

Left Democratic Front completes seat allocation

Accord reached on 129 seats; differences persist over 11 seats

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The CPI (M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) in Kerala has finalised allocation of 129 seats among the front constituents and kept 11 seats aside for allocation through bilateral discussions in the coming few days.

The Opposition alliance, engaged in bilateral and collective seat sharing talks over the last few weeks, could not complete the exercise even on Sunday on account of persistent differences over the CPI(M) claim to more seats this time.

All the 11 seats that have been kept unallocated are those contested by the minor allies in the 2001 Assembly election. Most of these seats are likely to be taken

over by the CPI(M). The only ally of the CPI(M) that has emerged unscathed from the exercise is the CPI. The party has been able to retain all the 24 seats it had contested in the last election. The CPI(M) has come out with its list of 76 candidates and the CPI is expected to do so on Monday.

Of the seats that have been allocated, 76 goes to the CPI(M), 24 to the CPI, eight to the Janata Dal (Secular), six to the Kerala Congress (Joseph), four to the RSP, two to the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and one each to the Congress (S) and the Kerala Congress (Secular). Four seats have been kept apart for independents.

The CPI(M) had contested 77 seats in the 2001 Assembly elec-

tion and CPI 24. Janata Dal (Secular) has to give up four seats. The party had contested 12 seats last time.

The NCP had contested in nine seats in 2001, but had split into NCP and Congress(S) subsequently.

Together, they get only three seats this time. Kerala Congress (J) has had to surrender four seats (10 last time) and RSP two seats (six last time).

The Indian National League (INL), an informal ally of the LDF, has been given three seats against the two seats the party had contested last time.

Briefing newsmen, the front convener Paloli Mohammed Kutty said the LDF's election manifesto would be released in Kozhikode on Tuesday.

27 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

Achuthanandan to be fielded

9.8 Kerala
K.D-1
25/3

No other major change in list, says Karat

Special Correspondent

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: Bowing to popular sentiment and the demand articulated by a large number of people within and outside the party, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) has decided to field Leader of the Opposition V.S. Achuthanandan in the coming Assembly elections in Kerala.

Announcing at a news conference here late on Friday evening the decision to field the veteran leader, CPI(M) general secretary Prakash Karat said the party Polit Bureau had decided to 're-open' the question of his candidature after reviewing the situation following the earlier decision not to field Mr. Achuthanandan and CPI(M) State secretary Pinarayi Vijayan, and considering the confusion resulting from it.

Mr. Karat made the announcement after back-to-back meetings of the CPI(M) State secretariat and State committee here to discuss Mr. Achuthanandan's candidature and finalise the list of candidates for the Assembly elections. He made it clear that the party would take a decision on who should be the Left Democratic Front's Chief Minister after the poll. Mr. Vijayan, being the party State secretary, would not contest the election. However, LDF convenor Paloli Mohammed Kutty would be in the fray and there would be no major changes in the list of candidates approved by the last meeting of the State committee, he added.

Asked why the Polit Bureau had decided to review its decision not to field Mr. Achuthanandan, Mr. Karat said it was done after hearing the views of various sections within the party. The Polit Bureau meeting held on March 15 and 16 had decided not to field Mr. Achuthanandan and Mr. Vijayan. However, after taking stock of the situation, another meeting of



V.S. Achuthanandan

the Polit Bureau was held on March 21 to discuss the issue in the light of some confusion arising from the earlier decision. The decision of the meeting was that a team from the Polit Bureau must meet the State secretariat and State committee to review the decision, he said.

To a question whether the Polit Bureau decision to field Mr. Achuthanandan was unanimous, he said the question did not arise in the CPI(M). Mr. Karat said that the candidates' list would be ready by Friday night. It would be released immediately after the LDF State committee meeting slated for Saturday.

It was a hectic day for the CPI(M) leaders on Friday. Apart from Mr. Karat, the Polit Bureau was represented at Friday's meetings here by Polit Bureau members Sitaram Yechury, R. Umanath and S. Ramachandran Pillai. At the State secretariat meeting, which began in the morning, Mr. Karat presented the Polit Bureau decision and heard each of the secretariat members. Later, the Polit Bureau stance on the question of fielding Mr. Achuthanandan was presented before the State committee and its endorsement secured.

Editorial on Page 10

THE HINDU

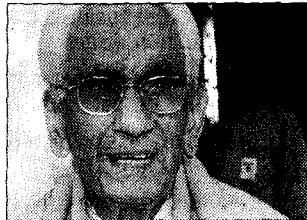
Karunakaran gets a facesaver

DMK deal pleases ally

Rebel leader signs pact with Congress

RAMESH Babu
Thiruvananthapuram, March 23

AFTER THE tirade, the handshake. Senior leader K. Karunakaran on Thursday clinched a face-saving deal with the ruling Congress-led United Democratic Front, two days after his vitriolic outburst against the Congress leadership. The UDF has decided to give 17 seats to his party, the Democratic Indira Congress (DIC).



K. Karunakaran

Deal sealed
Congress decides to give Karunakaran 17 seats

Uneasy ties
CM Oommen Chandy is unhappy at the importance being given to the rebel

U-turn
Two days ago, Karunakaran had criticised the Cong



KERALA
VOTES

However, a section of the Congress, including chief minister Oommen Chandy, is unhappy with the party for the importance being accorded to Karunakaran. At one point of time, Chandy had even threatened not to lead the party if he was forced to agree to Karunakaran's demand for 30 seats.

Kerala's bipolar politics

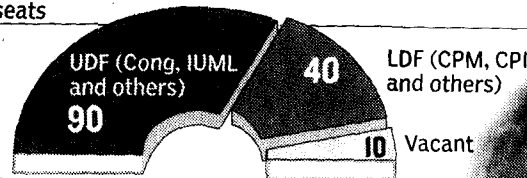
The state's voters have the habit of showing the door to the ruling front after each term

Peculiarities

Two fronts. No scope for individual parties
Ruling front gets dumped every election
Winning margins wafer thin
Local issues dominate. Strong caste and community undercurrents
Minorities hold the key (Muslims 24%, Christians 19%)

Total seats

140



UDF

Plus

Turned state into an investment destination. Made strides in IT and tourism
Initiated populist programmes at 11th hour
Term was peaceful
Implemented report by Narendran quota panel

Minus

Anti-incumbency wave
Split in Congress
Corruption charges
CM Chandy lacks charm

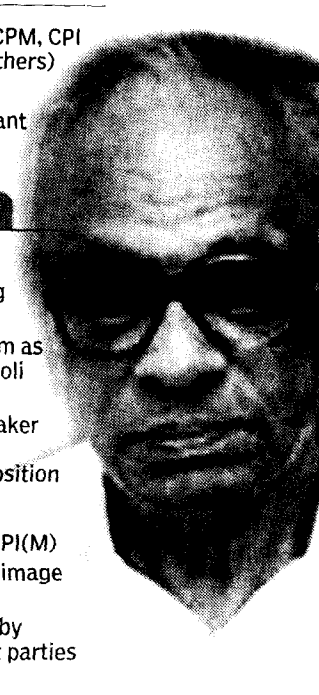
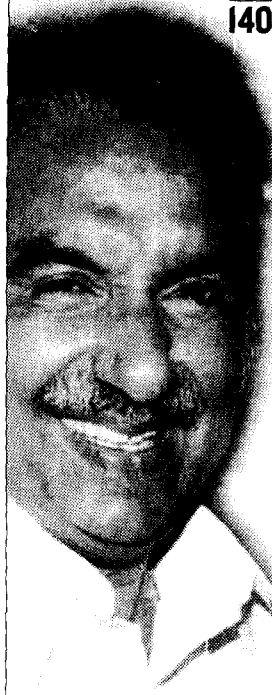
LDF

Plus

Has been exposing govt's failures
Projecting a Muslim as CM candidate (Paloli Mohd Kutty, right)
Minorities and weaker sections more favourable to opposition

Minus

Infighting within CPI(M)
Anti-development image of hardliners
Violent agitations by youth wings of left parties



For Assam Cong, it's a family affair

FOR THE Congress in Assam, dynasties do matter. For some, it is in the genes. For others, power apparently has to remain within the family.

Thus wives and sons of several party leaders figure in the list of candidates. The two power centres of the Congress in Barak Valley — Union minister Santosh Mohan Dev and state social welfare minister Gautam Roy — both have a rel-

ative contesting the polls. While Dev's wife, Bithika, is the Congress candidate in Silchar, Roy's son, Rahul, will contest from Algapur. In other cases, sons have either replaced their parents or stepped in after their death. In Gossaigaon, MLA Mithias Tudu has been replaced by his son Chrisostom Tudu while Javed Islam replaced his mother Hosenara Begum in Mankachar. **HTC**

HT Correspondent
Chennai, March 23

FOR ONCE, there is very little grumbling in TN Congress after the party finalised the choice of constituencies with the DMK on Tuesday. "Primarily the numbers were good and now the constituencies allotted are also winnable seats", said a senior MLA.

Congressmen were apprehensive that the DMK, after giving away 48 seats, would compromise on the choice of seats by dumping the difficult ones on the Congress. But their fears have mostly proved unfounded as 30 of the 48 seats given to them are viewed as quite winnable. "We would have liked a couple of more seats in Chennai and northern Tamil Nadu but that has been compensated by seats in south, which is our stronghold", said Gnanasekaran, a senior MLA.

However, followers of former city MLA Chellakumar on Thursday protested in front of the party office and burnt effigies of AICC general secretary Veerappa Moily for not getting enough seats in Chennai.

Most of the sitting MLAs have retained their seats and the party's MPs, too, have managed to get at least one Assembly constituency in their Lok Sabha constituency. "We are confident of winning the three seats allotted to us in the Sivaganga Lok Sabha constituency", said Karti Chidambaram, son of Union finance minister P. Chidambaram.



TAMIL NADU
VOTES

POLLS ■ Murleedharan to get safe seat in Kozikode with IUML support

Kerala: Congress seals deal with Karunakaran finally

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
MARCH 23

IN A major poll-eve realignment of forces in Kerala, the ruling Congress and K Karunakaran's DIC-K today reached an understanding for the Assembly elections. Though details were being worked out, sources said that the Congress had conceded to the major demand of the DIC-K to contest on its own party symbol.

"We have reached an understanding. The details of the alliance will be worked out soon," CWC member in charge of Kerala affairs, Veerappa Moily, told reporters after marathon discussions with DIC-K president K Muraleedharan and IUML leader P K Kunhalikutty who mediated in the talks. Moily had held consultations with senior leaders, including A K Antony and Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, before talking to Muraleedharan.

Moily brought around sections in Congress who were against any kind tie-up with Karunakaran with the argument that it was essential to avoid a split in the 'democratic ranks' to bring the coalition back to power, sources said.

The possibility of an alliance had earlier dimmed after the fiery speeches of Karunakaran and Muraleedharan against Congress leaders in the DIC-K special convention the other day.

But the chances brightened after Karunakaran made a brief statement yesterday that he respected Sonia Gandhi as a member of the Nehru family. The mood of reconciliation gave impetus to the talks today.

According to sources, the Congress was offering up to 17 seats and another seat was likely to be given from the kitty of IUML, the second largest partner in the UDF. Muraleedharan was likely to contest the 'safe' seat to be provided by IUML in Kozhikode district.

On the symbol issue too, the Congress appears to have relented, the sources said.



Karunanidhi finalises seats for allies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, MARCH 23

DMK president M Karunanidhi, who heads the Democratic Progressive Alliance in Tamil Nadu, today gallantly defended AICC president Sonia Gandhi's decision to resign from the Lok Sabha and NAC saying: "One who conquers oneself, conquers the world. Sonia Gandhi exemplifies this."

Earlier, wrapping up talks with allies on identification of constituencies for the Assembly election in Tamil Nadu scheduled for May 8, Karunanidhi released the list this evening.

The DPA chief has been prudent in handing over almost all the sitting seats of his allies, the Congress, PMK and the two Left parties.

Two of the 14 seats in Chennai city, considered a DMK bastion, has been given to allies - Saidapet to the PMK and R K Nagar to the Congress. The DMK lost to film 'villain' Radha Ravi of the AIADMK in the by-election held to the Saidapet constituency which fell vacant after the death of Y Perumal (DMK).

A good many of the additional seats which the allies would be contesting in the south happens to be strongholds of both the AIADMK

and MDMK, which are on the same side for the coming election. The Congress has retained some of the seats which fall within the Sivaganga Parliamentary constituency, from where Finance Minister P Chidambaram won in the 2004 Lok Sabha election.

The DMK chief is now ahead of his rival, Chief Minister and AIADMK supremo J Jayalithaa, who is apparently facing trouble with her new ally, MDMK leader Vaiko, over identification of seats for his party. Both the AIADMK and MDMK are strong in southern Tamil Nadu and hence the deadlock over some constituencies.

Back to square one

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After knocking at the doors of both the Left Democratic Front and the United Democratic Front, the Democratic Indira Congress (Karunakaran) is back to charting its own course in the Kerala Assembly elections. What should have been obvious from the start is slowly dawning upon the DIC(K) in the wake of another round of failed negotiations with the Congress: that the best option in the prevailing political situation is to float a third front. Any new party that is yet to prove its electoral strength will, without doubt, get a bad bargain in alliance talks with established parties. Although DIC(K) founder K. Karunakaran derives great strength from his Congress roots, he cannot expect either the LDF or the UDF to accept this as a basis to gauge the alliance-worthiness of his newborn party. From the beginning, the effort of Mr. Karunakaran should have been to demonstrate his party's independent support base, and not to find a short cut to power by striking a deal with one or the other of the two major fronts. True, in Kerala's polarised politics, forming an alternative to the Congress and the Left parties is no easy task. But for someone who spent an entire political career fighting the Communists, and who had just walked out of the Congress citing irreconcilable differences with the party leadership, there was no choice other than leading a third front.

By displaying an amazing propensity to switch from one end of the political spectrum to another, the DIC(K) actually damaged its credibility. Indeed, the apprehensions voiced within the LDF that the DIC(K), an offshoot of the Congress, was unreliable as an ally seemed entirely justified. Not surprisingly, the UDF was also wary of a party that could switch sides with such ease. Hence the insistence on the part of the Congress during the negotiations that the DIC(K) contest on its 'Hand' symbol. This would have made defection from the Congress impossible for the elected supporters of Mr. Karunakaran without their inviting disqualification. If Mr. Karunakaran had agreed to the proposal, it would have effectively meant a merger of the DIC(K) with the Congress. All his grievances against the Congress remain, and to return to the parent party for the sake of a few seats for his supporters would have seemed to be total surrender. Small parties play an important role in politically conscious Kerala, but only as constituents of either the UDF or the LDF. Some of the expelled CPI(M) leaders had found ready acceptance in the UDF without their having to test their strength independently, but Mr. Karunakaran, who had fomented trouble within the Congress before finally walking out, cannot expect such favours. To be taken seriously, the DIC(K) will have to show that it has the vote base that can make the difference between victory and defeat for the UDF or the LDF.

22 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

CPI(M) Polit Bureau to meet State-level bodies in Kerala

March 24 meeting to ensure that decisions are fully implemented

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Polit Bureau of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Tuesday took stock of the political situation in Kerala, where certain divergences of opinion within the State party have recently spilled on to the streets, ahead of the April-May Assembly elections.

It met here for over six hours to discuss how the party should unitedly face the election so that

the Left Democratic Front can be victorious.

"The Polit Bureau will meet the Secretariat and the State Committee of Kerala on March 24 to ensure that the party's decisions are fully implemented," party general secretary Prakash Karat told mediapersons.

Mr. Karat also dismissed a brief protest outside the party office here in the evening by a handful of people. "Anyone can come and protest, they are not

our party members," he said.

Some eight persons suddenly descended outside AKG Bhavan in the evening, carrying a banner and raising slogans in support of senior leader V. S. Achuthanandan.

The banner scribbled in Malayalam read: "Congratulations to VS, the champion of poor." However, after a short while, the group receded even as the police and CPI(M) workers approached them.

The Polit Bureau is understood to have discussed the situation in detail since the differences within the party have got externalised.

The fact that there has been some reaction from the public was a factor the Polit Bureau took note. The situation got complicated since the development came at a time when the Assembly elections were announced.

22 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

U-TURN ■ In a big climbdown, DIC-K likely to contest on Congress symbol, may settle for 20 seats

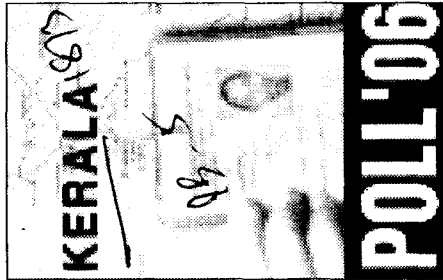
Karunakaran near return to Cong fold

VARGHESE K GEORGE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 17

VETERAN K Karunakaran's return to the Congress in Kerala seems imminent, with central observer M Veerappa Moily expected to brief party chief Sonia Gandhi on the issue on Friday.

Party sources indicated that Karunakaran's outfit, the Democratic Indira Congress (DIC), was willing to contest on the Congress symbol and might settle for 20 seats.

This is a big climbdown for Karunakaran and son K Mu-



Vayalar Ravi remains adamant that Karunakaran not be welcomed, but other players have scaled down their opposition.

After days of posturing, and following talks with Moily, Muralidharan declared on Wednesday that "he belonged to the Congress family". In contrast, Minister Vayalar Ravi still remains adamant that Karunakaran be not wel-

comed, but other players, like CM Ommen Chandy, and KPCC President Ramesh Chennithala, have scaled down their opposition. However, they still insist on Karunakaran's outfit contesting only on Congress symbol.

This has to do with the veteran's reputation of being a hard bargainer, and Congress leaders fear that after the elections, he might play hard to get yet again. If his men get elected on Congress symbol, they would be subjected to the party whip, a situation that the DIC-K has been struggling to avoid.

they were in the Congress, he had said only two days back that "contesting on Congress ticket will be sui-

cidious. They had been so far insisting on contesting on their own symbol, and when their faction had won 33 seats in the 2001 elections.

Kerala conundrum

Voters must ask the state's politicians a question: when will growth come

IN the Kerala's bipolar political matrix, coming to power is about riding the anti-incumbency wave. By that logic, come May and the Left Front should soon be in power here — despite Sonia Gandhi's recent appearance on the state's political stage clad in the traditional mundu-neriyathu. The political discourse in the state tends to be so focused on the micro-realities of power politics, that the big picture is lost in the confusion.

While Karnataka has become a cyber-hub; Tamil Nadu has emerged as a manufacturing giant, and Andhra Pradesh is rushing to catch up, Kerala continues to be the Cinderella of the region. A state with great potential that is going nowhere and is unlikely to go anywhere. The state has been applauded for its social indicators. Rightly so. India has to be proud that Kerala has done better in literacy and health than even China. But the economic liberation that social well-being should have brought in its wake never came

about, thanks to an unfortunate melding of parochial politics and militant trade-unionism. This meant that despite high literacy rates, meaningful employment within the borders of the state remained elusive. In one of the few states in the country where women are almost as literate as the men, women's unemployment is almost twice as high as that of their male counterparts. In one of the few states in the country which boasts of an aware workforce, there is no manufacturing base to speak of, thanks to the state's rich history of strikes and labour disputes.

Kerala surely deserves rather more than the uncertain remittance economy? The question Kerala's voters should be asking those hoping to represent them in the next assembly is really quite a simple one: when will real growth come their way? It is unlikely that they will get a satisfactory answer. But that shouldn't stop them from posing the question as clearly and loudly as they can.

Sonia bails out old warhorse of Kerala

HT Correspondent
Kochi, March 5

VETERAN LEADER K. Karunakaran's political isolation is set to end with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi leaving the decision on his breakaway party to the state unit, which in turn responded positively. "Let the DIC-K (Democratic Indira Congress-Karunakaran) come to us. We will cross the bridge when it approaches," All-India Congress Committee secretary Tom Vadakkan said here.

"Is it like that? Let me see," Karunakaran said in Thiruvananthapuram while reacting to this. He refused to elaborate on it and asked to wait till March 20 when his party finalises the poll strategy.

PCC president Ramesh Chennithala said the political resolution to be adopted on Monday by the ongoing brainstorming session here would make the party's stand clear. The Congress' partners in the United Democratic Front, especially the influential Indian Union Muslim League, are all for taking Karunakaran's party in. However, most of the Congress legislators who met Sonia Gandhi told her that such a move would upset the prevailing peace in the state unit.

Both the Congress and the DIC-K rule out a merger at this stage. Senior leaders, including, chief minister Oommen Chandy, power minister Aryadan Mohammed and Union minister Vayalar Ravi advised Sonia Gandhi not to go beyond seat adjustments saying it would be suicidal for the party that has found "unity and tranquility" in so many years after the exit of Karunakaran and his son K. Muraleedharan.

Karunakaran wanted Sonia Gandhi to call him for a meeting but that was most unlikely since his isolation is complete with the Left Democratic Front (LDF) dumping him after winning crucial elections with his support.

Till late Saturday, it was believed that the Congress high command would have the final say, but on Sunday it threw the ball back to the state's court sending across strong signals that the central



Sonia Gandhi in Kochi to attend Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee session.

leadership is not against taking in the four-time chief minister.

Rural scheme

Launching an attack on the opposition chief ministers for making 'false claims' that the national rural employment guarantee scheme was theirs, Sonia Gandhi on Sunday said the scheme was fully funded by the UPA government.

"It is a UPA government scheme. Ninety per cent of the funds needed for the scheme is being allocated by the Centre. Some CMs make false claims that the scheme is their own", Sonia Gandhi said while kicking off the DMK-led Democratic Progressive Alliance's election campaign for the May 8 assembly polls in Tamil Nadu here.

06 MAR 2006

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Jharkhand MLAs petition Kalam

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI/JAIPUR, March 27. — The Opposition UPA MLAs from Jharkhand today called on President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, demanding disqualification of 13 MLAs in the ruling NDA government in Jharkhand for occupying offices of profit. The BJP, however, claimed that there was no threat to the Arjun Munda-led government in the state.

The state Governor, Syed Sibtey Razi, forwarded a list of legislators for the Chief Election Commissioner's examination. The Opposition MLAs were planning to weaken the Munda government by intensifying their pres-

sure tactics for the disqualification of its 13 MLAs, currently in Rajasthan. The BJP has 41 MLAs in an Assembly of 81. BJP spokesman Mr Prakash Javadekar later claimed that the Munda government was in a "very comfortable" position. He did not attach any importance to the party MLAs visiting Rajasthan saying that they were on a vacation there. In a counter attack, he accused the UPA of trying to create an atmosphere of political instability in the state. "There is no threat to the government. They (the government) have already passed a law (on office-of-profit with retrospective effect)," he said.

Meanwhile, chief minister, Mr

Arjun Munda is on a "tour" of Rajasthan in an attempt to keep his folk together. With 40 Jharkhand MLAs on board, a special bus arrived in Jaipur this evening from Delhi. The visitors were welcomed at the Rajasthan border by a close aide of the CM Ms Vasundhara Raje and others.

Speaking to reporters, Mr Munda said: "We have come here to study the tourism industry of Rajasthan. We will also be praying at the Khawaja (Moinudeen Chisti's) Dargah for the Opposition to see sense and not try to grab power." The visitors are also to enjoy the programmes being held as part of the Rajasthan Diwas celebrations.

28 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

Disqualification Bill passed

Chaos in the Jharkhand Assembly; four MLAs get respite

RANCHI: Amidst hurling of chairs and overturning of tables by Opposition United Progressive Alliance (UPA) members, the Jharkhand Assembly on Friday passed a controversial Bill to protect four National Democratic Alliance (NDA) MLAs from possible disqualification on the ground of their holding of offices of profit.

The Opposition protest came as soon as Speaker Inder Singh Namdhari took up the Jharkhand Legislature (Removal Of Disqualification) 2006 Bill. The members rushed to the well raising anti-Government slogans and demanded the resignation of four NDA MLAs, accusing them of holding offices of profit.

The MLAs are Karia Munda, who heads the 20-Point Programme Implementation Committee; Chhatruram Mahto heading the State Agriculture Marketing Board; Saryu Roy, vice-chairman of the State Planning Board; and Khiru Mahto, chairman of the Hazaribag Mines Board.

Terming it as a 'black Bill', some Opposition members overturned the House reporters' table and chairs and marshals had a tough time shielding the Speaker. The Bill was passed by voice vote and the Speaker abruptly adjourned the House indefinitely. — PTI



UPROAR: Opposition members in the Jharkhand Assembly protesting on Friday against the four NDA MLAs allegedly holding offices of profit. — PHOTO: PTI

SATURDAY, APRIL 22, 2006

A decisive verdict for continuity

The Supreme Court's clear verdict on the Bangalore-Mysore corridor project has come as a vindication of the argument that a mere change of government should not lead to a review or cancellation of projects cleared by the predecessor regime. The Rs.2,250 crore mega project, awarded by the S.M. Krishna administration in Karnataka, ran aground after the Congress-Janata Dal(S) coalition led by Dharam Singh assumed office. Even after the Karnataka High Court dismissed the State's case that the acquisition of 20,000 acres for this corridor project was much beyond the requirement, the Government and other petitioners chose to challenge the verdict. The Nandi Infrastructure Corridor Enterprise Limited, which was awarded the mega project, presented its case and won. The apex court also slapped costs on both the State Government and the other petitioners for what it called their "frivolous arguments and *mala fides*" in pursuing the case. The Supreme Court has given two clear directions. There was no need to review all decisions after a change of government; and there was enough justification for the acquisition of 20,000 acres for this project. Though there were several charges and counter charges when the Krishna Government cleared the Bangalore-Mysore corridor project, the delay in its execution has worsened the infrastructure scenario in the State.

The project must be viewed in perspective and in its entirety. It was conceived and sanctioned at a time when Bangalore, which used to be a 'Garden City,' was bursting at the seams and there was a dire need to expand the city and look at other centres and towns. And Mysore acquired significance in that scenario. The corridor project was not just about expanding road network and enhancing connectivity, but also providing housing and many services *en route*. Land, when it is converted from agricultural to industrial or commercial uses, becomes a very sensitive issue. While the Krishna Government viewed the acquisition from the point of industrial and infrastructure development, the coalition regime that succeeded it attached more importance to retaining the agricultural nature of the holdings. This was especially because a portion of the total land to be acquired was in Mandya region, the rice bowl of the State. It can only be hoped that the Supreme Court ruling will clear all the clouds and the Kumaraswamy-led Janata Dal(S)-BJP coalition will take the corridor project forward. The message in the verdict for all States is that a change of government should not lead to witch-hunting or a rejection of all commitments made by the predecessor regime merely to score political points. The State cannot afford any further delay in the implementation of such major infrastructure projects. Already, the impression is gaining ground that because of the changed attitude of the Government, Karnataka is losing ground to the neighbouring States in high technology and industrial development.

27 APR 2006

THE HINDU

3 die as Rajkumar fans go on rampage

Bangalore Logged Off As Worst Kind Of Violence Erupts, Mourners Throng Funeral

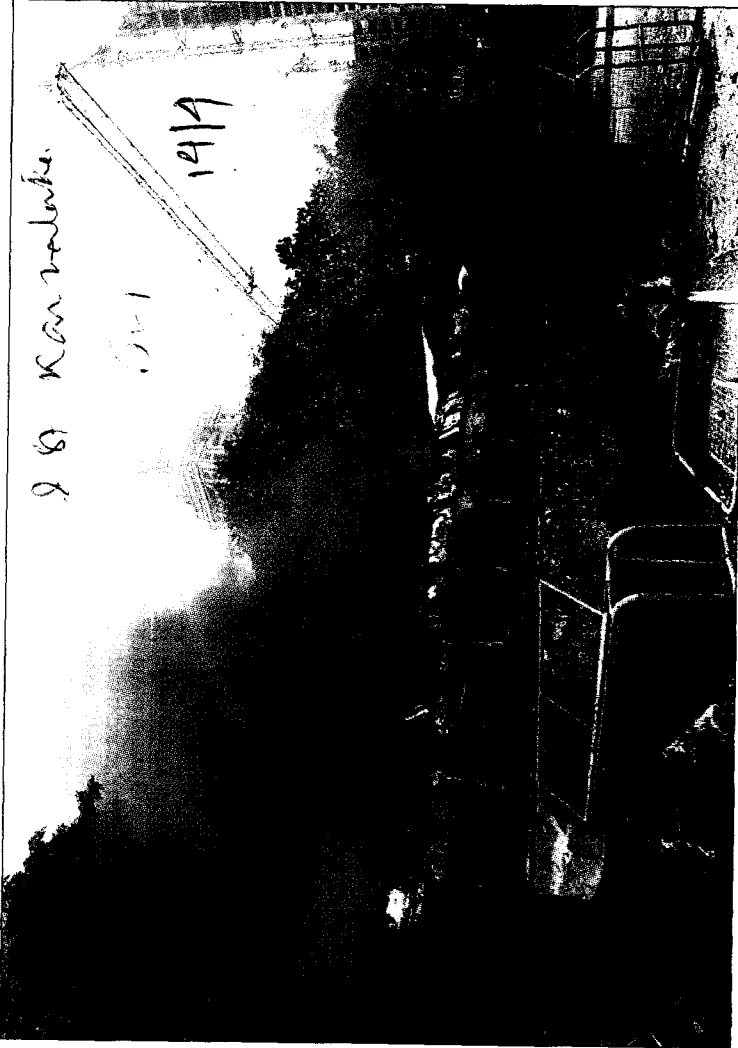
Times News Network

Bangalore: Three people died and 150 were injured, including 45 policemen, as frenzied fans of Kannada thespian Rajkumar went on the rampage on Thursday, resorting to stone-pelting and targeting vehicles in and around Kanteerava stadium here, where his body lay in state, as tens of thousands of people paid their homage to the legendary actor.

Tens of thousands of mourners have been pouring into the stadium since Wednesday night to pay their last respects. Police had a tough time in controlling surging emotionally-charged crowds who swelled in numbers with each passing hour. At least two state-owned buses were set on fire near the stadium and scores of private vehicles damaged by the unruly crowd, which also attacked the police and fought pitched battles with them.

Police repeatedly resorted to lathi-charge and burst teargas shells in and around the stadium which itself was stoned.

Bangalore was essentially logged off. All for a man whose stint with violence never travelled beyond his films, for their



Angry Rajkumar fans set on fire a bus at Siddalingaiah Circle in Bangalore on Thursday

beloved Rajkumar, an acclaimed peacenik. For a sense of what Bangalore turned into on Thursday, just take a walk. The streets were bursting with people spilling from every corner of the city, screaming hysterically, attacking man, woman, child, buildings, vehicles and strutting about the streets with knives, daggers, stones, lathis. Just why were

they angry and what were they protesting? No one knows. What did Bangalore do on Thursday? No petrol bunks were open, no petrol or diesel was available, no drivers and cab owners were willing to risk stepping out, banks remained closed, offices, schools, colleges had a holiday, ATMs remained firmly shut, hotels, restaurants, petty chai kadais were all padlocked. Except for frenzied 'fans' the streets were empty.

There were rare sights too—a band of frenzied men running down Brigade Road with daggers, 'fans' attacking policemen leaving one critically injured. Every street had its local diety—Natasarvabhauma Rajkumar—photos of the thespian ruled at every street corner with people garlanding it, lighting lamps, burning incense sticks. Any car in the city was deemed 'safe' if it sported a picture of Rajkumar. Still a feeble ruse for the crowds who burnt public buses and private vehicles all the same.

The worst was yet to be—when the cortege travelled from the Kanteerava stadium to the Kanteerava studio, a good 15 km procession. The route was marked with violence.

"Left is our valued ally"

9.8.08 Kerala 40-1
20/9

Even pressures do good: Manmohan

Kerala Bureau

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Left parties are the "valued allies" of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government at the Centre and any dispute between the two will be resolved amicably, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Wednesday.

Addressing a press conference in Kochi, he said pressures from the valued allies would serve only the cause of good. Even unhealthy pressures would sometimes do a lot of good.

Dr. Singh was in Kerala to campaign for the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), which is facing a stiff challenge from the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front (LDF).

The Prime Minister did not criticise the Left parties at election meetings at Perumbavoor in Ernakulam district and Thodupuzha in Idukki district and confined himself to asking the voters to give the UDF another mandate to continue the good work it had been doing in the State during the last five years.

ing a 'diplomatic stand' towards the Left parties because of CPI (M) general secretary Prakash Karat's 'tough talk' about the Centre "violating" the Common Minimum Programme, Dr. Singh said: "I cannot change my style." This was his style for the last two years he had been Prime Minister.

It would take time to build a consensus in a coalition set-up and the UPA was a coalition of 15 parties. Once a consensus was reached, the set-up would be durable, Dr. Singh said. Coalitions had come to stay in Indian politics and they could hold together only on the basis of forward-looking programmes. Citing the economic policies as an instance, he said there was a stout opposition (to the policies pursued by the previous Congress regime at the Centre) from several quarters but when the BJP came to power in 1996, it could not alter the policies much.

Dr. Singh said his Government was implementing the CMP agreed to between the UPA and the Left in all sincerity.

'I cannot change my style'

Asked whether he was adopt-

Editorial on Kerala elections: Page 8

20 100 2006

THE HINDU

পরিবর্তনের চক্র এ বার ভাঙবে, আশা 'অন্য রকম' মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর

প্রসূন আচার্য • পুথুপল্লি (কোট্টয়ম)

সকলেরই পরশে লুঙ্গির মতো সাদা খুতির উপর সাদা শাট। কেউ দেখিয়ে না দিলে শুভ ফ্রাইডের প্রার্থনা সভায় গ্রামবাসীদের দঙ্গলে খুঁজে পাওয়াই মুশকিল হত ওমান চান্ডীকে। গির্জার একেবারে পিছনের সারিতে ভিড়ের মধ্যে দরদর করে ঘামতে ঘামতে সুর মেলাচ্ছেন প্রার্থনায়। গির্জার মধ্যে কয়েকটি পাখা ঘুরছে ঠিকই, তবে সবচেয়ে কাছের পাখাটি থেকে মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর মূল্যবান মাথাটির দূরত্ব অন্তত ২৫ ফুট।

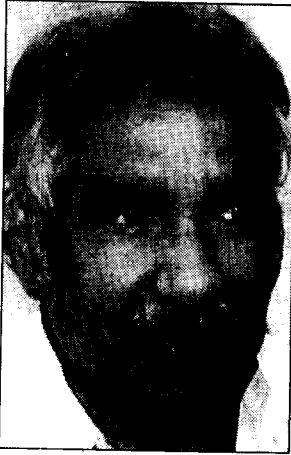
কোট্টয়ম জেলার ছোট গ্রাম পুথুপল্লি। উঁচু-নিচু পাহাড়ি রাস্তা। ছোট একটা টিলার মাথায় বড় গির্জা, পুথুপল্লি চার্চ। সামনে দাঁড়িয়ে চারিদিকে চোখ বোলালেও খুঁজে পাওয়া যাবে না কোনও লালবাতি লাগানো গাড়ি বা খাকি উর্দি পরা পুলিশকে। গির্জা থেকে তাঁর বাড়ির দূরত্ব গাড়িতে মিনিট দশেক। কোনও গ্রহরী নেই সেখানেও। বৈঠকখানার সোফায় সোজা গিয়ে বসলে মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর ভাই অ্যালেক্স ভি চান্ডী বেরিয়ে এসে বিশুদ্ধ মালয়ালামে জানতে চাইবেন, “— কাকে চাই?”

কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন ইউডিএফ সরকার পাঁচ বছরে দুর্নীতি ও যৌন কেলেঙ্কারি নিয়ে যতই হাবুডুবু খান, দেড় বছর কেরলের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী থাকা মানুষটিকে দেখলে প্রশ্ন জাগবেই, এমন মুখ্যমন্ত্রীও এ দেশে আছেন? এ যেন “রাজা যদি মাঠে নেমে হাওয়া খায়।” আদিবাসী মুখ্যমন্ত্রী অজিত জোগী, ওবিসি মুখ্যমন্ত্রী উমা ভারতী, লাল-রাবড়ী, মুলায়ম, দলিত মুখ্যমন্ত্রী মায়াবতী, এমন কী কমিউনিস্ট মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বুদ্ধদেব ভট্টাচার্যের সঙ্গেও যে সত্যিই একটা বড় পার্থক্য রয়েছে খ্রিষ্টান মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ওমান চান্ডীর, কোট্টয়ম জেলার এই পুথুপল্লিতে না এলে বোঝাই যেত না। গত ৩৭ বছর এই বিধানসভা কেন্দ্রে টানা জিতেছেন চান্ডী। মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলে কথা। ঘুরে বেড়াতে হচ্ছে সারা রাজ্য। নিজের বিধানসভা কেন্দ্রে সময় দিয়েছেন মাত্র দু’দিন। এরই মধ্যে একটা দিন এই শুভ ফ্রাইডে।

কেরলের আর পাঁচটা গ্রামের মতোই পুথুপল্লিও আধা শহর। চারশো বছরের পুরনো পৈত্রিক ভিটে চান্ডীর। নাম কারুউট্টু ওয়াল্লাকালি। উপরে টালি ছাওয়া কাঠের তৈরি বাড়ি। উঠোনে নাইলন জালে ঢাকা কুয়ো। কেরলে এই কুয়োর জল পান করাটাই বৈশিষ্ট্য। কয়েকটা গাছ। গোলাপ। জবা। ওমান চান্ডীর বাড়ি বললে অবশ্য বুঝতেই পারবেন না বয়স্করা। বলতে হবে,

কুঞ্জুউঞ্জুর বাড়ি কোনটা? মালয়ালাম ভাষায় ‘কুঞ্জু’ মানে ছোট্ট ছেলে। কুঞ্জুউঞ্জুর অর্থ পাড়ার ছোট্ট ছেলেটি। মাথার নব্বই ভাগ চুল পেকে গেলেও ওমান চান্ডীকে তাঁর গ্রামের লোকেরা আজও এই নামেই ডাকেন। এই গ্রামের স্কুলেই পড়েছেন ওমান। তার পর কোট্টয়মের কলেজে।

বসার ঘরে সদ্যপ্রয়াত মায়ের ছবি। আরও কিছু টুকিটাকি সৌখিন জিনিস।



ভোটে কেরল

ভাই অ্যালেক্স জানান, “দাদা তিরুঅনন্তপুরম থেকে আসার আগে পুলিশের জিপ এসে দাঁড়ায় বটে। তবে দাদা এসেই সেটাকে ফিরিয়ে দেন।”

“সারা দেশে মন্ত্রী-সাত্ত্বীদের এত নিরাপত্তা, কেরলে হিন্দু, মুসলিম, খ্রিষ্টানদের পৃথক রাজনৈতিক আনুগত্য, আপনার ভয় করে না?”

প্রশ্ন শুনে জবাব মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর, “পাহাড় ও সমতলের মধ্যে এই যে দেখছেন ধানক্ষেত, নারকেল গাছের সারি, এর মধ্যেই বড় হয়েছি আমি। এই গ্রামের কেউই আমায় মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর চোখে দেখে না। মারবে কেন?” মানুষও অঙ্কুত নির্লিপ্ত। কুঞ্জুউঞ্জু মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলে আলাদা কোনও তাপ-উত্তাপ নেই কারও। যেন, মুখ্যমন্ত্রী হয়েছে বলে আলাদা দু’টো হাত বেরিয়েছে না কি?

গতবার ৭৫ শতাংশ ভোট পেয়ে

জিতেছিলেন ওমান। ইউডিএফ পেয়েছিল ১০০ আসন। এ বার তো এলডিএফ জিতছে? শুনে মুদু হাসলেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী। বললেন, “একবার ইউডিএফ তো পরের বার এলডিএফ। আসলে এই পরিবর্তনে অভ্যস্ত হয়ে গেছেন মানুষ। কিন্তু ব্যতিক্রমের নজিরও তো রয়েছে। ৭৭ সালেই এমনটা হয়েছিল, এবারও হতে চলেছে। আমার ধারণা ৮০-৮৫ টা আসন পেয়ে আমরাই সরকার গড়ছি।”

কিন্তু ব্যাপক দুর্নীতির অভিযোগ, সেক্স র্যাকেট স্ক্যান্ডাল, মন্ত্রীদের ইস্তফা, চাষিদের আত্মহত্যা, সরকারি কর্মীদের ক্ষোভ, পাশাপাশি সাম্প্রতিক সমস্ত নির্বাচনে এলডিএফের বিপুল জয়ের পর এটা অতিরিক্ত আশাবাদ বলে মনে হচ্ছে না কি?

এ বার যথেষ্ট রক্ষণাত্মক ওমান। বললেন, “বনমন্ত্রী ইস্তফা দিয়েছেন বটে, কিন্তু এ সব নস্কারণজনক ঘটনায় তাঁর জড়িত থাকার ঘটনা আদৌ প্রমাণ হয়নি। চাষিরা দেনা শোধ করতে না পেরে আত্মহত্যা করছেন সত্য। কিন্তু ক্ষতিপূরণও পাচ্ছে পরিবার। গত বছর থেকে ভাল বৃষ্টি হচ্ছে। এ বার চাষবাস ভালই হবে। আর, কোষাগারের ঘাটতি কোথায় নেই? আপনাদের পশ্চিমবঙ্গে নেই? আসলে, রাজ্য ঘুরে দেখুন, সরকার-বিরোধী হাওয়া কোথাও নেই। তা ছাড়া মাত্র কয়েক মাস আগে ৫ লক্ষ সরকারি কর্মীর জন্য চালু করেছি নতুন বেতনক্রম। এর একটা প্রভাবও আছে। আসলে পরিবর্তনের চক্র এ বার ভাঙছেই।”

এ বার মুখ্যমন্ত্রীর বিরুদ্ধে দাপুটে এসএফআই নেত্রী সিন্ধু জয়কে দাঁড় করিয়েছে সিপিএম। তবে ওমান চান্ডীর তা নিয়ে যেন কোনও মাথাব্যথা নেই। প্রার্থনা সেরে বিকেল বেলা প্রচারে বেরোলেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী। খোলা জিপ, হাতে মাইক। সঙ্গে জনা কয়েক কর্মী। পথে নাম ধরে ডেকে কথা বলছেন গ্রামবাসীদের সঙ্গে। এতই পরিচিত মুখ, আগে পোস্টারে তাঁর ছবি ছাপা হ’ত না। এবার হয়েছে। সম্প্রতি পা ভেঙে যাওয়ায় হাঁটেন ক্রাচে ভর দিয়ে। সে ছবিও রয়েছে কাট-আউটে।

সিপিএমের প্রার্থী সিন্ধু লডাকু তরুণী নেত্রী। চান্ডী সরকারের পুলিশের নির্ঘাতনে তাঁর পায়ের হাড় ভেঙেছে। এক বছর আগে তিরুঅনন্তপুরমে সরকার-বিরোধী আন্দোলনে তিনি ছিলেন পুরোভাগে। লাঠি ও রাবার বুলেটে ভীষণ আহত হয়ে ৯ মাস সিন্ধুকে কাটাতে হয়েছে কোট্টয়মের হাসপাতালে। সিন্ধুর চোখে অঙ্কুত প্রতিশোধের আশুনা। বললেন, “ওমান চান্ডীর জয়ের রেকর্ড এ বার চুরমার হয়ে যাবে।”

তবে সন্দেহ নেই, এটাও সিন্ধুর অতিরিক্ত আশাবাদ।

Kerala Muslims turn against UDF

Sanjaya

KOZHIKODE, April 15: — Muslims, constituting 24 per cent of the population of Kerala who had been the mainstay of the Congress in its experiments with coalition governments, are distancing themselves and moving closer to the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front in large numbers for the first time.

When the Congress-led United Democratic Front government, in which the Indian Union Muslim League is a major partner, convened a special session of the Assembly on 14 March to pass a Bill to annul a Supreme Court order to raise the storage level of the Mullaperiyar dam, it also passed a resolution seeking the release of Abdul Nasser Madani, leader of the People's Democratic Party, detained in the Coimbatore Central jail for a terrorist attack, on "humanitarian grounds." Not surprisingly, the resolution was passed unanimously.

Disregarding the initiative taken by the Congress, Madani wrote a letter exhorting his followers to support the LDF in this Assembly election. Sent in a sealed cover, it was opened at the PDP's special convention in Thiruvananthapuram by Mr. Poonthura Siraj, working chairman of the

party. The letter was the result of secret talks Mr. T.K. Hamza, CPI(M) MP, had with Madani in jail.

In the 2001 Assembly election, Mr. A.K. Antony, leading the UDF campaign, pledged to secure the release of Madani and obtained the support of the PDP. After becoming the Chief Minister, he not only failed to redeem the pledge, but also opposed Madani's release on bail to attend a family funeral.

Madani, though commanding a huge following among Muslims, is not an ordinary prisoner. He is accused of masterminding the 14 February 1998 Coimbatore serial blasts minutes before the then BJP president, Mr. L.K. Advani, was to address an election rally there. The blast missed its main target. But 59 innocent people were killed and many more maimed. Madani has been held in jail without trial since then.

It was from the Coimbatore jail that Madani issued his earlier fatwa urging his followers to vote the UDF in the 2001 election. The UDF won its biggest ever victory in that election. His bloody record and communal violence notwithstanding, come election time, he is the cynosure of all politician's eyes.

While the UDF is upset at

Madani's latest fatwa, the Chief Minister, Mr. Oomen Chandy can take comfort in Mrs. Sufiya Madani, wife of the jailed PDP leader, complementing him for making some effort at least to secure her husband's release. In an interview, she said Mr. Chandy, after succeeding Mr. Antony as Chief Minister, "wanted to help but some forces in his Cabinet were opposed to it."

Madani had lost one leg in an attack by the RSS in the early 1990s. He had been complaining against inadequate medical facilities in the Coimbatore jail.

The PDP is not alone among the Muslim outfits in casting their lots with the LDF. The Jamaat-e-Islami, not accustomed to getting involved in electoral politics, has made an exception this time to support the LDF. Also backing the LDF is the highly respected Sunni leader, Mr. Kanthapuram Aboobacker Musliar.

The Indian Union Muslim League, successor to the pre-partition Muslim League, which used to be the sole representative of the community in Kerala, continues to remain loyal to the Congress but the splinter Indian National League led by Mr. Ibrahim Sulaiman Sait, has hitched its wagon to the LDF. Mr. Sait parted company with the

parent organisation when the Kerala unit of the Muslim League refused to quit the UDF to register its protest against the demolition of the Babri Masjid.

Another dissident Muslim League group which goes by the name "CH Secular Forum" also announced its support to the LDF. The main Muslim League, considered the moderate face of Muslim politics, under the stewardship of its general secretary, Mr. P. K. Kunhalikutti, has fallen on evil days and its influence is waning rapidly. Its president, Mr. Panakkad Mohammedali Shihab Thangal, has been revered as a spiritual head but not as a political leader.

In the 2001 election the UDF went to town exploiting an alleged rape of a Muslim woman by the CPI(M) gang at Theruvamparamba in Kozhikode district. Muslim women had formed squads and convened family meetings narrating the incident. This single episode mobilised Muslim votes for the UDF throughout the northern districts and helped it emerge with 100 seats in the 140-member Assembly, the like of which Kerala had never witnessed before. Subsequently, the allegation was proved false. The tide has now turned in favour of the LDF.

98
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Left Democratic Front set for big win in Kerala

The Hindu-CNN-IBN Poll predicts 93-103 seats for LDF

Sanjay Kumar, Rajeeva Karandikar, Gopa Kumar and Yogendra Yadav

NEW DELHI: The Left Democratic Front (LDF) appears headed for a big victory in the Kerala Assembly elections. The findings of the Hindu-CNN-IBN Poll conducted by the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS) suggest that the trend witnessed in the State in the Lok Sabha elections of 2004 has not changed. The Left swept the polls then, winning 18 out of the 20 Lok Sabha seats. Since then the LDF's lead over the ruling

United Democratic Front (UDF) has dropped from eight to about six percentage points, but that is enough to ensure a comprehensive victory for the LDF. If the trend holds till polling day, the LDF could secure its biggest electoral victory since 1967.

If elections had been held in the first week of April, when this survey was conducted, the LDF would have got 49 per cent votes, compared to 43 per cent in favour of the Congress-led UDF. A lead of six percentage points for the winning party would be considered modest in any other State, but it is huge by Kerala

standards. Ever since the two-coalition competition started in 1977, no winning alliance has had more than a six-percentage point lead in the Assembly elections. Most elections have been decided by a gap of two to four percentage points between the UDF and the LDF. Such a big margin also puts paid to the BJP's hopes of emerging as a pivot

otal player by transferring its votes or winning a few seats in a tied election. There are no indications of the BJP breaking through its vote share of around 5 per cent. If the LDF succeeds in holding on to the lead till May 3, the last day of polling in the three-phase elections to the State Assembly, it could win between 93 to 103

seats, leaving the UDF with just 39-45 seats. If that happens, it would be the UDF's worst-ever performance in any Assembly election. The last time the LDF scored such a huge victory over the UDF was in the 1980 Assembly elections when the LDF secured a six-point lead in votes to win 93 seats against only 46 for the UDF. The LDF may surpass this performance and its tally may touch three digits.

Two occasions

In Kerala's electoral history there are only two occasions any alliance has secured more than 100 seats: in 1977 the then UDF (including the CPI and some other current allies of the LDF) won 111 seats and in 1967 the then Left-led UF (besides the

Communist parties, it included the Muslim League, currently a UDF partner, and some other parties) won 117 seats.

Politically aware State

The LDF's lead does not appear vulnerable to short term changes between now and the elections. In this highly politically aware and conscious state, 96 per cent of the voters know about the elections and 76 per cent say they have already made up their mind. As many as 83 per cent of those who 'voted' for the LDF in this survey say they are absolutely sure of voting the same way in the elections. The corresponding figure is 77 per cent among those who favoured the UDF in this survey.

The survey was carried out

among 4,377 electors spread across 184 locations in 46 Assembly constituencies in the State. A survey of this kind is subject to one per cent standard error. Taking the extreme possibility of survey error into account, the LDF still leads over the UDF by a comfortable margin by Kerala standards. Unless something dramatic happens between now and the days of election, it is the LDF's turn to take over the reins of power in Kerala.

(Watch the CNN-IBN-The Hindu special show on Tamil Nadu at 10 p.m. on Thursday, only on CNN-IBN)

Details of survey on Page 10

93 Seats

139

THE FORECAST

	ESTIMATED SEATS 2006	SEATS IN 2001	PROJECTED VOTE SHARE 2006	CHANGE FROM 2001
LDF	93-103	40	49	+ 6
UDF	39-45	99	43	- 6
Others	0-2	1	8	0

Note: Others include BJP (projected votes in 2006: 4%).
Vote change in percentage points

কেরলে বামজোয়ারে ভেসে

তিরুবনন্তপুরম, ১১ মে (পি টি আই) কেরলের মানুষ সমর্থনের বিপুল জোয়ারে ক্ষমতায় ফেরাল সি পি এম নেতৃত্বাধীন বাম গণতান্ত্রিক মোর্চার। ১৪০ আসনের মধ্যে ৯৮টিতেই জিতেছে বাম মোর্চ। ৪২ আসনে জিতে অস্তিত্ব রক্ষা করেছে কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন সংযুক্ত গণতান্ত্রিক মোর্চ। করুণাকরণের অবস্থা সঙ্গীন। তাঁর কংগ্রেস ভেঙে বেরিয়ে আসা এবং মূর্খের আবার কংগ্রেসের জোটে ভিড়ে যাওয়ার মুখিবাবানী অবস্থান মানুষ মনে নিতে পারেনি। ১৮ জন প্রার্থী দিয়েছিলেন, ১৭ জনই পরাজিত। এমনকি তাঁর ছেলে ও প্রদেশ কংগ্রেস সভাপতি মুরলিধরনও হেরেছেন। বাম মোর্চার জয়ের পশ্চাতকা উড়েছে তিরুবনন্তপুরম, কোল্লম, পালান্কাড, কোজিকোড, আলাপুজা ও কান্নুর জেলায়। সংযুক্ত মোর্চার দুর্গ হিসেবে পরিচিত মালাপুরম ওয়ারানাড জেলায়ও বিজয়রথ ছুটিয়েছে বাম মোর্চ। মালামপুজা কেন্দ্রে জিতেছেন সম্ভাব্য মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ভি এস অর্জুনাশঙ্কর। গত লোকসভা ভোটারে নিরিখে ৫১১ বিধানসভা কেন্দ্রে এগিয়েছিলেন বাম মোর্চ। সেই তুলনায় আসন কিছু কম হয়েছে। এর কারণ হিসেবে রাজনৈতিক বিশ্লেষকরা বলেন, বাম মোর্চ করুণাকরণের দলের সঙ্গে সঙ্ঘাতের কারণে আসন আরও বাড়ত। করুণাকরণ কংগ্রেসের বিরুদ্ধে বিদ্রোহের দৃষ্টান্তকা তুলে বামপন্থীদের কাছাকাছি এসেছিলেন। চিরায়িত কংগ্রেসি ভোট সঙ্কটকটাই কাটতে পারতেন করুণাকরণ। বাম মোর্চার ৯৮ আসনের মধ্যে সি পি এম পেয়েছে ৩৬, সি পি আই ১৭, ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ জনতা দল ৩, কেরল কংগ্রেস ৪, আর এস পি ৩ এবং কংগ্রেস-স, এন সি পি, কেরল কংগ্রেস (ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ) এবং আই এম এল একটি করে। মোর্চার ৪ নির্দল প্রার্থী জিতেছেন। সংযুক্ত গণতান্ত্রিক মোর্চার ৪২ আসনের ২৪টিই কংগ্রেসের। এ ছাড়া আই ইউ এম এল ৭, কেরল কংগ্রেস-এম ৭, কেরল কংগ্রেস-বি ১,



কেরলে অচ্যুতানন্দনের ছবি নিয়ে বামফ্রন্টের বিজয় মিছিল। তিরুবনন্তপুরমে বৃহস্পতিবার। ছবি: অরুণকুমার

করুণাকরণের দল ডি আই সি ১, জে এস এস রাজাগোপালেরও একই হলে। বাম মোর্চার ১ এবং নির্দল ১। ২০০১-এর ভোটে কংগ্রেস বিজয়ী প্রার্থীদের মধ্যে ভি এস অচ্যুতানন্দন জিতেছিল ৬২ আসনে। এবার ৩৮ আসন হারাও আছেন মোর্চার আহুয়ক পালোলি কমেছে। জোটের অন্যতম প্রধান শরিক মহম্মদ কুট্টি, সি পি এম কেন্দ্রীয় কমিটির সদস্য ইন্ডিয়ান ইউনিয়ন মুসলিম লিগ পেয়েছিল ১৭ আসন। এবার কমে হয়েছে ৭। মুসলিম লিগের নেতা পি কে কুনালিকুট্টি ও সংযুক্ত মোর্চ সেরকারের দুই মন্ত্রী তাঁদের শক্ত ঘাট মালাপুরম জেলাতেই ধ্বংসারী হয়েছেন। বি জে পি-র খাতা খোলা এবারও সম্ভব হল না। সাম্প্রদায়িক দলকে কেরলের মানুষ কোনওভাবেই সমর্থন করতে নারাজ। বেশিরভাগ কেন্দ্রে তাদের প্রার্থীরা তৃতীয় বা চতুর্থ স্থানে ঠাই পেয়েছেন। প্রবীণ বি জে পি নেতা ও প্রাক্তন কেন্দ্রীয় মন্ত্রী ও অধ্যক্ষ সুন্দরন নাদার হেরেছেন। এদিকে

গেল কং

দিল্লিতে সি পি এম নেতা সীতারাম ইয়েচারি জানিয়েছেন, ১৬ মে পলিটব্যুরোর বৈঠক বসছে। কেরলের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী কে হবেন, সে বিষয়ে সেই বৈঠকে আলোচনা হবে। অন্য দিকে কেরলের প্রবীণতম রাজনীতিবিদ ৮৬ বছর বয়সী কে আর গৌরী তাঁর জীবনের ত্রয়োদশতম নির্বাচনী লড়াইয়ে হেরে গেলেন। ১৯৫৭ সাল থেকে জিতে আসছেন। ই এম এস নাযুদিরিপাদের সরকারে মন্ত্রী ছিলেন। ১৯৯৪ সালে সি পি এম থেকে বহিষ্কৃত হন। গঠন করেন জনাধিপত্য সংরক্ষণ সমিতি। এবার তিনি হারলেন সি পি এমের নবীন প্রার্থী এ এম আরিফের কাছে।

চোখের জলে করুণাকরণ প্রায় খালি হাত করুণাকরণের। চোখে জল। মুছছেন তোয়ালে দিয়ে। সাংবাদিকদের সঙ্গে কথা বলার সময় ভেঙে পড়লেন কে করুণাকরণ, কেরলের প্রাক্তন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী। তাঁর দল গণতান্ত্রিক ইন্দিরা কংগ্রেস শ্রেফ একটি আসনে জিতেছে এবারের বিধানসভা নির্বাচনে। গত বছর মেম্বাসে কংগ্রেস ভেঙে নতুন দল গড়া করুণাকরণ ১৮টি আসনে প্রার্থী দিয়েছিলেন। কংগ্রেস নেতৃত্বাধীন

কেরল	
আসন	১৪০
বাম মোর্চ	৯৮
সংযুক্ত মোর্চ	৪২

সংযুক্ত গণতান্ত্রিক মোর্চার যোগও দেন। হেরেছেন করুণাকরণ-পুত্র কে মুরলিধরন। কোদুভালি কেন্দ্রে ৫ হাজারের বেশি ভোটে তাঁকে পরাস্ত করেছেন এল ডি এফ সমর্থিত মুসলিম লিগ প্রার্থী। কোদুভালি এর আগে কখনও বাম জোটের দখলে যায়নি। 'বিদ্রোহী' করুণাকরণের একমাত্র সন্তান কুন্তানাড আসনটি। সেখানে দলের প্রার্থী অনাবাসী ব্যবসায়ী টমাস চণ্ডী করুণাকরণের মুখ রেখেছেন।

12
MADABAZAR PATHIKM

Two-thirds majority for LDF in Kerala

5.65 % point difference between two fronts; seven Ministers of Chandy Cabinet lose

Roy Mathew

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The Left Democratic Front (LDF), led by the Communist Party of India (Marxist), has won an impressive two-thirds majority in the Kerala Assembly elections. It secured 98 seats in the 140-member House.

Significantly, this is the highest-ever tally for the LDF in its present eight-party configuration.

The ruling United Democratic Front (UDF) got 41 seats and its partner, the Democratic Indira Congress (Karunakaran) one.

The Bharatiya Janata Party failed to open its account.

Prominent winners included CPI(M) leader, chief ministerial probable and Leader of the Opposition in the outgoing Assembly V.S. Achuthanandan, Chief Minister Oommen Chandy, LDF convener Paloli Mohammed Kutty and Assembly Speaker Therambil Ramakrishnan.

Several front-ranking UDF leaders tasted defeat. They included seven Cabinet Ministers, including Agriculture Minister K.R. Gouri, Cooperation Minister M.V. Raghavan, Education

Minister E.T. Mohammed Bashier and Public Works Minister M.K. Muneer.

A pro-LDF wave swept through almost all districts, reversing the trend in the 2001 elections. But the pattern did not quite conform to the trend that was witnessed in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections – the LDF led in 112 Assembly segments.

The Indian Union Muslim League, second most prominent partner in the UDF, suffered a major setback, with two-thirds of its candidates failing in its strongholds in Malabar. Its strength in the Assembly comes

down from 16 to seven. The alliance's leading partner Congress also suffered similar reverses. The party, which contested 77 seats, has only 24 seats in the new Assembly against 62 in 2001.

The difference between the two fronts this time is 5.65 percentage points. According to Election Commission figures, the LDF has got 48.63 per cent of the votes polled. It got 43.70 per cent in 2001. The UDF this time got 42.98 per cent, compared with 49.05 last time. The BJP has suffered a drop from 5.02 per cent last time to 4.75 now.

12 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

UNCERTAINTY CONTINUES IN KERALA

Politburo seal on Buddha

98 Kerala
571
1913-

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, May 13: The Communist Party of India-Marxist's Politburo today formally announced that Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee would continue to be West Bengal's chief minister but stopped well short of saying if Mr VS Achutanandan would lead Kerala's ministry. The veteran leader is, of course, the front runner but the "final decision" will be taken by the party's state unit on Monday.

The Politburo, meeting here today, reviewed the Assembly election results before approving the West Bengal party secretariat's proposal for Mr Bhattacharjee to be allowed to continue as leader of the state's council of ministers.

The party's general secretary, Mr Prakash Karat, said the Politburo had discussed Kerala to decide that its views would be conveyed to the state unit on 15 May for the final decision to be taken. Given faction feuds in Kerala's CPI-M, which had taken a nasty turn ahead of the polls, Mr Karat declined to disclose the Politburo's choice.

"We will announce our decision in Kerala on May 15. It cannot be done in New Delhi. Our party doesn't bypass its state committees," he said, basically making a virtue of necessity. A rivalry between groups led by Mr Achutanandan and the Kerala party secretary, Mr Pinarayi Vijayan, resulted initially in the former being denied his nomination. The 82-year-old Marxist heavyweight, though, finally joined the electoral fray when the party's central leadership interceded with the state unit on his behalf.

'I'm a Communist compromising with capitalism'

NEW DELHI, May 13: Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee today said the party could not afford to stick to dogmas and he was a "Communist compromising with capitalism" to develop West Bengal.

"I know what I am doing in West Bengal. What is the alternative? If we have to develop, we need capital," he told a TV news channel while making it clear that he remained a Communist to the core. Admitting that the party had made many mistakes in the 60s and 70s, the chief minister said he and his colleagues were fully committed to reforms. "The old is changing. We are not fools, we are realists. We cannot stick to our dogmas," he was quoted as saying. **PTI**

The CPI-M-led Left Democratic Front under Mr Achutanandan's leadership upset the Congress-led United Democratic Front, winning 98 out of 140 seats. LDF partners want Mr Achutanandan as chief minister. But Mr Palloli Mohammed Kutty, Mr Achutanandan's rival in the intra-party tussle, is favoured by Mr Vijayan.

Though Mr Jyoti Basu sat it out, today's meeting in the country's capital city was attended by all other senior CPI-M leaders, including Mr Bhattacharjee and Mr Achutanandan. The Politburo will meet on May 27-28 in Kolkata to discuss the political situation to prepare a report for the party's central committee, meeting for three days in Hyderabad from 8 June.

14 MAY 2006

THE STATESMAN

ANOTHER RED

The portents were proved right. The Left Democratic Front won in Kerala, a two-thirds majority in a house of 140, and the biggest victory for it in its present configuration. The United Democratic Front could hardly have been unconscious of the coming defeat — being augured since the Lok Sabha polls, although it was, perhaps, too immersed in addressing its own troubles to be able to do much about it. There was something even rather purblind in the announcement of a new development programme for the state by the former chief minister, Mr Oomen Chandy, on the very day that the UDF was trounced in the local bodies elections by the LDF in October last year. Mr Chandy's "Kerala Vision 2010" emphasized development in such sectors as knowledge, education, industries and tourism. A notable absentee in the list was agriculture, although the numbers of farmers' suicides in the state had outstripped those in Andhra Pradesh between 2001 and 2004.

In the October elections, the UDF's most celebrated breakaway group, the Democratic Indira Congress-Karunakaran, had an understanding with the LDF. But if Mr K. Karunakaran's dissidence pointed directly to divisions within the leading Congress, the Revolutionary Socialist Party (Bolshevik) had quit the coalition earlier. Managing the coalition was not proving easy for the UDF, although the DIC(K) had returned to its fold for the assembly elections, to little avail. But factionalism was not solely the UDF's problem. The Communist Party of India (Marxist), leading the LDF, had its troubles too. It went to the assembly elections, still nursing the tussle for control of the party by the two factions headed by Mr P. Vijayan and Mr V.S. Achuthanandan respectively. Mr Achuthanandan was fielded as a candidate at the last minute, and the LDF victory is likely to bring an urgent edge to the issues at stake. Mr Vijayan is considered to be the reformer, in tune with the demands of the new age, while Mr Achuthanandan, moulded in an older tradition, speaks of reviving agriculture and the traditional industries. There are also hard issues regarding foreign investment in infrastructure and, more tellingly, the pending question over acceptance of a loan from the Asian Development Bank. What Mr Achuthanandan's government decides on this would indicate to some extent how the Kerala CPI(M) is going to deal with its divided approaches to reform.

15 MAY 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

How Kerala voted

LEFT DEMOCRATIC FRONT

SEATS WON
(CONTESTED 140)

98

SEATS GAINED: 61
SEATS LOST: 3

58 SEATS NET GAIN



UNITED DEMOCRATIC FRONT

SEATS WON
(CONTESTED 140)

42

SEATS GAINED: 4
SEATS LOST: 61

57 SEATS NET LOSS



OTHERS

SEATS WON
(CONTESTED 65)

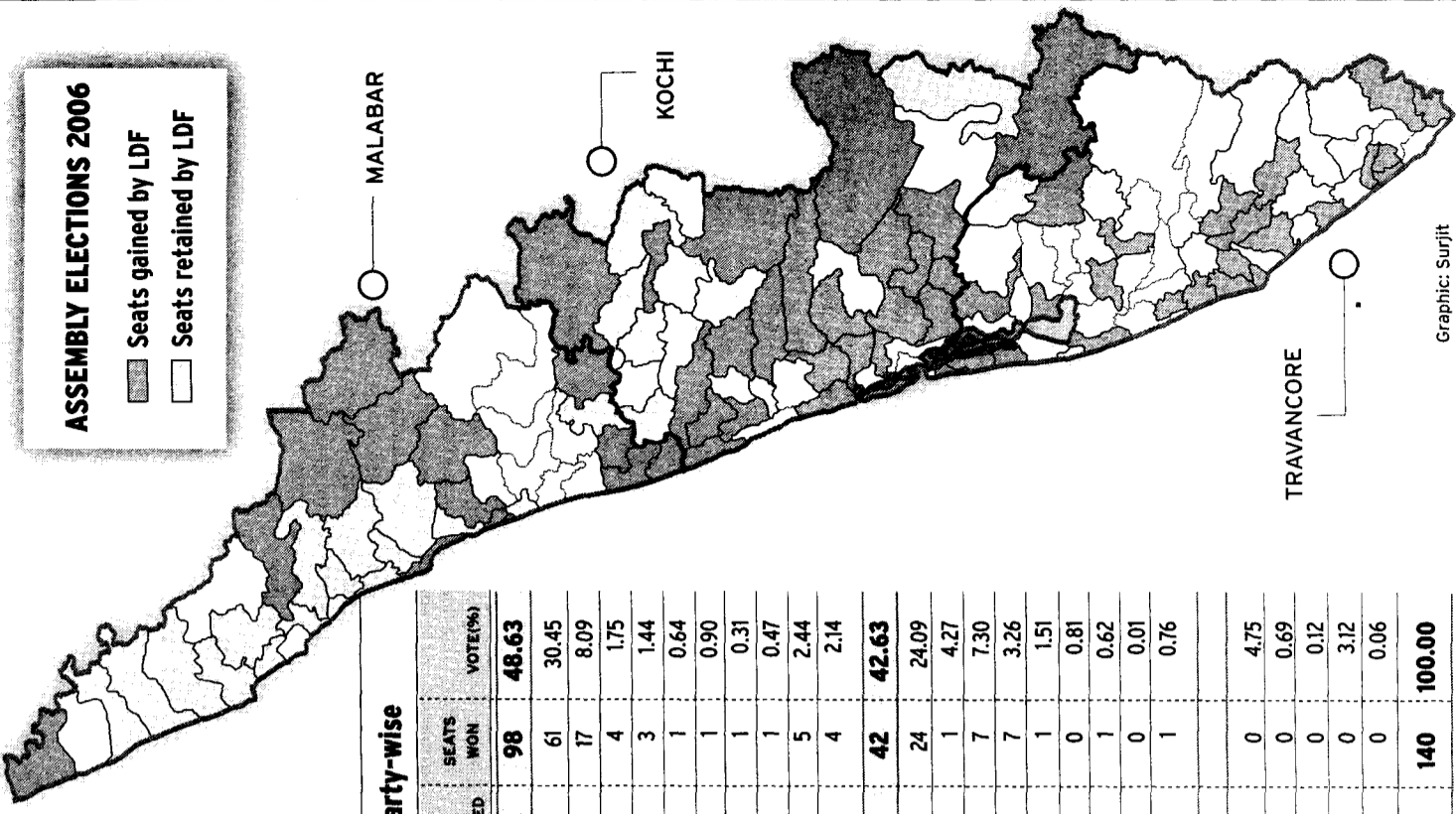
0

SEATS GAINED: 0
SEATS LOST: 0

01 SEAT NET LOSS



98% of Kerala
H.S.



ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS 2006

Seats gained by LDF
Seats retained by LDF

Graphic: Surjit

LDF'S REGION-WISE GAINS: More votes in Malabar, but more seats in Travancore

REGION/DISTRICTS	Total seats	Turnout	Change over 2001	LDF	UDF	BJP	OTHERS
				Seats Won	Vote (%)	Vote (%)	Vote (%)
MALABAR	42	74.9	-0.5	31	+14	-14	0
KASARAGOD	5	71.3	-2.9	4	+1	-1	0
KANNUR	10	77.5	-0.7	8	+1	-1	0
WAYANAD	3	70.4	-11.3	3	+3	-3	0
KOZHIKODE	12	75.5	-1.0	11	+5	-5	0
MALAPPURAM	12	75.1	+3.9	5	+4	-4	0
KOCHI	44	72.6	+0.4	34	+24	-24	0
PALAKKAD	11	74.6	+0.5	9	+3	-3	0
THRISSUR	14	72.3	-0.7	11	+9	-9	0
ERNAKULAM	14	71.7	+2.5	10	+9	-9	0
IDUKKI	5	71.2	-2.9	4	+3	-3	0
TRAVANCORE	54	69.6	-0.7	33	+20	-19	0
KOTTAYAM	10	71.1	-1.7	5	+3	-3	0
ALAPPUZHA	11	76.1	+1.7	5	+2	-2	0
PATHANAMTHITTA	7	68.4	-4.2	3	+2	-2	0
KOLLAM	12	70.3	-0.2	11	+8	-8	0
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM	14	64.2	-0.8	9	+5	-4	0
TOTAL	140	72.3	-0.2	98	+58	-57	0

Note: Figures for swing in percentage points

Major gains for the LDF in Muslim and Christian dominated constituencies

CATEGORIES	Total seats	Turnout	Change over 2001	LDF	UDF	BJP	OTHERS
				Seats Won	Vote (%)	Vote (%)	Vote (%)
Muslim dominated	21	72.8	+1.3	13	+9	-8	0
Christian dominated	34	69.7	-1.6	20	+16	-16	0
Others	85	73.2	+0.0	65	+33	-33	0
TOTAL	140	72.3	-0.2	98	+58	-57	0

HOW THEY FARED: Party-wise

PARTIES	SEATS CONTESTED	SEATS WON	VOTE(%)
LDF	140	98	48.63
CPM	85	61	30.45
CPI	24	17	8.09
KEC	6	4	1.75
RSP	4	3	1.44
NCP	2	1	0.64
INL	3	1	0.90
KCS	1	1	0.31
Cong(S)	1	1	0.47
JD(S)	8	5	2.44
Independent (LDF)	6	4	2.14
UDF	140	42	42.63
INC	77	24	24.09
DICK(K)	17	1	4.27
KSMUL	21	7	7.30
KCM	11	7	3.26
JPSS	5	1	1.51
CMF(K)	3	0	0.81
KEC(B)	2	1	0.62
RSPK(B)	1	0	0.01
Independent (UDF)	3	1	0.76
OTHER PARTIES			
BJP	136	0	4.75
BSP	107	0	0.69
AIADMK	29	0	0.12
Independents	368	0	3.12
Smaller parties	11	0	0.06
TOTAL	931	140	100.00

What determined this election? An unwise alliance and a subtle shift in the minority vote, says YOGENDRA YADAV

A routine change of Government? A mere five-party coalition within the CDM/AM

THE VOTING PATTERN: Largely unchanged

comparison. The Indian National League brought it a decent share of votes and paved its entry into the Muslim-dominated remained substantially the same. The bulk of the LDF vote came from Dalits and OBCs, in-

More to it than meets the eye

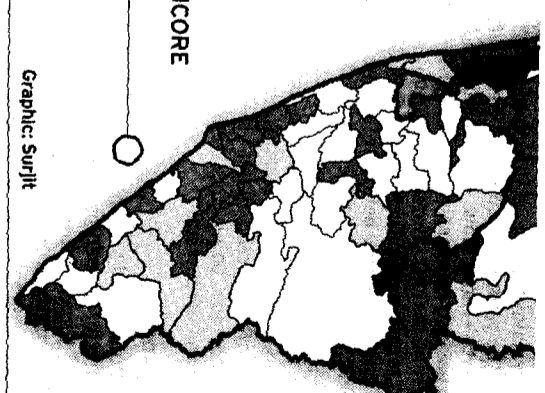
CATEGORIES	Total seats	Thiruvananthapuram	Kollam	Pathanamthitta	Alappuzha	Nil	4.2	+0.1	3.1	-2.2	46.6	-2	6	2.3	48.0	+1.7	5	-2	5	76.1																												
ALAPPUZHA	11	76.1	+1.7	5	-2	48.0	+2.3	6	-2	46.6	-2.2	3.3	3.1	+0.1	0	Nil	4.2	+0.1	3.1	-2.2	46.6	-2	6	2.3	48.0	+1.7	5	-2	5	76.1																		
PATHANAMTHITTA	7	68.4	-4.2	3	+2	42.8	+0.7	4	-2	41.4	-9.7	6.3	6.3	+0.0	0	Nil	9.5	+9.0	6.3	-9.7	41.4	-9.7	6.3	6.3	+0.0	0	Nil	9.5	+9.0	7	68.4																	
KOLLAM	12	70.3	-0.2	11	+8	52.1	+6.5	1	-8	51.9	-11.9	3.1	3.1	-0.5	0	Nil	6.9	+5.9	3.1	-11.9	51.9	-11.9	3.1	3.1	-0.5	0	Nil	6.9	+5.9	11	70.3																	
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM	14	64.2	-0.8	9	+5	46.4	+2.6	5	-4	43.3	-3.0	2.9	2.9	-2.1	0	Nil	7.4	+2.5	2.9	-3.0	43.3	-3.0	2.9	2.9	-2.1	0	Nil	7.4	+2.5	9	64.2																	
TOTAL	140	72.3	-0.2	98	+58	48.6	+4.9	42	-57	42.6	-6.4	4.8	-0.3	0	-1	4.0	+1.7	0	-0.3	4.8	-6.4	4.8	-0.3	0	-1	4.0	+1.7	0	-1	4.0	+1.7	140	72.3	-0.2	98	+58	48.6	+4.9	42	-57	42.6	-6.4	4.8	-0.3	0	-1	4.0	+1.7

Note: Figures for swing in percentage points

Major gains for the LDF in Muslim and Christian dominated constituencies

CATEGORIES	Total seats	Thiruvananthapuram	Kollam	Pathanamthitta	Alappuzha	LDF		UDF		BJP		OTHERS					
						Vote (%)	Swing	Vote (%)	Swing	Vote (%)	Swing	Vote (%)	Swing				
Muslim dominated	21	72.8	+1.3	13	+9	46.7	+1.0	8	-8	44.2	-4.7	6.1	-1.1	0	-1	2.9	-1.2
Christian dominated	34	69.7	-1.6	20	+16	46.2	+3.9	14	-16	43.9	-6.3	4.0	-0.4	0	Nil	5.9	+2.8
Others	85	73.2	+0.0	65	-33	50.0	+4.8	20	-33	41.8	-6.9	4.7	0.0	0	Nil	3.6	+2.1
TOTAL	140	72.3	-0.2	98	+58	48.6	+4.9	42	-57	42.6	-6.4	4.8	-0.3	0	-1	4.0	+1.7

PARTY	SEATS	PERCENTAGE
DIC(K)	17	4.27
KSMU	21	7.30
KCM	11	3.26
JPS	5	1.51
CMP(K)	3	0.81
KEC(B)	2	0.62
RSPK(B)	1	0.01
Independent (UDF)	3	0.76
OTHER PARTIES	136	4.75
BSP	107	0.69
AIMDK	29	0.12
Independents	368	3.12
Smaller parties	11	0.06
TOTAL	931	100.00



Graphic: Sujit

More to it than meets the eye

What determined this election? An unwise alliance and a subtle shift in the minority vote, says YOGENDRA YADAV

A routine change of Government? A mere five-year itch? Or has the Left Democratic Front's victory in Kerala have to do with issues such as governance, policies and ideology? Will this verdict have a long-term effect on the politics of the State? These questions are bound to confront any serious analyst, even if the media finds them much too boring to ask.

The sense of boredom may have to do with the fact that, of the results in the four States that went to the polls, the Kerala verdict ran along the most expected lines. Beginning with the Hindu-CNN-IBN pre-poll survey, which projected 98 to 103 seats for the LDF, all the surveys forecast a big victory for the LDF. The final projection by The Hindu-CNN-IBN, between 107 and 117 seats, may have over-estimated the magnitude of the LDF's victory, but no one really doubted the final outcome.

A close look at the final figures suggests that there is something more than "routine" at work here. The final gap between the vote share of the LDF and the United Democratic Front is exactly six percentage points, the same the LDF had in its previous best performance in the 1980 Assembly elections. Six percentage points is a huge lead in Kerala. The regular change in governments between 1980 and 2001 took place with the winning alliance having a lead of less than three percentage points. The regime changes can be attributed to the voters' desire to change the government every five years. The pattern was broken in 2001, when the UDF secured a lead of 5.4 percentage points. Then, the UDF was helped by the very poor

THE VOTING PATTERN: Largely unchanged

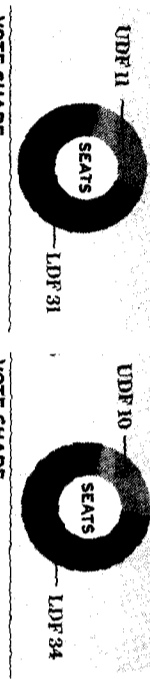
VARIABLES	LDF 2006	UDF 2006	BJP 2006	OTHERS 2006
AGE GROUP: The younger the voter, the greater the lead for LDF				
Up to 25 yrs	50	38	7	6
26-35	51	40	5	4
36-45	49	44	4	3
46-55	48	43	5	5
Above 55 yrs	45	48	4	4
SEX: Unlike Bengal, the Left in Kerala does better among men				
Male	49	40	6	5
Female	48	45	3	3
EDUCATION: The LDF leads among the well educated as well				
Non-literate	54	41	1	3
Up to Primary	47	45	4	4
Up to Matric	49	41	6	4
College and above	48	41	5	6
CASTE/COMMUNITY: Dalits and OBCs again contributed to LDF victory				
Upper Castes	45	38	12	6
Ethnias	64	27	6	3
Other OBCs	60	27	8	6
SCs	62	27	7	4
Muslims	39	57	1	3
Christians	26	69	1	4
Others	54	42	1	3
ECONOMIC CLASS: The LDF still retains a pyramid-like class profile				
Poor	54	38	4	5
Lower	53	42	4	2
Middle	45	44	6	5
Rich	38	52	4	6

Not personally driven

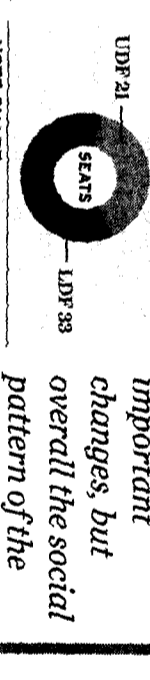
We also know that this election was not personally driven. No doubt, V.S. Achuthanandan emerged the clear frontrunner, leaving Mr. Chandry behind. But his popularity was driven by the tide in the favour of the LDF and not the other way round. "VS" has not yet acquired the capacity of "Buddha" [Buddhadab Bhat-tacharjey, West Bengal Chief Minister], who has carried the party along with him. The leadership issue did not influence the election either; the supporters of both parties supported the existing leadership, and there was hardly any challenge to Mr. Achuthanandan from Phirayal Vijayan or to Mr. Chandry from Democratic India Congress (K) leader K. Karunakaran.

There is also no evidence of a significant ideological shift in the Left's favour. The Hindu-CNN-IBN poll asked respon-

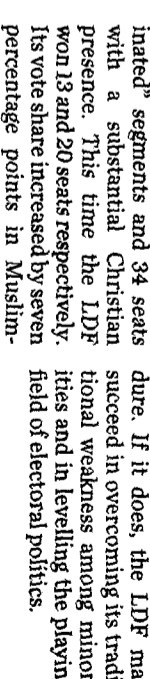
MALABAR



KOCHI



TRAVANCORE



economic ideology and closer to the positions attributed to VS than to the new economic policies of Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. The only exception marked difference in the political culture of the two States. The electorate of Kerala, left inclined or otherwise, is generally more "progressive" than that in West Bengal. The Left voters of Kerala are firmer on the party's

making this verdict what it was. A close look at the vote share of the major alliances provides the clue to a small but crucial factor. Mr. Karunakaran's DIC(K) contested 17 seats and managed to win only one. In the seats it contested, it secured only 35.9 per cent of the vote. The corresponding figure for the Congress is 43.8 per cent. The post-poll survey showed that had the DIC (K) contested alone, it would have won less than half a per cent of the total vote. If the Congress had not entered into this unwise alliance, and contested the seats it allotted to DIC(K), the UDF's vote share would have increased by one percentage point. The new alliances built by the Left worked much better in

comparison. The Indian National League brought it a decent share of votes and paved its entry into the Muslim-dominated areas.

The Left's disadvantage

The second factor has to do with a subtle shift in the social basis of voting. The Left always started from a position of disadvantage, because of its inability to win over the 40 per cent-plus minority vote. The UDF used to start with well above two-thirds of the Christian and Muslim votes in any electoral race. After considerable effort, including an alliance with Muslim sectarian parties, the LDF made a breakthrough in this election. It is not yet clear what the extent of the LDF's gain is and how enduring it will be.

We know that in the 2001 elections, the LDF won only four seats in the 21 "Muslim-dominated" segments and 34 seats with a substantial Christian presence. This time the LDF won 13 and 20 seats respectively. Its vote share increased by seven percentage points in Muslim-dominated seats, well above its average. This resulted in big gains for the LDF in Malappuram district and a sweep in Kozhikode. Yet it is not clear how many Muslims finally voted for the LDF. The Hindu-CNN-IBN post-poll survey estimates it at 39 per cent, a modest increase of three percentage points over the last election. The survey under-sampled the Muslim voters and may have under-estimated the shift of Muslim votes to the LDF. The LDF also gained in areas with a Christian presence, but not very significantly.

Overall, the picture of the social pattern of voting behaviour remained substantially the same. The bulk of the LDF vote came from Dalits and OBCs, including the single largest community in the State: the Ezhavas. The upper castes, the only section to vote in significant measure for the BJP, appear to have leaned towards the LDF this time. But this shift may not matter much given their small numbers. In class terms too, the Left represents a classic pyramid: broad at the bottom and narrow at the top. A massive lead of 16 percentage points among the poor enables the LDF to maintain its overall lead. As in the past, the UDF takes a lead over the LDF among the well-to-do. In this respect, the Left in Kerala is different from the Left in West Bengal, which increased its vote share among the middle class and the rich. It is not clear if the gains made by the LDF will endure. If it does, the LDF may succeed in overcoming its traditional weakness among minorities and in levelling the playing field of electoral politics.

(The figures given here are based on The Hindu-CNN-IBN post-poll survey carried out in the State after the polling. They may be different from the figures reported in the earlier post-poll surveys, for those did not include constituencies that went to the polls in the last phase of the elections. The discrepancies between the post-poll data and the actual outcome have been corrected by weighting the data by actual vote share for different parties. Comparison with voting patterns in 2001 is based on a similar post-poll survey undertaken by the CPSJ after the Assembly elections in 2001.)