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Desam snaps ties with BJP

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Hyderabad, Aug. 1: The bond has finally snapped. The Telugu Desam Party and the BJP, whose ties had grown weak since the poll fortunes turned against them, have decided to go their own ways.

Telugu Desam Party president N. Chandrababu Naidu has said he will go it alone in the local body polls slated for the middle of September.

Relations between the once good friends had begun to sour when the Desam threatened at its convention in May to split if the BJP continued its Hindutva stance. For the BJP, Naidu's pro-Muslim tilt that had become all too evident recently sealed the divorce.

The decision was taken at the state executive of the BJP in Nellore, chaired by former party president M. Venkaiah Naidu.

This will, perhaps, be the first time in its 22-year political history that the Desam will be contesting polls all alone. Before it had the BJP for company, the Left parties had joined its bandwagon.

The flashpoint for the BJP was a minority meeting hosted by Naidu at the Desam headquarters. The former chief minister left no stone unturned to appease Muslims, whose feathers he had ruffled by opposing the proposal to give them a five per cent quota. He even sported a fur cap.

Naidu said the Desam was firm in its stand on secular issues and would always keep a distance from the BJP, though his party's support had been crucial to the survival of the NDA regime. "It is the BJP which is always swinging between its love for Hindutva and power," he alleged.

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