

Imrana's father-in-law Ali
Mohammed in police custody.

should be meted out to her with-
out delay".

Women's support

Meanwhile, Imrana found further support as several women and voluntary organisations came out to express their solidarity with her. A Muslim welfare society on Wednesday urged members of the community to rally behind her and demanded that the case be heard by a fast-track court. Members of the Fazalhe Insanayat Welfare Society gave her Rs 5,100, the "first instalment towards relief".

and the consequent fatwa by the Dar-ul-Uloom of Deoband annulling her marriage has snowballed into a debate among the Muslim intellectuals on the campus.

AMU intellectuals contend that the case has two aspects — the crime and its nature, which is more "personal". If provisions of IPC are to be implemented, then one has to wait till the crime is proved. If the Shariat is to be invoked, then it will not be possible to do so in India as it is not an Islamic country. The Shariat decides on personal aspects of the community.

Another scholar said the fatwa was not justified as Imrana could not be blamed if her father-in-law or any of her husband's relatives "physically abused" her.

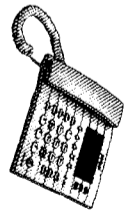
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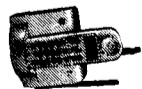
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Yashwant not quitting party

I'll continue
to raise issues'

PRESS Trust of India
New Delhi, June 29

DELHI: Yashwant Sinha on Wednesday said he will not quit the BJP but continue to raise issues of ideology while remaining within the party, which he felt had not taken his statements in the "right spirit".



30 JUN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Yashwant is no longer BJP spokesperson

New Delhi
28 JUNE

FORMER Union minister Yashwant Sinha, who created a flutter recently, after criticising BJP president LK Advani and chiding the Jharkhand chief minister, was sacked as BJP spokesperson on Tuesday.

Mr Sinha, who was asked by the party not to air his grievances in public last week, does not figure in the panel of BJP spokespersons which was reconstituted by Mr Advani on Tuesday. No reason was given for his removal but it comes close on the heels of his critical remarks about the Jinnah controversy involving Mr Advani. Mr Sinha had said the discussion on the Pakistan founder could have been avoided, which drew flak within the party.

"The panel of spokespersons

has been reconstituted by the party president, Mr Advani. Sushma Swaraj and myself will be the two spokespersons," party spokesperson Arun Jaitley said. Manvendra Singh and Prakash Javdekar will be the additional spokespersons.

Mr Sinha, who originally came from the Janata Dal and was the finance and external affairs minister in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, had also wondered whether Mr Advani would be competent enough as leader of the Opposition after his resignation as party president. After his unbridled attack on Jharkhand chief minister Arjun Munda, accusing him of corruption and extravagance, the party asked Mr Sinha not to air his views in public. But he maintained that he had expressed his opinion in the interest of the people. —PTI



আডবাণী-বিরোধিতায় এ বার সুর নবম করছে আরএসএস

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৮ জুন: জিন্মা বিতর্ক নিয়ে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের মধ্যে দ্বিধাগ্রস্ত আডবাণীকে 'বয়কট' করার কথা ঘোষণা করলেও নিজেদের অবস্থান থেকে অনেকটা সরে আসছে আরএসএস। বিজেপি সভাপতি সম্পর্কে নিজেদের মনোভাব অনেকটাই লঘু করেছে আরএসএস। এ দিকে, জিন্মা বিতর্কে আডবাণী বিরোধিতার জন্য প্রবীণ বিজেপি নেতা যশবন্ত সিনহাকে দলীয় মুখপাত্রের পদ থেকে আজ সরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

জুলাইয়ের গোড়ায় সুরাতে সঙ্ঘের সম্মেলনে আরএসএস নেতৃত্ব আডবাণীকে তুলে ধরেন। তাঁকে বিজেপি সভাপতির পদ থেকে হঠাৎ সরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। সুরাতে সঙ্ঘের বিতর্ক নিয়ে নিজেদের মনোভাব অনেকটা লঘু করেছে আরএসএস। এ দিকে, জিন্মা বিতর্কে আডবাণী বিরোধিতার জন্য প্রবীণ বিজেপি নেতা যশবন্ত সিনহাকে দলীয় মুখপাত্রের পদ থেকে আজ সরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে।

সুরাতে জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গ উঠলেও, আডবাণীর দিকে কামান দাগার সম্ভাবনা কম। তার কারণ, আডবাণী বিরোধিতা নিয়ে সঙ্ঘের তিতরেই মতপার্থক্য মাথা চাড়া দিয়েছে। অন্য দিকে, সঙ্ঘ বনাম আডবাণীর বগড়া নেটোতে সক্রিয় হয়েছেন বিজেপি এবং এনডিএ নেতৃত্বও। আজ এনডিএ-র আস্থায়ক জর্জ ফার্নান্দেজ নাগপুরে ঘণ্টা তিনেক বৈঠক করে

কুপহালি সুদর্শন, মোহন ভাগবতকে বোঝাতে চেষ্টা করেছেন, আডবাণীর বক্তাবোধ পুরো পটভূমি না জেনেই বিতর্ক বাজানো হয়েছে।



কাল বিজেপির বেক্কাইয়া নায়ডু, রাজনাথ সিংহ, বাল আশু, সঙ্ঘ জোশী আরএসএস-এর সদর কার্যালয়ে সঙ্ঘের যুগ্ম সাধারণ সম্পাদক

সুরেশ সোনির সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেন। ইঙ্গিত মিলেছে, মনোভাব বদলাচ্ছে সঙ্ঘ। অন্য দিকে, বিজেপি-র প্রবীণ নেতা যশোবন্ত সিংহ দলের সাধারণ সম্পাদকদের বর্তমান পরিস্থিতিতে আডবাণীর পাশে দাঁড়াতে নির্দেশ দেন। জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে আডবাণীকে আক্রমণ করায় প্রাজ্ঞ অধমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহাকে দলের মুখপাত্রের পদ থেকে সরিয়ে দেওয়া হয়েছে। বলা হয়েছে, মুখপাত্র হয়ে দলীয় সভাপতির সমালোচনা মেনে নেওয়া যায় না।



গোড়, থেকেই সক্রিয় আডবাণীর বিরুদ্ধে। কিন্তু সুরাতে সক্রিয় আডবাণীর বিরুদ্ধে মত পোষণ করছেন। ফলে সুরাতের

বৈঠকে প্রচারমাধ্যমকে ডেকে আডবাণীর বিরোধিতাকে হাই হাই করে প্রচার করার যে পরিকল্পনা সুদর্শনদের ছিল তাতে ভাটা পড়ছে। স্বদেশী জাগরণমঞ্চের আহ্বায়ক এস আর গুরুমুর্তি সম্প্রতি নাগপুরে গিয়ে সুদর্শনকে বোঝান, এই অহেতুক বিতর্কের প্রয়োজন ছিল না। আরএসএস-র মরাটি মুখপাত্র 'তরুণ ভারতের' সম্পাদকীয়তেও সমালোচনার সুরে বলা হয়েছে যে, সঙ্ঘ রাজনীতিতে অত্যধিক মাথা গলাচ্ছে।

সব মিলিয়ে আডবাণীর পক্ষে পরিস্থিতি কিছুটা সহজ হয়েছে বলেই ওয়াকিবহাল শিবির মনে করছে। ২ থেকে ৫ জুলাই সুরাতে যে প্রাণ্ড প্রচারক বৈঠক হবে তাতে বিষ হিন্দু পরিষদের পক্ষ থেকে উপস্থিত থাকবেন অশোক সিংহল-প্রবীণ ভোগাড়িয়াও। আরএসএস কিছুটা শান্ত হলেও, ভোগাড়িয়া-সিংহলেরা অবশ্য তাঁদের আডবাণী বিরোধিতা থেকে পিছু-হঠছেন না।

Yashwant Sinha sacked as BJP spokesperson

New Delhi: Former Union minister Yashwant Sinha, who recently created a flutter by his criticism of BJP president L K Advani and attacked the party government in Jharkhand, was on Tuesday sacked as BJP spokesperson.

Sinha, who was last week asked by the party not to air his grievances in public but within the party forum, does not figure in the panel of BJP spokespersons which was reconstituted by Advani on Tuesday.

No reason was given for his removal from the spokesperson's post but it comes close on the heels of his critical remarks at the height of the Jinnah controversy involving Advani when he said the discussion on Pakistan founder could have been avoided.

"The panel of spokespersons has been reconstituted

by party President L K Advani. Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley will be the two spokespersons," party spokesman Arun Jaitley said. Manvendra Singh and Prakash Javdekar will be the additional spokespersons.

Sinha, who originally came from the Janata Dal stream in politics and was finance and external Affairs minister in the Vajpayee government, had also wondered whether Advani could be effective as leader of the opposition after his resignation as party president.

After his unbridled attack on Jharkhand chief minister Arjun Munda, accusing corruption and extravagance of the government, the party asked Sinha not to air his views in public. But he maintained that he had expressed his opinion in the interest of the people of the state.

The decision to remove Sinha from the post of spokesman was taken on Monday at a meeting of party general secretaries chaired by Advani. The BJP felt that it was inappropriate for Sinha to continue as a spokesman even as he continued to attack the party leadership and its governments, party sources said.

Fernandes holds talks with RSS chief

Nagpur: In an apparent bid to bridge differences between the RSS and BJP president L K Advani, NDA convener George Fernandes on



Tuesday held a closed-door meeting with RSS chief K S Sudarshan and its general secretary Mohan Bhagwat at the Sangh headquarters here.

The meeting assumes significance in the wake of RSS criticism of Advani over his controversial remarks about Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah during his recent Pakistan visit.

Advani back as the hawk

Slams Pakistan on Kashmir

ZORAWAR Singh Jamwal
Lakhanpur, June 23

IN WHAT appeared to be an attempt to put the Jinnah controversy behind him, BJP president L.K. Advani attacked Pakistan for encouraging terrorists operating in Kashmir and said his party would not allow the Centre to "buy" the peace package offered by Pakistan.

Advani was speaking at a huge rally in Lakhanpur to mark the death anniversary of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, the founder president of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the BJP's parent party. It was his first public speech after his return from Pakistan.

"During my visit to Pakistan, I discussed the terror threat with President Pervez Musharraf. He did not agree at first, and assured me that militancy would not be allowed on any land in Pakistan or PoK... Yet I have reports that a terrorist infrastructure still exists there. Terrorist training camps and launching pads still exist across the border," the BJP president said.

He dismissed the significance of the Hurriyat Conference leaders' visit to PoK and Pakistan. "The BJP will never accept the Hurriyat as the only true representative of Jammu and Kashmir. There are Hindus in Jammu, Buddhists in Ladakh and Kashmiri Pandits who have been forced out of the Valley too. One cannot ignore them," he said.

Yet, he added: "During our rule, Hurriyat leaders had wanted to meet us. We met them with a clear perspective, due to which Hurriyat leaders admired our approach. We are not against talks, but we cannot compromise on terrorism."

Advani strove to strike an emo-



Hardliner speaks

ON PAKISTAN: It is still backing terrorism in India

ON HURRIYAT: Can't accept conglomerate as only voice for J&K. There are Hindus, Pandits and Buddhists too

ON TERRORISM: BJP not against talks but cannot compromise on terrorism

tional chord with BJP activists, highlighting the historic contributions by some of them and describing these as an inspiration for generations to come.

"The sacrifice of S.P. Mookerjee is among these contributions. But while remembering Mookerjee, we should not forget people like Bihari Lal, who had married just eight days earlier but who laid down his life along with Mookerjee," he said. Ratno Devi, widow of Bihari Lal, was honoured on the occasion with the BJP announcing Rs 1 lakh as relief.

BJP leaders passed a resolution demanding the resignation of Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh, who had been photographed addressing a gathering at a Canadian gurdwara under a banner reading 'Khalistan zindabad'. The resolution also warned the Centre against withdrawing the army from Jammu and Kashmir.

24 JUN 2014

VHP praises Indira to spite Advani

'She Divided Pak And Never Changed Her Stand'

New Delhi: Fully endorsing RSS chief K S Sudarshan's laudatory reference to late prime minister Indira Gandhi, the VHP on Monday sought to take a dig at BJP president L K Advani, saying, "She divided Pakistan and never used to change her stand like some big leaders".

The sangh parivar outfit also termed as an "afterthought" Advani's clarification on Friday that his controversial comments in Karachi on Mohammad Ali Jinnah was to remind the people of Pakistan of their founder's views.

"He (Sudarshan) had only praised her courage. She divided Pakistan into two. She was the only man in her cabinet. She acted like a he-man," the sangh parivar outfit's senior vice-president Acharya Giriraj Kishore said here. "Unlike the big leaders who change their views, she was consistent about her stand and never used to waver from it," the octogenarian leader said, when asked about Sudarshan's views.

Addressing the Sangh Shiksha Varg in Lucknow, the RSS chief had on Sunday praised Indira Gandhi for her courage and determination and her role in the creation of Bangladesh out of Pakistan.

**Sudarshan didn't
praise Indira: RSS**



New Delhi: Caught on the wrong foot over its chief K S Sudarshan's praise for late prime minister Indira Gandhi, the RSS on Monday sought to clarify his remarks, saying he had not lauded her leadership but only referred to a "glimpse" of courage shown during the Bangladesh war.

"There was neither praise nor condemnation. It is wrong to interpret that he complimented Indira's leadership," RSS spokesman Ram Madhav said. PTI

The sangh parivar leaders' sudden fondness for In-

dira Gandhi's role in dividing Pakistan assumes significance as Advani during his visit had described the emergence of Pakistan as a sovereign country as an "unalterable reality" of history. However, BJP spokesman Prakash Javadekar declined to join issues with Sudarshan saying he would not like to comment on what the RSS chief says.

Kishore, however, asserted that the sangh parivar was not "reviewing" its stand on the Emergency imposed by Gandhi, which it had vehemently opposed. He, nevertheless, said she imposed Emergency "against all protests and odds".

Asked why the RSS chief rated Indira Gandhi as the best prime minister and not its own 'swayamsewak' A B Vajpayee, he said, "There was only one PM who divided Pakistan. Only another PM who eliminates Pakistan can be greater than her."

On Advani's statement clarifying the context of his remarks on Jinnah, he said, "It was an afterthought as he had said it was a well-considered remark and there should be a debate on it. But having seen the backlash, he is retracting". Agencies

Indira praise was not compliment: RSS

But, VHP equates her with He-man

PRESS Trust of India
New Delhi, Jun 20

THE RSS on Monday sought to downplay chief K.S. Sudershan's praise of Indira Gandhi, while the VHP went on to equate her with He-Man.

The RSS said Sudershan had not complimented Indira's leadership, only referred to a "glimpse" of courage she showed during the Bangladesh war. "There was neither praise nor condemnation in his speech. It would be wrong to interpret that Sudershan has complimented Indira Gandhi's leadership", RSS spokesman Ram Madhav said. He said the RSS chief was referring to the lack of strong and determined leadership in Independent India in his Lucknow speech on Sunday and in this context mentioned that Indira gave a "glimpse" of courage and determination during the Bangladesh war. "But he later went on to say that she subsequently tread the wrong path by imposing Emergency", he said.

There was neither praise nor condemnation in Sudershan's speech. He only referred to a 'glimpse' of courage Indira showed during the Bangladesh war

Ram Madhav
RSS spokesman

Fully endorsing Sudershan's laudatory reference to the late PM, the VHP sought to take a dig at BJP president L.K. Advani by saying, "she divided Pakistan and never used to change her stand like some big leaders".

"He (Sudershan) merely praised her courage. She divided Pakistan into two. She was the only man in her cabinet. She acted like a He-Man", the VHP's senior vice-president Acharya Giriraj Kishore said. "Unlike the big leaders who change their views, she was consistent about her stand and never used to waver from it", the octogenarian leader said of

Sudershan's views. Kishore, however asserted that the Sangh Parivar was not "reviewing" its stand on the Emergency, which it had vehemently opposed.

Asked why the RSS chief rated Indira Gandhi as the best Prime Minister and not its own 'Swayamsewak' Atal Bihari Vajpayee, he said, "there was only one Prime Minister who divided Pakistan. Only a Prime Minister who eliminates Pakistan can be greater than her".

To a question about Advani's recent statement clarifying the context of his remarks on Jinnah, he said, "it was an afterthought as he had consistently maintained it was a well-considered remark and there should be a debate on it. But having seen the backlash, he is retracting".

On BJP general secretary Pramod Mahajan's statement that the RSS and BJP shared a mother-son relation and the mother should not publicly scold her grown-up son, he said, "if the son gets out of hand, parents are forced to even give advertisements disowning them. It is a two-way street".

The VHP leader also condemned the Andhra Pradesh government's move to give five per cent job reservation to Muslims and said such "divisionary" moves "sow the seeds of partition". The Congress lambasted Sudershan for holding Jawaharlal Nehru responsible for "all ills facing the country while giving a left-handed compliment to him for hailing Indira. "Sudarshan has sought to present a distorted version of history. This is preposterous and condemnable," Congress spokesman Anand Sharma said, driving home the point that the Sangh had played no role in the Independence movement.



Some Hindu religious leaders at a meet to protest BJP chief L.K. Advani's statements on Jinnah, in Ahmedabad on Monday.

Indirect dig at Vajpayee, Advani

PANKAJ Vohra
New Delhi, June 20

BY PRAISING Indira Gandhi, RSS sarsangchalak K.S. Sudarshan was indirectly hitting out at senior BJP leaders A.B. Vajpayee and L. K. Advani.

Sudarshan has implied that the RSS does not consider the achievements of Vajpayee and Advani — especially when it comes to dealing with Pakistan and handling India's internal security — exemplary.

While handling Pakistan, only Indira demonstrated that she was a woman of firm determination, Sudarshan told RSS and BJP volunteers at the concluding ceremony of the Sangh Shiksha Varg.

Sudarshan's message wasn't so much for the country as it was for Sangh and BJP cadres. He was referring to how they should view Vajpayee and Advani — or anyone else within the Parivar

INSIGHT

who wishes to model himself on Jawaharlal Nehru.

Sudarshan's criticism of Nehru is in line with the RSS established view that the country's first PM was a man who laid the foundations of our democracy. By attacking Nehru, Sudarshan may have subtly attacked Vajpayee who had modeled himself in the Nehruvian mould — as well as Advani, who is now following Vajpayee.

While eyebrows have been raised in political circles over the praise for Indira just before the 30th anniversary of Emergency, the timing of the RSS chief's tribute to the former PM has to be viewed in the context of Advani's recent praise of M.A. Jinnah.

He said Indira may have done many things in pursuit of her

own ambition, but she had surely taught Pakistan a lesson. Sudarshan has spelled out the RSS's view on how a strong leadership should be. It was also a message to the UPA government that it should not blindly endorse Vajpayee's initiatives but deal with Pakistan in a firm manner, the way Indira had.

The RSS has never adored Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru, but Sudarshan's present remarks have to be strictly viewed in context of the ongoing debate within the Parivar over its commitment to Hindutva.

Though the full text of the RSS chief's speech was not available, he has obviously criticised the minority status accorded to Indian Muslims. It has always been the RSS view that Muslims in India are not outsiders but converts and therefore should not be treated as minorities. The remarks may result in a fresh controversy.

Atal best PM, says Khurana

Jammu, June 20

SENIOR BJP leader Madan Lal Khurana on Monday described Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the No 1 PM India ever had. "I don't know in what context Sudershan referred to Indira as the best PM, but as far as I am concerned Vajpayee remains the overall best PM."

"No doubt Vajpayee had described Indira as Durga when India defeated Pakistan. But that does not make her the best PM. For that matter, India had won Kar-gil war under Vajpayee, he said. **HTC**

BJP silence ominous for Advani

RATHIN Das
Ahmedabad, June 20

THE BJP leadership might pretend that the 'Jinnah' chapter is over with party president L.K. Advani taking back his resignation, but in its very own state of Gujarat the issue is snowballing into a major embarrassment.

The state leadership's silence on the VHP launching a campaign against Advani, especially to mobilise voters against him, almost seems ominous.

VHP supporters in the city have not only formed an informal Voters Association to seek Advani's resignation from the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha seat, but also roped in saints like Acharya Dharmendra Maharaj and Sadhvi Ritambhara to address meetings on the issue.

Advani, who has represented Gandhinagar for the last several terms, had actually lost from three of the seven Assembly segments in the 2004 elections. And now the state VHP has vowed to work vigorously for Advani's defeat next time. State BJP leaders are unwilling to accept that the party's rank and file is a demoralised lot over the 'Jinnah episode'. But, they also have no explanation why there is no murmur of protest against the VHP, which is making a lot of noise against Advani.

A BJP leader said the VHP has its own agenda, but agreed the party has problems countering its 'fraternal' organisation's activities. He also agreed that the recent developments have held up the party's revamp and the Cabinet expansion. Advani had in May nominated Vajubhai Vala as the party's new state president following which he was to reconstitute the state party machinery and chief minister Narendra Modi was to expand his Cabinet and make appointments to various boards and corporations.

RSS chief praises Indira Gandhi, BJP differs

"A lady of determination," says RSS; "She was authoritarian" and "undemocratic," observes BJP

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the Bharatiya Janata Party, its affiliate, appear to have different perceptions of Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi.

Nehru is responsible for all the problems facing the country, while Indira Gandhi was "a lady of determination," RSS chief K.S. Sudarshan reportedly said at the concluding ceremony of

the Sangh Shiksha Varg in Lucknow on Sunday. It is well established that the RSS admired Indira Gandhi, especially for her role in helping carve out Bangladesh from Pakistan in 1971.

However, the BJP is not quite in tune with the RSS chief's perception. Although party leaders were not willing to openly contradict Mr. Sudarshan, they pointed out "off the record" the BJP's plans to hold a major public meeting in Delhi on June 25

to mark the imposition of Emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975. This would be followed by a rally the next day in Bangalore from where the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and BJP president L.K. Advani were arrested immediately after the proclamation of Emergency.

The BJP's view is that Indira Gandhi was "authoritarian" and "undemocratic," although senior BJP leaders had described her as "Durga" after the 1971

war. The Emergency, which was imposed four years later, overshadowed that view.

On Sunday, Mr. Sudarshan is reported to have said: "If we go to the roots of the problems of this country, we find Nehru responsible." The British wanted Nehru as the first Prime Minister of free India as he was "English-minded" and would protect British interests.

On the other hand, the BJP leaders see Nehru as the man

who helped establish democracy in the country. Mr. Sudarshan apparently kept away from the sensitive subject of Mr. Advani's recent remarks on Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

But touching on the subject of Muslims, he reportedly said that the RSS had been "misrepresented" as being anti-Muslim. Since Muslims were born in India, had their roots here, they should not be described as a minority community.

সংবাদ বাখরক্ষাহ তাঁদের কাছে সবথেকে বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ।

ঠাকরের হুমকি, আদবানির সুর নরম, আক্রমণে গোবিন্দাচার্য

আজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি, ১৮ জুন— আদবানির জিলা-স্বত্তি নিয়ে আন্দোলনে নামবেন গোবিন্দাচার্য। তাঁর শ্লেষ: লোকে আজ বি জে পি-কে বলছে ভারতীয় জিলা পার্টি। এক সময়ে বাজপেয়ীকে বি জে পি-র মুখোশ আর আদবানিকে মুখ বলেছিলেন গোবিন্দাচার্য। এবং তার পরই অটলের কোপে পড়ে নির্বাসন। আজ সেই গোবিন্দাচার্যই বলেন, ক্ষমতায় থাকার জন্য নরমপন্থী সাজতেই আদবানির জিলা-স্বত্তি এবং বাবরি ধ্বংস নিয়ে দুঃখপ্রকাশ। আগে থেকে ঠিক করেই রেখেছিলেন, কী বলবেন। তবে আদবানির সাধ পূর্ণ হবে না। বাধা তাঁর অতীত। আদবানি নিজে অবশ্য এখন সুর নরম করার চেষ্টা করছেন। গতকাল একটি বই প্রকাশের অনুষ্ঠানে ব্যাখ্যা দেওয়ার চেষ্টা করেন, পাকিস্তানের জনক কী চেয়েছিলেন, সেটাই শুধু তিনি সেনেশের মানুষকে স্মরণ করিয়ে দিতে চেয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু এখানে আলোচনাটা গড়িয়ে গেছে দেশভাগের প্রশ্নে। রাজনীতিকে 'বেশ্যাবৃত্তি' বলে উল্লেখ করেছিলেন সঙ্ঘ-প্রধান সুদর্শন। আক্রমণটা ছিল আদবানিকেই। আদবানি কাল তাঁর ভাষণে 'কুৎসিত ভারতীয় রাজনীতিকের' মুখাচ্ছবি বদলে ফেলার ওপর গুরুত্ব দিলেন। এদিকে বাল ঠাকরে হুমকি দিলেন, বি জে পি হিন্দুত্ব ছাড়লে, সঙ্গ ছাড়বে শিবসেনা। মুম্বই থেকে সংবাদ সংস্থা জানাচ্ছে, দলীয় মুখপত্র সামনায় এক সাক্ষাৎকারে জিলা এবং বাবরি ধ্বংস দুটি বিষয়েই বি জে পি সভাপতির বক্তব্যের তীব্র বিরোধিতা করেন ঠাকরে। একই সঙ্গে তাঁর তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ মন্তব্য: একজন আদবানিকে দেখে গোটা বি জে পি-কে বিচার করা ঠিক নয়। একজন পুলিশ ধর্ষণ করলেই গোটা পুলিশ বাহিনীকে দোষী বলে দেওয়া তো ঠিক নয়। ঠাকরের লজ্জাছিদাহীন মন্তব্য: বাবরি ধ্বংস উচিত সাজ। তবে ওভাবে না ভেঙে গোড়া থেকে উপড়ে ফেলতে পারলে ভাল হত।

১৮ জুন ০০

Vajpayee forewarns PM of 'Kashmir-centric' talks

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 16 JUNE

EXPRESSING his concern over "the disturbing turn that the peace process with Pakistan has taken," Atal Bihari Vajpayee countered Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's "everything-was-fine-across-the-border" thesis on Thursday, by highlighting the disturbing signals emanating from Islamabad.

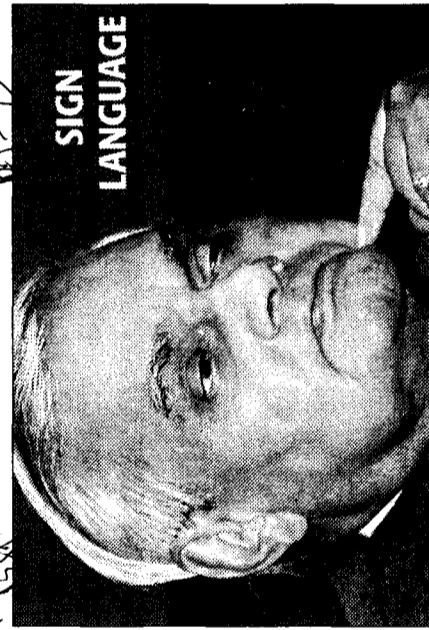
In the process, the former Prime Minister made it clear that he did not agree with his party colleague L.K. Advani's line that things had improved in Pakistan.

Alarmed by these dangerous trends in the peace process, Mr Vajpayee, under whose stewardship the process of normalisation of ties between the two countries

commenced, felt constrained to write a letter to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh giving vent to his feelings. He cautioned the Manmohan Singh government against falling into the trap laid by the Musharraf regime by allowing the negotiations to become "Kashmir-centric" — something which successive governments in India resisted all along.

Copies of the letter were circulated by the BJP on Thursday afternoon. "The peace process was kicked off by Mr Vajpayee when the NDA was in power. We are unhappy at the manner in which it is being conducted now," BJP spokesman and former union minister Yashwant Sinha told newsmen in New Delhi, while releasing copies of the letter.

The former external affairs



Sheikh Rashid Ahmed? Did they protest when the Hurriyat crossed over to Pakistan from the PoK without valid passports?" Mr Sinha asked, adding, "The tone and manner in which the Hurriyat leaders spoke in Pakistan and the subsequent statement of Pervez Musharraf that by allowing these leaders to travel to Pakistan without valid passports, India accepted Indian-held Kashmir as a disputed territory, are all very damaging developments.

The BJP spokesman wondered whether the Manmohan Singh government accepted Kashmir as a disputed territory, and also asked the Centre to clarify its position on Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri's assertion that the peace talks should be made trilateral

and his comparison of Kashmir's status with that of Palestine.

Mr Vajpayee, in his letter to the Prime Minister, underlined three points — the prominence given to the Hurriyat leaders, making it appear as if they were the sole voice of the Kashmiris, the mis-handling of the Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan by the Indian authorities and the deviations made by Islamabad from the commitments made by it in the January 6, 2004 statement — that terrorism shall be eschewed and that there shall be no third party. "The murderous attack in Pulwama, the revelations made by Yasin Malik, the statements of Hizbul Mujahideen leader Syed Salahuddin — all point to this disturbing trend," Mr Vajpayee pointed out.

16 JUN 2005

ANADABAZAR PATINA

কৃষকস্বয়ংসহায় সমিতির জিন্মায় অনাড় আডবাবাণী

নব্যাদিষ্টি ও চেম্বাই, ১৫ জুন: ইজফা নিয়ে টানাপোড়েনের দিনগুলোতে গীতা থেকেই সাহস খুঁজছেন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাবাণী।

জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে নিজের অনাড় অবস্থান বোঝাতে আজ ভগবদগীতা থেকেই উদ্ধৃতি দিলেন তিনি। বললেন, “কৃষ্ণ অর্জুনকে বলেছিলেন, নিজের বিশ্বাস থেকে সরবে না। পলায়নী মনোবৃত্তি থাকলে মহৎ উদ্দেশ্যে সার্থক হয় না। সে কথা স্মরণ করে আমিও পালাইনি। পরিস্থিতির মোকাবিলা করেছি।” সেই সঙ্গে এ ক’দিন ঘনিষ্ঠ মহলে তিনি যা বলছিলেন, আজ প্রকাশ্যে তা জানালেন। বললেন, গণপরিষদে জিন্মার বক্তৃতার ওই অংশটি তিনি ২০০৪ সালেও বলেছিলেন, কিন্তু তখন তা নিয়ে হইচই হয়নি।

জিন্মা-বিতর্কে বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ তাঁর রাজনৈতিক সম্মান চাওয়ার পরে আজ ভগবদগীতা সম্পর্কে একটি বই প্রকাশ করেন বিজেপি সভাপতি।

নিজের মনোভাব জানানোর এই সুযোগ স্বাভাবিক ভাবেই তিনি ছাড়েননি। প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়া যতই তাঁর ইজফা চান, জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে যে নিজের অবস্থান থেকে সরছেন না, তা আডবাবাণী অবশ্য কালই পরিষদের সাধুদের জানিয়ে দেন। আডবাবাণীর বিষয়ে কী প্রস্তাব নেওয়া হবে, তা নিয়ে মতভেদের মধ্যে পেজোয়ার মঠের স্বামী বিশেষের তীর্থ আডবাবাণীকে ফোন করেছিলেন। আডবাবাণী তাঁকে জানিয়ে দেন, জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে যা বলার বলে দিয়েছেন। তা থেকে সরতে তিনি রাজি নন।

বিজেপি সভাপতির এই অনাড় অবস্থান সশ্বেও তোগাড়িয়া-বিরোধী শিবির তাঁর পাশ থেকে সরেনি। বিশেষের তীর্থ এবং স্বামী পরমানন্দ সরস্বতী-সহ অনেকেই পরিষদের সভায় বলেন, বাবরি ধ্বংস, জিন্মা বা অর্থও ভারত সম্পর্কে আডবাবাণীর সাম্প্রতিক মন্তব্যের সঙ্গে তাঁর একমত নন।



প্রচারে আডবাবাণী যে ভূমিকা নিয়েছিলেন, সেটাও তাঁরা ভুলে যেতে চান না। এ নিয়ে দিনভর সভায় বিতর্ক চলে। যদিও শেষ পর্যন্ত তোগাড়িয়ার সুরেই পরিষদের প্রস্তাবে বলা হয়, “আডবাবাণী হয় ক্ষমা চান, নয় রাজনীতি ছেড়ে সম্মান নিন।”

তবে এই প্রস্তাব পাশের সঙ্গে সঙ্গেই যে আডবাবাণী বিতর্কে যবনিকা পড়ল এমন নয়। আজ খোদ

ভিএইচপি-র সহ সভাপতি গিরিরাজ কিশোর বলেন, “সন্তোষ তো প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়ার অধীনে কাজ করেন না। পরিষদই ধর্মগুরুদের নির্দেশে চলে।” তিনি এ-ও বলেন, “ক্ষমার সুযোগ সব সময়েই আছে। তবে আডবাবাণীকে সন্তদের সঙ্গে কথা বলতে হবে।”

বিজেপি-ও আজ অস্তিত্ব প্রকাশ্যে আডবাবাণী প্রসঙ্গে ভিএইচপি-কে তুলোথোনা করেছে। দলীয় সূত্রের খবর, ভিএইচপি-র প্রস্তাবের কথা শুনে মহা চটে যান অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী। সঙ্গে সঙ্গে ফোন করেন বেঙ্কাইয়াকে। তার পরেই বেঙ্কাইয়া ভিএইচপি-কে ‘নিজের চরকায় তেল দিতে’ বলেন। তাঁর কথায়, “জিন্মা-বিতর্ক অতীত। দলের কী করণীয় সেটা দল বোঝে। পরিষদের মাথা না-যামালেও চলবে। আডবাবাণীর নেতৃত্বে দলের পূর্ণ আস্থা আছে।” দলীয় মুখপাত্র প্রকাশ জাভোদকরও পরে বলেন, আডবাবাণীকে যারা দেশদ্রোহী বলেছে, তাদের ক্ষমা

ভিএইচপি-র সহ সভাপতি গিরিরাজ চাইতে হবে। উল্লেখ্য, আডবাবাণীর ইজফা ফেরাতে বিজেপি প্রথম যে প্রস্তাব তৈরি করেছিল, তাতেও তোগাড়িয়ার সমালোচনা করা হয়।

দু’দিনের সম্মেলনে ভিএইচপি যে কড়া মনোভাব নেবে, তা প্রত্যাশিতই ছিল। ইজফা প্রত্যাহার করার সময়ই স্পষ্ট হয়ে গিয়েছিল, আডবাবাণীর সঙ্গে

সংঘের লড়াই চলবে। আর সেই লড়াইয়ে পুরো দলকে পাশে পাওয়াটাই তাঁর সামনে বড় চ্যালেঞ্জ। বেঙ্কাইয়া বা প্রকাশের আজকের মন্তব্যে এমন মনে করার কোনও কারণ নেই যে, আডবাবাণী দলকে পাশে পাওয়ার লড়াইয়ে অনেকটা এগিয়ে গিয়েছেন। বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ এবং আরএসএস এক নয়। সংঘের বিরুদ্ধে দলের কোনও নেতা এ ভাবে মুখ খুলতেন কি না সন্দেহ। আবার অরুণ জেটলি বিদেশে। দেশে থাকলে তাঁকে দিয়ে পরিষদের বিরুদ্ধে এ ভাবে বলানো যেত কি না, তা নিয়ে সংশয় আছে দলেই। — পিটি আই

১-১৮ ১৩ ৪৮

Advani refuses to bow to VHP

BJP Tells Outfit To Keep Off, Pejawar Mutt Chief Mediates

Hardwar: In a snub to VHP, BJP president L K Advani refused to apologise for his controversial statements in Pakistan, prompting the Sangh Parivar outfits to demand that he quit politics.

"I have already said what I had to say," the BJP chief is understood to have told Pejawar mutt Swami Vishvesh Teerth when the latter telephoned him on Tuesday during the meeting of VHP's Kendriya Maargdarshak Mandal (Central Advisory Board) here, sources said.

The Swami conveyed VHP's concern over a statement on Babri Masjid demolition, Akhand Bharat and Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Teerth, along with Swami Paramanand Saraswati, general secretary of the influential Akhara Parishad and a sizeable section of Hindu religious leaders gathered here had expressed reservation over the meeting adopting resolutions against Advani.

These religious leaders maintained that Advani made yeoman's contribution to the cause of 'Hindutva' with his 'Ram Rath Yatra' and that he should be given another opportunity. They also felt that religious leaders should not get involved in castigating any individual leader.

Though RSS has chosen not to comment on the resolution against Advani, VHP leaders claimed it had the backing of the Sangh



VHP vice-president Giriraj Kishore (right) addressing the media in Hardwar on Wednesday

and it was adopted after being read out to a senior RSS leader.

VHP general secretary Pravin Togadia said "I believe we have spoken to whomsoever we felt was necessary." Asked about the RSS's public stand that the controversy over Advani's remarks was a closed chapter, he said "For us it is not. VHP is bound by whatever the religious leaders decide."

In an attempt to avoid a direct confrontation with Advani, the Pejawar mutt chief had telephoned the former from the meeting venue itself, the sources said.

Later VHP sources attributed the Pejawar Swami's pro-Advani stand to his disciple and BJP leader Uma Bharti, who has of late been trying to build bridges with the party president.

The BJP on Wednesday rejected the VHP's

demand that L K Advani should quit politics and asked the Sangh Parivar outfit to "mind its own business. The BJP decides who should be its President and the VHP need not take any pains in this regard. We are a democratic and nationalist political party. We are capable of conducting our affairs," BJP vice-president M Venkaiah Naidu told reporters here.

Naidu said Advani's contribution to the cause of Hinduism and nationalism was unparalleled and he represented the best values in public life. BJP had benefited immensely from his leadership, he said. "Advani was the man who set an agenda for a debate on the true meaning of secularism by tearing apart pseudo secular policies practiced by the parties with an eye on vote bank," he said. PTI

Power eq

The BJP-RSS arranger party draws its strength

Neena Vyas

LAST WEEK, during his Pakistan yatra, L.K. Advani committed the cardinal political sin of forgetting who he was, where he came from, and which constituency his party represented. A comment doing the rounds at the Bharatiya Janata Party headquarters in New Delhi is that he forgot he was elected from Gandhinagar, not from Karachi, that he was president of the BJP, not the Muslim League.

It underlines the fact that Mr. Advani not only misjudged the effect of his laudatory Jinnah pronouncements on his constituents in Gujarat, where the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has threatened not to allow him to enter his Lok Sabha constituency, but also the fallout on his ideological *parivar*, headed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh.

A political party draws its strength from the people it represents, from the constituency that votes for it and sends its candidates to the Lok Sabha or the State Assemblies. And it is to the people that it should be answerable. The problem with the BJP-RSS arrangement is that it ignores this basic democratic principle. The people elect the BJP and its candidates, but the BJP draws its "inspiration" and even its electoral strength from the RSS, a non-elected body. Every RSS member takes an oath of allegiance and loyalty to the *bhagwa dhvaj* (saffron flag symbolic of the RSS 'guru'), and this is renewed each year when swayamsevaks offer *guru dakshina*. The word of the RSS chief, the Sarsanghchalak, is final.

It is not a coincidence that over the six years the BJP was in office — and this has continued even after it lost the last Lok Sabha election — the most strident criticism has come from the RSS and its affiliates. During the stand-off with the Vajpayee Government on the *shila puja* programme organised in Ayodhya, VHP leaders told Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. Advani to their faces that had it not been for the Parishad's support, the Ramjanmabhoomi "movement" would not have taken off and they would not be in office.

Persistent grouse

This is also the grouse of the RSS leaders. In power, on one excuse or the other, the BJP was disloyal to Hindutva ideology; its leaders paid less than the respect RSS leaders thought was due to them; yet whenever elections neared they organised coordination meetings with the *Sangh Parivar* to ensure the party got the full benefit of canvassing by RSS volunteers. Much of the

A message in offing



TO MAKE A POINT: President A.P.J. Abdul Kalam arrived on Tuesday, as Prime Minister Manmohan Singh looked on.

Swamy condemns blast

Special Correspondent

CHENNAI: Janata Party president Subramanian Swamy on Tuesday condemned the Pulwama blast and urged the Centre to send Air Force planes to "bomb the 17 known camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir and inside Pakistan itself."

In a statement, he said cross-border retaliatory action was "permitted under the United Nations resolutions on terrorism. In any case, till this matter is resolved, no further peace initiative with Pakistan should be undertaken. India cannot pursue

Bandh h

Shujaat Bukhari

SRINAGAR: A bandh called by the hard-line faction of the Hurriyat Conference and Al Umar Mujahideen on Tuesday against the blast in Pulwama disrupted normal life in Srinagar and other major towns of the Kashmir valley. At several places people took to the streets and demanded a high-level probe into the incident.

Shops, business establishments, banks and educational institutions remained closed while the attendance in government offices was thin as public

VHP tells Advani to quit politics

Agencies

Hardwar, June 14

THE VHP on Tuesday demanded that BJP president L.K. Advani quit active politics. The VHP leaders said Advani had betrayed the Hindu community by calling Mohammed Ali Jinnah 'secular'. Top VHP leaders, who have gathered at Haridwar, passed this resolution on Tuesday.

"The Kendriya Marg Darshan Mandal has warned the deceptive, opportunistic leaders for their behaviour. They should ask for forgiveness from the Hindu society," said VHP leader Acharya Dharmendra.

"To make amends for their wrongdoings they should retire from politics. And the intelligent but sidelined leaders should revamp the party," Acharya Dharmendra said.

Earlier in the day differences had emerged within the organisation over its attack on Advani. Members of VHP's affiliate organisation, the Sadhu Parishad, said Advani should not be the focus of the VHP meeting. Differences also appeared over the BJP chief's future. While some said Advani should resign, others felt it was the BJP's internal busi-

ness. "This is an internal matter of the BJP and we do not want to meddle in their affairs. There is no move to discuss Advani at this meet," said Swami Parmanand of the Akhara Parishad.

Advani has been severely criticised for calling the founder of Pakistan, Mohammed Ali Jinnah a secular leader during his recent visit to Pakistan.

অশ্বস্তি সামাল দিতে পাক-নিদায় ফিবল বিজেপি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১২ জুন: এক স্ককালের ঘরোয়া কোদল দলের ভাবমূর্তির যে ক্ষতি করেছে তা মেরামত করতে কোমর বেঁধেছেন বিজেপি নেতৃত্ব। জিন্না-বিতর্ক নিয়ে এক দিকে দলের সভাপতি লালকৃষ্ণ আডবালীর সঙ্গে দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের মতান্তর, অন্য দিকে সজয় শরিবারের তীব্র সমালোচনার মুখে জেরবার দল মাত্রমণের মুখ ইউপিএ-র দিকে ঘুরিয়ে দিতে রিয়া। সেইসঙ্গে পাকিস্তানকে আক্রমণ করে 'লীয়া সমর্থকদের কাছে এই বাতাই পৌছানোর চেষ্টা হচ্ছে যে, আডবালীর পাক সফর কূটনৈতিকভাবে সফল হতে পারে, কিন্তু নীতির প্রশ্নে কোনও ভাবেই আপস করা হবে না।

দু'দিন আগেই আডবালীর পাকিস্তান সফরের ভ্রমসী প্রশংসা করে শস্তাব নিয়েছিল বিজেপি।

সেই মঞ্চক্রিয়া শেষ হয়ে গিয়েছে। হরিয়ত নেতৃত্বকে লাল কার্পেট বিছিয়ে স্বাগত জানানোর জন্য ইসলামাবাদের কড়া সমালোচনা করা হয়েছে। বিজেপি-র সংসদীয় দলের মুখপাত্র বিজয়কুমার মলহোত্র বলেছেন, "আমাদের সন্দেহ ছিল ভারতীয় পাসপোর্ট ছাড়াই বিচ্ছিন্নতাবাদী ব্যক্তির পাকিস্তানে ঢুকতে পারবেন মুজফফরবাদ বাসের সৌজন্যে। তা সত্যি হয়েছে। পাকিস্তানের কতব্য ছিল হরিয়ত নেতাদের পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরের বাইরে পাসপোর্ট ছাড়া যেতে না দেওয়ার।" সম্প্রতি প্রেসিডেন্ট পারভেজ মুশারফ মন্তব্য করেছিলেন, জম্মু ও কাশ্মীরের অধিনিধিত্ব করছেন হরিয়তই। এই মন্তব্যকে মিথ্যা ও গ্রহণযোগ্য নয় বলে নিন্দা করেছে বিজেপি। মলহোত্র জানান, "জম্মু ও লাদাখ এলাকায় এঁদের

কোনও প্রতিনিধিত্ব নেই। কাশ্মীর উপত্যকাত্তেও হরিয়ত নেতারা কখনও ভোট দাঁড়ানি। তাঁদের কোনও প্রতিনিধিত্বমূলক চরিত্রই নেই।" মুশারফকে আক্রমণ করার পাশাপাশি মনমোহন সরকারকে বিগতে ছাউনি সদা 'জিন্না-সঙ্কট' কাটিয়ে ওঠা বিজেপি। শ্রীনিগর-মুজফফরবাদ বাসের চুক্তি অনুসারে যাত্রীদের পাক অধিকৃত কাশ্মীরের বাইরে যাওয়ার কথা নয়। কিন্তু ইসলামাবাদের ক্রমাগত চাপের মুখে ভারত সরকার কিছুটা নরম হয়। নেতাদের অনেকই পাসপোর্টের জন্য আবেদন করলে তাদের তা দেওয়ার জন্য শ্রীনিগর পাসপোর্ট অফিসকে নির্দেশ দেয় কেন্দ্র। হরিয়ত নেতৃবৃন্দ ইসলামাবাদে পৌছানোর পর মুশারফ দাবি করেন যে নেতারা অনেকে পাসপোর্ট ছাড়া এসেছেন। গোটা বিষয়টি

স্পষ্ট করেনি ভারতীয় বিদেশমন্ত্রক। আজ বিজেপি গোটা বিষয়টি স্পষ্ট করার দাবি জানিয়েছে। বলা হয়েছে, হরিয়ত নেতারা ইচ্ছাকৃত ভাবে ভারতীয় পাসপোর্ট ছাড়া পাকিস্তান গিয়েছেন। বিষয়টির ব্যাখ্যা করা হোক। "অভ্যন্তরীণ সঙ্কটে বিজেপি যে তার রাজনৈতিক চরিত্র হারায়েছে। তা তুলে ধরতে আজ জানানো হয়েছে, এই বিষয়গুলি নিয়ে আসন্ন বর্ষিকালীন অধিবেশনে সংসদ উত্তোলন করা হবে।

তারএসএস তাদের মুখপাত্র 'অগনিইজার'-এ বিজেপি-র নিন্দা করে বলেছে, 'দল হরিয়তের পাক সফর সম্পর্কে উদাসীন। হরিয়ত নেতারা পাকিস্তানের সঙ্গে যে বিপজ্জনক খেলা বেলাছেন তা জিন্নাকে নিয়ে অনর্থক বিতর্কে হারিয়ে গিয়েছে।' রাজনৈতিক সুত্রের মতে, বিজেপি'র সর্বব হওয়ার পিছনে সজয়ের চাপ প্রবল।

13 JUN 2006

ANADABAZAH PATILKA

MONDAY, JUNE 13, 2005

It is war in the Parivar

The Bharatiya Janata Party's biggest ideological crisis to date has come to a troubled, tortured end. On paper, everyone is happy — Lal Krishna Advani, who returned as party chief; the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, which had its way on Mohammad Ali Jinnah; and the BJP's second rung, which hammered out a resolution acceptable to the *parivar* and its once illustrious son. That the truce is tenuous is betrayed by the wording of the resolution: even as it lavished praise on Mr. Advani's Pakistan trip, it negated the spirit of that mission by heaping scorn on Mohammad Ali Jinnah. On his tour, the BJP chief referred twice to Jinnah, and both times in the limited context of a speech the Quaid-e-Azam made to Pakistan's Constituent Assembly setting forth his vision of the ideal state — one which guaranteed equality and freedom of faith to all its citizens. No sober and rational person could quarrel with this "classic exposition of a secular, non-theocratic State," and Mr. Advani said as much, quoting none other than Swami Ranganathananda, head of the Ramakrishna Math. However, in the eyes of the *parivar* this was blasphemous. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad asked Mr. Advani to return to Pakistan while the RSS wanted him brought to heel for daring to step out of line.

Consider the extraordinary lengths to which the resolution went to denounce Jinnah: "the BJP reiterates that whatever may have been Jinnah's vision of Pakistan, the State he founded is theocratic and non-secular. The very idea of Hindus and Muslims being two nations is repugnant to it." Further, "there can be no revisiting the reality that Jinnah led a communal agitation to achieve his goal of Pakistan, which devoured thousands of innocent people in its wake and dispossessed millions of their homes and livelihoods." Mr. Advani climbed down from his position that he would not withdraw his resignation unless the Jinnah issue was debated by the BJP. So where does the BJP chief go from here? Did he make a tactical retreat so as to resume whatever he wishes to do another day? Only time can say who got the better of whom in a conflict so fierce that it brought the party to the brink. The soap opera abounds in irony. It was accepted wisdom that any battle within the BJP will be led by "moderate" Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In the event, the challenge came from a confirmed "hawk," who was thought to be inseparably linked to the *parivar* and its divisive ideology. The younger generation of leaders, many of whom were handpicked and trained by Mr. Advani, deserted him in his hour of need. Finally, what can be a greater paradox than the *parivar's* opposition to the two-nation theory? The first to propound the notion of a separate Hindu nation was not Jinnah but the *parivar's* ideological guru and original proponent of Hindutva, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar. He mentioned the concept in his 1923 essay "Hindutva." He was to expand on the theme again and again. Addressing the 1937 session of the Hindu Mahasabha in Ahmedabad, he said: "India cannot be assumed today to be a Unitarian and homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems in India." On August 15, 1943, he clinched the issue: "I have no quarrel with Mr. Jinnah's two-nation theory. We Hindus are a nation by ourselves and it is a historical fact that Hindus and Muslims are two nations." Will the *parivar* follow up with a resolution extolling Savarkar's two-nation doctrine?

I have learnt many lessons, says Advani

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party president L.K. Advani said on Saturday he hoped the lessons he had learnt in the past fortnight would help him shoulder future responsibilities.

He was addressing the first party meeting of office-bearers and 'morcha' presidents after withdrawing his resignation. After the meeting, party spokesperson Sushma Swaraj told reporters that Mr. Advani referred to the "major developments" that had taken place in the party. She quoted Mr. Advani as having said that "a man always learns something throughout his life. From the extraordinary and unexpected

events of the last 15 days, first the experience of the Pakistan 'yatra' and then on my return here, I have learnt many lessons. I hope this will help me to handle future responsibilities."

Party's health

Mr. Advani addressed the party forum, which had on its agenda a discussion of programmes to be taken up during its ongoing silver jubilee year and a review of political developments in States going to polls next year. Those in charge of the States where polls are scheduled in 2006 presented brief reports on the state of the party and its poll prospects.

The Bihar Assembly elections expected later this year could

provide an opportunity to Mr. Advani to put the embarrassing events of the last fortnight behind him.

Mr. Advani himself referred to the Bihar elections and the "distinct possibility" of the BJP forming a government there, along with its allies.

As a number of party workers gathered to offer garlands to him, Mr. Advani told them that the time to celebrate was not now when they should be working hard. The time to celebrate and offer garlands would come when the party was able to win the Bihar elections.

Photograph: Page 8

12 JUN 2006 THE HINDU

The Telegraph

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REFORMER TAMED

Most critics of Mr L.K. Advani believe that he will always be the bridesmaid and never the bride. This assessment of him seems to have been confirmed by the mini-drama enacted by him and the Bharatiya Janata Party over his resignation and its eventual withdrawal. When Mr Advani put in his papers on Tuesday morning, he was poised to enter the history books. He had just returned from a historic visit to Pakistan where he had staked a claim to be the leading statesman of the BJP, capable of thinking beyond the bigotry of the *sangh parivar*. When the latter hit back, Mr Advani chose to exit as a leader who had tried to refashion his party, had failed, but had resigned with his head held high and his principles intact. The withdrawal of the resignation under pressure from the party conveys the impression that Mr Advani is incapable of standing up for what he believes in. That is a more polite way of saying that he does not have it in him to be a leader. But such a view of the episode is too simplistic to capture the broader significance of the whole affair.

When Mr Advani praised Mohamad Ali Jinnah's secularism in Pakistan, he, as a lifelong *sanghi*, could not have been unaware of the reactions that would emanate from Nagpur. What caught him unawares was the hostility to his statements that came from within the BJP. Some of his critics were his own handpicked men.

Mr Advani may have missed his place in history this time, but he can draw comfort from the fact that he has at least provoked a debate in the BJP

known within the party as belonging to the Advani-lobby. This made it clear that Mr Advani, in his project to reform the BJP — notorious for its hatred of Muslims and for its avowal of *Hindutva* — had marched ahead of the party. He has been pulled back. He tried to make history, but history claimed him first. His plight is akin to what happened to Mr Jyoti Basu, the veteran leader of the Communist Party of India (Marxist), in 1996. Mr Basu had then argued that the CP(M) should support a Congress-led government at the Centre. His party shot down his arguments. But Mr Basu had initiated a process of re-thinking whose results are evident now.

Mr Advani may have missed history's bus just as Mr Basu had missed the chance of being the prime minister of India. But Mr Advani can draw comfort from the fact that he at least provoked a debate within the BJP. Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, with his almost compulsive equivocation, never made debate possible. Mr Advani, on the other hand, by his dramatic statements and gestures, has forced the BJP to review its own image, to rethink its own dependence on the *sangh parivar* and, above all, to accept that after Mr Vajpayee and Mr Advani, it has no leaders. Mr Advani, knowingly or unknowingly, has opened up a dispute between the BJP's past and the BJP's future. The immediate victim appears to be Mr Advani himself. But today's fallen hero might well be tomorrow's unsung prophet.

SCRIPSI

The purest treasure mortal times afford/ Is spotless reputation; that away/ Men are but gilded loam, or painted clay./ A jewel in a ten-thousand life. Both grow in one./ Take honour from me, and my life is done.

—WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

In the end, Advani was cowardly in the face of his own courage

Big debate to small drama

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

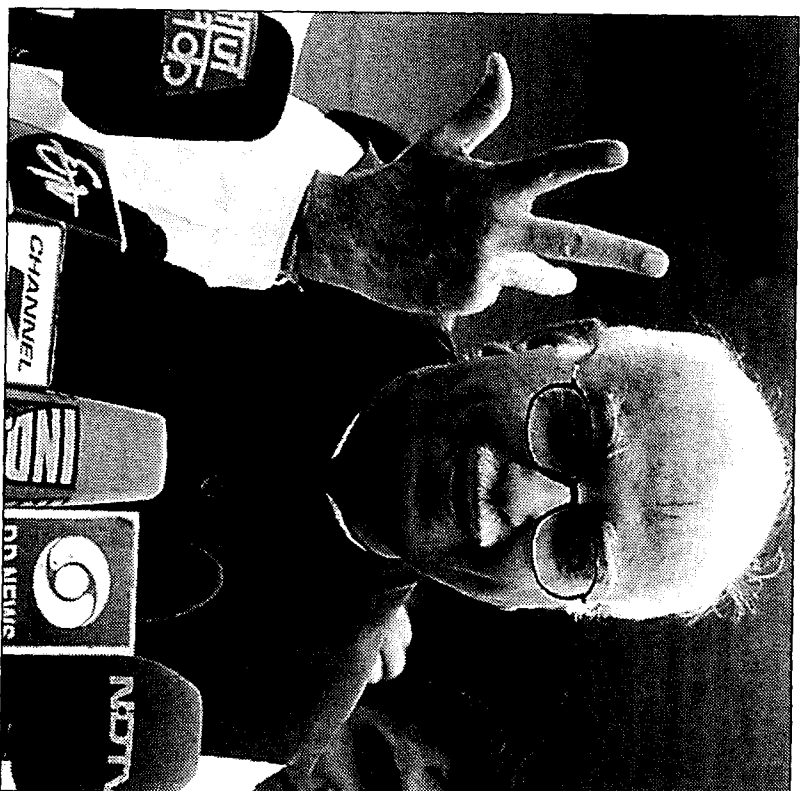
A potentially path-breaking ideological debate has ended as a minor political drama. Advani has withdrawn his resignation; the BJP has passed a tortured resolution to facilitate that withdrawal. In the process, both come out considerably diminished.

The BJP's resolution that facilitated Advani's withdrawal is a pathfully binkered return to its own past. It acknowledged that Advani's visit to Pakistan was significant but then went on to describe its significance entirely in Hindu nationalist terms. The visit now becomes significant because Advani participated in the restoration of ancient temples, reiterated India's tough stand on terrorism and lectured the Pakistanis on how they had failed to live up to Jinnah's vision for Pakistan. If this is what made Advani's visit significant, then we are in troubled waters indeed. The visit was supposed to be about the India-Pakistan peace process. But the BJP's resolution turns even the peace process into a matter of proprietorship. Its main aim is to give credit to the NDA for furthering the process. It forgets the larger ambition with which Advani went to Pakistan, and the larger context of the peace process.

Ultimately, the peace process can move forward only if the leaders of India and Pakistan can talk to and convince the public in each other's countries. India's dilemma has been that its own principles have made it difficult for it to grant Pakistan any more than grudging ideological legitimacy. Certainly, praising Jinnah on any matter was taboo and we were obliged to reiterate denials of the two-nation theory. But if we so much as refuse to acknowledge Jinnah and constantly remind Pakistanis that we do stand opposed to every ideological current that led to their founding, we put ourselves in a politically vulnerable position. This is grist for the mill of those in Pakistan who argue that India cannot be trusted because it cannot adapt to the reality of Pakistan.

D enial of the two-nation theory is important as a normative exercise. It is a way of reiterating our claim that multi-ethnic, multi-religious democracy is a possibility. But we need to articulate this claim in a way that is compatible with

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Slipped through the fingers

recognizing Pakistan as a legitimate state. In that sense the pre-1947 debate over the two-nation theory has become irrelevant. The point of Advani's statement in Pakistan was to find a language for moving forward. This language takes the emphasis away from debates over nationalism to a debate over shared constitutional values. The exhortations to Jinnah's constitutional aspirations was a way of saying: we might disagree over conceptions of nationhood, but there are some constitutional values we could nevertheless share. Can we use that as a basis for moving forward?

Besides, the denials of the two-nation theory can also be fraught with unsavory implications. It could mean the kind of enforced unity that Savarkar, its early exponent, was after. It could also be made compatible, as the BJP has done, with a thoroughly assimilationist and hegemonic project that denies the two-nation theory only because it wants to assert the claim of one particular conception of nationhood.

While the link is understandable, it would be a mistake to link the fate of Indian secularism to denials of the

two-nation theory. We need to transcend the categories about nationalism that were bequeathed to us by the nationalist movement or we will continue to fall into the same traps and divisions that hobble both India and Pakistan. The appeal to constitutional values rather than conceptions of nationalism was the right place to start.

But the BJP has once again negated that fleeting attempt that Advani made. In doing so, it has made it clear that it is still a party of the past, not the future, still unable to think outside a traditional RSS framework and organizationally completely beholden to it. The BJP has secured a short-term truce, but at the price of postponing the inevitable day of reckoning about its own identity.

It is, of course, impossible to tell what motivated Advani to do what he did. It should not always be assumed that politicians' own speculations and motives are always completely transparent to them. Given the political taboos that surround Jinnah in both India and Pakistan, his deft use of Jinnah's August 11 speech, was an act of courage. And the chorus of criti-

cism that followed, from Togadia to Ambika Soni, from Jyoti Basu to Sudarshan, certainly showed how hazardous even small innovations are. Advani did want to be seen as a man of peace for three reasons: to overcome his own image as a hardliner on Muslims, to exorcise the ghosts of Agra where he was seen as a spoiler, and to reclaim the peace process for the NDA.

This evolution was in no way incompatible with *Hindutva*. Characters like Togadia and Modi may have a pathological, over-determined and irrational fear of Pakistan and Muslims. For Advani and Vajpayee, *Hindutva* has always been about protecting Hindu interests. But the definition of these interests is historical: it is based on what they perceive as the threats. So the articulation of *Hindutva* in the early Nineties when India is undergoing a profound crisis, facing numerous insurgencies, subject to the Congress's compromises on secularism in Shah Bano and Rushdie, will be very different from a *Hindutva* when India is far more confident about its role in the world, insurgencies are more contained, and the BJP has understood at least some of the imperatives of governance. This reinterpretation of the anxieties that need to be addressed can again change. So the fact that Advani could change is not surprising. The world has changed.

But in the end, Advani was cowardly in the face of his own courage. A charitable interpretation of the withdrawal of his resignation might go something like this. For Advani, the unity of the *sangh parivar* is of paramount importance; he has given to the *parivar* what was meant for the nation. So it is not surprising that he gave in. After all it is not easy to split with the party that defined your identity so thoroughly. But the resolution that it is still a party of the past, not the future, still unable to think outside a traditional RSS framework and organizationally completely beholden to it. The BJP has secured a short-term truce, but at the price of postponing the inevitable day of reckoning about its own identity.

Those who were prepared to admit that Advani had transformed will feel betrayed; those who thought he had the ability to lead will now have to admit that he can only follow; those who thought he was genuine about becoming a statesman will recognize him as nothing other than a party hack. Advani has regained the presidency of the party, but he has lost his place in history.

আজি মুখেই, নবীনেরা চাননি ফিরুন

মস্ত শিক্ষা, বললেন

বিষণ্ন আডবাণী

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল ● নয়াদিল্লি

১১ জুন: গত কয়েক দিনে তাঁর যে অভিজ্ঞতা হল, আগে কখনও হয়নি।

জিমা সম্পর্কে তাঁর মন্তব্যকে ঘিরে দলের একাংশ ও সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের আপত্তি, সভাপতি পদ থেকে তাঁর পদত্যাগ এবং শেষ পর্যন্ত দু'পক্ষের মান রেখে সমঝোতা— এই টানা পোড়েনের অভিজ্ঞতাকে অবশ্য 'তিজ্ঞ' বলছেন না লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। জানাচ্ছেন, এই অভিজ্ঞতা থেকে শিক্ষা নিয়েই আগামী দিনে দল চালাবেন তিনি। আর এই মন্তব্যের জেরেই জন্ম নিয়েছে বড় নতুন প্রশ্ন।

প্রশ্ন উঠেছে, এ বার তা হলে আডবাণী কী করবেন? কোন পথে তিনি নিয়ে যেতে চাইবেন বিজেপি-কে? তিনি কি পারবেন দলকে আরএসএস-এর হাত থেকে মুক্ত করে উদারপন্থার পথে নিয়ে যেতে?

এটা আডবাণীও ভাল করেই জানেন যে, শেষ মুহূর্তে নতিস্বীকার করে এখনকার মতো গদি বাঁচাতে পারলেও তাঁকে সরানোর জন্য চেষ্টার কোনও কসর করবে না সঙ্ঘ পরিবার। জিমা প্রসঙ্গে আডবাণী যা বলেছেন, সঙ্ঘের কাছে তা ক্ষমাহীন অপরাধ। শুধু সঙ্ঘই নয়, আডবাণীর বিপদ রয়েছে দলের মধ্যেও। মুরলীমনোহর জোশীর মতো কট্টরপন্থী নেতারাও তাঁকে কোনও রকম ছাড় দিতে রাজি নন। তাই ভুলচুক এড়িয়ে এখন খুবই সতর্ক হয়ে চলতে হবে আডবাণীকে।

আজ সকালে যখন তিনি দলের সদর দফতরে আসেন, তখন সাহেব সিংহ বর্মার মতো কিছু নেতা ঢোল-কাঁসর সহযোগে বিপুল সংবর্ধনার ব্যবস্থা করেছিলেন। কিন্তু উৎসবের মধ্যেও আজ আডবাণী ছিলেন বিষণ্ন। সেই বিষণ্ণতা নেতারা টের পেয়েছেন বৈঠক শুরু হওয়ার পরে। বৈঠকে আডবাণী বলেন, “আমার একটা মস্ত বড় অভিজ্ঞতা হল। প্রত্যেকেই জীবনে কোনও না কোনও ঘটনা থেকে শিক্ষালাভ করে। আমিও করলাম। গত

১৫ দিনে আমার যে অভিজ্ঞতা হয়েছে তা এক কথায় অপ্রত্যাশিত, অসাধারণ। প্রথম দফায় পাকিস্তানে, তার পরে দেশে। আমি মনে করি ভবিষ্যতে দল পরিচালনার কাজে এই অভিজ্ঞতা কাজে লাগবে।”

এই অভিজ্ঞতাটা ঠিক কী রকম স্পষ্ট করে না বললেও বিজেপি নেতৃত্বের ধারণা, নবীন প্রজন্মের

নেতারা যে ভাবে সঙ্ঘের সঙ্গে হাত মিলিয়ে তাঁকে ইস্তফা দিতে বাধ্য করেছিলেন, সেই অভিজ্ঞতা থেকেই শিক্ষা নিচ্ছেন আডবাণী।

আজকের বৈঠকে আগাগোড়াই ছিল কৌশলের কারিকুরি। দলের বিভিন্ন শিবিরের মধ্যে টানা পোড়েন ধামাচাপা দিতে আলোচ্যসূচির অভিমুখ ঘুরিয়ে দেওয়া হয় ইউপিএ'র বিরোধিতা, বিহার ভোটের দিকে। ক্ষমতা দখলের জন্য দলের মধ্যেই যে রেবারেখি, তা থেকে যাতে ফের কাদা ছোড়াছুড়ি শুরু না হয়, সে ব্যাপারে রীতিমতো সচেতন ছিলেন নেতারা।

ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহারের জন্য এই নেতারা আডবাণীর বাড়িতে ক'দিন দফায় দফায় ধর্না দিয়েছেন। আডবাণীর ‘মান রাখার’ জন্য একটা খসড়া প্রস্তাব নিয়ে কাটাছেঁড়া করেছেন বহু বার। আসলে কিন্তু তাঁর আশায় ছিলেন শেষমেশ আডবাণীর পক্ষে ওই প্রস্তাবের বয়ান মেনে নেওয়া সম্ভব হবে না। সে ক্ষেত্রে সঙ্ঘ পছন্দমতো নেতা বেছে নিতে পারত ঠিকই, কিন্তু শিকে ছিঁড়ত দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মেরই কোনও না কোনও নেতার ভাগ্যে।

সেই আশাতেই ছিলেন সুখমা স্বরাজ, প্রমোদ মহাজন, বেকাইয়া নায়ডু, অরুণ জেটলি বা রাজনাথ সিংহের মতো নেতারা। কিন্তু বিষয়টি আডবাণীর নজর এড়ায়নি। রাজধানীতে ফেরার পরে জিমা প্রসঙ্গে দলের সঙ্গে বাদানুবাদের সময়ে আডবাণীর কাছে বিষয়টি স্পষ্ট হয়ে যায়। এমনকী তিনি সরাসরি নেতাদের কাছে জানতেও চেয়েছিলেন, দল তাঁকে ছুড়ে ফেলতে চায় কি না। তবে সত্যিই সেই সুযোগ তিনি দলকে দেননি। সময় বুঝে প্রস্তাবে নিজের সম্মতি জানিয়ে গদি বাঁচিয়েছেন।

বিজেপি-র দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের নেতাদের সামনের সারিতে আসার আকাঙ্ক্ষা আর নিজের পছন্দসই লোককে বিজেপি-র মাথায় বসিয়ে সংগঠনে কর্তৃত্ব কায়ম করতে সঙ্ঘ

জিমা-ময়দানে যশোবন্তুও



স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১১ জুন: ইজরায়েল থেকে ফোনে আডবাণীকে ধৈর্য ধরতে বলেছিলেন। দেশে ফিরে নিজেই ধৈর্য রাখতে পারেননি। যে ‘কায়েদ-ই-আজম’ মহম্মদ আলি জিন্নার সম্পর্কে আডবাণীর একটি মন্তব্যে দেশে-বিদেশে ঝড় উঠেছে, সেই জিন্নার উপরে গোটা একটি বই লিখছেন প্রাক্তন কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রী ও বিজেপি সাংসদ যশোবন্তু সিংহ। এখন দলীয় সভাপতির কাছে তাঁর জিজ্ঞাসা, “আপনার মন্তব্যেই এই কাণ্ড, তা হলে আমার বইটা বেরোলে কী হবে?”

খিলাফৎ আন্দোলন বা সংখ্যালঘুদের জন্য সংরক্ষণের বিরোধিতায় সরব হয়েছিলেন যে জিমা, তিনি কী ভাবে পরবর্তী কালে পাকিস্তানের ধারণার শরিক হলেন, সেই বিষয়েই গবেষণামূলক কাজে হাত দিয়েছেন যশোবন্তু। মোটেই সঙ্ঘপন্থী নন এই প্রাক্তন বিদেশমন্ত্রী। তাঁর জীবনযাত্রাও যথেষ্ট উদার। জিমা বিতর্কের চূড়ান্ত পর্বে দলের প্রস্তাব গ্রহণের সময়ে যশোবন্তু পুরো বিতর্ক নিয়ে কিছু বলতে চেয়েছিলেন। স্পষ্টতই আডবাণীর বক্তব্যের পক্ষেই

এর পর উনিশের পাতায়

জিমা-ময়দানে যশোবন্তুও

প্রথম পাতার পর

নিজের বক্তব্য পেশ করতেন তিনি। কিন্তু তাতে ফের জীবন্ত হয়ে যেতে পারত অনেক ক্ষোভের আগ্নেয়গিরি। মুরলীমনোহর জোশীর মতো কট্টরপন্থীরা ফের আডবাণীর নিন্দায় সরব হতেন। শুরু হয়ে যেত আর এক দফা কাদা ছোড়াছুড়ি। তাই যশোবন্তুকে বলতে না দিয়ে সযত্নে সেই বিতর্ক এড়িয়ে গিয়েছেন বিজেপি নেতৃত্ব।

কিন্তু কত দিন? যশোবন্তুর বই বাজারে আসার পরেও কী ঠেকিয়ে রাখা যাবে বিতর্ক? ধন্দে এখন লেখক নিজেই।

লালু ৫৮

নয়াদিল্লি, ১১ জুন: ৫৮ বছর বয়স হল রেলমন্ত্রী ও আরজেডি প্রধান লালুপ্রসাদ যাদবের। আজ জন্মদিনে লালুর বক্তব্য, “আমাদের জন্মানায় বয়সের হিসাব রাখার রীতি ছিল না। কাছের লোকেরাই বলল আমার ৫৮ বছর বয়স হয়ে গেল। আমারও মনে হয় তাই হবে। তবে এখন তো আমি নিজেই দাদু হয়ে গিয়েছি, আর ঘটা করে জন্মদিন পালনের কী দরকার?”

তাঁকে জন্মদিনের অভিনন্দন জানাতে দলে দলে লোকে রেল ভবনে গিয়েছেন। আডবাণী প্রসঙ্গে লালু বলেন, “আডবাণী ও তাঁর দলের কট্টরপন্থী রাজনীতি দেশবাসীর কাছে প্রকট হয়ে গিয়েছে।” — পি টি আই

12 JUN 2006

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

New Advani

But it's the same old BJP!

Before attempting to understand, or analyse, the stormy debate within the Sangh Parivar over Lal Krishna Advani's statements in Pakistan, it is essential to ask some questions. What possible political relevance could there be to calling Mohammad Ali Jinnah secular nearly six decades after the man's departure from the scene? The existence of Pakistan is not in question and the votaries of Akhand Bharat will forgive us a chuckle, nor the fact that it is a theocratic state. Advani's description of Jinnah as secular will not improve relations between India and Pakistan, nor hasten the resolution of disputes. So what, we must ask ourselves, was the point? Next, how does a 76-year-old man who has spent more than five decades advocating aggressive Hindutva, leading movements to pull down mosques and erect temples, and who revels in being called a "*Loh Purush*", experience as radical a change of heart as Advani seems to have, and for no discernible reason? Miracles do happen, but not within the opportunistic arena of Indian politics.

For the past decade, the Sangh Parivar has sought to straddle both sides of a political divide — the schism between realpolitik and ideology. Earlier, Atal Behari Vajpayee was projected as the soft face of Hindutva, Advani as the hawk. One or other side of the proposition was shown to be dominating the debate, depending on political convenience. The Parivar managed this contradiction well enough to last a full term in office. But with Vajpayee having all but hung up his boots, Advani faced the risk of being seen as a hawk in a party of hawks. While hawkish positions may please hardliners, these are impractical and the Sangh Parivar realises — perhaps better than anyone else — that the imperatives of Indian politics are such that even national parties must see themselves as part of a coalition of political interests if they are to aspire to power. Thus a dove had to be created within the community of hawks. Advani, with his recent statements in Pakistan, and the Sangh Parivar, with its declamatory excesses, appear so far to be managing the image makeover quite well. But if the new Advani is to be the old Vajpayee, who will play the old Advani? Enter Murli Manohar Joshi, to lead the battle for the Hindutva brigade. The BJP and the Parivar are only doing what they managed so successfully over the past decade, keeping their options open. And if Advani emerges looking suddenly a nicer, more liberal man, what's the harm in it? He is, after all, Vajpayee's successor, isn't he?

12 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

Jinnah Bottled, Advani Stays

RSS Wants Short Innings



Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 10 JUNE

HAVING satisfied itself that there was no deviation in the BJP from its stated position on Jinnah, the RSS now wants L K Advani to have a short innings as party president before handing over the baton to some other leader. As the latest drama being played out in the party headed towards an unpredictable finish on Friday night, there was some satisfaction in the RSS that the BJP had stayed its course on something that was central to its ideological moorings, rather than embark on an adventurist course as laid out by its president which, in the long run, would have spelt doom not just for the BJP, but for the entire sangh parivar too.

"Our primary concern was not whether Mr Advani continued as the BJP president after his Jinnah re-assessment, but whether an individual's thinking on so fundamental an issue was transformed into the party-line. To that extent, our concerns have been addressed. Ideology has finally prevailed over an individual's personal preferences," sources in the Sangh said this evening.

Even though the RSS took pains to clarify that the

latest upheaval in the BJP was "an internal matter" and that it had nothing to do with it, it was clear that it had more than a passing interest in the events as they unfolded. Mr Advani's Karachi musings, RSS leaders concluded, had not just forced the VHP to adopt a rebellious path, but also made the entire cadre extremely restive and angry.

It was against this backdrop that RSS general-secretary Mohan Bhagwat, in his midnight meeting with a section of BJP's leadership on June 6, asked them to seek a retraction of Mr Advani's statements on Jinnah. The message was clear — no one, however high and mighty he was, could be allowed to tamper with the sangh parivar's basic ideological position. "Withdraw your remarks, or quit," was the ultimatum.

In the RSS's assessment, Mr Advani might have earned a reprieve for now, but his moral authority and stature would have diminished greatly after the latest episode. "It is doubtful whether he can continue to command the same kind of respect and awe as before," these sources said.

Having stumbled once, Mr Advani would find it extremely difficult to re-claim the turf he had ceded in the process. "His position has become very shaky, and untenable," the RSS sources said.



Advani withdraws his resignation

BJP insists Jinnah led a communal agitation that killed thousands; RSS rejects idea of debate

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: L.K. Advani on Friday withdrew his resignation as Bharatiya Janata Party president even as the party said it "continues to steadfastly reject the two-nation theory" championed by Pakistan founder Mohamad Ali Jinnah. It said that "there can be no re-visiting the reality that Jinnah led a communal agitation to achieve his goal of Pakistan, which devoured thousands of innocent people in its wake."

The week-long crisis in the BJP ended, but the party clearly refused to endorse Mr. Advani's remarks made during his recent visit to Pakistan that Jinnah was secular.

On Monday the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh said Mr. Advani's remarks were "totally unacceptable" and ran contrary to its ideological position. On Friday, after the crisis ended, RSS spokesperson Ram Madhav said the Sangh rejected the idea of a debate on Jinnah (as suggested by Mr. Advani) and demanded a clarification from the BJP, which was given on Friday. "It was not even a question of an RSS viewpoint but a question of the historical facts [related to Jinnah's role in the Partition of the country]," Mr. Madhav said.

Party leaders firm

All the BJP leaders stood together on the issue of "no deviation from ideology" and went along with the RSS position that there could be no question of re-evaluating Jinnah or his role in the Partition.

The formal resolution of the crisis took place at a meeting of the BJP parliamentary board and central office-bearers to which Chief Ministers of BJP-ruled States were also invited. Everyone was present, including the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Jaswant Singh, who flew in from Israel.

Mr. Advani was party to the one-page statement adopted at



TAKING STOCK: Jaswant Singh, A.B. Vajpayee and L.K. Advani at the BJP Parliamentary Board Meeting in New Delhi on Friday. — PHOTO: RAJEEV BHATT

the meeting and has thus endorsed the explanation of his statements and agreed with the assertion that Jinnah led a communal agitation that killed thousands of innocent people.

Party general secretary Pramad Mahajan said that matters had been sorted out by Thursday evening when he took the "final draft" of the one-page statement to Mr. Vajpayee for approval. The "draft" was approved by the senior leader, Murti Manohar Joshi, a couple of hours ahead of Friday's meeting. On Thursday,

Dr. Joshi said there could be "no dilution of ideology" on the Jinnah issue and there was no room for ambiguity that Jinnah practised communal politics.

A concession to Mr. Advani was the explanation by the party that he had welcomed the Pakistan Government's invitation to him to lay the foundation for the Katsraj temple "and in that context" and "without describing Jinnah as secular" Mr. Advani had "reminded the people of Pakistan" that Jinnah in his address to Pakistan's Constitu-

ent Assembly "had urged full freedom of faith for all its citizens and no discrimination between its citizens on grounds of religion."

The one-page statement also praised Mr. Advani's visit for taking India-Pakistan relations to a "new level" in "continuation" of the initiative taken by Mr. Vajpayee.

Compromise and the compromised: Page 11

আপসে ফিরলেন লৌহপুরুষ

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সমঝোতার হিসাব-নিকাশ

ধাক্কা খেল আডবাণীর ভাবমূর্তি বদলের চেষ্টা

অগ্নি রায় • নয়াদিল্লি

এই খসড়াটি লিখেছেন রাজাসভার সদস্য চন্দন মিত্র।
কী রয়েছে এই প্রস্তাবে? জিমা সম্পর্কে করাচিত্তে আডবাণীর যে মন্তব্য ঘিরে বিতর্কের ঝড় উঠেছিল, খুব সতর্ক ভাবে তাকে সমর্থন করে বলা হয়েছে, “কটাসরাজের অনুষ্ঠানকে আডবাণী স্বাগত জানিয়েছেন, বলেছেন এটা শুভ সূচনা। এবং সেই প্রসঙ্গে, জিমা কে ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ অ্যাথ্যা না-দিয়ে, তিনি শুধু পাকিস্তানের মানুষকে মনে করিয়ে দিয়েছেন তাঁদের জনকের একটি বক্তৃতার কথা। যে বক্তৃতায় জিমা সব নাগরিকের পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতার কথা বলেছেন।” পরে বেফাইয়াও বলেন, আডবাণীর মন্তব্যকে তার সঠিক পরিপ্রেক্ষিতে ফেলে বিচার করা উচিত। নরেন্দ্র মোদী, অনন্ত কুমারদের কাছে কাল রাতেই খসড়া প্রস্তাবটি আডবাণী মেনে নেন। ফলে আজ তাঁর ফিরে আসতে আর কোনও সমস্যা ছিল না।

আডবাণীর দিকটি না হয় কোনও ভাবে সামাল দেওয়া হল। কিন্তু সঙ্ঘ? তাদের তুটু করার পর্যাপ্ত রসদও রয়েছে প্রস্তাবে। বলা হয়েছে, “পাকিস্তান নিয়ে জিমা মতাদর্শ যা-ই হোক না কেন, যে রাষ্ট্রের তিনি পতন করেন, তা ধর্মভিত্তিক ও সাম্প্রদায়িক। যার মধ্যে ছিল হিন্দু ও মুসলিম সম্প্রদায়ের ভিত্তিতে দু’টি আলাদা রাষ্ট্র তৈরির বীজ। ভারতকে সাম্প্রদায়িক রেখায় বিভাজন করার ঘোর নিন্দা করে বিজেপি। জিমা প্রবর্তিত ও ব্রিটিশ সমর্থিত দ্বিজাতিতত্ত্বকেও প্রত্যাখ্যান করে। পাকিস্তান পাওয়ার লক্ষ্যে জিমা তাঁর সাম্প্রদায়িক আন্দোলন চালিয়ে গিয়েছিলেন, সেই সত্য আবার ফিরে দেখার কোনও প্রয়োজন নেই।”

আডবাণী প্রথম প্রস্তাবটি ফিরিয়ে দেওয়ার পরে আরএসএস-এর পাঁচটা চাপও ক্রমে বাড়ছিল। পরিস্থিতি আরও জটিল হয়ে যায় মুরলীমোহর জোশীর মন্তব্যে। তিনি আডবাণীর তীব্র বিরোধিতা করে বলেন, জিমা প্রসঙ্গে দলের কোনও রকম আপস মানতে তিনি রাজি নন। আপাতত বিজেপি-র সঙ্কট ধামাচাপা পড়লেও গোটা ঘটনাটির কড়া সমালোচনা করতে ছাড়েনি কংগ্রেস। দলের অন্যতম প্রবীণ নেতা প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় বলেন, “এটা একটা তামাশায় পরিণত হয়েছে। জিমা যে বক্তৃতা দিয়েছিলেন ‘৪৭ সালের ১১ অগস্ট, এত দিন পরে তার উদ্ধৃতি দিয়ে আডবাণী পাকিস্তানকে ‘ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা’ শোখাতে চাইছেন?’ আর এক কংগ্রেস নেতা প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুণ্ডি বলেন, “রত্নাকর থেকে বাণীকি হওয়ার চেষ্টা করেছিলেন আডবাণী। কিন্তু সাত দিনের নাটকের পরে উনি রত্নাকরই থেকে গেলেন।”

আর প্রবীণ সিপিএম নেতা জ্যোতি বসুর কটাক্ষ, “উনি যে আবার সভাপতির পদে ফিরবেন না”

আর এস এস

লাভ

- বিজেপিতে নিয়ন্ত্রণ কতটা, তা প্রমাণিত হল
- জিয়ার বিরুদ্ধে বিজেপিকে প্রস্তাব নিতে বাধ্য করা
- সাংগঠনিক শক্তি বাড়ানোর সুযোগ
- ভবিষ্যতে বিজেপি নেতৃত্বে নিজেদের লোক বসানোর সম্ভাবনা

ক্ষতি

- আডবাণীকে সরানো গেল না।
- পাকিস্তান সঙ্ঘের সাফল্য মেনে নিতে হল
- ভবিষ্যতে আডবাণী আর এস এসের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইয়ে দলকে নিয়ে যেতে পারেন

গ্রাফিক্স: বঙ্গপ দত্তপাট

লাভ

- সভাপতির পদ গেলে বিরোধী দলনেতার পদে অসুবিধা হত
- বিক্ষুব্ধ রাজনীতি আপাতত বাড়বে না
- আর এস এসের পছন্দের লোক সভাপতি হল না
- সংগঠন হাতে থাকায় আদর্শগত লড়াই চালাতে সুবিধা

ক্ষতি

- ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ, উদার ভাবমূর্তি তৈরির চেষ্টায় ধাক্কা।
- দলে নিয়ন্ত্রণ আগের চেয়ে শিথিল
- আর এস এসের সঙ্গে বিরোধ বাড়বে
- সমালোচনা হবে, তিনি ক্ষমতালোভী
- আজ হোক কাল ইস্তফা দিতেই হবে

আডবাণী



আরএসএসের সঙ্গে লড়াই চলবে, প্রশ্ন দলকে পাশে পাওয়া নিয়েই

জয়ন্ত মোঘাল • নয়াদিল্লি

১০ জুন: যাটের দশকে ইন্দিরা গান্ধী যখন প্রধানমন্ত্রী, তখন মোরারজী দেশাই, নীলাম সঞ্জীব রেড্ডি, নিজলিন্দার মতো নেতার সঙ্গে তাঁর ক্ষমতা দখলের লড়াই চলছিল। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয়ে ইন্দিরা ঘনিষ্ঠ আমলা পি এন হাকদার তখন এই ক্ষমতার লড়াইকে আদর্শের লড়াইয়ে রূপান্তরিত করার জন্য ইন্দিরাকে পরামর্শ দেন। সেই পরামর্শ মেনেই ব্যঙ্গের জাতীয়করণের মতো বৈশ্বিক বিষয়কে তুলে ধরেছিলেন ইন্দিরা। বিক্ষুব্ধদের রুখতে সফলও হন।

সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের সঙ্গে ক্ষমতার লড়াইকেও একই ভাবে আদর্শগত রূপ দিতে চেয়েছিলেন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। অনেকটা সফলও হন। পাক সফরে মহম্মদ আলি জিয়ার সমাধিতে গিয়ে আডবাণীর বক্তব্য সীমান্তের দু’পাশেই তাঁর কটর ভাবমূর্তি ভাঙতে অনেকটাই সাহায্য করেছিল। তাঁর কুশপুতুল দাহ করে পরোক্ষে আডবাণীর এই সাফল্যেরই স্বীকৃতি দিয়েছে বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ। সঙ্ঘের সঙ্গে বাজপেয়ীর বরাবরই দুরত্ব থাকলেও আর এস এস-এর আদর্শে পুষ্ট আডবাণীর এ ভাবে প্রকাশ্যে সংস্কারপন্থী মনোভাব ব্যক্ত করা ভোল পাশ্চাত্যের সামিল। তাই আডবাণীই এখন সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের পয়লা নম্বর দশমন।

কিন্তু তিনি যে ইন্দিরা গান্ধী নন, আজ বিজেপি সভাপতি পদে ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহার করে লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী তা প্রমাণ করেছেন। প্রশ্ন হল, তাঁর ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহারের সিদ্ধান্তে কি এক

পক্ষকালের এই লড়াই একেবারে ধুলিসাৎ হয়ে গেল না? দলে তাঁর ঘনিষ্ঠ শিবিরের বক্তব্য, এর পরেও ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহার না করলে ক্ষমতার অলিন্দ থেকে ছিটকে যেতেন আডবাণী। সে ক্ষেত্রে দলীয় নীতিতে কোনও পরিবর্তন আনা তাঁর পক্ষে সম্ভব হত না। সঙ্ঘ পরিবার দলে কর্তৃত্ব কয়েম করত। আডবাণীর পক্ষে যুক্তি, দল তাঁর বক্তব্য কার্যত মেনে নিয়েছে। এর পরেও গৌ ধরে থাকলে বিক্ষুব্ধদের হাতে দলের রাশ ছেড়ে দেওয়া হত। সেটা চাননি আডবাণী। কারণ, দলের ভিত্তিভূমিই তাঁর নিয়ন্ত্রণে না থাকলে অট্টালিকা গড়া যাবে না।

আডবাণীর মান রাখার জন্য দল সত্যিই বারবার প্রস্তাব ভাঙগড়া করেছে। তা সত্ত্বেও সঙ্ঘের হাতে দলীয় ক্ষমতার হস্তান্তর ঠেকাতে আডবাণীকেও অনেকটাই জমি ছাড়তে হয়েছে। জিমা প্রসঙ্গে বিরোধ আর না বাড়িয়ে আপাতত কার্যত আপস করে নিয়েছেন আডবাণী।

তবে জিমা প্রসঙ্গে সঙ্ঘের সঙ্গে তাঁর মতবিরোধ প্রকাশ্যে চলে এসেছে। এ ক্ষেত্রে তাঁর নিজের দলেরও খুব ছোট অংশই আডবাণীর পাশে রয়েছে। কাজেই সংঘাতটা এখন যতটা সঙ্ঘ বনাম বিজেপি-র, তার থেকে অনেক বেশি সঙ্ঘ বনাম আডবাণীর। পুরো দলকে পাশে না পেলে আডবাণীর পক্ষে যে লড়াই আর এগিয়ে নিয়ে যাওয়া সম্ভব নয়।

সম্ভবত না। আডবাণী ভেবেছিলেন, বিজেপি-র হাল ধরার মতো নেতার যে হেতু অভাব রয়েছে, তাই বিনা বাধায় দলে তাঁর বক্তব্য গৃহীত হবে। কিন্তু রাজনীতিতে সে রকম সর্বাত্মক সমর্থন পেয়েছেন মুষ্টিমেয় কয়েক জন নেতা। বিরোধিতা সত্ত্বেও চৌরিচৌরার ঘটনার পর এক কথায় দেশজুড়ে অসহযোগ আন্দোলন খামিয়ে দিতে পেরেছিলেন মহাত্মা গান্ধী। সেই কর্তৃত্ব তাঁর যে নেই, আডবাণী তা বুঝতে পারেননি।

আডবাণী প্রথমে ভেবেছিলেন, জিমা প্রসঙ্গে এই আদর্শগত লড়াই শুরু করে বিজেপি-র সঙ্ঘ নির্ভরতা অনেকটাই কাটিয়ে দিতে পারবেন তিনি। কিন্তু দলকে পাশে না পেয়ে তাঁকে রণে ভঙ্গ দিতে হল। চল-তরোয়ালহীন ‘নিধিরাম সর্দার’ হয়ে লড়াই চালিয়ে যাওয়া তাঁর সমীচীন মনে হয়নি। আবার যে ভাবে আডবাণী ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার ঘোড়ায় সওয়ার হয়েছেন, তাতে ফের কটর ভাবমূর্তিতে ফেরা সম্ভব হবে না। দলকে পুরোপুরি পাশে না পেলেও যে কোনও মুহোই এই আদর্শগত লড়াই তাকে চালিয়ে যেতে হবে। তিনি চানও, দলকে আর এস এসের প্রভাব থেকে বের করে সামনের দিকে নিয়ে যেতে। তার ফলে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের সঙ্গে তাঁর সংঘাত বাড়বে বই কমবে না।

এই পরিস্থিতিতে প্রশ্ন থেকেই যাচ্ছে, লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী এ ভাবে কত দিন দলে কর্তৃত্ব বজায় রাখতে পারবেন? আর আডবাণী যদি লক্ষ্যপূরণে ব্যর্থ হন, তা হলে কি সঙ্ঘ পরিবার পুরোপুরি গ্রাস করে ফেলবে বিজেপি-কে?

আপনার মতে

আর এস এস কি শেষ পর্যন্ত গ্রাস করে নেবে বিজেপিকে?

আপনার মতামত এসএমএস করুন ৮২৪৩ নম্বরে

যদি ‘হ্যাঁ’ হয় তা হলে লিখুন: Apoll a

যদি ‘না’ হয় তা হলে লিখুন: Apoll b

উত্তর পাঠান হাট, এয়ারটেল, টাটা ইন্ডিকম অথবা বিলায়েন্স ইন্ডিয়া মোবাইল থেকে।

জিমা-বিতর্ক কি ভারত-পাক শান্তি প্রক্রিয়াকে বিঘ্নিত করবে?

হ্যাঁ ৫৬% না ৪৪%

19 J

Hardliners delay patch-up

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 9. — Caught in a double bind over the conflict between Mr LK Advani's controversial statements in Pakistan and the RSS' stiff opposition to them, the BJP today failed to defuse the crisis gripping the party since his resignation on Tuesday.

Grappling with the tough balancing act that could placate the sentiments of both Mr Advani and the Sangh, the BJP had to postpone the meeting of its Parliamentary Board and central office-bearers till 6 p.m. tomorrow in order to buy another 24 hours.

The Advani loyalists worked overtime to arrive at a compromise formula to break the deadlock but could not tide over the Advani-RSS face-off on the Jinnah issue, with the RSS ruling out any compromise on its "basic ideology".

Despite maintaining in public that it does not interfere in the BJP's leadership matters, the RSS is said to be sticking to its position that Mr Advani's praise for Pakistan's founder has to be reviewed.

To make matters worse for the BJP's crisis managers, another senior leader, Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, a known Advani-baiter, said Jinnah was not secular. Expressing surprise at why Mr Advani made



ADVANI BAITERS: (Clockwise from top left) Mr Joshi, Mr Sinha, Mr Gaur and Mr Marandi

that statement, he also stressed that there could not be any compromise over the party's "basic ideology".

The fissures in the BJP seem to be growing wider. The senior party leader, Mr Yashwant Sinha, had earlier voiced views similar to Mr Joshi's.

Engaged in a series of meetings since morning, senior BJP leaders worked on a draft resolution to be adopted by the Parliamentary Board to accommodate Mr Advani's position. Mr Advani had expressed displeasure that the resolution passed

by the Parliamentary Board last evening had not referred to his Pakistan visit and the "contexts" of his remarks on Jinnah.

BJP sources said the fresh draft had sought to describe Mr Advani's visit to Pakistan as "historic" and his inauguration of restoration work at the Katasraj Temple as a "milestone". It was also believed to have stated that Mr Advani's remarks on Jinnah had to be "seen in its totality in the context of diplomatic relations between the two countries."

It had also sought to mention Jinnah's "other face", particularly his espousal of the two-nation theory, to drive home the point that the BJP would never compromise on its ideology.

Although the BJP leaders are in touch with the Sangh leadership, the RSS is expected to maintain its tough stance on the issue.

Given the fact that neither Mr Advani nor the RSS is showing any signs of a climb-down from their respective stands, the possibility of Mr Advani's withdrawal of his resignation appears to be remote.

There is now a sharp division in the BJP, with Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, Mr Babu Lal Gaur and Mr Babulal Marandi openly backing the RSS line while distancing themselves from Mr Advani.

More reports on page 4

RSS takes ideology battle to Advani camp

NEW DELHI, June 9. — The RSS seems to have asked "its men in the BJP" to fight the battle on behalf of the Sangh Parivar while opposing "Mr Advani's views".

At least this is what appears from Mr Murli Manohar Joshi's direct attack on Mr Advani's statements in Pakistan and similar resentments expressed by Mr Yashwant Sinha, Mr Babulal Gaur and Mr Babu Lal Marandi. In the throes of an

unprecedented leadership crisis, a sharp divide in the BJP is evident. The turf battle involves the leaders who stand by the RSS' diktat and Advani loyalists. Although only time will tell which of these two camps would have the last laugh, it is apparent that the RSS has mobilised its hardcore sympathisers in the BJP to go on the offensive to save its "ideology", which, the Sangh feels, was severely

undermined by Mr Advani's views on Jinnah and other issues during his recent tour of Pakistan. "There are a lot many people in the party who understand RSS ideology and they would accordingly influence any decision on the issue," said the RSS spokesman, Mr Ram Madhav, hinting at what 'pro-RSS' leaders in the BJP should do. Not surprisingly, Mr Murli Manohar Joshi, a known "blue-eyed boy" of the Sangh, today

openly came out to criticise Mr Advani, saying Jinnah was not secular and there should be no dilution of the party's "basic ideology". Mr Joshi set the stage for a stormy meeting of the BJP Parliamentary Board tomorrow evening. There are only a few leaders like Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr Jaswant Singh who have supported Mr Advani's views. Some others have preferred to adopt a "wait-and-watch" policy. — SNS

Third front likely if NDA breaks

VINOD Sharma
New Delhi, June 9

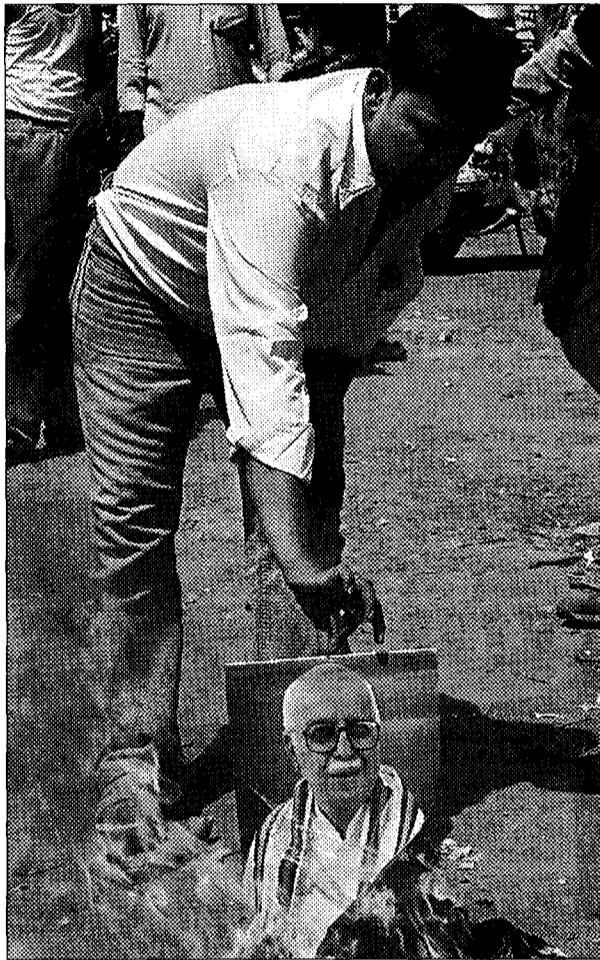
IF THE BJP fails to strike a balance between the Sangh Parivar and its extended family, including the NDA allies, the much-discussed third front might emerge earlier than expected, causing seismic changes across the country's political landscape.

Senior BJP leader Murl Manohar Joshi's take on L.K. Advani's views on Jinnah is a full-throated reiteration of the RSS's understanding of history he so zealously promoted as Atal Bihari Vajpayee's HRD Minister. His emergence as the party chief -- an ambition he feels emboldened to pursue now -- or that of any other RSS proxy, could bring about the NDA's collapse even before the next round of Assembly elections.

The kind of defence Advani expected from his party colleagues on Jinnah's secular pitch in his August 11, 1947 speech, has come, in fact, from NDA fellow-travellers. Even TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu who, only the other day, attributed his post-Gujarat association with the BJP to his defeat in Andhra, has come out in Advani's support.

In this era of coalition politics, these developments drive home the relevance of the image makeover Advani sought for himself and the BJP. The irony, however, is that without the RSS-BJP backing, he'd be of little use for his allies.

If the RSS manages to foist its own man as BJP chief, whose views will he reflect in the House? His own



A Sena activist burns an Advani poster in Mumbai on Thursday.

or those of his party? The gross incongruity of such a situation wasn't lost on Vajpayee when Advani, as the RSS' chosen poster-boy, launched the *rath yatra* for the Ram temple some 15 years ago. The Sangh then had wanted the former PM to lead the party in Parliament while his junior colleague toured the country. But he refused, arguing that

he cannot defend in the House the political line with which he disagreed.

From the standpoint of the Congress, the developments do not also augur well; its UPA allies such as the RJD and the Lok Janshakti already part of the 'secular Jinnah' chorus besides the NDA's Nitish Kumar, Sharad Yadav and George Fernandes.

CPM to BJP leader's defence

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, June 9

THE CPI (M) on Thursday said that BJP leader L. K. Advani never directly referred to Jinnah as a secularist, although he had to resign following RSS pressure over his remarks on Pakistan's founder.

Party mouthpiece People's Democracy in its editorial in the forthcoming issue says "To be fair, Advani never directly referred to Jinnah as a secularist. He quoted Jinnah's speech of August 11, 1947 to establish that Pakistan should accordingly be a secular state."

A "charitable" interpretation of this reference to Jinnah's speech is being attributed to Advani's effort to chastise Pakistan as deviating from Jinnah's vision, the editorial says.

"Indirectly, we are being told, Advani was advising the Pakistani political leadership to correct this deviation. Such subtlety, if ever it was intended, however, did not find either approval or acceptance by the RSS and the likes of the VHP.

"For the RSS, anti-Muslim and anti-Pakistan are synonymous. For achieving its objective, the RSS requires to constantly whip up anti-Muslim sentiments and sharpen communal polarisation," the CPM editorial elucidates.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Sangh dictates terms of return

RADHIKARAMASESHAN

New Delhi, June 9: Under severe pressure from the Sangh, the BJP tonight prepared an amended resolution that would request Lal Krishna Advani to recall his resignation without supporting his remarks on Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

After the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh declined to approve any draft that tried to even explain the context of Advani's laudatory comments, changes were carried out to make the resolution acceptable.

It endorsed Advani's Pakistan trip, but was critical of Jinnah, apparently without any word of support for the BJP president's statement in Karachi.

Advani had earlier insisted on the party backing him on his remarks on Jinnah.

"This is the best we could have done. Either Advani accepts it or does not. The ball is in his court, he will have to decide if he wants to quit or not," said a source.

Advani met Vice-President Bhairon Singh Shekhawat today. Shekhawat is an elder statesman who is respected in the Sangh as well.

For the record, RSS spokesperson Ram Madhav maintained that Advani's resignation as BJP chief was a "matter for the party to decide" but insisted that the Sangh's "misgivings" on his praise for Jinnah "should be removed".

"People in the BJP understand what reservations we have, what our stand is and we are sure they will keep this in mind when drafting the resolution," Madhav said, asked what would satisfy the RSS as

well as lead to a resolution of the leadership crisis in the party.

"We cannot accept that Jinnah is secular," he added.

The BJP parliamentary board, scheduled to meet this evening after Advani was to have announced his "formal" response to its rejection of his resignation, put off the meeting until tomorrow. The ostensible reason was the leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Jaswant Singh, will return tomorrow from Israel and his presence is "necessary".

"Advani is sentimentally attached to Singh and if he requests him to stay on, perhaps he will," said a source.

Asked about tomorrow's meeting of the parliamentary board, Madhav said: "Advani knows what we want. He will do what is appropriate. We hope tomorrow it will be over."

According to BJP sources, the RSS spoke its mind because of the perception or feedback that Advani was fast losing support in his party after he refused to yield on Jinnah. After Yashwant Sinha — who the sources claimed was "put up" by the Sangh — senior leader Muri Manohar Joshi aired his dissent publicly today.

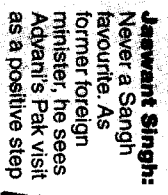
Joshi said Jinnah was "responsible" for the killings of lakhs of people after Partition and had always pursued the theory of separatism. He added that nobody in the BJP had had a rethink on Jinnah and none had called him "secular" either.

Joshi said he and Advani had "mutual differences" on the issue and the Sangh's ideology would not be compromised. Asked if the crisis would be resolved, he merely smiled.

Unlike in the past, when a statement remotely critical of Advani from Joshi used to be



A.B. Vajpayee: The original Sangh challenger cannot publicly disown his new disciple



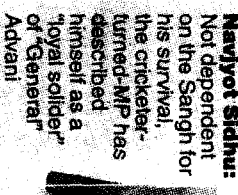
Jaswant Singh: Never a Sangh favourite. As former foreign minister, he sees Advani's Pak visit as a positive step



Brajesh Mishra: Backs Advani on economic reforms, Pakistan and secularism



Pramod Mahajan: Disliked by the Sangh. Wants to recast himself as a "liberal"



Navjot Sidhu: Not dependent on the Sangh for his survival, the cricket-turned-MP has described himself as a "loyal soldier" of General Advani

A HOUSE DIVIDED: WHO STANDS WHERE



M.M. Joshi: RSS pet. Sees this as the right moment to bounce back



Arun Jaithey: Drifting closer to the Sangh after K.S. Sudarshan's controversial interview



Sushma Swaraj: RSS favourite. Refused to put Advani's Jinnah comments on BJP website



Kalyan Singh: Projecting himself as leader of Opposition in case Advani quits



M. Venkalah Naidu: Used to be Advani's eyes and ears in BJP. Now wants to be on RSS side

Ananth Kumar: Follows Jaithey and Naidu blindly

Graphic: MANOJ

quashed instantly, the BJP was silent this time. "Joshi has raised an important matter and we expect it will be debated tomorrow," said a party leader who was one of his strongest detractors in the past.

BJP sources said the reason why a dominant section went against Advani was the "virtual ultimatum" served by the RSS. "The Sangh conveyed if there was anything overtly

supportive of his Pakistan visit in the resolution, it would sunder its links with the party," said a source.

While the estrangement would not affect Atal Bihari Vajpayee or Advani, others, the source added, would have to pay a price politically. "Minus the Sangh's infrastructure and support we are nothing," the source admitted. ■ See Page 6

Joshi roar blessed by RSS

Sangh sees no reason for debate on Jinnah

SHEKHAR Iyer
New Delhi, June 9

COINCIDING WITH Murl Manohar Joshi's attack against L.K. Advani's stand on Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the RSS said it did not see any reason for a debate on Pakistan's founder as sought by Advani.

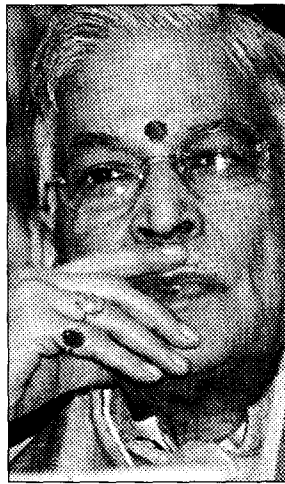
RSS spokesperson Ram Madhav said, "There is no need for a debate 60 years after independence. Jinnah may have said something in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. If this is the understanding of Jinnah, who was responsible for the partition of the country on religious lines?"

He said Advani's statements on Jinnah and his remark that the Akhand Bharat concept was irrelevant did not "jell with our ideology". "We cannot accept that Jinnah is secular".

Joshi and the Sangh Parivar seemed to have waited till the game plan of Advani's supporters was apparent. They had not brought up the Jinnah issue in the first resolution of the BJP parliamentary board, adopted on Wednesday. That resolution had merely appealed to Advani to withdraw his resignation while extolling his leadership.

Nevertheless, as Joshi put it on Thursday, he had conveyed his objection to Advani's estimation of Jinnah to Venkaiah Naidu, who as senior-most vice president, had conducted the show.

Joshi, who met Advani on Wednesday, is believed to have straightaway asked him why he had made such remarks. Advani is said to have kept mum. Joshi said, "Jinnah can in no way be



Murl Manohar Joshi
Whose line is it anyway?

termed as a secular man. The party has to keep its ideology in mind when it takes any decision or makes a public comment on any issue...this is an issue

between the one-nation and the two-nation theory."

Said the RSS spokesperson, "BJP leaders know how to remove our misgivings".

Advani continued to get support of the NDA allies, and surprisingly of the TDP. Janata Dal (U) leader Nitish Kumar met him and conveyed to him his party's support. Kumar said, "Advani has won the hearts of the nation with his Pakistan visit. We need to understand what he had said about Jinnah. My party and I extend full support to him and we strongly feel that what he did in Pakistan was right".

In a belated reaction, TDP leader Chandrababu Naidu said he endorsed the senior BJP leader's description of Jinnah and did not find anything wrong in what Advani said in Pakistan.

10 JUN 2005 THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

BJP working out a compromise

HD-1
10/6

Meeting put off; party awaiting Jaswant's return

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party's expanded parliamentary board meeting scheduled for Thursday evening was postponed by a day. This will give it a little more time to try and craft a compromise formula that will "satisfy" L.K. Advani and enable him to withdraw his resignation as party president without displeasing the Rashtriya Swayam-sevak Sangh.

The RSS has disagreed with Mr. Advani's view that the Pakistan founder, Mohammed Ali Jinnah, was secular.

However, the hitch in the negotiations between those close to Mr. Advani and others was that virtually none of the senior leaders and office-bearers was willing to endorse his views on Jinnah made during his recent visit to Pakistan. Some in the party described his visit as a "diplomatic success" and praised his contribution to the peace process with Pakistan. Others wondered how the BJP would talk about his visit ignoring the remarks on Jinnah that led to protests from the Sangh Parivar and met with disapproval from parties across the political spectrum.

Another resolution

After meetings at the party headquarters and the residence of vice-president Venkaiah Naidu, drafts of another resolution for Friday's parliamentary board meeting were apparently shown to Mr. Advani. But till late in the evening nothing could be worked out that would satisfy him and not annoy the RSS or compromise on the basic Sangh ideology of 'Akhand Bharat' (united pre-Partition India). So

- No senior leader willing to endorse Advani's views on Jinnah
- Advani will not withdraw resignation till party speaks positively about his Pakistan trip
- Party has appealed to Advani to withdraw his resignation, but ideology cannot be diluted: Murli Manohar Joshi

time was bought till Friday.

The reason given by the BJP spokesperson, Prakash Javadekar, for the postponement of the meeting was that the senior leader, Jaswant Singh, now in Israel, had expressed a wish to be present at the meeting. He would be back here on Friday.

However, senior party leaders privately said that there were enough indications from Mr. Advani's camp that he would be willing to consider withdrawing his resignation if the party were to applaud the success of his visit to Pakistan. The problem was that the RSS made it clear that Mr. Advani's views on Jinnah were unacceptable, and it was now for the BJP to accept or reject his resignation.

The RSS spokesperson, Ram Madhav, said: "Our ideological position is known to them [BJP leaders] and we have made it clear. Now, whether Mr. Advani withdraws his resignation or the BJP accepts it is the BJP's internal issue. We have nothing to say." He denied that any top-level contact was made between the RSS and the BJP over the last 24 hours.

The senior BJP leader, Murli Manohar Joshi, said Jinnah was not secular and that he was prepared for a debate on the subject as demanded by Mr. Advani. "There can be no dilution of ide-

ology ... ideology is always above individuals ... Mr. Advani is our president and the party has appealed to him to withdraw his resignation, but *vichar dhara ko halka nahin kiya ja sakta* (ideology cannot be diluted)." Jharkhand Chief Minister Babulal Marandi said the same thing.

A senior party leader described the dilemma faced by the BJP: "The matter has got stuck on the remarks on Jinnah. All office-bearers are one on this ideological issue. Sudhendra Kulkarni [Mr. Advani's secretary and an office-bearer] tried to raise the issue at Wednesday's board meeting, but he was firmly told 'no.' Mr. Advani told us that unless the party speaks [positively] about his Pakistan 'yatra,' he cannot withdraw his resignation. But how can the party speak about the Pakistan visit and ignore the Jinnah comment?"

Vice-President Bhairon Singh Shekhawat met the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and later Mr. Advani made a "courtesy visit" to his residence. A party functionary said: "Back channel diplomacy is also at work." He confirmed that journalists Chandan Mitra (a BJP-nominated MP) and Swapan Das Gupta, both close to Mr. Advani, had helped to draft the resolution.

10 JUN 2006

THE HINDU

THURSDAY, JUNE 9, 2005

Advani sets Jinnah among the parivar

Opinion on Atal Bihari Vajpayee has always been divided. To some he embodied moderation in a party wedded to bigotry and right-wing extremism; others saw him as wearing a mask of geniality that slipped every so often. Lal Krishna Advani, on the other hand, was cast in an image that offered little scope for nuanced interpretation. The architect of the Ram *rath yatra* was the iron man who stuck resolutely to the positions he adopted, be it his unflinching commitment to Hindutva or his defence of the fanatical Narendra Modi. He was at once hero and villain: his followers saluted his "courage of conviction" while his critics accused him of spreading hatred and vitriol in the guise of promoting his ideology. Few in either camp believed the Bharatiya Janata Party chief when he said he was going on a peace mission to Pakistan. He actually went farther than anyone could have anticipated in promoting the cause of Indo-Pakistan friendship. So much so, the "ultra nationalist" whose jingoism once pushed India to the brink of war with Pakistan today stands accused by party and *parivar* of betraying India on Pakistani soil. Senior Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Giriraj Kishore may have apologised for Praveen Togadia's intemperate outburst but the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is not in any mood to call a ceasefire.

So what outrageous indiscretion did Mr. Advani commit in Pakistan that he has felt obliged to step down as BJP chief? He certainly made a well-thought-out, persuasive case for stable peace between the two countries. He made so bold as to go to the mausoleum of Mohammad Ali Jinnah (the first by an Indian leader) where, in his own hand, he recorded his glowing appreciation of the founder of Pakistan. The former Deputy Prime Minister described the Qaid-E-Azam as that "rare individual" who created history, indeed who stood for a secular Pakistan. Mr. Advani subsequently expanded on the theme in a speech to the Karachi Council of Foreign Relations, Economic Affairs and Law. Citing Jinnah's August 11, 1947 address to the Pakistan Constituent Assembly, he pointed out that the founder of Pakistan envisioned a state that guaranteed "equality of all citizens in the eyes of the State and freedom of faith for all citizens." This, the BJP president noted, "is what we in India call a Secular or Non-Theocratic State...[where] there is no place for bigotry, hatred, intolerance and discrimination in the name of religion...[and where] there can certainly be no place, much less State protection, for religious extremism and terrorism..." Mr. Advani can be faulted for ignoring Pakistan's subsequent erratic evolution into an Islamicist state. However, the commendation of Jinnah was in the specific and limited context of the August 1947 speech and a conversation Mr. Advani had a year ago with Swami Ranganathananda, head of the Ramakrishna Math, who drew his attention to the Jinnah speech, hailing it as "a classic exposition of a Secular State." The BJP chief has been pilloried by the *Sangh Parivar* for his praise of the Qaid-E-Azam; yet by daring to go beyond the demands of diplomacy, Mr. Advani appears to have won a substantial constituency for India in Pakistan. The *parivar* is shell-shocked, and understandably so. The *Sangh* ideology rests on the premise of the 'other' — the enemy who must at all times be demonised. Until now, this role was fulfilled by Pakistan, and by India's Muslims. Mr. Advani has knocked the bottom out of this sinister theology.

THE HINDU

লালকৃষ্ণের মানভঞ্জন পর্ব

৭৪/১৫৪৮
১১/১১

বাজপেয়ীর চাপে জিন্মা নিয়ে দলের সুর নরমের চেষ্টা

১১/১১

সুদর্শনের তোপের দিন থেকেই পদ ছাড়ার ভাবনা

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৮ জুন: মহম্মদ আলি জিন্মা সম্পর্কে তাঁর বক্তব্য দল আনুষ্ঠানিক ভাবে সমর্থন না করলে ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহার করবেন না লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। আর তাকে সভাপতি পদে ধরে রাখতে মরিয়া প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী-সহ বিজেপি-র একাংশ। এই অবস্থায় দলকে পাকিস্তান ও জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে আডবাণীর মনোভাবের শরিক করতে উদ্যোগী হয়েছেন বেঙ্কাইয়া নয়ডু, অনন্ত কুমার প্রমুখ নেতা। রাতভর অব্যাহত রাজনৈতিক টানাপোড়েন।

তার আগেই অবশ্য এ দিন সন্ধ্যায় বিজেপি সংসদীয় বোর্ড সর্বসম্মত ভাবে গৃহীত প্রস্তাবে আডবাণীর ইস্তফা খারিজ করে দেয়। বৈঠকের পরে বিজেপি নেতারা আডবাণীর বাড়ি গিয়ে গৃহীত প্রস্তাবটি তাঁর হাতে দিয়ে বারবার ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহারের অনুরোধ জানান। কিন্তু আডবাণী তাঁদের জানিয়ে দেন, তিনি ইস্তফা ফেরাতে এখনও নারাজ। ওই প্রস্তাবে বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ নেতাদের আডবাণী-বিরোধিতার তীব্র নিন্দা করা হয়েছে। কিন্তু বিতর্কিত জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে একটি কথাও বলা হয়নি। এতে আডবাণী ক্ষুধা বিজেপি নেতারা চাইছেন, আডবাণী বিবৃতি দিয়ে জানান যে, জিন্মা সম্পর্কে তাঁর বক্তব্য সংবাদপত্রে বিকৃত করা হয়েছে। আডবাণী এই প্রস্তাব খারিজ করেছেন। তিনি চাইছেন, দল জিন্মা সম্পর্কে তাঁর বক্তব্যকে সমর্থন জানাক। তা না হলে তিনি ইস্তফা ফেরাবেন না। তখন নেতারা তাকে আরও ভাবার অনুরোধ করেন। বিজেপি সভাপতি বলেছেন, তিনি চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত কাল জানাবেন। যদিও তিনি রাতে বলেন, "অনেক ভেবেচিন্তে ইস্তফা দিয়েছি। তা প্রত্যাহারের পক্ষপাতী নই।"

কিন্তু আডবাণীকে ছাড়তে নারাজ খোদ বাজপেয়ী। আজ তিনি নিজে আডবাণীকে বলেন, তিনি ইস্তফা দিলে কটরপন্থীরাই শান্তশালী হয়ে উঠবে। সে ক্ষেত্রে দলীয় নীতির অভিযুক্ত বদলের যে চেষ্টা তিনি করছিলেন, সেটাই বাথ হবে। দলের দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের নেতাদের মাথায় ৮.৫৬ বসবে সঙ্ঘ পরিবার। বাজপেয়ী নিজে দলকে সংস্কারমুখী উদারপন্থী পথে নিয়ে যেতে বরাবরই আগ্রহী। আজ আকস্মিক ভাবে আডবাণী যদি দলের নেতৃত্ব থেকে সরে আসেন তবে বাজপেয়ীও আর দলের উপর নিয়ন্ত্রণ রাখতে পারবেন না। আজই জয়পুরে সুদর্শন ও সিঙ্ঘল বৈঠকে বসেছেন। পরিস্থিতির দিকে কড়া নজর রাখছেন তাঁরা।

আডবাণী ফিরিয়ে দেওয়ার পরে বেঙ্কাইয়ার বাড়িতে বৈঠকে বসেন বিজেপি নেতারা। সেখানে ঠিক হয়, জিন্মা ও পাকিস্তান প্রসঙ্গে আডবাণীর মতের সমর্থনে কিছু কথা মুকোশলে আজকের প্রস্তাবে ঢোকানোর চেষ্টা হোক। এর পরে বেঙ্কাইয়া আডবাণীকে ফোন করে বলেন, "আমরা প্রস্তাব বদলের চেষ্টা চালাচ্ছি। সংশোধিত খসড়া প্রস্তাব নিয়ে কাল সকালে আমি আপনার কাছে বাবা। আপনি অনুমোদন করে দিলে বিকালে সংসদীয় বোর্ডের বৈঠকে তা পাশ করা হবে।" এখন সঙ্ঘ পরিবার ঘনিষ্ঠ নেতাদের চাপ উপেক্ষা করে বেঙ্কাইয়ারা দলকে আডবাণীর পাশে কতটা আনতে পারবেন, এবং সেই সংশোধন আডবাণীর কতটা পছন্দ হবে, সেই প্রশ্ন থেকেই যাচ্ছে।

এর পর সাতের পাতায়

৮ জুন: সঙ্ঘয় গাঁধী ক্ষমতাশালী হয়ে ওঠার পরে প্রধানমন্ত্রী ইন্দিরা গাঁধীর ঘনিষ্ঠ আমলা পি এন হাকসারকে নীরবে বিদায় নিতে হয়েছিল প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সচিবালয় থেকে। হাকসার সে দিন কাউকেই জানাতে চাননি যে ইন্দিরার ছোট ছেলের জন্য তাঁকে বিদায় নিতে হচ্ছে। কিন্তু সে কথা গোপন থাকেনি। আজ এত বছর পর লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী আরও অনেক সুচতুর ভাবে, আরও দীর্ঘমেয়াদি পরিকল্পনা মাথায় রেখে দলের সভাপতি পদ থেকে ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন। তিনিও জানাতে চান না আর এস এস নেতা কুগ্ৰহলি সুদর্শনের চাপে তিনি সরে যাচ্ছেন।



ইস্তফা ফেরানোর জন্য আডবাণীর উপরে চাপ ক্রমশ বাড়ছে। জিন্মা প্রসঙ্গে দলকে তাঁর পাশে দাঁড় করানোর চেষ্টাও শুরু হয়েছে। বাজপেয়ীও চাইছেন না, সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের আপত্তির কাছে নতিস্বীকার করে আডবাণী সরে যান। এই চাপের কারণে শেষ পর্যন্ত ইস্তফা ফিরিয়েও নিতে হলেও সুবিধাজনক অবস্থায় থাকবেন— এটাই আডবাণীর অঙ্ক।

কিন্তু সুদর্শন যে দিন প্রবীণ নেতাদের দায়িত্ব ছাড়ার কথা প্রকাশ্য সাক্ষাৎকারে বলেছিলেন, সে দিনই আডবাণী জেনে গিয়েছিলেন, আজ নয় তো কাল ইস্তফা তাঁকে দিতেই হবে। অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীও যখন সুদর্শনের বক্তব্য পরোক্ষ সমর্থন করে জানিয়ে দেন যে নবীন প্রজন্মের নেতারা দায়িত্ব নিতে প্রস্তুত, তখন তিনি আরও স্পষ্ট বৃষ্ণে যান দলের সভাপতি পদে পূর্ণ মেয়াদে থাকা সম্ভব নয়। কিন্তু সে দিন যদি তিনি ইস্তফা দিতেন, তা হলে এটাই প্রচারিত হত যে তিনি সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের চাপে ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন। তাই সে দিন ইস্তফা না দিয়ে গোটা দলকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে আর এস এস নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে তিনি লড়াই করেছিলেন।

এ বার দৃশ্যপট আলাদা। আডবাণী করাচিতে থাকার সময় বুঝতে পেরেছিলেন আর এস এস বা বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ শুধু নয়, দলের দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের নেতারাও জিন্মা-প্রশস্তিতে তাঁর সঙ্গে নেই। করাচি থেকে ফ্যাক্সে তাঁর বক্তৃতা দলীয় অফিসে পাঠানো সত্ত্বেও কোনও বিজেপি নেতা দলের সভাপতির সমর্থনে কোনও কথা সাংবাদিকদের কাছে বলেনি। আডবাণী আজ রাতে শুতে যাওয়ার আগেও জানেন যদি তিনি ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহার করেই নেন, তা হলেও অদৃষ্ট ভবিষ্যতে দলের সঙ্কট থাকবেই। আর এস এস, বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ এবং বিজেপি-র বহু নেতা তাঁকে হঠানোর দাবিতে ফের সরব হবেন। তাই আদর্শগত সংঘাতের প্রশ্ন তুলে এখন বিদায় নেওয়াটা বেশ সম্মানজনক বলে মনে করছেন বিজেপি-র এই শীর্ষ নেতা।

কাল সকালে সংসদীয় বোর্ডের বৈঠক হওয়ার কথা ছিল। রাতে আডবাণীর বাড়ি থেকে ফিরে বেঙ্কাইয়ার বাড়িতে দলীয় নেতারা বৈঠকে বসেন। তাঁরা ঠিক করেন বৈঠক সকালে না করে রিকেল পাঁচটায় করা হোক। তার আগে দলের বাকি নেতাদের বুঝিয়ে জিন্মা ও পাকিস্তান সম্পর্কে আডবাণীর বক্তব্যের সমর্থনে

এর পর সাতের পাতায়

তোপ্পের দিন

প্রথম পাতার পর
কিছু কথা আজকের প্রস্তাবে
চোকানোর চেষ্টা করা হোক।

আপাতত আডবাণী এসব নিয়ে মাথা ঘামাচ্ছেন না। জিন্নার বক্তব্য নিয়ে তিনি কোনও ব্যাখ্যা বা মুচলেকা যে দেবেন না, সেটা নিশ্চিত। এখন দল কী করবে সেটা দলের ব্যাপার। শেষ পর্যন্ত দল তাঁর অবস্থানকে সমর্থন করবে না ধরে নিয়েই তিনি পদত্যাগের সিদ্ধান্তে অনড়। এ ভাবে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের কোন্দলকে ধামাচাপা দিয়ে মতাদর্শের প্রশ্নটিকে সামনে এনে দাবার নতুন চাল চলেছেন আডবাণী। বাজপেয়ীর সঙ্গে তাঁর মতপার্থক্য হয়েছে বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে। সুদর্শনের সঙ্গে সাম্প্রতিক বিরোধ সুবিদিত। এই সঙ্কটকে তিনি তাঁর নিজের ভাবমূর্তি পুনরুত্থানের কাজে লাগিয়েছেন। রথযাত্রার সময়েও তিনি যে কৌশল দেখাতে পারেননি, এবার জিন্না বিষয়ে তিনি তা করেছেন ঠান্ডা মাথায়। এর আগে আডবাণী ঠিক করেছিলেন ডিসেম্বর মাসে মুম্বইয়ে দলীয় অধিবেশনের সময়ে তিনি ইস্তফা দেবেন। এ বার করাচি থেকে ফেরার পর ভেবেছিলেন জুলাইয়ে ইস্তফা দেবেন। কিন্তু নেতাদের মনোভাব দেখে তিনি আর দেরি না করে ফিরেই ইস্তফাপত্রটি পত্রপাঠ পাঠিয়ে দেন।

দলের সুর নব্বমের চেষ্টা

প্রথম পাতার পর

আডবাণীর ইস্তফা নিয়ে কাল যে রাজনৈতিক নাটক শুরু হয়েছিল, তা আজও দিনভর চলেছে। সঙ্কট মেটাতে সকালে বেঙ্কাইয়া নায়ডুর বাড়িতে নিজেদের মধ্যে আলোচনা করেন প্রমোদ মহাজন, সুফমা স্বরাজ, অরুণ জেটলি, নরেন্দ্র মোদীরা। স্থির হয় আডবাণীকে বলা হবে জিন্না সম্পর্কে তিনি যে 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ' শব্দটি ব্যবহার করেননি, বেদ্যুতিন মাধ্যমে বিষয়টিকে ভুল ভাবে পরিবেশন করা হয়েছে এই মর্মে তিনি বিবৃতি দিলেই পরিস্থিতি সহজ হয়ে যাবে। বিজেপি-র ভোটব্যাঙ্ক জিন্নাকে ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বলে মনে করে না। ফলে আডবাণী এই বিবৃতি দিলে রাজনৈতিক ভাবে দলের সুবিধা হবে। সঙ্ঘের অসন্তোষ কমবে। তিনিও সম্মানে ইস্তফা ফিরিয়ে নিতে পারবেন। কিন্তু আডবাণীর কাছে প্রস্তাবটি রাখা মাত্র তিনি সাফ জানিয়ে দেন, সিদ্ধান্ত প্রত্যাহারের প্রশ্ন নেই। এই নিয়ে তিনি আর মুখ খুলবেন না।

আজ সকাল থেকে আডবাণীর পৃথ্বীরাজ রোডের বাড়িতে বিজেপি নেতাদের ভিড় লেগেই ছিল। আসেন মধ্যপ্রদেশ, গুজরাতের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীরা। তবে সবার আগে, কিছুটা অপ্রত্যাশিত ভাবেই আসেন মুরলীমোহর জোশী,

যিনি আডবাণী-বিরোধী শিবিরের নেতা হিসাবেই চিহ্নিত। বাড়ির ডইংরুম থেকে বাগান, সর্বত্র তাঁকে ঘিরে ধরে বোঝানোর আশ্রয় চেষ্টা করেন বিজেপি নেতারা। কিন্তু সারা দিন ধরে এই সব ব্যক্তিগত এবং সঙ্ঘায় সংসদীয় বোর্ডের বৈঠকের পরে সরকারি ভাবে করা অনুরোধেও বরফ গেলেনি।

বাজপেয়ী, জোশী-সহ সব শীর্ষ নেতার উপস্থিতিতে সংসদীয় বোর্ড যে প্রস্তাব নিয়েছে তাতে বলা হয়, "দল আডবাণীর নেতৃত্বে বিপুল ভাবে উপকৃত হয়েছে। ভবিষ্যতেও তাঁর নেতৃত্ব চায়। ...সাধারণ মানুষের জন্য উৎসর্গীকৃত জীবনে তিনি শ্রেষ্ঠ মূল্যবোধের প্রতিফলন ঘটিয়েছেন। গত কয়েক দশক ধরে যুক্তি, বাস্তবতা এবং শক্তিশালী ভাষা ব্যবহার করে জাতীয়তাবাদ নিয়ে বিতর্ক চালিয়ে গিয়েছেন তিনি।"

প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়ার নাম না-করে বিজেপি-র প্রস্তাবে বলা হয়েছে, "আডবাণী সম্পর্কে ভিএইচপি-র কিছু নেতা যে আপত্তিকর শব্দ ব্যবহার করেছেন দল তার খোর নিন্দা করছে।"

এত কথা বললেও প্রস্তাবে জিন্না প্রসঙ্গে আডবাণীর মন্তব্য নিয়ে একটি শব্দও নেই। আর সেই না থাকটাই শেষ পর্যন্ত বরফ গলতে দিল না।

BJP Refuses To Let Advani Quit

New Delhi
8 JUNE

LEADERSHIP crisis in BJP continued to remain unresolved until Wednesday night, despite the BJP top brass rallying behind L. K. Advani in a bid to persuade him to continue as party president. Mr Advani, however, remained non-committal with a promise to respond to the issue on Thursday.

Party leaders met to discuss a way out of the crisis after Mr Advani reportedly expressed disappointment over the absence of the party's defence of him in the parliamentary board resolution on the remarks he had made against Mohammad Ali Jinnah in Pakistan, that had attracted the wrath of RSS.

In the face of a strong RSS reaction to Mr Advani's praise for Mr Jinnah and other statements, which he had made in his recent tour to Pakistan, no BJP leader had rallied to his defence. It was only on Wednesday evening that the parliamentary board met and passed a resolution rejecting Mr Advani's resignation, urging him to continue to lead the party.

However, interestingly the resolution refrained from making any reference to the controversial remarks on Mr Jinnah. Immediately after the parliamentary board meeting, party vice president M. Venkaiah Naidu led the top brass, barring former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Murli Manohar Joshi, to Mr Advani's residence to appeal to him to withdraw his resignation.

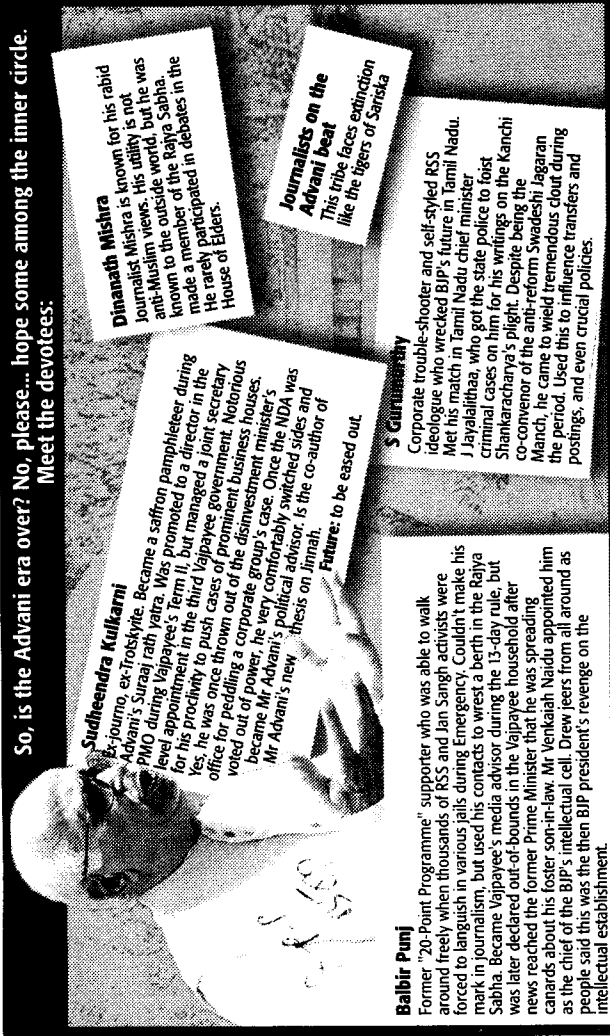
"What is new in this resolution," Mr Advani is believed to have asked Mr Naidu and others, apparently referring to initial lack of any defence among the rank and file of the party of his remarks on Mr Jinnah. He also conveyed his displeasure over the "hesitation" of the party office bearers to defend the "achievements" of his Pakistan visit.

BJP party sources, however, said the matter would be sorted out amicably without any further elaboration.

Mr Advani offered to get back on Thursday morning with his decision on the parliamentary board's appeal, in time for the parliament board meeting.

Senior BJP leader Ms Sushma Swaraj, speaking to reporters after the meeting at Mr Naidu's residence, denied reports that Mr Advani had asked the party to make its stand clear on the Jinnah remarks. "These are wrong. He has only said since all of you have come, give me time till tomorrow morning," Ms Swaraj said.

—PTI



So, is the Advani era over? No, please... hope some among the inner circle. Meet the devotees:

Dinanath Mishra
Advani is known for his rabid anti-Muslim views. His utility is not known to the outside world, but he was a member of the Rajya Sabha. He rarely participated in debates in the House of Elders.

Journalists on the Advani beat
This tribe faces extinction like the tigers of Sariska

Sudheendra Kulkarni
Ex-journo, ex-Trotskyite. Became a saffron pamphleteer during Advani's Suraj rath yatra. Was promoted to a director in the PMO during Vajpayee's Term II, but managed a joint secretary level appointment in the third Vajpayee government. Notorious for his proximity to push cases of prominent business houses. He was once thrown out of the disinvestment minister's office for peddling a corporate group's case. Once the NDA was voted out of power, he very comfortably switched sides and became Mr Advani's political advisor. Is the co-author of Mr Advani's new thesis on Jinnah. Future: to be eased out.

S Gurusamy

Corporate trouble-shooter and self-styled RSS ideologue who wrecked BJP's future in Tamil Nadu. Met his match in Tamil Nadu chief minister J Jayalalithaa, who got the state police to foist criminal cases on him for his writings on the Kanchi Shankaracharya's plight. Despite being the co-convenor of the anti-reform Swadeshi Jagaran Manch, he came to wield tremendous clout during the period. Used this to influence transfers and postings, and even crucial policies.

Balbir Punj

Former "20-Point Programme" supporter who was able to walk around freely when thousands of RSS and Jan Sangh activists were forced to languish in various jails during Emergency. Couldn't make his mark in journalism, but used his contacts to wrest a berth in the Rajya Sabha. Became Vajpayee's media advisor during the 13-day rule, but was later declared out-of-bounds in the Vajpayee household after news reached the former Prime Minister that he was spreading canards about his foster son-in-law. Mr Venkaiah Naidu appointed him as the chief of the BJP's intellectual cell. Drew jeers from all around as people said this was the then BJP president's revenge on the intellectual establishment.

Image Problem?

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 8 JUNE

L.K. Advani's latest tenure as the BJP president was marked by a series of controversies and little forward movement for the BJP. In the one year that he stayed at the top, he tried to appease rebellious leaders, ducked difficult decisions, and in true Narasimha Rao style, left problems to get sorted out themselves.

His friends called it prudence that is the trademark of an experienced leader. Those who were exasperated with his inaction termed it his inability to look at problems in the eye. There were major expectations when Mr Advani took over after the backbreaking and morale sapping defeat in the 2004 elections. His presidency was expected to make the organisation more purposeful for

meeting the challenges posed by the Congress' success in putting together a coalition. The ideologue, the cadre felt, could help the party recharge the BJP's ideological battery and make the organisation more vibrant. But unlike his earlier presidency where he relied on his general secretaries for fashioning strategies, this time he was dependent on a set of advisors, who had made lateral entry into the party, and the not-so-political who surrounded him. These new Advani men, who were adept at using short-cuts, confined the leader to addressing just one issue — his image problem. They concluded that Mr Advani's image needed to be spruced up. His acceptability quotient should be raised for winning more allies. Hard-nosed political considerations became secondary.

HINDUSTAN TIMES

9 P.P. ✓
BJP

Career prospects

THE RESIGNATION of L.K. Advani as BJP president tells us three things about the RSS, the BJP and indeed, about Mr Advani himself. The first of these is self-evident. Mr Advani is now trying to recast his image to capture the slot that Atal Bihari Vajpayee previously occupied. In the old days, Mr Vajpayee was acceptable to the NDA, tolerated by the BJP and loathed by the RSS. Judging by the events of the last two days, this is exactly how Mr Advani is being perceived. He may have been right or wrong about Mohammad Ali Jinnah's secular credentials, but he seems to have achieved the positioning he was after.

Second, it is clear that the RSS still calls the shots as far as the BJP is concerned. As much as Mr Advani and his cohorts go on about the backdoor influence of Sonia Gandhi and 10, Janpath, on the UPA government, the truth is that the old men of Nagpur exert at least as much influence on the BJP as Mrs Gandhi does on the UPA. In Mrs Gandhi's defence, it could be said that she campaigned for the party, was elected leader of the Congress Parlia-

mentary Party, was the unanimous choice of all allies for the prime ministership and then turned it down. Thus, she may have some moral right to influence the government. K.S. Sudarshan's credentials, on the other hand, are much less obvious.

Third, it is clear that Mr Advani is in no mood to give up any substantive power. The resignation as party chief does not mark a renunciation and is no more than a calculated career move. How else can he explain the apparent moral contradiction between resigning as president but continuing as Leader of the Opposition and enjoying the perks (the large house, the motorcade, the official status etc.) that come with the job? The installation of his protégé Venkaiah Naidu as acting president buys him some time to try and install a full-time president of his choice.

Only the big question remains: will the BJP's core constituency, the people who actually vote for the party, agree with Mr Advani's praise of Jinnah and his refusal to even reconsider or revise it? There's still no answer to that one yet.

09 JUN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Advani's Karachi speech decoded

The RSS has failed to understand the line of legitimisation Mr. Advani has opened up; and the Congress, in its enthusiasm to mock him, has chosen to neglect the challenge this speech has thrown up for it.

Suhas Palshikar

AL KRISHNA Advani's resignation from the office of president of the Bharatiya Janata Party seems to have overshadowed the issues raised by his June 5 speech in Karachi. In that speech at a function organised by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations, Economic Affairs and Law, Mr. Advani did three things. He projected himself as a statesman and approved of the on-going peace process. He formally accepted that Pakistan was a reality and that there could be no going back to history, so the goal of *Akhand Bharat*, so dear to the diehard follower of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, was now redundant. He also obliquely reminded the Pakistan state authorities of their responsibility towards the minorities. All laudable things indeed.

However, Mr. Advani did more than that through his speech. He said Mohammed Ali Jinnah was a secular leader and had a vision of a secular Pakistan; in fact, he quoted extensively from Jinnah's speech of August 11, 1947 in Pakistan's Constituent Assembly. While both the Congress and the RSS have failed to grasp the significance of this, the media are playing this up as the great Indian political soap opera.

Two features of the speech have been less noted. One is the invocation of the goal of secularism. The other is the implicit legitimisation of the politics of the BJP over the last two decades. The RSS has failed predictably to understand the line of legitimisation Mr. Advani has opened up; and the Congress, in its enthusiasm to mock him, has chosen to neglect the intellectual challenge that this speech has thrown up for the Congress.

The evaluation of Jinnah as a secular leader must be seen in the context of Mr. Advani's own contribution to the lexicon of Indian politics: pseudo-secularism. He has been making a distinction between "secularism" and "pseudo-secularism." It may be recalled that two issues are at the heart of

the controversy about secularism in India: one is the basis of nationalism, and the other is the role of religious identity in public life. On these and some other aspects, Mr. Advani would share common ground with Jinnah.

Jinnah and Savarkar

Jinnah was a non-practising Muslim but used religious sentiment as the tool for mobilisation and ultimately upheld religion as the basis of nationhood. Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's position was closest to Jinnah's during that period. Savarkar, too, was a non-practising Hindu, in fact a rationalist. However, he too, like Jinnah, approved of religion as the basis of nationhood. Savarkar strongly believed in the mobilisational potential of religion.

However, he fudged the issue by confusing between the Hindu religion and Hindu culture (*Hindutva*). Although there were differences between the two, (Jinnah was brought up on the staple diet of liberalism while Savarkar operated on the continuum of patriotic nationalism and *Hindutva*), both Savarkar and Jinnah were products of the modern Western political tradition and knew the limits of religion as the basis for running the state.

Their position was that religion could be the basis of the nation, and once the nation attained statehood, a secular state structure must evolve, though, the cultural ambience could still be dominated by the religion of the majority.

Textbook cases of communalism?

Their understanding of the majority-minority question was mired in the colonial context and, in the case of Jinnah, was situated at the outdated recesses of the liberal democratic framework. Thus, the issue was the sharing of power between the majority and the minority.

On the other hand, the issue was that of representation. Both Savarkar and Jinnah

argued that it was possible and necessary that the majority and the minority communities should be politically represented through separate political outfits. This ensured proper representation, sharing of power; and above all, this constituted democracy.

It is in this sense that Jinnah and Savarkar operated in the framework of majority-minority. The politics of both Jinnah and Savarkar represented the distortions possible within the liberal democratic framework. For both, competitive politics meant legitimisation of religious identity as the basis of politics.

In this sense, Jinnah and Savarkar would constitute the textbook of communalism in the subcontinent. Mr. Advani and the BJP are the additions to this textbook in its late twentieth century edition.

In order to understand the former Deputy Prime Minister's approving remarks on Jinnah, it is necessary to keep in mind his own ideological position. Mr. Advani, like Jinnah and Savarkar, is not a devout person in the religious sense of the term. It may not be an exaggeration to say that he belongs to the Savarkar school of Hindu nationalism. Not only Mr. Advani, but a majority among the present day *Hindutva* politicians would want *Hindutva* to be the basis of India's nationhood, also the main influence on India's public life.

Yet it would be foolhardy to imagine that all of them want to establish a non-secular state in India. Thus, Mr. Advani represents and extends the Savarkar legacy in the context of contemporary India. His remarks about Jinnah inconspicuously situate him as the representative of Savarkarite Hindu nationalist position.

Mr. Advani and the BJP have always believed in *Hindutva* as the basis of Indian nationalism. They have used religious identity as the basis for political mobilisation and as a lever for political power. Mr. Advani's politics ever since his *Rathayatra* has

relied on a majoritarian framework and communalised the political terrain.

His remarks about Jinnah seek to justify all these positions as secular. True enough, the BJP has never challenged the official secular structure of the Indian state. This confusion arises because "secularists" are not clear about the meaning of secularism. Many of them are in fact unaware that in the Indian context secularism is challenged not so much by theocratic ideas as by communal ideas.

According to this idea, the state can be secular, yet the texture of politics, the basis of political competition, can be communal. In praising Jinnah, Mr. Advani has underlined this version of secularism with which he and his party would have no problem.

Congress' folly

It is unfortunate that the Congress does not understand this link between Jinnah-Savarkar, on the one hand, and Mr. Advani and the present BJP on the other. More unfortunate is the Congress' complete amnesia about its own history. Ironically today, in their haste to welcome Mr. Advani's remarks, sections of the Congress have unknowingly approved Mr. Advani's (Savarkar's) conception of secularism. This is not a moment for settling political scores or creating confusion in the ranks of the adversary.

The Congress would do well to remember that its secularism, until recently, was based on the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru. It hinged on tolerance, liberal sentiment, and respect for diversity. In reacting to the Advani episode, the Congress must remember that the Savarkar-Golwalkar-Advani conception of "We" or "Our Nationhood" defined is in direct contrast to the Gandhi-Nehru conception of Indian nationhood anchored in "We the people of India". (The author teaches Political Science at the University of Pune. His email id is suhas@unipune.ernet.in.)

The full text of L K Advani's speech at a function organised by the Karachi Council on Foreign Relations, Economic Affairs & Law, in Karachi on June 5:



IT is always a matter of pleasure when one goes abroad and gets an opportunity to interact with the intellectual elite of that country. But when the country one is visiting is Pakistan, and when the interaction with intellectuals is happening in a city which is one's birth-place, how can that experience be described? "Pleasure"? "Great pleasure"? "Delight"?

I find these words trite on this occasion. The truth is that, I have no words to adequately capture the feelings that have welled up in me at this meeting in Karachi, which I have been able to visit only for the second time since I left it nearly six decades ago. Karachi has changed beyond recognition, not only since I left in 1947, but also since I last came here in 1978. The city has of course become immensely more populous — its population in 1947 was a mere 4 lakh; today, I am told, it is nearly 1.4 crore. But Karachi has also become more developed and prosperous.

I compliment the people of Karachi for this achievement and hope that not only Karachi but the whole of Pakistan continues to travel rapidly on the path to prosperity and all-round development.

My return to the roots

FRIENDS, barring the dinner engagement later in the evening, this function happens to mark the conclusion of my weeklong visit to Pakistan. My visit had three parts. The first part, comprising two days in Islamabad, was largely political. The second leg, which meant two days in Lahore, was part political and part religious-cultural, since it included visits to the ancient Katas Raj Temples and to the Nankana Sahib Gurdwara. But the last part in Karachi, again of two days, is purely sentimental. Before leaving for Pakistan, I had stated that the primary aim of my visit was to contribute, in my own humble way, to the ongoing peace process between India and Pakistan through my meetings with the leadership of Pakistan and also with representatives of various political parties and civil society organisations in this country. But I had added that the visit is also a kind of "return-to-the-roots" for me and members of my family, who are coming to Pakistan for the first time.

My visit to the school where I studied, to the house where I lived (although it does not now stand in its original shape), to the Sindh Assembly building where I meet legislators belonging to the Pakistan People's Party (PPP), the reception and cultural programme organised by the Hindu Panchayat, and the lunch reception hosted by the Chief Minister of Sindh — all these will remain indelible memories in me.

Jinnah's speech on August 11, 1947

I HAVE many deeply engraved memories of the first 20 years of my life that I lived in Karachi. I shall recall here only one of them, because the person with which that memory is associated, and the philosophy that I learnt from him in Karachi, have a reverential place in my life.

In the last three-four years of my life in Karachi, I came in contact with Swami Ranganathananda, who was the head of the Ramakrishna Math here for six years from 1942 until it was closed down in 1948. I used to go to listen to his discourses on the Bhagwad Gita. In later years, I maintained regular contact with this great disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who went on to become the head of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in India.

Swami Ranganathananda passed away in April this month. The last time I

'Fiza zaroor badli hui hai, bahut badli hui hai'

met him was in Calcutta last year. He was 96 but still very agile in mind and radiant in spirit. Our talk, among other things, turned to his years and my years in Karachi. He asked me, "Have you read Mohammed Ali Jinnah's speech in Pakistan's Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947? It is a classic exposition of a Secular State, one which guarantees every citizen's freedom to practice his or her religion but the State shall not discriminate between one citizen and another on the basis of religion."

He asked me to send him the full text of the speech, which I did.

The reason for my recounting Jinnah's historic speech in the Constituent Assembly is two-fold. Firstly, as I said, it is associated with my last conversation with the Swamiji, who was one of the towering spiritual personalities in India. The second reason is that its remembrance was triggered by my visit to the ancient Katas Raj Temples in Chakwal district four days ago. The Government of Pakistan was kind enough to invite me to lay the foundation stone for a project to restore these temples, which are now in ruins but whose legend is rooted in the epic story of the Mahabharata.

I feel it appropriate to read out the relevant portion from Jinnah's speech.

"Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, specially of the masses and poor. If you will work in co-



Paying tribute to Jinnah. PTI

operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed. If you change your past and work in a spirit that every one, no matter what community he belongs to, no matter what relations he had with you in the past, no matter what is his colour, caste or creed, is first, second and last a citizen of this State with equal rights, privileges and obligations, there will be no end to the progress you will make.

I believe that this is the ideal that India, Pakistan as well as Bangladesh — the three present-day sovereign constituents of the undivided India of the past, sharing a common civilisational heritage — should follow. I hope that this ideal is implemented in its letter and spirit. The restoration of the Katas Raj Temples is a good beginning.

Time to undo the follies of Partition

ESTEEMED friends from Karachi, people often ask me: "Does this mean that you want to undo the Partition?"

My answer is: "The Partition cannot be undone, because, as I said in Lahore at the SAFMA function, the creation of India and Pakistan as two separate and sovereign nations is an unalterable reality of history. However, some of the follies of Partition can be undone, and they must be undone."

I dream of the day when divided hearts can be united; when divided families can be re-united; when pilgrims from one country — Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs — can freely go to holy sites located in the other country; and when people can travel and trade freely, while continuing to remain proud and loyal citizens of their respective countries. Friends, at the end of my visit, if someone were to ask me to sum up the situation about Indo-Pak relations at present, I would, on the basis of what I have observed and experienced here since my arrival in Pakistan on the

What has been stated in this (Jinnah's) speech — namely, equality of all citizens in the eyes of the State and freedom of faith for all citizens — is what we in India call a Secular or a Non-Theocratic State. There is no place for bigotry, hatred, intolerance and discrimination in the name of

religion in such a State. And there can certainly be no place, much less State protection, for religious extremism and terrorism in such a State...

evening of May 30, say unequivocally that "Fiza zaroor badli hui hai, bahut badli hui hai. (The atmosphere has definitely changed, it has changed a lot.)"

Yes, it's true that there is tranquility on the border, which is no mean achievement in itself. True, there are greater people-to-people contacts, which too is a significant step forward. It is also true that the *awaam* (people) of both India and Pakistan have taken over the peace process. But the peace and tranquility that exists is still tentative. It is also relative, in the sense that terrorist acts in J&K have not come to an end. Only last month there was a terrorist strike in Srinagar aimed at innocent school children.

How do we convert this tentative peace into permanent peace? How do we remove all the irrational abnormalities in our bilateral relations to place Indo-Pak ties on a completely normal footing based on the principle of mutual benefit?

I am posing these questions because these need to be discussed in depth and with an open mind in both our countries. As I have reiterated on several occasions during my visit, I would like to emphasise that we need to seize this historic moment, which is pregnant with hope. We must convert this hope into confidence and resolve that we shall certainly find solutions to all the issues that have estranged our two brother-nations. There should also be no going back on the realisation that dialogue is the only way to resolve every single issue, including the issue of Jammu & Kashmir, between India and Pakistan. Peace cannot be achieved through recourse to non-peaceful means. This must be clearly understood.

Imperatives of waging peace

THERE is a phrase in English that has always intrigued me — Waging Peace. Normally, one comes across the phrase — Waging War. I have often won-

dered why the word "wage" is used in the context of peace. It is probably because, if the resolve to win is the aim in any war, the same resolve to win has to be the aim of making peace.

However, there is a crucial difference. In war, strategists look for a quick victory. They have an impatience to achieve their goal. In waging peace, you cannot do that. We need patience. We need to realise that it takes time to minimise differences and to find a mutually acceptable solution, especially to longstanding problems.

It takes time — and I would urge all those who sincerely desire peace between India and Pakistan to realise this important truth — because not only the painful manner in which the Partition happened in 1947 but also subsequent hostilities have hardened feelings and rigidified mindsets in both India and Pakistan.

After all, the Partition resulted not only in unprecedented violence but also in the largest cross-migration in the history of mankind. In history, including in the history of undivided India, kingdoms and dynasties have come and gone. Power has changed hands either peacefully or violently. But in recent centuries these developments did not destabilise the society very much.

In contrast, when the British left in 1947, not only was there a change of power, but there was also human displacement on a massive scale. This has left behind a trail of tragedy. The wars that followed, the long period of terrorist violence and other events have contributed to the hardening of positions in certain sections of society both in India and Pakistan. This is the reason why even well-intentioned moves for peace and normalisation are viewed with suspicion and met with disapproval on both sides.

I therefore strongly submit to one and all involved in the Indo-Pak peace process — to those in governments as well as to

those in civil society organisations — that we should give due weightage to these critical viewpoints. Nothing can be achieved by either dismissing or disparaging these critical viewpoints. This is because, firstly, those who view the peace process with suspicion both here and in India are not insubstantial in number. Secondly, in our endeavour to establish lasting peace between India and Pakistan, it is axiomatic that we should strive to carry with us all sections of society and public opinion in our two countries.

Let us move on all issues in tandem

I SHALL make one last point before concluding. For us to move towards peace and normalcy, it is necessary to move the dialogue process forward on all issues. This is the reason why we both have called it the Composite Dialogue process. I was happy to know that many people in Pakistan also believe that we should move in tandem on all issues. As I said in Lahore, it is not in the interest of the peace process to let slower progress on some issues become a hurdle in achieving faster progress on others.

Here I shall just flag off a few issues that show how the relations between India and Pakistan suffer from avoidable abnormality. For instance, since coming here I have not been able to watch any of the Indian news channels to see what is happening in India and also, secondarily, to know how my visit to Pakistan is covered. It is ironic that in Pakistan one can see American CNN, British BBC, Chinese CCTV but not Indian news channels.

The abnormality is also evident in other spheres. India and Pakistan have an official trade of about \$250 million, which

is meager by any standards in today's age of globalisation. But the unofficial trade is at least four-five times larger. Isn't it ironic that we buy and sell our products of mutual demand by routing them through Dubai and Singapore, and thereby enriching those countries, but have not been able to regularise this trade right across our borders, thereby creating more employment and business opportunities for our people? Take another example. Pakistan's economy, like the economies of any country today, has a lot of need for Information Technology solutions. And I am told that, in addition to being met by your local IT industry, you buy costly IT solutions from several western countries. But right across the border we in India have a flourishing IT industry, which is ready to cooperate with Pakistan and offer cheaper solutions. Ironically, the IT solutions that western companies sell around the world are produced in Bangalore, Hyderabad, Gurgaon and Pune.

I am making this point because Karachi is the commercial capital of Pakistan. And I may add that, historically Sindh was the incubator for global trade. In ancient times our forefathers from Sindh ventured forth to far off lands, in the same way as in modern times Sindh businessmen have so successfully demonstrated their acumen in Hong Kong, Singapore, London and New York.

In the era of globalisation, trade and business are not only about money and profit. They also bring another kind of profit — a stronger stake in peaceful, stable and cooperative relations between two countries. It is heartening to know that soon we'll have a broad gauge rail link between Munabao and Khokrapar. I suggested to President Musharraf that we should also re-open the sea link between Karachi and Mumbai via Gujarat. He accepted the suggestion. The issue of reopening of our consulate offices in Karachi and Mumbai is also on the cards. All these are good signs for much more can be done. And it should be our mutual resolve to do all the desirable things, and do them quickly.



Yes, it's true that there is tranquility on the border, which is no mean achievement in itself. True, there are greater people-to-people contacts, which too is a significant step forward. It is also true that the awaam (people) of both India and Pakistan have taken over the peace process. But the peace and tranquility that exists is still tentative... How do we convert this tentative peace into permanent peace?

fore, we must learn a lesson from this. You are free, you are free to go to your temples. You are free to go to your mosques or to any other places of worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed; that has nothing to do with the business of the State... You will find that in course of time Hindus will cease to be Hindus and Muslims would cease to be Muslims, not in the religious sense, because that is the personal faith of each individual, but in the political sense as citizens of the State."

What has been stated in this speech

the Kashmir dispute being resolved. The charm offensive extended to the press: he was not a "hardliner"; he regretted the demolition of the Babri Masjid; he approved the Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan; and, yes, he would support talking to terrorists, provided they gave up arms.

Advani charms Pakistan, irks his Parivar



PAKISTAN Periscope

Mohammad Ali Jinnah, no topic was taboo for this most interesting visitor from across the border. Mr Advani agreed with the Pakistan President that the peace process must be made irreversible. He told Prime Minister Shaikat Aziz that last- ing peace was contingent on

the Kashmir dispute being resolved. The charm offensive extended to the press: he was not a "hardliner"; he regretted the demolition of the Babri Masjid; he approved the Hurriyat leaders' visit to Pakistan; and, yes, he would support talking to terrorists, provided they gave up arms.

The surprises did not end here. In Lahore, Mr Advani acknowledged the emergence of India and Pakistan as "an unalterable reality of history"; in once hometown Karachi, he described Jinnah as that "rare individual" who created history, who espoused the cause of secular Pakistan. Earlier, with official Pakistan applauding, Mr Advani flagged off a project to restore seven ancient temples associated in mythology with the Mahabharata. Of course, the irony was not lost on the

So why did the BJP chief act out of character? Was he carried away by nostalgia? Not likely. It was undoubtedly an emotional trip for Mr Advani. Yet he would not have gone so far, yet so near, unless there was a Realpolitik angle to it

accompanying press corps who wondered if General Musharraf could similarly restore a mosque in India. The reference was obviously to the Babri Masjid. This interlude aside, the tour went off

like a dream. The Pakistani President and his government proved impeccable hosts. Indeed, Islamabad went out on a limb to ensure its guest was not discomfited on any count. Thus,

there was no reminder of the aborted Agra summit or of the General's subsequent fulminations against Mr Advani. Paradoxically, the embarrassment for the BJP chief came from quarters thought to be closest to him — the Sangh Parivar. It was bad enough that the Parivar's favourite son apologised, on "enemy" territory, for the demolition of the Babri Masjid; it was "treacherous" that he praised the man who had partitioned India. Mr Advani's one refrain on the tour was that the

BJP was not against Pakistan. The backlash from the Parivar shattered the myth.

So why did the BJP chief act out of character? Was he carried away by nostalgia? Not likely. It was undoubtedly an emotional trip for Mr Advani, yet he would not have gone so far, yet so near, unless there was a Realpolitik angle to it.

Today the peace process has acquired a momentum all its own. As the General noted, peace is the reigning flavour on either side of the border. It would be a pity Mr Advani were to retch home and say and act otherwise.

It is a measure of the impressive distance India and Pakistan have travelled on the peace route that Perviz Musharraf and Lal Krishna Advani are talking to, not at, each other. Pakistan rolled out the red carpet for the visiting former deputy prime minister, the man General Musharraf famously said had wrecked the 2001 Agra summit. For his part the Indian "hawk" played the perfect peacenik: the rally and thunder of the past was gone, replaced by an openness that saw Mr Advani do the unthinkable over and again.

From Kashmir through terrorism, the Babri Masjid, and, finally and unbelievably,

ইস্তফা ফেরাতে বাজপেয়ীর অনুরোধও ব্যর্থ

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ৭ জুন সভাপতির পদ থেকে লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীর ইস্তফা গভীর সম্রটের দিকে ফেলে দিয়েছে বিজেপি-কে। পদবর্তী সভাপতি কে হবেন, সেটা স্থির করা এখন বিজেপি নেতাদের পক্ষে কার্যত কুকুরের লাভ সোজা করার মতোই কঠিন কাজ।

ইস্তফা করেছেন অটম বিহারী বাজপেয়ী। আডবাণীকে থেকে তিনি ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহারের জন্য অনুরোধ করেছেন। কিন্তু আডবাণী রাত পশু অনড়। কাল সংসদীয় বোর্ডের বৈঠকে এই ব্যাপারে চূড়ান্ত সিদ্ধান্ত নেওয়া হবে বলে বেঙ্কাইয়া নায়ডু জানিয়েছেন। বিজেপি-র বেশ কিছু নেতার সঙ্গে এনডিএ-র অন্য শরিকেরাও আডবাণীর মত পালনের চেষ্টায় সক্রিয়।

মহম্মদ আলি জিন্নার 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ' চালনার প্রশংসা করায় সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের বিদ্রোহের মুখে আজ দলের সভাপতির পদ থেকে ইস্তফা দেন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। করাচি থেকে ফেরার দিন অর্থাৎ গত কালই তিনি পদত্যাগপত্র লিখে ফেলেন। আজ সকাল সাড়ে দশটায় দলের সাধারণ সম্পাদক সঙ্ঘ জ্যেষ্ঠীকে বাড়িতে থেকে তিনি পদত্যাগপত্র দিয়ে দেন।

এর পরেই গোটা দিন ধরে চলে রুদ্ধশ্বাস নাটক। দলের সাধারণ সম্পাদকেরা দফায় দফায় গিয়ে আডবাণীকে ইস্তফা প্রত্যাহার করতে বলেন। সকালেই আডবাণীর সমর্থনে এগিয়ে আসেন খোদ বাজপেয়ী। তিনি নিজেও জিন্নাকে ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বলে অভিহিত করেন। জর্জ ফার্নান্ডেজ, নীতীশ কুমার, শরদ যাদবের মতো শরিক নেতারা ইস্তফা ভুলে নেওয়ার করার আর্জি জানান। বাজপেয়ী ফোন করে আডবাণীকে থেকে প্যাসান এবং একই অনুরোধ করেন। রাত পর্যন্ত আডবাণী অবশ্য তাঁর অবস্থানে অনড়। বেঙ্কাইয়া অস্থায়ী সভাপতি হিসাবে কাজ চালাচ্ছেন। বাজপেয়ী-আডবাণী বৈঠকের পরে বেঙ্কাইয়ার নেতৃত্বে প্রমোদ মহাজন, সুখমা স্বরাজ প্রথমে বাজপেয়ী এবং পরে আডবাণীর সঙ্গে দেখা করতে যান। এর পরে বেঙ্কাইয়া সাংবাদিক বৈঠক করে জানান, কাল বিকাল পাঁচটায় দলের পদবিকারীরা মিলিত হবেন। সেখানেই বিষয়টি নিয়ে আলোচনা হবে।

আডবাণীর জিন্মা সম্পর্কিত মন্তব্যকে কেন্দ্র করে আর এস এস বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ এবং বিজেপি-র মধ্যে কল্যাণ সিংহের মতো কিছু নেতা যখন সমালোচনায় মুখর হয়েছিলেন, তখন বিজেপি-র কোনও সাধারণ সম্পাদক আডবাণীর সমর্থনে কোনও মন্তব্য করেননি। অবশেষে আজ আডবাণীর পদত্যাগের পরে বেঙ্কাইয়া সাংবাদিক বৈঠকে আডবাণীর নেতৃত্বের সমর্থনে এগিয়ে আসেন। প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়ার আডবাণী-বিরোধিতার তীব্র সমালোচনা করে বেঙ্কাইয়া বলেন, এই সব কঠোর মন্তব্য অবিলম্বে প্রত্যাহার করতে হবে। এত দিন নীরব থাকার কারণ হিসাবে তাঁর ব্যাখ্যা, "এত দিন চুপ করে ছিলাম, কারণ প্রত্যেক দিন কথা বলার মতো কোনও মানে হয় না।" বেঙ্কাইয়ার পাশে ছিলেন সুখমা ও প্রমোদ।

করাচিতে গত কাল সকালেই পদত্যাগপত্রটি লিখে ফেলেছিলেন আডবাণী। ভেবেছিলেন, দিল্লির বিমানবন্দরে নামলে পরিষদ তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে বিক্ষোভ দেখাতে পারে। এবং সেটাই যদি হয়, তবে তিনি তৎক্ষণাৎ ইস্তফা দিয়ে দেবেন। আর যদি বিক্ষোভ না হয়, তা হলে জুলাই মাসে ইস্তফা দেবেন। কিন্তু দেশে ফিরে তিনি দেখলেন শুধু পরিষদ বা আর এস এস নয়, গোটা দলের কাছেই তিনি কার্যত ব্রাতা হয়ে গিয়েছেন। দলের কোনও নেতাই প্রকাশ্যে তাঁর সমর্থনে এগিয়ে আসছেন না।

অরুণ জেটলি, প্রমোদ, বেঙ্কাইয়া-সহ সব নেতাই কাল আডবাণীর কাছে আসেন। তাঁদের সঙ্গে কথা কাটাকাটির পরে আডবাণী বলেন, "হ্যাঁ বলেছি, ভেবেচিন্তে বলেছি। কোনও পরিবর্তন করতে আমি প্রস্তুত নই। বরং আমি মনে করি, দলের নেতাদের উচিত ছিল প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়ার মতো নেতার সমালোচনার জবাব দেওয়া। জিন্মা সম্পর্কে আমি কী বলেছি, তা না-জেনে এই সব মন্তব্য যাঁরা করেছেন, তাঁদের যুক্তিও খণ্ডন করার দায়িত্ব দলের ছিল। আমার বক্তব্যের সঙ্গে যখন আপনাবা একমত হতে পারছেন না, তখন আমার ইস্তফা দেওয়াই বাঞ্ছনীয়।"

আদর্শগত প্রব্লে ইস্তফা হলেও দলের ভিতরে বিস্তর জলঘোলা শুরু হয়। বিভিন্ন দিক থেকে আক্রমণ শুরু হয়ে যায় আডবাণীর বিরুদ্ধে। প্রাচীন কেন্দ্রীয় অর্থমন্ত্রী যশবন্ত সিনহার মতো নেতা তাঁর ইস্তফা দাবি করেন। শুধু সভাপতি নয়, বিরোধী দলনেতার পদ থেকেও। আবার সাহেব সিংহ বর্মার মতো কেউ কেউ প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়ার বিরুদ্ধে ব্যবস্থা গ্রহণের আর্জি জানান। আডবাণীর বাড়ির সামনে তাঁর সিদ্ধান্ত প্রত্যাহারের দাবিতে গোটা দিন ধরে স্লোগান দিতে থাকেন কিছু দলীয় কর্মী। রাত্রে কল্যাণ সিংহ থেকে জর্জ ফার্নান্ডেজ, বহু নেতাই তাঁর বাড়িতে গিয়ে সিদ্ধান্ত প্রত্যাহারের দাবি জানাতে থাকেন।

অর্থমন্ত্রী থাকাকালীন আর এস এস এবং সর্দেশি জাগরণ মঞ্চের আক্রমণ থেকে যশবন্ত সিনহাকে আগলাতে বড় ভূমিকা ছিল আডবাণীর। সেই যশবন্ত আজ আডবাণীকে আক্রমণ করেছেন। বেঙ্কাইয়ার মতো নেতারা মুখে আডবাণীকে ফেরানোর কথা বললেও তেমন ভাবে আন্তরিকতা দেখাচ্ছেন না। রাজনৈতিক মহলের বিশ্লেষণ, দলের মধ্যে এমন মসৃণ ভাবে আডবাণী-বিরোধী হাওয়া তোলার পিছনে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের সঙ্গে বাজপেয়ী গোষ্ঠীরও প্রচ্ছন্ন মদত রয়েছে। কোনও নেতা ইস্তফা দিলে তাঁর বিরুদ্ধে বিবৃতি দেওয়ার যে প্রয়োজন কংগ্রেসে চালু আছে, তা এ বার বিজেপি-তেও ঢুকে পড়ল বলে মনে করা হচ্ছে।

আর এস এস নেতাদের সঙ্গে বিজেপি নেতাদের বৈঠক হয় কাল রাতে। মপারাত্রেই আর এস এস মুখপাত্র রাম মাধব জানান, জিন্মা নিয়ে আডবাণীর বক্তব্য পুনর্বিবেচনা করতে হবে। কিন্তু আডবাণী প্রস্তাবে রাজি না-হয়ে ইস্তফার কথা বলেন। এর পরে রাম মাধব বলেন, "উনি ইস্তফা দেবেন কি না, সেটা বিজেপি-র বিষয়। আমরা শুধু চাই, ওই সিদ্ধান্ত পুনর্বিবেচিত হোক।" এর ফলে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের মধ্যে খুব বড় কোনও সঙ্কট তৈরি হয়েছে বলেও তিনি মনে করেন না।

অন্য দিকে বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদের গিরিরাজ কিশোর বলেছেন, "মানুষ ও দলীয় কর্মীদের ইস্তফা মাথায় রেখে আডবাণী যে সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়েছেন, তার জন্য সাধুবাদ জানানো উচিত। অধিকাংশ রাজনৈতিক সিদ্ধান্তই বদলে যায়। আশা করছি, এই সিদ্ধান্ত বদলাবে না।" তাঁর কথায়, "সমস্ত বৃদ্ধ নেতার শাসনের নোঙ ছেড়ে সেবার ভাবনায় আসা উচিত। হিন্দুবাদী দল তৈরিতে মন দেওয়া উচিত।" আর যাঁর মন্তব্য ঘিরে সঙ্কট ঘনীভূত হয়েছে, সেই প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়ার আডবাণীর ইস্তফাকে স্বাগত জানিয়ে বলেছেন, "উনি প্রধানমন্ত্রী হওয়ার স্বপ্ন দেখছিলেন।" শিবসেনা প্রধান বাল ঠাকরেও চুপ করে থাকেননি। তিনি বলেছেন, আডবাণীর মন্তব্যে আদর্শগত বিস্তারিত তৈরি হয়েছে এবং দেশের পক্ষে তা ক্ষতিকর।

The soul of the BJP

Will it be a party of rabble rousers, fanatics?

Or a modern right of center party?

L.K. ADVANI'S resignation has brought the BJP to its day of reckoning. For months the party has been besieged by personal squabbles, organisational indiscipline and ideological disarray. The gauntlet had been thrown when RSS chief Sudarshan had, in a *Walk the Talk* interview to *Indian Express* editor, Shekhar Gupta, openly challenged Advani's leadership. Advani's remarks on Jinnah have further precipitated a crisis that was long brewing. But it is to Advani's great credit that he has not only stood up to the RSS but has done so on a serious matter of principle. Whatever the outcome of this tussle, Advani is a winner. If the party opts for him, as it should, he will have succeeded in stamping his authority on politics and charting a new course for his party. If the Sangh Parivar decides to cut off its own nose, Advani will have done the nation and himself a great service. He will have conclusively established that the BJP will not allow anyone who even deigns to occasionally think and act like a statesman to rise to the top.

This latest row in the Sangh Parivar has established that differences between the RSS and VHP on the one hand and Advani on the other are not merely illusory, a

pantomime put on for public consumption. What is at stake in this contest is the very soul of the BJP. Will it be a party that is dominated by rabble rousers, fanatics and pinched-up ideologues of the sort the VHP and RSS support? Or will it become a genuine right of center party that is capable of governing India in the twenty first century? Will its nationalism remain a largely destructive and negative force always targeted on minorities? Or will it enlarge its conception of Hindu interests to make them more compatible with a forward looking nationalism? It should by no means be assumed that Advani will become a standard garden variety liberal. But by taking on the RSS, of all issues, on Jinnah, by expressing regret over the demolition of the Babri Masjid, Advani has shown the courage to take on the ideological presumptions of Hindutva. This is not merely tactical posturing but a signal to take the fight over the BJP's identity to its logical conclusion. Either the BJP shapes up, or Advani ships out.

The leadership of the BJP should rally around Advani. This is the moment that will define their aspirations and prospects for some time to come.

9. 8. 0
BJP

The Jinnah touchstone

ADVANI'S statements over Jinnah have not just created a political storm within the BJP. They have also exposed the ambivalences and conflicts that still characterise Indian nationalism. There is a delicious irony in the fact that the RSS and the Congress have made common cause in criticising Advani. For the record, Advani's statement's had more historical truth than either his Congress or RSS detractors recognise. Much of the controversy hinges on that most opaque of words, secularism. What does it mean to call Jinnah secular? A term is often defined by what it is opposed to. In India the term secular has two antonyms. To be non-secular can mean "religious", someone who in a political sense espouses a religious state. Jinnah certainly was certainly secular in this sense of the term. He believed in a in something akin to a modern constitutional state and not a theocracy. The second antonym of secular is "communal". Jinnah thought that no scheme of representation would have been adequate to safeguarding Muslim interests against majority domination in an undivided India. We may not agree with this proposition, but that does not by itself make Jinnah communal.

Congress has indicted Jinnah for being communal on two other grounds. First, his claims that Hindus and Muslims are two nations and second, that only he could represent Muslim interests not Congress. He was also communal in the sense that he thought, at least as far as the debate in undivided India went, community identity should matter to the question of political representation. But let us face the historical truth: in the entire negotiations over Muslim representation in the first half of the century, there were very few voices that genuinely believed that religious ide-



Advani's statement highlights that RSS and Congress are in a time warp

PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

ntity could be made completely irrelevant to citizenship or legal rights. The debate was over whether these different identities could be politically represented within one state or not. Congress did not dismantle the majority minority framework of thinking about representation. But it did think it could represent both. This was often done with the good intention of making the point that Indian national identity was not an assimilationist project that aspired to making religious identity irrelevant to what legal or political rights citizens have. Congress still cannot openly espouse this aspiration. There have been very few

resisted for a number of reasons. It is bad history and presents an unattractive conception of the subcontinent's historical identity. But it does not follow from this fact that the historical significance and complexity of any figure who espoused the theory cannot be recognised. But by denying the two nation theory in the manner that the Congress does, we continue to insinuate Pakistan's illegitimacy. Implying this is both wishful thinking and an impediment to any prospects for peace with Pakistan.

Advani's virtue was to emphatically acknowledge that Pakistan is a legitimate nation and

ritory; we attack the basis of their nationhood. This might give Congress and the RSS a sense of their own exalted virtue. But it was precisely an exalted sense of its own virtue that prevented Congress from being politically astute in dealing with Jinnah; and its interpretation of its own virtue will forever cast a shadow on the future of India Pakistan relations. Advani, on this occasion, displayed great historical sense by not being stuck in history.

In addition, Advani's statements over Jinnah have turned out to be explosive politics. For one thing, it was a reminder to Pakistanis that if they can espouse Jinnah's secular ideals they will be better off. And India will be more secure if Pakistan follows the legacy of Jinnah rather than assorted mullahs and generals. It is difficult to guess whether Advani anticipated the storm his remarks would brew. But his resignation has produced a moment of reckoning thrice over. After months of being perceived as being weak, he has taken an initiative and stuck by it. He has emerged as a man of conviction with a capacity for independent initiative. He has also forced the BJP to come to terms with its own ideological and organisational disputes.

Advani's statement by no means signals that he has given up Hindu nationalism. There is no contradiction in praising Jinnah and at the same time mobilise for constructing a Ram temple at Ayodhya. Advani does not have to change his spots. But he has to assert his authority over rabble rousers like Togadia and either marginalise them or be vanquished. But most importantly, he has once again brought the Congress Party and Pakistan, the custodians of official nationalisms, to confront their own deep seated assumptions. And surprise surprise, Congress scratched, turns out to be closer to the RSS, stuck in the past.

Advani has brought the Congress Party and Pakistan, the custodians of official nationalisms, to confront their own deep seated assumptions

who have been willing group identities completely subordinate to the demands of citizenship. In that sense communalism is the inevitable outcome of Indian nationalism, not a marginal tendency we can distance ourselves from by pegging it on Jinnah.

At the turn of the new millennium we should also be careful of how we speak about the two nation theory. The dilemma is this. Indian secularism needs to argue that Hindus and Muslims are not two nations, or at least two nations that require separate states. But we have to do this without thereby implying that Pakistan, circa 2005, is an illegitimate state. The two nation theory needs to be

that Jinnah had a historical role in creating it. If we want to have a genuine dialogue with Pakistan we have to begin by emphatically acknowledging this fact. The Congress is still in a time warp if it thinks that it can acknowledge the reality of Pakistan but not honour its founder. What does it mean to deal with a Pakistan if we say: "We don't acknowledge the ideological current that led to your founding, we don't acknowledge your founder, and we certainly will not tolerate anybody who could so much as suggest that Jinnah might have had a mistaken conception of nationhood, but a correct conception of constitutional values." Pakistan attacks our ter-

RSS din, Jinnah djinn do Advani in

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WHO SAID WHAT

Breaking their silence on Mr Advani's resignation as BJP president, party leaders today came out strongly in his defence, but they seemed to have left it too late as he is believed to have categorically ruled out withdrawing his resignation. Describing the reactions to his statements in Pakistan as "most unfortunate", he was particularly agonised over party leaders not reacting even after some people labelled him a traitor. Of his critics, while the RSS tried to soften the blow, VHP leaders continued going ballistic and political opponents had a field day.

Jinnah played an important role in the freedom struggle... senior Congress leaders such as Sarojini Naidu had also made similar remarks (to those made by Advani) about Jinnah... the *Janak* (Father) of Pakistan who wanted the people of India and Pakistan to live in harmony, but his intentions were not supported by other Pakistani leaders. Everyone has a right to freedom of expression. Advani's remarks on Jinnah have been misinterpreted. **AB Vajpayee, BJP**



We have nothing to do with the resignation. It is an internal matter of the party... we didn't put any pressure for the resignation... we don't get involved. (But) we were not in agreement with the sentiments expressed by Advani vis-a-vis Jinnah. The debate on the issue, however, is over. **Ram Madhav, RSS**



Eighty crore Hindus in India will feel betrayed if someone wants to create a secular image for himself by showering praise on Jinnah. **Saamna, Shiv Sena mouthpiece**

Advani's commitment to nationalism and nationalist ideology cannot be questioned in any manner. The party has reached its current heights due to him. **Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi, BJP**

It's an internal matter of the BJP (but) his controversial statements in Pakistan were aimed at an image makeover following the defeat in the last Lok Sabha polls. The mask that was being worn by Vajpayee till now is sought to be donned by Advani. **Ambika Soni, Congress**



Advani's resignation is a victory of patriotism over treason. **Praveen Togadia, VHP**

Dil ki baat kahi hai (he's spoken from the heart). He should stick to his resignation and now resign from the RSS too. **Lalu Prasad, RJD**



Graphic: Arindam Mazumdar

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, June 7. — Sending shock waves through his party's rank and file, Mr LK Advani today resigned as president of the BJP in the wake of the controversy raging within the Sangh Parivar over his statements on Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Babari Masjid demolition and Partition during his recent tour of Pakistan.

Though Mr Advani claimed that he had taken the decision just before leaving Karachi yesterday, he submitted his resignation letter to the BJP general secretary, Mr Sanjay Joshi, this morning after the RSS had told him to "withdraw his statements" or face the "consequences".

Close on the heels of Mr Advani's resignation, BJP lead-

ers went to his residence, urging him to withdraw his resignation. Sensing Mr Advani's resolve to stick to his decision, the leaders rushed to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee's residence to seek his intervention. They urged Mr Vajpayee to resolve the matter and persuade Mr Advani to withdraw his resignation.

Later in the day, Mr Advani met Mr Vajpayee, but the meeting did not yield any result. Mr Advani stuck to his decision, telling Mr Vajpayee that he had "made up his mind," party leaders said.

Keeping in view Mr Advani's firm stand, the BJP leadership has begun its search for a new president. For the time being, the vice-president, Mr Venkaiah Naidu, has taken charge "unofficially".

In his resignation letter, Mr

VHP, Bajrang Dal rejoice

GANDHINAGAR, June 7. — VHP and Bajrang Dal workers celebrated the resignation of Mr LK Advani by bursting crackers, distributing sweets and beating drums in his Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency. Several VHP and Bajrang activists were reportedly detained and taken into custody for anti-Advani protests. Not satisfied with the resignation from the party chief's post, the VHP is pressing for his resignation from Parliament. The VHP's Gujarat unit secretary, Mr Dilip Trivedi, today made it clear that "Mr Advani is an unwanted man in the state." "It is *pravesh bandh* for him," a statement from Mr Trivedi said and added that Mr Advani should take a bath in the Saryu river in Ayodhya to "wash his sins" and then ask for forgiveness from Ram Lalla, before he becomes acceptable again. The VHP said that his resignation was an *upkaar* (favour) to the BJP and not Hindu society. — SNS

Advani maintained that he stood by his statements in Pakistan. "I have decided to request the party to relieve me of the presidency. I am sure acceding to my request would be in the best interests of the great cause I have served all my life and also of the party which has given me so much," he stated.

Referring to his visit to Pakistan where the controversy originated, he said: "I have taken this decision after pondering the matter very carefully. And I believe that my visit to Pakistan last week has immensely reinforced the initiatives taken by the NDA government to bring about peace and nor-

malty with Pakistan", reserving the punch-line in his last sentence — "I have not said or done anything in Pakistan which I need to retract or review."

Even as the party leadership rallied around Mr Advani, most BJP leaders preferred not to comment on his controversial statements. Mr Vajpayee and Mr Sahib Singh were among the few who openly defended Mr Advani, saying his comments had been "misunderstood and misrepresented".

Mr Verma also attacked the VHP leader, Mr Praveen Togadia, who had called Mr Advani a "traitor". He said: "They should apologise for their conduct. And action should be taken against Togadia."

Rising to Mr Advani's defence, BJP vice-president Mr

Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said: "Mr Advani's commitment to nationalism and the nationalist ideology cannot be questioned in any manner. The party has reached its current heights owing to his contribution."

On its part, following its sharp criticism of Mr Advani's comments, the RSS today preferred to remain silent on his resignation. "We have nothing to do with today's development. It is an internal matter of the party," said the RSS spokesman, Mr Ram Madhav. The BJP parliamentary board will meet tomorrow evening.

Late tonight, Mr Sanjay Joshi called on Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, former BJP president, to discuss "party affairs and selection of a new party chief".

More reports, photographs on page 4

Advani quits as BJP president

Party cadre stunned, VHP members celebrate resignation

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party president L.K. Advani resigned from his party position on Tuesday, following the controversy over his description of Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah as "secular" and his remarks that the demolition of Babri Masjid was the "saddest day" of his life.

The BJP cadre are stunned by the development which has arisen in the wake of the severe criticism of Mr. Advani by the Sangh Parivar outfits.

As Mr. Advani was firm that his resignation be accepted, the focus was on leadership change, a problem that has confronted the party and was brought into sharp focus by Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief K.S. Sudarshan suggesting in a television interview a few months ago that the ageing BJP leadership should step aside to make way for the next generation. The immediate task before the BJP is to arrive at a consensus with the Sangh Parivar on who should now lead the party and no one in the BJP doubts that the Sangh will have a major say in this, notwithstanding its public stance.

Naidu to the defence

After daylong meetings at the residences of Mr. Advani and the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who arrived back in the Capital from Manali, the party decided to call a meeting of its parliamentary board on Wednesday to discuss the issue. Announcing this, party vice-president Venkaiah Naidu showered praise on Mr. Advani and condemned as "highly objectionable" the description of Mr. Advani as a "traitor" by Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Pravin Togadia. He hoped that "even now Mr. Advani will accept the wish of the party to reconsider his decision."

It was around 9 a.m. that the drama unfolded with Mr. Advani asking the party general secretary (organisation), Sanjay Joshi, a key RSS man, to come to his residence. A three-paragraph letter of resignation was handed to him and, immediately afterwards, Mr. Advani's aides distributed copies of the letter to the media waiting outside. "I am writing this letter just before departing from Karachi. I have decided to request the party to



STANDS FIRM: BJP leader L.K. Advani leaving after meeting the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, at his residence in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

relieve me from presidentship. I am sure acceding to my request would be in the best interests of the great cause I have served all my life, as also the party which has given me so much," the letter said.

However, even in the BJP there were not many takers that

the letter was written in Karachi (when the RSS had reacted to his Jinnah remarks and suggested that it was totally contrary to the Sangh ideology, coming soon after the Sangh's unhappiness with the earlier remark that "the saddest day" in his life was the day Babri Masjid was demol-

ished). Mr. Togadia — many correspondents received angry SMS messages in his name calling Mr. Advani a traitor — was reported to have asked what Mr. Advani had been doing with the letter since his arrival in India on Monday morning.

It seems Mr. Advani's idea of Jinnah's secular credentials is too hard for the BJP and the Sangh Parivar to swallow. As one senior Muslim leader of the BJP said: "For no Indian and no Indian Muslim has Jinnah been a hero or an icon. He is a hated figure held responsible for the divided families and many other problems of Partition. Some may hero-worship Saddam Hussein for taking on the United States, even though unsuccessfully, but Jinnah is an icon for no one." Vinay Katiyar, BJP leader, is reported to have said that Jinnah "broke the country" and that Mr. Advani was now destroying the party.

In Ahmedabad, VHP cadre celebrated the news of Mr. Ad-

vani's resignation by bursting firecrackers.

Debate over: RSS

RSS spokesperson Ram Madhav made it clear that the resignation issue was for the BJP to decide. The RSS had not asked for it and was not going to ask him not to press it. "The RSS is not in agreement with the sentiments expressed [by Mr. Advani on Jinnah]. The debate is over," Mr. Madhav said. On Monday, Mr. Advani had called for a "debate" on the issue.

Mr. Advani's resignation, party leaders hint, was "inevitable" after the RSS had demanded that Mr. Advani "review" his remarks and after Mr. Advani made it equally clear that he would not. "I have not said or done anything in Pakistan which I need to retract or review," he emphasised in his resignation letter.

Vajpayee stands by Advani

Kanwar Yogendra

SHIMLA: The former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on Tuesday endorsed the views of his party colleague, L.K. Advani, on Mohammad Ali Jinnah. "People are getting the wrong end of the stick," he said. Mr. Advani's remarks were "misinterpreted."

Calling Jinnah 'Father of independent Pakistan,' Mr. Vajpayee said he always

wanted good relations with India but other Pakistan leaders did not support him.

Mr. Vajpayee agreed with Mr. Advani's description of Jinnah as "secular" leader, who had a liking for India even after Partition. "Everybody has the right to freedom of expression and people should not mind it," he said.

He was talking to reporters here before boarding a plane for New Delhi after a 10-day holiday in Kullu-Manali.

Reactions on Page 12

ADVANI STICKS TO REMARKS ON JINNAH

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7/6

Retract or review: RSS

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Press Trust of India

9 P P B 3 P

Congress sees Jinnah 'djinn' in BJP chief

NEW DELHI, June 6. — Hardening its stand against BJP president Mr LK Advani for his remarks on Jinnah and Partition during his week-long trip to Pakistan, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh tonight demanded that he withdraw his controversial remarks or review them, even as Mr Advani defended his stand on the issues earlier while talking to the media upon his return from Pakistan.

"I have come to know that my remarks have triggered a debate. I have no objection to it. The matter should be debated," Mr Advani said. Summing up his "memorable and unforgettable week", he said his visit to Islamabad had been "essentially political". Mr Advani said he had met Gen. Musharraf, Mr Shaukat Aziz and Mr Khurshid M Kasuri, among others, and "we discussed things very freely". Everyone wanted the peace process to be carried forward, he added. "Whatever you have said, we are convinced of. The process will go ahead," he quoted the Pakistani leaders as telling him.

RSS general secretary Mr Mohan Bhagwat conveyed the RSS' views on Mr Advani's remarks to senior BJP leaders, including Mr M Venkaiah Naidu and Mr Arun Jaitley, who had met the leader at

NEW DELHI, June 6. — The Congress today attacked Mr LK Advani's praise for Jinnah as a secular leader, saying that he appeared to be wanting "Jinnah's brand of secularism" that advocated the two-nation theory which the Congress had always opposed. A sarcastic Mr Abhishek Singhvi, Congress spokesman, said: "For Advani, as for Jinnah, as indeed for Veer Savarkar, secularism can mean a two-nation theory." — PTI

Details on page 5

RSS' Jhandewalan headquarters tonight. "Ideological questions are involved and it is not possible for the Sangh to compromise on them," RSS spokesman Mr Ram Madhav said. Any question of an apology was, however, ruled out by the RSS leader. "The remarks should be reviewed," he said. The 90-minute meeting between the RSS and BJP leaders came after the BJP leaders had held a day-long conclave. The RSS chief is to arrive here tomorrow.

However, the JD-U has expressed its support for Mr Advani. Mr Nitish Kumar said the remarks on Jinnah were "courageous" and "factually correct". "I salute Advani for giving such a courageous statement," he added.

07 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

Act of courage ^{9.8.08}

Advani does the histories of India and Pakistan a great service by reopening the Jinnah question

L.K. Advani's statements about the historical role and ideas of Muhammad Ali Jinnah have upset the Sangh Parivar. Jinnah is one figure in modern history few Indians have honestly come to terms with. Advani's statements were a reminder that Indian history is not a simple black and white story of heroes and villains that it is often made out to be. Jinnah was at one time considered an ambassador of Hindu Muslim unity. Jinnah may be held responsible for furthering communalism in Indian politics by insisting on thinking of representation in communal terms and then pressing for partition. But that is not incompatible with the claim that Jinnah wanted a Pakistan that was not a theocracy.

Indeed, if anything, Advani's references to Jinnah's statements at the eve of independence were a reminder to Pakistanis about how far they had strayed from Jinnah's ideals in their urge to embrace militant Islam. While Jinnah has been revered as a founder in Pakistan, many of his statements and pronouncements that suggest that he would have been uncomfortable with the kind of Islamic Republic Pakistan subsequently became, have been a subject of embarrassment for Pakistan's rulers. Advani may have reignited the debate over the character of Pakistan. This is a far greater achievement than the Sangh, with its lack of historical sense, will ever acknowledge.

Of course Advani may have multi-

ple motives in saying what he did. He could be positioning himself as being more statesman-like; he could simply be reciprocating the hospitality he received. And, in a back-handed way, he could be legitimising the BJP's own ideology by suggesting that acknowledging that a nation has an identity that derives from a dominant religious group is not incompatible with allegiance to a secular constitution. After all, both Jinnah and the BJP want to run a parallel version of the same story: India as a Hindu state with a modern secular constitution; Pakistan as a Muslim state with a modern secular constitution. But we have become so enamoured of a simplistic history, with its easy heroes and villains, that we often fail to notice the complicated ways in which ideologies function, the ways in which seemingly secular commitments can unleash horrendous communal politics. Advani has done the histories of India and Pakistan a great service by reopening the Jinnah question. Just as Pakistan has to answer what Jinnah's legacy is really about, Indians should have a more complicated view of Jinnah's role in Partition. What we heard from Advani about Jinnah was not Advani the politician or the ideologue. It was Advani the intellectual. And he needs to be commended for showing intellectual courage, at least on this occasion.

তীব্র ক্ষোভ দলে, আডবাণী তবু জিন্মা-স্বত্বিতে অনড়

জয়ন্ত ঘোষাল • নয়াদিল্লি

৬ জুন: শুধু গিরিরাজ কিশোর বা প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়াই নন, তাঁর জিন্মা-প্রশস্তিতে নিজের দলের অন্দরেও যে প্রবল অসন্তোষ তৈরি হয়েছে আজ দেশে ফিরেই তা টের পেলেন বিজেপি সভাপতি।

মহম্মদ আলি জিন্নার সমাধিতে গিয়ে যে ভাবে তাঁকে 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ' বলেছেন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী, তাতে বিজেপি'র দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের নেতারা 'আপসেট'। তাঁদের ধারণা এর ফলে দলের ভোট ব্যাঙ্কে ভাঙন ধরবে। এ দিন সন্ধ্যায় বেঙ্কাইয়া নায়ডুর বাড়িতে ঘরোয়া বৈঠকে বসেন অরুণ জেটলি, প্রমোদ মহাজন প্রমুখ। সেখানেই ঠিক হয়, তাঁদের আশঙ্কার কথা আডবাণীকে সরাসরি জানানোই ভাল। সেই মতো জেটলি ও অনন্তকুমার আডবাণীর বাড়ি গিয়ে তাঁকে বলেন, দলে তো বটেই, জিন্মা সম্পর্কে তাঁর প্রশংসাসূচক মন্তব্যে সাধারণ মানুষের মধ্যেও প্রচণ্ড নেতিবাচক প্রতিক্রিয়া হয়েছে। এই ভুল বোঝাবুঝি মেটাতে সাংবাদিক বৈঠক ডেকে বিষয়টি ব্যাখ্যা করুন তিনি। দুই নেতাই আডবাণীর সচিব সুধীন্দ্র কুলকার্নিকে বলির পাঠা করতে চাইছেন। তাঁদের বক্তব্য, পাকিস্তানে আডবাণীর বক্তৃতার খসড়া তৈরি করেছিলেন সুধীন্দ্র। তাঁকে অবিলম্বে সরানো প্রয়োজন। এ দিনের বৈঠকে সুধীন্দ্রকেও ডেকে পাঠানো হয়।

আডবাণী অবশ্য তাঁর অবস্থান বদলাতে রাজি নন। আজ রাজধানীতে নেমেই তিনি সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, "আমি শুনেছি জিন্মা সংক্রান্ত মন্তব্য নিয়ে কিছু বিতর্ক হচ্ছে। বিতর্ক হওয়া ভাল। তাতে আমার আপত্তি নেই।" তিনি বলেন, "সে দিন জিন্নার সমাধিতে তাঁরই বক্তৃতার কিছু অংশ স্মরণ করেছিলাম মাত্র। যেখানে তিনি ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার কথা বলেছিলেন।" আডবাণী মন্তব্য ফেরাতে রাজি নন কারণ তিনি জানেন, তাতে তাঁর পাকিস্তান সফরের সাফল্য ধুলোয় মিশে যাবে। তাই আপাতত এ ব্যাপারে আর কোনও ব্যাখ্যায় না গিয়ে নীরবতা অবলম্বনের পক্ষপাতী তিনি।

এ দিকে, কংগ্রেস আজ আডবাণীর সমালোচনা করেছে। তাদের কৌশল হল, বিজেপি-র অভ্যন্তরীণ কলহ আরও উস্কে দেওয়া। কংগ্রেস মুখপাত্র অভিষেক মনু সিঙ্ঘবি বলেছেন, গাঁধীজিকেও হিন্দু নেতা অ্যাখ্যা দিয়েছিলেন জিন্মা। যিনি ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে দেশভাগ সমর্থন করেছেন, তাঁকে এত দিন পরে আডবাণী ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বলেছেন কেন? কংগ্রেসের

বক্তব্য, আডবাণী প্রধানমন্ত্রী হওয়ার স্বপ্ন দেখছেন। তাই ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ সাজতে ব্যাকুল। তাদের আর একটি ব্যাখ্যা, করাচিতে জিন্মা হত্যার বড়যন্ত্র মামলায় আডবাণী অভিযুক্ত। এফআইআর এখনও রয়েছে। এই অবস্থায় জিন্মা প্রশস্তি করে তিনি সেই অভিযোগের অবসান ঘটাতে চান। আডবাণীর মন্তব্যে হিন্দু সমাজে যে প্রতিক্রিয়া হয়েছে, সে দিকে তাকিয়ে সেই ভোট ব্যাঙ্কে ভাগ বসাতে চাইছে কংগ্রেস।

আডবাণীর প্রতি বিজেপি নেতাদের অসন্তোষ আজ সকালে বিমানবন্দরেই স্পষ্ট হয়ে যায়। সভাপতিকে অভ্যর্থনা জানানোর কোনও উৎসাহ ছিল না নেতাদের মধ্যে। অনেকেই বিমানবন্দর মুখো হননি। বেঙ্কাইয়া নায়ডু, রাজনাথ সিংহ, মুখতার আকবাস নকভি প্রমুখ নমো নমো করে তাঁকে স্বাগত জানান। ক্ষুর নেতারা বলছেন, বিহার এবং অসমে ভোট আসছে। তার আগে আডবাণীর মন্তব্য দলের প্রভূত ক্ষতি করেছে। তাঁদের প্রশ্ন, আডবাণীর এই পাকিস্তান প্রেমে দলের কী লাভ হবে? তিনি তো আর গাঁধীনগর ছেড়ে করাচিতে ভোটপ্রার্থী হবেন না। আডবাণী অবশ্য বিজেপি নেতাদের আজ বোঝানোর চেষ্টা করেছেন যে, তিনি এমন কিছু বলেননি, যা থেকে বিতর্ক হতে পারে।

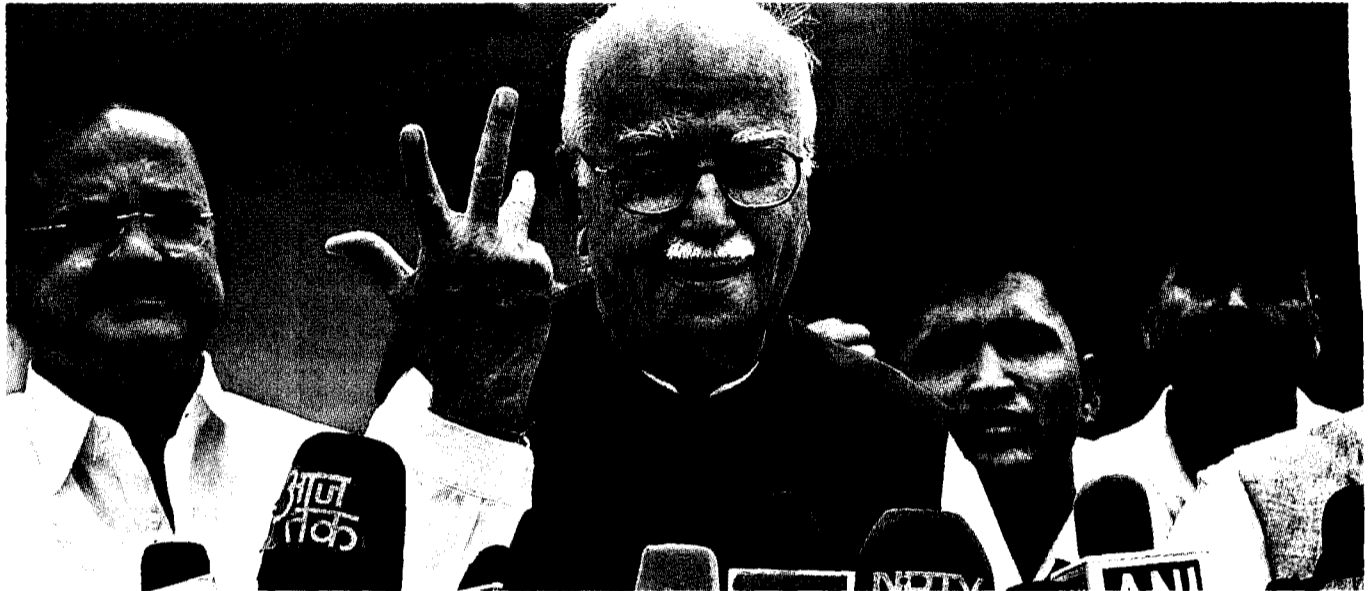
আসলে এই আডবাণী বিরোধিতার পিছনে সাংগঠনিক কলহও রয়েছে। তাঁর পাকিস্তান যাত্রা নিয়ে কটাক্ষ করেছেন বাজপেয়ী। সভাপতি পদ থেকে যারা আডবাণীকে সরাতে চান, তাঁরা আরও সক্রিয়।

ঠিক কী হয়েছিল করাচিতে? জিন্নার সমাধিতে গিয়ে আডবাণী জিন্নারই বক্তৃতার অংশ তুলে বোঝাতে চেয়েছিলেন, যে জিন্মা ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার নীতি প্রয়োগ করতে চেয়েছিলেন। তাঁর বক্তব্যের পুরো পটভূমি না জেনেই কল্যাণ সিংহ থেকে শুরু করে গিরিরাজ কিশোর, প্রবীণ তোগাড়িয়া প্রতিক্রিয়া ব্যক্ত করেন। পরের দিন আডবাণী আবার এক লিখিত বক্তৃতাতে বলেন, ভারত ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ রাষ্ট্র। ধর্মের ভিত্তিতে এখানে রাষ্ট্রগঠন হয়নি। জিন্মা এমনটাই বলেছিলেন। কিন্তু তিনি এটাও বুঝিয়ে দেন যে, পাকিস্তান সেই নীতির বাস্তব প্রয়োগে সক্ষম হয়নি।

পাকিস্তানেও অবশ্য জিন্মাকে নিয়ে বিতর্ক চলছে। পাক চিন্তাবিদ আয়েতজাজ আসান তাঁর সাম্প্রতিক গ্রন্থ বলেছেন, জিন্মার এমন অনেক অপ্রকাশিত চিঠি ও লেখা রয়েছে, যা প্রকাশ করলে ইসলামি রাষ্ট্রের চিন্তায় আঘাত লাগবে। তাঁর এই মন্তব্য পাক সমাজে আলোড়ন ফেলেছে।

Ready for debate: Advani

Remarks on Jinnah evoke protests from Congress too



FRUITFUL VISIT: BJP president and Leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani addressing newsmen at the airport in New Delhi on Monday on his return from Pakistan. — PHOTO: PTI

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party president L.K. Advani said here on Monday that there should be a "debate" vis-à-vis his remarks on Pakistan founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah and that he welcomed it. "I have no objection to it," he told the media here on Monday on his return from a weeklong visit to Pakistan.

The BJP leader described his visit as a substantial effort in promoting India-Pakistan relations.

Mr. Advani's remarks on Jinnah being a secular leader had created a furore and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad openly expressed their ire.

A week ago, Mr. Advani was given a warm send-off by party leaders, and he also carried the good wishes of the RSS. His re-

turn saw an angry Sangh Parivar wanting to know why he had "heaped praises" on Jinnah and distanced himself from the Sangh's concept of "Akhand Bharat" (united India).

Asked to go back

Though senior BJP leaders were present at the airport to receive the BJP president, Hindu Jagran Manch activists had put up an anti-Advani poster, which resented his support to Jinnah asked him to "go back."

"I have come to know that my remarks have triggered a debate. I have no objection to it; the matter should be debated," Mr. Advani told reporters.

Mr. Advani had said that Jinnah, in his speech to the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, had favoured a secular and non-theocratic state and was of the view that there should not be any difference between Hindus

and Muslims as all were its citizens.

Ironic, says Congress

This one speech of Jinnah's, according to the Congress, did not make him "secular." Stating that it was "truly ironic and astonishing" that Mr. Advani should consider Jinnah secular, Congress spokesman Abhishek Singhvi said the former Deputy Prime Minister should explain to the nation his "new definition of secularism."

"For Mr. Advani as for Mr. Jinnah as was for Veer Savarkar, secularism justifies a two-nation theory and electorates divided on the basis of religion. Perhaps, Mr. Advani wants Jinnah's brand of secularism for India, which cannot be compared to the secularism of Gandhi and Nehru," Mr. Singhvi said.

Apart from the sentimental values attached to the country of

his birth, Mr. Advani said the objective of his visit to Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi was to promote the peace initiatives taken by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) Government.

Pakistani leaders, Mr. Advani said, had appreciated that the peace process started by the NDA Government was being carried forward by the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance Government.

He said that since the India-Pakistan problems were decades-old, it required "patience" to arrive at solutions. Besides Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, Mr. Advani also met Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz and Foreign Minister Khurshid Kasuri.

More reports on Page 12

07 JUN 2005 THE HINDU

ATL-ADVANI ERA OVER, SAYS VHP

Tough test for BJP chief

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Statesman News Service

Of peace & parivar...

NEW DELHI, June 5. — BJP president Mr LK Advani is set to face a stiff resistance from both within his party as well as the Sangh Parivar when he returns home tomorrow after his week-long trip to Pakistan.

Though his media managers are working hard to dilute the controversy generated by his remarks on Babari Masjid's demolition and his calling Mohammad Ali Jinnah an "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity," the VHP is bent on launching a campaign to demand Mr Advani's removal from the BJP president's post. Mr Advani's remarks have also upset many senior BJP leaders who admitted that the statements have demoralised and confused the BJP cadre.

In Karachi, Mr Advani's aides today defended his statements, adds PTI. They said that "whatever he said about Jinnah was based on his various speeches... and there is nothing wrong in what he said on the Babari demolition... he had been saying this for a long time." They distributed excerpts of Jinnah's speech to the Constituent Assembly on 11 August, 1947, from which Mr Advani had quoted extensively at Jinnah's mausoleum yesterday. He had described Jinnah as a "great man" who had espoused the cause of a secular Pakistan and a "rare individual who actually created history".

But the RSS and the VHP are not pleased. Mr Advani's statements were "meant to deceive the people of the country and distort history," charged VHP president Mr Ashok Singhal and added that "the era of Atal and Advani is over and Sangh Parivar has to chalk out the future of BJP".

Demanding an immediate change in the BJP leadership, Mr Singhal alleged that by deviating from the RSS' theory of

KARACHI, June 5. — Mr LK Advani today rebuffed the "Akhand Bharat" proponents and said Partition cannot be undone. In an apparent reference to the Sangh Parivar, he said critical viewpoints on ties between the two countries should neither be dismissed nor disparaged. Aiming to strike a balance between peace and the parivar, he said while addressing a function here that the hardening of positions among certain sections in India and Pakistan were rooted in history and "this is the reason why even well-intentioned moves for peace are often viewed with suspicion and met with disapproval on both sides." He appealed to those involved in the peace process to "give due weight to these critical viewpoints". — PTI

"Akhand Bharat" by saying that "Pakistan was an established fact of history," Mr Advani was only "trying to throw dust into the eyes of the people". The VHP chief said: "How can Jinnah, who put forth the two-nation theory, be termed secular? There is no Hindu who does not know that Pakistan was formed because of Jinnah and Advani did the unthinkable by paying floral tributes to him."

In Nagpur, RSS chief Mr K Sudarshan tonight declined to comment on the remarks. He said he endorsed the views of RSS spokesman Mr Ram Madhav, who said yesterday in Bangalore that such statements were against the RSS ideology and they would like to know in what context were the statements made.

Also today, Mr Singhal met the Union home minister and was understood to have expressed apprehensions about a threat to his life. Mr Singhal refused to divulge details, but said: "In the present scenario, with all the peace moves being made between India and Pakistan, the threat has increased."

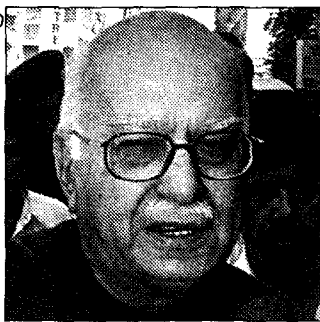
More reports on page 5

Advani throws saffron in crisis over Jinnah eulogies

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 5 JUNE

WITH L.K. Advani jeopardising the Sangh brotherhood's nationalist plank by accrediting Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the force behind the two-nation theory, as a 'secularist', the BJP was in the throes of a major crisis on Sunday. While the Sangh parivar offshoots demanded the resignation of Mr Advani from the BJP's top post, his party leadership was finding it difficult to defend the party president's re-appraisal of Jinnah.

Mr Advani, who flaunted his 'naya dil' in his public appearances in Pakistan, in the process also adopted the Wagah candle lighters' views on Partition and the Indo-Pakistan divide as his new gospel. It was precisely this historiography that the BJP and the parivar have been ridiculing all these years. Ignoring the historical fact that Jinnah had mustered the forces to fight the Hindus and the British for a Muslim homeland and undermined the theme of 'one country, one nation', the BJP president donned the neo-secularist garb during his visit to Jinnah's mausoleum and wrote in the visitor's book; "There are many people who leave an inerasable stamp on history. There are very few who actually create history. Jinnah was one such rare individual. Sarojini Naidu, a leading luminary of India's freedom struggle described Jinnah as an ambassador of Hindu-Muslim



unity. His address to the constituent assembly of Pakistan on August 11, 1947 is really a classic, a forceful espousal of a secular state in which, while every citizen would be free to practice his own religion, the State shall make no distinction between one individual and another on grounds of faith."

It was clear that Mr Advani was swept off his feet by melodrama involved in his interactions in Pakistan and film songs such as *ghar aya mera pardesi* during banquets in his honour. Many in the party see his latest attempts to appease the hysterical secular opinion as one that stems from his anxiety to create the right ambience that can accommodate his Prime Ministerial ambitions. This existential crisis has been forcing him to frequently underplay his role in the demolition of the disputed structure at Ayodhya (he used to describe the structure as an ocular demonstration against the Hindus) as well as the image of a hard-liner.

That it contradicts his past and

known views becomes clearer when one peruses an article penned by Mr Advani on the demolition. Sample this: "It is worth recalling that Toynbee had expressed surprise that the government allowed several intentionally offensive monuments raised by Mughul and British rulers to remain even after Independence. Toynbee, while delivering the Azad memorial lecture had observed: In the course of the Russian occupation of Warsaw, the former had built an Eastern Orthodox Christian Cathedral in the Capital of the once independent Roman Catholic country, Poland. The Russians had done this to give the Poles a continuous ocular demonstration that the Russians were now their masters. I do not greatly blame the Polish government for having pulled down the Russian Church. The purpose for which the Russians had built it had been not religious, but political, and the purpose had also been intentionally offensive." But Mr Advani's current speech writer Sudheendra Kulkarni does not appear to be familiar with these known views of his principal.

Mr Advani will be required to explain the "rewriting" of history when he meets 200 senior party leaders at a study camp in Mumbai's Rambhau Mhalgi Prabodhini on June 10. The familiar route politicians take when faced with similar situations 'blaming it on the media' will not be available for Mr Advani as TV channels are still relaying his Karachi sound bytes.

RSS questions Advani's remarks on Jinnah

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“The cadre is unhappy and confused”

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is not at all overjoyed by the Pakistan 'yatra' of Bharatiya Janata Party president L.K. Advani.

It is unhappy that the hero of the 'rath yatra' from Somnath to Ayodhya has described December 6, 1992 — the day the Babri Masjid was demolished — as the “saddest day in my life.” RSS leaders, on Saturday, were even more stunned by the praise lavished by Mr. Advani on the Father of Pakistan, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, virtually suggesting that he considered Jinnah secular.

'People angry'

Speaking to *The Hindu* over telephone from Bangalore, RSS spokesperson Ram Madhav asked: “Who was responsible for the Partition of India along religious lines? What Advaniji said

in Karachi and earlier was not in line with RSS thinking. The cadre is unhappy and confused, the people are angry. When Advaniji returns we will find out exactly what he said.”

Mr. Madhav was not at all pleased that when Mr. Advani visited the Jinnah *mazar* (mausoleum) in Karachi on Saturday, he was reported to have talked of Jinnah's wish to see Pakistan emerge as a secular nation. “Every child who has read history in this country knows that it was the policies of the British, the Congress party, and, above all, Jinnah that led to the Partition of this country,” Mr. Madhav said. “If one man was responsible for the creation of Pakistan, it was Jinnah.”

Referring to Mr. Advani's mention of Jinnah's Presidential address to Pakistan's Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947 in which Jinnah favoured a

secular state as against the Islamic state that Pakistan is now, Mr. Madhav said that a man should not be judged by one sentence or a single action. His life and beliefs had to be taken in totality.

Two days ago, Vishwa Hindu Parishad leader Ashok Singhal criticised Mr. Advani's remarks on the Babri Masjid demolition as the “saddest day” in his life. He wanted to know what his Ayodhya 'rath yatra' was all about and whether his demand that a Ram temple should be built at the disputed site could be achieved without bringing down the masjid at the spot.

BJP spokesperson Prakash Javadekar was tight-lipped on Saturday. Asked to comment on Mr. Advani's praise for Jinnah, his response was: “No comments, how can a spokesperson of a party comment on what the party president has said.”

01 JUN 1993

THE HINDU

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JUN 2005

05 JUN 2005

THE ...

Jinnah a great man: Advani

Press Trust of India ... and Pakistan as an "unalterable reality of history", placed a wreath at Jinnah's mazaar as the navy's bugles played (*Photo on right*) and he stood in silence when a cleric offered prayers.

"The Qaid-e-Azam was a rare individual who created history," Mr Advani wrote in the visitors' book. Recalling that Sarojini Naidu had described Jinnah as an "ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity", he reminded the people of Pakistan that he had actually favoured a secular state. He said Jinnah's 11 August, 1947 speech in Pakistan's Constituent Assembly

was "a classic, a forceful espousal of a secular state in which, while every citizen would be free to pursue his own religion, the state should make no distinction between one citizen and another on grounds of faith. My homage to this great man," Mr Advani said.

Ironically, a pamphlet distributed to the Indian media said: "The necessity of a separate homeland became all the more vital as the Hindu majority made it increasingly difficult for the Muslims in India to live a free life according to the tenets of Islam."

More reports on page 6



Advani's makeover

Attempt to improve his image

The press on both sides of the western border are talking about the 'image makeover' being undertaken by the leader of the Opposition and president of the BJP, LK Advani. Apart from an exercise in confidence building between feuding neighbours, Advani's six-day trip is being seen as a way to shed his hawkish anti-Pakistan, and importantly, the stridently pro-Hindutva and anti-Muslim image which has stuck to him for the last two decades. But visiting the Faisal Mosque in Islamabad will not wash away the image of Advani presiding over the demolition of the 400-year-old Babari Masjid in Ayodhya in December 1992, etched firmly in many minds. No one can forget the backing he gave to his protegee Narendra Modi as thousands of Muslims were killed in Gujarat only two years ago. Remembering the shared history of India and Pakistan as he visited the ruins of Taxila is not enough. It will be hard.

Advani's trip should be viewed as an official visit by a leader of the Opposition to a foreign country, and never mind the sentiment of it being the land of his birth. His language and movements are certainly in line with diplomacy shown by a senior politician visiting Pakistan in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation. There is no question but that once Advani returns to Indian soil, he is unlikely to carry a change of heart with him or a change of politics. His commitment to Hindutva and the Ramjanambhoomi cause is steadfast. It is true that in the light of Atal Behari Vajpayee's decision not to fight the next elections, BJP's main prime ministerial candidate is Advani, and for him to be acceptable to all NDA allies he does need to soften his image. It is not enough to say that the Babari Masjid demolition was the saddest day in his life, or that Gujarat riots were an aberration to make people forget the past.

04 JUN 2005

THE STATESMAN

Advani clears air on Partition

RADHIKARAMASESHAN

Lahore, June 2: BJP chief L.K. Advani today said his party had accepted the emergence of India and Pakistan as two separate, sovereign and independent nations as an "unalterable reality of history".

Observers believe this is the second-most significant political statement from Advani during his Pakistan trip. The first was his description of December 6, 1992 — the day the Babri mosque was demolished in his presence — as the "saddest day of my life" at a news conference in Islamabad on May 31.

Addressing a function organised by the South Asian Free Media Association here this evening, Advani said he made this statement because "there are still some misconceptions and false propaganda about what the BJP thinks of Pakistan".

The "propaganda", he added, "has no legs to stand(on) now" because it was the BJP-led NDA government that kick-started the peace process and continued it for the six years it was in office.

"Even now when we are in the Opposition, we have been supporting it equally vigorously," he said.

Sources close to Advani said a section of the Pakistani establishment and intelligentsia believed that the BJP still opposed the two-nation theory, which was the basis of Pakistan's emergence as a nation-state.

The RSS's oft-repeated line of creating an "*akhand*

Bharat", which would include Pakistan and Bangladesh, reinforced this notion. As the home minister and deputy Prime Minister in the NDA government, Advani had warned Pakistan not to "overstep its limits" after the Pokhran blasts and later spoke of pre-emptive strikes on terrorist hideouts in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Today, he used the media forum to suggest a shift in his stand. "Both Indians and Pakistanis have to recognise and respect each other's desire for sovereignty, security, prosperity, unity and territorial integrity of their respective countries," Advani said.

"No solution to any of the outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, including the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, can work if it erodes the sovereignty, security, unity and territorial integrity of the two countries."

The BJP chief also made it clear that the Opposition in India will work in a "spirit of consensus" with the government for any mutually acceptable solution to pending issues.

The submission was considered significant as there was an apprehension in the ruling establishment in Pakistan that if the BJP-led Opposition refused to cooperate with the UPA government on policy matters, the peace process might not go forward.

On Kashmir, Advani said any eventual solution would have to be acceptable to India and Pakistan and to "all sections of the diverse communities that constitute the state".

02 JUN 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

2 f r B J r

Advani revives Atal proposal

SHEKHAR Iyer
Islamabad, June 1

BJP PRESIDENT L.K. Advani on Wednesday revived a proposal by former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee for joint commemoration of 150th anniversary of the First War of Independence (1857) by India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in 2007.

Advani said what unites the people of India and Pakistan is the common heritage of the freedom struggle. Hindu and Muslim soldiers had jointly revolted against the British across the sub-continent, serving the first severe jolt to the colonisers.

Advani's proposal came on a day when the local media highlighted a statement of sadness over the demolition of Babri Masjid in 1992

and denial of any role in a 1947 plot to kill Pakistan's founder Mohammed Ali Jinnah.

Advani, who is known for propagating the erstwhile Jan Sangh's pet theory of a confederation, made the suggestion to Pakistan foreign minister Khurshid Mahmood Kasuri at a dinner.

He also expressed the desire to visit the Lahore jail where legendary freedom fighters — Bhagat Singh, Raj Guru and Sukh Dev — were hanged to death. Pakistan officials said they would see if his request could be accommodated during his stay in Lahore.

Vajpayee had made the proposal

Urges joint fete on the 1857 war

to observe the 150 years of the 1857 revolt at Saarc summit in January 2004, a turning point in Indo-Pak ties following the joint statement that saw Pakistan agreeing for the first time to check anti-India terrorist groups operating from Pakistan.

Advani said he got the idea to revive Vajpayee's proposal when Kasuri described to him how both his grandfather, father and uncle were dedicated freedom fighters in undivided India. They had also made sacrifices for their participation in the movement against the British.

"In some way, what unites the people of India and Pakistan is the common heritage of the freedom stru-

ggle," he said. "I know many people who were born in this part of undivided India, and whose families made untold sacrifices in the cause against the British."

Advani met Pakistan National Assembly Speaker Chaudhary Amir Hussain and Opposition leader and Jammait-ul-Islam leader Maulana Fazal-ur-Rehman on Wednesday.

He suggested formation of Friendship Association of Parliamentarians of India and Pakistan. Speaker Hussain told Advani that "the breakthrough in our ties came when Vajpayee came to Islamabad last year. All of us here know your support to the peace process when you were in government, and also know. The credit, both directly and indi-

rectly, goes to you."

CBI must challenge Bofors decision: BJP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

DESCRIBING the Delhi High Court's decision to quash all proceedings against the Hindujas in the Bofors case as a "glaring example of a judicial burial", BJP general secretary Arun Jaitley today demanded that the CBI challenge the decision and not give in to "political pressure".

Speaking at length on the Bofors case that has seen several twists and turns over the past 18 years, Jaitley denied that not much progress had been registered in the case even when the NDA was in power.

On the contrary, Jaitley said, "Except for two periods, namely, 1989-90 and 1998-2004, when the CBI was given a free hand to investigate and prosecute the accused, governments during the remaining

FIR was not registered till the Congress was ousted from power in 1989; in 1993, then external affairs minister Madhavrao Solanki gave a note to the Swiss authorities hinting that the case be closed; and a

quashed charges of criminal conspiracy against public servants in the case.

Jaitley "categorically rejected" the charge that the case had made little headway despite the NDA being in power for six years and asserted that it was under the NDA that charges were framed, witnesses cross-examined and an earlier high court order challenged.

Admitting that both "judicial fatigue" and "media fatigue" was partially responsible for the waning interest in Bofors, Jaitley indicated that he, at least, would continue to focus on it — an interest dating back to the time he was additional solicitor general in the V.P. Singh government.

Jaitley denies not much progress made in the case during NDA rule

period have actively attempted to help the accused. There have been at least five judicial pronouncements which have enabled the scuttling of the case."

According to Jaitley, examples of how successive Congress governments put pressure on the CBI to sabotage the case included the fact that an

Cong spares none in seeking apology

NEW DELHI: A day after the Delhi High Court's verdict in the Bofors case, the Congress on Wednesday spared none in demanding an apology from those responsible for whipping up the gun scandal against former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi, including some of its allies in the UPA.

Congress spokesperson Jayanti Natarajan said the party demands an "apology to the nation from people left with any shred of morality and decency for launching the unsubstantiated and baseless campaign" against Rajiv Gandhi.

Asked whether this list included former prime minister V.P. Singh and former Opposition leaders who are now part of the UPA coalition, she said, "We are leaving none. This includes a wide spectrum."

Natarajan alleged that Opposition leaders "have deliberately misled an entire nation... They raked up a campaign against Rajiv Gandhi without a scrap of evidence. Besides, they spent Rs 250 crore to investigate unsubstantiated and baseless charges."

—ENS

02 1 1 1 1

INDIAN EXPRESS

Vajpayee throws his weight behind Modi

Bhuntar (Kullu): Firmly backing Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi, former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Friday gave a veiled warning to the Centre against any move to dislodge his government, saying public opinion was with him.

"Those who had failed to defeat Modi through democratic means were trying tac-

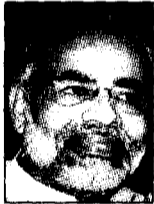
tics like appointing a committee to prove the state government's role in the post-Godhra riots,"

Vajpayee told reporters on arrival here near Kullu for his annual sojourn. He said those who were trying to dislodge Modi "through undemocratic means" should know that public opinion was with him.

Vajpayee's remarks assumes significance in the wake of the Centre appointing a group of ministers to look into the charges levelled by senior Gujarat police official R Sreekumar against Modi with regard to the handling of post-Godhra riots.

During his sojourn in Manali last year, Vajpayee created a flutter within BJP circles by attributing the defeat of the BJP-led NDA in the Lok Sabha elections to some extent to the continuation of Modi as Gujarat chief minister.

A statement by the then party chief M Venkaiah Naidu that BJP had won the assembly polls in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan after the Gujarat riots further added fuel to the controversy which died down soon with Vajpayee retracting his statement and the party standing like a rock behind Modi. PTI



28 MAY 2005

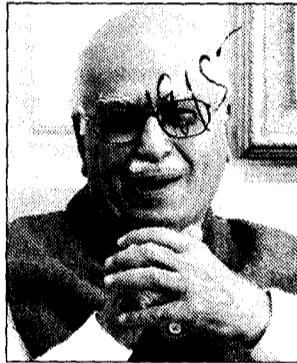
THE TIMES OF INDIA

Left Is Not Right For Growth, ^{J.P.P.} Advani Tells UPA ^{B.S.P.}

New Delhi
18 MAY

SEEKING to drive a wedge in UPA near the completion of its one-year rule, BJP president L. K. Advani on Wednesday cautioned Prime Minister Manmohan Singh that his "dependence" on communist support would prove to be a "liability" in achieving double-digit growth, unless the latter were marginalised. "In national interest, I wish to caution Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh that your dependence on communist support will prove to be a liability for anything good you may wish to do," Mr Advani said, addressing CII's annual session and national conference here.

He stated that the first thing India must do to achieve a "double-



digit inclusive growth" was to "marginalise the ideological and political influence of the communists, for their policies will neither deliver inclusive growth nor double-digit growth". Expressing BJP's readiness to support the government on any reform vital for India's economic progress, he commented: "NDA is being constantly run down...What I am particularly concerned about is that political illiberalism is now leading the government to a policy of vindictiveness".

Launching a blistering attack on the Left, he said: "It is indeed ironic that those whose dogmatic policies are a prescription for increasing poverty, perpetuating backwardness and promoting corruption and bureaucratism should be talking about 'inclusive growth'. Contrary to the propaganda of our communists here, the Soviet Union never achieved high growth nor banished want".

Giving "credit" to Dr Singh for

... blames slow growth on Nehru ^{19/5}

Our Political Bureau

NEW DELHI 18 MAY

BJP president L.K. Advani, on Wednesday, took exception to the attempts to equate the low-rate regimes of the first three decades of independent India with a "Hindu rate," claiming that it was Jawaharlal Nehru's policies and the socialist legacy which caused a drag on the economy during that period.

Mr Advani, at the same time sought to praise the Vajpayee government, of which he was a part, for taking the economy out of the traditional mould, and bringing it into the high growth rate bracket. "By the same logic, it should be possible to call the 6-7% GDP growth rate that India has now begun to achieve also as the new Hindu rate of growth," he argued.

He added: "Is it anybody's contention that some non-Hindu entity was responsible for achieving this higher rate of growth after the 1990s? After all, it is under the government led by the BJP, which is usually described as the 'Hindu nationalist party,' that we Indians recently demonstrated that we can achieve an 8% GDP growth rate."

Mr Advani proceeded to tell the corporate bigwigs assembled at the CII meet that he was "raising these questions because, consciously or subconsciously, the word 'Hindu' is sought to be associated with low achievement." "I am proud to be a Hindu and I am proud to be an Indian. And as Mahatma Gandhi said, my pride in India stems principally from my pride in Hinduism, which teaches me to respect all faiths," Mr Advani said.

initiating India's economic "transformation" in 1990s, Mr Advani maintained that the country could break the chains of under-achievement. —PTI

19 MAY 2005

The Economic Times

BJP adamant despite Speaker's letter

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI May 3. — Having exhausted the political mileage from its boycott and under pressure from its allies to end its protest action, the Speaker's letter to Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee today came as a boon to the BJP, anxiously looking for a face-saver to return to Parliament.

Mr Somnath Chatterjee urged Mr Vajpayee to return to Parliament with the other NDA partners, calling off their boycott of House proceedings.

The letter is being seen as the

last straw for the NDA allies to clutch on to and float home to a respectable position.

BJP could not but resign itself to the UPA government's continued indifference to its demand for the resignation of Mr Lalu Prasad. What the BJP had demanded could never be accepted. The letter has now provided them with a way out.

The BJP is increasingly coming under pressure from the TDP and the Biju Janata Dal (BJD) to end the boycott and take part in the day-to-day business of Parliament.

Their leaders had told the BJP

in their constituencies, as they wanted their members to attend the session to highlight issues concerning them.

The NDA today announced that it would continue with its boycott of Parliament. The BJP indicated that the situation could be defused only after the Prime Minister's intervention. However Dr Manmohan Singh's media advisor Mr Sanjaya Baru said: "The Prime Minister cannot go on repeating the same appeal to the BJP-led opposition asking them to come back to Parliament."

Another report on page 4



Mr Vajpayee at an NDA meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

leadership that they are finding it difficult to face their supporters

Lalu should resign: Vajpayee

I will, if there is a law to that effect, says Railway Minister

New Delhi Bureau

NEW DELHI: Business in both Houses of Parliament was disrupted for the second day in a row on Tuesday over the Railway Minister, Lalu Prasad, with the Opposition demanding that he withdraw his "allegations" against Sangh Parivar organisations in his *suo motu* statement in Parliament on the train accident near Vadodara. Leading the Opposition charge was the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who also wanted Mr. Prasad to take moral responsibility for the accident and resign from the Union Cabinet.

The demand for withdrawing portions in the statement charging the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad with attacking him during his visit to the accident site was rejected by Mr. Prasad in both Houses. As for his resignation, Mr. Prasad told the Rajya Sabha he would be willing to resign if there was a law to this effect. Also, he sought to know why Mr. Vajpayee had not dismissed the Modi Government after the Gujarat carnage.

Minister's counter

Referring to the Opposition demand for his resignation after charges were framed against him in a fodder scam case, Mr. Prasad in the Rajya Sabha quoted Mr. Vajpayee's statement of December 7, 1999, while defend-

ing continuation of L.K. Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti as Central Ministers after charge sheets were filed against them in the Babri Masjid demolition case on the ground that filing of charge sheets was not sufficient reason for removal of the Ministers.

This was reiterated by the Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs, Suresh Pachauri, in the Rajya Sabha, during the course of the day. Also, reacting to the Leader of the Opposition, Jaswant Singh's observations against Mr. Prasad, he said, instead of targeting the Railway Minister, the House should have debated the responsibility of State Governments in providing security to visiting Union Ministers.

While the Lok Sabha was ad-

joined five times without conducting any business except the tabling of papers, the Rajya Sabha saw a sharp deterioration in relations between the ruling and opposition benches to the extent that some members of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) had to be physically restrained during Question Hour. However, business was conducted in the afternoon in the Upper House after the Opposition staged a walkout.

Though Opposition members referred to the fodder scam in their slogans against Mr. Prasad in the Lok Sabha, the former Prime Minister confined himself to the accident and the related *suo motu* statement while addressing the House amid interruptions. Intervening after the

first adjournment, Mr. Vajpayee — referring to his own association with the RSS — said the Railway Minister should have been more responsible while preparing the statement instead of making such accusations. Demanding Mr. Prasad's resignation on moral grounds, Mr. Vajpayee said: "If this House has to run, then a minister like Lalu Prasad should not be there."

Echoing Mr. Vajpayee's views in the post-lunch session, the Leader of the Opposition, L.K. Advani, said Bihar had been freed of a "leader who had destroyed it for 15 years." This plunged the House into further chaos with RJD members protesting the statement as the BJP again laid a siege of the well of the House resulting in three successive adjournments.

'Centre, CBI must monitor Bihar situation'

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party on Tuesday demanded that the Centre and the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) keep a tab on attempts at "horse-trading" of MLAs being allegedly made in Bihar to cobble together a majority to form a government.

Addressing the press here,

the BJP Parliamentary Party spokesman, V.K. Malhotra, said that about 110 legislators were with the Janata Dal (United) leader, Nitish Kumar. He expressed apprehension that the RJD chief, Lalu Prasad, could trigger a "horse-trading" of MLAs. "There is an urgent need not only for the Centre to remain vigilant but also for agencies such as the CBI to keep a

watch on the situation in Bihar. The RJD, the Congress and the LJP might prevent Mr. Nitish Kumar [from] forming a government." Referring to the raid on the house of the RJD MP, Mohammad Shahabuddin, at Pratapur in Siwan district and the seizure of arms and ammunition, Mr. Malhotra said Mr. Shahabuddin was "Mr. Prasad's trusted lieutenant."

লালুর উপর চাপ বাড়ছেই, সম্মুখসমরে নামলেন অটল

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৬ এপ্রিল: রেলমন্ত্রী লালুপ্রসাদকে কোণঠাসা করতে দীর্ঘদিন পরে সম্মুখসমরে নামলেন অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী।

লালুকে আক্রমণ করে ইউ পি এ সরকারকে অস্থিতিতে ফেলার জন্য রাজনৈতিক চাপটা ক্রমশ বাড়িছিল বিরোধীরা। আর আজ এন ডি এ নেতৃত্ব সর্বাঙ্গিকভাবে বাঁপিয়ে পড়ল লালু-বধ যজ্ঞে। সংসদের বাইরে ও ভিতরে সেই যজ্ঞে নিজস্ব ঢঙে ঘূতাহুতি দিয়ে আক্রমণকে আরও ধারালো করলেন প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী। তাঁর অভিযোগ, শুধু বিরোধী রাজনৈতিক দলগুলিকেই নয়, সঙ্ঘ-পরিবারেরও মর্যাদাহানি করেছেন লালু।

তবে, পশুখাদ্য কেলেকারি ও গুজরাত-কাণ্ডে জেরবার রেলমন্ত্রীও কিছু ছেড়ে কথা বলেননি। কংগ্রেস শীর্ষ মন্ত্রী ও বামদলের পাশে নিয়ে তিনিও পাল্টা বিধেছেন বাজপেয়ী-সহ এন ডি এ-কে। সরকারের তরফ থেকেও জানানো হয়েছে, লালুর পদত্যাগের প্রশ্ন উঠছে না। দিনভর এই চাপানউতোরের মধ্যে লালুর ইস্তফার দাবি নিয়ে সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে লড়াইয়ের ডাক দিয়েছে বি জে পি-সহ বিরোধীরা। আজও গতকালের মতোই বারে বারে মূলতুবি হয়ে গিয়েছে সংসদের দু'টি কক্ষই। আগামী তিন দিন সংসদের দু'টি কক্ষই বয়কটের সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে ফেলেছে এন ডি এ। আজ রাজ্যসভা এমনিই উত্তপ্ত হয়ে ওঠে যে বি জে পি-র এক মারমুখী সাংসদ দৌড়ে যান ট্রেজারি বেঞ্চের দিকে। পরিস্থিতি প্রায় খণ্ডযুদ্ধের আকার নিলে কোনও মতে তা নিয়ন্ত্রণ করা হয়।



রাজ্যসভার খণ্ডযুদ্ধ না হয় সামলানো গিয়েছে, কিন্তু লোকসভার বাগযুদ্ধ? উত্তরোত্তর চড়েছে—

অটলবিহারী: লালুপ্রসাদ এই সদনের সম্মানিত সদস্য। তিনি উঁচু পদে রয়েছেন। কিন্তু যে ভাষা তিনি ব্যবহার করেন, তা শিশুরাই কেবল শোনে! বড়দের উপর তার কোনও প্রভাবই পড়ে না!....লালু কী শব্দ বলছেন সেদিকে নজর দেন না। পরে সেই নিয়ে সমস্যা হয়। সদনের কাজ ঠিকমতো করতে হলে লালুর মতো মন্ত্রী থাকা অনুচিত। (আর জে ডি শিবির থেকে প্রবল চিৎকার)

লালুপ্রসাদ: বাজপেয়ী বারবার বলেছেন যে তিনি আর এস এস-এর। তাই তাঁর আহত হওয়ার কারণ আমি বুঝতে পারি! উনি ভাল ভাল কাজ করতে চান। কিন্তু তাঁকে তা করতে দেওয়া হয় না! এই তো সেদিন সাক্ষাৎকারেই তিনি বললেন....(চিৎকারে কথা শেষ করতে পারলেন না)।বি জে পি যখনই সঙ্ঘটে পড়ে বাজপেয়ীকে নিয়ে আসে। (আবার চিৎকার)।.... সত্যকে কখনওই ঢাকা দেওয়া যায় না। কাগজের ফুলে কি সৌরভ মেলে?

আজ সকালে বি জে পি-র সংসদীয় দলের বৈঠকেই স্থির হয়ে যায় লালুর ইস্তফার দাবিতে বাঁপানো হবে। গতকাল রেলমন্ত্রীর বিবৃতি নিয়ে বৈঠকে প্রবল ক্ষোভ প্রকাশ করা হয়।

সকালেই বাজপেয়ী সাংবাদিকদের বলেন, “সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের বিরুদ্ধে লালুপ্রসাদের বিবৃতি অত্যন্ত আপত্তিজনক। সংসদের কার্যবিবরণীর থেকে এই অংশ মুছে দেওয়া হোক। অভিযোগগুলি করা হয়েছে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের মর্যাদা হানি করার জন্য। এগুলি পক্ষপাতদুষ্ট।” তাঁর কথায়, “সংসদে যা হচ্ছে তা সঠিক নয়। এ রকম চলতে পারে না। শাসক ও বিরোধী দু'পক্ষেরই সংসদীয় গণতন্ত্রের প্রতি সামান্য সম্মান দেখানো কর্তব্য।” বি জে পি সভাপতি লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীর বক্তব্য, “এই সরকার ক্ষমতায় আসার পর থেকেই বিরোধীদের সঙ্গে শত্রুর মতো আচরণ করছে। তাদের একমাত্র কাজ আমাদের অসম্মান করা।”

আজ সংসদ শুরু হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গে সরব হয় বিরোধী বেঞ্চ। হাজামায় অধিবেশন মূলতুবি হয়। দ্বিতীয়বার অধিবেশন বসার পর বাজপেয়ী দাঁড়িয়ে উঠে বলেন, “বিভিন্ন সংগঠনের নাম নেওয়া হচ্ছে। প্রাণহানি ঘটানোর মতো সাংজ্ঞাতিক অভিযোগ করা হচ্ছে। এতবড় দুর্ঘটনা ঘটল। রেলমন্ত্রীর কি দায় নেই নৈতিক কর্তব্যের খাতিরে পদত্যাগ করার?” বাজপেয়ী বলেন, তাঁদের দলের কোনও মন্ত্রীর ক্ষেত্রে নৈতিকতার সঙ্কট যখনই দেখা দিয়েছে, দলের পক্ষ



থেকে তাঁর ইস্তফা নেওয়া হয়েছে। গতকাল কেন্দ্রীয় স্বরাষ্ট্রমন্ত্রীর বিবৃতি দেওয়ার কথা ছিল। কিন্তু শেষ পর্যন্ত তিনি তা দেননি। লালুই বিবৃতি দিয়েছেন বিকালে। বাজপেয়ী বিষয়টিকে কটাক্ষ করে বলেন, “উনি অনৈতিক কাজ এড়াতে চেয়েছেন, তাই কাল কোনও বিবৃতি দেননি।” বি

জে পি-সহ এন ডি এ সাংসদেরা তিনটি দাবিতে মুখর হন। এক, গতকালের বিবৃতি তুলে নিতে হবে। দুই, রেল দুর্ঘটনার দায়িত্ব মন্ত্রককে নিতে হবে। তিন, চার্জ গঠনের ঘটনার পর লালুকে অবিলম্বে পদত্যাগ করতে হবে।

এই ত্রিমুখী আক্রমণেও লালু অবশ্য যুদ্ধং দেহি মনোভাবে অটল ছিলেন। সরকারও তাঁর পাশেই রয়েছে। প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় আজ সাফ জানিয়ে দেন, লালুর পদত্যাগের প্রশ্ন নেই। বাজপেয়ীর দাবি সম্পর্কে প্রশ্ন করা হলে প্রণববাবু বলেন, “১৯৯৯ সালের ৭ ডিসেম্বর এই বাজপেয়ীই লোকসভায় বলেছিলেন, পুলিশ বা আদালত চার্জ গঠন করলে আইন অথবা সংবিধান অনুসারে সংশ্লিষ্ট মন্ত্রী পদত্যাগ করতে বাধ্য নয়। কেউ মন্ত্রিসভায় থাকবেন কি না তার চূড়ান্ত নির্ধারক প্রধানমন্ত্রী।” তাঁর ব্যঙ্গোক্তি, “নৈতিকতার জন্য যদি পদত্যাগ করতে হয়, তা হলে তো বছরে দু'তিনটি করে রেলমন্ত্রী প্রয়োজন!”

লালুও উচ্চকণ্ঠে জানিয়েছেন, পদত্যাগের প্রশ্ন ওঠে না। রাজ্যসভায় তিনি এক পা এগিয়ে বলেছেন, “গুজরাতে দাঙ্গার সময় হাজারো মানুষ মারা গিয়েছিলেন, কিন্তু বাজপেয়ী মোদীকে সরাননি। আজ এঁরাই আমাকে নৈতিকতার জ্ঞান দিতে আসছেন।”

● চাপক্য বাজপেয়ীর নয়! কৌশল...পৃঃ ৪

BJP beams Laloo's 'lies'; panel to probe case

9 p.p. 9.6.3 25/4

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 24

DEMANDING Railway Minister Laloo Prasad Yadav's ouster, BJP today accused him of misleading the Prime Minister and the country into believing that he was attacked on his visit to Gujarat by Bajranj Dal and VHP activists.

The party's belligerent stance comes in the wake of the Gujarat government's decision to order a judicial probe into the attack on Laloo. Justice N.B. Patel, a retired judge of the Gujarat High Court, will conduct the inquiry into the attack in Vadodara on Thursday, when Laloo had gone to meet the victims of the Sabarmati Express train mishap. The

one-man panel will also probe if there was any security lapse during the entire episode, officials said, and will give its report in three months.

Reacting to the decision, Laloo said it was a tacit admission of Chief Minister Narendra Modi's guilt in a desperate attempt to "hush up his misdeeds". But clearly the BJP, armed with video clippings to support their theory, was determined to come out in its defence of Modi. Party spokesperson Arun Jaitley said the footage showed that the car Laloo was travelling in was not damaged. "The rear windscreen of the minister's car was intact," he said.

The BJP had collected the footage from five cameras stationed at the Vadodara hospital.

Gujarat Home Minister Amit

Jaitley shows video clippings of Laloo's visit on Sunday. Ravi Bhatia



Shah, who was also present at the press conference, said the enquiry committee constituted to look into the alleged attack on Laloo was asked to give its report within 90 days. CDs of the Railway Minister's visit to the hospital were also circulated to the electronic media.

Centre playing vindictive politics, says Advani

■ NEW DELHI: Criticising the UPA for targeting former Defence minister George Fernandes, BJP chief L.K. Advani on Sunday accused the Centre of playing vindictive politics. He said: "There are some people in the new Government who feel their duty is not complete if they have not harassed ministers in the previous government. This politics of revenge will harm polity and embitter public life."

—PTI

"big lie and a big plot", Jaitley added that even the PM was misguided and he held a meeting of the CCTPA late in the night on the matter. He said the clippings showed that on Laloo's arrival at the hospital, slogans were raised in his favour and against him. Just as there were slogans for and against the Gujarat CM.

Meanwhile, Justice Patel is yet to receive an appointment letter and the terms of reference. "I have not yet received my appointment letter and would like to comment only after receiving the terms of reference," he said.

The Railway Police at Vadodara has already registered cases against some BJP workers for creating mischief at the hospital following Laloo's allegations.

Asked whether this would be an issue in Parliament, Jaitley said: "Parliament will take note of it."

Describing Laloo's claim as a

Party too big to be pushed by parent

The bark is worse than the bite. In the tug of war between the leaders of the RSS and the BJP, the latter is now proving more assertive.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee has never been one to forgive direct attacks easily. Vajpayee's retort to K.S. Sudarshan's call for a new leadership was pithy. Since he held no posts, he had no idea what more was required of him.

After firing a salvo at the senior leadership of the BJP, the parent organisation has taken a big step backward. Too much is at stake to risk a larger confrontation. In fact, even in his initial interview, the RSS supremo was careful to claim that the two organisations partake of a "community of ideas". Each charts its own course.

In this, he protests too much. Most of the senior leaders of the party have either been ideologues (*pracharaks*) of the Sangh or have cut their political teeth in the local branch or *shakha*. This includes both Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani. Others like Arun Jaitley have held senior posts in the student front before being drafted into the party.

None of them can take the word of the *sarsanghchalak* lightly. The word itself means supreme leader. It can also mean the one who directs the

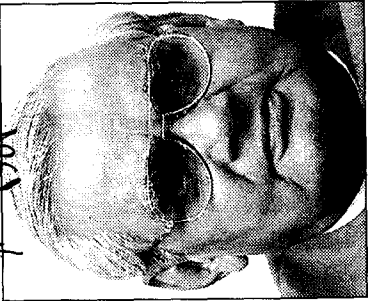
show. Yet much has changed in the quarter century of the party's existence.

When it is down and out, the Sangh is more, rather than less, assertive. In the 1984 general elections, the RSS, disappointed by what it saw as a weak-kneed endorsement of Hindutva, leaned towards the Congress. Nanaji Deshmukh, Vajpayee's old bete noire, had actually called for "cooperation and sympathy" for Rajiv Gandhi.

Soon after, there was a course correction. Advani replaced Vajpayee and the Ram temple issue took the place of more minimalist agendas. The party and the movement won new adherents. Saffron was more than the main colour of the party flag.

Yet, the six-year interregnum of the Vajpayee regime saw the Sangh keep in check even as it won significant government patronage. The compulsions of coalition politics prevented any major consolidation of gains for the Ram temple project. The sensibilities of allies also made it impossible for taking up issues like "Bangladeshi influx".

Sudarshan also faced a piquant situation due to his own equation with the two men who have mostly dominated the BJP. When he was still a middle-level functionary, they were already in the ascendant



Sudarshan (left), Atal: Sparring partners

in the old Bharatiya Jana Sangh since the late 1960s. There is no way he will be regarded in quite the same way as the late Balasaheb Deoras was.

The BJP also underwent

Sudarshan has always had more pronounced views on issues of economic policy and technology than his predecessors. His favourite economist,

Bharat Jhunjunwala, was

THE BIG PICTURE MAHESH RANGARAJAN

given a short shrift by two successive finance ministers. Economics trumped ideology.

None of this indicates a major rift of ideological moorings. But it does show how the equation of party and parent are in a state of flux. The jostling for influence so well-known in other parties has always existed here. But it has never been so much out in the open. Not in a long time.

What makes matters worse is that here is a vacuum below the top in each organisation. Most of the second line of the party at the national level consists of leaders who have not won a Lok Sabha seat in the last five years. To this list of Sushma Swaraj or Pramod Mahajan may be added others like the high-profile Arun Jaitley who has never contested a popular election.

The two state-level leaders, Uma Bharti and Narendra Modi, lack wider acceptability even in the party echelons due to their style of functioning. Each may evoke other more intractable problems if the party is to appeal to its allies.

Nor have any of the campaign issues of the last 11 months really gathered force. Govindacharya had hoped to make a comeback on the former issue. Sonia sabotaged it by declining leadership of the government. Neither Veer Savarkar nor Uma Bharti's arrest galvanised supporters, let alone the masses.

The Sangh's own problems are no less acute. There is a dearth of leadership in the second rung. Mohan Das Bhagwat, now the general secretary, has to travel to become the next *sarsanghchalak*.

Lower down the scale, the falling attendance in the *shakhas* is worrisome.

The one unifying factor in

the Sangh is the absence of enthusiasm for the party. Make no mistake. It is not ideological watering down that is the real failing. It is the loss of power and the erosion of support. When in doubt and decline, the parent organisation has always in the past turned back to its taproot.

That is what it wants to do today. It also seeks a more pliant leadership that will do its bidding. Advani has a hard enough time keeping the morale of his legislators up. He now has to contend with a steady attempt to undermine his own word. In this, if nothing else he can and will get support from his old ally, Vajpayee.

The last word has not been said in the controversy. The RSS supremo has bitten off more than he can chew. The party, even when out of power is now too large an entity for its top leaders to be harangued in public.

The larger issues cannot be addressed till the new lineup emerges. A new order cannot congeal as long as the old one is in place. And no one holding office is in a tearing hurry to move on. Sudarshan may have the right prognosis but he lacks the ability to enforce his will.

The new tug of war is far from over. The civil wars of the saffron kind have just begun to unfold.

বাড়িটা ভেঙে পড়ছে

ভূমিকম্প নয়। হঠাৎই ভেঙে পড়ার নাটকীয় ছবি নেই। কিন্তু বাড়িটা ভেঙে পড়ছে। আবার তোলার সম্ভাবনাও প্রায় নিশ্চিহ্ন হয়ে যাচ্ছে। ইউ পি এ সরকার যে খুব ভাল চলছে বা চালাচ্ছে, তা নয়। কিন্তু বি জে পি-র অবস্থা এতই শোচনীয় যে, বিশেষ উদ্দেশ্যে নেই কংগ্রেস। বামপন্থীদের চাপ ও শরিকদের আবাদার নিয়ে বরং বেশি চিন্তিত কংগ্রেস নেতারা।

কী হচ্ছে, সবাই দেখছি, শুনি। পর্যুদস্ত দলটাকে আবার চাঙ্গা করার জন্য লালকৃষ্ণ আদবানির শক্ত হাতে দলের দায়িত্ব তুলে দেওয়া হল। কিন্তু, এক, পরবর্তী প্রজন্মের নেতা-নেত্রীদের ঝগড়াঝাটি কমল না, প্রায় প্রকাশ্যেই চলতে থাকল। দুই, লোকসভার বিরোধী দলনেতা ও বি জে পি সভাপতি— দুটি পদেই আদবানি। মন থেকে মেনে নিতে পারছেন না বাজপেয়ী। নিজের উপদল ধরে রাখলেন, আদবানির হেনস্থায় খুশি থাকলেন। তিন, আর এস এস। বি জে পি-র অভিজ্ঞাবক, পিতৃতুল্য! কংগ্রেস বা কমিউনিস্ট পার্টি বা দেশের কোনও দলকেই এই খবরদারি মেনে চলতে হয় না।

বাজপেয়ীর চেয়ে আদবানি অনেক বেশি গ্রহণযোগ্য রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সম্বন্ধে কাছে, কিন্তু তিনিও তো সরকারের থাকার এবং ফেরার ইচ্ছার সূত্রে অত কাছে নেই। অশোক সিম্বল, গিরিরাজ কিশোর, প্রবীণ ভোগাড়িয়ারা বাজপেয়ীর সঙ্গে আদবানিকেও ইতস্তত আক্রমণ করে যাচ্ছিলেন। কিন্তু এবার পোখরান বাধালেন স্বয়ং সুদর্শন, আর এস এস-এর সর্বোচ্চ নেতা। এই একটা বৃত্তান্তেই বি জে পি তথা সম্ব পরিবারের ভগ্নদশার ছবি পরিষ্কার ধরা আছে। এন ডি টিভিতে শেখর গুপ্তাকে হটিতে হটিতে বললেন সুদর্শন, বাজপেয়ী মোটেই সফল প্রধানমন্ত্রী নন।... এন ডি এ সরকার তেমন কিছু ভাল করেনি।... বন্ধু ব্রজেশ মিশ্র এবং পালিত জামাতা রঞ্জন ভট্টাচার্য সম্পর্কে সরাসরি বাজপেয়ীকে বলেও কোনও লাভ হয়নি।... অনেক বয়স হয়েছে, এবার বাজপেয়ী ও আদবানি— দুজনেরই সরে যাওয়া উচিত, নেতৃত্বে আসা উচিত পরের প্রজন্মের নেতাদের। টালমাটাল বি জে পি পরের কয়েকদিনে যা করল, রাজনীতিতে তাকে বলা হয় 'ড্যামেজ কন্ট্রোল'। ব্যাপারটা ঘনঘন করতে হচ্ছে, কারণ, ঘনঘন 'ড্যামেজ' হচ্ছে। এর মধ্যেই সমস্যাকে সঙ্কটের দিকে নিয়ে গেলেন বাজপেয়ী। বললেন, 'খুব ভাল পরামর্শ, নতুনদের নেতৃত্বে আসা উচিত। তবে, আমি তো এখন কোনও পদে নেই। আদবানি কী করবেন তা উনিই বলতে পারবেন!' আদবানি তাঁর ঘনিষ্ঠ নেতাদের বললেন, বাজপেয়ীকেও ফোন করলেন, বেশ, আমি সরে যাচ্ছি। বাড়িটা একটু-একটু করে ভাঙছে, কিন্তু হঠাৎ একেবারে যাতে ধূলিসাৎ না হয়, দ্বিতীয় সারির নেতারা ব্যস্ত হলেন। দুটি বিবৃতি পাওয়া গেল। বাজপেয়ী: 'আদবানির বিরুদ্ধে কিছু বলিনি। আমি চাই, উনি দলের সভাপতি পদে থেকে কাজ করে চলুন।' বেশ। তা হলে আগের কথাগুলো বললেন কেন? আগেই এ কথা বললে তো বেশ হত, সবাই দেখতেন যে বাজপেয়ী বনাম আদবানির গল্পটা নেহাৎই গল্প। এবং সুদর্শন বললেন, তিনি বাজপেয়ী সরকারের নিন্দা করেননি, কংগ্রেস ছাড়া আর কোনও দল টানা পাঁচ বছর সরকার টিকিয়েই রাখতে পারেনি, তাঁর মন্তব্যকে বিকৃত করেছে সংবাদমাধ্যম। প্রথমে একটু খেয়াল করুন, সুদর্শন বাজপেয়ী সরকারের এই প্রশংসাই করছেন— সরকার টিকিয়ে রাখা! এবার গোটা সুদর্শনে আসুন। বি জে পি-র বড় সমস্যার জায়গাটায় আসুন। শৃঙ্খলার অভাব বললে কম বলা হয়, রীতিমতো প্রত্যক্ষ বিশৃঙ্খলা। কমিউনিস্ট পার্টিতে এখন আর সেই নীতিবোধ বা শৃঙ্খলা নেই, বলা হয়। ঠিকই বলা হয়। কিন্তু, কিছুটা আছে, যা সংগঠন ধরে রাখার পক্ষে যথেষ্ট। বি জে পি-র পিতৃতুল্য আর এস এস-ও কঠোর শৃঙ্খলার জন্য বিখ্যাত। ছিল। সম্ব পরিবারের প্রধান টেলিভিশনে প্রকাশ্যে বলছেন, বি জে পি-র দুই প্রধান নেতার নাম করে বলছেন, ওঁদের সরে যাওয়া উচিত। ঘরের মধ্যে পিতৃসুলভ শাসন বা উপদেশ বা পরামর্শ নয়, প্রকাশ্যে মন্তব্য। আর এস এস আর সেই শৃঙ্খলার জয়গায় নেই। সুদর্শনের ডিগবাজিটিও প্রাসঙ্গিক ও গুরুত্বপূর্ণ। বলছেন, তিনি বাজপেয়ীর বা তাঁর সরকারের বিরুদ্ধে কিছু বলেননি, সংবাদমাধ্যম বিকৃত করেছে। সবাই জানেন, দেখেছেন, শুনেছেন, শেখর গুপ্তাকে কথাগুলো গোটা গোটা করে বলেছেন সুদর্শন। একবার নয় বারবার দেখিয়েছেন এন ডি টিভি। নির্জলা মিথ্যে বলছেন সুদর্শন। সাধারণ নীতিবোধও বিসর্জিত। আরও আছে। ভাবুন, কেন মিথ্যাচার করতে হল সুদর্শনকে? কারণ, ক্ষমতা উনিও বা ওঁরাও চান। স্বাদ পেয়েছেন, ফিরে পেতে চান। রাজ্যে রাজ্যে বি জে পি-র অবস্থাটা দেখুন। সাহেব সিং বর্মার চাপে দিল্লি ছাড়তে হয়েছিল মদনলাল খুরানাকে। কল্যাণ সিং ও লালজি ট্যান্ডনের চাপে লক্ষ্মী ছেড়ে দিল্লিবাসী হতে হয়েছে রাজনাথ সিংকে। গুজরাটে নরেন্দ্র মোদিকে সরাসরি সক্রিয় কেউভাই প্যাটেলরা। উমা ভারতী সরাসরি দাবি জানাচ্ছেন, তাঁকে মধ্যপ্রদেশের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর পদ ফিরিয়ে দিতে হবে। (পশ্চিমবঙ্গে তপন বনাম তথাগতের গল্পে নাই বা গেলাম। এখানে ওঁদের কীইবা আছে!)

উমা ভারতী। একাই একশো। একশো উদাহরণ— শৃঙ্খলাভঙ্গের। বাবুলাল গৌড়কে সরিয়ে তাঁকে ফের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী করতে হবে, দাবি। দলের কেন্দ্রীয় নেতৃত্বের বৈঠকে টেলিভিশন ক্যামেরার সামনে সভাপতি আদবানিকে অমান্য ও অগ্রাহ্য করলেন। সম্প্রতি ঠাট্টা করে বললেন, তাঁরও কাজ নেই, বাজপেয়ীরও নেই, তা হলে দুজনে মিলে তপস্যায় বসাই ভাল! সভাপতি তাঁকে কাজ দেননি, দিচ্ছেন না, মনে হয় পঁয়তাল্লিশ বছর বয়সেই তাঁকে রিটায়ার করিয়ে দিয়েছেন আদবানি! চূড়ান্ত সাংগঠনিক অসভ্যতা সত্ত্বেও উমা আছেন বি জে পি-তে। রাখতে হচ্ছে। কারণ, দলে কোনও শৃঙ্খলাই নেই, আছে শুধু ক্ষমতায় ফেরার তাগিদ, যেকোনো উমাকেও একটু দরকার। একজন, অস্তত একজন এখনও দলীয় শৃঙ্খলার নিয়ম মেনে চলছেন। আদবানি। একটা খারাপ কাজ অবশ্য করেছেন। ভুলও বলা যায়। জাতীয় কর্মসমিতির বৈঠকে টেলিভিশন দলকে থাকতে দিয়েছিলেন কেন? দলের বৈঠকে উত্তপ্ত বাক্য বিনিময় হতেই পারে, তা জনসমক্ষে প্রচারিত হতে পারল কেন? কিন্তু, আদবানি এখনও এমন একটাও মন্তব্য করেননি, যাতে দলীয় শৃঙ্খলা চূর্ণ হয়। বাজপেয়ী কোনও শৃঙ্খলার ধার ধারেন না, গোলমাল পেকে যাওয়ার পর 'ড্যামেজ কন্ট্রোল' খাতে বড়জোর একটা গুকনো বিবৃতি বরাদ্দ করেন। উমা ভারতীর কথা ছেড়ে দিন, রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সম্বন্ধের প্রধান নিজে প্রকাশ্যে বি জে পি-র দুই শীর্ষ নেতাকে আক্রমণ করছেন। এঁদের পাশে আদবানি অবশ্যই অন্যরকম। তাঁকে তো ফের সভাপতি পদে আনা হয়েছিল এজন্যই যে, তিনি আবার একসূত্রে গাঁথবেন দলকে, দলাদলি বন্ধ করবেন, উগ্র হিন্দুত্বের সঙ্গে সংসদীয় নরম লাইনকে মিশিয়ে বি জে পি-কে ফেরাবেন। পরিস্থিতি এই যে, আদবানির দলীয় সভাপতিত্ব নিয়ে প্রশ্ন উঠছে। তুলছেন সুদর্শন এবং উল্লেখ দিচ্ছেন বাজপেয়ী। মদত আছে অবশ্যই মহাজনদেরও। যদি থাকেনও সভাপতির পদে, সেই সাংগঠনিক কর্তৃত্ব থাকবে? নেতৃত্বকে ছোট করে কোনও সংগঠন সংহত হয়? আদবানি হলেন, অথবা ছিলেন, বি জে পি-র শেষ সুযোগ। অবমূল্যায়িত আদবানি আর পেরে উঠবেন না, এমনিতেই বোধহয় পেরে উঠছিলেন না। তবু একটা ক্ষীণ সম্ভাবনা ছিল। গরম সুদর্শন ও নরম বাজপেয়ী মিলে সেই সম্ভাবনার গাছে গরম তেল ঢেলে দিয়েছেন। বলতে পারেন, ক্ষতি কী। এই সব ঘটতে থাকায় তো বেশ হল, বি জে পি চুরচুর করে ভেঙে পড়ল, পড়বে। ভারতবর্ষে সাম্প্রদায়িক শক্তির সরকার থাকার বা ফেরার পথ বন্ধ হবে। যদি কংগ্রেস আবার ভীষণ রকম কংগ্রেস হতে না চায়, যদি আচমকা উগ্র হিন্দুত্বের হাওয়া আবার ওঠার সুযোগ না পায়, বি জে পি তথা সাম্প্রদায়িক শক্তির সরকার আসবে না। ভালই তো। ঠিক, ভাল। দেশের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ মানুষদের এজন্য স্বস্তির নিঃশ্বাস ফেলাই উচিত। খুশি হওয়াই উচিত। বেশ, খুশি হওয়ার চেষ্টা করে নিই। তারপর, একটা ব্যথা খচখচ করতেই থাকে। অথবা, একটা দুশ্চিন্তা। এমনিতেই রাজনীতির ওপর বীভৎস সাধারণ মানুষ। যেন, রাজনীতি মানেই নীতির অভাব, শৃঙ্খলার অভাব। কমিউনিস্ট দলে নীতিবোধ ও শৃঙ্খলার অভাব দেখে আমরা দুঃখ পাই। উল্টো মেরুর, দক্ষিণপন্থী দলেও একধরনের নীতিবোধ ও শৃঙ্খলা ছিল। সেটা আরও দ্রুতবেগে অধঃপতিত। সাধারণ মানুষ অত বাম ডান বোঝেন না। ভারতবর্ষের মানুষ এই অধঃপতনে, শৃঙ্খলাহীনতায়, শুধু সম্বপরিবার নয়, রাজনীতিকেরই আরও ঘণা করতে পারেন। ভাল কথা নয়।

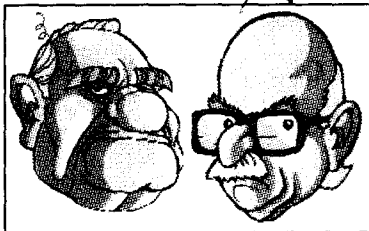
Vajpayee backtracks on Advani

^{2/11/05}
New Delhi: Making a U turn on his remarks that it was for L K Advani to decide on continuing as BJP president, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee today said his views have been misinterpreted and made it clear that he wants him to continue in the post.

As a controversy raged whether he had suggested that Advani should retire to make way for younger leaders to take over, Vajpayee, in a statement here, said, "A wrong meaning is being given to my replies to questions put by reporters yesterday. I have not said anything that could create a controversy over continuance of Advani as BJP President."

Advani, the former Prime Minister said, has been unanimously elected as president a few months ago and is heading the party successfully. "We all want him to steer the party in future too," the former Prime Minister said in his brief statement.

Breaking his silence on the suggestion of his bitter critic RSS chief K S Sudarshan that the party should be headed by the next generation leaders, Vajpayee



had on Tuesday said, "It is a good suggestion. I am not holding any post. I am not doing much work. Nowadays I don't have any work."

Sudarshan lauds Atal



Jaipur: RSS chief K S Sudarshan, whose remarks on leadership in BJP created a furore in the party and the Sangh Parivar, on Wednesday sought to assure former PM Vajpayee by lauding the performance of his government. It (the NDA government headed by Vajpayee) was the first non-congress government which successfully completed its term, he told reporters at a function in viratnagar, about 40 kms from here.

Sudarshan, who had in an interview to a TV channel last week said he would not rate Vajpayee as among the best prime ministers India had, said his remarks to the channel were "wrongly interpreted" and published. PTI

On whether Advani should step down, he had said, "It is for him and the party to decide."

Meanwhile, the party on Wednesday ruled out any change till Advani completed his full tenure. "There is no question of any change till Advani completes his full tenure. The party is not at all considering any change," senior party leader Jaswant Singh told reporters in New Delhi.

Asked about Vajpayee's remarks endorsing RSS chief K S Sudarshan's statement that both he and

Advani should give way to the second rung leadership, he said, "The party has totally and categorically reaffirmed its faith in the leadership of both Vajpayee and Advani."

On Vajpayee's remarks that the second generation is ready to take over, he said the very term "second line" has been coined by the media. "He (Vajpayee) is the most experienced and world renowned leader we have. There is no ambiguity. The party has reposed its total and exemplary faith in their leadership," the leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha said. PTI

I have no post to abdicate, says Vajpayee

*Q.P.P.
B.J.P.*

New Delhi: Reigniting the debate over the leadership of BJP, party stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Tuesday gave a surprise endorsement to the suggestion of his bitter critic RSS chief K S Sudarshan that the party should be headed by the next generation of leaders.

This was the former prime minister's first direct reaction to the RSS chief's attack on him and his family in a recent TV interview in which he had asked aging leaders Vajpayee and BJP President L K Advani to make way for the younger generation of leaders.



The statement had caused an uproar in the Sangh Parivar after which the BJP leadership had closed ranks behind the "big two" of the party.

The 80-year-old Vajpayee chose the first day of the resumption of the budget session of parliament to say that he agreed with Sudarshan as far as he was concerned but added that he did not hold any post in the hierarchy. As for Advani, he said it was for him and the party to decide.

"Achha paramarsh hai. Main kisi pad par nahin hoon. Main to pehle he kuch kam nahin kar raha hoon. Aaj kal mera pass koi kam nahin hain. (It is a good suggestion. I am not holding any post. I am not doing much work. Nowadays I don't have any work)," he said in reply to a question on Sudarshan's remarks after the BJP parliamentary party meeting here.

On whether Advani should step down, he said, *"Advaniji ke bare me, Advaniji faisla karenge, aur party faisla karegi* (about Advani it is for him and the party to decide)."

To a question on the second line of leadership in the party, Vajpayee said, "It is ready at any time to take over and it is necessary for them to take charge." Asked about Sudarshan's remarks that when he (Vajpayee) was the Prime Minister he did not do much on the Ayodhya issue, Vajpayee said, "It is his opinion. Everybody has the right to form an opinion."

On the second affidavit filed against former defence minister and NDA convenor George Fernandes in the supreme court, he said, "They (the government) have to take it back." ■

BJP's Gen Y ready to take over, says Atal

Endorses RSS chief's suggestion, but leaves decision to Advani

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 19

AFTER DAYS of silence on RSS chief K.S. Sudershan's call for him and BJP chief L.K. Advani to pass the baton to the party's younger, second-rung leadership, Atal Bihari Vajpayee today lobbed the whole question of leadership change up in the air — but taking care to disclaim any say in the matter.

The 80-year-old former Prime Minister said as far as his own retirement was concerned, he fully endorsed Sudershan's suggestion. But if Advani too should call it a day was up entirely to the party and Advani himself, he said.

He also explained that Sudershan's remarks couldn't apply to him since he held no party post. "Achha paramarsh hai. Main kisi pad par nahin hoon. Main to pehle he kuch kam nahin kar raha hoon. Aaj kal mera pass koye kam nahin hain. (It is a good suggestion. I am not holding any post. I am not doing much work. Nowadays I don't have any work)."

"The second line of leadership in the party is ready at anytime to take over," he added, implying that it was for Advani to decide on the timing. The subtext was: the issue couldn't be postponed on the plea that second-rung leaders were not prepared to take charge, BJP insiders said.

Advani refused to comment on Vajpayee's remark. But party leaders said it could step up the pressure on him and speed up the pace of events towards a leadership change.

Though Advani had sought to

WHO AFTER ADVANI?

 <p>MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI For: Close to Sangh Parivar, strong Hindutva image Against: Seen as old guard — tough, inflexible leader</p>	 <p>SUSHMA SWARAJ For: She is Sangh's one-time favourite and close to Advani Against: Has problems getting along with other leaders</p>	 <p>ARUN JAITLEY For: BJP's Mr Clean. Close to Advani, pro-reforms Against: Preoccupied with things like cricket, law</p>
 <p>PRAMOD MAHAJAN For: BJP's organisational man, was close to Vajpayee, Advani Against: Embroiled in too many controversies</p>	 <p>UMA BHARTI For: Hindutva icon with strong RSS links. Melodramatic skills Against: Failed to make it as administrator. Unpredictable</p>	 <p>NARENDRA MODI For: Styled himself as Hindutva icon and tough administrator Against: Ghosts of Gujarat riots won't leave him</p>

? DARK HORSE None of six mentioned here may make it. Chosen one will have to have Sangh's confidence, cadres respect and should be able to deliver in a state like UP

step down after Sudershan's remarks, he was advised by senior leaders to do nothing drastic.

But, given the BJP's dependence on the RSS, the party can't completely ignore Sudershan's views. Now, with Vajpayee openly supporting change, the issue

cannot be put off much further.

One view in the party is that Advani himself may take the initiative for a leadership change when the party's silver jubilee culminates in its *ma-haadhiveshan*, a three-day rally in Mumbai from December 28.

After all, Mumbai was the venue in 1995 when Advani named Vajpayee as the BJP's Prime Minister. In 1996, Vajpayee became PM in the 13-day government of the BJP, which had to bow out because it fell short of the required numbers.

THE POLITICS OF IDEOLOGY

No longer any family secrets

The Sangh's role in nation-building is a laudable one. Yet to build a globally competitive India, the RSS needs to relate to a wider world

S GURUMURTHY

IN a rare interview to the media last week, RSS chief K.S. Sudarshan put the BJP on the back foot. Sudarshan's remarks forced the RSS general secretary to step in to clarify that the RSS had high respect for Vajpayee and Advani and wanted the latter to remain as BJP president. The unusually open remarks of the RSS chief surprised even the detractors of BJP. But why did Sudarshan speak the way he did? It calls for some background.

It was the RSS-Advani combine which turned a BJP with just two seats in the Lok Sabha into a mighty political force. Advani's rath yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya proved a political coup. This put the BJP ahead of the Congress, but, still could not make the BJP rule the country on its own. So a time came when the BJP had to decide between waiting to get the numbers to rule on its own and diluting itself to secure allies to rule. It opted for the latter mode. Well ahead of the 1996 polls Advani, on his own initiative, declared that Vajpayee would be the BJP's prime ministerial candidate. This was calculated to leverage on the trans-RSS image of Vajpayee to secure trans-ideological allies. With Advani providing the ideological comfort to the RSS and Vajpayee providing assurance to the 'secular' allies, the BJP managed to add many unlikely allies including the DMK and the Trinamool Congress, which negated the RSS but accepted Vajpayee.

That is how the BJP remained in power for six years. Why does a Karunanidhi or Mamta reject the RSS but accept Vajpayee, an RSS

product? This needs some history. Pandit Nehru, the most popular leader after Gandhiji, had almost made it his personal agenda to finish off the RSS. He outlawed it and turned it into a political untouchable, though later he did partly make amends and invite the organisation to participate in the Republic Day parade in 1963. Later, however, Indira Gandhi unleashed a war on the RSS. From then on abusing the RSS became the political index of one's commitment to secularism and minorities. This is how minority-centric politics began demonising the RSS in the public domain. Yet, the organisation grew in strength every time the government banned it. Nevertheless, the wrong perceptions created about the RSS continued to affect its larger acceptability.

This is where the political work of RSS through the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, later the BJP did the churning for the Sangh. RSS's increasing strength manifested in the growth of the BJS/BJP which competitive politics could not ignore. A CPI had to partner the Jana Sangh in Bihar in 1960s. Along with the BJP the CPM had to support the VP Singh government in 1990 when the Ram temple movement was at its peak. Thus the BJS/BJP proved a rewarding investment for the Sangh.

But in 1998 a new situation emerged. It was the other way round, the BJP getting others' support to rule. That is their tacit acceptance of the RSS and soft landing of the RSS in national life. The only man who could achieve this for the RSS, and did it, was Vajpayee. He admitted many times he was a Swayamsevak at heart. But he was an admirer of Pandit Nehru too. He was comfortable

RSS chief Sudarshan: Too far too fast, Vajpayeeji

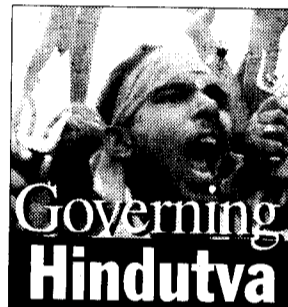


Vajpayee admitted many times, he was a swayamsevak at heart. But he was an admirer of Pandit Nehru too. He was comfortable with both, though others saw this as a contradiction in him. He understood that the reality of the RSS was different from the perceptions about it

with both, though others saw this as a contradiction in him. He understood that the reality of the RSS was different from the perceptions about it. So as a personal political alternative he carefully cultivated a trans-RSS image. This is what helped to lure allies to the BJP later. Just as the BJP needed Vajpayee to secure the allies, the allies also needed Vajpayee as an excuse to support the BJP.

But this also

forced the BJP to reformulate its agenda to suit his image - thus undermining the very political escalator of the BJP, the Ram temple movement. The complex nature of the coalition stalled the Ayodhya agenda, disappointing the RSS cadre. Added to that, the performance of some BJP ministers did not do RSS proud. The



Governing Hindutva

many of his candidates have won, he simply replied, all those who have won are my candidates.

Different party or ideology doesn't mean the two camps should become implacable enemies. Upadhyay and socialist leader Ram Manohar Lohia were good friends and together they issued a historic statement on *Akhand Bharat*. In 1962, Nehru's government had invited RSS swayamsevak to participate in the Republic Day parade in Delhi in full uniform and during 1965 war Shastri requested RSS cadres to help control traffic in Delhi, so policemen

forced the BJP to reformulate its agenda to suit his image - thus undermining the very political escalator of the BJP, the Ram temple movement. The complex nature of the coalition stalled the Ayodhya agenda, disappointing the RSS cadre. Added to that, the performance of some BJP ministers did not do RSS proud. The RSS, which was seeking an alternative political culture, found it difficult to digest this.

Kashmir. It's no secret that RSS leader Bhaurao Deoras and PV Narsimha Rao were firm friends. Congressmen like Sardar Patel, Shastri, Tandon, Subhash Bose have all been praised by members of the Hindutva family. Gandhi visited the Wardha *shakha*, Vinoba Bhave once said he is a 'non member' member of the RSS. JP took all support from RSS and even praised it. Vajpayee nominated a senior Congressman to head a high level committee for China. Are these bad examples? The hate election in the Indian polity is a major

Had the RSS expectations been more moderate, the disappointment levels would have been considerably less. Greater expectations only meant more disappointment. So the Vajpayee government lost many loyal friends. The BJP had to pay this political cost for leveraging on Vajpayee.

Sudarshan was giving open expression to the views of thousands of disappointed ideological loyalists. Here he was perhaps right. Yes, the Sangh family had also to pay its share of ideological cost to keep the BJP in power. But it also gained substantially in terms of popular acceptance transcending its ideological confines. It opened up for the RSS constituencies denied to it by the political establishment, for interaction with the world at large. Those ideologically different from the RSS also understood the necessity to work with it handle it, thus ending its isolator and increasing its general acceptability. For an organisation that aims to build the nation into a global power larger acceptability beyond its ideological fault lines is crucial to accomplish its mission. So the wider acceptability which the RSS gains through political process is thus critical for RSS agenda.

The RSS does not seem to be conscious of the vital contribution that the BJP makes here to the agenda. This is what Sudarshan's mark on BJP and Vajpayee firms. But more critically the incident also undermines the function of the RSS and allied organisations of RSS and parivar regard their large conglomerate of mass and organisations working for national resurgence subsuming narrow interests. In a country which has a historical impulse to disunite, the RSS parivar is a welcome contrast. In this sense, the Sangh work is building an alternative behavioural model which may prove a national asset in this competitive world.

Its work of character building and nation building should not be impeded. Will the fallout of Sudarshan's remarks be this realisation in the Sangh family? Will they introspect?

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Two houses, alike in dignity

There are numerous examples of co-operation between the Congress and Sangh Parivar. The anti-democratic hatred towards Hindutva is a creation of the Left

TARUN VIJAY

SHEKHAR GUPTA touched the right chord when he advocated a 'bus' between UPA and NDA, ('We need a UPA-NDA bus' IE April 9) and the idea should be discussed and taken forward. Presently only the animus seems to be ruling our minds. Most Indians would like to move ahead for a better future rather waste their time in watching useless googlies against each other for petty political gain. After all, for peace we always need to go an extra mile. The UPA government recently greeted with flowers a General who was singularly responsible for undoing a peace mission to Lahore and thrusting a war on our country. The same rulers treat their own political colleagues with such disdain and contempt that affidavits are changed and CBI is called to ensure they are targeted without mercy for a simple reason—a different ideology.

A shankaracharya is tortured in the name of law without any apparent reason or substantiable charge, other known and proven criminals are given a cabinet berth-lawfully. The obsession of the ruling clique to banish people of a particular ideology to some sort of *kala pani* is so intense that decency, grace and even formal courtesies have become taboo. Makes one wonder if democracy means Stalinism for the treasury benches, or creating Gulags for dissenters. New India can be run far more efficiently without such extreme postures.

When in Fifties, Pandit Nehru visited London, there was a black flag demonstration against him by Indians. This was severely criticised by none other than MS Golwalkar, the then *sarsangchalak* of the RSS saying it's an act of treachery as our

Prime Minister represents the whole of country. Did that spirit found any resonance?

A Congress is not hesitant to shake hands with a DMK, till recently the principal accused in their leader's brutal assassination, invite an Indian Muslim Leaguer to join the government, get support from Communists who have not balked at using abusive language against Gandhi, Nehru and Subhash Bose. But the same Congress does not think that those who stand for nationalism and who governed the nation for six years under the same constitution are even 'eligible' for a warm hello. Congress leaders boycotted the birthday of Shyama Prasad Mookerjee in parliament while LK Advani and Atal Bihari Vajpayee regularly paid rich tributes to Rajiv Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru on their anniversaries. Why shouldn't they be seen together in each other's *sukh-dukh*? Will the people stop voting them for this 'sin'? Why can't India's development be the final, basic meeting point and whoever gets the majority moves ahead with his ideas and idealism taking along those who couldn't make it in the electoral battle.

A good step by Manmohan Singh should be praised by Vajpayee and Advani's support should be taken seriously by Sonia Gandhi. Keep your other points of disagreement and criticism alive, but treat Indians as fellows till they are seen working against the nation. Reforming judicial and administrative procedures, halting the march of corruption, helping the economy to grow, the list of issues demanding a collective push is endless. And we do have some shining examples to take a cue from. When the leader of Jana Sangh, Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay was asked post elections how



The BJP and Congress have emerged as two distinct pan-Indian political poles. Together they can change the face of India dramatically and herald a new era of healthy democracy. The BJP's description of Manmohan Singh, as the weakest PM ever, didn't bring any gains. Conversely, to use cheap words against opponents and hurl slippers at portraits is not democracy

could be freed for defence duties.

During the 1971 Bangladesh war Jana Sangh leader Vajpayee praised Indira Gandhi and in Nineties PV Narsimha Rao sent a government delegation under him to represent India at a Geneva conclave on

contribution of the Communist movement that has always shared its dais and political space with a foreign organisation or ideology but has never been genuinely friendly with any Indian party.

It is an undeniable fact that the

Prasad Mookerjee in Srinagar jail), and Mamata Bannerjee, nothing is impossible for the sake of a greater good of our own people.

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Indo-Pak peace efforts have Vajpayee's blessings

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 18 APRIL

FORMER Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Monday took the Indo-Pak peace process outside the terrain of political contest by backing the efforts of the Manmohan Singh government. After a meeting with Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf, where the latter paid handsome tributes to the initiatives of the previous NDA government, Mr Vajpayee said the two countries should consolidate the current progress.

While seeking the BJP veteran's backing to the normalisation road map, the Pakistani President acknowledged the former's contribution in the resumption of the peace talks. He was candid in admitting that the peace juggernaut had started rolling during



Mr Vajpayee's tenure as Prime Minister, and sought the latter's blessings in bringing it to a successful end.

"Indo-Pak cricket ties started during your time and improved thereafter, and I respect you a lot," Mr Musharraf told the former Prime Minister, adding, "I am optimistic that you'd give full sup-

port on every subject that is taken up between the two countries."

Mr Vajpayee was accompanied in the meeting by former finance minister Jaswant Singh and former national security advisor Brajesh Mishra, two leaders who had helped him steer foreign policy through the rough and tumble of the post-Kargil days.

In a move that clearly showed that the Manmohan Singh government's peace efforts had all-round, bipartisan support, the former Prime Minister told Mr Musharraf that the exercise should continue unhindered.

"*Jo naya adhyaya shuru hua hai woh aagey bhi zaari rehna chahiye* (the new chapter that has begun should be carried forward)," Mr Vajpayee told reporters after the 30-minute meeting with Mr Musharraf, who called on him at his residence.

19 APR 2005

The Economic Times

'Advaniji has never let his son or daughter take advantage of his position... That was the kind of ideal we wanted from Atalji also'

Sarsanghchalaks of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) are normally content to remain in the political shadows, patriarchs of cultural and nationalist ideology rather than commentators on day-to-day politics. Yet **KUPPAHALI SITARAMAYYA SUDARSHAN**, who became head of the RSS in 2000, has presided over the organisation at a time of dramatic shifts in the RSS-BJP relationship, and is known for speaking his mind.

Sudarshan has not shied away from controversy, often taking potshots at the former Vajpayee-led NDA government on issues ranging from appointment of bureaucrats to economic policy. In a rare interview to **SHEKHAR GUPTA**, Editor-in-Chief of *The Indian Express*, on NDTV 24X7's *Walk the Talk*, Sudarshan elaborates on his disenchantment with the BJP leadership.

You are very media shy.
The reason is that as children we would sing a song.
(Recites the song)

This song means shun the media and fame, and work to make the nation strong.
Once a person becomes publicity-conscious, he loses his way. He just wants to see his name in print. That's all he wants. Work is no longer a priority. To give you an example, during a flood, several leaders visited the spot. They asked: "Where is the photographer?" All they wanted to show was that they were there.

Just as ministers who undertake an aerial survey.
Yes. They just want to show that they were there. But that does not solve the problem. We have to be like stones in a foundation and help build the nation. Our people, therefore, work in remote areas for social causes.

Thirty-three of your organisations are working at various places.
I've lost count, but there must be at least 33-34 important ones. A person is reaching in Dharchula. Who goes to that place in Himachal Pradesh?

Is that why the RSS leadership maintains a low profile?
Yes.

But those who come into politics, like BJP leaders?
That is the nature of politics. People in politics have to be in the public eye, in the limelight. The danger is that they may end up only seeking fame.

Have you seen people getting lost, like so many people in politics, from RSS?
Yes, people lose their way, but that does not surprise us. Politics is a game that has elements of jealousy, anger, covetousness, fame. That's why a lot of people get spoilt. So, if someone adheres to our principles while in politics, we take it as a victory.

Do you think most of the people who've gone into politics from the RSS have been able to stick to its principles?
Some have been able to do it, but others have lost their way.

Have you thought about why this has happened?
No, no. This is politics. In 1962, at an election meeting Deen Dayal Upadhyay was asked what was the guarantee that after coming to power the Jan Sangh would not become corrupt. Upadhyayji replied that there is no guarantee. Power is intoxicating; whoever gets it wants more.

When the BJP was in power for six years, some of its leaders were part of embarrassing controversies. They were from an RSS background, even the dissidents — Kalyan Singh, Uma Bharati. The common view was that the people from RSS would be disciplined.
It's not like that. Even though people are from the Sangh, they are human. They can be influenced by a lot of factors. If a person gives in to outside influence, he may be spoilt. Chances of this happening in politics are more than in any other sphere of life. All we say is that our values were not strong enough in the person.

What are you doing to correct this?



ON THE RECORD
K.S. SUDARSHAN
RSS chief

There should be a generational shift in BJP. We are telling them to move aside and bring in new people... When I met him (Vajpayee), I told him, get new people and watch them. Keep an eye on them and see the new leadership stand up in front of your eyes... We think both of them (Advani and Vajpayee) should step aside

What did she say when you told her?
She didn't say anything. But she heard me out.

Does she listen to you?
Yes, she does.

If so, you must be the only one she listens to.
That's okay.

Can somebody with this attitude, whether you call it a dual personality or confusion, be made a chief minister?
Once she was in the BJP, it was the leadership's prerogative to give her what they liked. But, very soon she realised that something was wrong. She was told that she'll have to meet people, but the sheer number of people who came to meet her scared her. And in front of all the reporters she started crying. She knew that it would not work. And that's why we told them to send her where there's a challenge and make her primarily do party work.

What about her boycott of Advani's meeting?
Yes, that was wrong.

The party's image as well as the RSS's image was sullied.
Not the RSS's image, she is not a member of the RSS.

But she's identified most with RSS, whether it is her clothes or what she says.
She is identified more with the VHP. People call it Sangh Parivar but they should actually call it the *vikhar parivar* (family of ideas). All organisations are independent from the Sangh. People don't understand that. They think that if RSS says it, it'll happen. But that is not right.

But people comment that they do everything together. Whether it's politics or dissonance against Atalji.
No, there's nothing like that. That's their independent thinking and they act according to it.

Govindji is a senior leader, he's vocal, intelligent; so when he criticises the BJP on its 25th birthday and says that BJP has lost its way...
He's not in BJP anymore.

Yes, I said things about Brajesh Mishra and they were absolutely right, he got very angry. Brajesh Mishra had ties with both fronts. He had relations with both the BJP and Sonia Gandhi. We told them, you have given him two responsibilities — he's the national security advisor and also foreign affairs advisor. To do justice to both he'll need 36 hours but there are only 24 hours in a day

Then the US tried to improve the relationship.
The US took the first step. The US thinks that its biggest enemy is China, and India is the only one capable of standing up to China. But at the same time, the US is also helping Pakistan.

But the NDA government and this one, both have been working to improve ties with China?
While improving relations, you should keep the national interest in mind.

So, according to you the NDA government's biggest achievements have been its policy on national security and foreign affairs?
Yes.

Was the NDA right in the way it handled Pakistan?
Pakistan's identity depends on its enmity with India. And if this is removed then Pakistan will be finished. Pakistan's administrators know this very well. If the people-to-people relations improve, then Pakistan will not be able to survive. This whole partition is artificial. They blame India for all their problems. For example, in Bangladesh the price of salt had soared to about Rs 4-5. When the experts were asked for a reason, they said because of India. When asked the price of salt in India, the professor replied: Rs 1. So, the poor man said then why don't we become India. That is the belief of the common man.

The common man believes that the Sangh does not want relations with Pakistan and China to improve. Do you agree with the policies that the NDA government followed and now the Dr Manmohan Singh government is following?
We don't want the national interests to be harmed in any way. There should be no compromises. Militants trained in PoK to Kashmir to terrorise people. Musharraf, under pressure from the US, has banned terrorist organisations. Even so, they (militants) are being trained in PoK.

What will India gain if relations with Pakistan improve?
If the image improves among the common people, then Pakistan will be finished. So, our gameplan should be to try and improve relations.

That is why the Army is always in power in Pakistan.
Yes, the Army is always in power. More importantly, they have removed all the *madarsas* from there. However, the chief of all *madarsas* has said, "We have been banned in Pakistan but we will continue in India." In border areas we have *madarsas* where Pakistanis come to study.

So it's time for some people to retire in the BJP?
It's a matter of age. It (generational shift) should happen. It has happened in RSS. When Balasabeh in RSS got tired, he gave the reins to Rajju Bhajiyaa.

When Atalji says, 'I'm tired, I should retire', do you agree?
Yes, I've been saying it for a while now. When I met him, I told him, get new people and watch them. Keep an eye on them and see the new leadership stand up in front of your eyes. See that they stand properly.

There are a lot of new leaders, from the RSS also, who don't match the RSS culture — a pen worth Rs 5 lakhs, a car worth Rs 25 lakhs.
Those are not the people who should be brought to the fore. They should bring people who can convey the right values. It's their job to find these people. It's their job to find the right people.

If it's only about age, Advaniji is not much younger than Atalji.
We think both of them should step aside. And after stepping aside, they should watch the new leadership come up. They should keep an eye and see that the new leadership is coming up properly.

Whom do you see coming up in the BJP?
It's their job to think about it.

The NDA-BJP was in power for six years, it achieved some things. On others — Ram Mandir, Article 370 — it couldn't make progress. What was the level of communication between the RSS and the BJP in these six years?
They never consulted us. We did not go to them either. But whenever we felt something was wrong, we would speak to them. We told them to be in constant touch with the other Sangh organisations. Everyone understands that there are limitations and they'd have to work within these limitations.

But some people abused them.
That was because there was no dialogue. What could these people have done? So they said what they wanted.

Did they do anything after you told them?
They heard us, but they didn't really do anything. They asked them what they were going to do, they didn't have an answer.

Were you hurt by the use of Urdu language that was used against Vajpayeeji?
Yes, from the national interest point of view, we believe that she was good, but there's another side, she was self-centred. The reason was that as a child she lived in Anand Bhavan. Anand Bhavan is very big and she imagined ghosts in the rooms there. Another thing, she grew up with servants. So whenever she wanted something, they would give it to her. She got used to getting her own way. And because she was scared, she kept saying that all these people are attacking us.

When I asked you about great leaders, you first mentioned Indiraji.
Indiraji knew how to find the right people. Only if she had taken decisions in the national interest, India would have got a new Chanakya.

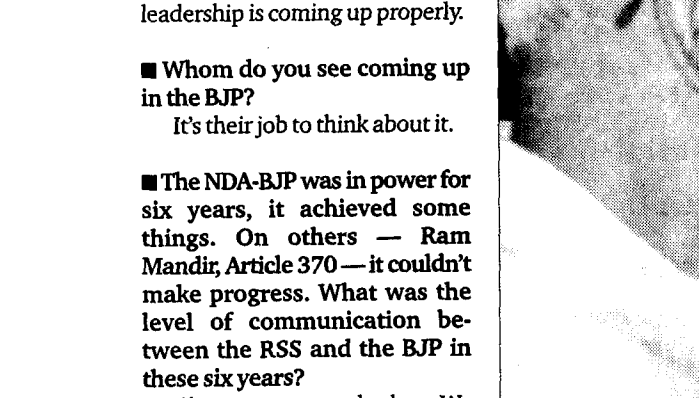
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Uma Bharati has two personalities. In her last birth she must have been a yogi. But in this birth, she has been born into a not-so-cultured family. The best in her comes out when she gets a platform or is faced with a challenge. But she behaves like a child, she's obstinate

What do you agree with his points of criticism?
What points?

That BJP has lost its way and that it has forgotten the Hindutva path.
VHP has also been saying this.

You just said that VHP and RSS are separate.
Yes, they are separate. VHP and BJP are also separate. But the point is they had to be part of a coalition. After the elections, there was a debate on whether the BJP should or should not form the government.

You wanted them to form the government?
We wanted it. Because the other option wasn't acceptable, a foreign woman being made the PM. That wasn't good for our country. So, I told him that you should be the PM. And so they had to compromise. They had to put aside their own agendas of the Ram Mandir, Article 370 and the common personal code.

What is the balance sheet of the BJP-led NDA's six-year rule?

Do you support the peace talks with Pakistan?
Yes, our only worry is national interest. If Pakistan keeps promoting terrorism, we will not support the peace talks.

I'll re-phrase the question. Are the peace talks begun by Atalji and taken forward by Manmohan Singh, in India's national interest?
Yes, we should have peace with all our neighbours.

What is happening right now, is it in the national interest?
Right now, they are promoting terrorism. Terrorists are coming here after being trained there.

You believe terrorism has not come down at all? Two Army chief and two PMs have said that infiltration has come down.



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He didn't say anything in public. He said that this is the first time we've got power and we should make it our work. We said being in power is not the only goal.

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Who are the two-three greatest leaders of the nation?
Indira Gandhi, her plus point was that she never gave in to pressure. But she was self-centred. And so whatever she did, she did to keep herself in power.

But you think she was a great leader.
Yes, from the national interest point of view, we believe that she was good, but there's another side, she was self-centred. The reason was that as a child she lived in Anand Bhavan. Anand Bhavan is very big and she imagined ghosts in the rooms there. Another thing, she grew up with servants. So whenever she wanted something, they would give it to her. She got used to getting her own way. And because she was scared, she kept saying that all these people are attacking us.

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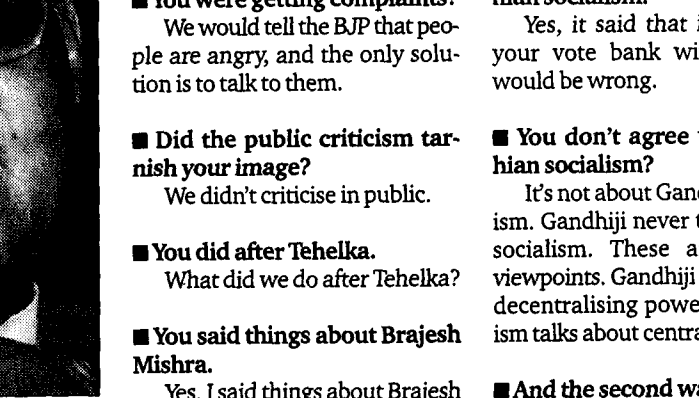
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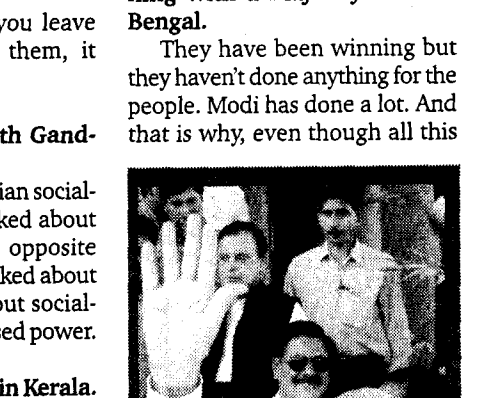
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with everyone open and that he didn't do.

Since you criticised him a lot after Tehalka, the feeling was that there was a lot of tension in the Sangh.
The Sangh is aware, notices things and says it. At *bathaks* we would explain it to him.

You were getting complaints?
We would tell the BJP that people are angry, and the only solution is to talk to them.

Did the public criticism tarnish your image?
We didn't criticise in public.

You did after Tehalka.
What did we do after Tehalka?

You said things about Brajesh Mishra.
Yes, I said things about Brajesh Mishra and they were absolutely right, he got very angry. Brajesh Mishra had ties with both fronts. He had relations with both the BJP and Sonia Gandhi. We told them, you have given him two responsibilities — he's the national security advisor and also foreign affairs advisor. To do justice to both he'll need 36 hours but there are only 24 hours in a day. Since he's served abroad let him be foreign affairs advisor, find someone else for national security advisor.

And the second was in Kerala. You have said it earlier too that the RSS helped the Congress to defeat the Marxists.
Yes, in 2001 we told the BJP to put up 40 candidates in the elections and that its main aim should be to get two-thirds of them into the Vidhan Sabha, so that they would have a voice. But the leadership wanted to field candidates from all places. Since the contests would be close, and given the RSS's violent struggle with the Marxists, we had to do something.

Yayalar Ravi came to meet R Hari.
In Cheralha in 1991, he came at midnight. He wanted to join him but we told him to come back in daylight.

He has denied the meeting.
He can say so. He hasn't seen me and I haven't seen him.

Today, to keep BJP-RSS out of power, Congress and Marxists have come together. Will it ever happen that to keep Marxists out, Congress, BJP and RSS will join hands?
It can happen. In politics, it all depends on the situation. Nobody is a permanent friend or a permanent enemy.

And no one is untouchable?
No one is untouchable.

But you are considered untouchable right now?
We can't do anything about it. Earlier the Congress was the focus of all opposition. Now it's BJP.

You don't rule out this kind of an alliance? This turnaround can happen in politics?
Yes, it can happen.

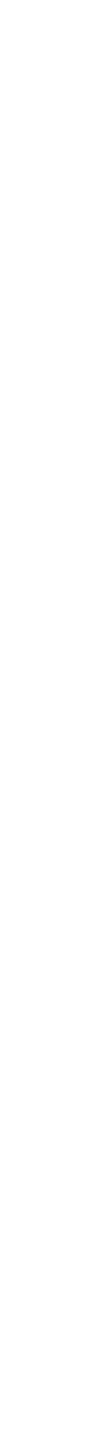
So, Congress is not untouchable?
We don't consider them untouchable even today. The Sangh has no politics of its own.

When the riots happened in Gujarat, did you ever feel that it was wrong?
I said it at that time too that a lot of innocent people are getting killed.

So, you would want people to be punished for it?
It was the people's anger at that time. It wasn't just people from the BJP. It was a lot of other people.

But 2,000 people died. Somebody should be punished for it.
Hindus also died in the riots. You say the law rules. Even in the Bombay blasts a lot of people died, but all the accused went free. That's the way the law works, everyone goes scot-free.

Who is the bigger enemy today — the Congress or the Marxists?
It's not like that. It depends on the situation. In any case, the Marxists have never been a part of this country. Now, since they are not getting any help from China and Russia, they are saying that it's no use looking that way. In Kerala,



When he (Vajpayee) became Prime Minister, we told him that you are old and you need somebody to take care of you. It's good that your son-in-law is taking care of you. But don't let him interfere in party affairs or government affairs. He replied what you are saying is right but it's a little difficult... He said people are just trying to malign his name (after Tehalka). We said if people are saying it, there has to be something behind it

Atal reacts to RSS attack

'I fear a bad name more than death'

HTC & Agencies
New Delhi, April 14

IN A veiled disapproval of the attack by RSS chief K.S. Sudershan on him and his foster son-in-law, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Thursday indicated he was pained by the unbridled criticism.

In his first reaction to the criticism by Sudershan, Vajpayee, in his inimitable style, utilised the occasion of a speech at a function to celebrate 50 years of *Geet Ramayan* to express his unhappiness over the attack.

"We are living in such times that it is difficult to avoid being maligned. If Lord Ram had taken birth in these times, he too would not have escaped being maligned. "I do not fear death, but I fear getting a bad name," Vajpayee said quoting a couplet from *Ramayana*.

Meanwhile, BJP president L.K. Advani dropped in at Vajpayee's residence on Thursday, apparently to discuss the recent developments. Advani went there after paying floral tributes to the architect of the Indian Constitution, B.R. Ambedkar, at Parliament House and was there for about 15 minutes, party sources said.

Although no comments from either leader were forthcoming, the two are

believed to have deliberated upon the recent outburst by RSS supremo K.S. Sudershan and VHP leader Giriraj Kishore — both of whom had asked them to step down and make way for youngsters. Sudarshan and Kishore had also ridiculed their six-year rule.

Neither Vajpayee nor Advani had so far reacted to the remarks made by Sudershan and Kishore. The former PM may speak on the issue when he addresses a public gathering in Pune on the occasion of Ram Navami.

The meeting between Vajpayee and Advani came shortly before the former was to leave for Pune. The two are understood to have discussed if they should react to the comments and, if so, in what way.

Meanwhile, Venkaiah Naidu, addressing reporters in Chennai on Thursday, on the issue of the VHP and RSS, said he did not want to join issues with the VHP. "There are no differences with the RSS and the VHP", he said, adding that he would not like to make any further comment, since what had to be said had already been said by the party. "We don't want to have a public debate on this issue any further".

To another question on the same issue, he said, "We have the same good relation with the RSS as in the past.

NOT AMUSED

Vajpayee finally reacted saying he was hurt by the criticism. Even Lord Ram would not have escaped being maligned had he been born now, he said.

L.K. Advani met Vajpayee at his residence on Thursday, just before the latter left for Pune. The two are said to have discussed whether or not to react to Sudershan's comments.

Venkaiah Naidu said he did not want to join issue with the VHP. Saying he didn't want a public debate, he said there were no differences with the RSS or the BJP.



We're proud that we draw inspiration from the RSS".

Naidu said he had come to the city in connection with the party's Tamil Nadu unit's two-day *Chintan Baithak*, beginning on Friday, at which important party functionaries would discuss next year's Assembly elections in the state.

15 APR 2005

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Why is Sangh Parivar angry with BJP?

Stress was building up; differences existed beyond Ayodhya

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: Why are the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and its many affiliates angry with the Bharatiya Janata Party? "*Sangh Parivar ko gussa kyon ata hai?*"

The RSS chief, K.S. Sudarshan's outburst suggesting that the BJP's big two, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani, "step aside," was not entirely unexpected.

The fault lines were there and the stress had been building up for some time, a BJP leader close to Mr. Sudarshan said. Another party leader directly associated with the Ram temple movement noted that Mr. Advani's empha-

sis on "ideological commitment" at the party's National Council session carried no credibility.

Loyal 'swayamsevaks' point out that after rounds of 'chintan baithaks' (brainstorming sessions) the Sangh Parivar leadership had agreed on a number of issues to be taken up aggressively by the BJP, but its leadership failed to act when it was in power from 1998 to 2004.

Inaction

The BJP could not take forward the Ram temple issue for obvious reasons — the matter was in a court; there was a second party, Muslims, involved in

the dispute; and the BJP's allies in the National Democratic Alliance did not want the issue to be raked up.

These problems did not exist in the area of disinvestment, foreign direct investment in the insurance sector, or in identification and deportation of illegal Bangladeshi migrants entering India.

What prevented the Vajpayee Government from acting on these issues is the question being asked in RSS circles.

RSS sources admit that Yashwant Sinha became the Finance Minister in 1998 with RSS approval after Mr. Vajpayee was forced to drop Jaswant Singh's

name for that slot. At that time, he was close to the RSS affiliate, Swadeshi Jagran Manch, and a proponent of 'swadeshi' economics.

But after Mr. Sinha got the job, the Manch leadership was marginalised; its most vocal supporter, K.N. Govindacharya, was forced out of the BJP; and the Government's economic policies moved rapidly in a direction opposite to what was agreed Sangh-BJP policy. As one 'swayamsevak' asked, was there coalition compulsion to sell off Modern Bakery in Delhi or the Centaur Hotel in Mumbai cheaply?

Advani calls on Vajpayee: Page 14

15 APR 2004

THE HINDU

The sangh parivar and the candid camera

Vidya Subrahmaniam

WHAT IS it between the *sangh parivar* and the small screen? The camera has merely to turn towards a member of the family and the secrets tumble out. Last year, Lal Krishna Advani and Uma Bharti had a flaming row before a worldwide television audience. Last week, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief K.S. Sudarshan treated the camera as if it were a close confidante. He never thought much of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the company he kept, Mr. Sudarshan said, adding for good measure that Mr. Advani, once the apple of the *sangh* eye, did not measure up either. In any case, the geriatric duo was long due for retirement.

On both occasions, it was the *parivar* that confirmed a truth long speculated upon in the media but which the BJP-RSS spin machine unflinchingly dismissed as a figment of the "pseudo-secular" imagination. Now it is official. The BJP not only has internal quarrels to fix, it has also messed up its scene with the RSS. Ms. Bharti's bitter complaints against her colleagues established the BJP's next generation as an undisciplined, bickering lot that was not fit for leadership duties. Indeed, the *exposé* caused Mr. Advani, 77, to ease himself into the party president's post — just months after he spoke of bringing forth a newer, younger leadership.

Who after Advani?

Unfortunately for Mr. Advani, Mr. Sudarshan has now demonstrated the futility of that gambit by showing the door to the BJP chief. In one fell swoop he has exploded the myth that Mr. Advani's comeback was blessed by the RSS.

Taken together, the two TV episodes lead to one question: with the second rung ruled out by Mr. Advani, and Mr. Advani, in turn, ruled out by

The crisis in the Bharatiya Janata Party is real. Yet it is doubtful if the RSS-BJP differences would have come to a head if Mr. Vajpayee had won another term.

the RSS, who succeeds the incumbent BJP chief? Which "young BJP leader" can carry forward the RSS agenda? If Mr. Advani, who was thought to epitomise loyalty to the RSS, has been decreed as not being good enough, who else can take his place? Assuming such a person is located, will he or she not further undermine the decision-making apparatus in the BJP by constantly seeking approval from Jhandewalan?

The news point in the Sudarshan story is not that the RSS cannot get on with Mr. Vajpayee (which was an open secret anyway) but that it is unhappy with Mr. Advani. A senior RSS figure thus explains the organisation's position. A leader must possess three qualities: conviction, character, and competence. Mr. Advani met the second criterion fully, the third partially but failed entirely to demonstrate his conviction. As Deputy Prime Minister, he was so busy espousing pragmatism that he overlooked his duties towards the RSS. So much so, a small matter like Mr. Sudarshan's request for facilities to pilgrims visiting Ayodhya went unheeded.

That Mr. Advani reverted intermittently to talking ideology following the BJP's Lok Sabha defeat only added to the RSS' ire. A day before the BJP's silver jubilee celebrations, the former Home Minister told the press that if the BJP aspired to return to office it would have to compromise on ideology. Once on the podium for the formal function he did a *volte face*. Mr. Advani's

presidential speech revolved around the BJP's irrevocable ties with the RSS and its ideology ("Our inflexible stand on our association with the RSS gave us a distinct ideological identity about which we have never been apologetic nor will we ever be.") If for the better part of his six-year-long stint in Government, Mr. Advani advocated separation of ideology and governance, now he attributed the BJP's defeat to its focus on "issues of governance" and the consequent neglect of its "core constituency of ideological supporters." Unsurprisingly, the RSS fumed at this "duplicity."

So is this the end of the road for the BJP-RSS relationship? Not by a long stretch. The BJP duo's alleged lack of deference to it notwithstanding, the RSS remains, and will remain, the single biggest influence on the BJP. Despite his public humiliation by Mr. Sudarshan, Mr. Vajpayee — the first non-Congress Prime Minister to last six years — has been unable to defend his record in office, much less hit back at Mr. Sudarshan or throw off the Sangh yoke. Mr. Vajpayee did not embark on that path even at the height of his popularity, when he was arguably best placed to break with the RSS. After all, there was no dearth of pundits who urged "Atalji" to take that final, daring step and have his name engraved in bold the pages of history. Far from it, Mr. Vajpayee's years in office is marked by frequent capitulations to the RSS — from allowing it to

dictate the composition of the Union Cabinet to appeasing it with various placatory statements on the Ram temple and Hindutva, not to mention Narendra Modi. Mr. Vajpayee asked Mr. Modi to follow the *raj dharma* of office. But he also asked that fatal question, *kisne jalayee aag* (who lit the fire??) Mr. Vajpayee declared himself a "swayamsevak" to a rapturous NRI gathering in the United States and later gave the gloss of "national sentiment" to the divisive Ram temple agenda. As for Mr. Advani, whatever his private shortcomings in relation to the RSS, in public perception he was ever the proud warrior, the hero of the Ram temple movement and the man who bound the BJP forever to the RSS.

Value of office

The BJP and the RSS are extensions of each other. The BJP knows that alienating the RSS would mean alienating the thousands of Sangh workers who fetch it votes in election after election. On every occasion that the RSS switched its allegiance to another party, the BJP has suffered a devastating rout. The most glaring example of this was the general election of 1984 when the RSS cadre shifted *en masse* to the Congress. Equally, for all its fulmination against the current BJP leadership, the RSS knows that no other party can take it towards its ultimate goal of Hindu Rashtra. Certainly not Sonia Gandhi's Congress. The RSS knows the value of office and has made — and will make — compromises as and when necessary.

The RSS and its affiliates experienced a phenomenal surge in membership when the Jan Sangh was part of the Janata Party Government. Years later, with "Atalji" as Prime Minister, the RSS' clout increased manifold: it was now able to influence policy decisions and place its own people in important positions. Who can forget the midnight call Mr. Vajpayee received even as he was about to finalise his first cabinet? Can any other Union Minister for Education accomplish for the RSS what Murli Manohar Joshi so doggedly and systematically did in the six years that he occupied that crucial post?

The crisis in the BJP is real. It has severely hurt the party's image and its electoral prospects. Yet it is doubtful if the RSS-BJP differences would have come to a head if Mr. Vajpayee had won another term. There is quite a bit of play acting here — on both sides. The RSS may rail against the dilution of ideology brought about by the compulsions of coalition politics but it has never flinched from supporting coalitions if that was the only way to access power. As far back as 1967, the RSS endorsed the Jan Sangh's participation in coalition governments in the Hindi belt. Power remained a goal for the RSS even during the "dual membership" crisis that broke up the Janata Party in 1979.

Parivar folklore has it that the Jan Sangh gave up office to preserve its pristine ties with the RSS. In actual fact, it was the Charan Singh faction that walked out. The Jan Sangh not only stayed on in the Janata Party but tried its best to return to power by persuading the RSS to agree to a face-saving formula. The formula was that the RSS would itself — but only for public consumption — bar its membership to holders of elected office. At that time Mr. Vajpayee — again as part of a deal with the RSS — wrote an article critical of the RSS in *The Indian Express*. Said the article dated August 2, 1979: "It is possible that some people genuinely feel apprehensive about the RSS. A certain onus accordingly devolved on the RSS, an onus that has not been discharged effectively by the RSS."

That the RSS was very much in on this pragmatic project is evident from the fact that less than a year later Mr. Vajpayee became the founding president of the BJP. Years later, the RSS backed Mr. Vajpayee for another experiment in coalition governance — one that lasted six years.

KESHAV



Who will come up trumps in the tug-of-war between Vajpayee and Sudarshan?

Battle lines drawn, for fourth time

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 12: When RSS chief K.S. Sudarshan described Atal Bihari Vajpayee as the "worst" Prime Minister India has had and called his foster son-in-law Ranjan Bhattacharya and his principal secretary-cum-national security adviser Brajesh Mishra names, it revived memories of another day in the minds of the rest of the parivar.

The pet pastime in the BJP headquarters at 11 Ashoka Road today was counting the number of spats Vajpayee and Sudarshan have had, how each of them played out and who won and who lost.

"The only difference between the last such episodes and this one is that for the first time the RSS sarsanghchalak spoke his mind out freely and that too on TV," said a leader.

The first time when Vajpayee and Sudarshan slugged it out was when the former had just become the Prime Minister with a legitimate majority of his own in 1998. Vajpayee wanted to appoint Jaswant Singh finance minister and Ramakrishna Hegde his home minister.

Jaswant was Vajpayee's choice as he wanted to hammer home the point that contrary to the *swadeshi* line on economics his party espoused periodically, he was for continuing the pro-reforms legacy left behind by P.V. Narasimha Rao.

Jaswant's name figured on the list of ministers sent by Vajpayee to Rashtrapati Bhavan to be sworn in the following morning. However, the buzz in the BJP headquarters — circulated by the *swadeshi* proponents — was "there was no way" Jaswant would become finance minister. They hedged their bet on Yashwant Sinha, who had then projected himself as a *swadeshi* advocate.

Sudarshan called on Vajpayee late in the night and insisted on deleting Jaswant's name. A miffed Vajpayee first threatened to resign, then gave in and agreed to have Sinha as

finance minister.

But Sinha turned out to be more pro-reform in the RSS's eyes than Jaswant. When the UTI "scam" dented the NDA government's image, Vajpayee had Sinha swap places with Jaswant. But this time Sudarshan was silent.

Round Two of the bout happened when in 2000, at a press briefing, the RSS chief attacked Brajesh Mishra, N.K. Singh (then special adviser in the PMO on economic matters) and Bhattacharya. The BJP did not come to his aid but the PMO issued a stiff rebuttal. The RSS was forced to issue a clarification that very evening, claiming that Sudarshan was "quoted out of context".

Vajpayee scored a double win when he managed to have the RSS chief "banished" from Delhi's Jhandewalan (the RSS's base) to the Nagpur headquarters in Resham Bagh.

From then on, a more amenable Madan Das Devi dealt with the government and the BJP on behalf of the RSS. Sudarshan was rarely seen or heard but from time to time, he used his acolytes in the VHP, Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch to throw barbs at Vajpayee and his regime. But they went down as the "fulminations" of a disgruntled person.

In Round Three, Vajpayee had to give in to Sudarshan and the VHP when he agreed to make L.K. Advani the deputy Prime Minister. The bargain was the VHP would call off a long-drawn agitation it embarked on in Ayodhya to reclaim the "disputed" land for the Ram temple. When Advani later waffled on Ayodhya, Sudarshan and the VHP could not swallow the "betrayal" and found a second "enemy" in the BJP to train their guns on.

Who will win Round Four is anybody's guess. The party may have rallied around Vajpayee if only to buttress Advani's dented position. But everybody acknowledges that Sudarshan or no Sudarshan, the RSS cadre is an invaluable element during elections.

FACE-OFF: BOUT BY BOUT

Round I

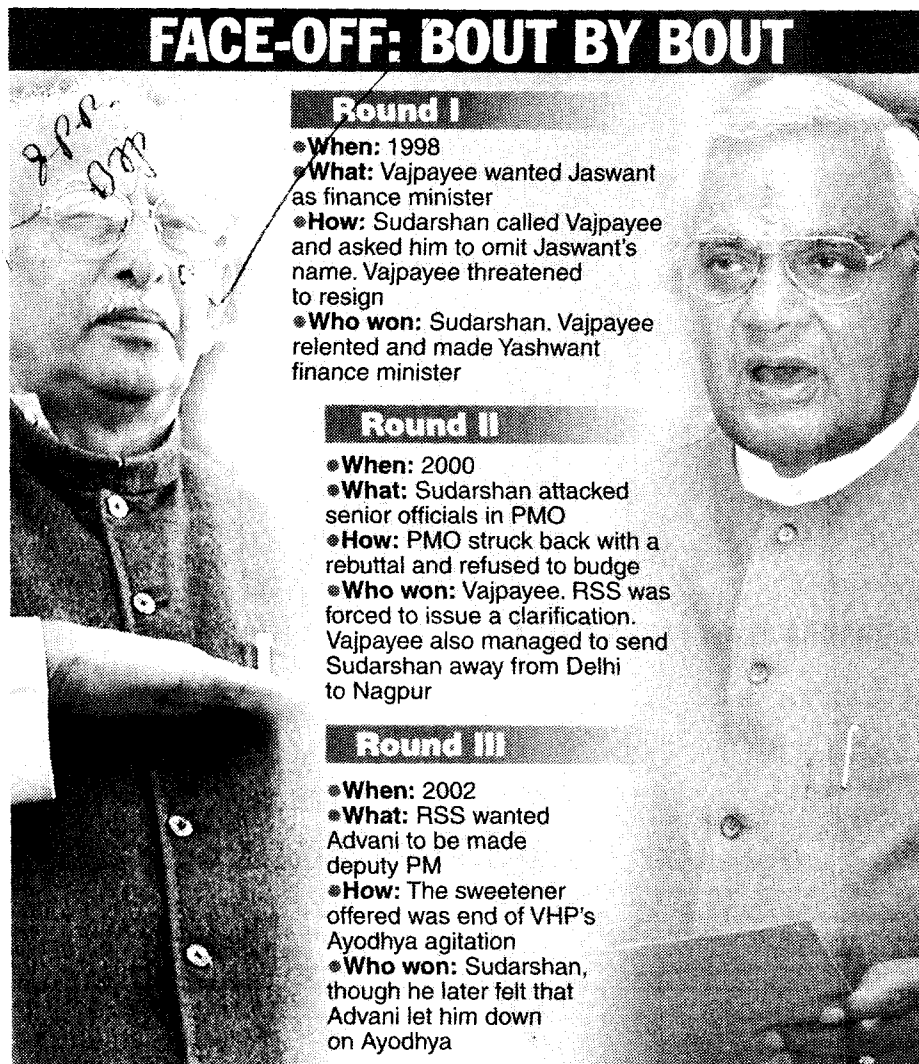
- **When:** 1998
- **What:** Vajpayee wanted Jaswant as finance minister
- **How:** Sudarshan called Vajpayee and asked him to omit Jaswant's name. Vajpayee threatened to resign
- **Who won:** Sudarshan. Vajpayee relented and made Yashwant finance minister

Round II

- **When:** 2000
- **What:** Sudarshan attacked senior officials in PMO
- **How:** PMO struck back with a rebuttal and refused to budge
- **Who won:** Vajpayee. RSS was forced to issue a clarification. Vajpayee also managed to send Sudarshan away from Delhi to Nagpur

Round III

- **When:** 2002
- **What:** RSS wanted Advani to be made deputy PM
- **How:** The sweetener offered was end of VHP's Ayodhya agitation
- **Who won:** Sudarshan, though he later felt that Advani let him down on Ayodhya



All ears cocked at Atal

► FROM PAGE 1

When Vajpayee was reminded that he was the NDA chairperson, he laughed out loud.

In the BJP, Vajpayee's silence was being construed as "eloquent", given the former Prime Minister's penchant for retaliating against those unkind to him in the most unexpected way and in the most unexpected place.

Everybody is waiting to see what Vajpayee will say in Pune on April 14 when he presides over a function to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the *Geet Ramayana*, a Marathi rendition of the epic in song. Twenty-five years ago, he graced the silver jubilee as external affairs minister — in the Janata Party government — in the company of Sharad Pawar, who was Maharashtra chief minister. Pawar will be with Vajpayee again.

Admitting that the RSS-BJP equation will never be the same after the latest controversy, a senior BJP functionary said the party would henceforth have nothing to do with Sudarshan but will only deal with Mohanrao Bhagwat, the number two in the RSS.

Bhagwat bailed the BJP out of a potentially explosive situation by distancing the Sangh from Sudarshan's remarks through a written statement. He conveyed to Advani, who is now expected to complete his term as party president, that whatever the sarsanghchalak said was not the RSS's "considered opinion".

The BJP functionary said the incident had

"isolated" the leader even in the RSS. But, if Sudarshan continues as the sarsanghchalak, it is only to "preserve" an 80-year-old institution. "If he is removed because he has given a wrong interview, the RSS will collapse. The king can do no wrong, his word is final. The position commands that kind of authority," he explained.

The Advani-led BJP, which had appeared unmoved when Vajpayee decided to call it a day at the national council last week, was forced to rally behind the former Prime Minister after the RSS chief's comments. Once the party expressed its "solidarity" with Vajpayee, the RSS figured out that as long as the "Big Two" are together — if only out of expediency — the BJP is virtually unassailable.

The game plan of Sudarshan, who feels that the BJP should go back to the Sangh's brand of Hindutva, was to use "age" as a ruse to pressure Advani to step down. Sudarshan's agenda, sources said, was to "detoxify" the BJP of Advani and those close to him, such as Naidu, Ananth Kumar and Sudheendra Kulkarni.

The RSS chief, it is believed, even set deadlines — the first in November was put off because of the Assembly polls. The second — March 31 — was ignored.

Sudarshan had two persons in mind for the BJP chief's post: Murli Manohar Joshi or Rajnath Singh. BJP sources questioned the choice, claiming that Joshi was "unacceptable" to the rank and file and "lacked charisma" and that Singh was unknown outside the cow belt.

Try social service, needles VHP

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 12: Sudarshan has spoken, so has his satellite.

The VHP has emerged as the sole voice of public support for the RSS chief within the Sangh parivar, echoing him by attacking Atal Bihari Vajpayee and accusing the former Prime Minister of "torpedoing" the "Hindu movement".

Acharya Giriraj Kishore, senior vice-president of the Sangh affiliate, endorsed Sudarshan's allegations.

"The RSS chief had pointed to a principle. Even Nanaji Deshmukh had set an example in the BJP that those in power politics, aspiring for public office, should retire after attaining the age of 60," he said, supporting Sudarshan's comments that Vajpayee and BJP chief L.K. Advani should make way for younger leaders.

"Vajpayee and Advani should now guide the party and allow the new generation to take over," Giriraj said here.

He also targeted Vajpayee's foster son-in-law Ranjan Bhattacharya, saying he belongs to an "American lobby" and had "direct links with Italy".

On Sudarshan's charge that Vajpayee and Advani did not do enough on Ayodhya, Giriraj said: "Both leaders did not perform their due role."

On whether the RSS chief himself and the VHP's leaders should step down because of age, Giriraj said they are not holding "posts of profit". "It is not applicable to social service where one can continue till health permits. Vajpayee and Advani, too, are welcome to do social service."

Brajesh hits back

Brajesh Mishra, Vajpayee's principal secretary when he was Prime Minister, has dubbed Sudarshan's charges "absurd, concocted and meaningless".

The RSS chief had said Mishra was aligned with Sonia Gandhi.

"Anybody who knows me knows that my loyalty to Vajpayee has been there and will be there," Mishra told a television channel.

He described Sudarshan as a "narrow-minded person who can be easily swayed".

Vajpayee wasn't best PM: RSS

SNS & PTI 9. P. P.

5/11 150P
NEW DELHI, April 11. — The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief, Mr KS Sudarshan, today said he didn't rate Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee among the best Prime Ministers and criticised his foster son-in-law for interfering in the working of the government and the party.

"I don't accept that he (Vajpayee) did something spectacular... what he could have done (on Ayodhya), he didn't do. He could have handed over the land (to the Ram Janambhumi Trust) after the Supreme Court order to return the land to whom it belonged," he said in a programme on NDTV telecast today.

The RSS chief accused Mr Brajesh Mishra, who was principal secretary to Mr Vajpayee, of having been aligned with Mrs Sonia Gandhi while still functioning under the NDA government. "When I complained, Mr Vajpayee was annoyed."

Mr Sudarshan did a volte-face today and said Mr LK Advani should continue as the BJP president.

The BJP today said there was no question of Mr Vajpayee and Mr Advani relinquishing their posts and the party did not take up the issue at its high-level meeting today.

More muck in RSS-BJP ties

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, April 11

EVEN AS the RSS launched a damage-control exercise over K.S. Sudershan's tirade against top BJP leaders, NDTV played fresh tapes in which the RSS chief attacked A.B. Vajpayee, his principal secretary, Brajesh Mishra, and son-in-law, Ranjan Bhattacharya.

In the fresh excerpts of his interview, the Sarsanghchalak launched a stinging attack on Vajpayee's role as Prime Minister during the six-year rule of the NDA government, his top aide, Brajesh Mishra, and his close family.

In the remarks played on NDTV on Monday, Sudershan said Vajpayee had not done enough for the Ram temple in Ayodhya. He was also critical of Brajesh Mishra and the "interference" of his foster son-in-law, Ranjan Bhattacharya, in the government's and party's functioning. Though the RSS attempted to undo the damage, his scathing criticism of Vajpayee only worsened matters for the saffron party, which was thrown into a turmoil on Monday.

While the former PM was singled out for brickbats, his deputy, Advani, came in for a good word from the Sangh head, who felt he was a good administrator and ensured he never became a centre of power.

He also praised the work of BJP second-generation leader Sushma Swaraj, hinting that she could be a candidate for the post of party president in future. On Vajpayee, without mincing words, Sudershan told the channel there was nothing outstanding about his performance as PM and he had failed to communicate with his constituency or help in the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"I don't think he did such a good job. When he made a deci-

sion, he never took people along with him... He didn't do things which he could have done as Prime Minister.

"After the Supreme Court judgment, he could have given land for (building) the Ram temple, but he didn't do that", the Sangh supremo told the interviewer.

Sudershan also criticised Vajpayee's foster son-in-law, Ranjan Bhattacharya, for interference in the BJP's affairs, while accusing his former principal secretary, Brajesh Mishra, of double-dealing, saying he used to maintain links with Congress president Sonia Gandhi, too.

Meanwhile, following frantic calls to the RSS brass from BJP chief L.K. Advani and other leaders following Sudershan's remark on Sunday, that the party's top two must step aside to make way for a younger leadership, its general secretary, Mohan Rao Bhagwat, and spokesman, Ram Madhav, attempted a damage control exercise. "The RSS has always held the leadership of Vajpayee and Advani in high esteem and maintained that the party needs their guidance and leadership always", Bhagwat said, while asserting that Advani must continue as BJP president.

In a statement issued here, he also said he had talked to Sudershan over phone and had been told he had made very "general observations" regarding the age factor in politics and these were taken out of context to create an erroneous impression.

Meanwhile, RSS chief K.S. Sudershan's controversial statement on the BJP leadership is likely to figure at a meeting of BJP general secretaries to be presided over by its president, L.K. Advani. While the meeting has been called to discuss the party's silver jubilee celebrations, party sources hinted that Sudershan's statement might also come up for discussion.



K.S. Sudershan at a recent RSS meeting in Nagpur.

Why Sangh is not exactly a happy parivar

Pankaj Vohra
New Delhi, April 11

THE CATEGORICAL assertion by RSS Chief K. Sudershan that both BJP president L.K. Advani and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee should quit to make way for younger leadership has apparently come after prolonged but considered deliberations within the Sangh Parivar over the past few months.

Even though the timing of Sudershan's observations have left many in the BJP red faced, since the party commenced its silver jubilee celebrations only last week, the writing was on the wall. Both Vajpayee and Advani had been accused by several key Sangh Parivar activists of deviating from the Hindutva agenda.

In fact, the RSS had been under pressure from the VHP to float another political party and had come to the conclusion that a long-term plan to revive the BJP was needed.

It could not be immediately known whom the RSS chief has in mind as possible successors to Advani and Vajpayee. There are indications though that no one person but a group of leaders, including Dr Murli Manohar Joshi, may be asked to play important roles.

It is well known that within the RSS top leadership there has been a difference of opinion regarding the leadership change.

While Sudershan and Mohan Bhagwat have favoured new leadership, Shashtri and Madan Das Devi want Advani to continue despite the fact that the RSS was not consulted but only informed when Advani decided to replace Venkaiah Naidu as party chief.

There are also indications that Sudershan, who does not like Vajpayee and lately Advani, may himself make way for Bhagwat to take over as the RSS chief. When he told a TV channel that Vajpayee and Advani should oversee the grooming of new leadership by quitting, he perhaps also plans to assume a similar role within the RSS.

However, what has raised eyebrows is Sudershan's indirect defence of Modi, who was described as a person who took correct decisions without being able to carry the cadres with him.

Sudershan had last June wanted Modi to be replaced but changed his mind when Vajpayee criticised Modi in order to take credit for his removal.

Attempts are likely to be made to salvage the situation for Vajpayee and Advani by stating that Sudershan was quoted out of context even though he was on television the whole day. One thing is certain that all does not seem to be well within the Sangh Parivar — at least for the time being.

Livid BJP refuses to oblige Sudershan

Shekhar Iyer
New Delhi, April 11

IN A rare, but direct, rebuttal of RSS chief K.S. Sudershan's views, the BJP brass on Monday expressed total faith in the leadership of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and party chief L.K. Advani.

The party also put on record that the NDA government run by them was one of the best ones to reject his critical remarks against the stewardship of the government by Vajpayee.

The extent of the BJP leadership's displeasure with Sudershan, which marks a new chapter in the party's links with the Sangh, saw senior functionaries meeting at the residence of Advani to adopt a statement, rejecting Sudershan's views.

What provoked the BJP leaders to act were more startling remarks by Sudershan on NDTV's weekly show, Walk The Talk, aired on Monday. Sudershan raised another controversy, saying he did not consider Vajpayee

among the 'best Prime Ministers', though he had failed to do anything on the Ayodhya issue. Since Sudershan's critical comments came on top of his statement that Vajpayee and Advani should make way for younger leaders to take over, BJP leaders thought the RSS chief's criticism had to be rebutted.

Reading out a prepared statement after a two-hour meeting, BJP general secretary Arun Jaitley said the party had noted the statement of Sudershan and believed the NDA government under Vajpayee's leadership was "one of the best performing governments of the country".

Senior BJP leader Jaswant Singh was deputed to Vajpayee to convey to him that the party was fully behind him as Advani and other leaders formulated the party's response. Singh left the meeting midway and drove straight to Vajpayee's residence. He later returned to the party meeting and apprised the leaders of his discussions with Vajpayee. Besides Jaitley, Ananth Kumar, Sush-

ma Swaraj, Pramod Mahajan, Rajnath Singh and Sanjay Joshi attended the meeting.

The BJP leaders said Sudershan's criticism of Vajpayee, particularly his decision to retain Brajesh Mishra as his principal secretary and the role of his son-in-law, Ranjan Bhattacharya, was not new. The Sangh had made an issue of their importance in 1999-2000, but Vajpayee's threat to quit had forced the RSS to back out. Jaitley said the BJP believed that not only had he held together a coalition government successfully, but India had also become a major nuclear power under Vajpayee's leadership.

"The pace of Indian economic growth was a matter of global recognition and the NDA government left its footprint in the infrastructure sector", he said. Expressing the party's "concern" for farmers, the statement said the BJP was proud of the performance of the NDA government and the meeting reaffirmed total faith in the leadership of Vajpayee and Advani.

RSS quit-call to BJP giants

SNS & PTI 9-8 12:07P

NEW DELHI, April 10. — The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh chief, Mr K Sudarshan, has hinted that Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee and Mr LK Advani should retire and let younger leaders take over the reigns of the BJP. He said both the leaders should take note of their age and remove themselves from active command of the party.

In an interview to a TV channel Mr Sudarshan said: "Mr Vajpayee should stay as senior adviser only." Asked whether the time had come for "some persons" to retire, he said: "Absolutely, age is a factor



Mr KS Sudarshan

after all." On whether Mr Advani was also getting old, the RSS chief said: "Yes." In Nasik today, he repeated his view without naming any BJP leader.

While the BJP declined to comment, the RSS today issued a denial saying the RSS chief's remarks have been taken out of

context and he never meant to interfere in the internal affairs of the BJP.

The remarks "are taken out of context and are not true. There is absolutely no discussion among RSS leadership," the RSS said in a press statement.

"Mr Sudarshan, while answering a general question, had made a very generalised observation about the age factor and politics and said that senior leaders should bring younger leaders forward and guide and advise them appropriately to lead the party," the RSS spokesman, Mr Ram Madhav, clarified.

"The Sangh does not interfere in the leadership question," he said.

সরে যান বাজপেয়ী-আডবাণী, দাবি সুদর্শনের

স্টাফ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি, ১০ এপ্রিল: নবীন প্রজন্মের হাতে দলের দায়িত্ব ছেড়ে দিয়ে বাজপেয়ী-আডবাণীর এ বার সরে যাওয়া উচিত বলে মন্তব্য করলেন রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সঙ্ঘ (আর এস এস)-এর প্রধান কে এস সুদর্শন। আজ একটি বেসরকারি টেলিভিশন চ্যানেলকে দেওয়া সাক্ষাৎকারে তিনি বলেছেন, বয়স হয়ে যাওয়ার ফলে ওই দুই নেতা ভাল ভাবে কাজ করতে পারছেন না। ওঁদের এখন শুধু দলের উপদেষ্টা হিসাবেই কাজ করে যাওয়া উচিত।

সুদর্শনের এই মন্তব্যে রাজনৈতিক মহলে শোরগোল পড়ে গিয়েছে। অতীতে বাজপেয়ীর সমালোচনা করলেও এই প্রথম আডবাণীর প্রতিও অনাস্থা প্রকাশ করল সঙ্ঘ পরিবার। বস্তুত, বিজেপির বর্তমান নেতৃত্বের সঙ্গে আরএসএসের সম্পর্ক মোটেই

ভাল যাচ্ছে না। এবং আরএসএস প্রসঙ্গে বিজেপি-ও দ্বিধাবিভক্ত। যেমন মাত্র কয়েক দিন আগে দলীয় বৈঠকে আডবাণীর ধমক খাওয়া সত্ত্বেও আজ পোপ দ্বিতীয় জন পলের মৃত্যুতে জাতীয় শোক ঘোষণা নিয়ে খোলাখুলি কেন্দ্রের সমালোচনা করেছেন বিজেপির সহ-সভাপতি বেক্কাইয়া নয়ডু। আরএসএসের প্রিয়পাত্র হওয়ার তাগিদেই তাঁর এই মন্তব্য বলে দলীয় সূত্রের মত।

সুদর্শন-বেক্কাইয়ার জোড়া মন্তব্যে বেক্কাইয়াকে তলব করেন। সেই বৈঠকে ছিলেন বিজেপি-র তরফে যিনি আরএসএসের সঙ্গে যোগাযোগ রেখে চলেন, সেই সঙ্ঘ জ্যেষ্ঠীও। আডবাণী তাঁদের বলেন, “দলে আমিই প্রথম নবীন প্রজন্মকে জায়গা করে দিতে



সুদর্শন



আডবাণী

বলেছিলাম। এটা তো ঠিক যে, আমাদের বয়স হয়েছে। উপযুক্ত নেতৃত্ব উঠে এলেই আমি পদ ছেড়ে চলে যাব। দল এ ব্যাপারে সিদ্ধান্ত নিক।” পোপ সম্পর্কে বেক্কাইয়ার মন্তব্য নিয়েও অসন্তোষ প্রকাশ করেন তিনি।

বেশ কিছু দিন ধরেই বাজপেয়ী বলেছেন, তিনি ক্রান্ত। এই প্রসঙ্গে সুদর্শন বলেছেন, “আমি তো বলছি, ওঁর সরে

যাওয়া উচিত। দুজনেরই উচিত পদত্যাগ করে নতুনদের জন্য জায়গা করে দেওয়া।” পরে সঙ্ঘের তরফে অবশ্য বাধ্য দিয়ে বলা হয়, বাজপেয়ী-আডবাণীকে আক্রমণ করে সুদর্শন কিছু বলেননি। বয়স হয়ে গেলে সাংগঠনিক দায়িত্ব পালন করা যে সম্ভব নয়, তা-ই বলতে চেয়েছেন।

অন্য দিকে, সম্প্রতি দলের কর্মসমিতির বৈঠকে পোপের মৃত্যুতে তিন দিন জাতীয় শোক পালনের সিদ্ধান্তের নিন্দা করে প্রস্তাব পাশ করাতে চেয়েছিলেন বেক্কাইয়া। আডবাণী সে দাবি পত্রপাঠ খারিজ করে দেন। তা সত্ত্বেও বেক্কাইয়া যে তাঁর অবস্থান থেকে সরেননি, আজকের মন্তব্যেই তার প্রমাণ। একটি বেসরকারি চ্যানেলকে সাক্ষাৎকারে আজ তিনি বলেছেন, পোপের মৃত্যুতে তিন দিনের

শোক ঘোষণা করে সাম্প্রদায়িকতার জন্ম দিয়েছে ইউপিএ সরকার। এর পরে অন্য ধর্মীয় গোষ্ঠী তাদের প্রধানের মৃত্যুতে জাতীয় শোক দাবি করলে কী হবে? এক বিজেপি নেতার মতে, ভবিষ্যতে সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের সমর্থন নিয়ে ফের সভাপতি হওয়ার বেক্কাইয়ার লক্ষ্য। এই মন্তব্যে আরএসএস যে খুশি হবে, তা তিনি বিলক্ষণ জানেন।

আডবাণী-বাজপেয়ীর প্রতি অনাস্থা প্রকাশের পাশাপাশি আজ গুজরাতের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী নরেন্দ্র মোদীর সমর্থনে সরব কাজ কিছু করছেন না। তাঁর কাজের ধরনটাই যা ঠিক নয়। কাজের ধরন বদলানো নিয়ে তাঁর সঙ্গে কথা হয়েছে বলে সঙ্ঘপ্রধান জানিয়েছেন। কালই মধ্যপ্রদেশ, ছত্তীসগড় ও রাজস্থানের মুখ্যমন্ত্রীদের নিয়ে সুদর্শনের সঙ্গে দেখা করেন মোদী।

BJP back to Ayodhya, influx

Shekhar Iyer

New Delhi, April 6

INFILTRATION FROM Bangladesh is the new emotive issue for the BJP — after Ayodhya. At its national council on Wednesday, the party vowed not only to work for construction of Ram temple but also go full blast on the issue of influx from across the eastern border, citing serious demographic changes in the Northeast.

Both the issues will now form a key element of the BJP's bid to nurse its ideological and organisational constituency for a renewed mandate. The timing is significant as elections are due in Assam and West Bengal next year.

Influx isn't a

Hindu-Muslim issue, but a national one.

Only those who don't have India's concerns in mind will call the stand communal

L.K. Advani

Advani devoted his speech, largely to Bangladeshi influx to Indian cities illegally, which he feared would

In the same breath, he called for "radical decisions" to check population growth.

"I want to make two things clear: The BJP views the threat of demographic invasion not as a Hindu-Muslim issue but as a national issue. Only those who do not have the interests of the Indian nation at heart will try to obfuscate this threat by calling our party's stand on the matter 'communal'."

Secondly, Advani said, the BJP wishes to see friendly relations between India and Bangladesh. "We hope Bangladesh reciprocates India's wish by agreeing to stop infiltration of its nationals and winding up its policy of giving shelter to anti-India terrorist groups."

Uma observes silence, skips meet

FIREBRAND LEADER Uma Bharti skipped the BJP's Delhi meeting and began a three-day "silence". She took part in religious ceremonies in Amarakantak, where she was solemnised as a *sanyasin*.

Bharti, who has been having a restricted diet ever since she reached the temple town on April 3, has started observing silence for three days from Wednesday, sources said. "She will remain in isolation for the next three days," they said. Uma spent the day performing special puja at Mai Ka Bagiya, before preparing to leave for another hermitage in the forests.

PTI, Bhopal

lead to another partition if not immediately checked. "It's a danger that, unfortunately, very few recognise as a danger. The PM should repeal IMDT and call an all-party meet to evolve a consensus on checking infiltration."

বিজেপির পঁচিশ বছর বিদ্রান্ত, তাই ভয় করে

গৌতম রায়

দেখতে দেখতে ভারতীয় জনতা পার্টির (বিজেপি) বয়স পঁচিশ হয়ে গেল। ১৯৮০-র এপ্রিলে তখনকার জনতা পার্টি থেকে বেরিয়ে এসে ভারতীয় জনসংঘের এই উত্তরসূরি অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীর সভাপতিত্বে তার নব পর্যায়ের রাজনৈতিক অভিযান শুরু করেছিল। '৭৭ সালে জনতা পার্টিতে মিশে গিয়ে কেন্দ্রে প্রথম অকংগ্রেসি সরকার গড়ার এবং অন্তর্কলহে তা টিকিয়ে রাখতে না-পারার তিক্ত অভিজ্ঞতাই জনসংঘীদের নিজস্ব সংগঠনে পুনর্নির্নয়িত হবার প্রেরণা দেয়। বাজপেয়ী তাঁর কাব্যবোধ নিয়ে সে দিন 'অন্ধকার কেটে গিয়ে সূর্যের প্রকাশ হওয়ার এবং পদ্মফুল ফুটে ওঠার' আশ্বাস শুনিয়েছিলেন। তবু পদ্ম বিশেষ ফুটছিল না। '৮৪-র লোকসভা নির্বাচনে মাত্র দুটি আসন দখল করতে পারে বিজেপি। তার পরই শুরু হয় অযোধ্যায় রামজন্মভূমি মন্দিরের আন্দোলন, যার গৈরিক প্রভাবে আর্থাবর্তই পদ্মময়।

সেই আন্দোলন, লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী'র রামরথের চক্রনির্ঘোষ, তার জেরে সৃষ্টি হওয়া সাম্প্রদায়িক বিভেদপন্থা, দাঙ্গা এবং মসজিদ ধ্বংস বিজেপির আত্মপরিচয় নির্ধারণ করে দেয়। হিন্দু জাগরণ, হিন্দুত্ববাদী শক্তির ফ্যাসিবাদী সমাবেশ এবং উগ্র জাতীয়তাবাদের আফালন তাকে চমকপ্রদ নির্বাচনী সাফল্যও এনে দেয়। এক লাফে প্রধান বিরোধী দল এবং তার পর একেবারে শাসক গোষ্ঠীতে পরিণত হয় বিজেপি। আর সেখান থেকেই শুরু হয় তার সফটও। কেন্দ্রীয় শাসক গোষ্ঠীর প্রধান শরিক হলেও জোটে অন্য শরিকদের চাপে এবং শাসক হওয়ার দায়বদ্ধতায় হিন্দুত্বের প্রকাশ্য ও স্পর্ধিত এজেন্ডা আন্তিনের আড়ালে লুকিয়ে ফেলতে হয়। মুখে উচ্চারণ করতে হয় সর্বধর্মসমভাবের সুভাষিত। হিন্দুত্বের লাঠিয়ালরা—করসেবক, বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ ও বজরঙ দলের স্বেচ্ছাসেবক—বিশ্বাসভঙ্গের দায়ে বিজেপি নেতৃত্বকে কাঠগড়ায় দাঁড় করায়। এমনকী রাষ্ট্রীয় স্বয়ংসেবক সংঘও হিন্দুত্বের পরীক্ষিত সড়ক থেকে বিচ্যুত হওয়ার জন্য দোষারোপ করতে থাকে। এরই পাশাপাশি দলীয় সরকারের আর্থিক নীতি, গ্রামীণ ও শহুরে দরিদ্রদের কল্যাণের প্রতি উদাসীন উন্নয়নের এজেন্ডা আম জনতাকেও বিজেপির প্রতি বিরূপ করে তোলে। ছ'বছর নিরবচ্ছিন্ন শাসন চালানোর পর 'অন্য রকম দল' হওয়ার দাবি, 'সবাইকে পরখ করেছেন, আমাদের একবার সুযোগ দিন' শ্লোগানও তার প্রাসঙ্গিকতা হারায়। গত নির্বাচনে বিজেপির ভরাডুবি হয়, রাজ্য-রাজ্যে তার শরিকরাও বিধ্বস্ত হয়।

এই প্রেক্ষিতেই রৌপ্য জয়ন্তী উদযাপনের লগ্ন এসেছে। এটা দলীয় নেতৃত্বের সামনে আত্মসমীক্ষা করার সুযোগও বটে। কিন্তু দলীয় মুখপাত্রদের বিবৃতিতে দেখছি অনুতাপহীন বিপথগামিতায় প্রত্যাবর্তনের ব্যগ্রতা। শুনছি রাম-মন্দির নির্মাণের অসমাপ্ত কৃত্য সমাপনের অঙ্গীকার। দলের অগ্রগতির মাইলফলক রূপে তুলে ধরা হচ্ছে আডবানী'র তিনটি এবং মুরলীমনোহরের একটি 'যাত্রা'র গুরুত্ব। এমনকী '৫৩ সালে কাশ্মীরে শ্যামাপ্রসাদ মুখোপাধ্যায়ের গ্রেফতারি ও মৃত্যুর স্মৃতিও খুঁটিয়ে তোলা হচ্ছে। অর্থাৎ ঘুরে-ফিরে সেই হিন্দুত্ব। তা হলে বাবরি ধ্বংসোত্তর জঙ্গি হিন্দুত্বের দিগ্বিজয়ের শ্রেষ্ঠ মাইলফলক গুজরাতের নরমেধ যজ্ঞই বা বাদ থাকে কেন? হয়তো থাকবে না। কারণ স্বয়ং নরেন্দ্র মোদী তো জয়ন্তী অনুষ্ঠানের মঞ্চ আলো করে রয়েছেনই। মাঝখান থেকে বেচারি উমা ভারতী তাঁর 'তিরঙা যাত্রা'র জন্য কোনও পুষ্পস্তবক পাচ্ছেন না, যেমন পাচ্ছেন না সুসমা স্বরাজও তাঁর সাভারকর যাত্রার জন্য (অথচ সনিয়ার প্রধানমন্ত্রিত্ব ঠেকাতে ওই দুই সাধ্বীই বৈধব্যব্রত প্রায় নিয়েই ফেলেছিলেন। রাজনীতিকরা কত দ্রুত সব ভুলে যায়। নইলে দলের রৌপ্যজয়ন্তীতে ডাক না পেয়ে উমা অমরকণ্টকে মৌন ও উপবাসব্রতধারী!)

গত পঁচিশ বছরে বিজেপির সবচেয়ে বড় সাফল্য অবশ্যই

কেন্দ্রে ২৩ দলের কোয়ালিশন চালানো। এই প্রথম একটি অকংগ্রেসি সরকার কেন্দ্রে তার পুরো মেয়াদ কাটাতে পেরেছে। কোয়ালিশন রাজনীতি ভারতের ভবিষ্যৎ ধরে নিলে এই সাফল্যের পূঁজি তাকে ভবিষ্যতে আবার ক্ষমতায় ফেরাতে পারে। সাফল্যটির মূলে আছে জাতীয় রাজনীতির বিভাজন ও খণ্ডীকরণ মেনে নেবার, রাজ্য-রাজ্যে আঞ্চলিক, জনজাতীয় ও জাতপাতভিত্তিক রাজনৈতিক সংগঠনের অনিবার্যতা শিরোধার্য করার এবং তাদের উচ্চাকাঙ্ক্ষা ও দরকষাকষির সঙ্গে নিজেকে খাপ খাওয়ানোর নমনীয়তা। লক্ষ করবেন—কেন্দ্রে বিজেপি গদিত্যুত হলেও বিহারে, ঝাড়খণ্ডে, অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশ, মহারাষ্ট্রে কিংবা পঞ্জাবে আঞ্চলিক দলগুলি কেউ বিজেপির জোট ছাড়াই। এই বঙ্গ মমতাও নন। এর কারণ সম্ভবত এই যে, অকংগ্রেসি যে সোশালিস্ট-স্বতন্ত্র-লোহিয়াবাদী-জয়প্রকাশপন্থী রাজনীতি কংগ্রেসের অবক্ষয়ের যুগে জনতা পার্টির ছায়ার দানা বেঁধেছিল, তার উত্তরাধিকার বিজেপিই বহন করছে।

মণ্ডলায়ন অবশ্য ওই অকংগ্রেসি শিবিরকে মাঝ-পথে অনেকটাই ছত্রভঙ্গ করে দেয়। হিন্দুত্বের কমগুণ (সংরক্ষণবিরোধী আন্দোলন) দিয়ে মণ্ডলায়ন ঠেকাতে ব্যর্থ বিজেপিও তখন বিকল্প হিসাবে সোশাল ইঞ্জিনিয়ারিং-এর এজেন্ডা অনুশীলনে উদ্যত হয়। গুজরাত ও উত্তরপ্রদেশের অনগ্রসর নেতা শঙ্করসিন বাগেলা এবং কল্যাণ সিংহকে মুখ্যমন্ত্রিত্বে এনে আর্থাবর্তে মণ্ডল রাজনীতির পালের হাওয়া কেড়ে নেবার চেষ্টা করে বিজেপি। সে প্রয়াস ব্যর্থ হলেও মণ্ডলায়নের জঠরজাত লোহিয়াপন্থী জাতপাতের সংগঠন ও নেতাদের অধিকাংশকেই বিজেপি জয় করে নেয়। তা ছাড়াও শিক্ষিত মধ্যশ্রেণিকে বিজেপির আর্থিক সংস্কার নীতি আকৃষ্ট করে। গত নির্বাচনে বিজেপির বিপর্যয়ে সবচেয়ে মর্মান্বিত হয় এই শ্রেণিই, তারা যে বিজেপিকেই ভোট দিয়েছিল।

পরাজয় মেনে নিতে না-পারার নাবালকোচিত অসূয়া আজও বিজেপি নেতারা বর্জন করতে পারেননি। তাঁদের ক্ষমতা এখন দেশের মাত্র তিনটি বড় রাজ্যে সীমিত। তার মধ্যে আবার গুজরাতে নরেন্দ্র মোদীর অপসারণের দাবিতে বিক্ষুব্ধরা মাঝেমধ্যেই আডবানী'র দরবারে হানা দিচ্ছেন। মধ্যপ্রদেশে অপ্রতিরোধ্য উমা ভারতীকেও বাগ মানাতে হিমসিম খেতে হচ্ছে নেতৃত্বকে। আডবানী'র পর দলকে নেতৃত্ব দেবার মতো সর্বজনগ্রাহ্য রাজনীতিক তৈরি হয়নি, হবার

কোনও লক্ষণও নেই। অরুণ জেটলির কোনও গণভিত্তি নেই, আর প্রমোদ মহাজনকে তো মহারাষ্ট্রের সব কর্মীও সমর্থকও মানেন না। বাধ্য হয়ে আডবানী'র যাকে নেতৃত্বে ফেরাতে চাইছেন, সেই বেঙ্কাইয়া নায়াড় তো প্রথম দিনেই পোপ পলের মৃত্যুতে তিন দিনের রাষ্ট্রীয় শোকের বিরুদ্ধে হিন্দুত্ববাদী নিন্দাপত্রবৎ এনে বসলেন! উপরন্তু মাত্র পঁচিশ বছরেই ঘটে গেছে নেতিবাচক অর্থে বিজেপির কংগ্রেসায়ন। আর্থিক কোলেস্কারিতে অভিমুক্ত মহাজন, নগদ নিতে গিয়ে ধরা-পড়া বঙ্গার লক্ষণ ও দিলীপ সিংহ জুদেও হয়তো হিমশৈলের ভাসমান চূড়া মাত্র। দুর্নীতি, স্বজনপোষণ ও দলবাজির যে অভিযোগের তিরগুলি কংগ্রেসের দিকে ছোড়া হত, এখন বিজেপি নেতারাি আট্টেপুটে সেই শরবিদ্ধ। গোবিন্দাচার্যকে যতই কোণঠাসা করা হোক, এখন বোঝা যাচ্ছে, 'মডার্নিটি' বাজপেয়ীকে তাঁর সংঘ পরিবারের মুখোশ আখ্যা দেওয়াটা যথার্থই ছিল। গুজরাত দাঙ্গায় বাজপেয়ী সরকারের ভূমিকা এবং সে সম্পর্কে তদানীন্তন রাষ্ট্রপতির সখের সমালোচনা তার জ্বলন্ত প্রমাণ। অনুরাগীরা বাজপেয়ীকে ভারতীয় রাজনীতির 'পিতামহ ভীষ্ম' কিংবা 'বরিষ্ঠ রাষ্ট্রনায়ক' (Elder Statesman) জাতীয় গালভরা অভিধায় ভূষিত করলেও কার্যত তিনি ধৃতরাষ্ট্রের খাপেই বেশি মানানসই, কুরুক্ষেত্রের মহারণের পর হস্তিনাপুরে যার প্রাসঙ্গিকতা ফুরিয়েছে। বৃদ্ধ আডবানীকেই অগত্যা দমকল নিয়ে চতুর্দিকে ছোটাছুটি করতে হচ্ছে। তাঁর হাতে চার বছর সময় আছে। আর একটা সাধারণ নির্বাচন আসন্ন হলে আবার কি একটা বাবরি কিংবা একটা গুজরাত পুনরাবৃত্ত হবে? নিদেন পক্ষে আবার একটা রামরথযাত্রা? ভয় করে!

07 APR 2005

ANADABAZAR PATRIKA

Embarrassing Modi

Dissidents continue their campaign

Narendra Modi may have got a reprieve from the BJP high command but his detractors in the Gujarat unit have not yet given up. Dissident MLAs, who make up about half of the party's numbers, led by four prominent MPs and a former chief minister are still determined to embarrass the "autocratic" Modi into expanding his Cabinet and allowing them to elect a new state unit president. While LK Advani ruled out a change of chief minister, he did tell Modi to be more "accommodating". It could not have been easy for Modi to listen to such advice, followed by slogans of "Narendra Modi murdabad" a few days later in Ahmedabad in his and Advani's presence — and that too by members of his own party. Modi and Advani were embarrassed further when the father and family of the late Haren Pandya, whose statue they had come to unveil, walked out of the function as Advani rose to speak, calling Modi a murderer.

It has been a bad month for Modi starting with the denial of the US visa, which he tried to make political capital of by suggesting it was a slur on national pride. But Gujaratis are a little tired of having their pride so inextricably linked with Modi's. The "Swabhiman rally" was a damp squib with all the dissidents staying away. This was followed by his decision to cancel his trip to the UK. Modi, who likes to project himself as the "saviour" of both Gujaratis and Hindutva, tried to twist facts to suggest it was the Prime Minister who was concerned about his safety when in fact he had chickened out. The "brave" Modi found egg on his face when the PMO set the record straight. Advani, Modi's mentor, could not let him down under such circumstances and so even before the dissident MPs met the party leadership, it was clear that Modi would continue as chief minister. Unexpectedly, the dissidents refused to back down, and continued to use every opportunity to embarrass Modi. Dissidents are simply biding their time and Modi should prepare for more embarrassments.

06 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

Flip-flop on ideology and governance

Advani mantra puzzles party

RADHIKARAMASESHAN

New Delhi, April 4: BJP president L.K. Advani has left his party members a "little confused".

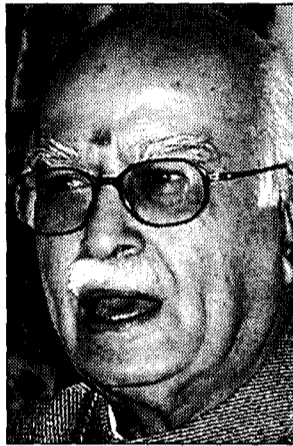
Yesterday, Advani had said his party would have to "compromise" with its ideology if it aspired to rule and give "good governance". Exactly 24 hours later, he declared "we will come back to power when we get a full mandate to carry out our ideological objectives".

The BJP president also said the construction of a Ram temple on the "disputed" site in Ayodhya remains an "unfulfilled desire", besides giving a clean chit to Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi and asserting that there was no way the BJP would ever sever ties with the RSS.

Having urged party workers not to articulate their problems through the media — print or TV — he gave a series of interviews to television channels. His statements were splashed across TV over the two days the BJP spent to gear up for its silver anniversary celebrations from tomorrow at Ambedkar Stadium here.

Party sources, looking for "ideological clarity" and a "sense of political direction" to revive the BJP, said they were a "little confused".

Advani had yesterday pulled out one of his own coinages from his bag — "de-ideologis-



Advani: To compromise or not?

ing governance". He had used the term during a national executive when the NDA was in power to justify his party indulging in "five-star culture", as the RSS had alleged.

In an interview to a news channel yesterday, he said the "five-star" charge appears "absurd" today because the "touchstone for judging what is simplicity and austerity also has to change".

Advani added: "I feel that everything in the country ought to be five-star, which means it should be excellent. ... The country would benefit in proportion to wider acceptance of this attitude."

The BJP chief said his party could not carry the ideological baggage of the past if it was to be taken seriously as a

party of governance and a leader of a larger coalition.

"Is it not a good ideal that your government should be stable? Either you decide that you are going to be an ideological pressure group, which will remain a pressure group in Indian politics, nothing more, nothing less. But if you aspire to become a ruling party and give good governance to the country, then you must compromise."

BJP insiders said the RSS had conveyed through "appropriate" sources that Advani's statements did not go down too well with its leaders.

Today, the BJP leader changed his tune and spoke of how important the Ram temple was to his party's agenda.

Advani stressed that the BJP's commitment to building a temple was "irreversible".

"If we had been able to get a renewed mandate in the Lok Sabha, it would have been a few more months that there would be an agreement between Hindus and Muslims in respect of constructing a Ram temple," he said.

Sources said Advani's unveiling of a statue of Haren Pandya, the anti-Modi politician who was murdered, in Ahmedabad yesterday was being seen as a "gesture of assurance" to dissidents gunning for the Gujarat chief minister's scalp. He today rubbished the speculation as "incorrect".

05 APR 2005

THE TELEGRAPH

Warring Guj BJP camps patch up

Advani Pacifies Rebels, Modi Loyalists

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Gandhinagar/New Delhi: The breakfast menu must have been really good. Or, was there any other reason for both the dissidents and loyalists to be "satisfied" with the talks they had at the residence of BJP president L K Advani?

By all accounts all that the BJP leadership assured the dissident leaders at the end of the nearly three-hour meeting was that corrective measures would be taken shortly. Yet, they seemed happy

went to meet former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee and spent half an hour with him.

All this while, restive dissident MLAs in Gandhinagar were waiting for a word from their leaders. After Venkaiah's briefing, where he said that the leadership issue was "not discussed", they made frantic calls to find out what really went wrong, if at all. The talks they had with the troika brought back the smiles. As the meeting ended, Advani told all the participants, looking at the direction of Keshubhai, "Only Venkaiahji is going to brief the press. None of you will say a word."

"Advaniji is coming to Gujarat shortly to hear us out. Even though he may not have taken sides, what is important is that he gave a very patient hearing to all that our leaders had to tell him about Modi," said a rebel spokesman.

Details trickling out of the meeting suggested that it all began with Keshubhai handing over a 57-point charter to Advani, explaining the reasons for MLAs to rise in revolt. Keshubhai did most of the talking which focused on the op-

pressive environment even for MLAs under the Modi regime, telephone tapping, tailing by intelligence sleuths, humiliation meted out to political workers in the Sachivalay, corruption at various levels and high-handed in governance which bordered on dictatorship.

At one point, Keshubhai said even he was threatened by Modi that he had records of conversations what other BJP leaders were discussing among themselves. Rana and Mehta are learnt to have complained how the MLAs had been turned into pygmies. Leave alone secretaries and district collectors, even taluka level officials do not listen to them. "The MLAs have no clout in their constituencies," Advani was told.

The other issues raised at the meeting included the hype around the government's performance through state-sponsored festivals and investment meets. Stress was laid on how the rejection of the US visa to Modi had shown Gujarat and Gujaratis in poor light all over the world.



Former BJP president M Venkaiah Naidu addresses the media after a meeting at BJP president L K Advani's residence in New Delhi on Thursday

at the end of it.

Similarly there was jubilation in the Narendra Modi camp. "The party has clearly told these people (dissidents) that the state leadership issue is non-negotiable," said a Modi loyalist. The loyalists also spoke about expansion of the cabinet, appointment of a new state BJP president and formation of a coordination committee to iron out the nagging problems which has bred this dissidence as the solutions offered by Advani and ex-president Venkaiah Naidu at the meeting, the latter being a last-minute invitee to the breakfast table.

Two significant things happened at the meeting. One, Keshubhai requested that the BJP observer for Gujarat, Om Mathur, leave the meeting room. An embarrassed Mathur—who is perceived as a Modi loyalist—had to stay out for full 40 minutes. Two, it was clear that the dissidents were not putting all their eggs in one basket. Soon after the meeting and Venkaiah Naidu's briefing, Keshubhai Patel, Suresh Mehta and Kashiram Rana

Modi not giving up his fight yet

By Kingshuk Nag
TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: A well-known astrologer had foretold a few months ago that Narendra Modi would face acute trouble, late February onwards. That prediction proved right, but there is no telling as yet whether the Gujarat chief minister would be able to — politically — survive bad times and save his chair. Indicative of Modi's nervousness, the strongman told a TV channel that he would abide by the party's decision about his future.

But Narendra Modi - true to his nature - is not giving up just as yet. Even as he flew to Delhi on Tuesday morning to attend a meeting of the inter-state council and also lobby for himself, the Sangh Parivar seems to be confused on what to do with its Hindutva hero. While one section of the Parivar remains convinced that Hindutva has no future without an upcoming leader like Modi, the others are equally sure that the Gujarat CM is no Hindutva hero and actually is a liability. In fact it is this latter line that the rebel trio of Keshubhai Patel, Kashiram Rana and Suresh Mehta is going to push forward in their crucial meeting with L K Advani on Wednesday.

Modi, before going to Delhi made a strong attempt to soften Suresh Mehta and break the tie between the rebels. Modi met up with Mehta and made some overtures to Kashiram Rana.

"The BJP is a dominant force in Gujarat for over a decade and has been so even without Modi's presence. Modi has only brought a bad name to Gujarat," said a confidante of

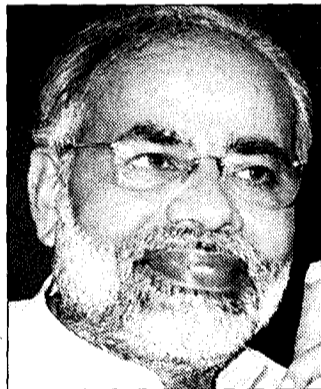
a top rebel leader suggesting that this would be part of the argument to be forwarded by the rebels. He added: "A few more years at the helm and Modi would have succeeded in destroying the BJP in its prime state."

The rebels are also expected to reiterate — in no uncertain terms — that they are not interested in any compromise formula and the only solution acceptable to the rank and file of MLAs is the ouster of Modi. They would also press forward that Modi is a "non performer" and the image of a good administrator is part of the hype being created by his publicity men.

With the campaign for his removal gathering strength, Modi sympathisers have also launched a blitzkrieg. As part of this, pamphlets seeking to play on fears of a section of the public are being circulated. One such pamphlet suggests that elements like Teesta Javed (Teesta Setalvad) would rule the roost, if Modi goes.

Modimen have also been in touch with rebels, proffering different arguments. Non Patel MLAs are being told that the present disaffection is Patel centred only for the benefit of the Patels. So there is nothing for them in the exercise. Similarly, north Gujarat MLAs are being impressed upon that Modi is from the region and therefore it is advantageous for them to allow the chief minister a free run. Some other backward caste (OBC) MLAs are also being reminded that Modi is himself an OBC.

At the same time, Modimen say that the CM is now ready for a compromise involving a large expansion of his cabinet and appointment of partymen as director in public sector companies. This is something Modi had been resisting for a long time.



Dissidents bullish about removing Modi

By Jyotirmaya Sharma

AHMEDABAD, MARCH 28. Senior dissident leaders of the Bharatiya Janata Party from Gujarat are meeting the party president, L.K. Advani, on Thursday in New Delhi to press their demand for the removal of the Chief Minister, Narendra Modi. Keshubhai Patel and Suresh Mehta, both former Chief Ministers, are expected to brief Mr. Advani. The former Union Minister, Kashiram Rana, and the State BJP president, Rajendrasinh Rana, are also expected to attend the meeting.

While none of the dissident leaders is willing to go on record, reliable sources close to these leaders suggest that the door for reconciliation and co-existence with Mr. Modi has now been decisively closed. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, it is learnt, has also indicated that it is not averse to Mr. Modi's departure. This has considerably emboldened the Modi detractors.

Mangalore meeting

These sources allude to a recent meeting in Mangalore between Mr. Advani and the senior leadership of the RSS from Gujarat, where Mr. Advani sought the help of the Sangh to devise a formula that would placate the dissidents without removing Mr. Modi.

This attempt, the sources say, was rebuffed by the Gujarat RSS leadership, which strongly argued in favour of a leadership change. It is also reliably learnt that the BJP central leadership's seeming solidarity with Mr. Modi has now been openly questioned by the senior dissident leaders. They feel that the interests of the party in Gujarat have for too long been sacrificed in the name of the party's national image and interests. Some senior leaders have gone to the extent of questioning Mr. Advani's political judgment. To support this observation, they cite the instance of Mr. Advani viewing the denial of a U.S. visa

to Mr. Modi as an opportunity to start a movement that would revive the fortunes of the BJP and ignite the cadres.

The dissident case against Mr. Modi has been formulated at various levels. The dismal performance of the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections of 2004 is a decisive factor. If the results of the 2004 Lok Sabha elections were to be translated in future into the party's standing in assembly constituencies, the BJP would end up with 90 seats instead of the 127 seats it won in 2002.

Legislators "alienated"

Dissident leaders also claim that Mr. Modi has alienated elected representatives of the BJP through his "abrasive, authoritarian and undemocratic style of functioning." Instances of his inaccessibility and bypassing of the local party structures are repeatedly cited. Many senior leaders have also conveyed to Mr. Advani their serious reservations about Mr. Modi's inclination towards excess and his "megalomaniacal streak." Neither do the dissident leaders want a repeat of the situation where Mr. Modi was "foisted" on the State by the central leadership of the BJP without consulting a single leader from the State.

This time round, the BJP leadership would ignore the sentiments of the legislators only to the peril and detriment of the party in Gujarat, they emphasise. They argue that the BJP central leadership does not have to elaborately choreograph Mr. Modi's departure; there have been instances in the past, notably, Mr. Keshubhai Patel in Gujarat and Rajnath Singh in U.P., when Chief Ministers have been changed without much fuss or fanfare. The same ought to apply to Mr. Modi, they argue.

Mr. Modi will be in Delhi tomorrow to attend the standing committee meeting of the Inter-State Council called by the Centre. He is likely to meet Mr. Advani.

29 MAR 2005

RSS meet confirms commitment to ideology

By Our Staff Correspondent

BHOPAL, MARCH 24. The two-day Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) "Chintan Baithak" (brainstorming meeting) concluded here today with the consensus that the Sangh parivar and its allied organisations, including the Bharatiya Janata Party, should remain committed to their basic ideology "with no reason to be apologetic" about it.

Briefing the Press, the RSS spokesman, Ram Madhav, said here this evening that this message has also been communicated to the BJP leaders. Mr. Madhav said it has been felt that the distancing of the BJP from the RSS ideology was one of the factors that led to the defeat of the NDA in the last election. He said the RSS chief, K.S. Sudershan was especially present at this meeting. Prominent BJP leaders who attended the Chintan Baithak included former party president, Venkaiah Naidu, Bal Apte, Sanjay Joshi and the former Union Minister, Murli Manohar Joshi. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad was also represented at this meeting.

Mr. Madhav said the Bhopal conclave was hosted by Swami Dayanand, who has his ashrams

at Rishikesh and Coimbatore. This was the first time after the National Democratic Alliance Government's defeat in the last parliamentary elections that such a "chintan baithak" had been organised. Mr. Madhav said that over the past one year, in-house discussions have been continuing within the Sangh parivar on the "ideology issue" and the RSS is absolutely clear about its ideology. He said the Bhopal exercise was joined by about four dozen intellectuals, writers and mediapersons (with ideological affinity).

"We listened to them and also gave them inputs for generating awareness among the people," said Mr. Madhav. Over the last eight or nine-month period, after the United Progressive Alliance Government came to power at the Centre, all the vital issues of national interest have come under attack from the Central Government, the RSS spokesman said emphasising that the Hindu movement was now being maligned. This was the common view at the Bhopal meeting, he added. Mr. Madhav said that the Communists and the Leftists were presently engaged in backseat driving and some Union Ministers have vir-

tually become puppets in their hands.

When asked to clarify on this count, he cited the example of the Union Human Resource Development Minister, Arjun Singh and describing him as a "master-purger" said he was directly interfering with academics as well as appointments at various levels. He also alleged that there was a conspiracy against the Kanchi Shankaracharya.

On the denial of visa by the U.S Government to the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, he said: "this is the height of American arrogance. The U.S. is behaving like a big bully and an arrogant and spoilt child. It is not just Narendra Modi but even Ramchandra Guha, considered to be a "secular intellectual", who has now become a victim of U.S. "dadagiri" (bullying tactics)," Mr. Madhav added. He further said that deliberations were also held on the dangers of demographic imbalance in the country. "We are confronted with an alarming scenario due to growing imbalance between the growth rates of the Hindu population on the one hand and that of the Muslims and Christians on the other.

THE HINDU

25 MAR 2005

Anti-Modi camp looks up to Advani

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Every time Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi has faced internal dissension, it is BJP president L K Advani who has vetoed any move to dislodge him. This time round it is not different. Dissident BJP MLAs are realising that it is Advani, once again, who is proving to be the main stumbling block in their mission to bring about a leadership change in Gujarat.

And the cancellation of Modi's US visa hasn't really helped their cause, even though there has been no improvement in the CM's popularity rating in Gujarat.

There is now a growing realisation among rebels that they will have to do something spectacular to draw Advani's attention towards Gujarat.

Even after successive meetings which former chief minister Keshubhai Patel and other MPs have had with Advani in recent weeks, there has been no signal from the party president that he would dislodge Modi.

The view of the party leadership so far has been that they would not like to encourage dissidence in Gujarat, fearing it will affect other BJP-ruled states. Besides, making a habit of changing chief ministers mid-term is not a good governance policy. And there is this predicament of the party on what role to assign to a belligerent Modi in case a change becomes necessary.

Keshubhai has returned from Delhi and has again started meeting dissident MLAs like Gordhanbhai Zadaphia and Dhirubhai Gajera to sense the mood

among the MLAs. But this seems to be an exercise to ascertain the mood of the MLAs after the end of the assembly session and the eruption of the visa controversy, rather than trying to give a direction to the anti-Modi campaign.

Though Advani had promised that he would be looking into the Gujarat issue after the end of the budget session of the assembly on March 18, it is still not clear when and where this meeting will take place. State BJP president Rajendrasinh Rana, who has been camping in Delhi, is awaiting a directive on this matter.

A team of senior ministers headed by Vajubhai Vala, who had a detailed discussion with



Narendra Modi



L K Advani

the central leadership in Delhi last week, has also underlined the fact that though there may be a sizable number of MLAs who do not approve of the CM's style of functioning, Modi still enjoys majority support in the BJP legislature party. The ministers have also pointed out that the orchestrated revolt against Modi came under the purview of party indiscipline.

The feeling is that Advani, who is slated to be in Ahmedabad on Sunday to unveil the statue of late Haren Pandya, may use that opportunity to hear out the dissidents. Advani was here on last Sunday too for Modi's Swabhiman rally.

Party sources have indicated that Advani is looking for a "compromise formula" because he would not like to entirely ignore the rebellion. His emissaries, including Om Mathur and Sanjay Joshi, are in touch with Keshubhai Patel and other dissident leaders like Kashiram Rana and Vallabh Kathiria on the broad outline of this formula.

'Virtual' Modi goes soft on US

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: Hours after raving and ranting against the US over the issue of denial of visa to him, Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi suddenly went soft on Uncle Sam during his hour-long tele-conference which was shown live on Sunday evening (Monday morning IST) before a gathering of the Association of Indi-

an Americans in North America (AIANA) at the Madison Square Garden in New York.

There was no rhetoric of the kind seen at the 'Bharat swabhiman rally' in Ahmedabad on Sunday where he took on the US, blaming factors like the passage of the anti-conversion bill in the Gujarat assembly and the Iran oil pipeline which passes through Gujarat for the decision. He even compared Gujarat to Iraq. However, on Monday, a softened Modi said, "I

Decision stays: US

New Delhi: The US on Monday reaffirmed its decision to revoke the visa to Gujarat CM Narendra Modi. US ambassador to India David C Mulford told reporters here that the state department after a review following India's request had stuck to its earlier decision of declining him visa in the light of 2002 Gujarat riots. PTI



have no grievance against the US or the people of that country."

Addressing the largely Indian-American audience over satellite, he told them that a "disinformation campaign" had been launched to malign India. In fact, he criticised those who had rallied against his US tour. Modi urged Indians living in the US to act as ambassadors to counter the "propagan-

da launched by certain motivated groups having vested interests in defaming India".

To a question on the visa issue from a participant in the US, he said, "I have no reaction. I believe only in action. A handful of people managed to publish false information and succeeded in defaming India. Such false campaigns can be countered by putting forth facts along with explanations."

► Indo-Americans stage protests, Page 12

Modi, the U.S., and visa power

By Siddharth Varadarajan

THE DENIAL of a U.S. visa to Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi has evoked a predictably strong reaction from the Bharatiya Janata Party, less strident objections from the Congress party and a formal, diplomatically correct protest from the government of India, whose *note verbale* requesting a visa went unheeded.

For Mr. Modi, who identified closely with many of the policies of the Bush administration, the visa denial is a particularly cruel blow. After all, the United States was perhaps the only major (or minor) country in the 'West' not to express its concerns about the Gujarat violence while it was going on. Even tiny Finland saw fit to raise its voice, inviting a stinging rebuke from the External Affairs Ministry, but not Washington.

The BJP says the visa rejection has hurt India's national pride but this does not appear to be a perception that is shared widely by Indians, who see the saffron party's appeals to *swabhimaan* (self-respect) and constitutionalism as largely self-serving. There is no Constitution in the world that requires a country to grant foreign nationals a visa to enter its territory; on the other hand, every Constitution, India's included, obliges governments to investigate and punish individuals involved in large-scale violence against its citizens.

Investigations by the National Human Rights Commission, the CBI (in the Bilkis Bano case), and scores of non-governmental bodies have documented numerous acts of omission and commission, suggesting official connivance with the perpetrators of the violence. Even if one accepts the argument that Mr. Modi knew nothing at all about the manner in which more than 2,000 Muslims were targeted and killed across his State in the weeks following the Godhra incident of 2002, his failure to investigate these crimes and punish the guilty is manifest. No less a judicial authority than the Supreme Court of India has pointed this out.

All countries exercise their right to issue visas (and even passports) keeping in mind their own definition or perception of national interest. Thus, the National Democratic Alliance Government tightened the procedure for granting foreign scholars visas to attend conferences on "political" subjects or conduct research on "sensitive" topics or areas. More recently, a Dutch professor and expert on Assam and the Northeast had his application for an Indian visa rejected.

Foreign governments can protest, concerned Indians can criticise their Government's pig-headedness and agitate for a more liberal approach, and the courts may intervene but

If the BJP believes it is a victim of U.S. double standards, it has also benefited from the same duplicity in the past.

that is unfortunately the way the law works.

In the United States, perhaps more than any other country, visas have always been used as a foreign policy tool. During the Cold War, membership in a Communist party or allied organisation was grounds for a visa rejection, as was former membership of the Nazi party. Over the years, hundreds of dissident or progressive intellectuals and artistes were denied U.S. visas because of their Leftist views (and this continues to happen on a slightly diminished scale even now). In practice, being a Nazi was much less of a disqualification — since the U.S. was interested in recruiting German rocket and nuclear scientists and intelligence assets — but that issue need not detain us here.

Ever since the end of the Cold War, the U.S. has started rejecting visas on the grounds of involvement in corruption, torture and human rights abuses, and violations of religious freedom. These restrictions have developed in tandem with the growing tendency to consider gross violations of human rights as transgressions of international law and international humanitarian law. However, unlike the attempt to prosecute offenders in jurisdictions other than that of their own countries — for example the well-known case against former Chilean dictator Augusto Pinochet in a Spanish court — the denial of visas per se does not represent the extra-territoriality of law enforcement.

Prominent U.S. visa rejects in recent years include Lt. Gen. Prabowo Subianto, the son-in-law of former Indonesian President Suharto, who was denied a visa in 2000 on the grounds of being suspected of involvement in torture, former Philippine President Joseph Estrada, who was denied a U.S. visa for medical treatment ostensibly because Washington said it could not "guarantee his security," and two senior Yugoslav parliamentary officials — Srdja Bozovic, who was president of the Chamber of Republics, and Ljubisa Ristic, president of parliament's foreign policy committee — because their names figured on a list of "regime associates" of Slobodan Milosevic.

For many years, the U.S. has informally used the existence of corruption charges against public officials as a reason to deny a visa. Last year, for example, Gregory Surkis, a Ukrainian MP and close ally of then Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, was denied a U.S. visa for allegedly interfering with his

country's electoral process. The then Ukrainian Interior Minister Mykola Bilokon was put on a visa watch list with the presumption of denial in case he ever applied. In 1996, Ernesto Samper's U.S. visa was revoked when he was Colombia's President.

On January 12, 2005, President George W. Bush formally issued a proclamation amending section 212 of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act to "suspend" entry into the U.S. of public officials "whose solicitation or acceptance of any article of monetary value, or other benefit, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of their public functions has or had serious adverse effects on the national interests of the United States." The new rule has already been invoked against Panamanian and Kenyan officials and elected representatives.

There is no denying the subjective, arbitrary and ultimately political nature of these provisions. For every alleged money-launderer, corrupt official, violator of religious freedom or torturer kept out, hundreds of others have had no problem getting a U.S. visa. Indeed, double standards have been explicitly written into the law: Section 2 of Mr. Bush's January 12 proclamation says the visa ban "shall not apply with respect to any person otherwise covered by (the ban) where entry of the person into the United States would not be contrary to the interests of the U.S." And this determination is at the sole discretion of the Secretary of State.

But if Mr. Modi today cries that he is a victim of double standards, BJP leaders have also benefited from these double standards in the past. When the human rights of Muslim Gujaratis were being violated on a large-scale in 2002, for example, the U.S. preferred to keep its counsel. Had 2,000 Bahais been killed in Iran or Christians in Indonesia or Malaysia, there would have been howls of protest from Washington.

But those were the days of great bonhomie between the BJP leadership and the Bush administration and Washington perhaps did not want to bring up an issue that might come in the way of the strategic realignment it was trying to engineer in Indian foreign policy. L.K. Advani, who travelled to the U.S. as Deputy Prime Minister in June 2003 and promised Indian soldiers as cannon fodder for the U.S. occupation of Iraq, had no trouble getting a visa despite being formally charge-sheeted in a major case involving religious discrimination — the demolition of

the Babri Masjid.

Even as he leads the rally for Mr. Modi's right to accumulate frequent-flyer miles, Mr. Advani should ask why it was in U.S. national interest to give him a visa in 2003 and why it is not in U.S. national interest to let the Gujarat Chief Minister in today. My own guess is that given the defeat of the BJP-led NDA at the Centre, Washington can now afford to pay heed to its own domestic lobbies — including the patriotic Indian-American community — that believe that Indian officials suspected of involvement in mass violence should not be allowed to travel to the U.S. Simply put, denying a visa to Mr. Modi is a relatively low-cost political decision.

For all those concerned about U.S. double standards, the Modi visa affair throws up a number of challenges. Denying a visa to one alleged violator of religious freedom but granting it to another is a matter of domestic U.S. policy that public opinion in the United States will have to take up. But if the BJP is serious, it cannot cherry-pick which instances of double standards it will oppose. When the party was in power, it endorsed the underlying discourse of hegemonic arbitrariness (whereby, for example, some countries get designated as 'terrorist sponsors'), applauded the growing extra-territorial reach of the U.S. and sought closely to align India with the projection of Washington's military might.

Today, BJP leaders are referring to the Iraq invasion and Abu Ghraib. If they are serious, let them declare that senior U.S. officials whose memos created the legal cover under which Iraqi prisoners were tortured (including the Attorney-General and Defence Secretary) should not be given visas to visit India. I don't think any right-thinking Indian would oppose such a demand.

It is a well-established principle in international law that sovereignty does not provide an inviolable shield behind which gross violations of human rights can be committed. Countries that are powerful (such as Israel or indeed the U.S. itself) can get away with murder, but others cannot. Smaller states can buy impunity by aligning themselves with the U.S. but as and when contradictions emerge, that impunity can rapidly melt away. For India, a fitting answer to the insult Mr. Modi has brought upon the country in having his U.S. visa revoked is to put in place legal systems that deliver quick and impartial justice in all instances of mass violence like Delhi 1984 and Gujarat 2002. That is the only way to guarantee we never again find ourselves in the embarrassing position of having high officials and functionaries accused of abetting mass murder.

Modi likens self to the Mahatma

AHMEDABAD, March 20. — Gujarat chief minister Mr Narendra Modi today drew a parallel between the denial of visa to him by the USA and preventing the entry of Mahatma Gandhi into a first class coach of a train in South Africa by the British. "I am not warning USA. But they should not forget that the frail looking Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi shook the foundation of the Britishers because of the insult," he said while addressing the *Bharat swabhimaan* rally here on the issue of denial of visa.

Connecting the Mahatma's Dandi March of 1930 with the denial of visa to Mr Modi, BJP chief Mr LK Advani said even a small incident can have major ramifications. He went on to say that Mr Modi was previously identified with "Gujarat *gaurav* (pride)" but "now he has become a symbol of national pride". However, both thanked the Prime Minister for the stand he has taken on the issue and his speech in Parliament.

Mr Advani said in Nagpur that the USA should review its decision following Dr Manmohan Singh's appeal. Mr Modi will now address Indian associations in New York and Florida through video conferencing. But two UK-based organisations are planning protests during his proposed London visit next Saturday.

Gujarat unit of the Congress blasted the rally. PCC chief Mr BK Gadhi said that *swabhimani* of the country was hurt when thousands of women became widows and children orphans during the 2002 Gujarat riots. — SNS & PTI

MIXED BAG: SAFFRON TEAM PLEASED WITH PM STAND

Indo-US ties may suffer: BJP

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 20 MARCH

ENCOURAGED by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's above-the-fray statement in Parliament on Saturday, the NDA on Sunday said the denial of visa to Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi will impact Indo-US ties.

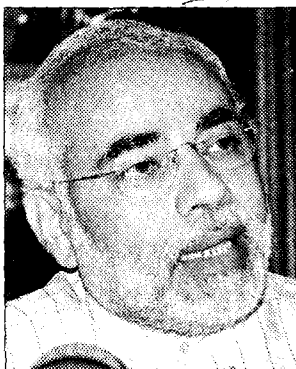
Dr Singh had, while replying to a discussion on the issue in the Rajya Sabha on Saturday, attacked denial of visa to "a constitutionally elected authority" of the country, and asked it to reconsider its decision.

"This is not a matter of partisan politics, but rather a matter of concern over a point of principle. The American government has been clearly informed that while we respect their sovereign right to grant or refuse visa to any person, we do not believe that it is appropriate to use allegations or anything less than due process to make a subjective judgement to question a constitutional authority in India," he had said.

The across-the-board criticism of the American action, best exemplified by the Prime Minister's hard-hitting speech in the Rajya Sabha, has enthused the BJP and its allies, and triggered hopes that the Bush administration would take note of the unanimity displayed by the Indian political class on the issue.

BJP president L.K. Advani was quick to express his gratitude to the Prime Minister for sending a clear, unambiguous message to the US, and urged the Bush administration to pay heed to the sentiments expressed by the people cutting across ideological barriers.

"The Prime Minister in Parlia-



NARENDRA MODI: ENTER-PRISE

ment on Saturday appealed to the US administration to review their decision and they are expected to respect the appeal," Mr Advani told newsmen in Nagpur on Sunday.

The issue, the BJP chief argued, had the potential of vitiating the ties between the two countries if not handled properly. "Diplomatic relations between two powerful democracies in the world, India and the United States, have improved over time and many persons from both sides worked to restore normalcy in relationship. But denial of visa to Mr Modi was a severe blow to this relationship," he said.

Mr Advani was on his way to Ahmedabad, where he, along with NDA convenor George Fernandes, was scheduled to address the "Swabhiman Rally" organised by the BJP's Gujarat unit to protest the US action.

The party's state unit, rocked by a serious infighting of late, has decided to go the whole hog to capitalise on the issue. By terming the American government's action as "an insult to India", the party hopes to cash in on the popular outrage.

BJP upset with Cong over patent Bill issue

Our Political Bureau
NEW DELHI 20 MARCH

AS the suspense over the fate of the patent Bill lingers, the BJP is upset with the Congress for reneging on the deal worked out with Union commerce minister Kamal Nath at a meeting held in L.K. Advani's chamber in the Parliament last week.

The meeting, held at Mr Nath's request, to seek the Opposition's help in breaking the patent Bill logjam, was attended by top BJP leaders, including Jaswant Singh, Sushma Swaraj, Arun Jaitley and Vijay Kumar Malhotra.

The compromise formula hammered in the meeting went like this. The government would table the Bill before the Parliament broke for recess on March 24 and, in keeping with the sentiments expressed by the NDA and the Left parties, refer it to the standing committee on commerce, headed by Dr Murli Manohar Joshi.

The standing committee would hold day-to-day meetings, and prepare its report after holding consultations with the NGOs, representatives of the pharmaceutical industry and other stakeholders. The report should be tabled in the Parliament on April 18 when the two Houses resume their proceedings after the post-recess period. The Bill could then be passed with a retrospective effect as the Parliament has the right to legislate a law retrospectively.

According to BJP leaders, the proposal would have enabled the Centre to overcome the constraints of time, and reservations of the Opposition block. The ordinance passed by the government lapses on April 8.

MODI ISSUE / DENIAL OF VISA NOT PROPER: CONGRESS

BJP protests against U.S. action

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18. The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Congress may be poles apart in their views on the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, but on the issue of denial of a visa to him by the United States, both parties felt it is a matter that needs to be taken up strongly with the United States Embassy here.

The former External Affairs Minister and BJP spokesperson, Yashwant Sinha, told reporters that the Embassy had conveyed to the BJP that it was denying the visa under a U.S. law on religious freedom and tolerance. "We strongly protest against the decision of the U.S. authorities. The application of a U.S. domestic law to the visit of a high political personality was totally unwarranted and is unacceptable to us," Mr. Sinha said.

Mr. Sinha said he was in touch with the External Affairs Ministry and had information that the Centre would be lodging a protest. "I compliment the Government on its stand, and I am happy that the Government is taking this up, for it is not a partisan issue. Mr. Modi is the elected Chief Minister of a State here ... While every country has a sovereign right to grant or deny a visa, the approach should

be rational ... Modi is not an accused in any court of law..."

Mr. Sinha, who had continued the Vajpayee Government's foreign policy of bringing India and the United States closer, was perturbed by the U.S. decision. "All kinds of U.S. officials come here. If we were to apply the same standards to these officials, there will be trouble ..."

The BJP admitted that Mr. Modi's visit had had no official agenda — he had been invited by the Indian-American Hotel Owners' Association (dominated by Patels from Gujarat) and

was to have addressed a meeting of non-resident Indians where he would have talked about Gujarat being a good investment destination.

The Congress spokesperson, Anand Sharma, made it plain that his party's views about Mr. Modi and his role in the Gujarat riots "remain unchanged", but as a Chief Minister held a diplomatic passport, his papers had been forwarded to the U.S. Embassy through the Ministry of External Affairs, and the denial of visa was not proper. He said the Ministry would issue a statement.

However, Congressmen, especially those from Gujarat, in private, were celebrating the U.S. decision.

RJD stand

The Rashtriya Janata Dal leader and Union Minister for Rural Development, Raghuvansh Prasad, said: "Mr. Modi is an Indian so we have no choice but to tolerate his presence here, but other sovereign nations do not have to allow religious bigots to enter their country or indulge in vile communal propaganda."

A reprieve for Modi

By Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI, MARCH 18. The Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, who was facing opposition from over 60 dissident MLAs may get a reprieve as a result of the United States denying him a visa.

A senior party leader here pointed out that about a year ago Mr. Modi got a fresh lease of life after the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, wanted to change the Chief

Minister. The former party president, Venkaiah Naidu, countered Mr. Vajpayee's statement made from Manali and the decision to replace Mr. Modi as Chief Minister was put off.

Over the last one month, dissidence in the Gujarat unit of the BJP has again gathered momentum — two days ago the former Chief Minister, Keshubhai Patel, met the party president, L.K. Advani, over lunch to discuss the issue. But the matter had not made much headway.

"Now that Mr. Modi has been denied a U.S. visa he has again become a hero in Gujarat ... this has come as a reprieve for him," a leader close to Mr. Modi said. Not many in the BJP seem to be unduly worried that their "hero" has been virtually labelled by the world's only "super power" as a man who was not tolerant towards other religions. The party would rally around Mr. Modi, leaders said, and they feel that Mr. Modi will use this to his advantage.

THE HINDU

19 MAR 2005

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A SLAP IN MR. MODI'S FACE

IN A SINGULAR instance of the Ides of March for the Gujarat Chief Minister, Narendra Modi, the United States has rejected his application for a diplomatic visa, while simultaneously revoking his tourist/business visa under Section 212(a)(2)(g) of the U.S. Immigration and Nationality Act. It is intriguing why Mr. Modi chose to ask for a diplomatic visa for a trip that was ostensibly to address the Asian-American Hotel Owners' Association and meet business leaders. Was he apprehending something so untoward that the protection of a diplomatic visa would come in handy? In denying a diplomatic visa under Section 214(b) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, the U.S. Government has clarified that Mr. Modi was visiting the United States for a purpose that did not "qualify for a diplomatic visa." In revoking the business/tourist visa, Washington has been even more forthright, arguing that any foreign government official who was responsible or had "directly carried out, at any time, particular severe violations of religious freedom" was ineligible to enter the U.S. Not too long ago, Mr. Modi had exulted about the similarities between President George W. Bush's election speeches and his own communal vitriol in 2002. He even challenged political pundits to analyse the spiritual consanguinity between Mr. Bush and himself. Now that the U.S. Government has formally given international recognition to Mr. Modi's responsibility in the post-Godhra genocide, he must be puzzled as to why and how these assumed similarities could have been given such short and ignominious shrift.

The United States has effectively barred Mr. Modi from entering its territories and declared him *persona non grata*. This significant decision owes a lot to the active protests by human rights activists across America. What helped matters was the U.S. State Department's International Re-

ligious Freedom Report, which was released on September 15, 2004. The report extensively deals with specific instances of the systematic derailment of the rule of law in Gujarat during and after the post-Godhra riots and traces the genesis of violent acts against minorities to the Hindutva philosophy espoused by the Bharatiya Janata Party. The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom found Mr. Modi's complicity in the riots in Gujarat in its May 2004 report. The denouement came in the form of a resolution in the American House of Representatives, moved recently by John Conyers, Jr., an influential Democrat Congressman from Michigan. It asked the House to condemn "the conduct of Chief Minister Narendra Modi for his actions to incite religious persecution and urging the United States to condemn all violations of religious freedom in India." Quoting the State Department, Congressman Conyers spoke about the role of the Modi Government in promoting racial hatred and fanning communal passions.

Predictably, Chief Minister Modi has reacted to the denial of U.S. visa by calling it an "insult to India and the Constitution". This is precious coming from a man who not only violated every single norm enshrined in the Indian Constitution, but was also asked by the pre-eminent leader of his party, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, to follow his *rajdharm*. Mr. Modi has now resorted to the rhetoric of being popularly elected as well as the spurious legalism of the absence of indictment of the Gujarat Government or the Chief Minister in the "incidents" — Mr. Modi's euphemism for the pogrom conducted against the minorities — that happened after the Godhra massacre. Dissidents within the BJP in Gujarat have been active in recent weeks demanding his scalp. With this additional setback over his U.S. visa, the Gujarat Chief Minister could be in for a long, hard summer.

'No (Cong, BJP are not talking sufficiently). I would think much more is needed'

It looks like it was just the other day when you, as the Deputy Prime Minister, were looking at another term, the Congress and the Opposition in a complete disarray. Things have changed.

Yes, things have changed for the country, for my party, for me. And I hope that despite the change, the country will move forward and the path we have been on since we were in government will continue.

Somehow the transition has been less bumpy than we would have imagined — foreign policy, economy, the broad national policies — all this continuity despite this massive ideological differences. Did you expect that or does it surprise you pleasantly.

I would think that democracy is what has really given this country this kind of resilience. In fact, I recalled that when Independence came and the Constitution declared that parliamentary democracy would be the system we would adopt, there were cynics and sceptics in the West who said how can a country with such a large mass of illiterate and uneducated people succeed with democracy. And in fact, some people scoffed.

And it is that democracy that's now giving this continuity. Yes.

Did you expect this continuity or did you expect a roll-back? No, I would think that broadly speaking we expected continuity... But we were shaken, considerably shocked and became somewhat sceptical during the brief period of '75-'77, because that was totally unexpected.

The Emergency. Yes. Not only the Emergency, the Emergency by itself was bad, but what was worse was the attempt by the then ruling party to rationalise it, and to project that a country like India needs something like a one-party democracy some African countries have.

Let me take you back to something that Sonia Gandhi said on Walk The Talk last year when she expressed regrets for the Emergency. Do you think that was the kind of catharsis or that was the kind of break that the Congress made from that part, or do you think the break is not made here? Why did the Emergency take place? What were the trigger points? The Allahabad judgement, secondly the Gujarat elections — these are the two principle things, and of course the Jayprakash Narayan movement and Navnirman movement. All of these seemed to threaten the Congress hegemony in political life. That hegemony won't continue. After all, a State like Gujarat, which was supposed to be one of their strongest fortresses, has collapsed because the Opposition came together. The possibility of the Opposition coming together in '76, many people in the country wanting Mrs Gandhi to resign... So, the responses were: amend the Constitution, amend the law, change the judiciary, shut down the media.

But why so much about the Emergency now? Suddenly we have gone back 30 years. Because as I said, if you somehow make yourself believe that the country's interest lies in one party or one family controlling all the States, controlling the central government, if this is the basic mindset, it leads to this. And I would say if we succeeded during the six years to run a multi-party coalition, it was because we recognised that the Akalis had built up a domain of their own in Punjab; over a period of a decade or so, the TDP had created an area for itself in Andhra. Of course the two Tamil Nadu parties have been there since '67, they are the oldest among the regional parties apart from the Akalis. Similarly, every regional party has built up a domain. Now if we make an alliance with them and make them share power with us in the Centre, we must also not try to utilise their alliance with us to encroach into their domain.

The BJP and the Congress are now two pillars of our national

Opposition leader and BJP president L K ADVANI has long been the ideological mascot of his party. He's been called the "lauh purush" (iron man) of the Sangh Parivar, his statements on "pseudo secularism" have become famous and his 1990 Rath Yatra redefined Indian politics. After the unexpected defeat in last year's general elections, the recent events in Jharkhand have given a new energy to the NDA's campaign against the ruling UPA. Now, once more Advani has emerged as the charioteer to lead the BJP towards a fresh lease of agitation. Advani says he remains a committed democrat and tells SHEKHAR GUPTA, Editor-in-Chief of The Indian Express, on NDTV 24X7's Walk the Talk that the creation of a two-party system in India has been a crucial achievement of the BJP-led Opposition.

politics. Between the two parties, which are reasonably centric, there is a central gravity in our politics. At a time when coalitions are building, regional leaders are getting stronger, are you worried that both parties are weakening? I believe that unless the two parties together have 350 seats in Parliament, India is in trouble. I am worried that the Congress party's attitude to the BJP is

ON THE RECORD L K ADVANI BJP president

not healthy — they are evil, that's the approach.

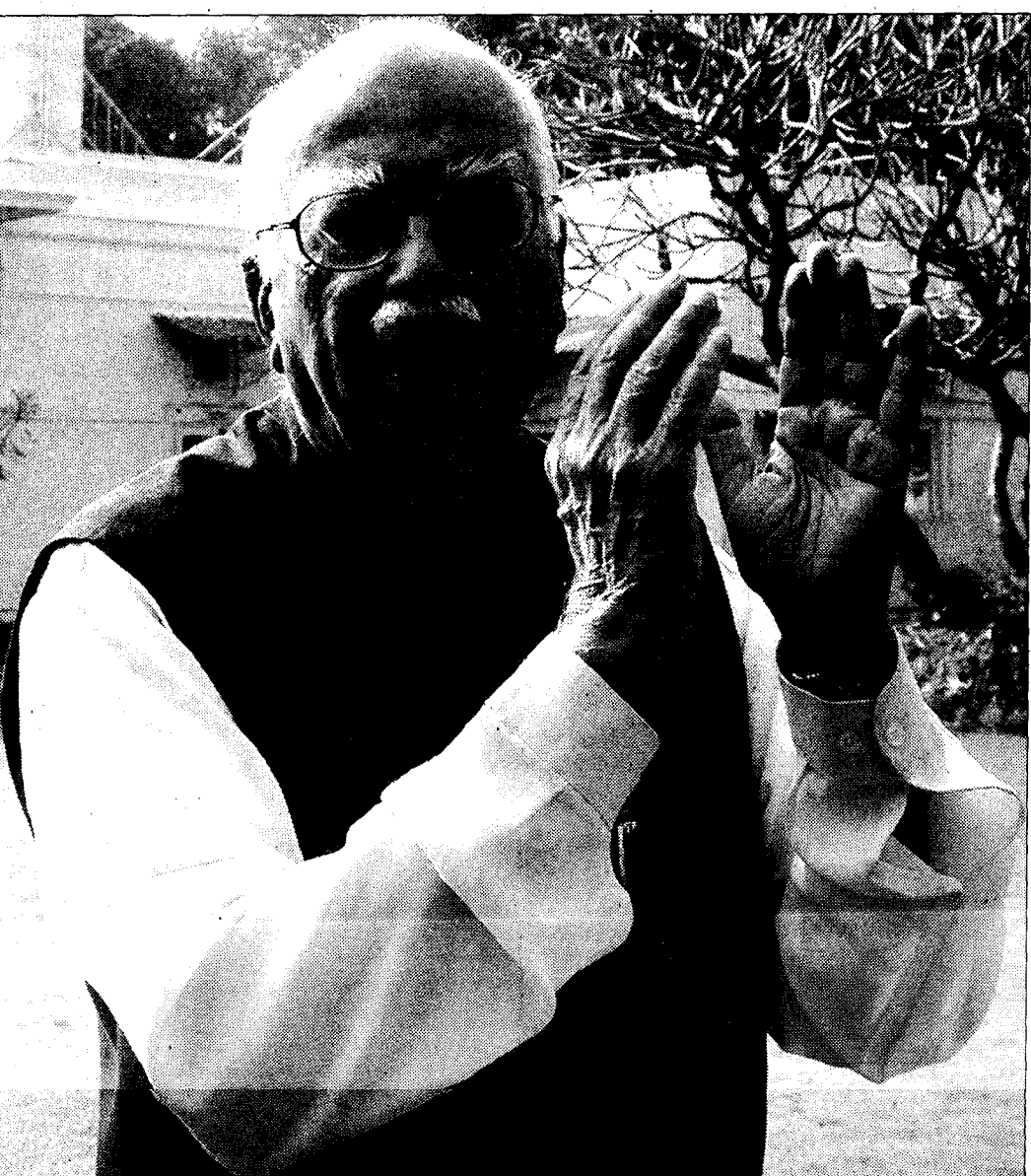
Congress thinks BJP is evil? The Congress thinks the BJP is evil. And yet, it is the Opposition and they have to tolerate it. My own view is not that. It is true that since 1950, since the Constitution was adopted, most political analysts, most political thinkers have longed to see India develop into a two-party system, as America has, as Britain has, as some of the other democracies have... In the last three decades we have come up very sharply and converted India's polity into a bipolar polity — if not a two-party system, it's a bipolar polity with two stable poles.

But these kinds of coalition — small groups with eight seats, 10 seats — they can almost hijack the agenda. Does it worry you? No, it doesn't worry me. It's a process of change from a dominant single-party set-up to a bipolar polity. It has been a progress.

And what is the direction of the progress? Do you think the direction is towards bipolarity or towards this crazy multipolarity? No, it's not crazy. It's multipolarity. I see multi-polarity remaining, except that some kind of changes in the electoral laws, in the other laws which contribute to



This conception that a Gandhi is alone fit to rule the country is undemocratic. It is unacceptable to any democrat, and I am surprised Cong has readily accepted it. The manner in which the change of Cong presidentship took place would shock any decent person. How can you physically change a party president? ... In a country of so many crores, how can you have a person of foreign origin as your leader only because the person is married in a certain family



If you believe the country's interest lies in one party, if this is the basic mindset, it leads to this. If we succeeded in running a multi-party coalition, it was because we recognised that Akalis had built a domain in Punjab; TDP had created an area for itself in Andhra. Of course, the two Tamil Nadu parties have been there since '67. Similarly, every regional party has built a domain. Now, if we make an alliance with them, we must not try to utilise their alliance to encroach into their domain

the party system stability etc need to be made. For example, I have been of the view that in so far as the Legislature is concerned, Parliament is concerned, we have emulated the UK system, whereas most democracies in Europe have fixed-term Legislatures. In fact, I spoke to the present defence minister a month or two back, I said now it would be to your advantage, do it... And we have tried to see that the malady of defection is somehow controlled. Earlier the law provided against...

I wonder how the law got passed, and also the law limiting the number of Cabinet berths. The law now is better than the earlier law.

It is a very good law. Yes, and therefore people have to resign, they can't defect.

Talking about bipolarity and talking about the responsibility that the Congress and the BJP have as the two most serious largest parties, do you think the two parties are talking or are co-operating enough? No, as I said if you think that my political adversary is an evil...

You don't see the Congress as an evil? No, I don't. As I said perhaps a few years back, that before 1947 there used to be several ideological streets at the Congress. The Congress was only a platform, it was only a banner under which various ideological groups struggled for India's independence. And there were people like Gandhiji, Rajaji, Patel, without whose views on Indian affairs I would not have been here.

But today you wouldn't see the Congress as an evil? I don't.

You wouldn't see the Gandhi family as an evil. I don't think the Gandhi family

is an evil. But this conception that a Gandhi is alone fit to rule the country is basically undemocratic. It is totally unacceptable to any democrat, I am surprised the Congress has readily accepted it. In fact, the manner in which the change of Congress presidentship took place would shock any decent person. How can you physically change a party president? That's what happened.

That's the way Congress is? Why?

I think parties have their own culture. The question of Sonia's foreign origin, has there been any evolution of thought on that? No, it is an approach which I don't see anything wrong about. And it strikes a chord in the mind of the common man. In a country of so many crores, how can you have a person of foreign origin as your leader only because the person is married in a certain family.

So that remains an issue? It's an issue.

In politics or also in your mind and heart? In politics, in my mind and heart. Also, I would say that if there is any political party which split up on that issue it is the Congress. After all, the NCP is there, though compulsions of power politics may make them compromise. Therefore, I respect a person like Sangma.

One remarkable feature of your government was how you and the Congress — I don't want to use the word colluded but sort of got together on so many issues like Pakistan — we were close to war three times — the US policy on Pakistan, on economic policies you passed legislations together. Why has that vanished now? Why's that not happening? That's for the Congress party to think over. After all, we were a small party when Narasimha Rao became the prime minister. And

were the principle Opposition, no doubt. From a paltry strength of two we had come to 86 in '89 and then we grew. But at the same time it's our honest conviction that in a country like India, unless you have a broad measure of consensus, the country cannot move forward.

So why is this consensus not there? Aren't you talking sufficiently — you and Congress, you and this government, the UPA? Not sufficiently. I would think much more is needed. These days they have been talking to us about VAT. I frankly told one of their ministers that there was a tendency in our party to see that all our States agreed with their proposal. But I can tell you the day that Goa happened, there was a hue and cry in our party ki kya kar rahe ho, tum kyun kar rahe ho inke saath maamlo mein cooperation, aur hum narazgi bhi maurye bya-paryon ki, kaha ki liye?... If you want cooperation even in matters of economic policies where we basically agree — we have been the most opposed to this license permit quota raj for years, woh aaj ki baat nahin...

So you would say even in today's sort of bitter politics, the BJP and the NDA will be willing to help Congress pass some crucial legislations, as the Congress did in the past with you? If it is in the country's interest, I don't see why the BJP and the NDA shouldn't cooperate.

But legislations like banking reforms, insurance? Every issue will be considered on merit. Simply because we are in the Opposition we have to oppose everything the government does is not a right approach. Though in order to see that this thinking of ours gets full support from the whole party, you have to behave in a manner which doesn't annoy the party.

Is the Congress talking to you sufficiently, is it reaching out to you sufficiently? No. Before we conclude, I have to ask you one question which I have always wanted to ask and tell me the truth. What happened that day in Agra? In Agra. The last day of the summit. You know there have been many theories, many claims. Musharraf has said you scuttled it, somebody says somebody else scuttled it, somebody says it happened by itself. Now we've put several years behind us, what happened? Good question really. And particularly because I think that Indo-Pak relations, the path we have taken must be pursued further. And with General Musharraf in office there, there is a possibility we move forward. And therefore I would say that when Agra took place the issue super most in the minds of both the governments, and me particularly because I was home minister dealing with it, was the problem of terrorism — cross-border terrorism. And all the drafts prepared, they were not willing to concede that there is any such thing like terrorism. So when we sat together, from the very beginning I said that unless there is some acceptance that cross-border terrorism has to be curbed, how can there be an agreement? And then all the ministers...

But there were people in the Cabinet, in the negotiating table, who still wanted to sign the declaration. I wouldn't say that. After this was pointed out, this glaring omission was pointed out, there was no difference at all.

Mr Jaswant Singh? Yes, no difference.

And was the breakfast, the famous Musharraf breakfast with his wagging finger, was that the turning point? No.

Because that's the popular view, that tipped the scale. When Agra took place, the issue super most in the minds of both govts, and me particularly because I was home minister, was cross-border terrorism. And all the drafts prepared, they were not willing to concede that there is any thing like terrorism. So when we sat together, I said unless there is some acceptance that cross-border terrorism has to be curbed, how can there be an agreement? ... It is true that for us to have invited Musharraf despite Kargil was not a small step. I would claim that I did it. I advised Vajpayeeji that it doesn't matter if Lahore has failed

So we had not come close to signing the declaration, but for

many things happened, even in Pakistan. Apart from 9/11, things that developed in Pakistan made him realise terrorism is an evil which will afflict every country.

And in that combination of his internal problem and international crisis... And I think General Musharraf can deliver.

Are you optimistic of the peace process going forward? Yes, I am optimistic.

the breakfast? I don't recall the breakfast you are referring to.

The breakfast with us, editors, which was televised. I don't think so. No. Not at all

Did you see a change in Musharraf's attitude later? Yes. I would say that if what was agreed in the joint statement at Islamabad with Vajpayeeji had been agreed at Agra, Agra would have a big success. And I said this

The Congress thinks the BJP is evil. And yet, it is the Opposition and they have to tolerate it... Since 1950, most political analysts have longed to see India develop into a two-party system... In the last three decades, we have come up very sharply and converted India's polity into a bipolar polity — if not a two-party system, it's a bipolar polity with two stable poles

to Kasuri when he came to invite me to come to Pakistan.

Is it true that when Musharraf came at Agra, his attitude, his body language, his style was as if he was coming to a defeated country? Then that change...

I think it would be wrong to make such... but at the same time he came with a kind of confidence which made him feel that even though he would assert that Jammu and Kashmir is a freedom struggle and there is no terrorism, India will be willing to sign a treaty, sign something.

As if India was suing for peace. Maybe. Because it is true that for us to have invited him despite Kargil was not a small step. I would claim that I did it. I advised Vajpayeeji that it doesn't matter if Lahore has failed.

And that confidence became realism in Musharraf's case. Yes.

And what brought that change you think? I think in the meanwhile so



When Agra took place, the issue super most in the minds of both govts, and me particularly because I was home minister, was cross-border terrorism. And all the drafts prepared, they were not willing to concede that there is any thing like terrorism. So when we sat together, I said unless there is some acceptance that cross-border terrorism has to be curbed, how can there be an agreement? ... It is true that for us to have invited Musharraf despite Kargil was not a small step. I would claim that I did it. I advised Vajpayeeji that it doesn't matter if Lahore has failed

No, I don't think so. My own view was very clear in this, so was the view of the whole government as such. Except that when the drafts are discussed and prepared, alright achha isko dekhte hai, yeh aapne kya hain, yahan par thoda aapne maan liya hain... Maine kaha baaki sab maan lena lekin unless cross-border terrorism is categorically accepted, and will be curbed... If that's not there, nothing else will satisfy.

So we had not come close to signing the declaration, but for

SANGH TO SHUN ELECTORAL POLITICS

RSS tells BJP: Build your own base

Tyagraj Sharma in Mangalore

March 13. — The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh today sprung a surprise by asking its affiliate, the Bharatiya Janata Party, to build its own organisational base. It also expressed reservations over the BJP's commitment to the ideals of Hinduism.

The decision was taken on the final day of the three-day national general council meet of the saffron organisation.

The conference, which ended today, was attended among others by BJP president Mr LK Advani who flew in here this morning.

According to RSS spokesman Mr Ram Madhav, the Sangh also decided that none of its affiliates, including the Vishwa Hindu Parishad or allied bodies, will talk of forming a separate political party. It was agreed at the meet that not only was it impractical but even non-pragmatic to talk of a new party. "That discussion does not exist in the organisation anymore," he asserted.

While Mr Madhav refused to go into details on the sudden decision of the RSS in seeking to alienate its workers from the BJP, it is common knowledge that its affiliates like the VHP and the Bajrang Dal were unhappy with the party.

They had been charging that the BJP was not fulfilling its commitment to "Hindu idealism."

The two fundamentalist wings of the RSS had been criticising the BJP while ascribing its recent defeat in the general elections to the weakness of its leaders who, according to them, had "abandoned

'Glimpses of PM'

MANGALORE, March 13. — After accusing Dr Manmohan Singh of being an "invisible" Prime Minister, Mr LK Advani today said he saw "some glimpses of him" in the developments in Jharkhand which saw resignation of chief minister Mr Sibusoren and installation of an NDA government.

Jharkhand trust vote

The Arjun Munda government will seek a vote of confidence on 15 March, the day the Speaker's election will be held. The NDA named Mr Inder Singh Namdhari as its candidate for the Speaker's post. — PTI

See page 5

Hinduism". It was precisely why the RSS spokesman, when asked, admitted that there were serious reservations in the Sangh ranks over the BJP's commitment to organisational ideology.

The RSS also announced its decision to ask its party functionaries to refrain from active politics. "We are not trying to divide the party from the Parivar. Instead, all we are saying is that in electoral politics, the RSS workers will now step aside and the BJP will take the lead. The RSS need not take the initiative anymore, let the BJP do it," Mr Madhav said.

The BJP, the RSS maintained, would now be required to build its organisational base and win "our confidence through its network". This was described as a positive development by the RSS which hopes that in the coming days, the BJP will make efforts to win back its confidence and build rapport with the Parivar's constituents.

Another report on page 5

‘দ্বিতীয় জয়’-এ উদ্বুদ্ধ বিজেপি ফের ‘বিদেশিনি’ নিয়ে সরব

সাঁঞ্চ রিপোর্টার, নয়াদিল্লি ও রাঁচি, ১২ মার্চ: বাতখণ্ডে এখনও আস্থা ভেঁটা জেতা বাকি। কিন্তু রাজধানীর অশোক রোডে বিজেপি-র সদর কার্যালয়ে রীতিমতো উৎসব শুরু হয়েছে।

সেটা স্বাভাবিক। কেননা, মে মাসের লোকসভা ভোটের পরে এই প্রথম কংগ্রেসকে কোণঠাসা করতে পেরেছে বিজেপি। শাসক দলের উপরে চাপ আরও বাড়তে বিজেপি সভাপতি লালকৃষ্ণ আডবানী এ দিনই ঘোষণা করে দিলেন, সনিয়া গান্ধীর ‘বিদেশিনি’ পরিচয় নিয়ে আন্দোলন ‘মরে যামনি’। রাজনীতির ময়দানে তো বটেই, বিষয়টি রয়েছে তাঁর হৃদয়েও।

‘বিদেশিনি’ প্রসঙ্গ তুলে চাপ বাড়ানোটা যদি একটা কৌশল হয়, অন্যটা তা হলে ঝাড়খণ্ডের রাজ্যপাল সৈয়দ সিবতে রাজিকে সরানোর দাবিতে অটল থাক। প্রয়োজনে এ নিয়ে তাঁরা

সুপ্রিম কোর্টেও যাবেন। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর কাছেও ফের এই দাবি রেখেছেন আডবানী।

কিন্তু স্পিকার সোমনাথ চট্টোপাধ্যায়ের বিরুদ্ধে যে অন্যস্ব প্রস্তাব আনার কথা ছিল, তা খারিজ করে দেওয়া হয়েছে। বিজেপি সূত্রে জানানো হয়েছে, পরিবর্তিত পরিস্থিতিতে ওই ব্যাপারে জেদ ধরে থাকলে আখেরে এন ডি এ-র বিশেষ রাজনৈতিক সুবিধা হবে না। বরঞ্চ বাম জোট (যারাও ঝাড়খণ্ডের রাজ্যপালের আচরণে কংগ্রেসের সঙ্গে দূরত্ব তৈরি করেছে) এবং ইউপি এ-র শরিকেরা একজোট হয়ে যাবে।

আজ রাঁচিতে অর্জুন মুন্ডার শপথ গ্রহণ অনুষ্ঠানে যোগ দিতে আডবানী রাঁচি পৌঁছেছেন। কাল রাজ্যপালের রায়কে তাদের ‘দ্বিতীয় জয়’ হিসাবে বর্ণনা করেছেন আডবানী। তাঁর ব্যাখ্যা, ভোটাররা বিজেপিকে প্রথমবার জয়ী করেছিলেন।

কিন্তু তার পরেও লাড়াই করতে হয়েছে কংগ্রেসের ‘চক্রান্ত’-এর বিরুদ্ধে। তাতেও জিতেছেন। দ্বিতীয় রাউন্ডটা তাঁরা লড়েছেন দিল্লিতে। দু’দিন আগে লোকসভায় যা বলেছিলেন, আজ তারই প্রতিধ্বনি করে বিজেপি সভাপতির বক্তব্য, এন ডি এ-র আদেশের সঙ্গে যারা একমত নন, তাঁরাও সিবতে রাজি-র কার্যকলাপের বিরোধিতা করছেন।

তবে গতকালের ঘটনারিতিতে দৃশ্যতই উৎফুল্ল বিজেপি শিবির। দিল্লিতে লের সদর দফতরের সামনে বাজির আওয়াজে কান পাতা যাচ্ছিল না।

লাড়ু বিলি করছেন সুখমা স্বরাজ। তবে তারই মধ্যে কংগ্রেস সভানেত্রী সনিয়া গান্ধীর বিরুদ্ধে আক্রমণে এতটুকু টিলে পড়ছে না। রাজ্যপালের আচরণকে সংবিধান-বিরোধী হিসাবে অভিহিত করে সুখমা বলেন, “সনিয়ার ইঙ্কন ছাড়া কেউ নিজের থেকে এই কাজ করবেন না। এস কে

সহায় বা প্রিয়রঞ্জন দাশমুন্ডির মতো কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রীরা রাঁচিতে কী করছিলেন? আমরা উৎসাহী আক্রমণের নিশানা করছি।”

আর এই নিশানায় আরও নিতুল থাকতে চেয়ে বি জে পি সভাপতি অভিযোগ এনেছেন, “মহাস্বা গান্ধীর ডাবি অভিযোগের মতো ঘটনাকে কংগ্রেস সভানেত্রীর একান্ত প্রচারের বিষয় করে তুলে ধরা হয়েছে।” আডবানী একটি লিখিত ভাষণে জানিয়েছেন, “ভারতের স্বাধীনতা সংগ্রামে সাধারণ মানুষের পবিত্র উত্তরাধিকার রয়েছে। এটা কংগ্রেসের একচেটিয়া বিষয় নয়।”

তবে শিবু সোয়ালের সরকার ইস্তফা দেওয়ার পরবর্তী পর্যায়ে স্পিকারের উপর আর অন্যস্ব আনার প্রয়োজন নেই বলেই মনে করছে বি জে পি। যুক্তি হিসাবে স্বরাজ বলছেন, “পরিষ্কৃতিটাই তো বদলে গিয়েছে।”

Bolstered Advani raises 'foreigner Sonia' pitch



The BJP president with party leaders after their arrival in Ranchi on Saturday. — PTI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, March 12. — BJP president Mr LK Advani today said the issue of Congress president Mrs Sonia Gandhi's foreign origin continued to remain an issue "in politics, in my mind and heart".

The Leader of Opposition also asserted that the Congress should not "annoy" the BJP if it expected cooperation from it in passing crucial legislations in Parliament.

Maintaining there was no evolution of thought on the foreign origin issue, he said, "it is an approach. I don't think there is anything wrong about it and it strikes a chord in the minds of the common man. How can you have, in a country of so many crores, a person of foreign origin as your leader only because the person is married in a certain family. It's an issue in politics, in my mind and heart," he said in an interview on the *Walk the Talk* programme on NDTV.

The BJP chief recalled that if any party had split on the issue, it was the Congress "though compulsions of politics may have made them compromise. Therefore, I respect a person like Mr Sangma." Mr Advani said, unlike the Congress which saw the BJP as an "evil", he did not see either the Congress or the Gandhi

'I asked for Agra summit'

NEW DELHI, March 12. — Former Deputy Prime Minister Mr L K Advani today claimed that he was behind inviting Pakistan President Gen. Pervez Musharraf for the 2002 Agra talks "despite Kargil" and he still believed that the latter "can deliver". "That for us to have invited him (Musharraf) despite Kargil was not a small thing. I would claim that I did it. I advised (then Prime Minister) Vajpayeeji," he said. — PTI

family as an evil.

"But this conception that the Gandhi family alone is fit to rule the country is basically undemocratic. It is totally unacceptable to any democrat. I am surprised that the Congress has readily accepted it. The manner in which the change of Congress presidentship took place would shock any decent person. How can you physically change a party president. Why there is no protest?," he asked.

Mr Advani said Congress and BJP were not "talking sufficiently" and "much more is required".

In this regard, he said the Congress was lately talking to it on the Value Added Tax regime and there was a tendency to make all BJP-ruled states comply with that, "the day they did Goa, there was hue and cry" in the party, he added. The BJP chief said his party had no problem in cooperating with the Government in passing legislations which were in the country's interest and the party will consider every issue on its merit.

"Simply because we are in the Opposition, you have to oppose everything government does is not a right approach though in order to see that this thinking gets full support of the party also, you also have to behave in a manner which does not annoy the party", he said. "I am worried at the Congress party's attitude towards BJP. They are evil, that's the approach. Yet it's the opposition, they have to tolerate it", he said.

Second victory for him

Mr L K Advani today said Jharkhand Governor Syed Sibtey Razi's invitation to the NDA to form the government was the "second victory" for the alliance in the state and attributed it to the media. "It is our second victory. The first was given by the voters. In the second, the media had a role," Mr Advani said.

'I couldn't go further than Constitution'

ENS & PTI
NEW DELHI/KOCHI, MARCH 3

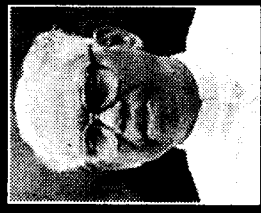
AFTER he charged former prime minister A.B. Vajpayee with doing nothing effective to tackle the post-Godhra riots despite repeated requests, former President K.R. Narayanan today said limits on his powers set by the Constitution prevented him from doing "anything further".

"I couldn't go further than the limits of the Constitution," Narayanan said in Delhi when asked why he did not take any concrete action during the riots.

He said the entire country was raising the issue of Gujarat, but the President has certain limitations to act under the Constitution.

"As a President, I can only advise the prime minister. I have no other powers," Narayanan said.

The former President had, in an interview published in *Manava Samaskaram*, a Malayalam maga-



NARAYANAN ON RIOTS

'BJP, both at state and Centre, were involved in the conspiracy... I could only advise PM, I had no other powers'

zine edited by Congress MLA P.T. Thomas, claimed he had sent letters to Vajpayee and spoke to him directly on the issue.

He had also said the 2002 communal pogrom in Gujarat was backed by a conspiracy involving the BJP governments in that state and at the Centre. "There was government involvement in the Gujarat riots. I wrote repeatedly to Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee about it. I also discussed it personally with him. But, Vajpayee just didn't do anything effective," Narayanan said in the interview.

The former President underlines how the Vajpayee govern-

ment cocked a snook at the Presidential order to deploy the Army. The former President said he had asked for the Army to be sent in to quell the violence, and it was deployed. But the troops couldn't shoot at the rioters.

"So many episodes of that riot could have been averted if the Army could shoot at the rioters. Much of the genocide in Gujarat would not have happened if the Army had the operational freedom. But neither the state nor the Central Government allowed it," he pointed out. "Behind the carnage in Gujarat was the conspiracy of the state and Central Gov-

State Cong urges panel to probe KR statement

AHMEDABAD: The Gujarat Congress on Wednesday urged the Godhra inquiry commission to look into a report from Kerala in which former President K.R. Narayanan has purportedly "criticised" the state BJP and then NDA government for not curbing the riots following the Godhra carnage in 2002. —PTI

ernments," Narayanan added.

He said the BJP Government had "hidden agendas" in many areas. "They wanted to take over the reins in education to further their ideology. I intervened in a way that they did not appreciate when it came to appointing some vice-chancellors. This was not taken kindly by Murali Manohar Joshi and some others," he said.

Such interventions, added Narayanan, was why BJP didn't want to allow him a second term

as President. "They had come to power deciding to put to work too many of their hidden agendas. They had probably realised that their agendas can't be implemented in my presence," the former President said.

"There were too many occasions during my presidency when I had felt completely hopeless and sad. There were times when I just could not do anything... I had often rued the limitations of my office, he said. "Power with a surrounding powerlessness is the real tragedy."

Narayanan also said he had deeply rued his decision to return the I.K. Gujral government's recommendation to dismiss the then UP Government. "I did it because I thought it was constitutionally right. But later events showed it was politically unwise. The BJP made political capital using the Speaker to play its games. It gained power in UP and, using that momentum, at the Centre too, spelling long-lasting impacts on the country's polity," he said.

Atal for caution, BJP war

Shekhar Iyer
New Delhi, March 1

GOA IMBROGLIO

THE BJP has decided to go on the warpath over the stalemate in Goa, where the Congress ministry is unable to muster the numbers and an obliging Raj Bhavan has given ample time to prove majority.

Notwithstanding former Prime Minister A.B. Vajpayee's reservation over disrupting Parliament, BJP MPs stalled both Houses.

At the BJP's parliamentary party meeting, Vajpayee is said to have favoured a debate in Parliament and not disrupting question hour or any other business. He, however, agreed to go by what the majority in the BJP wanted.

Several BJP MPs wanted an aggressive course, saying a soft approach would not serve any purpose. Besides, the Congress was already "manipulating" the Governors in Jharkhand and Bihar to deprive the NDA of a chance to form the government. BJP deputy leader in the Lok Sabha and spokesperson V.K. Malhotra denied any

such differences and said Vajpayee only wanted to "press for a debate". Soon after the meeting, Vajpayee, himself, sounded the bugle.

He accused Goa Governor S.C. Jamir of "murdering" democracy and demanded dissolution of the Assembly and fresh polls in the state. "Democracy has been murdered in Goa. The governor has crossed the limits of his powers and dismissed an elected government.

This is an issue of serious concern for democracy. The Assembly should be dissolved and fresh elections held in the state", Vajpayee said. Asked if the Assembly Speaker was above board, he said, "If there are grievances against the Speaker, a solution has to be found within the House and not outside. The remedy does not lie with the governor".

Charging the Governor with "acting at the behest of the Centre", Vajpayee said, "The Governor can't behave like a dictator".

The BJP's parliamentary

party decided to press for an adjournment motion in the Lok Sabha on the issue.

Addressing BJP MPs, BJP president and Leader of the Opposition L.K. Advani said the dismissal of the Parrikar ministry was an "immoral act" on the part of the Governor. "They've made a mockery of the anti-defection law. Members who have resigned are being made ministers. We'll raise the issue vociferously and Parliament can't remain a mute spectator to the violation".

Malhotra announced that the BJP would hold a separate meeting on the Budget for the party MPs, which would be addressed by former finance ministers Jaswant Singh and Yashwant Sinha.

He said the party MPs described as "ridiculous and stupid" the proposal to levy tax on Rs 10,000 cash withdrawals from the banks. "The Budget has many shortcomings that affect the salaried class, women and senior citizens. It hinders development and is inflationary", the BJP leader said.

Pro tem Speaker mum on Neri

GOA PRO TEM Speaker Francisco Sardinha, on Tuesday, parried questions on whether he would reconsider suspending the order disqualifying Independent MLA Filipe Neri Rodrigues.

"I've just taken charge, I've not applied my mind to whether Neri's order can be suspended or not. If injustice has been done, it should be reversed, but I'll go by the law and do what's legally correct", Sardinha told reporters at the assembly after taking charge.

Claiming that a pro tem Speaker had all the powers of a regular Speaker, Sardinha, however, denied that he was considering suspending former Speaker Vishwas Satarkar's order disqualifying Neri or that he would disqualify UGDP MLA Mathany Saldanha. "I haven't yet been approached by Neri. I am, however, clear in my mind that I'll go by the law," he said.

Agencies, Panaji

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

02 MAR 2005

BJP at Kalam's door over Goa

Agencies

New Delhi, February 3

IN A show of strength, a BJP delegation — led by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and including 17 MLAs from Goa — on Thursday met President APJ Abdul Kalam and demanded the immediate reinstatement of the party's government in Goa and recall of Governor S.C. Jamir for his "unconstitutional and partisan" action.

The 28-member delegation, which included party president L.K. Advani and ousted chief minister Manohar Parrikar, submitted a memorandum to Kalam, accusing the Goa Governor of "mounting an unprecedented assault on Indian democracy".

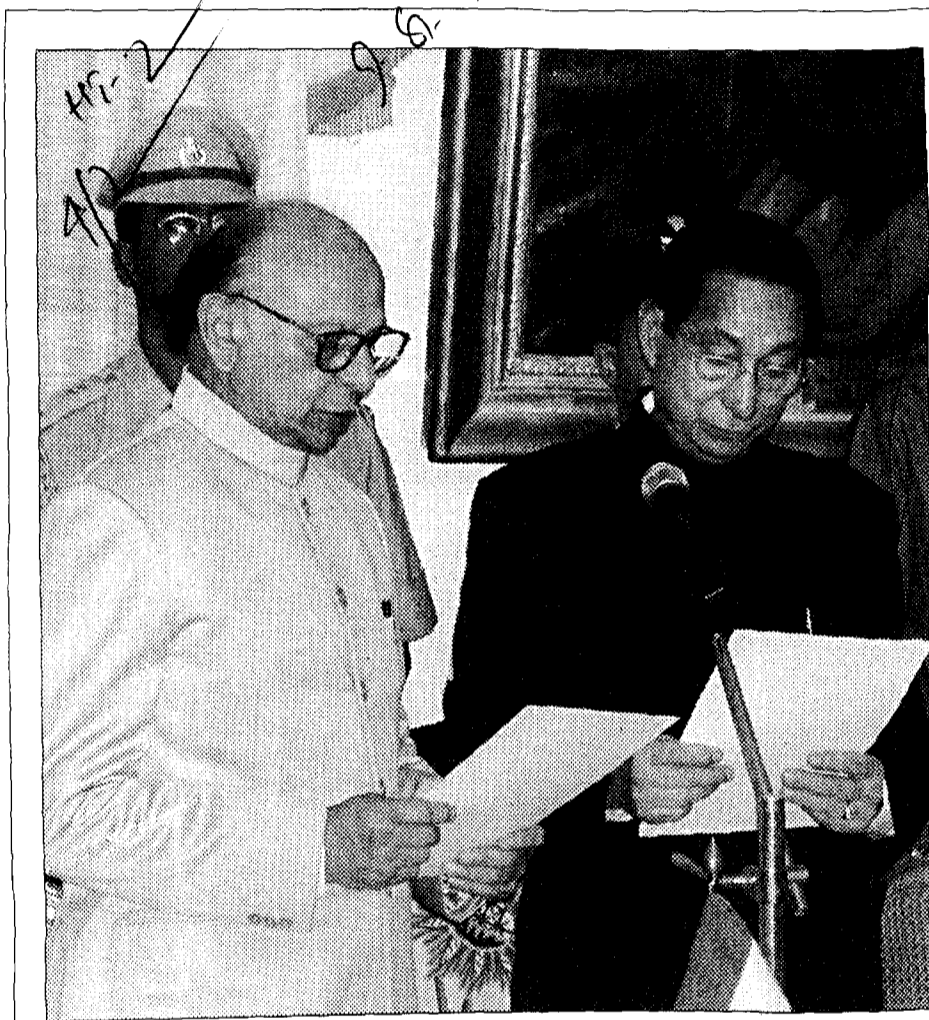
"The entire sequence of events — since the appointment of Jamir as the Governor of Goa till the recent events — proves beyond any doubt that the Congress-led UPA government at the Centre had hatched a plot to destabilise the BJP government in Goa and use the high office of the Governor to bring it to fruition", it said.

The BJP delegation impressed upon the President that, under the Constitution and also according to the established norms of democracy, the Governor has no powers to annul the ruling of the Speaker. "The judiciary is the sole forum before which an appeal can be made against the Speaker's ruling".

It also pointed out that, while the Governor gave only one day to Parrikar to prove his majority, he gave 30 days to incumbent Pratapsinh Rane to do so. Besides 16 BJP MLAs, the delegation also included Mathany Saldanha, UGDP MLA supporting Parrikar.

Emerging from the hour-long meeting with the President, Advani told reporters that the delegation had conveyed to him that whatever happened in Goa was "totally unprecedented, perverse and dangerous".

"We sought presidential



Pratapsinh Rane being sworn in by Governor S.C. Jamir on Wednesday night.

PTI

Six more join Rane Cabinet

Agencies

Panaji, February 3

THE PRATAPSIH Rane government in Goa was expanded on Thursday with the induction of six Cabinet ministers, including four whose support is crucial to provide stability to the new Congress-led dispensation.

Only two of the six sworn in at a ceremony in Raj Bhavan belong to Congress — former chief minister Luisinho Fernandes and Dayanand Narvekar.

The other four are Wilfred d'Souza of the NCP, Sudhin Davlikar of the MGP and BJP MLAs Isidoro Fernandes and Pandurang Madgaikar, who resigned from the Assembly last week, contributing to the exit of the saffron party-led ministry.

With Thursday's induction, the strength of the Rane ministry has gone up

to eight. Rane was sworn in as chief minister and Independent MLA Philippe Neri Rodriguez as his deputy late on Wednesday night, soon after the dismissal of the BJP-led government, by the Governor.

Fernandes and Madgaikar said that they had not yet joined the Congress and would take a decision only after consulting their supporters. Rane said his ministry would be expanded further soon.

The Congress asserted on Thursday that the Rane government would definitely be successfully in the crucial confidence vote.

"There are more (MLAs) wanting to quit the BJP and join us. We'll prove our majority on the floor of the House", AICC general secretary Margaret Alva told reporters in Delhi. She said the government would soon bring a no-confidence motion against the Speaker.

intervention since he had appointed the Governor who acted in a patently unconstitutional and politically motivated manner", the BJP chief said.

"If the Governor misuses Article 164 of the Constitution according to his whim, what will be its limit?"

Attacking as "illegal" his removal from office by the Governor, Parrikar attributed the recent political events in the state to his "strong action" against a "corrupt" minister who, later switched sides to the Congress.

He said the "blatantly illegal and conspiratorial" dismissal of his government after it won the vote of confidence on the floor of the Assembly "can damage the country's federal structure".

'Peculiar', says Left

TERMINING THE developments in Goa as "peculiar", the Left parties on Thursday said the Speaker's decision to disqualify some members even before the vote of confidence was "wrong" and the best option would be to seek a fresh mandate.

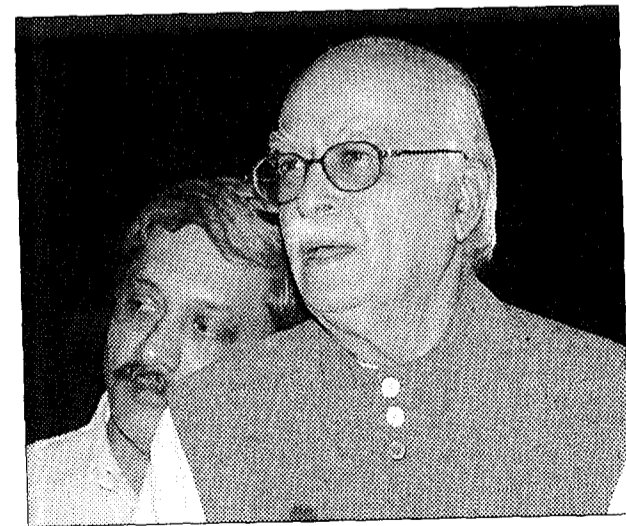
"Disqualification of some of the members by the Speaker even before the vote of confidence was wrong... However, the best option now is to go back to the people", CPI(M) politburo member Sitaram

Yechury and other Left leaders told reporters here.

Commenting on the decision to have a voice-vote on the no-confidence motion, CPI general secretary A.B. Bardhan asked, "Could the Speaker count the voices when he declared the 18-6 result?"

Yechury said there should have been a division and proper voting on the motion. Others present at the press conference were Forward Bloc leader G. Devarajan and the CPI's D. Raja.

Agencies, New Delhi



L.K. Advani and former Goa CM Manohar Parrikar talk to the Press after meeting the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan.

PTI

Lalu, Paswan all the same: Naidu

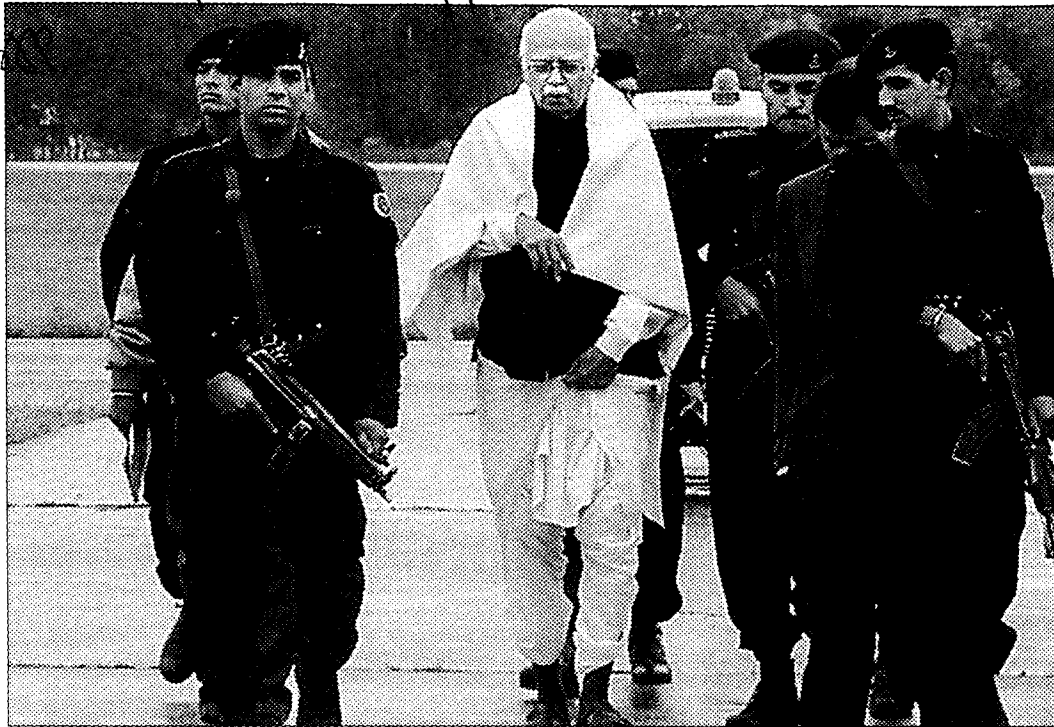
Agencies
Sasaram, January 30

TERMING THE RJD and the LJP as "two faces of the same coin", senior BJP leader M. Venkaiah Naidu today alleged that their leaders — Lalu Prasad Yadav and Ram Vilas Paswan — would gang up after the Assembly poll in Bihar and called upon the electorate to give a clear mandate to the NDA to end what he described as "the terror raj of the RJD rule".

"Friendship in New Delhi and wrestling in Patna is nothing but an eyewash. Both Lalu and Paswan, who are cabinet colleagues in the UPA government at the Centre, will gang up after the poll," Naidu told an election rally at Amra Talab under Nokha Assembly constituency in Rohtas district.

Claiming that the NDA was the lone alternative capable of ending the "15-year-long RJD misrule," he urged the electorate to give the BJP and JD-U a chance to make "Bihar crime-free". Alleging that the ruling government was a total failure on all fronts and had "hood-winked" the people by indulging in "politics of castes and creeds", Naidu said: "Lalu has provided employment only to abductors, his wife and brothers-in-law while people of the state continue to suffer."

"There is no law and order worth the name. Roads are in bad shape and there is no electricity and there is paucity of drinking water in thousands of villages in Bihar," he said and alleged that the Congress was "equally responsible" for the "sorry state of affairs" in the state.



L.K. Advani at Birsa Munda airport in Ranchi on Sunday.

Referring to yesterday's attack on his helicopter by suspected Naxalites of the CPI (Maoist) in Bihar's Gaya district, Naidu appealed to the Naxal outfits to return to the mainstream.

After going through a "nightmare" when his helicopter was blown up, Naidu said at Ranchi on Sunday that there was prevalence of gun culture in the state and that the morale of the police was low. He said that Bihar police failed to realise the gravity of the situation and had been waiting near the national highway when he reached it.

Advani for Prez rule in Bihar

BJP PRESIDENT L.K. Advani today demanded President's rule in Bihar in view of the rising lawlessness.

"Before Uttar Pradesh, President's rule should be clamped in Bihar where small children are being kidnapped," Advani said while addressing an election meeting here in sup-

port of the party's candidate from Giridih, Chandramohan Prasad. Asserting that the BJP never compromised with its policy on Naxalites to win elections, Advani asked Prime Minister Manmohan Singh to review his government's policy on internal security.

PTI, Giridih

No law and order problem in Bihar, says RJD chief

CONDEMNING THE attack on BJP leader M. Venkaiah Naidu's helicopter in a Naxal-infested area in Gaya, RJD chief Lalu Prasad today said the help offered by the villagers of the area "certifies" that there is law and order in the state.

"I thank the villagers who apprised them of the risks of being in that area and advised them to leave the place as soon as possible. This is a good thing and proves that there is no law and order problem in the state," he told a news channel.

He said when Naidu came to the main highway, the police came to know about the incident and escorted him away from the area. For these reasons, he said, the incident should not be used to raise any law and order issue.

Naidu, however, has alleged that the Bihar police failed to realise the gravity of the situation and were waiting near the national highway when he reached it by scooter from the spot where he had landed.

Lalu noted that Naidu's helicopter was forced to make a landing in the area because it ran out of fuel and in his characteristic style, said: "The pilot should have kept alert, should have put extra fuel in the helicopter."

Suspected Naxalites on Saturday blew up Naidu's helicopter an hour after it forced landed in a village in remote Naxal-dominated Barachatti police station area of Gaya. Fortunately for him, however, he had left the spot by then.

PTI, New Delhi

Reverse Swing: Congress Comes Up As Largest Party

BJP govt reduced to a minority in Goa

Panaji

29 JANUARY

THE BJP government in Goa was reduced to a minority on Saturday with three of its 21 party MLAs resigning from the 40-member state Assembly and an equal number withdrawing support in a sudden development that spurred Opposition Congress into staking claim to form a government.

Atanasio Monserratte, who had resigned from the state Cabinet on Friday after being suddenly stripped off the town and country planning portfolio, and two other ruling party legislators—Isidore Fernandes and former tourism minister Micky Pacheko—submitted their resignation letters to the Assembly secretary, reducing the ruling BJP's strength from 21 to 18. Mr Pacheko had only on Thursday

merged his United Goa Democratic Party (Secular) with the BJP.

MGP MLA Sudhin Dhavilkar and independent legislator Phillip Nery Rodrigues besides the UGDP, which were supporting the Parikkar government, too submitted letters to state governor S.C. Jamir withdrawing their support to the three-year-old BJP government. The UGDP MLA, who is a minister, is on his way back from Spain.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Congress, which has 15 MLAs and support of one NCP member, met the governor and staked claim to form a government. Congress general secretary in charge of Goa, Margaret Alva, who met the governor separately, told reporters: "We have presented our support to him. We are the largest party and it is up to him to take a decision now."

Mr Monserratte, who resigned from the Assembly said: "I

have been humiliated in such a way that I thought it is better to go home." Ms Alva claimed that two more BJP MLAs were on the verge of resigning, but refused to give their names. Political activity in the capital was at its peak, with hectic meetings and consultations on in both camps. Transport minister Pandurang Madkaikar also joined Congress leaders who met the governor, fuelling speculation that he too would be resigning.

Both Mr Dhavalikar and Mr Rodrigues, however, said they had withdrawn support to the government solely due to "outside pressure". While Mr Dhavalikar said he had taken the decision at the behest of his party, Mr Rodrigues said: "I was pressurised by my voters, most of whom are Catholic, that there should be another government at the helm. Personally I am very happy with the chief minister." —PTI

Reuters

Modi to lead BJP charge against Banerjee report

9 p.m.
BJP
2/1/05

By Mohua Chatterjee/TNN

New Delhi: BJP has decided to counter the U C Banerjee committee report on Godhra by going on the offensive with Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi leading the charge.

Modi, who was enlisted on the panel of star campaigners in Bihar along with others like Uma Bharti, Shatrughan Sinha, Sushma Swaraj, Varun Gandhi, apart from party chief L K Advani and former PM Atal Behari Vajpayee, is now going to be extensively and aggressively used by the party which is trying to make a dent in the RJD-ruled state.

"Uma and Modi are going to be key campaigners now," according to a top party source. Modi will campaign in all the three states— Bihar, Jharkhand and Haryana— which are going in for assembly polls in February. While BJP, on Tuesday, stepped up its attack on the Godhra report, publicly denying that it would make it a campaign issue, the thinking within party circles is that, the report is going to damage the Congress and work in

favour of BJP in Bihar.

Accusing RJD chief and railway minister Lalu Prasad of initiating the probe purely for political purposes, BJP's calculation is that the polarisation, bound to be triggered by the Godhra issue, will benefit the party. "This report has no legal basis or statutory status," BJP general secretary Arun Jaitley said.



The BJP reading is that the polarisation will help consolidate the upper caste vote bank in the state which was its stronghold but may have strayed into the Congress kitty, if people voted for the ruling combine.

To Lalu Prasad's benefit, it (polarisation) will help Muslims and backwards to get routed back to RJD in strength, instead of a share of the backward votes straying into JD-U or Ram Vilas Paswan's LJP camps. Even if RJD's strength has been Muslim-Yadav votes and Lalu Prasad has been considered the messiah of the backwards in the state, Prasad is faced with an anti-incumbency factor which has accumulated over 15 years and hence wouldn't like to take chances this time.

Going by the same equation, the NDA combine is unlikely to be a loser since by BJP's own admittance, JD-U or any of the other allies have had almost no share of Muslim votes, ever since it tied up with BJP. The end result: a polarisation of votes between RJD and BJP, who have never really vied for each other's vote share. In such a scenario Congress ends up as the big loser, since it could have eaten into BJP's support base.

"The interim report has less connection with reality of the case and more with the upcoming elections," Jaitley alleged, insisting that Godhra was not an accident, as suggested by the report, but result of a "conspiracy."

Casting aspersions over the procedures adopted by the committee, he alleged that it had not examined the police officer investigating the case, supervisory officers or doctors who treat the patients and had not taken into consideration the reports of forensic sciences laboratory (FSL) or RDSO (a subsidiary of the railways). "The more serious issue is that senior Gujarat police officers have been invited for examination on January 18, a day after the interim report was made public," he pointed out.

Bid to influence course of justice: BJP

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 17. — The BJP today slammed the interim report of the UC Banerjee Committee on the fire in the S-6 coach of the Sabarmati Express as an "extra constitutional effort to influence the course of justice". It also alleged that the report was released in view of the forthcoming Bihar Assembly elections.

Off the record, a section in the

BJP and strategists in the Sangh Parivar said the move could backfire on Mr Lalu Prasad and his supporters. Senior BJP leaders opined that this "offensive" from the rival camp could actually force party satraps to close ranks.

Reacting to the report, BJP general secretary Mr Arun Jaitley said: "Our worst fears have come true. This report is a disgraceful and unfortunate attempt to trivialise one of the worst offences

and crimes which started off a series of unfortunate incidents in February 2002." He alleged that the report was released today after the first round of nominations were filed for the Assembly polls, instead of 3 March, the date up to which the commission's term was extended, as it would not have helped the railway minister in the Bihar polls. Mr Jaitley also alleged that the interim report has ignored the entire trial and was

aimed at benefiting "those who committed the crime". The report had no legal basis as a criminal trial was already on and a commission of inquiry was probing the case, he added. "The choice of the judge (Mr Justice UC Banerjee) was made by the political establishment. The credibility of such investigations without public hearings, expert reports, witnesses and cross examinations is less," he said.

GODHRA REPORT FALLOUT

Meanwhile, a senior Sangh Parivar functionary said: "This time Lalu (Mr Prasad) is trying to take on the RSS directly. So far the VHP and the Bajrang Dal, which have a strong base in certain pockets of Bihar, were not ready to campaign for the BJP. But the Banerjee committee report would force the Sangh Parivar to throw all its might behind the BJP." Another senior functionary said: "If there is communal polarisation in Bihar, the BJP or Sangh Parivar can't be blamed."

BJP hints at post-poll alliances in Bihar

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 14. — The BJP today said it is not averse to a post-poll alliance in Bihar with some new players if needed to form a government.

The party today also announced that its election campaign with the JD(U) would be based on the slogan "*sarkar badle, to bihar badle*" (change the government to bring change in Bihar).

BJP vice-president Sushil Kumar Modi, who hails from Bihar, today replied in the affirmative when asked about the possibility of a post-poll alliance with the NDA's one-time ally Lok Janshakti Party of Ram Vilas Paswan or any other group.

The BJP general secretary, Mr Arun Jaitley, added that the BJP would not hesitate to join hands with any party which was fighting against the ruling RJD in Bihar.

Mr Jaitley, however, said it would have been better if such parties could come together before polls.

Mr Jaitley said the NDA campaign would focus on the "misrule" in Bihar for the past 15 years. It would also "expose the nexus" between the RJD and the Congress, he added. Mr Jaitley said while the JD(U)-BJP alliance exhibited "complete understanding" on sharing of seats, the mode of campaign vis-a-vis the Congress and RJD was in "disarray". He claimed that the situation had "dramatically changed" in favour of the JD(U)-BJP alliance.

"We had earlier thought of concentrating on the anti-Lalu vote, but a situation has arisen where anti-NDA votes have become the bone of contention among the UPA partners," Mr Jaitley said.

During the campaign, the alliance would highlight how the Congress, which had fought against the RJD last time, got into a post-poll alliance with the same party to form a government with all its 11 MLAs being made ministers. "In the past five years the Congress never opened its mouth against the non-governance in Bihar," he added.

THE STATESMAN

15 JAN 2005

Lalu tells Cong to go its own way

New Delhi
8 JANUARY

ANGERED by the Congress-JMM tie-up in Jharkhand, RJD chief Lalu Prasad today bluntly told Congress that it was free to go on its own in the Assembly polls next month in Bihar but kept his options open.

Prasad told reporters that the Congress-JMM move has sent "bad signals" about the health of UPA coalition at the Centre. He said the Congress decision in Jharkhand was in "bad taste" and the RJD along with Left parties and NCP would protest to UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi as it was made "without taking us into confidence."

The RJD chief, however, took pains to emphasise that Congress president Sonia Gandhi was not involved in the move and she had been "misled". "I do not want to embarrass her (Gandhi). She would not be a party to it and she

must have been misled," Prasad said. The attack was obvious on senior Congress leaders Arjun Singh and M L Fotedar, who were negotiating with party's allies including RJD on the seat-sharing in Bihar and Jharkhand.

In a veiled attack on the two Congress leaders, he said whoever had been instrumental in the Congress-JMM tie-up in Jharkhand had helped communal forces. "Those

who try to weaken UPA, we will teach them a lesson," he remarked.

In the face of criticism by RJD and Left parties over the electoral agreement

reached with JMM in Jharkhand, Congress today hinted

that it was open to renegotiation of the seat-sharing arrangement for the next month's Assembly polls. "In politics, there is always give and take. Nothing is fixed. We are open to talks with our allies in Jharkhand to find an amicable settlement," AICC general secretary Ambika Soni told reporters.

— PTI

