

RJD

## Laloo, Rabri attack BJP at RJD rally

By K. Balchand

**PATNA, APRIL 30.** The ruling Rashtriya Janata Dal today displayed its newly raised lathi-wielding army at its rally here, undeterred by two incidents of violence in less than 12 hours killing as many people, one belonging to the party and the other to the rival BJP.

While a BJP man was killed this morning even as RJD supporters marched to the historic Gandhi Maidan, an RJD worker died in yet another incident of group rivalry last night. There was no backlash of the two killings, however, on the rally. In fact, the lathi-brandishing rallyists remained disciplined.

Satyanarayan Sinha, who unsuccessfully contested the Danapur Assembly byelection on a BJP ticket last year, was gunned down during a battle with the RJD's Reet Lal Yadav at Jama-luddin Chak under Danapur police station about 15 km from here.

Sinha's supporters went on the rampage burning down a dozen vehicles carrying RJD supporters to the rally attacking the residence of the father-in-law of the Chief Minister, Rabri Devi's daughter, Misa Bharati. The rival groups continued to



**The Rashtriya Janata Dal chief, Laloo Prasad Yadav, and the Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, displaying a lathi at the rally in Patna on Wednesday.** Photo: Ranjeet Kumar

exchange fire, despite the presence of police who fired in the air to prevent the situation from deteriorating.

Last night, Raj Kumar Yadav, cousin of the former MLA and RJD leader, Ranveer Yadav, convicted in the Taufir Diara mas-

sacre in which nine persons were killed in 1985, was killed by unidentified criminals.

At the rally, the RJD supremo, Laloo Prasad Yadav, charged the BJP with inciting and spreading violence saying his supporter's had been fired at even as they emerged from the house of his daughter's in-laws. Mr. Yadav's clarion call to his supporters was clear: be armed and prepared to defeat the Opposition in the coming elections. His wife Ms. Rabri Devi was more forthcoming: "You have to have a lathi in each house and protect your booth in the elections."

Resenting the BJP's objection to the use of lathi, Mr. Yadav said, "for them the trishul, the talwar and the bandooks are okay. But not the lathi. If you want to the do away with the lathi, then remove the lathi from the statues of Mahatma Gandhi." While Mr. Yadav sought to paint the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, as a stooge of the U.S., Ms. Rabri Devi said the people should seek an explanation from the BJP for its "step-motherly" treatment of Bihar with the lathi.

It was lathis all the way and they came in all shapes and sizes. The RJD workers struck at

each other's lathis creating sounds like gunfire. Resolutions were approved by raising lathis unlike the usual case where hands are put up.

PTI reports:

Describing the BJP as the fountain-head of "communal politics", the rally, christened as "BJP bhagao desh bachao aur Bush bhagao vishwa bachao rally", accused the Vajpayee Government of trying to divide society along communal lines.

The "BJP wants to replicate the Gujarat formula in the next Lok Sabha elections. This shows the fanatical and fascist face of the party in power at the Centre."

"The Vajpayee regime would go down in history as the most corrupt, weak and ineffective government ever," Mr. Yadav said.

He assailed the Centre for its proposed scheme to inter-link rivers, saying states such as Bihar and Assam, endowed with huge water resources, would be adversely affected. "We will never allow the Centre to succeed in its evil design to rob us of this vital resource," he said with his cheering supporters waving lathis in approval.

## Samata-JD(U) to contest about 100 seats

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, NOV. 6. The Samata-Janata Dal (United) will contest around 100 seats in the five States going to polls this month and the next.

The merged party will altogether field nearly 70 candidates in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi and Chhattisgarh. In Mizoram it will contest 29 Assembly seats.

The chairman of the parliamentary board and Minister for Food and Consumer Affairs, Sharad Yadav, today released the list of 10 candidates for Madhya Pradesh, nine for Rajasthan and 29 for Mizoram. He said the party would contest 30 seats in Madhya Pradesh, 20 in Rajasthan and between 10 and 15 each in Rajasthan and Delhi.

The party, a constituent of the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) at the Centre, said there were no seat-sharing talks with the Bharatiya Janata Party. "We have not sought any seats from the BJP. Ours is a small party. As a big party leading the coalition, the BJP should come forward with a proposal," he said.

Mr. Yadav said the JD(U) had a long history and an all-India presence. On its own it had polled the third highest votes in Gujarat last year. Even now the party was contesting in seats where it had a strong base and good winning prospects. "But for Delhi and Chhattisgarh, we are in a good position everywhere," he added.

While declining to comment on the erstwhile JD(U) party rebel, Devendra Prasad Yadav's criticism that the merger was done without consulting party members, he said the merger reflected the will of party workers.

Earlier speaking to *The Hindu*, Capt. Jaipal Singh said he and his colleagues decided to leave the NCP as there was no 'inner party democracy'. He said there was absolute lack of development in Madhya Pradesh and they preferred to join the JD (U) as Mr. Yadav was trying to improve the situation.

THE HINDU

7 NOV 2006

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## FISSION AND FUSION

J.P.P.  
Janata Dal

THE LEADERS WHO were part of the Janata Party experiment in the post-Emergency period have been part of an endless cycle of squabbling among themselves and coming together to form new political formations. The merger of the Samata Party and the Janata Dal (United) is a case in point. George Fernandes and Sharad Yadav began their term in the present Lok Sabha as part of the Janata Dal (United); they had Ram Vilas Paswan and Ramakrishna Hegde for company. However, soon after the elections, the party went into fission mode. The immediate provocation was the dispute over who should be the president of the JD (U). While Mr. Fernandes took charge of the Samata Party and rallied his faithful around him, Mr. Sharad Yadav doggedly clung on to the JD (U) with backing from diverse quarters including Mr. Hegde. Soon Mr. Hegde parted company with Mr. Yadav and a little later, the JD (U) saga took a new turn with Mr. Paswan floating his own outfit. Despite such splits and the bitterness accompanying them, virtually all these players remain part of the National Democratic Alliance. Mr. Paswan is the exception and his departure from the NDA had nothing to do with the JD (U)'s internal affairs. If the splits are the work of conflicting egos and power struggles, the series of mergers is a reflection of political expediency.

Since both are NDA constituents, the Samata-JD (U) merger will not have any immediate impact on national politics. However, the merger of these two parties that have bases restricted to Bihar will mean that the BJP will no longer be the main Opposition party in the State. The JD (U) will now occupy that slot. However, the merger and the consequent changes in party positions within the Bihar State Assembly will not trigger any immediate political changes in the State. The

sharp polarisation of forces in Bihar — between Laloo Prasad Yadav and those opposed to him — is likely to force the JD(U) and the BJP to stay together, whatever their differences at the State or Central level. Those responsible for bringing about Samata-JD (U) 'unity' have hinted that this has been done with an eye on the coming general election. Having increased its strength, in terms of both the number of legislators and ground-level support, the post-merger JD (U) is in a position to bargain much more effectively with the BJP in Bihar when elections are held. The hints thrown by Mr. Fernandes as well as Mr. Yadav that their party will now start looking at partners outside the NDA lend significance to the move. Although the JD (U) may have no partner other than the BJP in Bihar, its options are wider elsewhere.

For instance, Mulayam Singh Yadav's Samajwadi Party and Kalyan Singh's outfit represent attractive options in Uttar Pradesh. These two leaders cannot think of an arrangement with the BJP for obvious reasons. With a substantial base in Uttar Pradesh, they have no use for the Congress, which is a very weak force in the State. Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party also falls in this category. The existing arrangement with the Congress in Maharashtra notwithstanding, the NCP is as unreconciled to an alliance with the Congress as it was at the time of its formation. The Telugu Desam Party and the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam are in an intriguing situation that is, in some respects, comparable to the Samata-JD(U)'s. Their leaders will be keeping a sharp eye out for pointers to what 2004 might bring, possibly political realignments and perhaps even a third force' as in 1996. But all this is too speculative for now.

## A brief history of Janata time

9.8.03



VP Singh

**1988:** Janata Party, Jan Morcha, headed by V P Singh, and two Lok Dals merge to form Janata Dal on October 11 at Bangalore.

**1990:** V P Singh's National Front Govt falls and JD splits. JD (Samajwadi) takes birth at the initiative of Chandrashekhar, Devi Lal and Mulayam Singh Yadav. Later, JD (Samajwadi) becomes Samajwadi Janata Party.



Chandrashekhar



Mulayam

**1992:** Mulayam deserts SJP to form Samajwadi Party. Later, Om Prakash Chautala, too, leaves SJP to form Indian National Lok Dal.

**1992:** Ajit Singh leaves VP Singh-led JD to form his own party.

**1993:** VP quits Janata Dal Parliamentary Party. Sharad Yadav becomes JDPP chief.



Sharad



Nitish

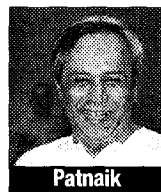
**1994:** Janata Dal splits in Bihar and Nitish Kumar and others form Samata Party with George Fernandes as its president.

**1997:** JD splits and Laloo Prasad Yadav forms Rashtriya Janata Dal.

**1998:** JD splits in Orissa, with Naveen Patnaik forming Biju Janata Dal.



Laloo



Patnaik

**1999:** JD splits into JD (Secular) headed by HD Deve Gowda and JD (United) led by Sharad Yadav. Later JD(S) splits in Karnataka, with SR Bommai forming All-India JD.

**2000:** Ram Vilas Paswan leaves JD-U, forms Lok Janshakti.

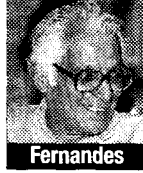
**2001:** RJD breaks and RJD (Democratic) with Nagmani and others formed.



Paswan

**2002:** Lok Janshakti splits with Jainarayan Prasad Nishad leading the revolt.

**2003:** BJD splits in Orissa with breakaway faction led by Bijoya Mahapatra.



Fernandes

**Oct 30, 2003:** JD-U and Samata merge to become Janata Dal (United) with Fernandes as its president.

# Fernandes is new chief of this JD(U) avatar

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 30 OCTOBER

DEFENCE minister and NDA convenor George Fernandes has donned another hat as the president of the new, arguably more powerful avatar of the Janata Dal (United). The choice of Mr Fernandes overran the speculation that railways minister Nitish Kumar would like to support the candidature of Union food and civil supplies minister Sharad Yadav for the post and might have been influenced by the equation the defence minister enjoys with the BJP as well as other components of the NDA.

Always the trouble-shooter for the ruling coalition, Mr Fernandes has lately been in the spotlight as he plays spoilsport for the Congress, poaching on the potential supporters of Mrs Sonia Gandhi. The new-look JD(U), with the accretion of 12 MPs belonging to the Samata Party, will have 18 members in the Lok Sabha, including Raghunath Jha and Brah-



GEORGE: NEW ROLE

manand Mandal.

The JD (U)-Samata merger, as Mr Fernandes put it during the press conference held here this afternoon, was part of a larger effort to bring the various splinter groups of the erstwhile Janata Dal together. He denied that the aim of the exercise was to revive the Third Front in the run-up to the Lok Sabha polls.

"The idea of the Third Front has no meaning. We are merely trying to put our house in or-

der," he said. It is, however, unlikely that the proponents of the merger plan will be able to attain a large degree of success in their plans to attract the other members of the Janata parivar to their fold.

Parties such as the Samajwadi Party, Indian National Lok Dal and the Biju Janata Dal have, over the years, acquired an independent identity of their own and merging them at this stage with another entity would be a difficult proposition for them. Even Trinamool Congress leader Mamata Banerjee, who, Mr Fernandes disclosed, had been extended an invitation to join them, would find it difficult to accept the offer.

The exercise may, nevertheless, make some headway in rallying together the anti-Laloo Prasad Yadav forces in Bihar. The post-2000 Assembly elections scenario in the state had seen the collapse of the NDA, with Ram Vilas Paswan walking out of the NDA combine to form his own party, the Lok Janshakti.

# Shahabuddin to surrender

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1/8  
P.P.P.  
R.S.

**Statesman News Service**

PATNA, Aug. 3. — RJD MP Md Shahabuddin, who is wanted in a kidnap case and has a warrant against him, appears to have “surrendered” to the wishes of his party supremo Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav.

The Siwan MP who was returning from Delhi to Siwan yesterday stopped at Gorakhpur apparently on the “instructions” of Mr Yadav. According to sources at 1-Anne Marg, Mr Yadav has asked Mr Shahabuddin “not to complicate the issue by arriving at Siwan”.

Mr Yadav, the sources said, asked the Siwan strongman to “surrender” in the Court. Mr Shahabuddin who had so far been asserting that he would not “bow down to any pressure tactics”, said over telephone: “I am ready to surrender”.

He said he had broken his journey on the “instruction of the party leadership”.

“The party is supreme... I have to abide by the instructions of my leadership.” Mr Shahabuddin, however, was critical about DGP Mr DP Ojha who has ordered his arrest. “Mr Ojha has tried to frame me in a three-year-old case to gain cheap publicity,” he said.

The Siwan MP alleged that a few persons with “vested interests” playing into the hands of the NDA were after him. Asked if he could name anyone, Mr Shahabuddin said: “It’s the DGP”.

DGP Mr Ojha, however, refused to comment on the MP’s statements. He said the MP was an accused in a criminal case and law would take its own course.

Railway Minister Mr Nitish Kumar said the RJD MP’s arrest was not a big issue but it has been blown up into “a high voltage drama” to divert peoples’ mind from the recent spate of kidnappings in the state.

“What is needed is a strong will to implement the orders of the DGP, Mr Ojha,” said Mr Kumar.

4 AUG 2003

THE STATESMAN

Breakthrough Came After A Series Of Meetings

# Samata crisis ends, Nitish withdraws resignation

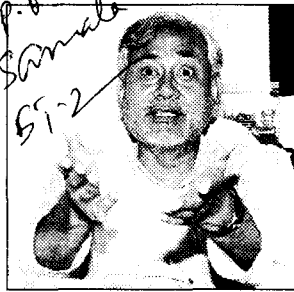
Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 16 JULY

THE two-day-long crisis within the Samata Party came to an end on Wednesday night with railway minister Nitish Kumar agreeing to withdraw his resignation. He is likely to resume work on Thursday.

The breakthrough came after a series of meetings — bilateral and trilateral — through the day. Later in the evening, Mr Prabhunath Singh, who had triggered the crisis by demanding the revocation of the expulsion of rebels MPs Raghunath Jha and Brahma-nand Mandal during the national council meeting on Monday, drove down to Mr Kumar's residence at the latter's invitation.

He was accompanied by his colleagues Arun Kumar, Sushil Kumar Singh (party MLA from Bihar) and Vashisth Narain Singh (Bihar Samata chief), who had emerged as the chief mediator between the two factions.

Emerging from the meeting, which lasted over two hours, Mr



NITISH: RAIL AILMENT

Prabhunath Singh told newsmen that the differences between the two sides had been sorted out, and that Mr Kumar would withdraw his resignation.

Mr Vashisth Narain Singh said: "The differences were not over any real issues. They were only emotional outbursts." Asked if Mr Kumar would withdraw his resignation, the Bihar Samata chief said: "He's not above the party. He has to go by the party's sentiments."

The Wednesday evening summit was preceded by a series of meetings, which began early in

the morning with Samata Party president George Fernandes taking the unusual step of going to Mr Kumar's residence on a fire-fighting mission. The two leaders remained closeted for almost an hour. Also present was Mr Vashisth Narain Singh.

It's learnt that Mr Fernandes once again made an impassioned plea to Mr Kumar to withdraw his resignation. The latter, however, refused to budge from his "no withdrawal" stand, reiterating that he could not continue in office as he had lost the trust of the majority of the party's parliamentary wing.

He's also learnt to have repeated his demand for an independent inquiry into allegations levelled against him by Mr Mandal.

Mr Fernandes followed it up by summoning Mr Prabhunath Singh to seek his help in defusing the crisis. Here too he's learnt to have made little headway, as Mr Prabhunath Singh responded by observing that he could do very little as he had no role in the entire affair.

# Nitish puts in his papers, Vajpayee doesn't oblige



**HEA(R)T OF THE MATTER** : Defence minister George Fernandes and railway minister Nitish Kumar at Samata Party's national executive meeting in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 14 JULY

**I**NTRA-party feud within the Samata Party just refuses to die down. Just when the tremors caused by suspension of two of its Lok Sabha members — Raghunath Jha and Brahmanand Mandal — has begun easing off, railways minister Nitish Kumar, miffed by demands for revocation of the suspensions, caused a major furore in the party by deciding to resign from the Union Cabinet.

His resignation, tendered toward the end of Samata Party's national council meeting, was forwarded not just to party president George Fernandes, but also to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, who, not surprisingly, rejected it promptly.

The sudden turn of events has

brought to the surface the simmering discontent within the Samata Party, particularly in its Bihar unit.

The reopening of what was supposed to be a closed chapter, kicked off at the national council by the irrepressible Prabhunath Singh, does not augur well for the party's election prospects in the state.

Making a veiled attack on Mr Kumar, the Maharajganj MP criticised the manner in which Mr Jha and Mr Mandal were eased out of the party. He summed up his speech by demanding revocation of the suspension order on the two MPs. This paved the way for similar demands from other members, including Munjay Lal, Arun Kumar and Renu Kumari (all Lok Sabha MPs from Bihar).

Mr Kumar, who was the target of a relentless smear campaign from

the two dissident MPs, especially Mr Mandal, who had gone on to demand that the Prime Minister's Office order an inquiry into the cases of corruption he had prepared, decided to take his critics head-on.

Speaking to members of the national council just before Mr Fernandes' valedictory address, he said he was fed up with criticism from a section of the party and was pained over corruption charges levelled against him.

Urging Mr Fernandes, who was earlier in the day re-elected party president, to order a judicial inquiry into the charges levelled by the two MPs, Mr Kumar declared, "I will not return to the government till I come out clean. I have always carried my resignation letter with me as I did not want to remain in politics by compromising my self-respect."



# Nitish camp axes George loyalists

APR 13 1999  
Sunder

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

Patna, April 13: The faction-ridden Samata Party inched closer to a split when a meeting of the party's state executive committee, attended by Nitish Kumar's supporters, adopted a resolution seeking expulsion of two MPs and three legislators owing allegiance to party president George Fernandes.

Moved by former minister Shyam Sunder Singh Dheeraj and adopted unanimously, the resolution demanded the suspension of MPs Raghunath Jha and Brahmanand Mandal, legislators Bhai Birendra, Ganesh Paswan and P.K. Sinha from primary membership for their alleged anti-party activities.

Samata Legislature Party leader Umashankar Singh, also a member of the Fernandes camp, was expelled at the meet. Upendra Kushwaha, a Nitish loyalist, has been temporarily appointed in his place.

Senior Fernandes loyalists, who held a separate meeting at Darbhanga today, dubbed the executive body defunct, saying it was not authorised to initiate the move. "Our struggle against Nitish Kumar is on. We demand his suspension from the party," said Raghunath Jha, a former state party president.

Nitish today conveyed support to his supporters, saying he would stand by the majority view of the state unit. "I belong to the party and I am bound by its laws," he said.

Earlier today, the railway minister held a round of talks with his party workers.

Basisth Narayan Singh, convener of the Bihar unit, said the state executive would send the recommendations for suspension to the national executive for prompt action.

The resolution declared that if the national executive failed to act immediately, the state unit would be forced to take a decision. But this invited flak from even some Nitish loyalists — Jehanabad MP Arun Kumar was shouted down by other party leaders when he raised the point at the Samata state council meeting.

The Samata Legislature Party, the state executive and the party's state council met separately and the resolution was passed by all the three bodies by voice vote.

Nitish was monitoring all the meetings even as he was busy attending programmes in Patna. "The party has passed through several crises but we hope to emerge stronger after we weed out the disturbing elements," said Kushwaha.

14 APR 2003

THE TELEGRAPH

*Samata party*

# Condemn USA: Samata

Statesman News Service

SSS 899

NEW DELHI, April 2. — The Samata Party today criticised the Centre's stand on the war and asked for a "unanimous" parliamentary resolution condemning the "US invasion".

This puts the government, which has been relatively guarded in its criticism in a potentially troublesome situation. It had fended off Opposition demands on a parliamentary resolution. An ally deserting the official position may add strength to the Opposition demand.

Samata Party general secretary and spokesman, Dr Shambhu Srivastava, said the NDA government should facilitate the passing of a unanimous resolution on the first day of Parliament's post-recess budget session. He also attacked what he called the Indian "foreign policy establishment".

He said, "Our foreign policy establishment is infested with people who think national interest and US interest are one and the same." Asked whether his party was seeking a review of Indian foreign policy, he said "No. What we feel is that our policy should not be merely Pakistan-centric and US-obsessed ... We should take a moral and practical stand to protect our interests".

He dubbed as "illusion" the "logic" that by not opposing US policies India will be able to distance Washington from Pakistan.

He demanded that the Centre immediately ask the UN and NAM to convene meetings to demand an end to the war. Dr Srivastava announced Samata plans to observe 5 April as a "protest day" against the "US invasion". He also gave a public call to boycott American brands.

THE STATESMAN

# Amar Singh alleges death plot

18 OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT 15/4

New Delhi, April 14: Samajwadi Party general secretary Amar Singh today alleged a political conspiracy between the NDA government at the Centre and Uttar Pradesh chief minister Mayavati to finish off his party.

Singh said the Samajwadi will intensify its agitation against the state government and expose the "Centre-state connivance". Singh said Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani were behind the "conspiracy".

"This is happening at the instance of the Prime Minister and the deputy Prime Minister and Mayavati is being used as a *mohra* (pawn)," the Samajwadi leader alleged. "The conspiracy has been hatched during the recent meetings Mayavati has had with Vajpayee and Advani here," he alleged.

Going hammer and tongs at

Mayavati, Singh said the Bahujan Samaj Party's *pardafash* rally in Lucknow today did not expose anything. Singh said neither he nor Samajwadi leader Mulayam Singh Yadav was scared of Mayavati's threats and they would face her politically, adding that he was waiting for the "Ghaziabad police to knock at his doors and raid any time".

The Samajwadi leader alleged that Mayavati has asked some criminals released from an Aligarh jail to kill him, Mulayam Singh Yadav's son Akhilesh Singh and Shivpal Singh, the party's Uttar Pradesh general secretary. "I have given the list of those criminals to the government. I have written to deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani," he said.

Singh said the party will



Amar Singh

launch a cycle rally on April 19 at the block and district levels in the state to politically counter her. "The cycle yatra will conclude with a huge rally at Lucknow on May 12," he said.

The Samajwadi general secretary regretted the Congress' refusal to co-operate in dislodging the BSP-BJP government, but said he would again

talk to it to broaden the agitation against the Mayavati government.

Singh also came down on the BJP top brass and the Centre for propping up the Mayavati government. He alleged that she was acting at the behest of Vajpayee and Advani. "Without the Centre's blessings it (filing cases against Samajwadi leaders) is not possible," he said.

Singh lambasted the BSP chief for "unleashing a reign of ter-

ror" on Samajwadi members and thanked her for the publicity she gave the party. "The entire rally was devoted to abusing me and Mulayam Singh Yadav. She has become our propaganda secretary. I am grateful to her."

The Samajwadi leader challenged her to disprove the veracity of the videotapes, in which she allegedly told party legislators to contribute a portion of their constituency development fund to the party. He said he would quit politics if it was proved that the tape was "doctored", as alleged by the BSP leader. "Let her show evidence that I doctored the tapes," he said and sought a CBI probe into the matter.

Singh said Tarun Tejpal's Tehelka exposed former BJP president Bangaru Laxman and defence scams, following which Laxman was forced to quit the post and George Fernandes also had to quit as defence minister. "What is good for Peter (Bangaru and Fernandes) is good for Paul (Mayavati)," he said.

15 APR 2003

# Nitish followers expel 5 senior George loyalists

Patna  
13 APRIL

**T**HE Samata Party was on the brink of a split on Sunday as bitter factional feud deepened, with Nitish Kumar loyalists "expelling" five senior lawmakers and "ousting" leaders of Samata Legislature groups owing allegiance to defence minister, George Fernandes.

Amid a boycott by supporters of Fernandes, loyalists of Nitish Kumar, railway minister, held meetings of the State Executive Committee, State Council and the legislature party where they announced the "removal" of George-supporters Umasankar Singh as

leader of Samata legislature party and P.K. Sinha as head of the party's group in the legislative council. Kumar-supporters in the state executive of the party assembled at the MLA club hall on Sunday morning and unanimously adopted a resolution seeking expulsion of two party MPs Raghunath Jha and Brahmanand Mandal, Bhai Birendra and Ganesh Paswan (both MLAs) and Sinha from the primary membership of the party.

A swarm of Kumar loyalists ratified the action at the meeting

of the State Council and the legislature party expressing unflinching faith in the railway minister. Fernandes loyalists, including Jha, Mandal and others, holding workers' meeting in the north Bihar town of Darbhanga for restoration of inner-party democracy termed Sunday's meetings called by Kumar's supporters as "unauthorised" and said "we will take our battle to the



**FERNANDES: IN A Fix**

logical conclusion". Convenor of Samata Party's Bihar unit and Kumar loyalist Basisht Narayan Singh told reporters here that while Singh has been "replaced" by his deputy Upendra Prasad Kushwaha Mnagani Lal Mandal will be the new leader of the party in the Council with im-

mediate effect.

Kumar promptly came out in support of the action taken by his supporters in the state executive council and the legislature party saying he will support any move to curb indiscipline. Reacting sharply to Nitish-loyalists' resolution seeking expulsion of the two MPs and three legislators, P.K. Sinha asserted the meeting lacked legal and constitutional validity as Basisht Narain Singh, appointed convenor to oversee organisational elections, had no authority to call meetings. — PTI

15 APR 1983

## FIGHTING IT OUT

The factional battle within the Samata Party has nothing to do with principles or policy. Rival camps owing allegiance to the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, and the railway minister, Mr Nitish Kumar, have been fighting it out to take control of the party. It had come close to a split on several occasions before. The only factor that seemed to have saved the party such a fate so far is its place in the National Democratic Alliance government. Of the Bharatiya Janata Party's partners in the Union government, the Samata Party has had a profile rather disproportionate to its strength in the Lok Sabha. Both Mr Fernandes and Mr Kumar hold important portfolios in the cabinet. Despite their endless bickerings, the factions have not gone far enough to upset the cabinet apple-cart. While this enables the leaders to enjoy the fruits of power, it erodes the party's credibility to the people. The party's unsavoury power-game is also increasingly proving an embarrassment for the NDA, of which Mr Fernandes is the convener. The BJP cannot afford to take sides in this tussle within a party which is a partner because both factions want the Samata Party to continue its relationship with the *sangh parivar*. From the BJP's point of view, a split will damage not only the party but also the alliance, especially at a time when crucial state assembly elections are round the corner and the next parliamentary elections less than a year away.

Waiting in the wings to reap the political benefit of a split in the Samata Party is Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav. Its claim of a national identity notwithstanding, the party's only substantive presence is in Bihar where it emerged as a strong challenger to Mr Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal among some sections of the people. Ironically, the party's growing popularity among the Kurmis and some other people in Bihar's caste-ridden politics has eventually become the main reason behind its internecine battles. The battle for the party is thus also a battle for the loyalty of some castes in Bihar. This precisely is the reason why Mr Kumar seems to have a greater control over the Bihar unit of the party than Mr Fernandes who never had much of a mass base in the state. It is unlikely, however, that the defence minister's camp will accept the Bihar unit's decision to expel two members of Parliament and three members of the state assembly who are loyal to him. It is a matter of time before the party's battle-front shifts from Patna to New Delhi, where Mr Fernandes's supporters can take on the rivals at the party's national executive committee.

15 APR 2005

# Samata, JD(U) to oppose Women's Bill

Our Political Bureau  
NEW DELHI 5 MAY

**T**HE government's ambitious bid to take matters forward on the long-pending Women's Reservation Bill on Monday boomeranged, triggering a "backward" rebellion with the OBC-dominated NDA opponents — Samata and Janata Dal (United) — firmly arrayed on the side of the opponents.

The decision is bound to meet with stiff resistance from the Samajwadi Party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal and the BJP's own allies such as the Samata Party, the Shiv Sena, Janata Dal (United),

and even the DMK. The parties have made it clear that they will oppose the Bill tooth and nail.

With the two Yadav chieftains — Mr Mulyam Singh and Mr Laloo Prasad — refusing to budge from their stated positions, the stage is set for the re-enactment of the stormy scenes of the kind witnessed during the previous Lok Sabha in 1999, when the RJDMP from Jehanabad, Mr Surendra Kumar Yadav had snatched the Bill's copy from the then law minister, Mr Ram Jethmalani's hands and tore it into pieces.

While the resistance from the "usual suspects" should not have worried the government in a sit-

uation where it has the support of the Congress and the Left, the cushion has been eroded severely by the sabotage by NDA components. Samata and JD-U sources were bitter that the Bill was being foisted upon them in breach of the understanding reached at the last NDA meeting that the government will seek, acting on the recommendations of the Election Commission, to get political parties reserve a fixed percentage of their nominations for women, rather than persisting with the original Bill.

Both Samata and the JD-U opposed the reservation as they spearheaded the demand for sep-

arate reservation for OBCs and minorities. Mr Nitish Kumar was on the Joint Select Committee which tried in vain to hammer an agreement and submitted a very strong note of dissent. Likewise, Mr Sharad Yadav, another Cabinet minister from the ranks of the kangaroo quota dead-enders, made headlines when he derisively referred to the supporters of the women's quota as "parkatis". The two outfits were canvassing support from other OBC-dominated NDA components, like the DMK, amid indications of success. The Shiv Sena was also opposed to the legislation, albeit for different reasons.

Anger was directed against the parliamentary affairs minister Sushma Swaraj, who was accused of acting unilaterally in order to curry favour with the "politically correct" crowd. It was because of similar opposition that the Bill continues to be in hibernation even though it is 3 years since it was tabled. Despite several rounds of all-party meetings, the government failed to hammer out a consensus on the Bill in its original form. While the RJDMC categorically stated that it would oppose the Bill in any form, the SP wanted the government to consider the proposal mooted by the Election Commission.

# Laloo, Rabri attack BJP at RJD rally

By K. Balchand

**PATNA, APRIL 30.** The ruling Rashtriya Janata Dal today displayed its newly raised lathi-wielding army at its rally here, undeterred by two incidents of violence in less than 12 hours killing as many people, one belonging to the party and the other to the rival BJP.

While a BJP man was killed this morning even as RJD supporters marched to the historic Gandhi Maidan, an RJD worker died in yet another incident of group rivalry last night. There was no backlash of the two killings, however, on the rally. In fact, the lathi-brandishing rallyists remained disciplined.

Satyamarayan Sinha, who unsuccessfully contested the Darrang Assembly byelection on a BJP ticket last year, was gunned down during a battle with the JD's Reet Lal Yadav at Jamadhin Chak under Danapur police station about 15 km from Patna.

Sinha's supporters went on a rampage burning down a dozen vehicles carrying RJD supporters to the rally attacking a residence of the father-in-law of the Chief Minister, Rabri Devi's daughter, Misa Bharati. Rival groups continued to



**The Rashtriya Janata Dal chief, Laloo Prasad Yadav, and the Bihar Chief Minister, Rabri Devi, displaying a lathi at the rally in Patna on Wednesday.** Photo: Ranjeet Kumar

exchange fire, despite the presence of police who fired in the air to prevent the situation from deteriorating.

Last night, Raj Kumar Yadav, cousin of the former MLA and RJD leader, Ranveer Yadav, convicted in the Tauri Diara mas-

sacre in which nine persons were killed in 1985, was killed by unidentified criminals.

At the rally, the RJD supremo, Laloo Prasad Yadav, charged the BJP with inciting and spreading violence saying his supporters had been fired at even as they emerged from the house of his daughter's in-laws. Mr. Yadav's clarion call to his supporters was clear: be armed and prepared to defeat the Opposition in the coming elections. His wife Ms. Rabri Devi was more forthcoming: "You have to have a lathi in each house and protect your booth in the elections."

Resenting the BJP's objection to the use of lathi, Mr. Yadav said, "for them the trishul, the talwar and the bandooks are okay. But not the lathi. If you want to do away with the lathi, then remove the lathi from the statues of Mahatma Gandhi." While Mr. Yadav sought to paint the Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, as a stooge of the U.S., Ms. Rabri Devi said the people should seek an explanation from the BJP for its "step-motherly" treatment of Bihar with the lathi.

It was lathis all the way and they came in all shapes and sizes. The RJD workers struck at

each other's lathis creating sounds like gunfire. Resolutions were approved by raising lathis unlike the usual case where hands are put up.

PTI reports: Describing the BJP as the fountain-head of "communal politics", the rally, christened as "BJP bhagao desh bachao aur Bush bhagao vishwa bachao rally", accused the Vajpayee Government of trying to divide society along communal lines.

The "BJP wants to replicate the Gujarat formula in the next Lok Sabha elections. This shows the fanatical and fascist face of the party in power at the Centre."

"The Vajpayee regime would go down in history as the most corrupt, weak and ineffective government ever," Mr. Yadav said.

He assailed the Centre for its proposed scheme to inter-link rivers, saying states such as Bihar and Assam, endowed with huge water resources, would be adversely affected. "We will never allow the Centre to succeed in its evil design to rob us of this vital resource," he said with his cheering supporters waving lathis in approval.

# Laloo's 'lathi' to counter 'trishul'

By K. Balchand

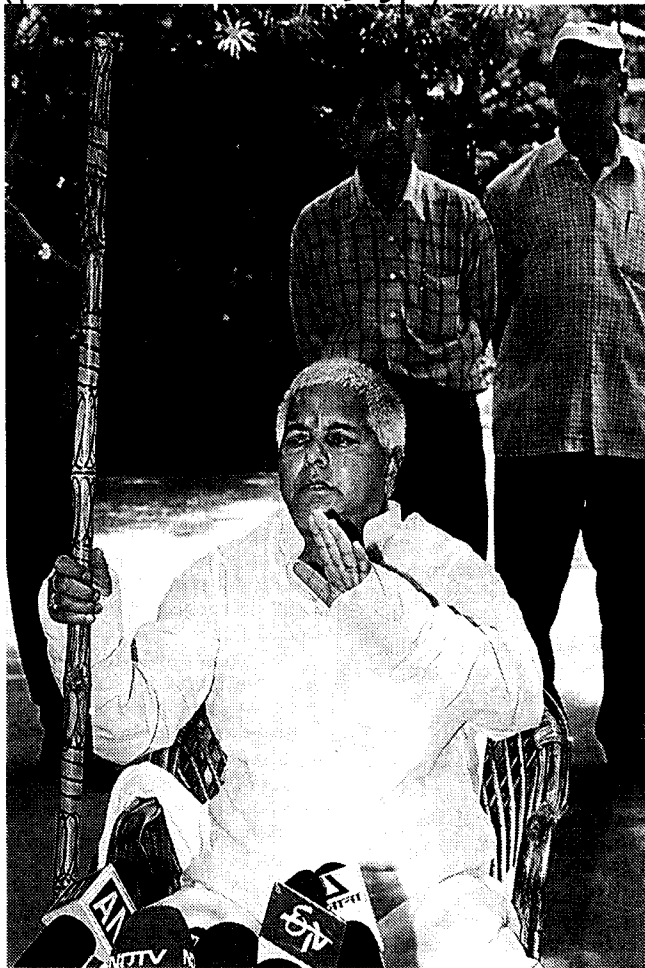
PATNA, APRIL 21. Despite the BJP's resistance, the Rashtriya Janata Dal supremo, Laloo Prasad Yadav, today intensified his campaign to arm the people with batons (lathis) for "self-protection" and countering the Sangh Parivar's idea of equipping its supporters with trishuls (trident).

While the BJP leaders, including its national general secretary, Rajnath Singh, who is here on a day's visit, apprehended breach of peace during the RJD rally here on April 30, Mr. Yadav said the 'lathi' was a symbol of support and each citizen had a right to private protection.

"We don't believe in violence. We believe in non-violence. Mahatma Gandhi carried the lathi and the lathi symbolises Bapu," he said.

The unpleasant incidents at a couple of his preparatory meetings notwithstanding, Mr. Yadav underlined the utility of the 'lathi' and sought to stress that it was not a weapon like the trishul that the VHP was distributing nor the guns that the Shiv Sena was providing to its workers.

The RJD leader also demonstrated the manner in which the 'lathi' is to be used against "out enemies." He said at his press conference here today that it was well within the law to hit below the knee and get away with it. "You will get bail even before you reach the police station, let alone go to jail." Mr. Yadav scoffed at the BJP leaders for trying to seek the intervention of the Governor and the



The RJD chief, Laloo Prasad Yadav, displaying a lathi at a press conference in Patna on Monday. — Photo: Ranjeet Kumar

President to stop his people from carrying the 'lathi'. "They are terrorising the people with their trishuls and guns and not us. The trishul belongs to Lord Shiva and who is Praveen Togadia to insult this sacred article by making it an object of terror," he asked.

Mr. Rajnath Singh told presspersons that there was no comparison between the

trishul and the 'lathi'. He argued that the trishul was being distributed by the VHP which was a religious and social body without any political inclination. He said it was illegal for a political party to ask its supporters to arm themselves. The Centre would take a stand on the issue once it received a report from the Governor, he added.



# Partymen demand George's scalp

TIMES NEWS NETWORK AND AGENCIES

**New Delhi:** After the defence minister's "surrender" to railway minister Nitish Kumar in the power struggle within the Samata Party, George Fernandes' supporters have turned against him and demanded his resignation from the Union cabinet.



G. Fernandes

"You have forfeited all moral right to remain the defence minister," Samata MPs Raghunnath Jha and Brahmanand Mandal told Mr Fernandes in a letter, which was released to the press on Sunday. The MPs asked Mr Fernandes how he could defend the country if he could not protect the interests of his supporters.

The crisis in the party has been brewing since January and had taken the party to the verge of a split last Sunday when the Nitish faction sought the expulsion of Fernandes loyalists in parliament and the Bihar legislature from the party. But on Saturday, a day before leaving for China, Mr Fernandes bought peace with Mr Kumar by suspending three Bihar legislators loyal to him—MLAs Ganesh Paswan and Bhai Virender and MLC P.K. Sinha. He also accepted the replacement of his supporters with Nitish loyalists as party leaders in the Bihar as-

sembly and the legislative council. Mr Fernandes also appointed a Nitish faction member, Prabhunath Singh, as head of a disciplinary action committee.

With these appointments, Mr Kumar's control over the party apparatus has become near total with Mr Fernandes remaining the president of the party without any real powers. And it was this "surrender" by their leader which made Mr Fernandes' loyalists to hit out at him. The two MPs described Mr Fernandes as a "weak and helpless" leader who has become a "rubber stamp" for Mr Kumar's "unconstitutional activities".

Mr Jha, who was earlier removed from his post of president of the Bihar Samata unit, claimed that the party squabbles within the party had helped the ruling RJD in Bihar and that he and Mr Mandal would not accept Mr Kumar as their leader. They also said that before suspending the three legislators, their case should have been referred to the central disciplinary committee.

Meanwhile, the three suspended legislators said on Sunday that they would file a petition in the Patna high court and move the Election Commission afresh against Mr Fernandes and Mr Kumar for violating the party constitution in suspending them. At a joint press conference, Mr Sinha said "the action of Mr Fernandes was totally unjustified as he suspended us under duress without providing us with an opportunity to explain our position".

THE TIMES OF INDIA

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THE TIMES OF INDIA

# Samata crisis may lead to realignment in Delhi

By K.V. Prasad

NEW DELHI, APRIL 13. The latest development in the Bihar unit of the Samata Party could see a possible realignment within the "Janata parivar" at the Centre as the tussle between the two top leaders, George Fernandes and Nitish Kumar, took a turn for the worse.

The tidings from Patna do not augur well for the Samata chief and Defence Minister, George Fernandes, whose loyalists have been ejected from prime party posts.

On his part, Mr. Fernandes does not want to be seen as a leader who wrecked the party he created.

While official word is being awaited from the Samata camp, a senior leader associated with the socialist groupings said the battle could well "see a realignment" in Delhi, which could result in Mr. Fernandes consolidating his grip over the Samata Parliamentary Party.

The Samata Party, with 12

Lok Sabha MPs, is the second largest constituent in the NDA Government after the Shiv Sena and enjoys a high rating with the BJP. Such is the level of confidence that Mr. Fernandes continued to be the NDA convener even after he quit the Union Cabinet on the Tehelka issue.

At present, the senior leader said, "At least eight of the 12 MPs are aligned with Mr. Fernandes, while the rest includes some fence sitters". With a serious revolt virtually resulting in a vertical division and the Bihar unit going the Railway Minister, Nitish Kumar's way, Mr. Fernandes may "expand his following as a measure of caution".

As of now, Mr. Fernandes is promoting the Trinamool Congress (with eight MPs) and its leader, Mamata Banerjee. It is understood that he has been advocating her return to the Union Cabinet.

Ms. Banerjee is said to be inclined towards reclaiming the Railway Ministry, and after the current showdown with Mr. Ku-

mar, the Samata chief may no longer plead with the BJP that his party colleague be allowed to retain the prime portfolio.

Significantly, the development comes at a time when different factions in the "Janata parivar" in Karnataka are trying to sort out their differences and close ranks. A similar move cannot be ruled out in Bihar, where the Samata Party and the Janata Dal (United) have good working relations.

Apparently, there is a move to sound out the Lok Janshakti Party chief, Ram Vilas Paswan, who quit the Vajpayee Government after the Gujarat riots.

Mr. Paswan, who was in the anti-Laloo Prasad Yadav front, has found himself alone ever since. His efforts to join hands with the Congress came a cropper during the Gujarat Assembly elections and, later, his party contested independently in the Himachal Pradesh elections in February last.

**Fernandes loyalists' expulsion sought: Page 11**

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THE HINDU

THE HINDU

## FIGHTING IT OUT

The factional battle within the Samata Party has nothing to do with principles or policy. Rival camps owing allegiance to the defence minister, Mr George Fernandes, and the railway minister, Mr Nitish Kumar, have been fighting it out to take control of the party. It had come close to a split on several occasions before. The only factor that seemed to have saved the party such a fate so far is its place in the National Democratic Alliance government. Of the Bharatiya Janata Party's partners in the Union government, the Samata Party has had a profile rather disproportionate to its strength in the Lok Sabha. Both Mr Fernandes and Mr Kumar hold important portfolios in the cabinet. Despite their endless bickerings, the factions have not gone far enough to upset the cabinet apple-cart. While this enables the leaders to enjoy the fruits of power, it erodes the party's credibility to the people. The party's unsavoury power-game is also increasingly proving an embarrassment for the NDA, of which Mr Fernandes is the convener. The BJP cannot afford to take sides in this tussle within a party which is a partner because both factions want the Samata Party to continue its relationship with the *sangh parivar*. From the BJP's point of view, a split will damage not only the party but also the alliance, especially at a time when crucial state assembly elections are round the corner and the next parliamentary elections less than a year away.

Waiting in the wings to reap the political benefit of a split in the Samata Party is Mr Laloo Prasad Yadav. Its claim of a national identity notwithstanding, the party's only substantive presence is in Bihar where it emerged as a strong challenger to Mr Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal among some sections of the people. Ironically, the party's growing popularity among the Kurmis and some other people in Bihar's caste-ridden politics has eventually become the main reason behind its internecine battles. The battle for the party is thus also a battle for the loyalty of some castes in Bihar. This precisely is the reason why Mr Kumar seems to have a greater control over the Bihar unit of the party than Mr Fernandes who never had much of a mass base in the state. It is unlikely, however, that the defence minister's camp will accept the Bihar unit's decision to expel two members of Parliament and three members of the state assembly who are loyal to him. It is a matter of time before the party's battle-front shifts from Patna to New Delhi, where Mr Fernandes's supporters can take on the rivals at the party's national executive committee.

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THE TELEGRAPH

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# Nitish followers expel 5 senior George loyalists

Patna  
13 APRIL

**T**HE Samata Party was on the brink of a split on Sunday as bitter factional feud deepened, with Nitish Kumar loyalists "expelling" five senior lawmakers and "ousting" leaders of Samata Legislature groups owing allegiance to defence minister, George Fernandes.

Amid a boycott by supporters of Fernandes, loyalists of Nitish Kumar, railway minister, held meetings of the State Executive Committee, State Council and the legislature party where they announced the "removal" of George-supporters Umasankar Singh as leader of Samata legislature party and P. K. Sinha as head of the party's group in the legislative council. Kumar-supporters in the state executive of the party assembled at the MLA club hall on Sunday morning and unanimously adopted a resolution seeking expulsion of two party MPs Raghunath Jha and Brahmanand Mandal, Bhai Birendra and Ganesh Paswan (both MLAs) and Sinha from the primary membership of the party.

A swarm of Kumar loyalists ratified the action at the meeting

of the State Council and the legislature party expressing unflinching faith in the railway minister. Fernandes loyalists, including Jha, Mandal and others, holding workers' meeting in the north Bihar town of Darbhanga for restoration of inner-party democracy termed Sunday's meetings called by Kumar's supporters as "unauthorised" and said "we will take our battle to the

logical conclusion". Convenor of Samata Party's Bihar unit and Kumar loyalist Basisht Narayan Singh told reporters here that while Singh has been "replaced" by his deputy Upendra Prasad Kushwaha Mnagani Lal Mandal will be the new leader of the party in the Council with im-



FERNANDES: IN A FIX

mediate effect.

Kumar promptly came out in support of the action taken by his supporters in the state executive council and the legislature party saying he will support any move to curb indiscipline. Reacting sharply to Nitish-loyalists' resolution seeking expulsion of the two MPs and three legislators, P.K. Sinha asserted the meeting lacked legal and constitutional validity as Basisht Narain Singh, appointed convenor to oversee organisational elections, had no authority to call meetings. — PTI

14 APR 2003

The Economic Times

# Nitish camp axes George loyalists

OUR SPECIAL  
CORRESPONDENT

Patna, April 13: The faction-ridden Samata Party inched closer to a split when a meeting of the party's state executive committee, attended by Nitish Kumar's supporters, adopted a resolution seeking expulsion of two MPs and three legislators owing allegiance to party president George Fernandes.

Moved by former minister Shyam Sunder Singh Dheeraj and adopted unanimously, the resolution demanded the suspension of MPs Raghunath Jha and Brahmanand Mandal, legislators Bhai Birendra, Ganesh Paswan and P.K. Sinha from primary membership for their alleged anti-party activities.

Samata Legislature Party leader Umashankar Singh, also a member of the Fernandes camp, was expelled at the meet. Upendra Kushwaha, a Nitish loyalist, has been temporarily appointed in his place.

Senior Fernandes loyalists, who held a separate meeting at Darbhanga today, dubbed the executive body defunct, saying it was not authorised to initiate the move. "Our struggle against Nitish Kumar is on. We demand his suspension from the party," said Raghunath Jha, a former state party president.

Nitish today conveyed support to his supporters, saying he would stand by the majority view of the state unit. "I belong to the party and I am bound by its laws," he said.

Earlier today, the railway minister held a round of talks with his party workers.

Basisth Narayan Singh, convener of the Bihar unit, said the state executive would send the recommendations for suspension to the national executive for prompt action.

The resolution declared that if the national executive failed to act immediately, the state unit would be forced to take a decision. But this invited flak from even some Nitish loyalists — Jehanabad MP Arun Kumar was shouted down by other party leaders when he raised the point at the Samata state council meeting.

The Samata Legislature Party, the state executive and the party's state council met separately and the resolution was passed by all the three bodies by voice vote.

Nitish was monitoring all the meetings even as he was busy attending programmes in Patna. "The party has passed through several crises but we hope to emerge stronger after we weed out the disturbing elements," said Kushwaha.

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THE TELEGRAPH

# Nitish followers expel 5 senior George loyalists

Patna  
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FERNANDES: IN A FIX

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NITISH 'AUTHORISED' TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST GEORGE

# Fissures in Samata resurface

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## STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

PATNA, April 5. — Fissures in the Samata Party has surfaced again with party legislators loyal to Mr Nitish Kumar "authorising" him to take action against party chief Mr George Fernandes for "encouraging" dissident activity in the party.

At their meeting today, some MLAs, including Samata Party deputy leader in the Assembly Mr Upendra Kushwaha even demanded the defence minister's "expulsion".

Differences between Mr Kumar and Mr Fernandes came to the fore into with Nitish Kumar loyalists dismissing Mr PK Sinha, a Fernandes loyalist, as state party spokesman. Later, at their two-hour acrimonious deliberations, the MLAs criticised Mr Fernandes for his "conspiracy to weaken Mr Nitish Kumar".

The railway minister re-



Mr Nitish Kumar and Mr George Fernandes

portedly enjoys the support of 30 out of the 33 Samata Party MLAs in the state. It was a legislature party meeting but Mr Kumar's supporters dominated proceedings.

Mr Sinha sat on dharna near the meeting venue to protest against his "illegal and unceremonious" dismissal from his post. But Nitish loyalists accused him of petitioning the Election Commission

against the dissolution of the state executive "at Mr Fernandes' behest." The meeting debated on a two-paged resolution expressing apprehension that Mr Fernandes was conspiring to hijack the Samata Party or plotting to leave it. Trying to play down differences in the party, Samata legislature party leader Mr Uma Shankar Singh said the resolution was not put for

voting. But another leader, Mr Kushwaha, told reporters 30 MLAs voted for the resolution censuring Mr Fernandes for his "anti-party activity." Mr Kushwaha circulated the copy of the resolution among the reporters.

Mr Kushwaha said Mr Kumar was the "main leader of the party" and anyone unhappy with Mr Kumar's leadership had no business to stay in the party. "Mr Fernandes has done too much damage to the party and he should be kicked out before it's too late."

Mr Sinha demanded action against those who had spoken out against Mr Fernandes. "Those who have spoken against the party president have broken all the norms of discipline ... action should be taken against them." He said his dismissal was illegal and no showcause was served on him as claimed by Mr Uma Shankar Singh.



# Samata Party crisis deepens

By K. Balchand

**PATNA, APRIL 5.** The crisis in the Samata Party deepened with the Nitish Kumar faction gunning for the Defence Minister and party president, George Fernandes' scalp at its legislature party meeting today.

The meeting was held against the backdrop of the letter to the Election Commission by the party spokesman denying the dissolution of the State executive and claiming that Bashisht Narain Singh had been appointed as convener of the Bihar unit to oversee organisational elections. The stage for confrontation was set when, earlier in the day, the Nitish Kumar faction removed P.K. Sinha — considered a Fernandes loyalist — as party leader in the Legislative Council.

There were claims and counter-claims about the resolutions adopted at the meeting. While supporters of the Railway Minister claimed that a resolution accusing Mr. Fernandes of conspiring against Mr. Kumar had been adopted, the Samata's Legislature Party leader, Uma Shanker Singh, denied it. Mr. Singh, who chaired the meeting, said the meeting reposed faith

in Mr. Kumar's leadership and expressed dismay over the change in the stand regarding the status of the State executive and called upon its central leadership to convene the national council to resolve the dispute.

On the other hand, the deputy leader of the party in the Assembly, Upendra Kushwaha, claimed that a resolution condemning Mr. Fernandes' role in "belittling" Mr. Kumar and seeking to remove him from the post of party President was adopted. The resolution, he said, urged Mr. Kumar to take over the leadership of the party in a bid to strengthen it and defeat the alleged conspiracy of Mr. Fernandes to destroy the party altogether.

Mr. Kushwaha said the resolution was opposed only by three of the 28 legislators present. Having demonstrated its hold over the legislative wing, Mr. Kumar's group is now set to prove its organisational control on April 12 and 13 when an emergency meeting of the State executive and all district units would be held.

Things in the party turned sour with the exit of Raghunath Jha as the State unit chief and the dissolution of the State ex-

ecutive by the parliamentary party. This was, however, denied by the Fernandes group in its letter to the Election Commission.

## Maran's condition has improved, says Karunanidhi

By Our Special Correspondent

**CHENNAI, APRIL 5.** The DMK president, M. Karunanidhi, said today that the condition of the Union Minister, Murasoli Maran, had improved. But he was not in a position to come back immediately. "It could take a month," he said when asked if the Minister would be back home.

Mr. Maran is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Houston in the United States.

On the Sri Lankan Government's move to hold a referendum at a time when the peace talks were gaining momentum, he said the talks should continue. Asked why the Centre did not condemn the U.S.-led attack on Iraq when most of the NDA partners had condemned it, he said he could not comment based on newspaper reports.

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THE HINDU