

# Dubey murder heat on Rabri Devi

HT Correspondent  
*Bhubaneswar, December 12*

UNION MINISTER for Road Transport and Highways B.C. Khanduri turned the heat on Bihar Chief Minister Rabri Devi on the controversy surrounding the murder of NHAI official S.K. Dubey. Addressing a news conference on Friday, Khanduri said between March 2002 and November 2003, he had written as many as five letters to the Bihar chief minister expressing concern over the law and order problems in the state.

Khanduri said, "I had also spoken to her on many occasions and said that unless the law and order situation was

addressed earnestly, it would be difficult to implement the National Highways Development Project (NHDP) in Bihar in an effective and timely manner".

In his March 15, 2002 letter, Kasuri noted that the people working on NH-2 were getting repeated threats on the telephone and warnings of dire consequences in the absence of their not fulfilling demands. The letter, Khanduri claimed, also cited instances of armed personnel attacking a camp and detonating explosives, which caused an atmosphere of fear and terror.

Khanduri refuted charges that the letter written by Dubey to PMO was leaked.

He stated that the passing on of Dubey's letter from the PMO to the concerned administrative machinery did not constitute a "breach of confidentiality".

Khanduri said Dubey was not penalised by directly writing to the Prime Minister. According to the Union Minister, the vigilance office of NHAI merely cautioned him of the impropriety he had committed in writing a letter directly to the PM.

Khanduri said, "Dubey was not penalised for writing directly to the PM. On the contrary, on October 31, 2003, he was promoted to the post of deputy general manager of NHAI in recognition of his professional compe-

tence". The minister said following Dubey's communications, the Koderma project implementation unit of NHAI removed four engineers and two lab assistants of the contractor and supervision consultant. Based on the shortcomings that Dubey had pointed out, nearly a kilometre of substandard granular sub-lease layer of the road was asked to be completely dug up and relaid, Khanduri added.

Khanduri was here to inaugurate the four-lane track of Jagatpur-Chandikhole section of NH-5 forming part of the Golden Quadrilateral. The NH-5 links Kolkata and Chennai and passes through Cuttack and Bhubaneswar.

## SC to hear petition on January 5

THE SUPREME Court will hear on January 5 a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking a probe into leakage of the name of National Highway Authority of India official Satyendra Dubey who was killed after he had lodged complaints with the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) about irregularities in the Golden Quadrilateral Project in Bihar.

An apex court Bench comprising headed by S. Rajendra Babu fixed the

date after petitioner, lawyer Rakesh U. Upadhyay, mentioned about the petition before it.

The petitioner alleged that Dubey was killed because his name was leaked despite his requests to keep it secret. He urged the Supreme Court to direct the Centre to evolve a system to protect persons who complained about corruption in high places until the whistle blower act was enacted.

HTC, New Delhi

# Improve law and order, HC to Bihar

Statesman News Service

PATNA, Dec. 12. — A Division Bench (coram RS Dikwan, CJ, and SK Singh, J) of Patna High Court today ordered the Bihar government to immediately improve the law and order situation.

The Bench also asked the government to bring back to jail those criminal-politicians and gangsters who were temporarily released on medical grounds and are now controlling criminal activities from hospitals.

Phulwaria, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav's native village in Gopalganj district, "is not the whole Bihar. The situation should improve in the entire state", the Chief Justice observed.

The Bench said the government must ensure proper execution of the "dedicated plan" it had submitted to the court following the murder of IIT engineer Satyendra Dubey. In the plan, the government had pledged to provide security to those working on the Golden Quadrilateral National Highway Project.

The Bench asked chief secretary Mr KAH Subrahmaniyam to report the progress made on 18 December, the next date of hearing.

Murder of doctors, engineers, teachers, businessmen and commoners has become quite common, the Bench said. State counsel Mr AK Singh was asked to remind the chief minister of her fundamental duties and the fundamental right of the

## Engineer's letter

NEW DELHI, Dec. 12. — The Supreme Court will hear on 5 January a PIL seeking an independent inquiry into the circumstances under which the letter written by slain engineer Satyendra Dubey, exposing corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral Highway Project, was leaked.

"Let the matter come up in normal course," a Bench (coram Abub, Mathur, JJ) of the court said when the matter came up before it for mentioning. The PIL has been filed by Mr Rakesh U Upadhyay, an advocate.

— Our Legal Correspondent

people to live.

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# Slum-crusader teacher killed in Patna

**K.C. PHILIP**

Patna, Dec. 10: A young teacher whose activism earned the wrath of slumlords was gunned down in the heart of Patna this morning, less than a fortnight after an engineer who blew the whistle on corruption in the Prime Minister's dream highway project was shot dead in Bihar.

Praveen Kumar, a 22-year-old teacher of Delhi Public School, was killed near his house at 6 am as he was on his way to the school in Danapur, 10 km from Patna. The assailants pumped five bullets into his head and chest near Saidpur Nahari, a slum where he lived.

Praveen, a theatre activist, was well known in the slum and he had been running a campaign to create awareness among his neighbours about the need to distance themselves from criminal ele-

ments and join the mainstream.

Praveen's brother Indrajit said some of the crime lords in the area resented the teacher's drive and could be behind the murder.

Indrajit had fought the municipal election unsuccessfully against one of the gang leaders, Sukku Paswan. Charged with more than 30 murders, Paswan has been languishing in jail for the past four years. Indrajit did not name any suspects or motive in the first information report.

The teacher's bullet-riddled body was discovered by some residents but no one has claimed to be a witness to the murder.

Police refused to say anything more than that the attack was made with the intention to kill. No motive has been established yet, said deputy superintendent of police R.K. Dubey.

Members of cultural groups in the city will march from Kalidas Ranganalaya to the secretariat tomorrow to protest against the murder and hand over a memorandum to chief minister Rabri Devi to speed up investigations.

Praveen's association with theatre had given him the job in the school as drama teacher. He was confirmed three months ago, before which he was a visiting teacher.

Praveen became a fulltime theatre activist in 1990 after he attended a workshop organised by the Union human resource development ministry in collaboration with Nirman Kala Manch, Patna.

For the past four years, he has regularly participated in the Bharat Rang Mahotsav organised by the National School of Drama, Delhi. Praveen also took part in drama festivals in Mumbai,

Calcutta, Jaipur and other cities.

The audacious murder coincides with not only a controversy over the ouster of the director-general of police who tried to break the nexus between politicians and criminals but also an uproar over the murder of the engineer, Satyendra Dubey.

Dubey, who had complained to the Prime Minister's Office about corruption in the Golden Quadrilateral Project, was shot dead on November 27 — a few days before the 31-year-old IIT alumnus was scheduled to take over as supervisor of a section of the construction.

In Delhi, the BJP today gave a clean chit to the Prime Minister's Office in the episode. But the party demanded a law to protect the identity of whistle-blowers in corruption cases, adds our special correspondent.

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# Bihar bandh passes with minor hitches

Our Patna Bureau

9 DECEMBER

CONTRARY to fears that Tuesday's 24-hour Bihar bandh would be marred by violence, the situation remained large peaceful. Most big business establishments and private schools remained closed, and bandh supporters disrupted vehicular and train movement. The bandh call had been given by the NDA and Lok Janshakti in protest against the removal of D.P. Ojha from the post of DGP.

Not prepared to take any chances, the state government had tightened security measures to ward off trouble. According to newly-appointed DGP W.H. Khan, 1,839 persons were arrested on Tuesday. Among those who courted arrest were NDA leaders Sushil Kumar Modi, Nand Kishore Yadav, Nand Kishore Yadav, Upendra Prasad Kushwaha, Ganesh Prasad Yadav and Narendra Singh of the Lok Janshakti. In Patna alone, more than 500 persons were arrested as bandh supporters went about deflating tyres and smashing wind-screens of vehicles, including that of an editor of an English daily. NDA convenor Nand Kishore Yadav claimed that a number of bandh supporters belonging to the Samata Party were attacked by the RJD goons.

In Gaya, the situation became tense as two communities clashed on the issue of closure of shops. The incident occurred near the busy commercial area of the town when bandh supporters tried to close the shops. However, the shop owners put up a stiff resistance. A rumour that a place of worship had been attacked added fuel to the fire. The DGP said timely intervention by the police brought the matter under control. Official sources said Gaya SP Sanjay Singh had a close shave when the two groups crossed swords.

Official sources said train movement in Darbhanga, Jamui and Samastipur was disrupted. Truck movement on the national highways also suffered. Bihar home secretary B.K. Haldar claimed in a press release that the bandh call was ineffective. On the other hand, NDA leaders, including Mr Modi, Nand Kishore Yadav and Upendra Prasad Kushwaha, told reporters here on Tuesday evening that the bandh was a resounding success.

Mr Modi said the removal of Mr Ojha from the post of the DGP will be raised in the state legislature during the winter session commencing from December 12.

The Economic Times

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# Ojha to move SC for shifting MP to Tihar jail

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Patna: Dhruv Prasad Ojha, who was unceremoniously removed as Bihar director-general of police (DGP) on Saturday, on Monday said that he planned to move the supreme court for shifting the controversial Rashtriya Janata Party (RJD) MP, Mohammed Shahabuddin, to Tihar Jail in New Delhi and demanded investigation of cases against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Mr Ojha said that he had recommended before being removed as the DGP that the MP, who is in judicial custody in Siwan in connection with cases of kidnapping and torture of two CPI (ML) workers in 2001, be shifted to Tihar Jail and investigation of nearly 36 cases pending against him be handed over to the CBI.

Shahabuddin's trial must also be held outside Bihar, he said, adding he would soon go to the supreme court for the purpose.

Meanwhile, the state government has issued a show cause notice to Mr Ojha, charging him with violating All-India Services Conduct Code by speaking against the government at the Sonepur fair on November 28. While addressing a function at the fair, Mr Ojha had said power had gone into the hands of rascal politicians ('satta lafange rajnetaon ke haath chali gai hai').

## Tight security for today's bandh

Patna: Security measures were beefed up across Bihar for Tuesday's state-wide bandh called by the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) to protest against the unceremonious removal of D.P. Ojha from the post of director-general of police.

Officials sources said all the police stations were put on maximum alert to maintain law and order, and patrolling was being intensified along national and state highways to ensure trouble-free traffic. PTI

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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# Former DGP, Laloo trade charges

Statesman News Service

PATNA, Dec. 8. — An NDA delegation today met Bihar Governor Mr M Rama Jois, demanding dismissal of the "anti-national" Rabri Devi government and imposition of President's rule in Bihar.

The delegation, led by NDA state convener Mr Nandkishore Yadav, submitted a memorandum, demanding the state government make public the report submitted by former DGP Mr DP Ojha on the Siwan "don" and MP Md Shahabuddin. Mr Ojha, after being sacked, said he had submitted a report to the government detailing Mr Shahabuddin's ISI and other anti-national links. That "invited my unceremonious ouster," he said.

The NDA in its memorandum said that the government "patronising anti-national elements should not be allowed to stay in office any longer."

Mr Nandkishore Yadav said that after the Bihar bandh tomorrow, another NDA delegation would meet the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister demanding dismissal of the Rabri Devi Government.

Mr Ojha went to Delhi this evening, reportedly to consult legal experts, to challenge his "unceremonious sacking" in the court of law.

Before his departure, Mr

Ojha slammed Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav. He said that Mr Yadav in course of his meeting with the Siwan MP in jail recently, had assured him that no further action would be taken against him. "My decision to take action against the Siwan don in two more criminal cases abrogated the deal that the RJD chief had struck with Md Shahabuddin," said Mr Ojha, adding that the state government was "a prisoner in the pocket of Md Shahabuddin."

But Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav countered Mr Ojha with more pungent words.

"Mr Ojha has links with the Ranvir Sena, the RSS and other criminal elements," Mr Yadav said, adding: "The state government won't spare him. It will take stern action against him." The RJD chief alleged "top Ranvir Sena men" were meeting Mr Ojha in his DGP's office. He also said that the government had taken cognisance of Mr Ojha's description of Mrs Rabri Devi as a "dumb chief minister."

Mr Ojha had berated the woman chief minister by his "indecent remarks on her," alleged Mr Yadav.

The NDA has called for a state-wide bandh tomorrow. The Lok Jan Shakti Party, too, has called a Bihar bandh tomorrow. Security has been beefed up, said a home department spokesman.

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# NDA calls bandh over DGP's ouster

Statesman News Service

PATNA, Dec 7. —The National Democratic Alliance today called a Bihar bandh on 9 December to press for the dismissal of the Rabri Devi government over the “unceremonious” removal of the state DGP, Mr DP Ojha.

State BJP leaders and workers here took out a protest procession while the Lok Janshakti Party staged a *dharna*.

The former DGP was sacked by the Bihar government yesterday for speaking against the State and its leaders “in violation of the code of conduct.”

The state NDA convenor, Mr Nandkishore Yadav said all the NDA's constituents today attended the emergency meeting which decided the bandh. “We have revived our demand for President's rule in the state as the Rabri Devi government has allowed mafia and criminal elements to rule the roost in the state”, said Mr Yadav

Spokesmen of the Left parties and the Lok Janshakti Party said that they were planning “future course of action” against the removal of the DGP.

The BJP's organisation secretary, Mr Harendra Pratap said the BJP and the NDA would unite all the Opposition parties to nail the state government over the removal of “an honest officer who had been taking on the mafia elements with aplomb.”

The BJP leader of Opposition in the state Assembly, Mr Sushil Kumar Modi said Mr Ojha sacking would have “demoralising impact on the honest and upright officers.”



Mr DP Ojha

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## Bihar police chief removed

By K. Balchand 101

**PATNA, DEC. 6.** The Bihar Government today removed the Director-General of Police, D.P. Ojha, from his post for criticising ruling party leaders. Mr. Ojha, who has spoken out against the criminalisation of politics, threatened to put in his papers and challenge his removal before the Supreme Court.

Appointing W.H. Khan as the new DGP, the Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, maintained that Mr. Ojha was not worthy of the post as he had violated the code of conduct and spoken against the State Government.

At a special Cabinet meeting convened on Friday night by the Chief Minister, several Ministers took exception to Mr. Ojha's statements in public about the political leadership of the State. Mr. Ojha was also invited to the meeting and he is said to have stood by his words.

The RJD president, Laloo Prasad Yadav, said that the Government would seek an explanation from Mr. Ojha for violating the rules of service. He denied that the police officer had been removed for targeting the RJD MP, Mohd. Shahbuddin. Mr. Yadav said it was a mistake to have appointed Mr. Ojha as the DGP as the CBI had suggested departmental proceedings against him on several charges. Mr. Ojha, who is scheduled to retire in February next, said he was being forced to pay the price for the report he had forwarded to the Government relating to the criminal and anti-national activities of Mr. Shahbuddin and his links with the ISI.

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# Bihar ministers want DGP removed

Statesman News Service

PATNA, Dec. 5. — Angry at the continuous outbursts of the Bihar director-general of police, Mr DP Ojha, the state ministers have stepped up pressure on the chief minister, Mrs Rabri Devi, to remove him.

The state excise minister, Mr Shivanand Tiwary, at the Cabinet meeting yesterday raised the issue, saying that Mr Ojha had violated the code of conduct of a public servant by stating that "the government was being ruled by rogues and rascals."

He demanded Mr Ojha's removal from his post and initiation of departmental proceedings against him on the grounds that the "DGP had attacked the

government of which he is a responsible functionary."

"My demand was supported by all the ministers in the Cabinet meeting," Mr Tiwary said. "What is the relevance of the code of conduct when a government official has the temerity to openly speak against the government?" he asked

Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav today reiterated that Mr Ojha should restrain himself. "The DGP should not speak too much."

But the RJD chief did not say anything else beyond that. It's understood that Mr Ojha's action against Mr Shahabuddin has the RJD supremo's "tacit backing".

Mr Ojha has launched a campaign against the criminalisation of politics in the state in general

and the "don" and Siwan MP, Md Shahabuddin in particular. Md Shahabuddin is in Siwan jail these days in connection with several cases of murder and kidnapping.

The DGP at a police officers' meeting at Sonapur recently had described Md Shahabuddin as the "mukhia (head) of the kidnapping gangs operating across the country."

Mr Tiwary, besides being a senior minister in the Rabri Devi government is also the RJD spokesman. He is one of the strong supporters of the Siwan MP.

Mr Tiwary had openly supported Md Shahabuddin when the latter engaged the police in a nine-hour gun battle at his native place at Pratappur in Siwan

in 2001. Mr Tiwary had then said that the police should not have raided the house of an elected representative.

But unfazed by the ministers and the RJD leaders ganging up against him, Mr Ojha has directed the police to take Md Shahabuddin in remand in two more criminal cases. The cases relate to the Md Shahabuddin-led gun battle against the police at Pratappur in 2001.

Reacting on the demand for his removal, Mr Ojha said: "I won't be deterred. I will keep on speaking truth and taking action against the offenders what may come. I don't mind if the government removes me. But I will do my duty as long as I am wearing a policeman's uniform."



UNDER PRESSURE: Mrs Rabri Devi

# One last fight

## Bihar DGP challenges Laloo

If it is most unusual for the director-general of police of a state to allow his conscience to speak for him, the truth is that DP Ojha in Bihar hasn't come out with startling revelations. What he said at a police function about the criminalisation of politics is common knowledge — to Laloo Prasad Yadav as much as to the man in the street. What is surprising is that Ojha could declare at a public forum that the "state is being run by rogues and rascals" and get only a guarded response from the RJD boss to the effect that he "should do his work and not cross the lakshman rekha".

Laloo's shouting brigade is capable of more assertive action in support of the leader without any reference to the issue as such. The point that Laloo misses — or pretends to miss — is that Ojha has probably reached the end of his patience. In a state that has witnessed a spate of kidnappings masterminded, if the DGP is to be believed, by leaders of the ruling party who provide shelter to criminals in their own homes, Ojha could well be the earnest cop who finds himself totally helpless but wants to put up one last fight. Others in a similar position may have surrendered and prospered. Ojha too has little chance of cleaning up the stables; the only satisfaction he may get on being quietly immobilised is a sense of achievement in exposing the root cause of Bihar's sorrow — that it all begins at the top.

The bigger tragedy is that no one in the RJD is willing to acknowledge the mess in a state where a hardened criminal is not only a member of Parliament but, after being jailed on countless charges, finds people visiting him to touch his feet. The tragedy is reinforced by threats, inevitably from within the ruling party, that a privilege motion may be brought against the DGP for "hurling abuses at elected representatives of the people". The honourable member refrains from any suggestion that Ojha's outburst is based on imagination. But what he does imply is that leaders like Md Shahabuddin, MP from Siwan now lodged in jail, are entitled to enjoy the notorious privileges of being in power with no questions asked. The difference here is that the resistance comes from the highest level of the police administration. It not only gives credibility and strength to the fears in the public mind but makes out a case for the Centre to intervene.

Ojha himself may now be reconciled to a life in the wilderness. But he has done his job, although some say in the winter of his career and after having reached his present position because the current — and in his words criminal — dispensation allowed him to get there. What Bihar needs now is officers at operational levels — and not at the level of Ojha — raising these questions.

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# DGP speaks his mind, incurs Laloo's wrath

Nalin Verma in Patna

Nov. 30. — Bihar director-general of police Mr DP Ojha's statement that the "state is being run by rogues and rascals" has provoked strong reactions from the Rashtriya Janata Dal. Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav, RJD president, today said, "The DGP should live within his limits. It's not good for an officer to cross the *lakshmanrekha*... He should work and not speak like this."

Mr Ojha had made the statement while addressing a police function in Sonapur a couple of days back. He had also described the RJD MP from Siwan, Md Shahabuddin, as the "*mu-khia* (head) of the kidnapping gangs operating across the country", and said several leaders go to Siwan Jail (where the MP is lodged) to touch his feet. Referring to police as agents of the ruling establishment, the DGP further said hard-core criminals were being arrested from the houses of the state's leaders.

Now the knives are out against Mr Ojha.

**The top cop said Bihar is being run by rogues and rascals. To this, Laloo replied an officer should do his work and not cross the lakshmanrekha**



vice-chairman of the state legislative council Mr Bholu Prasad Singh said the DGP had crossed his limit by hurling abuses at elected representatives of the people, and a privilege motion would be initiated against him.

Mr Ojha, however, has not backtracked on his statement so far. He said he would request the chairman of the council to allow him to have his say, should the legislators move a privilege motion against him. "If the chairman calls me, I will name the leaders who are in nexus with the criminals. I will expose them."

He also said: "I have commented on the system in general. I do not harbour ill will against any particular individual... I will keep on saying what I have said."

Senior RJD leaders Mr Rakripal Yadav and Mr Ramvihar Rai have demanded Mr Ojha's resignation. They said the DGP should be dismissed by the government if he refuses to resign. "If Mr Ojha is interested in debate, he should quit his post and join an open forum to vent himself," said Mr Ramkripal Yadav.

The DGP refused to pay heed to the angry remarks. He said police investigation should be "autonomous and should be kept away from the control of the government". "The politicians who patronise criminals interfere with investigations, using their political positions."

As expected, the Opposition, including the BJP and the Lok Janshakti Party, has been backing the DGP. Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Mr Sushil Kumar Modi said, "Mr Ojha has just stated the reality. He deserves praise."

# Communal flare-up

51-8 15/12 ✓ Naidu caught napping 9.8  
PP

Communal violence is not new to the old city of Hyderabad. However, the relative calm in the last five years has lulled Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu into believing that communal harmony has come to stay. The long spell of communal harmony was rudely shaken on the eve of the eleventh anniversary of the demolition of the Babari masjid. Ever since the demolition of the masjid on 6 December 1992, the day has been observed as "Black Day" by the minority community and "Victory Day" by the Sangh parivar. In spite of gearing up the administrative machinery and deploying three companies of Rapid Action Force of the Central Reserve Police Force, in addition to the city police, violence erupted and the police opened fire. Six innocent lives were lost. Communal polarisation in Hyderabad started long before the Babari masjid demolition. The annual Ganesh immersion processions, followed by the minority community's religious processions resulted in tension between communities. A minor quarrel between the two communities is sufficient to trigger riots. The Ayodhya rath yatra of 1990 triggered the bloodiest communal clashes in the city in which more than 200 people were killed and nearly 1,000 injured.

The Telugu Desam, unlike the Congress, can justly take credit for putting down communal riots. But the frequent change of city police commissioners by the Naidu government has lowered the morale of the force. The sudden growth of Muslim fundamentalist organisations coupled with resurgence of Sangh parivar has kept the communal cauldron boiling and the police should have anticipated the possibility of riots breaking out. The opposition allegation of failure of the police intelligence is not without substance. The judicial inquiry ordered by Naidu should bring out in the open the "vested interests" alluded by him to be behind the riots. His attempt to shift the blame on those spearheading the movement for a separate Telangana state in this election year is not convincing. Naidu should take care to not allow Telugu Desam's proximity to the BJP to cramp his style in putting down communal violence with an iron hand.

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## CURFEW IMPOSED; TOLL RISES TO FIVE

# Naidu orders judicial probe

By Marri Ramu

HYDERABAD, DEC. 7. The toll in the communal clashes in the Old City here on Saturday night rose to five as two more deaths, one in police firing and the other due to knife injuries, came to light on Sunday. The number of injured also increased to 31. With violence continuing unabated till the early hours of today despite heavy deployment of police forces, authorities clamped curfew on eight police station areas of the Old City.

The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, Chandrababu Naidu, who visited the affected areas in the morning, announced a judicial inquiry into the violence and arson.

All the injured, 19 of whom sustained bullet injuries and others in stone throwing and knife attacks, are undergoing treatment at the Osmania General Hospital. Police forces from the adjoining districts were deployed in the riot-affected areas today. No fresh incidents of violence were reported till this evening.

Even as Mr. Naidu assured the residents that every measure was being taken to ensure peace

in the Old City, several residents of Mekalamandi, Sultan Shahi and Lal Darwaza, complained to him about the "police inaction" and sought protection to their lives and properties. They tried in vain to persuade him to examine each of the damaged houses.

Condemning the riots, the Chief Minister appealed to all the communities to observe restraint. Announcing several measures to check the clashes, including the setting up of floodlights and closed circuit televisions at sensitive areas and an Integrated Call Centre to pass on messages to all departments, Mr. Naidu instructed the authorities to shift the four seriously injured persons to the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) from the Osmania General Hospital.

The Hyderabad Police Commissioner, R.P. Singh, said the curfew would be in force at least till Monday. Stating that the violence appeared to be planned, Mr. Singh told presspersons that efforts were on to identify the culprits who set fire to electric transformers before raiding the houses. "We will sternly deal with the accused. There is no question of showing any favouritism."

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## Curfew imposed in eight areas of old Hyderabad

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Hyderabad. Indefinite curfew was imposed in eight police station limits in the old city of Hyderabad following communal riots that erupted late on Saturday night. Five persons died and more than 25 were injured in the violence.

The government announced a judicial probe into the riots and chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said those who planned the riots or took part in them, would face charges under the tough provisions of the AP Control of Organised Crime Act.

The curfew is unlikely to be relaxed till Monday evening, police officials said.

Mr Naidu, accompanied by senior officials, visited the riot-hit areas on Sunday morning and reassured local residents that normalcy would be restored soon. He also visited the Osmania General Hospital where he consoled the victims of the riots, 19 of them who were injured in police firing.

The indefinite curfew was imposed in the police station limits of Shalibanda, Moghalpura, Bhavani Nagar, Chatrinaka, Mirchowk, Rein Bazar, Dabeerpura and Falaknuma in the Old City.

Three persons died of bullet wounds and two others succumbed to stab injuries. Twenty-one platoons of the armed police and Rapid Action Force teams have been deployed.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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# Naidu back home; probe ordered into 'security lapse'

By Dasu Kesava Rao with agencies

HYDERABAD, OCT. 2. The Andhra Pradesh police, shocked by the landmine attack on the Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu's car on the Tirumala ghat road yesterday, have begun investigations into the "security lapse", even as Mr. Naidu was flown in here from Tirupati in a special aircraft today.

The State Government has decided to hand over the probe to a separate agency. The Home

Minister, T. Devender Goud, told reporters after a meeting with senior officials and police that the agency would be named shortly.

Meanwhile, a few civil rights activists in Tirupati were picked up for questioning.

Mr. Goud confirmed that the blast was the handiwork of the outlawed People's War and added that it was a "well-planned execution" worked out over the last three months.

It has now emerged that a total of 17 landmines were plant-

ed near the Alipiri toll gate on the ghat road. Police, who launched a massive manhunt for those responsible for the blasts, today recovered at least eight unexploded mines planted in a stretch of 200 metres on the second ghat road in Tirupati. They believe the mines could have been planted months ago as thick grass has grown around them. The Chief Secretary, Mohan Kanda, reviewed the situation with the Director-General of Police, S. R. Sukumara, the Intelligence Chief, A. Shiv

Shanker, and senior police officials. S. Subrahmanyam, Security Adviser to the Government, who was instrumental in the setting up of the Special Protection Group (SPG) while he was with the Prime Minister in the early 90s, has gone to Tirupati to probe security-related issues.

Police are being asked to address vital issues such as why the jammer and identical vehicles — part of the Chief Minister's security apparatus in Hyderabad — are not provided to him on district tours.

In the light of the Tirupati incident, the Central Government has recognised the need for increased security cover for Mr. Naidu. The Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Swami Chinmayananda, indicated that Mr. Naidu would be extended the NSG cover, if necessary. A large gathering of TDP and BJP leaders and functionaries at the airport, that included M. Venkaiah Naidu, Ch. Vidyasagar Rao and State Ministers, heaved a sigh of relief when amid tight security at the Hyderabad airport, Mr. Chandrababu Naidu emerged from the aircraft, his left shoulder in a sling, and walked down with little or no assistance. He was accompanied by his wife, Bhuvaneshwari, brother Ramamurthy Naidu, and Cabinet colleague, B. Gopalakrishna Reddy, who was also injured in the blast. Mr. Reddy was taken to the NIMS for treatment where his condition is said to be improving.

Mr. Naidu headed straight for his Jubilee Hills residence. Doctors said he was improving fast. The Governor, Surjit Singh Barnala, and many leaders called on him at his residence. Ch. Krishnamourthy, TDP MLA from Tirupati, now in the Apollo Hospitals in Chennai, is said to be out of danger with the condition of R. Rajasekhara Reddy, TDP MLA from Puttur, undergoing treatment in Tirupati, continues to cause concern.

The President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, and the Deputy Prime Minister, L.K. Advani, are due here tomorrow. The attempt on the Chief Minister's life has apparently hardened the Government's stand on talks with the PW. There are clear hints that the Government is not interested in resuming the dialogue unless the outlawed outfit abjures violence.



The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister, N. Chandrababu Naidu, on his arrival at the Hyderabad airport on Thursday. — AP

Editorial on Page 10  
More reports on Page 11

# Local issues the key in the national capit

4.51.2003

The verdicts of the State Assembly elections have thrown up many questions and surprises. **Yogendra Yadav and Sanjay Kumar of the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, Delhi, analyse the meaning and consequences of the verdicts, based on special post-election surveys conducted in each of the States concerned. In the first of a five-part series, the analysis with regard to Delhi.**

**I**N RETROSPECT, what would have been the most obvious outcome of a predictable race now appears to have an element of surprise. The victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party in the remaining three States of the Hindi heartland has thrown up a question about the verdict in Delhi, a question no one had bothered to ask in the last two months. What makes Delhi, once a Jan Sangh stronghold, an exception? How did the Congress Government in Delhi escape the anti-incumbency wave that has been witnessed in all the other States? This question overshadows the other questions that have come up after the verdict. What does this victory tell us about the future of Delhi politics? Has the BJP's dominance in Delhi in all the Lok Sabha elections held in the previous decade finally come to an end? And, why was the Congress victory not as comprehensive as it was initially expected to be?

It is easier to answer the last question first. The final verdict makes the electoral drubbing look lighter for the BJP. A look at the vote share shows that the Congress secured 48.1 per cent of the votes to gain a 13 percentage points lead over the BJP. This lead is, for instance, bigger than that secured by the BJP in Madhya Pradesh. Compared to the last Assembly elections, the Congress has gained 0.4 percentage points in terms of votes, while the BJP has gained 1.2 points. In the normal course, it would have led to a replay of the result in the last Assembly elections. But a freak occurrence has resulted in the BJP getting a

better seats tally. In a rare coincidence, the Congress has lost all the seven seats that were decided by narrow margins of less than 2,000 votes. This has helped the BJP add five seats to its tally of 15 in the previous elections. Otherwise, this verdict is a replication of the Assembly elections verdict of 1998. In all, 45 of the 55 sitting MLAs who contested this time have won. The Congress retained 41 of the 52 seats it won last time, while the BJP held 10 of its 15. A total of 18 seats changed hands. This presents

an unusual picture of stability compared to the all-India trend of around half the seats changing hands each time, even when the ruling party remains in power. There is also some evidence of a last-minute shift towards the BJP that helped it narrow the lead from about 17 points reported by most of the polls to the final figure of 13 points. In the post-poll survey conducted by the CSDS between the day of voting and the day of counting, the respondents were asked when they had made up their

minds to vote. The Congress led by 17 percentage points among those who had made up their minds before the candidates were decided, by 11 points among those who had decided during the campaign and only 4 points among those who had made up their minds on the day of polling. Some of this may be owing to the 'underdog effect', sympathy for a party that is reported to be far behind in the polls. But there is no clear evidence on this count.

To get back to the first, big question: what accounts for the exceptional performance by the Congress in Delhi? It is tempting to read everything associated with the Congress or this elections as being the cause of the Congress victory. It may be said, for instance, that the Congress made a very wise selection of candidates, but the claim flies in the face of all that we know. The process of candidate selection was poor and contentious, leading to the emergence of many rebels and the defeat of more than one of the official candidates. Similarly, it is difficult to argue that a special so-

cial chemistry enabled the Congress to pull it off this time. The final evidence shows that the Congress won with the same social combination that it had cobbled up last time. Its overwhelming advantage among the Dalits, Muslims and to some extent other backward classes (OBCs) enabled it to override its disadvantages among upper caste Hindus, specially Punjabis. As was the case last time, class divisions mattered much more in Delhi than caste-community divisions. The Congress did make some inroads among the upper and middle classes but came back to power on the basis of the solid support of the lower middle class and poor voters. Notwithstanding the fact that the Chief Minister was a woman, the Congress did not enjoy any edge, let alone any overwhelming support, among women voters.

The same is true with regard to the personality factor, that was played up by the media. It is true that Sheila Dikshit was always way ahead of Madan Lal Khurana in popularity rankings and that she had emerged as the

undisputed leader of the Congress in Delhi, leaving her rivals way behind. Yet, it is not clear if she was the principal reason for voters voting for the Congress. Khurana may have been something of a liability for the BJP, but when asked directly, most of the voters said he was the right choice for the party. On balance, personalities reflected the voters' judgment of the parties, rather than it being the other way round. The same is true of the turnout effect. Delhi witnessed a higher turnout this time compared to the last election when the electoral rolls were rather dubious. The Congress has won 22 of the 28 constituencies that witnessed a lower-than-average turnout. But that cannot possibly explain the broad contours of this victory.

The question then is: why did an overwhelming proportion of the voters see no reason to change their voting preference? The principal answer lies in the nature of issues that mattered to the voters and their view of what they had to choose from. The post-election survey clearly demonstrates three points in this regard. One is that the election was fought on the performance of the State Government. The Central Government was not a factor, except for some of the BJP voters. Secondly, the issues that mattered most to the people were those of day-to-day governance, of development, of electricity, water, roads and so on.

And thirdly, as far as governance was concerned, they were pretty satisfied with the record of the Congress Government. Even among the BJP voters, more of them were satisfied with the performance of the Government than those who were not.

At any rate, the voters found the claims of the Congress in this regard to be more credible than those of the BJP.

In the last instance, then, the Congress seems to have understood and responded better to the changing sociology of Delhi, a city that is constantly re-defined by layers of migration and new settlements. The BJP, still imprisoned in its Punjabi and trader support base, has not responded to the new face of Delhi. Madan Lal Khurana simply came to symbolise this fossil-like character of the party.

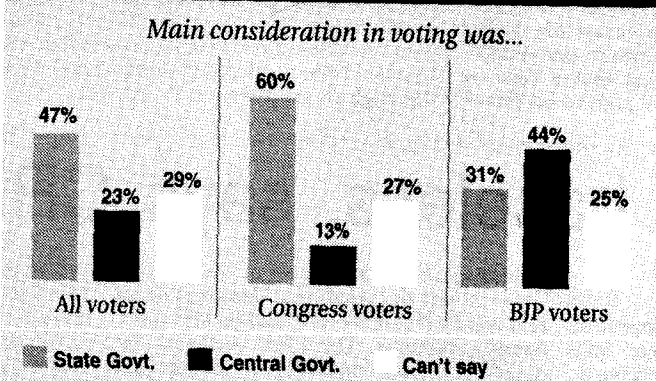
If this reading is correct, changing the leader alone will not bring about dramatic changes in the fortunes of the party. In the 1990s, the BJP did well in all the Lok Sabha elections held in Delhi, mainly because these elections foregrounded supra-local issues.

But if local issues were to dominate national elections in Delhi, as they do in most of the States, the Congress will sweep the Lok Sabha elections that are due next year. The post-election survey directly addressed the

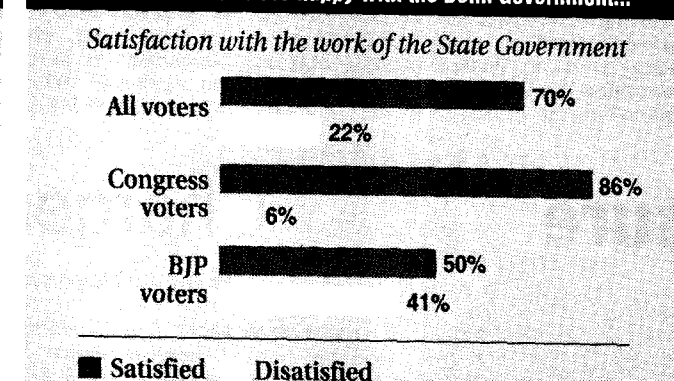
**Complete reversal from 1999 to 2003: Congress led in all the seven parliamentary seats where it lost to the BJP in the LS elections**

Parliamentary Constituencies	Seats	Turnout (%) in 2003	Gain/Loss	CONGRESS		BJP		BSP		OTHERS								
				Seats 2003	Gain/Loss	Vote (%) 2003	Gain/Loss	Seats 2003	Gain/Loss	Vote (%) 2003	Gain/Loss	Seats 2003	Gain/Loss	Vote (%) 2003	Gain/Loss			
New Delhi	5	46.1	+0.7	4	+1	59.4	+10.1	1	-1	33.9	-3.2	0	2.3	+1.8	0	0	4.4	-8.6
South Delhi	10	51.8	+6.4	6	-1	51.3	-0.3	4	+1	42.8	+0.0	0	0.9	-0.2	0	0	5.1	+0.5
Outer Delhi	21	53.8	+4.9	12	-4	45.1	-1.0	7	+3	34.9	+4.9	0	5.2	+1.7	2	+1	14.7	-5.6
East Delhi	20	54.2	+3.9	16	+1	47.4	+1.3	4	0	32.1	-1.7	0	11.3	+6.6	0	-1	9.2	-6.2
Chandni Chowk	4	55.2	+0.4	3	0	55.0	+3.2	0	0	21.9	-3.2	0	0.4	-0.3	1	0	22.7	+0.3
Delhi Sadar	5	56.3	+4.4	4	0	50.4	-2.4	1	0	43.5	+4.7	0	1.0	-1.2	0	0	5.1	-1.2
Karol Bagh	5	52.5	+3.7	2	-2	48.9	+2.6	3	+2	40.3	+2.4	0	2.0	-0.6	0	0	8.7	-4.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>53.4</b>	<b>+4.4</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>48.1</b>	<b>+0.4</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>+5</b>	<b>35.2</b>	<b>+1.2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5.8</b>	<b>+2.7</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>-4.2</b>

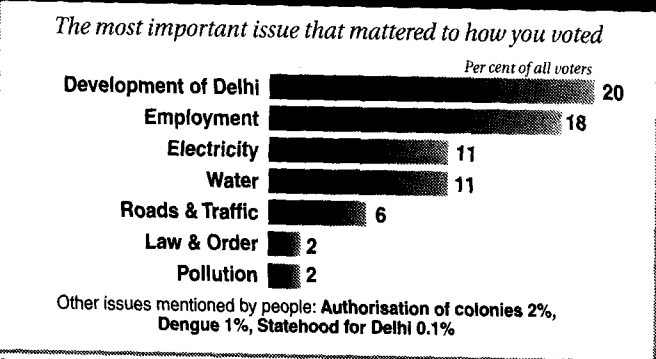
**It was mainly a vote on the performance of the State Government...**



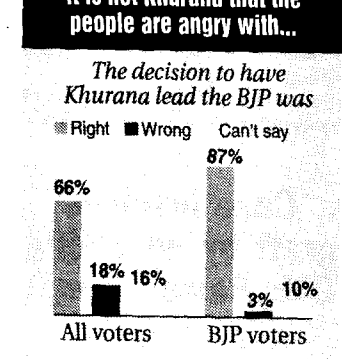
**Even BJP voters are happy with the Delhi Government...**



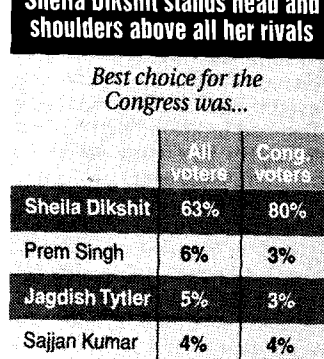
**Issues of development and governance dominated this elections**



**It is not Khurana that the people are angry with...**



**Sheila Dikshit stands head and shoulders above all her rivals**



## The methodology

This analysis is based on a post-election survey conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi, exclusively for *The Hindu*. The survey was conducted in all five States where Assembly elections were conducted — in Delhi, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh on December 1 and in Mizoram on November 20.

The field work was conducted on December 1 and 2. Voters were interviewed in their homes soon after the voting. The field work was completed before counting began on December 4. Interviews were conducted using a standard structured questionnaire.

In order to maintain secrecy, dummy ballot papers and dummy ballot boxes were used while eliciting from the respondents the answer to the voting question. The sample was selected in three stages. First, the Assembly constituencies were selected. Then the localities where the survey would be done were chosen and finally the respondents who would be interviewed were identified.

In Delhi, the survey was

conducted in 69 of the 70 Assembly constituencies. The survey could not be conducted in the Paharganj Assembly constituency.

In the second stage of sampling, involving the selection of localities, in each of the 69 Assembly constituencies four localities were randomly selected. Thus 276 localities were chosen.

Finally, in the third stage, the respondents were randomly selected from the electoral rolls. In order to account for any non-response from a chosen voter, a slightly higher number of respondents was selected than the actual number of interviews that were expected to be conducted. Of the total of 2,760 identified as respondents, 1,526 were finally interviewed in Delhi.

A team of 70 field investigators conducted the field work.

The central team at the CSDS comprised Himanshu Bhattacharya, Banasmita Bora, Chetan Bahrmoria, Abhay Datar, K.A.Q.A. Hilal, Bhaskar Jha, Pusuthottam Kumar Jha, Dhananjai Joshi, Rajat Joshi, Manoj Kumar, Kanchan Malhotra and Ved Prakash.

question of how the citizens of Delhi would vote if Lok Sabha elections were to be held tomorrow.

The answer holds some hope for the Congress in an election full of cruel surprises: the party has exactly the same 13-point lead over the BJP as it has managed in the Assembly elections.

But the results also hold an alarm signal for the party. The

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has secured 5.8 per cent of the votes despite an obvious lack of effort on the part of its leader, the former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister, Mayawati.

The vote share did not damage the Congress anywhere this time, but can well turn decisive in the long run and unsettle the two-party system that has prevailed in Delhi.

**Decisive lead for the Congress in a straight contest...**

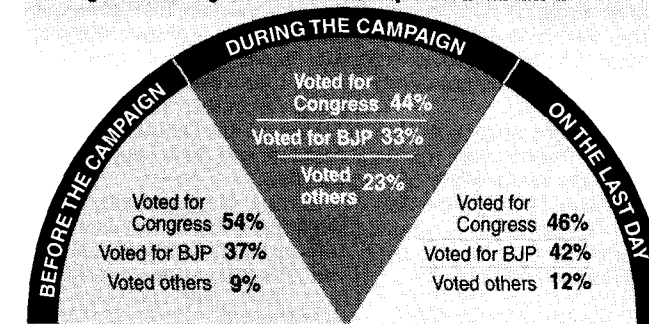
Party	Seats won		Vote share (%)	
	2003	1998	2003	1998
Congress	47	52	48.1	47.8
BJP	20	15	35.2	34.0
NCP	1	0	2.2	0.0
JD (S)	1	1	0.8	1.8
BSP	0	0	5.8	3.0
Others	0	0	3.0	4.7
Independents	1	2	4.9	8.7

**Except upper caste Hindus, it was advantage Congress all the way...**

Caste group	Party			
	Cong.	BJP	BSP	Others
Upper Castes	42	49	3	6
OBCs	42	33	9	16
Dalits	57	17	11	15
Muslims	64	12	7	17
Sikhs	57	39	0	4

Figures in %

**BJP gained among those who made up their mind late...**



Graphics by Varghese Kallada

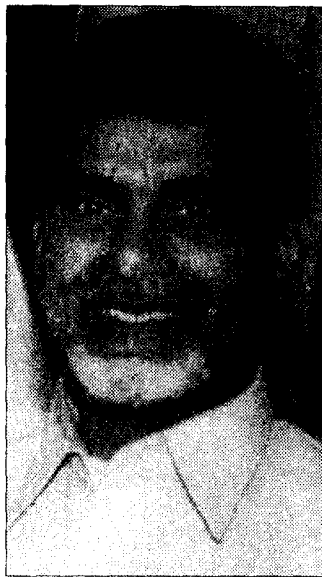


EXTREMISM A KEY POLL ISSUE

# 'We'll sweep the PWG stronghold'

Stanley Theodore in Hyderabad

Nov. 17. -- Expounding on his poll prospects in Telangana in an exclusive interview to The Statesman, his first after he dissolved the Assembly last week, Andhra Pradesh caretaker chief minister Mr N Chandrababu Naidu said his Telugu Desam Party would sweep the snap Assembly polls in the Naxalite-affected Telangana region by riding high on its anti-extremist plank. "Telangana people are empathising with us as we are seeking a mandate against extremism. The entire state is against the Naxalites, but the Telangana people have suffered the most at their hands. TDP is the first political party in the country to make extremism an election issue and the Telangana people are appreciating it."



Mr Chandrababu Naidu

On whether his party cadres would not be hampered in their campaign in sensitive areas, he said: "It is not like that. The cadres too are from the people. When the people are coming out openly and favourably, they don't need to fear anything. But, as I said before, they have to be cautious."

He answered in the negative when asked whether the snap poll was a political gamble. "No. It's a matter of conviction. It's for the state's interests, specially for the interest of future generations. The whole world knows that no matter how hard the government tries no industry sets foot on Telangana. Isn't it because of them (Peoples' War Group)? For how long should we allow them to hold a state's potential to ransom? The mandate will decide the administration the people want."

On why he did not put this on the agenda after the 1 October assassination attempt instead of letting political and media speculation hijack the issue, he said: "In the first press conference (on 17 October) I made it very clear that a comprehensive debate was necessary on extremism. It was already in progress. We've taken the decision after one and a half months of debate and analysis. We have discussed this elaborately in the party and also gathered the views of others. Don't think this is anything sudden, enough thought has gone into this."

Given this present stand, why did he display the state's failure by transferring and suspending officials? "I never said there was any failure. There were some mistakes which shouldn't have happened. But you have to see this in the context of terrorism. Was not Indira Gandhi killed in her own house? Could it be attributed to failures or to terrorism? Yet human errors have to be rectified."

Mr Naidu justified clubbing extremism with the Congress' criticism as he said the party was favouring talks and thereby siding with the PWG for sheer political opportunism.

On whether he would stick to this issue till the polls or switch to other ones, he said: "Extremism and its threats are our single point agenda. I will also explain the development in the eight and a half years of my government, about the advantages of an integrated state and the disadvantages of smaller states."

# Naidu not for face-off with EC

Statesman News Service

HYDERABAD, Nov. 16. — The Andhra Pradesh caretaker chief minister doesn't want to go in for a confrontation with the election commission over the chief election commissioner Mr JM Lyngdoh's decision not to hold the Assembly polls in February next year, as desired by Mr N Chandrababu Naidu.

The TDP politburo has decided not to challenge EC's decision since scheduling elections is the commission's prerogative. Party sources said the leadership, disturbed over the development, was hoping that Mr Lyngdoh would

reconsider his decision. Mr Naidu, in his bid to persuade the commission to hold the polls by February, is likely to inform the EC that examinations across the state will begin in March. Which means schools and colleges won't be available for setting up polling stations and counting centres.

According to the EC schedule, the draft electoral rolls for the state will be published on 27 November and the final rolls on 20 January next year.

Any objections will call for a summary revision, which would take one or two weeks. The EC will then take another three weeks to announce the poll

the Assembly that the EC would have no problems in holding the polls after 7 December, the day the poll process in five northern and northeastern states comes to a close. He had expected that the EC would announce the poll schedule even before publishing the final electoral rolls. But the commission, it seems, will come up with the dates only after the rolls revision is over.

One of the reasons the chief minister is eager to hold the polls by February is that the agricultural season peaks in March, causing a heavy demand on electricity. Farmers are making all preparations to reap in a good harvest

since this year's delayed monsoon, after two successive years of drought, has significantly lifted the ground water level.

Besides, as summer sets in the demand for power in urban areas too will shoot up. This, coupled with the anticipated drinking water crisis in rural areas during summer, may leave Mr Naidu, even after the PWC's assassination bid, with few issues to sway the electorate to his side again.

As a senior TDP leader said: "If the EC decides to hold the polls after February, Mr Naidu will be forced to tackle situations that he doesn't to before the polls."



Brows creased?

dates. A statutory gap of 25 days is needed between the notification and the polls.

Mr Naidu, the sources said, had calculated before deciding on dissolution of

TDP Fears Waning Of Sympathy Wave As Lyngdoh Hints At March Schedule

# Naidu seeks early polls, EC plays spoilsport

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 14 NOVEMBER

CHIEF Election Commissioner J.M. Lyngdoh on Friday indicated that the Andhra Pradesh elections may not be held earlier than March, throwing a spanner in chief minister Chandrababu Naidu's plans. Mr Naidu wants to be done with polls by February. "The poll panel will take its own time. The EC is not prepared at the moment," he told reporters.

The jolt evoked an instant plea from Mr Naidu for a review of the decision. The chief minister, according to an agency report from Hyderabad, justified the choice of February as the month to hold polls by pointing to Andhra Pradesh' preoccupation with exams in March.

Stating that the EC will conduct the exercise whenever it is ready, Mr Lyngdoh said the poll body was in no hurry as elections could be held any time within six months of the dissolution of the

Assembly.

The Chief Election Commissioner, who retires in February next, did not seem to share the urgency of the chief minister to complete the polls by February. "It is not likely before February, may be in March or beyond that," he said.

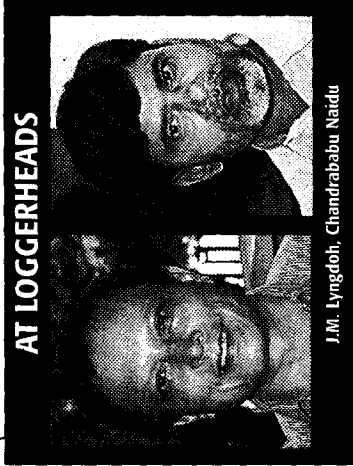
Mr Naidu favours early polls because of the anxiety that delaying the exercise might cause the "sympathy wave" to ebb. Ostensibly, however, he has defended the idea of February polls by pointing to the state's examination calendar, which begins in March and stretches to late April.

Almost ridiculing, Mr Naidu's assertion that he was seeking fresh mandate on his plans to curb naxal violence, the CEC said the problem has been there and will continue to be there. Mr Lyngdoh justified his reluctance to acquiesce in chief minister's poll schedule by arguing that the revision of voters' list was going to take time and will not be over before January.

He was also not impressed by the argument that deferring the polls to March might delay the presentation of the state budget. "It is their business," he said even

as he blamed the uncertainty over the budget on chief minister's decision to go in for polls. Requesting the poll watchdog to give its nod for polls in February, Mr Naidu said: "Students will be put to inconvenience if elections are held in March. We will be happy if they are held before March."

He was cautious and readily conceded the jurisdiction of the EC on poll dates. "Dissolving the Assembly is in our hands, but not holding of elections. It is the job of the Election Commission," he said. Meanwhile, the BJP, welcoming Mr Naidu's decision to seek an early mandate as bold and courageous, announced it would forge an alliance with the TDP in the Assembly elections on Friday. "We are going to have an alliance with TDP in Andhra Pradesh for early Assembly elections," BJP president M. Venkaiah Naidu said on Friday. The CM's decision to dissolve the Assembly will go down well with the people, he said.



AT LOGGERHEADS

J.M. Lyngdoh, Chandrababu Naidu

9.87 - AP

# Lyngdoh nixes Naidu's plan for early polls

TIMES NEWS NETWORK  
AND AGENCIES

**Hyderabad\New Delhi:** Barely a couple of hours after Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu met Governor S.S. Barnala on Friday and recommended the dissolution of the state assembly, Chief Election Commissioner J.M. Lyngdoh threw his plans to have early elections out of gear by saying that the state was not prepared for polls "at the moment".

The TDP had calculated that the Election Commission would announce a poll schedule for Andhra after the completion of the December elections in five states, so that it could go to the hustings in February.

But Mr Lyngdoh made it clear that the Election Commission would take its own time to conduct the polls. "Elections will not be held before February. They can take place in March or may go beyond," he told reporters in New Delhi. With reporters looking for a more conclusive reply, Mr Lyngdoh, who retires in February, said, "I will not be here after February."

"The EC wants to hold a proper election and not a quick and bad election. Right now, we are not prepared. Anyway we have six months after the dissolution," he said. When asked whether the election process would be hastened to hold an early poll, Mr Lyngdoh said, "Why should we? Certainly not."

He said the ongoing process of revision of electoral rolls would be over by the end of January and "lot of things have to be done after that".

State election officials said the revision was expected to be completed by January 20. Government officials said it would take at least 24 days from the date of publication of the revised rolls to hold elections. The Election Commission could also extend the scheduled time to seven weeks, they said.

Mr Lyngdoh also made light of the state government's assertion that it was going for elections because of the Naxalite

## Poll pitch



Elections can take place in March or go beyond..EC wants to hold a proper election, not a quick and bad election. Right now, we are not prepared—J.M. Lyngdoh

Dissolving the assembly is in our hands, not holding of elections. It's the job of the EC. We will move EC to hold polls before March—C. Naidu



problem. "They (Naxalites) were there earlier also," he said.

Mr Naidu had said earlier in the day that he was seeking a fresh mandate to clear the "vitiating atmosphere" created by Naxalites and to teach a fitting lesson to the "opportunistic Congress".

"I want a resounding mandate from them to counter extremist forces and the obstructive politics of the opposition," he told reporters shortly after the dissolution of the assembly, which is ten months ahead of expiry of its term.

Reacting to Mr Lyngdoh's comments, Mr Naidu told reporters in Hyderabad that he was leaving the schedule to the discretion of the Election Commission. "We have done our job by dissolving the House," he said. "Dissolving the assembly is in our hands, but not holding of elections. It is the job of the Election Commission."

He said his government would make a representation to the EC to hold elections in the state before March in view of the examination season. "Students will be put to inconvenience if elections are held in March. We will be happy if they are held before that," he said. "Moreover, as a caretaker government, we have few powers to execute development work."

CABINET TO APPROVE PROPOSAL TODAY

# Naidu clears snap polls

R.S.  
A.P.  
S.I.

14/11

**Statesman News Service**

HYDERABAD, Nov. 13. — Andhra Pradesh chief minister Mr N Chandrababu Naidu declared today that he would seek a fresh mandate after dissolution of the Assembly as his government had no other choice given the twin obstacles posed by the Naxalites and an irresponsible opposition in the Congress.

Today's extraordinary general body meeting of the Telegu Desam Party passed a resolution painting the Congress and the Naxalites with the same brush. It ended by saying: "The Opposition parties are behaving irresponsibly. Time has come for the people to teach them a lesson. The TDP seeks fresh mandate, earlier than scheduled, to enable us to effectively stamp out extremism as Naxalites have become an obstacle in the path of development." The Cabinet is to meet tomorrow at 9.45 a.m. to pass a one-line resolution to dissolve the House before sending it to the Governor for his approval.

In Delhi, BJP spokesman Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said Mr Naidu had taken top BJP leaders into confidence about the decision to dissolve the Assembly and the BJP had no problems with a snap poll in early 2004. He added that the BJP would like to continue its alliance with the TDP for the next Assembly polls. Talking about seat-sharing, Mr Naqvi said it was too early to comment on such things.

The majority of the 6,500 delegates left the meeting soon after copies of the resolution were circulated. By the time Mr Naidu announced the adoption of the resolution, the pandal at the Exhibition Grounds was virtually empty.

Mr Naidu, as TDP chief, had set the tone of the meeting in his inaugural

address. "The TDP does not need sympathy. What it needs is people's understanding. Based on this, we have to seek a fresh mandate." The time had come for the TDP to give a new direction to Andhra Pradesh, he added.

Seven speakers, including home minister Mr T Devender Goud and TDP parliamentary party leader Mr K Yerran Naidu, echoed their party chief and stressed the need for fresh polls after the 1 October assassination attempt on the chief minister. They blasted the Congress, mocked its factional feud and ridiculed its dependence on Delhi.

"The major problems while proceeding on the path of development is that peace is endangered and extremism is growing. I am proud that TDP has taken this decision despite having nine more months in the present term. It has been taken in the state's interests," Mr Naidu said. About a hundred delegates cheered him from near the barricades as he spoke. Terming the latest decision "an experiment" and warning partymen that they would face "problems," Mr Naidu recalled the killing of panchayati raj minister A Madhav Reddy by the PWG and said: "But we are ready for any sacrifice, including our lives."

Mr Naidu criticised the Opposition for not denouncing the PWG attack on him. "The Congress' behaviour is worse than the Naxalites," he said, before adding that the Congress and the Left were being opportunistic by asking the government to hold talks with the Naxalites even after a chief minister was targeted by them. He said that today's decision had the twin aims of augmenting development and providing a total solution to the extremist problem.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2003 ✓

## ANDHRA PRADESH IN ELECTION MODE

ALL SIGNALS FROM Andhra Pradesh say early Assembly polls. It is clear now that no sooner had Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu got over the shock of the claymore mine attack on him at Tirupati than he began to think elections. The leading factor behind the decision to bring forward the State Assembly contest seems to be the Telugu Desam Party's assessment that substantial sympathy has been generated for its leader by the People's War's assassination attempt that very nearly succeeded. The ruling party evidently hopes to cash in before the effect wears off. Consider the political uncertainty that lies ahead, with general elections due in late 2004. Add to this the fact that the monsoon thus far has been quite favourable. You have a recipe for a shrewd political leader opting to maximise his chances and give his opponents minimum time to get their house in order. It only remains for Mr. Naidu to announce the decision and dissolve the House. Since the TDP enjoys a comfortable majority, no one should have any quarrel with that.

Until a couple of months ago, the odds seemed stacked against the TDP. The anti-incumbency factor was much talked about. There was reported to be a widespread feeling, especially in the Andhra Pradesh countryside, that the TDP leader's obsession with economic reforms had led to a spiralling of prices, unemployment and other ill effects, and that the hyper-concentration on Information Technology did not touch their lives. The perception within the TDP at least is that this ground situation has been transformed. An early Assembly election divorced from a highly uncertain Lok Sabha contest makes compelling sense to the ruling party. It sees its best chance in keeping the focus on State issues — and what Mr. Naidu can PowerPoint as his 'developmental achieve-

ments'. He might have consciously kept out of the National Democratic Alliance and stayed away from the Government, but the identification of the TDP as the Bharatiya Janata Party's most important ally is strong. By going in for a sudden, separate poll, the TDP hopes to improve its chances with minority voters who might see the stakes rather differently in a general election.

What is clear is that the challenge from the Congress, which has been out of power in the State since December 1994, will be tough and resourceful. To note that the Congress in Andhra Pradesh is faction-ridden is not to say anything new. But in addition to the strong anti-incumbency factor it detects, the party will be banking on the feel-good force it hopes will be with it following triumphs in the coming round of Assembly elections in five States. It has a big stake in closing ranks, working out clear and potent campaign themes, and mobilising all its resources to neutralise Mr. Naidu's advantages. The Congress will no doubt dwell heavily on the theme that eight years of Mr. Naidu's rule has brought more hype than hope to the lives of millions of ordinary people in the State, especially the rural poor. It is bound to bring to the fore the issues of the stamp paper scam, regional imbalances in development, and the travails of cotton and tobacco farmers, especially the suicides. The party's faction leaders, including former Chief Ministers and Pradesh presidents, have come together in a "unity bus yatra" that itself tells a story. The revision of electoral rolls, which will begin soon and be completed by January 20, 2004 is a significant factor. It will bring in an army of earnest first-time voters whose preferences and expectations are completely unknown. For all Mr. Naidu's calculations, the coming Assembly contest in south India's largest State looks, at this stage, tight.

# Naidu scouts for 'right' reason to dissolve House

Stanley Theodore  
in Hyderabad

9-8r 51-7  
KP

Nov. 6. — Chief minister Mr N Chandrababu Naidu is trying to figure out a convincing reason for dissolving the Assembly to bring forward elections. He considers this important after legal opinion sought by him confirmed that dissolution, if challenged, would not entail any reversal in court.

The chief minister briefed both the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani, and BJP president Mr M Venkaiah Naidu on his poll plans and they backed the idea. "Mr Naidu is too far gone on polls and cannot back out at this stage and be viewed as being evasive. He is focussed on early elections. The only thing that concerns him now is extending the right reason for dissolving

the Assembly," close aides told The Statesman.

They said the Cabinet, meeting tomorrow, would take a unanimous decision to dissolve the Assembly and this resolution would be sent to the Governor, who would accept it and relay his decision to the EC. The procedure does not call for a giving a reason. But Mr Naidu wants to be ready with one to scotch the speculation that he is trying to cash in on the sympathy factor.

Also, since Mr Naidu commands an absolute majority in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly and is nowhere near losing it or heading for a split, a reason for dissolving is ideally in order.

Interestingly, the chief minister is aware there is a distinct lack of popular sympathy. So, he is considering portraying himself at the receiving end of the Oppo-

# CBI to quiz

## Ajit Jogi

*9/6*  
**New Delhi, June 8 (PTI):** Chhattisgarh chief minister Ajit Jogi will soon be questioned by the CBI after the Intelligence Bureau denied his charge that it was engaged in tarnishing his image.

Highly-placed CBI sources said the agency had sought time from Jogi to ask him to reveal the name of the source of a letter, on which he had based his complaints.

The sources said the state director, information, had sought some clarifications like who were the accused named and under what sections of the Indian Penal Code it was registered.

The CBI had last month shot off a letter to the chief minister asking him to make it convenient for its sleuths to question him in connection with the allegations levelled by him against the Intelligence Bureau.

The CBI had registered cases under Sections 417, 465, 468, 469 and 471 of the Indian Penal Code against unknown persons after

receiving complaints of forgery of documents in the name of the special directorate, Intelligence Bureau.

Asked whether it was mandatory for the chief minister to reveal the source of the letter, the sources said it was necessary as it would help solve the case.

The Intelligence Bureau had earlier denied Jogi's charges that its sleuths had launched a special operation, code-named Black Sea, to tarnish his image in the state, which goes to polls later this year.

The sources said the Intelligence Bureau told the CBI investigators that neither did any such directorate exist, nor had any such operation been launched.

The CBI probe is aimed at verifying the authenticity of documents furnished by Jogi relating to his allegation that the Intelligence Bureau had launched an operation to defame the BJP's political opponents.



120-1  
G.C.

# NCP leader killed, Jogi denies involvement ✓

J.S. Chhabra

**RAIPUR, JUNE 5.** The NCP Chhattisgarh treasurer, Ram Avtar Jaggi, was shot dead by unidentified gunmen on Wednesday night following which the party State unit chief, V.C. Shukla, alleged the involvement of his *bete noire*, the Chief Minister, Ajit Jogi, a charge denied by the latter.

"Mr. Jaggi was shot around midnight near the Mohdapara police station when he was going home. The gunmen broke the windshield of his car before fleeing on their four-wheeler," the senior Superintendent of Police, Mukesh Gupta, said.

Leading an NCP delegation, Mr. Shukla today met the Governor, Krishna Mohan Seth, and demanded a CBI inquiry into the killing alleging that Mr. Jogi and his son were involved in the murder.

According to him, the Governor assured the delegation that he would study the matter and take appropriate action.

Denying the charge levelled against him and his son, Mr. Jogi said that to drag a politician in a murder case was part of dirty politics.

As far as a CBI probe was concerned, the Chief Minister said he had no problem but he had full confidence that the police department would nab

the culprits "very soon".

On Mr. Shukla's charge that Mr. Jogi had threatened Mr. Jaggi over phone of dire consequences unless he stopped working for the NCP leader, the Chief Minister said "these are baseless allegations. He joined the party (NCP) on his own wish. Why should we threaten him?"

The Superintendent of Police said, "on getting information about the murder, the SHO, Mohdapara, B.K. Pandey, rushed to the spot and took Mr. Jaggi, who received bullet injuries on the right side of the chest, to hospital where he was declared dead".

Since Mr. Pandey was the first person to reach the spot, he himself filed an FIR, Mr. Gupta said.

Mr. Jaggi's son, Satish, meanwhile, in a report to police alleged that Mr. Jogi and his son were "behind the murder," according to the NCP spokesman, Pramod Choubey.

Mr. Satish has demanded that his report be treated as an FIR, Mr. Choubey added.

Ram Niwas, Inspector-General, however, said that since the SHO's report was registered first, it would be the FIR and Mr. Satish's report would be attached with that. As per the rules the second report could not be accepted as an FIR. — PTI

5 JUN 2003

# Jogi accused of murder

SNS & Agencies

RAIPUR/NEW DELHI, June 5. — The treasurer of the Chhattisgarh unit of the Nationalist Congress Party, Mr Ramavatar Jaggi, was shot dead by some unidentified criminals yesterday night, drawing accusations from the party that chief minister Mr Ajit Jogi had "masterminded" the murder.

Jaggi was shot dead near Mohadapara police station in Raipur when he was returning home in his car from the NCP headquarters. Car-borne assailants intercepted Jaggi's car, pulled him out, and pumped bullets into him.

Soon after the news broke, state NCP president Mr VC Shukla along with his supporters reached Mohadapara police station demanding inclusion of the names of Mr Ajit Jogi and his son in the FIR. Accusing the duo of "masterminding" Jaggi's murder, Mr Shukla claim-

ed that Mr Jogi had — over the phone earlier — threatened Jaggi, a former Congressman, with "dire consequences" for joining the NCP.

Mr Jogi, however, denied the charges against him and his son. He dismissed Mr Shukla's allegations as "politically motivated". Mr Shukla, he charged, is indulging in "dirty politics" to extract maximum political mileage from the incident. The state is due for polls in November.

Mohadapara Police have registered an FIR under Section 302 of the IPC against the unknown assailants. Jaggi's son, Satish, has lodged a second FIR against Mr Jogi and his son for their "murder conspiracy".

Mr Shukla charged that Mr Jogi, rattled by his party's rise, has been trying to intimidate his supporters in a bid to wean them away from his party. He claimed that even he has been warned.

A NCP delegation led by Mr Shukla

met Governor Mr KM Seth today asking for a CBI inquiry into Jaggi's killing. NCP chief Mr Sharad Pawar has supported Mr Shukla's demand for a CBI inquiry as also the state BJP president Mr Raman Singh. Mr Jogi has, however, shot down the idea.

In Delhi, however, Congress spokesman Mr Anand Sharma said the AICC has been in touch with Mr Jogi and that he has assured of a proper inquiry being conducted and the guilty being booked. "The rule of law will prevail," he quipped but avoided questions as to whether the state will agree to a CBI inquiry and how an inquiry by the state investigating agency into an allegation against the chief minister could be free and fair.

The NCP has also called for a Chhattisgarh bandh tomorrow to protest against the incident. The call has been backed by the principal Opposition, the BJP, and other parties.

# Swiss attache leaves,

HT A 07/10

HT Correspondent  
New Delhi, October 16

THE SWISS diplomat who was raped on Tuesday night has left for Switzerland after providing the police details about the incident, but a statement has not been recorded before a magistrate. She has said, however, that she is ready to return for a test identification parade.

The police have also made sketches of the assailants from descriptions provided by the diplomat.

On the basis of the information she has given and the questioning of over 500 people, the police have zeroed in on four suspects and have mounted surveillance operations.

The police say the suspects do not appear to be hardened criminals, but are not first-timers either. They believe that the rapist and his accomplice were from middle-class or upper middle-class backgrounds and were residents of south Delhi.

The Swiss diplomat told the police in a written complaint that the man who raped her in her Qualis after abducting her from the Siri Fort parking lot "appeared to have had a fresh shower" — he smelled of soap and deodorant.

This and other evidence suggest the suspects could have been staying in a guest house near Siri Fort. "Police teams are

combining adjoining localities like Uday Park, Asiad Village, Gulmohar Park, South Extension and Shahpur Jat," said a senior police officer.

Raids are also being conducted in parts of southwest Delhi near Safdarjung Enclave, where the suspects left the diplomat.

"The rapist was comfortable in dealing with foreigners," the officer said. After raping the woman, the man rummaged through her purse, found her identity card and learnt that she was a Swiss diplomat.

"The rapist then spoke to her at length about Switzerland. He even forced the diplomat to disclose the PIN (personal identification number) of her international credit card. He took the credit card and her diamond ring," the officer added.

The police have recovered a cheap lighter from the car and found some fingerprints. "The prints are being matched with our data bank," the police officer said.

Meanwhile, Swiss Ambassador Walter Gyger has given the Ministry of External Affairs a *note verbale*, saying that under the Geneva Convention a host country is responsible for the safety of diplomats.

"I am shocked and saddened, but I have full confidence in the Indian authorities and hope that the culprit will be arrested soon," the ambassador added.



## Manhunt

### BACKGROUND

▶ Rapist belongs to middle or upper-middle class

### EXPOSURE

▶ Was in a trade that brought him in contact with foreigners, was not intimidated

### CAME FROM

▶ Possibly the Siri Fort area; victim said he was freshly bathed



# 4 suspects identified

HT A 07/10

## Supreme Court tries to plug trial loopholes

Syed Liaquat Ali  
New Delhi, October 16

AFTER TRIALS that could take over a decade to complete, four out of every five men accused of rape in India walk. Cases pile up in court, and acquittals come on the flimsiest of grounds.

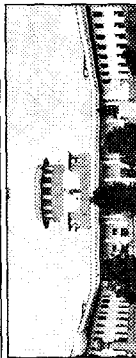
However, in a series of judgements, the Supreme Court has tried to plug the loopholes in the system so that trial courts can have greater leeway in deciding rape cases.

According to the Supreme Court, trial of cases involving sexual molestation requires an approach that is different from a normal case. It has said that insignificant discrepancies in rape cases should not sway the trial courts. "Any deficiency or irregularity in investigation need not necessarily lead to rejection of the cases of prosecution when it is otherwise proved." The apex court has said that the trial courts can punish the accused solely on the basis of the survivor's testimony.

In a recent case, the court upheld the conviction of three accused for raping a tribal school teacher on the basis of her testimony without further corroboration.

The court has asked the trial courts to consider circumstantial evidence, as "many a times, crimes are committed under the cover of darkness when none is able to identify the accused".

## Relief for victims



### Loophole: No witnesses

**Case:** Tribal woman gangraped in Bagod, MP, in broad daylight  
**Verdict:** Survivor's testimony enough. Accused get 10 years

### Loophole: Delay in lodging FIR

**Case:** 5-year-old raped in HP  
**Verdict:** If prosecution explains reasons for delay, case holds. Accused gets 10 years

### Loophole: Can't identify rapist

**Case:** Cop rapes woman in TN  
**Verdict:** Identification of accused not indispensable condition. Accused gets 7 years

# Bihar behind bars

Shahabuddin represents a state living out  
98-8 1576 its worst stereotype

WE don't want to prick the afterglow. Laloo Prasad Yadav is just back from a track two jamboree in Pakistan, where he was crowned Stealer of the Show. But may we point out, again, that in the Republic of Bihar the emperor wears no clothes. The daily abductions for ransom are old hat, they continue apace. But in the last few days, another routine Bihar story has had a new outing in the headlines. Mohammad Shahabuddin, RJD MP, popular as "Shabu AK-47", was on the run ever since the Bihar DGP ordered his arrest two weeks ago in a case of kidnapping with the intention to murder. Even as the police pursued him, in vain, he was regularly available to the media and we were treated to a free flow of quotable bombast from the absconding MP. He has surrendered now, promising to teach the DGP "a lesson". And to Laloo too. Should he discover the RJD chief was behind the law taking its course in the cases against him, Shahabuddin has promised to ruin the RJD.

It's a sobering image for Independence Day. This is not the first time that Shahabuddin, who has 36 cases against him — he's been acquitted in 14 — and who is known to run a parallel

administration in Siwan, goes to jail. It probably won't be the last. Trips to jail have not inhibited his political career so far. Some would argue they have added a certain lustre. He has won two elections, to the assembly and to Lok Sabha, from inside jail. He cultivates a Robin Hood image and actively plays the minority card. In Bihar, he is seen to be crucial to the Muslim-Yadav vote-bank that explains Laloo's sustained tryst with power. In fact, after the current turn of events, the political grapevine in Bihar is abuzz: Will this occasion an amendment in Laloo's electoral strategy?

Shahabuddin, MP, represents a state determined to live out its worst stereotype. In Bihar, the outlaw rules while a demoralised police force watches helplessly. The high court pulls up the state government for giving a doctored report on the law and order situation in the state. It's a state with two chief ministers, de facto and de jure, and no governance. Of course, Laloo and wife are not responsible for the whole decay. But here's a daring Independence Day wish for Bihar: Its rulers could own up to their share of the rot, so that a new beginning can be made.

INDIAN EXPRESS

INDIAN EXPRESS

15 AUG 2003

15 AUG 2003

Twist in tale: Shahabuddin disappears enroute to Siwan

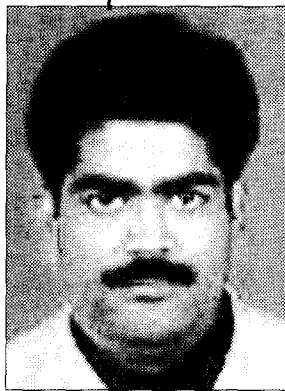
# Vanishing pact

VARGHESE K GEORGE  
PATNA 1 AUGUST 2

THE drama begun by Bihar DGP D.P. Ojha's order on Wednesday to arrest RJD MP Mohd Shahabuddin today took an unexpected twist.

Awaiting the arrival of their leader, Shahabuddin's supporters were disappointed this morning when the MP failed to arrive in Siwan by the Vaishali Express from New Delhi. Speculation is that the MP got down at some station in UP and is planning to come to Siwan late in the night today or early on Sunday morning to surrender to the court. This may be because he suspects that the police want to make a humiliating show of his arrest following a Siwan court rejecting the MP's anticipatory bail application.

Now that the first round



of the game has gone against the MP he is left with no option but to go to jail on non-bailable charges of kidnaping for murder of one Munna Chaudhary, a CPI-ML activist in 2001. There are 36 cases in total against the MP.

DGP Ojha remains unsailable and determined to see the MP to jail. On Friday, he recommended that CBI inquire into a case of bank robbery in which Shahabud-

din is suspected. A rural bank in Gopalganj had been robbed of Rs 20 lakh in March 2003.

Citing Shahabuddin's alleged links with inter-state and international criminals, the DGP has written to the Home Department that only a CBI inquiry can bring out the truth. Ojha also recommended an inquiry into the sources of the MP's income.

Meanwhile, a BJP delegation led by Opposition leader Sushil Modi and party president Nand Kishore Yadav today met Bihar Governor Rama Jois and requested him to monitor the progress of the Shahabuddin case. The party also demanded that the cases against Shahabuddin be tried outside Bihar. The DGP had earlier ordered that all cases against the MP in Siwan be transferred to Patna.

# Violence mars Patna bandh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATNA, Feb. 8. — Two buses were set on fire and a dozen other vehicles damaged as the National Democratic Alliance-sponsored Patna bandh turned violent and its supporters fought a pitched battle with the police in certain areas today.

The NDA had given a dawn to dusk bandh call to protest the killing of an army jawan, Amitesh, in an alleged fake encounter with the police recently and rising incidents of crime and kidnapping in the city.

The release of Dr Bharat Singh by his captors last night had a mollify-

ing impact. Otherwise, the bandh would have been "more destructive and damaging", police said. The independent MP, Mr Pappu Yadav, too had supported the bandh.

The Patna city SP, Mr ON Bhaskar, told reporters that the bandh supporters torched two buses near the planetarium at Bailey Road and smashed the windscreens of about a dozen other vehicles in various parts of the city.

The police arrested nearly 300 bandh supporters trying to create disturbances in the city. The police used teargas shells and lathicharged a violent mob of NDA supporters damaging vehi-

cles and fighting with the police at the Chiraiyatar overbridge.

The bandh, however, evoked partial response in the city. Business establishments on the main thoroughfares and private schools remained shut. But shops stayed open in the lanes and residential areas and there was skeletal movement of vehicles. Attendance in government offices and banks were partially affected.

The Lok Janshakti Party president, Mr Ram Vilash Paswan and the state BJP chief, Mr Nandkishore Yadav, took out separate processions demanding the dismissal of the Rabri government.

9 FEB 2003

THE STATESMAN

STRIKE PARALYSES HOSPITALS, TWO PATIENTS DIE UNATTENDED

# Patna doctor kidnapped

Statesman News Service

PATNA, Feb. 6. — Two critically ill patients died unattended today in the emergency ward of the Patna Medical College. The doctors were busy raising slogans in the street.

All the medical college hospitals in Bihar were paralysed today with the doctors striking work and hitting the streets to protest against the abduction of Dr Bharat Singh, noted orthopaedic and professor of the Patna Medical College.

Armed criminals waylaid Dr Singh last night in the SK Nagar area and took him away in a Zen Maruti car.

To make matters worse, the Bihar unit of the Indian Medical Association, at its meeting today

asked the doctors to stop private practice from tomorrow "till the abducted doctor is released." Serious patients admitted to various wards of the PMCH were heard wailing. No doctors were around to attend them.

Agitated doctors and students of the Patna Medical College blocked the traffic at Ashok Rajpath throughout the day. An IMA delegation met the chief minister, Mrs Rabri Devi and the RJD chief Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav today demanding the arrest of the culprits.

Requesting the doctors to resume work, Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav said: "We will try to release the doctor within the next 24 hours".

Defiant doctors are planning to cease work. "We won't withdraw our agitation till he is released", thundered Dr Janakdeo Prasad Sinha, the

president of the Bihar Orthopedic Association.

The National Democratic Alliance has called a Patna bandh on 8 February in protest against the kidnapping of Dr Singh, yesterday's killing of an Army jawan in a "fake" encounter by the police and deteriorating law and order in the state.

Dr Singh, who had received kidnap threats, had applied for a revolver licence about six months ago. His application is still lying with the district magistrate, Patna, for the last six months.

Police didn't turn up at the Dr Singh's residence even 24 hours after his kidnapping to record the statement of his wife and other relatives.

"I have nothing against the abductors. I just want my husband back", an wailing Mrs Renu Singh said.

# CBI will probe killings, says Rabri Devi

*f. B. Prasad*  
**PATNA, JAN. 4.** In a bid to stem political opposition following largescale violence, the Bihar Government today decided to hand over to the CBI the investigation of last Saturday's killing of three youths here in a 'fake' police encounter. Announcing this at a press conference here, the Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, said the CID investigation into the killing already under way would continue till the CBI took over the case.

She said the CBI would also probe the killing of two persons at Manjhaul in Begusarai district by the police in a case of mistaken identity on December 23. The RJD president, Laloo



Prasad Yadav, who was present at the hurriedly-called press conference, said a 'sinister at-

tempt' was being made by the Centre and the NDA to create confusion over the institution of the CID inquiry.

"We want the truth to come out even though we don't doubt the sincerity of the State agency (CID)... There was no attempt to hush up the matter."

The Government did its best to bring to book the police personnel involved in Saturday's encounter.

The sub-inspector of the Shastrinagar Police Station had already been, he said.

Ms. Rabri Devi said the State Government had announced an ex-gratia of Rs. 5 lakhs to the families of each of the three vic-

tims. Blasting the NDA for trying to politicise a human tragedy, she said they were "playing politics over bodies".

Mr. Yadav admitted that initially police tried to portray the killings as an encounter and even the media was misled. He charged the NDA with trying to provoke police action by instigating the local people to indulge in violence.

The NDA and the Left parties staged 'dharnas' across the State, burning effigies of Rabri Devi and pledging to intensify the agitation for the dismissal of her Ministry for "lawlessness and police brutality". — PTI

**No Central rule: Page 8**

THE HINDU

5 JAN 2003



WIDESPREAD ARSON, OVER 3,000 ARRESTED

# Bihar bandh turns violent

By K. Balchand

PATNA, JAN. 3. The dawn-to-dusk Bihar bandh, called by the Opposition parties today to protest the killing of three youths by some policemen in a 'fake encounter' last week, was marred by violence and the burning of vehicles at several places.

At least 50 persons, including policemen, were injured in clashes between National Democratic Alliance activists and those from the ruling Rashtriya Janata Dal, who opposed the bandh.

The bandh was near-total with traffic coming to a halt and shops downing shutters. The functioning of business establishments and Government offices was badly hit due to low attendance.

Government offices and vehicles were targeted by the rioters and police opened fire in the air at many points to disperse them. As train services were suspended passengers were stranded, at various stations.

At the Ashiana Nagar locality, where the three youths had been "gunned down" at a telephone booth last week, police fired at least 50 teargas shells and 20 rounds in the air after the rioters set fire to the already-raised sammelan market complex and a police jeep and attacked mediapersons.

Police rounded up some troublemakers. As the bus transporting those arrested reached the dak bungalow, the rioters fought with police, got down from the bus and set fire to it.

Police jeeps were set afire in Patna city and in Ara, Bhojpur district, six police personnel were injured in similar incidents. There were reports of ar-



A fireman attempting to douse a bus set afire by rioters during a general strike in Patna on Friday. — AFP

son from Government buildings such as the PWD office and the Biswas Board in Patna, the Circuit House in Ara and the District Superintendent Education Office in Motihari.

A crowd laid siege to the Collectorate complex in Saharsa, and vandalism was reported at the SBI branch in Chapra and the Cooperative Bank in Nawada.

RJD activists took to the streets opposing the bandh and in the resultant clashes, 16 persons were injured, including the Leader of the Opposition, S.K. Modi. Police rounded up around 3,000 bandh supporters, including NDA and Left party leaders.

NDA leaders claimed the

bandh was a success and charged the police with trying to prevent their agitation in a "brutal manner".

The NDA has decided to stage a Statewide-dharna tomorrow while the CPI (ML) will burn an effigy of the State Government and demand the resignation of the Chief Minister, Rabri Devi.

The RJD president, Laloo Prasad Yadav, claimed that the bandh "was a total flop" and that the people had prevented the NDA from "repeating Godhra in Bihar".

His party would submit a memorandum to the President, A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, against the manner in which the Defence Minister, George Fernandes, "misused Defence aircraft to

come here and vitiate the atmosphere". Mr. Yadav criticised the Railways for suspending train services and charged that it was a deliberate attempt to tarnish the image of the State.

The Trinamool Congress MP, Dinesh Trivedi, who was travelling by the Rajdhani Express, found himself stranded.

"They should not have allowed the Rajdhani Express to begin its journey. We were not told that the trains would be stopped at the stroke of six."

Meanwhile, the suspended officer-in-charge of the Shastri-nagar police station, Shamsi Alam — who was arrested for the killing of the youths — was assaulted by prisoners at the Beur Central Jail.

THE HINDU

4 JAN 2000

# GOD, MARX & STATE

Naidu escapes, PWG must not

SO much of policy, news and discourse on terrorism is devoted to the radical Islamic variety that it took the near-assassination of one of India's most remarkable public figures for everyone to remember that jihadis do not have a monopoly on "political" violence. But from that premise one must not take the fashionable detour and say the People's War Group (PWG) is somehow different from, in the sense of deserving more sympathy than, say, Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT). As Chandrababu Naidu, immensely lucky to escape, could say it better than anyone, PWG and LeT may be different in their so called ideology but for civil society they represent the same threat — a group committed to violence, to subverting institutions through terror and to murdering both individuals who represent those institutions and ordinary people. That LeT looks to some form of "God" and PWG, to some variation of Marx makes no difference to the need for the state to combat both, if necessary through means harsher than usual. There's a renewed debate on the Prevention of Terrorism Act (PoTA) — PWG figures in the Act's list — thanks to its bizarre use by Ms Jayalalitha, who is now threatening to arrest the Union minister and MDMK leader, Kanappan, for his alleged pro-LTTE public musings. Ms Jayalalitha is being herself in imagining she needs to be severe when she only manages to look silly — but she is being given the opportunity by Tamil leaders who seem to think that talking up LTTE is perfectly okay. It is not. Until recently LTTE was a banned terrorist group everywhere. Even now, with Sri Lankan peace talks on — or, rather, off and on — the Tigers haven't been deemed to have exchanged their stripes for civvies. LTTE is not an Indian Prime Minister — what business do Tamil leaders have talking approvingly of the group? Will they, as they have rushed to send messages to Mr Naidu, care to remember that PWG was taught the art of bomb-making and explosions by LTTE?

That fraternal revolutionary cooperation happened in the late 1980s and PWG for some years after that was a serious menace. Of late though, partly on account of Mr Naidu's concerted efforts and partly because of the extraordinary faction feuds that revolutionary Marxists are so fond of — remember the forever-debating Kolkata radicals — the group was reduced to a mere irritant in Telengana, its base and birthplace. The attempt to kill the Andhra Pradesh chief minister was a "back with a bang" strategy. Even with Mr Naidu surviving, that strategy has partially succeeded. But just as in 1998, when PWG had also unsuccessfully targeted the chief minister, the response needs to be immediate and massive. Otherwise, PWG regaining lost ground is more than a possibility. A parallel effort will, of course, be a post mortem of Mr Naidu's security arrangements. That there were no dummy vehicles seems to be an early criticism. But against that one has to consider the difficulties of arranging for extra cars when travelling out of main urban centres. The blunt truth is no public figure is safe from terrorists. Terrorists, whatever their holy book, should not feel safe either.

# Botched bid boost to Naidu

G.S. RADHAKRISHNA

Hyderabad, Oct. 4: The men who tried to blow him to bits didn't merely give him a new lease of life — they have rescued his politics, too.

As the parade of VIPs continues to N. Chandrababu Naidu's residence, the Andhra Pradesh chief minister is enjoying a turn in political luck that seems to have deserted him till recently.

A significant sympathy wave is building up for the injured leader whose popularity graph had been sliding in the backdrop of growing corruption, continued association with the BJP and the numerous scandals during his eight years at the helm.

Wednesday's assassination bid by People's War Group Naxalites near the temple town of Tirupati has come as a boon for Naidu's Telugu Desam. The Desam was ostracised in the just-concluded monsoon session of the Assembly over the false stamp paper scam, the abortive talks over Krishna water release from the Almatti dam in Karnataka, the severe drought and suicides by farmers.

The Congress and the Left parties which planned to take out demonstrations immediately after the session have postponed their activities. There were no takers for Opposition leader Y.S. Rajsekhar Reddy's agitation in Tirupati where he observed a "silent dharna" in protest against the growing menace of extremism in the state. The Congress programme went completely unnoticed by the media.

Naidu, on his part, has decided to cash in on the sympathy wave. Egged on by public adulation and the support of admirers, the chief minister has decid-



Karnataka chief minister SM Krishna calls on Andhra Pradesh counterpart N Chandrababu Naidu in Hyderabad on Saturday. (PTI)

ed to resume work from Monday against the advice of his doctors. His left hand still rests in a sling but the belt around his neck has been removed.

Doctors treating him say Naidu is recovering fast and, according to them, the reasons for it are rest and his determination "more than the medicine".

The steady stream of well-wishers has also done its bit. They have been coming in increasing numbers, compelling the doctors to even stop the visits for several hours in the afternoon.

S.M. Krishna and Om Prakash Chautala, the chief ministers of Karnataka and Haryana, were among those who called on Naidu early this morning.

Sri Lanka's minister for housing, Armugam Thondaman, also called on him and conveyed the message of the Sri Lanka President wishing him a fast recovery.

Industrialist Vijay Singhan, the governor of Tamil Nadu, P.S. Rammohan Rao, Telugu film actor Krishna along with his actress wife Vijay Nirmala, Jnanpeeth awardee C. Narayan Red-

dy, and the president of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Musalmeen, Sultan Salauddin Owaisi, were among those who called on Naidu.

Speaking to reporters, the Karnataka chief minister said extremism should be firmly dealt with in the interest of development and reaching economic benefits to the poor. "A coordinated effort by all the Naxalite-infested states — Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra — could help resolve the tenacious issue," he said.

EXTREMISTS TARGET CM FOR FIRST TIME

# Naidu survives PWG mine blast

Statesman News Service

HYDERABAD, Oct. 1. — Mr N Chandrababu Naidu survived an assassination attempt by the People's War Group today while he was driving to Tirumala, in his native Chittoor district, from Tirupati. He was injured but out of danger. At 9.15 p.m, he started complaining of severe pain and was put on pain killers and sedatives. The Prime Minister called him after the blast. The TDP has planned peace and protest rallies from tomorrow.

The explosives were detonated at 4.15 p.m. as Mr Naidu's convoy passed Alipiri toll gate on Tirupati's outskirts. Six claymore mines were packed in an iron rod and detonated through a remote device, a camera flash bulb. All the mines exploded. The precision was such that Mr Naidu's car took the bulk of the impact and hit the opposite embankment after turning turtle. Mr Naidu, sitting next to the driver, was extricated after cutting the car do-



or. His collarbone was fractured and left shoulder injured, apart from minor injuries to the chest and nose. The car's rear tyres were blown and axles exposed. His wife Mrs Bhuvaneshwari took the same route minutes before the blast. This was the first time a chief minister was injured in a PWG attack. But DGP Mr SR Sukumara said there wasn't a security lapse.

Employment generation minister Mr B Gopalkrishna Reddy and the driver suffered minor injuries, while TDP MLAs in the same car — Mr

Chadalavada Krishnamurthy and Mr Reddivari Rajashekar Reddy — sustained serious ones. All were rushed to Sri Venkateshwara Institute of Medical Sciences in Tirupati. Later, Mr R Reddy turned critical due to head injuries.

Mr Naidu's mother, Mrs Annamma, rushed to the hospital, but collapsed there and was admitted to the emergency ward. By 5.15 p.m., however, Mr Naidu began making queries about the incident. He's to fly back to Hyderabad tomorrow morning.

He was in a bullet-proof car. An explosion of this nature would blow any other vehicle to smithereens. There was no remote jamming device in the convoy, as the only one is in Hyderabad. It's a conspicuous element of his security detail.

Claymore mine, usually planted on the surface, was apparently deliberately used, as Mr Naidu never travels on unfinished or unmotorable roads which allow landmines to be placed under their surfaces.

# Naidu escapes attempt on life

## PWG hand suspected in mine blast

Ashok Das  
Hyderabad, October 1

ANDHRA PRADESH Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu was injured on Wednesday when the car in which he was travelling was hit by a landmine. Though no group claimed responsibility for the attack, the outlawed People's War Group (PWG) was suspected of carrying out the explosion.

State Information Minister B. Gopalakrishna Reddy and two MLAs, C. Krishmurthy and R. Rajsekhar Reddy, who were travelling with Naidu, were seriously injured.

The car was hit by the explosion while Naidu and his retinue were travelling to the Lord Venkateshwara temple in Tirupati on the occasion of the annual Bhamostavam festival, which the Chief Minister attends every year.

Naidu, who was seated in the front seat, fractured a collarbone and was hit by some splinters. The damage could have been much greater — the bullet-proof car flew nearly 10 feet under the impact of the explosion and was badly mangled.

The car's hood and parts of the rear portion were wrenched off.

Four to six landmines had been planted and were set off with a camera flash. Experts say that even for Naxalites this technology is primitive. The person who set off the explosion escaped. The camera flash was recovered by the police about 50 yards from the site of the explosion.

The first explosion hit Naidu's car. The subsequent explosions caused no damage to the rest of the vehicles in Naidu's convoy.

Naidu and the three other leaders were taken to a local hospital, but arrangements were being made to shift them to Hyderabad when reports last came in.

Naidu has been on the PWG's hit list for a long time, which is why his security drill is usually very stringent. His convoy has several identical cars with tinted windows, so that he cannot be targeted. But while travelling to Tirupati his windows were rolled down, fa-

### Target Chandrababu

**The suspect** The People's War Group, a banned Naxalite outfit active in Andhra Pradesh

**The evidence** Naidu has been on their hit list for long and the type of mines used in the attack are favoured by the PWG

**Shadow of doubt** Mines were set off with a camera flash, which even for the Naxalites is outdated technology



The car in which Naidu was travelling.

cilitating the attack. Experts on Naxalite operations say the attack was in all probability the handiwork of one of the central action teams of the PWG, which report to the group's highest body, the central committee.

Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, his deputy L.K. Advani and Vice-President B.S. Shekhawat called Naidu to inquire about his condition and that of others.