

JD(U) splits, MLAs to join Rabri

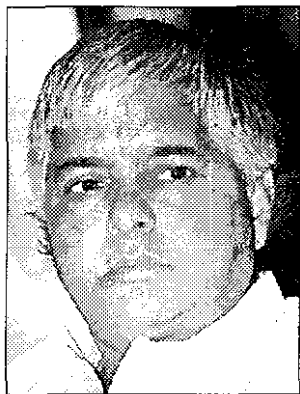
Patna

23 JULY

BHAR'S key Opposition party, the Janata Dal (United), has split. A breakaway JD(U) group on Tuesday said it was forming a new party called Janata Dal Jayaprakash. Sources said it would join chief minister Rabri Devi's alliance. The new party includes four of JD(U)'s 12 legislators in the 243-member Bihar Assembly.

Union consumer affairs, food and public distribution minister Sharad Yadav heads the JD(U), which has four MPs in the Lok Sabha and is a member of Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's ruling coalition.

The party's break-up in Bihar



LALOO: TROUBLESHOOTER

has taken its leadership by surprise. Said JD(U) legislative party leader Ganesh Prasad Yadav: "I heard this morning that four leg-

islators have defected. I am in no position to say anything."

The four defectors are Laxmi Narayan Yadav, Jainandan Yadav, Viswnath Singh and Sashi Kumar Rai. Mr Rai said they have urged Assembly speaker Sadanand Singh to identify their new party as a separate group.

The move comes just a month after another Opposition party, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), split as four of its five legislators joined Rabri Devi's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD). The chief minister made three of them ministers.

It is speculated that the four JD(U) defectors, too, might eventually join the RJD.

Their chances of becoming ministers are high. The defectors took the step after several meetings this month with RJD presi-

dent and Rabri Devi's husband, Rajya Sabha MP Laloo Prasad Yadav.

It is still not clear whether they also have the blessings of longtime Sharad Yadav-baiter and dissenter, Lok Sabha MP Devendra Prasad Yadav.

The JD(U) split has also come as a setback for defence minister George Fernandes' Samata Party, which was planning a common front with it to sideline their Opposition alliance leader, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The Samata, which has 30 legislators against the BJP's 35, was planning to claim the post of leader of the Opposition in the Assembly with JD(U)'s help. The BJP currently holds the post.

—IANS

RJD, Trinamool MPs clash over rail split

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, July 18

TRINAMOOL AND RJD members clashed in the Lok Sabha today after Railway Minister Nitish Kumar announced that East-Central Railway would be operational from October 1, to be followed by the other five new zonal railways from April 1 next year.

The Cabinet was supposed to meet today and discuss the issue of bifurcation. It met, but the issue didn't come up for discussion.

With agitated West Bengal MPs repeatedly interrupting the minister, Speaker Manohar Joshi said, "I have no objection to a discussion. Let the minister reply and if the House so desires, I will put it before the Business Advisory Committee."

This led to an impromptu debate during which RJD leader Raghuvansh Prasad Singh said the people of Bihar would not tolerate any injustice being done to the State for political reasons.

"Agitation has already started in Hajipur. No trains originating from West Bengal or going there will be allowed to pass through Bihar if the new zone is not set up," Singh said.

This sparked loud protests from Trinamool MPs, including Mamata Banerjee, who maintained that Singh had used unparliamentary language. Mamata, supported by Left party MPs, strongly opposed establishment of East-Central Railway having its headquarters in Hajipur, say-



Mamata Banerjee
The crusade is on

ing the move would divide the entire country. The Trinamool MPs attacked Nitish Kumar for his remarks and said he had no right to comment when the issue had been referred back to the Cabinet.

Mamata said "some people were playing a dirty game to bifurcate Eastern Railway zone as part of a political vendetta. We do not want to divide the country". The creation of the new headquarters would entail shifting of 10,000 people and that railway unions were opposed to the move, she added.

Amidst loud protest from the MPs from Bengal with PR Das munshi of the Congress demanding a full discussion on the issue, Nitish Kumar said that besides the one at Hajipur, the North-Western Railway headquartered in Jaipur would be functional from October 1.

War on Samata in CM defence

FROM ASHISH SINHA

Ranchi, April 8: The BJP is ready to go to war against key alliance partner Samata Party for demanding Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi's head.

"The alliance has an unwritten norm to sort out differences within the NDA coordination committee. I have read about the demand in the newspapers. I will speak with Samata leader George Fernandes and ask him why, if at all, the norm was breached," BJP president K. Jana Krishnamurthi said on his first visit to Jharkhand.

Samata spokesperson Shambhu Srivastava had yesterday demanded Modi's sacking for being "unable" to control communal riots in Gujarat.

"Narendra Modi's government, in consultation with the Centre, is struggling hard to bring peace to Gujarat. I say, and this is final, there is no question



Tribal drummers welcome Jana Krishnamurthi. (AFP)

of the Gujarat chief minister being removed. This is unfair and undemocratic. Gujarat will go to polls next year. If the people vote out the BJP, we will respect the mandate. Not many know this, but Modi had issued

shoot-at-sight orders immediately after the Godhra carnage. At that time the Congress and the communists were selective in their response," Krishnamurthi said.

He cited "media reports" to

suggest that an arrested accused in the Godhra incident had revealed "plans" to set the entire train ablaze to trigger communal riots all over the country.

"Why is an individual (Modi) being targeted? This is not good. Individuals do not matter. The failure (in Gujarat) was systemic. No one demanded the resignation of the Congress government of Madhavsinh Solanki when communal riots continued in Gujarat for weeks. Democracy should be allowed to function. I do not justify the killings. Every life is precious for the BJP. But such attacks on an individual must stop," Krishnamurthi said.

If "individuals do not matter", why did the BJP choose to replace Keshubhai Patel with Modi? "It is like a relay race. It is a political party's prerogative to change chief ministers if it thinks necessary. There is no such necessity in the case of Narendra Modi," he said.

9 APR 2001

THE TELEGRAPH

SP MLA shot in front of U.P. Raj Bhavan

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S.P.P.
Samajwadi
Party

By J.P. Shukla

LUCKNOW, MARCH 6. The Samajwadi Party MLA from Bareilly district of Uttar Pradesh, Manzoor Ahmed, was shot dead at the gates of the Raj Bhavan here today while taking part in a dharna along with party activists to protest against the "failure" of the Governor, Vishnu Kant Shastri, to invite their leader, Mulayam Singh Yadav, to form the next Government in the State.

The assailant — later identified by the police as Abhishek Bhardwaj from Jaunpur district, who was present among the demonstrators — whipped out



The body of the Samajwadi Party MLA from Baheri, Mansoor Ahmed, lies in front of the Raj Bhavan in Lucknow on Wednesday. The weapon used in the attack is shown in the circle.— PTI

U.P. Governor for President's rule

LUCKNOW, MARCH 6. The Uttar Pradesh Governor, Vishnu Kant Shastri, tonight recommended the imposition of President's rule in the State.

"As political instability continues and no party is willing to form the government, I recommend President's rule in the State and keeping the Assembly in suspended animation," Mr. Shastri said in his letter to the President, K.R. Narayanan. — UNI

a country-made pistol and shot Mr. Ahmed from point blank range. He threw away the weapon and raised his hands in a gesture of surrender soon after. Angry SP workers thrashed him before he was rescued by the police with great difficulty.

Mr. Ahmed was rushed to hospital where he was declared

dead. The accused was also provided medical aid and was stated to be out of danger. Preliminary investigations have failed to establish the motive behind the murder.

A relative of Mr. Ahmed said there was political rivalry between the deceased MLA and two persons — the Bahujan Samaj Party candidate who had unsuccessfully contested against him in the last elections and an SP activist who had sought the party ticket to contest from the same constituency — Baheri — from where Mr. Ahmed had been elected.

According to the State Principal Secretary (Home), Naresh Dayal, the SP workers had come in a procession to the Raj Bha-

van, situated less than a km from their office. The alleged assailant was apparently part of the procession. While a section of the processionists was stopped at a barricade put up by the police a little before the Raj Bhavan gates, others broke the police cordon and reached there raising slogans.

The shooting took place while SP leaders were addressing the demonstrators. Mr. Dayal said that while the accused had given some details about his identity, his account was being verified. Talking to newsmen later, Mr. Mulayam Singh Yadav said there was a deep conspiracy behind the attack on his party MLA.

Y.P.P. TOU

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Mayawati quits LS seat, eyes UP gaddi

Times News Network

NEW DELHI: The Union cabinet on Thursday night decided to recommend imposition of President's rule in Uttar Pradesh.



Mayawati

The cabinet also decided that the UP assembly be kept in suspended animation, parliamentary affairs minister Pramod Mahajan told reporters after an hour-long meeting presided over by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. The recommendation was made under

Article 356 (1) of the constitution, which provides for imposition of central rule in a state, he said.

The Union government move came even as Bahujan Samaj Party leader Mayawati resigned her Lok Sabha seat and hinted at a new proximity to the BJP as a prelude to a new pact for government formation in Uttar Pradesh.

Addressing a press conference earlier in the day along with her mentor Kanshi Ram before submitting her resignation to the speaker's office, Ms Mayawati said she was leaving for Lucknow to lead her party legislators and cadres.

Significantly, she sounded extremely

cautious while speaking on issues like Ayodhya and the communal carnage in Gujarat. In a sharp departure from her party's plank in the assembly elections, she revealed a pro-BJP tilt while referring to the cause of the Gujarat violence and the Centre's handling of the Ayodhya situation.

Ms Mayawati said that while the disputed land at Ayodhya should remain with the Centre until the court decides its future, the undisputed land around the site could be handed over for temple construction. "We have no objection to that," she said. "The Ayodhya problem began with the 'shilanyas' during the Congress rule," she said

THE TIMES OF INDIA

8 MAR 2002