in two other cases (the coal import case and the TANSI land deal case), which suggests that the prosecution's proceedings against her have run an irregular and sometimes unexpected course. In an environment where the cases have become inextricably mixed up with politics in the public mind, a

judicial victory for one side has come to be regarded as a political loss for the other. So much so, it has come as a handy political tool for the DMK Government that at least one of the corruption cases against Ms. Jayalalitha has ended in a conviction, particularly after the enormous embarrassment of the judiciary finding there was no evidence to frame charges against her in the coal and the TANSI cases.

Those AIADMK supporters who hailed these two rulings now find themselves on the wrong side of the judicial fence. And the burst of celebratory crackers which met her discharge have become transformed into ugly violence and abhorrent acts of barbarity. The burning alive of three young and innocent women students in Dharmapuri district by those angry with the verdict is an act of unspeakable savagery. AIADMK volunteers appear to have gone on the rampage in many other parts of the State and Ms. Jayalalitha — whatever her feelings about the verdict — must lose no time in reining these hooligans in. People who do not respect judicial verdicts and resort to barbarism as a form of protest have no place in a democratic society.

Ms. Jayalalitha's political allies including the TMC are unlikely to desert her in the short run, even though they are bound to be unsettled by the verdict. The upcoming byelections to three Assembly constituencies in Tamil Nadu may be the first pointer to whether — if at all — the verdict has had a political impact. In the long run, however, Ms. Jayalalitha may well find that proving her innocence is the only way of retaining her influence as a leader; her political future is likely to very closely tied up with her judicial fate.

HD-14 13/2  
**The disarray... and the disinterest**

*If the NDA's chances have dimmed, it is only because of the wrangling within. As for the Congress(I), its flip-flop in Bihar, Orissa and Haryana has blunted the edge of its election campaign.* **NEENA VYAS and ANGANA PAREKH on the poll prospects of the two sides with reports from K. BALCHAND in Patna, N. RAMDAS in Bhubaneshwar, RAJESH AHUJA in Chandigarh and IBOYAIMA LAITHANGBAM in Imphal.**

**T**HE BJP-led National Democratic Alliance is determined to rid Bihar of what it calls "jungle-raj", ironically with the help of its ally, Mr. Anand Mohan Singh, and several others who have criminal cases against them. Twice in the recent past it tried to use the back-door method of Article 356, both times unsuccessfully. The political stakes are high, mineral-rich Bihar being politically the most heavy-weight State after Uttar Pradesh.

In the three-phase poll covering four States — Bihar, Orissa, Haryana and Manipur — it is only in Bihar that the BJP has maintained its position as the lead partner in the NDA alliances. In Orissa it has allowed the leadership to go to the Biju Janata Dal, in Haryana to the Indian National Lok Dal, and in Manipur, it will be happy to simply make its presence felt.

Two months ago just before the Assembly elections were announced the ground reality favoured a sweep by the NDA in Bihar, Orissa and Haryana. If the scene is not that bright at the moment, it is only because of the wranglings within the NDA and the uncertainty about the efficacy of a joint NDA campaign on the ground given the lack of trust among the partners. The BJP's anxiety to keep the NDA flock together at all costs could be gauged from the fact that in Bihar it gave away as many as 24 Assembly constituencies as compared to the seats contested by it in the 1999 Lok Sabha poll, and in Orissa and Haryana it gave up its 50:50 seat sharing stance to allow its partners to lead.

The public posture, as recently spelt out by the BJP general secretary, Mr. K. N. Govindacharya, is that the NDA will win a two-thirds majority in Bihar, sweep the polls in Orissa, form the Government in Haryana, and emerge as a force in Manipur. But privately senior party leaders are not sure what damage the infighting between the Samata Party and the Janata Dal (United) will do in Bihar. And there is this nagging feeling that it would be a mistake to write off the irrepressible Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav.

It is admitted by senior BJP leaders that there are 52 seats in a total of 324 in Bihar where there are "multiple NDA candidates" and although some of them have been retired, the fact is that they will remain as contestants. In closely-contested constituencies, a loss of even a couple of thousand votes could make the difference between victory and defeat. And in the 1999 Lok Sabha elections although Mr. Laloo Yadav's RJD had to bite the dust, his vote share remained intact.

Reports from Bihar suggest that the NDA is far from cohesive, that the Samata and the JD(U) are not campaigning for each other, and finally that the perceived BJP preference for Mr. Ram Vilas Paswan of the JD(U) and even Mr. Anand Mohan Singh of the Bihar People's Party over Mr. Nitish Kumar of the Samata Party has added to the tensions within the NDA. All this suggests that the two-thirds majority claim may be more than exaggerated, and although the NDA has a decisive edge in Bihar, the post-election scenario could get murky with an all-out fight within the alliance for the post of Chief Minister.

In Haryana, the fight is clearly between the INLD-BJP alliance and the Congress(I). The influence of Mr. Bansi Lal's Haryana Vikas Party is virtually limited to the leader's home district, Bhiwani. Certainly the INLD-BJP alliance seems to have a better chance than the hopelessly-divided Congress(I), but there are several factors at work which suggest that it may not be a cakewalk for the alliance.

The BJP was forced to accept just 29 seats (including two which the party had not asked for) of a total of 90 in seat-sharing arrangements with the INLD. The level of resentment over what has been described by BJP Haryana leaders

as a "sell-out to Mr. Om Prakash Chautala" is high, and this is bound to impact on the election. Although the public posture of the BJP is that the results here would reflect the Lok Sabha results (10 out of 10 for the BJP-INLD), the assessment of a senior party leader closely connected with Haryana affairs is that the fight will be tough: "The popularity of Mr. Chautala is coming down each day, by the hour, and the Congress (I) has put up good candidates, it will be a close fight." The HVP rebels who had helped Mr. Chautala to come to power by crossing over to him have been booted out, and many of them are contesting as independents. In Jind, a retired INLD candidate is standing against the official BJP candidate, and some HVP as well as Congress (I) rebels are contesting as Bahujan Samaj Party candidates.

Another about turn taken by Mr. Chautala on his earlier promise of free water and power to the farmers is a cause for resentment. The bad power situation has not endeared the INLD to them, although his credentials as the son of 'Tau' Devi Lal continues to be a positive factor. In Orissa the BJD-BJP alliance is expected to sail through easily, building its support on the miseries of the people after the super cyclone tragedy exposed the Congress(I) State Government as completely inept. If the NDA alliance in Orissa has any problem at all, it is in the shape of serious infighting within the BJD.

The BJD sub-plot in the election story may unfold fully only after when the battle for the Chief Ministerial position is joined, a position to which Mr. Patnaik has laid claim by contesting the Assembly elections even while holding a portfolio in the Union Cabinet.

As for Manipur, where the elections have already generated a lot of violence, the BJP is hoping to make its presence felt in a State dominated by small local parties. It has entered into an alliance with the Samata Party and the Kuki National Assembly to form the Manipur Democratic Alliance.

THE HINDU  
 13 FEB 2000

P. T. O.

**I**F THE Congress(I) does not do well in the Assembly elections in Bihar, Orissa, Haryana and Manipur it will have only itself to blame; and if, contrary to expectations, it does do well, it will be thanks to the infighting in the rival camp.

The party's flip-flops in Bihar, Orissa and Haryana have blunted the edge of its election campaign. If in Bihar the Congress(I) is attacking the "misrule" of the RJD Government, few have forgotten that until recently it was supporting that very regime.

In Orissa, what credibility can the promise of "stability" have when the party has changed three Chief Ministers in the span of one year? And in Haryana, the party spiked its chances by first supporting the unpopular Bansi Lal Government and then withdrawing that support, leading to what the Congress(I) wanted most to avoid: Mr. Om Prakash Chautala forming the Government with the help of the BJP.

It may be argued that these blunders are things of the past. But even when the Congress(I) was given a major election issue on a platter — the boiling controversy over the pro-RSS moves of the Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Central Governments, the U.P. Government's obeisance to the RSS by banning the shooting of the film, *Water*, and the BJP's justification of the action — it has not taken it up in a big way.

Mrs. Sonia Gandhi and several CWC members courted arrest on January 30 to protest against the Gujarat order. But the highly-publicised event now seems like tokenism as after that there has been no mass agitational programme on the other related issues. The feeling is that the party's political reflexes are not sharp enough. Privately, Congress(I) leaders concede that an opportunity has been lost. The official explanation is that the party is preoccupied with the Assembly elections but will certainly launch a programme after they are over. Nevertheless, the picture is not one of total gloom.

Congress(I) leaders generally consider Haryana the party's brightest hope. With Mr. Bansi Lal's Haryana Vikas Party having become a marginal force, it is a straight fight between the Congress(I) and the BJP-INLD combine. A major problem is the large number of rebel candidates — almost half the seats have Congress(I) rebels contesting as independents. Also, the infighting between the "big four" — Mr. Bhajan Lal, Mr. Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Mr. Virender Singh and Mr. Inderjit Singh — witnessed during ticket distribution still persists and is likely to spill over to the elections as the scent of power gets stronger.

The Congress(I) is taking consolation from the fact that the rival BJP-Chautala camp also has its share of rebels. The subsequent division of votes and the anti-incumbency factor is what the Congress(I) is banking upon. The high command's message to the State unit is to fight unitedly and wait until after the elections for the tussle over Chief Ministership. It remains to be seen if this directive is heeded. In any case, old Haryana hands in the Congress(I) believe that if the party wins even about 30-odd of the 90 seats in the Assembly, the wily Mr. Bhajan Lal will succeed in "patching together" a Government.

For Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, it is vital that the party comes to power in at least one State — either Haryana or Manipur — to offset the impending defeat of its Government in Orissa. A lose one-win one scenario would muffle the questions about her leadership that are apprehended after the elections.

The perceived inadequacy of the State Government's response to the cyclone in Orissa and the rapid turnover of Chief Ministers have overshadowed whatever the Congress(I) achieved during its five-year rule. The party's prospects are particularly poor in the coastal belt which bore the brunt of the cyclone.

But in other parts of the State, the Congress(I) hopes to do better because of the large number of rebels from the BJP-BJD. The expulsion of Mr. Bijoy Mahapatra from the BJD is expected to work in the Congress(I)'s favour since he is now reported to be openly working against the BJD.

Party leaders hope that Mr. J. B. Patnaik will put his famed organisational and political skills to good use, at least to ensure that the BJP-BJD combine does not get a clear mandate.

Bihar is one State where the Congress(I) believes its position can only improve. It is a modest hope, considering that at present

it has only 29 MLAs in a State that only 10 years ago was its bastion. North and Central Bihar, where the RJD, the BJP, the Samata Party and the JD(U) are slugging it out, are not seen as very positive for the Congress(I). South Bihar is where the party is concentrating its efforts in the hope that its vociferous support for the creation of Jharkhand will win votes. Here, the fight for votes is mainly between the Congress(I) and the BJP since the other parties do not have much of a base in this predominantly tribal region.

The tiny state of Manipur has not received much prominence yet. Setting aside its aversion to alliances, the Congress(I) is part of a coalition, the Secular Democratic Front, which includes the CPI, the JD(S) and the Manipur People's Party. But the seat-sharing arrangement is less than perfect: there are 96 SDF candidates for the 60 seats. But the Congress(I) hopes that the ruling coalition's failure on the law and order front will tilt the balance in the SDF's favour.

The Congress(I)'s "star daughter", Mrs. Priyanka Vadra, is not campaigning at all. A Congress(I) leader explained that she was not being "exposed" to the public as the party did not consider these elections important enough.

**THE HINDU**

**13 FEB 2000**



# NDA wins in Orissa, Haryana; BJP checkmated in Bihar

By Harish Khare

HD-1

NEW DELHI, FEB. 25. The BJP's allies in the National Democratic Alliance won comfortably in the Haryana Assembly elections and were set to sweep to power in Orissa, while the BJP found itself checkmated in Bihar where the NDA allies were deemed to be unstoppable against Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav's presumably sinking Rashtriya Janata Dal. In Manipur, the Congress(I)-led Secular Democratic Front appeared to have gained an initial lead. However, at the end of the day's counting for four major States and by-elections in various other states, the NDA barely managed to have retained the political edge it had gained in the last Lok Sabha elections four months ago.

In Orissa, Mr. Naveen Patnaik, the projected chief ministerial candidate of the Biju Janata Dal-BJP alliance, appears poised to lead the combine to a comprehensive victory, against an indifferently-run Congress(I) Government. Similarly in Haryana, the Indian National Lok Dal-BJP alliance won comfortable majority. The Chief Minister, Mr. Om Prakash Chautla (INLD) is all set to take oath one more time.

However, in Bihar the NDA appears heading for a severe disappointment; defying all predictions and expectations of a clean sweep for the BJP-Samata Party-Janata Dal (United)-Bihar People's Party combine, Mr. Laloo Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal has performed well enough to emerge as the single largest party. So obvious was the disappointment for the NDA in Bihar that the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, even talked of having a "probe" and acknowledged that the NDA performance was "not so satisfactory".

The bottom-line of the electoral outcome in these three States is that there would not be a single BJP Chief Minister; on the other hand, the Congress(I) does not appear to have done as disastrously in Haryana and Bihar as it did in the last Lok Sabha elections. In any case, should the party be able to prevent the emergence of a "communal" government in Bihar, the internal equations in the Congress (I) would remain largely undisturbed.

And, if Bihar was a source of disappointment for the BJP, the two Lok Sabha by-elections in Bellary

(Karnataka) and Kannauj (Uttar Pradesh) provided little comfort to the ruling party at the Centre. Despite the fact that the BJP managed to win two and wrest one additional Assembly seat (out of eight), the party was in fourth place in Kannauj, where it found itself squeezed out by the Samajwadi Party (the winner, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav's son, Mr. Akilesh, making his political debut by registering a victory margin of 58,700), the BSP and Mr. Kalyan Singh's new outfit, the Rashtriya Kranti Party; the BJP-Loktantrik Congress Party candidate could poll only 21,918 votes. Moreover, in Bellary the Congress(I) candidate, Mr. Kolar Basavangoud, won by a margin of 96,000 votes, improving over Mrs. Sonia Gandhi's margin, 56,000, in October 1999.

Otherwise, more or less, the ruling parties in the States were able to retain the upper hand, indicating a certain stability in the political mood in the country at large. In Tamil Nadu, the ruling DMK-led front won in the Nellikuppam (Mr. V. C. Shanmugam of the DMK) and in Aranthangi (Mr. C. Anbarsaran of the MGR ADMK) constituencies while counting has been suspended in the third constituency (Tiruchirappalli). In Madhya Pradesh the ruling Congress(I) won two out of four byelections, while in Gujarat, the BJP wrested one seat (Chotila) from the Congress(I) and in the Bhadrachalam constituency an Independent candidate did the Congress(I) in, suggesting continued decline of the Congress(I) in the State.

However, in Maharashtra the ruling Congress(I)-NCP combine lost its South Mumbai seat to a Congress(I)-rebel-turned-Shiv Sena candidate. In West Bengal, the Left Front wrested two (Nabagam and Suri constituencies) seats from the Congress, while the third seat, Binpur, has gone to the Jharkhand Party (N), and in Andhra Pradesh the ruling Telugu Desam retained the Gudivada Assembly seat.

Perhaps the most satisfying win among all Assembly byelections was the Akali Dal's comfortable victory in Nawashahar, indicating a reversal of the anti-incumbency mood witnessed in the Lok Sabha poll. In Himachal Pradesh, the ruling BJP won the Solan seat, while in Rajasthan the ruling Congress (I) shared honours with the BJP, both win two seats each out of a total of six constituencies.

THE HINDU

26 FEB 2000

## Naveen elected BJD legislature party leader

Bhubaneswar, February 27

BJD CHIEF Naveen Patnaik, who led his party in alliance with the BJP to a spectacular victory in the elections to Orissa Assembly, was today unanimously elected leader of the BJD legislature party, paving way for his becoming Chief Minister, reports PTI.

The name of Mr Patnaik, who will head the new coalition Government in Orissa, was proposed by party's working president Nalini Mohanty and seconded by vice president A U Singhdeo. Sixty newly-elected MLAs present at the lawns of Naveen Nivas, approved the proposal unanimously.

Mr Patnaik is expected to be elected leader of the combine at a joint meeting of the MLAs of the BJD and BJP in a couple of days.

Mr Patnaik said the alliance would be inheriting a "bankrupt exchequer from the Congress regime with a burden of Rs 16,000 crore" and his Government will give top priority to the generation of additional resources.

[Related report on Page 8](#)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

28 FEB 2000

# Left extremism refuses to die down

Ashok Das  
Hyderabad, January 2

The vexed problem of Left wing extremism or Naxalism in Andhra Pradesh simply refuses to go. The issue has once again come to occupy the centre stage with the spate of violent incidents perpetrated by the PWG in retaliation of the killing of three of its top leaders in police encounter on Dec 2. According to Government estimates, the PWG cadres have destroyed public and private properties worth Rs.5 crores, besides killing ten persons, including policemen, during the past four weeks.

The trail of death and destruction left by the Naxals has forced the government to seriously ponder over a permanent solution to the problem.

The loss of life and property apart, what worried the government was the atmosphere of fear that brought all developmental activities to a standstill in the Naxal-affected districts.

Last week, the government convened an all-party meeting to

evolve a consensus on tackling the issue but the exercise was a non-starter as the main Opposition, the Congress, boycotted the meet.

The other three Opposition parties, namely the Bharatiya Janata Party, CPM and MIM, which attended the meet categorically stated that no solution could be found as long as the government treated the issue as a mere law and order problem.

They maintained that the govern-

## Naxal Movement in Andhra

ment should treat it as a phenomenon created by the socio-economic situation prevalent in the countryside.

They also urged the government to order a judicial probe into the killing of three Naxal leaders as a first step towards creating proper atmosphere for dialogue. But the government rejected the demand outright.

The Naxal movement, which was inspired by Chinese leader Mao Zedong, took its root in tribal dominated Srikakulam in Andhra

Pradesh in December 1968. It started basically as a revolt against the oppression of the landlord class on poor peasantry, especially the tribes, who were fraudulently deprived of their lands and thus means of livelihood by the machinations of the landlords, money-lenders and the colluding revenue officials.

It soon spread to coastal areas and then to Telengana and Rayalaseema districts. As many as

12 of the 23 districts are affected by Naxal problem.

The Naxal movement has a chequered history. It went through several splits owing to the differences among the various Naxal leaders on matters of ideology, theory, strategy, tactics and logistics.

At one point of time, there was five Naxal factions named after their respective leaders.

The movement got a fillip when Kondapalli Seetharamaiah (KS) formed the PWG on April 22,

1980. KS had a strategy for resuscitating the movement.

He discarded the Charu Majumdar line of total annihilation of class enemies as the only form of struggle and laid stress on floating mass organisations and taking up of economic struggles to spread the movement.

The group made rapid progress in short time, cashing in on people's anger and resentment and spread its wings beyond Andhra to Orissa, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Karnataka. In recent times, the organisation has spread to Bihar, West Bengal, Haryana, Delhi and Kerala.

The Naxal movement has undergone violent phases of repression. However, like the proverbial phoenix, it refuses to die and gets resurrected periodically to pose threat to the establishment.

Today, there are about 18 Naxal groups functioning in Andhra Pradesh, embracing various hues of Left extremism and propagating different methods to achieve the goal of rule by the proletariat. The Peoples War Group (PWG) is the most feared among them.

# Samata, Lok Shakti, JD merger to be completed today

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, January 5

THE MERGER of Samata Party, Lok Shakti and a faction of the erstwhile Janata Dal into the Janata Dal (United) is expected to be completed smoothly tomorrow. Several discrepancies prevail in this unity, prominent among them being the struggle for leadership among Mr George Fernandes and Mr Sharad Yadav.

But with the Bihar Assembly elections around the corner, this contentious question is being pushed to the backburner. According to party spokesman Mohan Prakash, "organisational questions" would be settled after the elections in Bihar, Orissa and Manipur. But a major part of the Samata Party, which is backing Mr George Fernandes' claim for the post of party president, is itching for a quick showdown over the issue.

Comparatively, Mr Sharad Yadav's bid for presidentship is

heavier. Not counting the influential segment of his own faction within the old Janata Dal, he can be sure of the tacit support of Mr Ram Vilas Paswan and the backing of Lok Shakti supremo Ramakrishna Hegde.

"If somehow Mr Yadav is not able to make it to the post of the president, we would back Mr J.H. Patel for presidentship but not Mr Fernandes," a senior Lok Shakti leader said.

There is also the Nitish Kumar factor that weighs favourably for the sitting president.

The Kurmi leader of Bihar who is also the Agriculture Minister in the Vajpayee Government is striking a line independent of Mr Fernandes. Since the last elections, he is assumed to have gone closer to the Sharad Yadav camp.

He stayed away from New Delhi during the two days of the Janata Dal's Steering Committee meeting which ended tonight and is expected to make his stand clear tomorrow.

# Saifuddin handed show-cause notice

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

CALCUTTA, Jan. 8. — Mr Saifuddin Chowdhury, former Central Committee member and crusader for "more internal democracy" in the CPI-M, was handed a show-cause notice when he met party big-wigs at Alimuddin Street today.

He is believed to have held talks with Mr Anil Biswas, CPI-M state secretary, Mr Benoy Konar, a hardliner, and Mr Buddhadev Bhattacharya, Deputy Chief Minister, during the day.

Admitting Mr Chowdhury had visited Alimuddin Street, Mr Biswas, however, said there was no need to read too much into it, as it was normal for any party member to visit the office.

When contacted, Mr Chowdhury said he would appeal to the Press not to misquote him.

"I don't want to hurt the sentiments of party leaders of long standing. I have only respect for them, and am on good terms with them," he said.

Mr Chowdhury has been given a fortnight to reply to the show-cause notice. The reply, once ready, will be forwarded

to the party Central Committee.

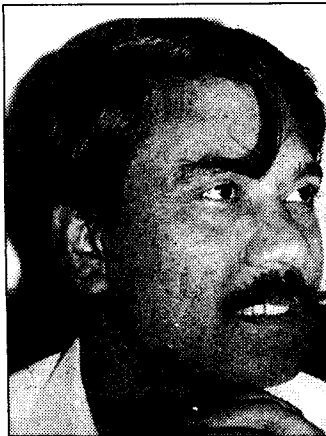
Today's development added a new dimension to the tussle between hardliners and liberals in the CPI-M. The contents of the show-cause notice have been kept a closely-guarded secret, but how Mr Chowdhury responds to the charges will be keenly watched.

Mr Chowdhury was the first among liberals who openly criticised attempts within the party to stifle all voices of dissent, and actually campaigned for more openness.

The hardliners, of course, denied the charge and stressed that no other party was as democratic as the CPI-M. Mr Anil Biswas made it clear at party fora that such dissent could not be allowed and

said the development was reminiscent of what Lenin had faced from his pro-democracy comrades.

He also accused the so-called pro-democracy group of harming the party. Mr Chowdhury, however, has maintained that his demand for more internal democracy was aimed only at reinvigorating the CPI-M. He wants a debate on the issue and is ready to defend his stand.



Mr Saifuddin Chowdhury

# RJD, CPM, SJP, JD (S) tie up to take on BJP in Bihar

NEW DELHI: The Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the CPM, the Samajwadi Janata Party (SJP) and the Janata Dal (Secular) entered into an electoral understanding on Wednesday to take on the BJP and its allies in the Bihar assembly elections.

"We have decided to join hands to take up the challenge posed by the BJP and its allies and fight elections together in Bihar," CPM leader Harkishan Singh Surjeet said at a joint press conference attended by RJD chief Laloo Prasad Yadav, SJP leader Chandra Shekhar and JD (S) leader H.D. Deve Gowda here. Describing the assembly polls in Bihar as very crucial, Mr Surjeet said the situation in the state "is very clear and the RJD is the strongest force to defeat the BJP and its allies".

"We do not find any other com-

bination to fight communal forces," he said.

Asked whether the new combination would also take other parties into its fold, Mr Surjeet said: "We would welcome other parties to join hands". "But we feel there is no other force bypassing which the RJD could think of coming to power," the CPM leader said adding the new alliance alone could defeat the BJP and its allies.

Meanwhile, AICC observer for Bihar polls Motilal Vora denied in Patna on Wednesday reports that Congress president Sonia Gandhi had talks with JMM-S leaders for forging an alliance in south Bihar and declared that his party would have no truck with the RJD for formation of the government in the event of a hung-assembly after the coming assembly poll.

"The Congress forging an

alliance with the JMM-S is completely ruled out. We have nearly finalised the list of our candidates for all 324 assembly seats," Mr Vora, who was in Patna to scrutinise the list of his party's nominees said in an interview. He said reports of Ms Gandhi holding consultations with JMM-S leaders for electoral understanding in south Bihar were "wrong and absurd".

Mr Vora said AICC general secretary Mohsina Kidwai, who is also in charge of the party's Bihar affairs, had at a number of times made it clear that the Congress would contest the assembly elections on its own strength "without exploring an alliance." Predicting a hung-assembly after the poll, Mr Vora said the party would prefer to play the role of a constructive opposition in the event of not securing a majority. (PTI)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 JAN 2000

# Records show they are JD-U members: EC George, 9 others derecognised as Samata leaders

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 20. — In a major blow to the Samata Party just ahead of the Assembly elections in Bihar and three other states, the Election Commission today said it would not entertain or honour nomination papers signed by the party's president, Mr George Fernandes, and nine other office-bearers who are MPs, as they are members of the Janata Dal (United) as per records.

These papers include Form A and Form B under the Symbols Order, intimating the names of the party's official candidates for the Assembly polls in Bihar, Haryana, Orissa and Manipur or any other by-election held simultaneously.

Besides Mr Fernandes, those derecognised by the EC are Mr Manjay Lal, Capt Jainarain Prasad Nishad, Mr Mahendra Baitha, Mr Nitish Kumar, Mr Prabhunath Singh, Mr Digvijay Singh, Mr Brahmanand Mandal, Mr Arun Kumar and Mrs Beatrix D'Souza.

Maintaining that all the 10 office-bearers whose names had been intimated to the commission by the Samata — in response to a query — were JD-U members according to EC and Lok Sabha records, the commission said the party constitution provided that a mem-

ber could not become a member of another party.

"As a logical corollary, once a party member became the member of another political party, he shall cease to hold the office which he was holding in the party organisation," the EC said, and thus couldn't recognise them as Samata office-bearers.

The EC said the Samata was a recognised party and enjoyed the privileges under the Symbol Order, but laid down that Forms A and B for candidates in this election be signed by an office-bearer duly authorised by the party, other than these 10.

The EC ruling came within hours of the Samata's reply to the EC query whether the party should be treated as having merged with the JD-U or it continued to retain its identity.

The commission dismissed the Samata contention that the affiliations of the members elected to Lok Sabha on the JD-U symbol have no bearing on their position in the Samata, and should not be construed adversely in the context of others seeking election to Assemblies on the Samata ticket and symbol.

The EC referred to another Samata contention — that in view of its decision not to merge, party members or

office-bearers elected to Lok Sabha on the JD-U symbol would take such steps as may be necessary in the Lok Sabha — as "admission of the fact that, as on date, the said persons are members of the JD-U".

The EC stand that these Lok Sabha members were JD-U members was based on its own records: nomination papers filed by these persons, list of contesting candidates, certificates of election given to the winners by the returning officers and the "Due Constitution Notification" issued after the general election.

"The members have themselves given individual declarations to the Lok Sabha Speaker that they were JD-U members," the EC pointed out.

Earlier in the day, the Samata told the EC that at no point had the party been dissolved or formally merged with any other political party. Only a political arrangement had been arrived at between the Samata, Lok Shakti and the breakaway Janata Dal, and it had been agreed to contest on a common symbol and on the National Democratic Alliance manifesto.

Though a "joint declaration of intent to unite as one party" was issued by the presidents of

## SAMATA:

(Continued from page 1)

the three parties on 20 July 1999, the Samata national executive on 6 January unanimously decided not to merge and continue its "distinct and separate" identity, the Samata reply to the EC query said.

The Samata also said the affidavit submitted by its president was "unauthorisedly" notarised.

Draft affidavits of Mr Fernandes and other Samata leaders were circulated by JD-U leaders at a meeting of the three parties. Following objections, it was agreed that a revised draft would be notarised and submitted to the EC only after the formal merger, the Samata replied. Pointing out that Mr Fernandes was not even in town on the day his affidavit was notarised, it urged the EC not to take cognisance of these affidavits. "The decision of the Samata national executive and national council is subsequent to the dates indicated on the so-called affidavits".

To this, the EC said it was for the party and the individuals to take action under law for this alleged breach of trust and faith, but the commission had to take them at their legal face value.

■ See SAMATA: page 6

THE STATESMAN

21 JAN 2000

# EC-stung Samata elects Jaya Jaitly acting chief

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, January 21

MS JAYA Jaitly today elected acting president of the Samata Party in a hastily convened meeting of the party's national executive. This step was prompted by the Election Commission (EC)'s order yesterday derecognising the party MPs including president George Fernandes as they had got elected as Janata Dal (United) candidates in the 1999 elections.

Ms Jaitly will sign the "A" and "B" forms which will enable the Samata candidates to fight the Bihar, Manipur and Orissa elections next month. The EC's confirmation of Ms Jaitly's new position was granted later in the day.

In another development, 12 MPs of the Samata Party, who had been elected on JD(U) symbols, today met Lok Sabha Speaker G M G Balayogi, and demanded recognition as Samata Party members of the House. They also requested the granting of separate seats in the next session of the House. The Speaker later stated that he will act in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Anti-Defection Act.

Meanwhile, seat sharing talks between the National

Democratic Alliance (NDA) partners still eluded final solution. Though sources said the broad formula had been agreed upon (six Assembly segments to each Lok Sabha seat contested in 1999), the JD(U) spokesman, Mr M. Raghupathy, maintained his side would not agree unless there was an "equitable" sharing of the non-BJP seats with the Samata.

Mr Nitish Kumar, the Samata's senior minister, accused the JD(U) of "forgery and treachery". He said the JD(U) had fraudulently notarised a draft declaration which was not adopted at a Steering Committee meeting of the JD(U) in December when the Samata was still working towards a merger. The draft could not be adopted because the Samata leaders pointed out that it had mentioned them as JD(U) leaders outside the Parliament whereas the formal merger process had not been completed.



Jaya Jaitly

According to him, Mr Fernandes, Captain Jai Narain Prasad Nishad and Mr Mange Lal had signed on this draft without noticing the objectionable part. It was scrapped when other Samata leaders in the Steering Committee had noticed it and objected to it. "Instead of destroying the draft they had notarised it on December 24 when Mr Fernandes was not in Delhi. This is nothing but a fraud," he said.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES  
22 JAN 2000



# Advani pilots NDA's Bihar seats deal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, Jan. 23. — NDA partners in Bihar hammered out a seat-sharing deal a day before close of nominations for the first phase, after Mr LK Advani called off a visit to Gujarat to pilot a concord among the squabbling opponents of Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav.

Of the 324 Vidhan Sabha seats, the BJP will contest 150, Samata Party 90, the Janata Dal-United 64 and Mr Anand Mohan Singh's Bihar People's Party 20. The Samata has conceded the most ground, climbing down steeply from its demand for 130 seats.

The division has been made on the basis of seats contested by the partners in the Lok Sabha polls. Nominee lists will be released later.

News of the breakthrough came after a five-hour conference between the allies at Mr Advani's Pandara Park home. Dal-U leaders, Mr Sharad Yadav and Mr Ram Vilas Paswan, and Mr George Fernandes and Ms Jaya Jaitley of the Samata, told reporters they were completely satisfied with the arrangement. The BJP and Mr Anand Mohan Singh too expressed satisfaction.

The Union home minister refused to identify the alliance's chief ministerial candidate, though. Each partner had its candidate for the job, he said, but the common priority was to end the Laloo-Rabri "jungle raj" in Bihar. The allies would contest the Assembly polls unitedly on a single manifesto to be issued in a few days. The issue of chief ministership would be sorted out afterward.

The Bihar deal had been held up by persistent differences between the Dal-U and

Samata over the number of seats each should contest. BJP veterans, Mr KN Govindacharya and Mr Kailashpati Mishra, had failed to conjure a formula that would break the deadlock.

With close of nominations creeping up, the partners decided this morning to authorise Mr Advani to mediate, and agreed to abide by his decision. The home minister is believed to have spoken to Mr Fernandes over the issue when they accompanied the Prime Minister to Shillong recently.

The Dal-U had earlier wanted Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee to intervene.

**Orissa:** Resolution of the Bihar tangle did not bring glad

tidings for the BJP in Orissa. The party remained locked in the logjam over seats with its ally, the BJD.

Mr Navin Patnaik today flew in from Bhubaneswar with party representatives on the allies' election steering committee after talks with Orissa BJP president, Mr Manimohan

Samal, and party leader in the Assembly, Mr Bishwa Bhushan Harichandan, failed to yield results. Mr Patnaik and his colleagues plan to meet with Mr Vajpayee, Mr Advani and the BJP president, Mr Kushabhau Thakre.

Filing of nominations begins tomorrow.

**Uttar Pradesh:** The BJP today announced the names of its seven nominees for the 17 February by-polls to eight Assembly seats. One seat will be contested by an ally.

## LALOO LIST

PATNA, Jan. 23. — Mr Laloo Yadav will contest the Bihar Assembly polls from Danapur, the seat he had won in 1995. His party today released a list of 95 candidates for the 12 February first phase of elections to 108 seats. Its allies — CPI-M, SJP and JD-S — will contest 11 seats. The RJD is yet to announce its nominees for the Patna East and Patna West seats. — SNS

(Details on page 8)

# Laloo all smiles as NDA leaders fail to rein in allies

By Ambikanand Sahay  
The Times of India News Service

PATNA: Bihar may be in a mess, but Laloo Prasad Yadav is all smiles. With the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in a shambles in the state, the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supremo finds himself favoured by Lady Luck once again.

So, why is Mr Yadav in such an upbeat mood these days? First, the income-tax investigations into the expenses on his daughter's wedding prior to the elections have come as a political windfall. His supporters in the Yadav and Muslim communities are convinced that the Vajpayee government is hell-bent upon crucifying their leader by any means. Mr Yadav's votebank, which saw an increase of more than four per cent in the Lok Sabha elections, appears to have further swelled. Second, developments in

the NDA have come as a godsend. The Samata Party just cannot "digest the ambitions" of the Janata Dal(U), while the latter thinks the former "suffers from megalomania". Separately, both view the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with suspicion. Then there is Anand Mohan Singh's Bihar People's Party (BPP) which wants to extract its pound of flesh at the expense of the other three. The NDA edifice in Bihar is being pulled by four horses in as many different directions. The NDA has fielded more than 160 candidates for the 108 constituencies going to the polls in the first phase on February 12. Leaders of the "alliance" are in no position to rein in their respective horses. Their candidates have been allotted party symbols and the last day for withdrawal is already over. So, they are all in the race against one another.

Finally, the fact that the NDA is in tatters in Bihar is good enough reason for the self-styled "kingmaker" to look beyond recapturing Bihar. He is beginning to foresee the collapse of the NDA in Delhi. And who knows "socialists" better than Laloo Yadav? In private conversation, the

RJD supremo and his friends say the ensuing elections in Bihar will prove to be a turning point in the country's democratic history. "Socialists, communists and fighters for social justice, including the Congress, are bound to reunite to topple the BJP applecart in Delhi," a close lieutenant of Mr Yadav said, adding that the "Samajwadis have by now developed the art of government-wrecking".

Mr Yadav's friends deliberately try to leak out "the information" that their leader is already in touch with "socialist friends within the NDA". The RJD chief's laudatory comments about the Samata leadership have not gone unnoticed.

Till about a week ago, Mr Yadav was a man on the run. The anti-Laloo Yadav wave sweeping the state was so strong that even his trusted bureaucrats had written off the RJD. Rebels were raising their heads and Mr Yadav was beginning to lose grip over his own outfit. But a week is a long time in politics. Mr Yadav is no longer the demoralised loser from Madhepura. He is a man on the move. And moving at full speed for the kill.



Laloo Yadav

# Cracks in BJD over seats deal

## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

**BHUBANESWAR, Jan. 29.** — Ending the stalemate which had threatened to break the alliance, the BJP-BJD combine today finally agreed to a seat-sharing arrangement.

According to the agreement, the BJD will fight 84 Assembly seats in Orissa and BJP will fight 63.

The stalemate was resolved after days of wrangling, but the crisis within the BJD continued and, in fact, deepened further after this arrangement was made public.

The BJD president, Mr Navin Patnaik, drew flak from all sections of his party. The workers camping at Navin Nivas said Mr Patnaik has bartered the interest of the party and lowered the image of Biju babu.

Agitated party workers broke a glass pane of the party president's residence and banged

the doors. "We should contest all 147 seats. Such conspiratorial politics won't be tolerated," they shouted. Mr Navin Patnaik, however, didn't come out of the house to pacify the crowds.

The situation worsened as news spread that the seat-sharing ratio was 84:63. Hordes of BJD workers stormed Navin Nivas demanding an explanation from the leader.

At one point of time, police had to intervene to prevent any untoward incident. This further agitated the party workers. "Even before he has become the Chief Minister he is seeking refuge of the police," remarked a BJD worker while alleging that Biju Patnaik would never have displayed such cowardice.

While the party rank and file were accusing Mr Navin Patnaik for having surrendered to the BJP, senior leaders were also equally agitated.

They authorised Mr Patnaik to decide on the 84 seats and also name the candidates.

A PAC member confided that most of the members were disgusted at the manner in which the party president had handled the entire negotiations. He didn't take a firm stand and some of the members suspect that he had committed to central BJP leaders that he would leave 63 seats to them right from the beginning. "Since he has done it, he should face the music now," remarked another angry party worker.

It is learnt that the PAC members had till the very last insisted that they should fight at least 90 seats. They wanted Mr Patnaik to talk to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and other central BJP leaders today.

But the BJP had already announced its stand by then. Just before the seat-sharing pact was reached, BJP leader

and Union minister, Mr Jual Oram, said his party was keen on contesting 74 seats. "We have given a list of our 74 candidates to the BJD," he said.

He asserted that the BJP was prepared to contest all 147 seats if the BJD refused to accept its proposal.

## BJP plea to allies

The BJP will ask its Bihar allies to expel candidates who refuse to withdraw their candidature after a seat-sharing deal was reached between the BJP, Samata, JD-U and BPP.

BJP leader, Mr KN Govindacharya, said the party which fielded 80 candidates for the first phase of polls in Bihar was likely to withdraw at least 20.

The BJP and its allies have decided on 300 of 324 seats today. A party leader hoped parties would reach a consensus on the rest by tomorrow.



Navin: under party members' fire

The political affairs committee of the party which met here earlier in the day, put Mr Navin Patnaik in the dock. Party insiders said the PAC members walked out in a huff when they realised that it would be impossible to face the workers after having conceded so many seats to the BJP.