

Uma Bharti launches new party

The Bharatiya Janshakti Party will carry forward the ideology of the parent party

Staff Correspondent

98 P. BKP
UJJAIN: The former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Uma Bharti, on Sunday formally launched her new party — the Bharatiya Janshakti Party — and announced the names of its top office bearers.

Ms. Bharti took her party's flag to the sanctum sanctorum of the Mahakal temple early on Sunday to offer prayers. She later announced the formation of the party outside the temple. She also unveiled the party flag, saffron in colour with a bright yellow sun at the centre.

Ms. Bharti said she had borrowed the saffron colour from her parent party's flag as it symbolised its *atman* (true spirit). She said the lotus, the BJP's symbol, had a direct link with the sun, which symbolised *shak-*



THE RISING SUN?: Expelled BJP leader Uma Bharti holding the new party flag at the launching of the Bharatiya Janshakti Party in Ujjain on Sunday.

PHOTO: A. M. FARUQUI

ti (power). The lotus cannot blossom without the sun shining bright, she added.

Placing her hand on the flag,

Ms. Bharti pledged that she would serve her party with her sweat and blood and do everything to raise the glory of the

Indian tricolour throughout the world. While Ms. Bharti would be heading the party, Sanghpriya Gautam has been nominated party vice-president, Raghunandan Sharma general secretary and Anita Singh treasurer.

Ms. Bharti said she was inspired by Vikramaditya — the ancient ruler of Awanti — and the great Parmar rulers. Emphasising that ideology was sacred, she said she would carry forward the ideology of the Bharatiya Janata Party through the new party. Ms. Bharti said the BJP leaders had started believing that they were “bigger than the party.”

The party workers had done everything to strengthen the BJP, but it had now been hijacked by a handful of people and the party was paying a heavy price for this.

01 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

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Pragati Wadhvani LOUISIANA'S SISTER Prudhvi during their father's cremation in the village of Mahajan in Bihar.

(Complete coverage on page 7)

BJP will sorely miss its utility man

VINOD Sharma
New Delhi, May 4

A BJP functionary often in competition with Pramod Mahajan had once sought to distinguish himself from the departed leader by drawing attention to the latter's reluctance to take on the UPA: "Pramod can't attack the government because he has a lot to hide."

Indeed, the former parliamentary affairs minister's ability — to mobilise funds, organise logistics and set up alliances — were, at once, the cause of his comeuppance. A pragmatist to the core, Mahajan was a doer, who'd have never, at least in the opinion of some, made it to the PM's office. But he'd have been a key player in any BJP government, given his capacity to fight fire, fix things and raise money the party could spend to cement alliances.

It's widely known in political circles that the resource-rich saffron family picked up

a sizeable portion of the JD(U)'s electoral bill in Bihar.

In this era of competitive and hugely expensive politics, utility politicians of Mahajan's genre are virtually indispensable.

It's on this score that he'd be missed sorely by the BJP — where his peers ganged up against him while many others gravitated to him in their quest for a godfather.

Yes, Mahajan was on the best of terms with state *satraps*, who benefitted from his counsel and largesse. He got along like a house on fire with Chhattisgarh's Raman Singh, MP's Shivraj Singh Chauhan, Rajasthan's Vasundhara Raje Scindia and Bihar's

Sushil Modi and Ravi Shankar Prasad.

At another level, the list included Rajnath Singh, whom Mahajan taught the ropes after his elevation as BJP president. For this reason, his untimely departure is bound to trigger realignments in the saffron party. It remains to be seen in which camp his confidants will drop the anchor.

The question also is whether the party can find a replacement for L.K. Advani's Laxman

who, ironically, fell to the bullets of his younger brother?

On the face of it, the task wouldn't be easy, given the paucity of leaders capable of ingratiating themselves with big business with-

out losing touch with the ground reality. The killer instinct Mahajan blended with his ability to strategise, organise and execute, really set him apart from his urbane contemporaries. The finishing power so essential in real-politic is now a veritable patent of regional leaders: Mulayam Singh Yadav, Jayalithaa, Karunanidhi, Lalu Prasad, Nitish Kumar, Mayawati and even Ram Vilas Paswan.

An exception to this rule, Mahajan rubbed shoulders with India Inc without alienating party cadres and potential allies. A leader of his ilk would have done wonders for the Congress whose political management often paled in comparison with that of the BJP or even the SP, which has its own utility man in Amar Singh. But for his language-limitations, the TDP's Chandrababu Naidu could have been Mahajan's equal in the game, minus, of course, the latter's propensity to court controversies.



BJP versus BJP

Though Uma Bharti broke with the Bharatiya Janata Party some months ago, she could not exorcise her past — as was evident from her almost obsessive claim that she was the “real BJP.” That the feisty sanyasin has named her new outfit the Bharatiya Janshakti Party only proves the lingering attachment between the old and the new. Ms. Bharti will no doubt point to the difference between ‘Janata’ and ‘Janshakti’, the former translating as “people” and the latter as “people’s power.” But in a country where every second political party professes to be a champion of people’s power, the alternative BJP is unlikely to blaze an innovative trail on account of its name. Nor does the new entrant inspire confidence on other counts. Ms. Bharti’s party came into this world amidst the blowing of conch shells and the chanting of Sanskrit slokas. In place of the red and green in the BJP flag, BJP (Uma) opted for pure *bhagwa* (saffron). *Bhagwa* is the political colour of the Hindu extreme right; it is the Vishwa Hindu Parishad’s long-cherished dream to hoist the saffron flag over the Red Fort and declare India a Hindu Rashtra. All this suggests that Ms. Bharti wants to out-Hindutva the original Hindutva party. In her parent party, Ms. Bharti was a charismatic leader able to reflect the conflicting points of view of mandal and mandir. The new party has plumped for a more extreme version of mandir at the cost of mandal. This makes little strategic sense considering that Ms. Bharti — like Kalyan Singh before her — was aggrieved on account of the BJP’s neglect of the mandal castes.

By sending out a strong signal that she stood for the upliftment of the backward castes, Ms. Bharti could have placed her party in opposition to the BJP, which is widely perceived to be a party of the upper castes. Indeed the sanyasin was aware that by emphasising Hindutva she stood to alienate the backward castes. Yet she has embarked on a path traversed many times by the BJP to diminishing returns. Today Hindutva holds no attraction to voters in the Hindi-speaking States, be it Madhya Pradesh, Ms. Bharti’s home State, or Uttar Pradesh, where she wants to emerge as an alternative to the BJP. If in M.P. Ms. Bharti has managed to wean away a sizable section from the parent party, it is no thanks to Hindutva. She will do well to remember that she won the 2003 Assembly election on the development plank; *bijli*, *sadak*, and *paani* (power, roads and water). In U.P. the fight is polarised between the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party, with substantial sections of the upper castes, thus far the biggest votaries of Hindutva, preferring Mayawati, once their arch enemy, to the BJP. It does not help Ms. Bharti that she has sought to be taken into the EJP-led National Democratic Alliance for any future Lok Sabha election. She has reasoned that she does not want to split the BJP’s votes. In that case, she might have as well stayed on in the BJP.

08 MAY 2006

THE HINDU

BJP threatens no-trust move against Speaker

Session ends with full-scale confrontation

Neena Vyas

NEW DELHI: The budget session of Parliament ended on Tuesday with a full-scale confrontation between the ruling benches and the Bharatiya Janata Party, which threatened to consider bringing a no-confidence motion against Lok Sabha Speaker Somnath Chatterjee.

The issue that divided them was "admonishment" of the former Secretary-General of the Lok Sabha, Subhash C. Kashyap, for breach of privilege, adopted by voice vote.

By the end of an action-packed day all four BJP members — Kishan Singh Sangwan, Rajendrasinh Rana, Ananth Kumar Hegde and Virendra Kumar — had written to the Speaker, saying they were resigning from the Committee of Privileges.

The BJP lost the sympathy of most allies in the National Democratic Alliance. Janata Dal (United) president Sharad Yadav told *The Hindu*: "On this issue we do not agree with the BJP at all. That man Kashyap speaks a lot of nonsense. He ought to be punished." A one-time ally, K. Yerranna of the Telugu Desam also made it clear that he was in favour of exemplary punishment being meted out to Dr.

• Even BJP allies want action against Kashyap

• Opposition says matter not discussed at Business Advisory Committee

Kashyap, who had unfairly and irresponsibly attributed motives to the Speaker and committed a breach of privilege.

A large number of MPs across the political divide were appalled at the "arrogance" shown by Dr. Kashyap when he appeared before the committee and admitted that he had not cared to ascertain facts before airing his views on a television channel.

The drama began on Monday night when Parliamentary Affairs Minister Priyaranjan Dasgupta informed BJP deputy leader V.K. Malhotra that a resolution seeking to admonish Dr. Kashyap would be moved in the House on Tuesday.

Mr. Malhotra apparently pleaded with him that the matter be dropped after a plain condemnation and that he should not be called to the bar of the House. That was accepted and the resolution redrafted and included in Tuesday's agenda.

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THE HINDU

BJP LEADER BATTLES FOR LIFE

Brother shoots at Pramod

SNS & PTI

MUMBAI, April 22. — High-profile BJP leader Mr Pramod Mahajan was shot at his residence by his younger brother this morning and was in a very critical condition after a four-hour long surgical operation at a leading hospital here. Mr Mahajan, 56, a party general secretary, was seriously injured when his "kid brother" Pravin, 46, emptied his licensed revolver, a Belgium-make Brownie, into him at point-blank range at the leader's 14th floor apartment in Worli around 8 am in the midst of a heated argument between the two. Three bullets hit Mr Mahajan, two in the abdominal area and one in the chest.

The BJP leader's wife, Rekha, and an orderly were the two persons in the house when the assassination was attempted. A doctor living in the apartment complex and Mr Mahajan's brother-in-law Mr Gopinath Munde accompanied the critically wounded leader to the Hinduja hospital where he was immediately operated upon by a team of surgeons. Later in the day, Indian Army doctors were requisitioned to examine Mr Mahajan and give their opinion on a second operation. Doctors discounted reports of a liver transplant.

Dr Anupam Verma of the hospital said Mr Mahajan's condition after the surgery was "quite critical". He has suffered massive blood loss due to injuries to the liver, lower chest, abdomen, pancreas, duodenum and an important vein. "The liver injury is extensive," he said, adding that Mr Mahajan had been shifted to the Intensive Care Unit and



When our father died, Praveen was only nine years old. And it was Pramod who looked after us, taking special care of Praveen who is the youngest of us three brothers, so what happened today has come as a terrible shock. ~ Prakash Mahajan, brother



Praveen Mahajan. AFP

was on ventilator support. None of the bullets have been removed and as many as 25 bottles of blood have been pumped into the leader. Reading out a medical bulletin, Dr Verma said Mr Mahajan was brought to the hospital at 8.20 am. He added that since the injury to the liver was extensive, pads were being used to stop the bleeding. Doctors emphasised that the next 48 hours would be crucial.

In a statement to police, Pravin said: "Pramod of late has not been treating me like an elder brother. This disturbed me."

■ See PRAMOD, page 10

PRAMOD:
9:45 AM 50-TC
(Continued from page 1)

Confusion prevailed over what motivated Pravin, a building contractor, to shoot at his brother. Initial reports that the fracas was the result of a property dispute were discounted both by police and another brother, Mr Prakash Mahajan, who lives in Aurangabad: "When there is no property, where is the question of dispute?"

After shooting his brother, Pravin went to police station and surrendered. He is reported to have "confessed" to having shot the BJP leader and has been charged with attempt to murder. His lawyer said his client had a "mental condition". Police Commissioner Mr AN Roy, however, said Pravin is of "sound mind".

THE STATESMAN

23 APR 2000

Advani for House panel to study farmers' suicides

ENS & PTI

SOLAPUR, APRIL 12

ON the seventh day of his Bharat Suraksha Yatra in this sugarcane belt of western Maharashtra, senior BJP leader L K Advani today sought to touch an emotional chord among the farmers, demanding setting up of a joint parliamentary committee to study suicides among them.

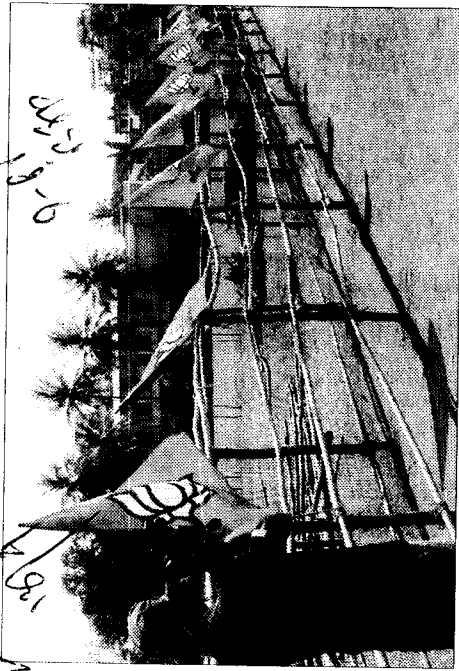
The Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha took to task the Congress-led Maharashtra government saying there was "total absence" of good performance and slamming its eight-year report card as "pathetic".

Charging the UPA government with "betrayal of kisans,

"Suicide by farmers in large numbers is the clearest sign that our country is going through its greatest agrarian crisis since the Green Revolution," he said and accused the Congress-led governments, both at the Centre and in several states, with contributing a new index 'kisans suicide mortality rate' to measure rural India's reverse development.

"How can a party that cannot provide suraksha (security) to kisans, provide suraksha to the country?" he asked linking the theme of his yatra with the issue. "This is not a government that cares for the aam aadmi (common man) but for the khaas aadmi (special people)".

Advani promised that when Parliament reconvenes on May 10, he would demand the consti-



Getting ready for Advani's welcome in Hubli on Wednesday. PTI

session of Parliament at the start of the Budget session made no reference to the large-scale farmers' suicides in several states of the country.

tution of a joint parliamentary committee to look into all aspects of the grave problem of farmers' suicides in the country and recommend an effective plan of action to put an end to this national shame.

"Considering the gravity of this problems, this to me seems to be an appropriate response by the highest democratic platform in the country," he said.

Expressing deep concern over the total absence of governance in Maharashtra, Advani alleged that nearly 5,000 tribal children had died of malnutrition in different parts of the state and Mumbai's infrastructure was crumbling due to the apathy of the Central and state governments.

"Between Pune and Solapur,

I have heard the plight of onion and grape farmers. There is severe power shortage everywhere. It is sad to see that Maharashtra, which was for a long time considered the most developed state in the country, has slipped badly in investment and development rankings.

"The Congress-led government's eight year report card is not only poor, it is pathetic," he said.

On the anti-dam agitation being spearheaded by Medha Patkar, the former Deputy Prime Minister said he had spoken to the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister and the latter had told him that no stone had been left unturned in the rehabilitation of the project affected persons in the state.

FRIDAY, APRIL 7, 2006

BJP's difficult yatra

The crisis in the Congress is hardly hidden from public view — a succession of scams, a bitter controversy that led the party chief to resign from important posts, and a none-too-happy prognosis for the Assembly elections. If the premier national opposition party has gained nothing from its adversary's series of blunders, it is because it is in a bigger mess. Since the upset of May 2004, factionalism within the Bharatiya Janata Party has deepened, with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh content to preside over quarrels at the top. The rift the BJP foresaw between the Prime Minister and the "super Prime Minister" is now more visible among Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Lal Krishna Advani, and Rajnath Singh. Internal differences are reflected in the opposition to Mr. Advani's Bharat Suraksha yatra, which was flagged off on Thursday. In recent interviews, the former BJP president has acknowledged his difficulties, seeing them as flowing from his appreciation of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's August 1947 vision. His assessment is that the party did not seize the Jinnah opportunity and is stuck with an image that does not do it justice. In the public perception, the BJP is affected by "Congressisation...infighting, factionalism, corruption ...they do hurt." Yet the Leader of the Opposition seems to waver on the image he wants for his party. His references to Jinnah's August 1947 secular vision suggested a less chauvinist orientation for the BJP: but there has been a contradicting reiteration of old shibboleths. The Advani view is that the BJP needs an image that is "true to our concept of cultural nationalism" and "we don't have to fight shy of being proud Hindus." He accuses the United Progressive Alliance Government of going out on a limb in pursuit of "minority appeasement" — the theme of his yatra.

This is Hindutva-speak. The stance reflects the ideological rigidity of a parivar that has no compunction in dumping a once-valued warrior rather than accommodate his dissent. The upping of the sectarian ante signals growing frustration within the BJP, which has no worthwhile non-sectarian issue to raise with voters. The realist Advani sees no early possibility of an alternative to the UPA Government. Party strategists have targeted Sonia Gandhi only to be outsmarted each time. The current round of Assembly elections holds no promise for the BJP. The news from Uttar Pradesh — where a 'Tamil Nadisation' of politics seems to have occurred — is that the party has been edged out of the race by the big two, the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party. The BJP's desperation is underlined by Rajnath Singh's overtures to Uma Bharti. Clearly, the party is rattled by the crowds the sadhvi is drawing at her rallies and does not want her as an opponent in U.P. It does not help Mr. Singh that the RSS is engaged in a double play: asking Mr. Singh to toe the line and giving issue-based support to Ms. Bharti and other raw proponents of Hindutva.

On Yatra No. 5, Advani back to agenda No. 1

On Yatra No. 5, Advani back to Agenda No. 1

HIRAL DAVE
RAJKOT, APRIL 6

WITH giant posters of Lord Ram and a veiled terrorist looming over him, and Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi standing by his side, senior BJP leader L. K. Advani flagged off his Bharat Suraksha Yatra on Ramnavmi day here with a call to build the Ram temple at Ayodhya, and an appeal to Muslims to "consent" for the same.

"If talks pave the way and both communities come together on this, it would bring unprecedented harmony and goodwill," the former deputy prime minister said.

Advani, who was presented with a bow and arrow before the rath rolled, urged the Muslim community to come to the talks table, saying we should learn from our 1,000-year-old history and forget religious barriers.

"The BJP always wanted to construct a Ram temple at Ayodhya, be it through a



Tells Muslim to agree to Ram temple

court decision, talks between both communities or an amendment. A resolution to this effect could not be passed due to the NDA alliance's unwillingness... And not everyone will be happy with a court's verdict," he said.

Senior BJP leader Jaswant Singh, Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Shivraj Chauhan were present to see Advani off.

However, while BJP women and male volunteers were all wearing saffron to add colour to the proceedings, and even schoolchildren had been trucked in to add to the numbers, the crowd wasn't quite what the party had been projecting.

The yatra, which incidentally began on the BJP's foundation day, will end on May 10—the anniversary of the Revolt of 1857, as Advani pointed out.

Elaborating on the yatra's mission to "highlight increasing terrorist attacks in India and raising public opinion against the UPA's pro-terrorist policy", the senior leader said that "Bharat Suraksha" means overall security—political, economical and social—for Indians. "Security from terrorists and foreign attacks is always a prime concern. But people should also get protection from economical, social and political dangers," Advani stressed.

The yatra has nothing to do with elections, he claimed. "We aim to bring an overall change—the way the Ram Rath Yatra changed the country's political scenario."

Modi too addressed the crowd, drawing applause for his criticism of the UPA Government over law and order issues—including abolition

of POTA—and the formation of the U C Banerjee Committee to look into the Godhra Sabarmati train fire. "If the Supreme Court can punish one person for turning hostile, why can't action can be taken against a committee set up to shield culprits? The law should be equal for all," he said.

Along the route, including at Atkot, Jasdand and Vinchiya, Advani spoke about how terrorism has become a global issue. "Till 9/11, the US was not aware about terrorism. But that changed its mindset," he said at Vinchiya.

However, again, the BJP leader returned to the temple theme: "The BJP is not against minorities but is against the policy of favouring minorities to create a vote bank. The BJP would like to see the Muslim community say yes to Ram mandir construction."

He also made a mention of the Volcker controversy, saying: "The Congress party's name featured in the UN's report. But the party managed to make its minister (Natwar Singh) the scapegoat."

Talking about the nuke deal with the US, Advani said it was "not in India's favour". "This deal is about imposing sanctions on India's strategy. The US has tried to restrict India's nuclear power," he claimed.

Domestic policy being communalised: BJP

Yatras are meant to educate masses about key issues: Advani

9.8.06 BJP

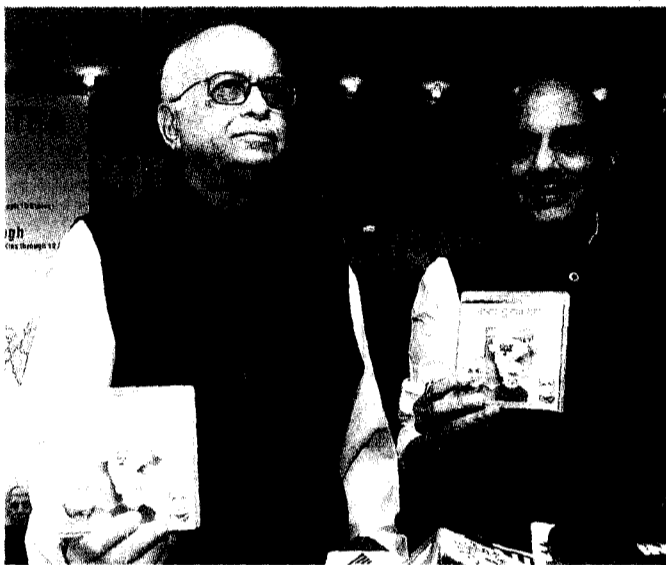
Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday accused the Congress of "communalising the domestic policy" and asked it to reverse its politics of "minorityism."

Addressing a crowded press conference jointly on the eve of the BJP's twin "Bharat Suraksha Yatra," party president Rajnath Singh and Leader of Opposition L.K. Advani charged the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government with failing on all fronts.

The two BJP leaders said the party was undertaking the twin rath yatras to educate the people on a number of new challenges that the country has been facing since the UPA government assumed office in May 2004. "The UPA government has failed on all fronts. The country is facing serious threats in the areas of economic security, food security, terrorism, and I directly charge the Congress-led coalition with indulging in politics of minority appeasement," Mr. Singh said.

The five-point agenda of the twin rath yatras beginning April 6, unveiled on Tuesday, is to safeguard national security from jihadi terrorism and left-wing extremism, to defend national unity from the divisive politics



TWO FOR THE ROAD: Bharatiya Janata Party leaders L. K. Advani and Rajnath Singh in Delhi on the eve of their cross-country "yatras". - PHOTO: R. V. MOORTHY

of minorityism, to rescue governance from corruption and criminalisation in high places, to save parliamentary democracy from instructional misuse and to protect the *aam aadmi* [common man], the poor and farmers from the assaults of massive price rise, unemployment and debt.

Mr. Advani alleged that the coalition had given rise to "minorityism" which would destroy the country, if not checked in

time. He revealed that the idea of the rath yatras took root when the controversy over "Muslim headcount" in the armed forces erupted and the Government had to retreat and admit that it was a blunder. He said the Government move had evoked sharp reaction from all sections across the country.

"Appeasement of minorities takes them nowhere. It is not for their social or economic welfare.

My suggestion to the minorities is to work for the spread of literacy and quality education among them and never allow themselves to be exploited by the peddlars of vote bank politics," Mr. Advani said.

A tool of communication

Defending the decision to take out rath yatras from April 6 to May 10 and putting at rest fears of untoward incidents and tension along the route, Mr. Advani said it was the primary duty of a political party to educate masses about key issues and its policies from time to time. "I have found yatras to be an effective tool of communication," he said.

Mr. Advani said: "The day the Congress party honestly accepts that communalisation of domestic policy is not in India's national interest, and reverses its politics of 'minorityism,' a firm foundation would have been laid for the two national parties in India's bipolar polity — BJP and Congress — to make common cause in a very wide area of politics and governance."

Mr. Singh said due to large-scale infiltration from Bangladesh, the demographic profile of the country has undergone a major change and accused the Congress and Left parties of playing communal politics.

THE HINDU

05 APR 2006

The roads from Chitrakoot

The Bharat Suraksha Yatras may not have the full backing of the rest of the sangh parivar.

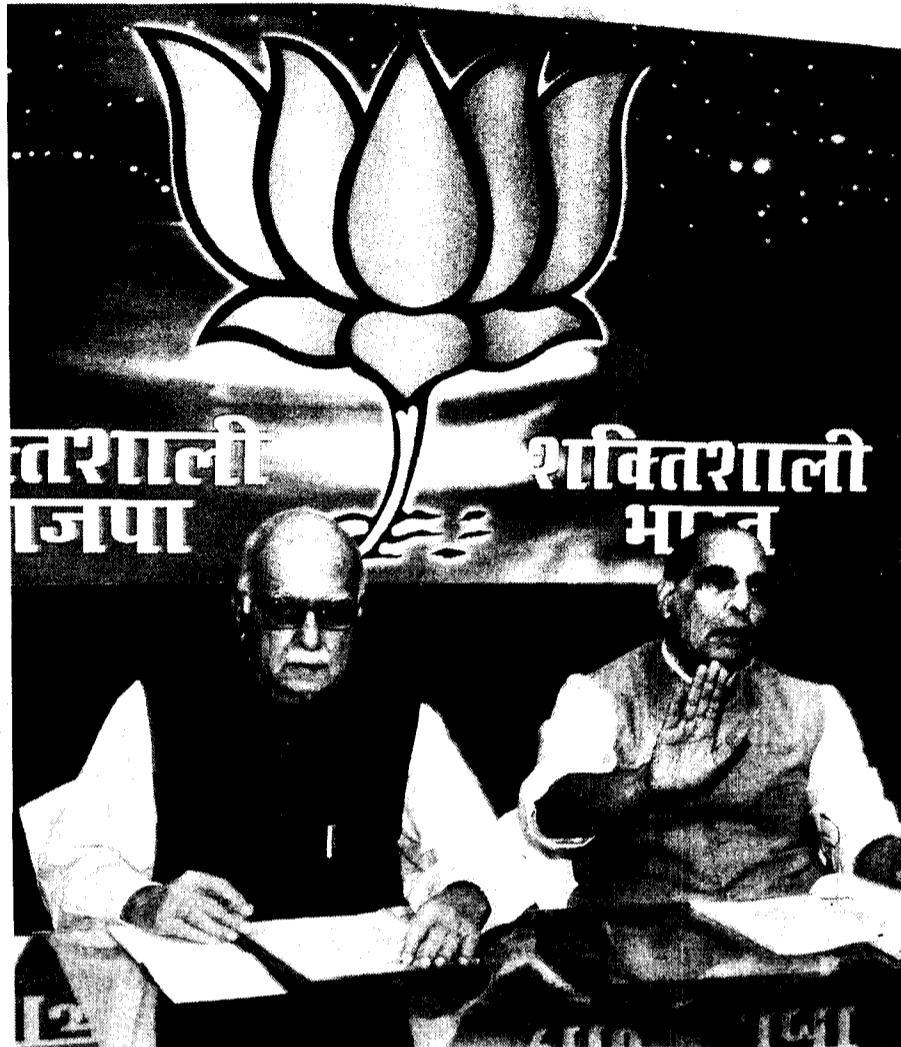
Venkitesh Ramakrishnan

YATRAS HAVE been effective instruments of political campaigning for the Bharatiya Janata Party for more than a decade and a half but as the party gets ready to launch the Bharat Suraksha Yatras, its leadership is confronted by an unprecedented organisational problem. This is the overt opposition to the yatras from sections of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh-led sangh parivar, to which the BJP also belongs. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, self-professed ideological sword arm of the sangh parivar, repeatedly criticised the initiative as an "exercise in political opportunism mooted by BJP leader L.K. Advani" and predicted that "it is bound to fail since Mr. Advani has no credibility among the Hindu masses." Indications are that sections of the RSS too are in agreement with the VHP perspective, though they have not been as vocal.

The BJP had launched seven yatras in the past 16 years, starting with the 1990 Ram Rath Yatra under Mr. Advani's leadership, and each was backed by sangh parivar outfits in a united manner. The last major one was the Tiranga Yatra led by the former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Uma Bharti, who has since been expelled from the party. This yatra, in September 2004, too was formally supported by all organisations of the Hindutva combine though a clutch of second-rung BJP leaders — Ms. Bharti's peers — apparently conspired to minimise its impact.

It could be argued that the new, explicit division in the approach of various sangh parivar outfits to the Bharat Suraksha Yatras is a natural consequence of the power play that manifested during the Tiranga Yatra and the ideological, political, and organisational struggles that dominated the Hindutva combine all through 2005. Such reasoning, however, would not satisfy large sections of the sangh parivar, especially those belonging to the RSS. The sangh had designated 2006 as the period to firm up "its course correction plans" leading to a resolute and cohesive advancement of the Hindutva ideology and its political agenda with new thrusts in various spheres of society and politics. The idea, as asserted in a number of RSS circulars and documents, was to leave behind the internal struggles of 2005 and go ahead with programmes that would highlight "ideological purity and collective functioning in sangh parivar organisations."

In fact, when the RSS met for its first important conclave this year (the Akhil Bharatiya Prathinidhi Sabha — All India General Council) from February 24 to 26 at Nagpur, its leadership had evaluated that there was



UNDER PRESSURE: Rajnath Singh and L.K. Advani at a meeting of the Bharatiya Janata Party. — PHOTO: V. SUDERSHAN

some concrete progress in this "positive" direction. It was specially mentioned at the Prathinidhi Sabha that a number of directives given to various sangh parivar outfits between an earlier conclave (the Akhil Bharatiya Karyakari Mandal — national executive) held in October 2005 at Chitrakoot in Uttar Pradesh and the present one had been carried out to satisfaction.

The deliberations at Chitrakoot had formed the basis for many of these directives and their implementation had manifested in different ways. The first manifestation, and the most important from the organisational perspective of the RSS, had come in the form of the "stepping down" of Mr. Advani as BJP president and the elevation of the "more faithful" Rajnath Singh. Other steps had to follow to "re-emphasise ideological purity

and collective functioning."

A major premise in a number of deliberations at Chitrakoot was that the BJP had drifted from "ideological purity" and succumbed to "personality cult driven leadership," during its years in power at the Centre because other sangh parivar organisations were not provided an active role in the political sphere. So, the Chitrakoot conclave had also indicated that the RSS would make concerted efforts to boost the importance of other organisations in its fold such as the VHP, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), and the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM), irrespective of the state of power play in the BJP. A series of happenings in early 2006 made it clear that the RSS was pursuing this percept assiduously, even though its primary "course correction" vis-à-vis the BJP

had taken place through Mr. Rajnath Singh's elevation as party president.

These happenings had included the formulation of plans to evolve a Hindu vote bank through a VHP initiative and the launch of a part social, part religious campaign on the "demographic shift caused in India by the machinations and growth of [minority] Muslim and Christian population." Both the plans were widely discussed at the VHP-sponsored Dharam Sansad held in early February at Prayag in Uttar Pradesh.

The VHP concept note on this asserted that the block of Hindutva volunteers it was planning to create as part of the Hindu vote bank would support any candidate who gave in to their demands and that the formation of this massive pressure group would create a situation where no single party would have monopoly over the vote of the Hindu community. The emphasis was clear. The VHP's block of Hindu voters need not necessarily respond to the BJP's calls or accept it as a pro-Hindu party.

All these developments broadly fit in with the multifaceted Chitrakoot organisation plan and this was the reason for the "satisfactory evaluation" at the RSS Prathinidhi Sabha. But all that changed in early March with the Varanasi blasts. Mr. Advani announced twin yatras under the leaderships of Mr. Rajnath Singh and himself. By all indications, Mr. Advani had not consulted the top brass of the sangh parivar before making the announcement. The RSS itself was apparently taken aback initially by the announcement and hence slow to formally declare support to the yatra.

But as far as the VHP is concerned, the unilateral announcement of the new yatras is in clear violation of the Chitrakoot guidelines. Its leadership is of the view that Mr. Advani has jumped the gun in hastily announcing the yatras. It is also of the view that the potential damage of this initiative would be aggravated through the reassertion of a personality cult around Mr. Advani, something the RSS has been steadfastly trying to eradicate.

Indeed, the RSS has been put in a quandary of sorts. On its part, it has responded by bringing in more forces in the ambit of its endorsement. The praise showered on Congress president Sonia Gandhi by RSS ideologue M.G. Vaidya for resigning from "offices of profit" and the statement of the former RSS spokesperson, Ram Madhav, that the sangh would support expelled BJP leaders Uma Bharti and Madan Lal Khurana in all the "patriotic and people oriented causes they advance" is seen in this light. Clearly, the roads from Chitrakoot are broadening and diversifying even as the original Rath Yatri tries yet another hand at cementing his place in the realm of Hindutva politics.

THE HINDU

04. APR 2006

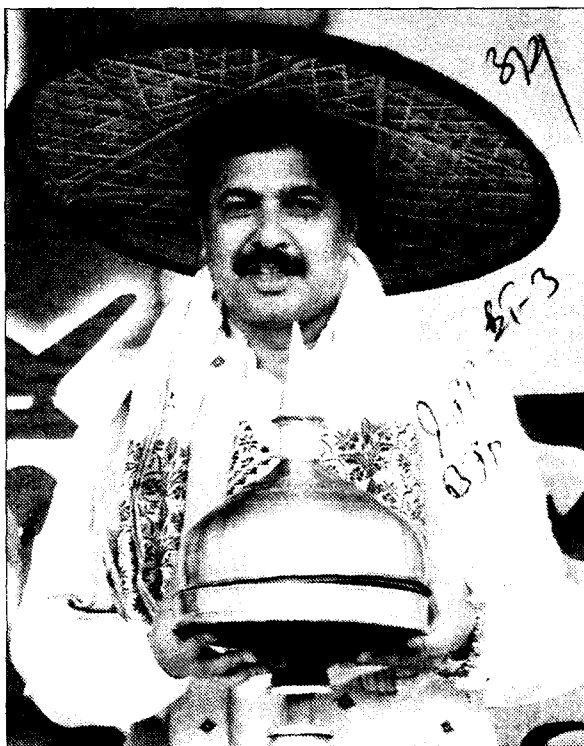
EC objects to Mahajan's pre-poll tryst with media

Bikash Singh
GUWAHATI

BJP leader, Pramod Mahajan's media briefing on Sunday has run into rough weather as the Election Commission (EC) has found it in violation to the Representation of the People Act, 1951. EC has asked the district electoral officer to file a case against Mr Mahajan.

Chief electoral officer JP Prakash said EC received complaints against Mr Mahajan, who is also the in charge of the party in the Asom polls. "The election commission of India has stated that Mr Mahajan's press conference is a violation of 126(1A) of the Representation of the Peoples Act and is punishable under Section 126(2) of the said Act. EC has asked the district electoral officer to file a case against Mr Mahajan," he said. Section 126(1A) prohibits public meetings during a period of forty-eight hours ending with the hour fixed for conclusion of the poll.

It states: "No person shall convene, hold, attend, join or address any public meeting or procession in connection with an election; or display to the public any election matter by means of cinematography, television or other similar apparatus; or propagate any election matter to the public by holding, or by arranging the holding of, any musical concert or any theatrical performance or any other entertainment or amusement with a view to attracting the members



of the public thereto."

According to the act, any person who contravenes the provisions of sub-section (1) shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term, which may extend to two years, a fine or both.

Mr Prakash said EC had also received complaints against Abhiyapuri (South) Congress candidate and sitting MLA, Chandan Sarkar, for alleged violation of model code of conduct. "There is a complaint against Mr Sarkar that he had organised a rally without permission of the concerned authority and used more vehicles

than the permissible limit. Video graphs of these event have been sent to EC," he said.

Mr Prakash added that in the run-up to the Assembly polls, security personnel had seized cash to the tune of Rs 1.5 lakh in some constituencies. In other places, liquor was recovered. Earlier, EC had issued show cause notices to Asom Panchayati Raj and rural development minister, Ripun Bora and Congress MLA, Horen Das after both legislators went to meet the chief election commissioner, BB Tandon, in a government vehicle.

BJP's *yatra* hits a roadblock

Dipankar Chakraborty
in New Delhi

April 2. — With just three days remaining for the beginning of the BJP's proposed "Rashtriya Suraksha Yatra", slated to kick-off on 6 April, it has already hit a "serious" roadblock — this time over the issue of reinstatement of Mr Sanjay Joshi as party organisational general secretary.

The *yatra* has been beset with problems ever since former BJP president and leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Mr LK Advani made a "sudden" announcement about it at an impromptu press briefing during Budget session of Parliament. "The whole issue over the return of Mr Sanjay Joshi has taken a serious turn as section of party leaders belonging to former party president's coterie has voiced their opposition to Mr Joshi's come back to the party fold," sources told The Statesman here today.

The unexpected development has raised a question mark over the fate of coming countrywide twin *yatra* by Mr Advani and party president Mr Rajnath Singh, sources further said. In fact, sources said, a day after Mr Joshi was given a clean chit by the Hyderabad-based forensic lab in the controversial CD episode, which allegedly

RSS reinstates Sanjay Joshi

NAGPUR, April 2. — Even as the BJP dithered on his rehabilitation, the RSS today sought to put pressure on the saffron party by announcing the re-instatement of former party general secretary Mr Sanjay Joshi as a "pracharak" (organiser) in the wake of the Madhya Pradesh police's stand on the sleaze CD controversy. In a statement issued from the RSS headquarters here, Sangh general secretary Mr Mohan Bhagwat said Mr Joshi had been a pracharak but was relieved from the post following his resolve not to take up any responsibility till proved innocent. With the Madhya Pradesh police's view of the forensic laboratory's report on the CD "proving his involvement in the so-called vulgar CD controversy as wrong and untrue, he is now again part of the pracharak system," the statement said. The BJP president, Mr Rajnath Singh, while welcoming Mr Joshi's reported exoneration, have not hinted at his being re-instated as general secretary of the organisation.

showed him indulging in sexual acts, senior RSS leader Mr Mohan Bhagwat telephoned Mr Rajnath Singh and asked him to ensure Mr Joshi's early return to the post. Mr Joshi had resigned from the post in December last year after the CD was leaked to media and RSS and BJP leaders. The matter again figured during Mr Rajnath Singh's meeting with RSS chief Mr KS Sudrashan at Jhandewalan here, sources said.

Sources further added that as the stage seemed set for Mr Sanjay Joshi to take charge of his office, the coterie close to the "previous dispensation" expressed their reservation over his come back "at this juncture". The matter soon came to such a serious head

that it had to be referred to former Prime Minister Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee's arbitration. "The ball is currently in Mr Vajpayee's court," sources said, adding that "the dramatic turn of events have now cast its ugly shadows over the entire *yatra* programme. People opposing Mr Joshi, it seems, are clearly afraid of being exposed."

Meanwhile, a section of party functionaries have also questioned Mr Advani's authority to lead a *yatra* on the issue of national security. "The terrorist attacks in Parliament, at Raghunath temple in Jammu and Akshardham temple in Gujarat — all took place during the BJP led NDA rule at the Centre. How would he face the public now?" they asked.

রথযাত্রায় বেরিয়ে সেই রামমন্দিরেরই আশ্রয়ে আডবাণী

শঙ্খদীপ দাস ● রাজকোট

৬ এপ্রিল: বোতলটাও নতুন নয়, মদটাও পুরনো।

রাজকোটে দাঁড়িয়ে যেন আজ দেড় দশক আগের সোমনাথে ফিরে গেলেন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। পাক সফরের মাত্র দশ মাসের মধ্যেই রাতারাতি একশো আশি ডিগ্রি ঘুরে গিয়ে বিজেপি-র লৌহপুরুষ ফের যেন রামমন্দিরেই খুঁজলেন রাজনৈতিক আশ্রয়। হয়তো সে কারণেই মধ্যে তাঁর তির-ধনুক উচিয়ে পোজ দিয়ে দাঁড়ানোর সময় জিন্মা প্রঙ্গে তাঁকে মঙ্গলা দেওয়ার গুরুমশাই সূরীন্দ্র কুলকার্নি চলে গেলেন একেবারে পিছনে।

শুরু হয়ে গেল আডবাণী-রাজনাথ সিংহের 'ভারত সুরক্ষা যাত্রা'। গুজরাতের যে কাঠি যওয়াড় থেকে ১৯৯০ সালে রামরথ বেরিয়েছিল, সেখান থেকেই।

যাত্রার অভিপ্রায় জানাতে গিয়ে আজ দুর্নীতি থেকে শুরু করে জলসঙ্কট, নানা বিষয়ে বিচরণ করলেন আডবাণী। অবশ্যই তার কেন্দ্রে রয়ে গেল রাম মন্দির। সংখ্যালঘু তোষণ ও সন্ত্রাসবাদকে আঙ্কারা দেওয়ার অভিযোগ তুলে ইউপিএ সরকারের সমালোচনা করতে করতে তিনি পৌঁছলেন রাম মন্দিরে। যোলো বছরের রাজনৈতিক যাত প্রতিঘাতে যে বিষয়টি এতটুকু বদলায়নি, আজ যেন নতুন করে তার মীমাংসা সূত্র খুঁজতে চাইলেন আডবাণী।

জিন্মা-বিতর্কের জেরে দলের সভাপতি পদ থেকে ইস্তফা দিতে বাধ্য হওয়ার পরে আডবাণী যে দ্বিতীয় বিষয়টিই বেশি করে চাইছেন, তা বলাই বাহুল্য। দলে তাঁর কর্তৃত্ব পুনঃপ্রতিষ্ঠাকেই তিনি মাছের চোখ দেখছেন। দলে তাঁর নিয়ন্ত্রণ ফের প্রতিষ্ঠার লক্ষ্যে অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ীও যে তাঁর পাশে রয়েছেন, সে কথাও বোঝানোর চেষ্টা করেছেন আডবাণী। রাজকোটে রথযাত্রা শুরুর পরে তাঁর প্রথম বক্তৃতাতেই বারবার টেনে এনেছেন বাজপেয়ীর প্রসঙ্গ।

বোঝাতে চেয়েছেন এখনও প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে তাঁর বোঝাপড়া কত ভাল। আডবাণীর কথায়, আজ সকালেও তাঁর সঙ্গে টেলিফোনে পরামর্শ করে পরমাণু চুক্তি প্রসঙ্গে বিবৃতি দিয়েছেন বাজপেয়ী।

ওড়িশায় অবশ্য রাজনাথ সিংহ রাম মন্দির নয়, ইউপিএ সরকারের উপরেই অনেক বেশি সরব ছিলেন। প্রাক্তন বিজেপি সভাপতি বেক্কাইয়া নায়ডু, ছত্তীসগড় ও ঝাড়খণ্ডের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী রমন সিংহ এবং অর্জুন মুন্ডা এবং বিহারের উপমুখ্যমন্ত্রী সূশীল কুমার শিন্ডেকে নিয়ে যাত্রা শুরুর আগে পুরীর মন্দিরে পূজা দিয়ে আসেন রাজনাথ। পরে সমাবেশে বলেন, শুধু ভোটব্যাঙ্ক অটুট রাখতেই মুসলিম তোষণ শুরু করেছে কংগ্রেস। তারা সরকারে আসার পরে দেশ জুড়ে জঙ্গি হামলাও বেড়ে গিয়েছে।

মুসলিম তোষণ নিয়ে সরব হন আডবাণীও। ইউপিএ সরকারকে হুঁশিয়ারি দিয়ে বলেন, "এই সরকার সংখ্যালঘু তোষণ করলে বিজেপি-র লাভ।" বস্তুত শাহবানু মামলার প্রেক্ষিতে নব্বইয়ের দশকে বিপুল জনসমর্থন পেয়েছিল বিজেপি।

তাঁর হিন্দুদে ফিরে যাওয়া আর ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ ভাবমূর্তির মধ্যে যোগসূত্র রাখতে সবশেষে আডবাণী বলেন রামমন্দির নির্মাণ মুসলিমদের বিপক্ষে নয়। আদালতে এর মীমাংসা হলেও খুশি হব না। খুশি হব, যদি উভয় সম্প্রদায়ের সমঝোতার মধ্যে দিয়ে মীমাংসা হয়।

চৌধুরি হাইকোর্টের মাঠে সাদ সামিয়ানার নীচে তখনও হাজার দশেক সমর্থকের ভিড়। ও দিকে চল্লিশ তাপমাত্রা ছড়াচ্ছে সূর্য। এ সব কিছুকেই পিছনে ফেলে বৌ, বৌমা, ছেলে-মেয়ে নিয়ে বাতানুকূল রথে বেরিয়ে পড়লেন আডবাণী। পিছনে নয় নয় করে একশো গাড়ির 'কাফিলা'। ইনোভা, কোয়ালিস, স্করপিও, শেভলে...। এ-বাড়ি, ও-বাড়ির ছাদ থেকে রাজপথে ফুল ছড়াল জনতা। এগিয়ে চলল আডবাণীর রথ, হিন্দু সমাজের আস্থা অর্জনে।

APR 2013

ANANDAPAZAR PATRIKA

Now, Advani talks of Christ

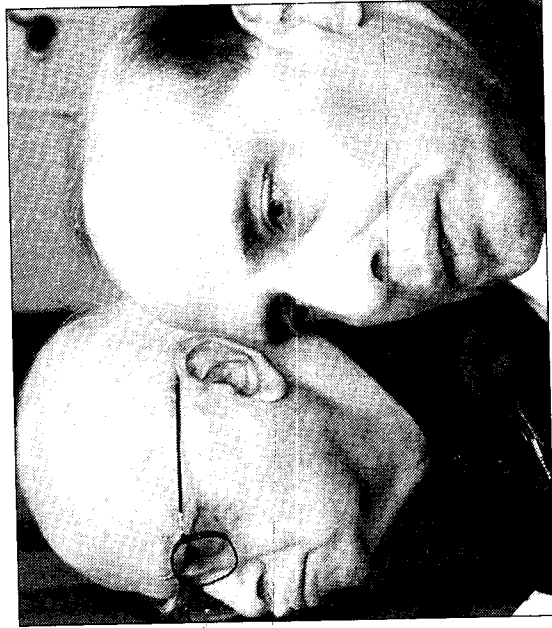
OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 4: L.K. Advani's new-found fervour for Christian symbolism could be credited to his recent visit to St. Patrick's, his alma mater in Karachi.

On the eve of launching his fifth rath yatra, he compared the birth of the BJP to the resurrection of Christ.

"We were thrown out of the Janata Party on April 4, 1980. It was Good Friday, the day Jesus Christ was crucified. We formed the BJP on April 6. It was Easter Sunday, the day Christ was resurrected. The coincidence is remarkable," Advani said.

The analogy could prove troublesome for the Jinnah-stung Advani. Already, the more excitable members of the Sangh parivar have started spewing venom against him.



LK Advani with Rajnath Singh at the news conference in New Delhi on Tuesday. Picture by Prem Singh

Christians and the communists.

"They have developed a feeling of identification with the enemies of the land. They look to some foreign lands as their holy places," Golwalkar has said in Chapter XII of his *Bunch of Thoughts*.

Although the Sangh is more circumspect in expressing opinion, an activist tersely said: "*Vinash kale viprit buddhi* (A condemned man cannot think straight)."

Praise & offer surprise

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi, April 4: In a move that may surprise the Congress, L.K. Advani today heaped praise on Sonia Gandhi and claimed that the BJP can make "common cause" with her party if it shuns "minority appeasement".

Advani quoted the Congress chief's signed editorial in the party organ where she reportedly attacked the Left for communalising foreign policy. "I completely agree with her," Advani said.

"I think she did the right thing by criticising attempts to communalise foreign policy. But, I ask her, is it right to communalise domestic politics?"

He then counted instances of the UPA's "minority appeasement": reservation for Muslims in Andhra Pradesh; reservation in Aligarh Muslim University; amendment in the foreigners' act to make it difficult to deport illegal Bangladeshi immigrants; and setting up the Rajinder Sachar committee to assess the extent of Muslim representation in

government institutions.

"If the Congress shuns such dishonest means of attracting minority vote, we can lay a firm foundation for the two principal political parties in India's bipolar polity — the BJP and the Congress — to make common cause in a very wide area of politics and governance," Advani said.

Pointing out that economist Lord Meghnad Desai had touched on the possibility of such an alliance in various lectures, Advani said there was a credible expectation about it.

"We share a common perspective on several issues — foreign policy, economic issues etc. The only bone of contention is their unabashed minority appeasement purely for the purpose of attracting minority votes."

Besides making unusual remarks on the Congress, Advani summed up the purpose and aims of the BJP's twin yatras, slammed the UPA for failing on "all fronts" and totally overshadowed party president Rajnath Singh.

The two leaders were ad-

ressing a joint press conference to explain the purpose and aims of the yatras. Rajnath, however, found it difficult to make himself heard over Advani's far superior articulation of the party's agenda.

Despite Advani's creditable performance, the schisms in the BJP were difficult to hide with news of A.B. Vajpayee's opposition to the yatras making headlines this morning.

Advani, however, denied he had been told to call off the yatra. "I am astounded by such reports. Vajpayeeji has been very enthusiastic right from the beginning. In fact, I had met him some time back and he was very supportive."

The party also launched a damage-control exercise to dilute the impact of Vajpayee's widely believed disapproval. Its media cell circulated a message around 4.30 pm that Vajpayee would be flagging off the two yatras tomorrow morning.

"Shri Vajpayeeji would bless the Bharat Suraksha Yatra and see off Shri Advaniji and Shri Rajnathji tomorrow morning," read the B-JP message.

Mammoth's silence on Muslim reservation criticised

Biggest achievement of BJP was smashing single party dominance in polity, says L.K. Advani

Y. Mallikarjun

HYDERABAD: Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha L.K. Advani has termed Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's silence on illegal immigrations from Bangladesh and the demand for reservation for Muslims in Government jobs as "ominous".

At a press conference here on Wednesday before resuming his 'Bharat Suraksha Yatra' to the Telangana districts, he said he was constrained to comment on the "negative signals" that have emanated from the meeting between Dr. Singh and a delegation led by the Shahi Imam of the Jama Masjid. As far as harassment of Muslims in Assam was concerned, he reiterated the party's stand that there should be "100 per cent protection" to them and "zero per cent tolerance" towards Bangladeshi infiltrators.

Mr. Advani claimed that the biggest achievement of the BJP was that it had smashed the single party dominance of the polity. Now two stable poles have emerged at the national level and most other parties have to choose between the two, he said.

• **'National security compromised by vote bank politics'**

• **Criticises Congress' silence on Volcker report**

• **'Need for comprehensive ban on conversions'**

He said that the yatra sought to highlight vital issues, including "politics of competitive minoritism" of the BJP's political adversaries and threats to internal security from "jehadi" terrorism and naxalism.

The former Deputy Prime Minister appealed to all in the political establishment to honestly introspect and ask themselves whether their policies and actions squared up with the imperatives of 'Bharat suraksha'. "I feel that all should make earnest efforts to enlarge the area of common agreement and cooperate with one another on that basis for the larger good of the nation".

Mr. Advani said that it was in this spirit that he had welcomed the UPA chairperson Sonia

Gandhi's recent criticism of the Communist parties on the communalisation of foreign policy.

He alleged that national security was being compromised by vote-bank politics. National security makes good governance imperative and the same was being undermined by the kind of corruption "bedevilling this Government". The "biggest shock" with regard to the Volcker report was the mention of an explanation from the party.

Replying to a question on the nuclear policy, he said the country should not allow itself to be dictated to. It was for India to decide on minimum nuclear deterrence. To another query, he said there was a need for a comprehensive law on conversions. In many countries, including China, conversions were banned.

However, there should be no prohibition on voluntary conversion. On the proposed amendments relating to disqualification of people's representatives for holding offices of profit, he said nothing should be done to undermine the rationale of Articles 102 and 103.



RURAL GIFT: Bharatiya Janata Party leader L.K. Advani dons a shepherd's blanket and is being presented a lamb at Toopran in Medak district of Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday. At left is party leader Bandaru Dattatreya. - PHOTO: K. RAMESH BABU

সামলানো দায়, আডবাণীর খেয়ালে দিশাহারী বিজেপি

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ২৯ মার্চ: আশলেণ্ডের ভার্গিজ কুরিয়েন।
ক্রিকেটের সচিব তেভুলকর।
এ ব্যয় কি তবে ভারতীয় জনতা পার্টির লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী?

কিংবদন্তি মহানায়কের কি অনেক সময় এ ভাবেই পিছলে যান বিচ্যুতির শ্যাওলায়? আপাতত বিজেপি-তে হাজারো প্রশ্ন উঠছে এই শীঘ্র নতাকে ধরেই। তাঁর বিভিন্ন সিদ্ধান্ত দলের পক্ষে আদৌ ভাল কি না, দলের একাংশের মধ্যে তা নিয়েই দেখা দিয়েছে সংশয়। যেমন,

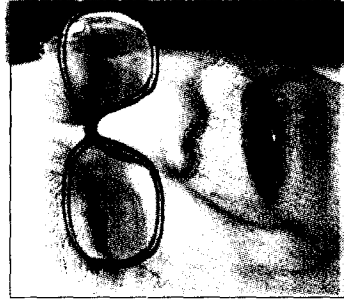
- অঙ্ক ভাবে সনিয়া-বিরোধিতার কৌশলেই দলের মঙ্গল কি না,
- স্বরূপিন নিয়ে হঠাৎ প্রতিবাদের স্বর নামিয়ে নেওয়াটা ঠিক হল কি না,
- রথহাতায় বিজেপি-র সতাই কতটা লাভ হবে, কিংবা
- রাজসভায় অমূকের বদলে তমুককে মনোনয়ন দিলেই ভাল হত কি না, এখন সে সব প্রশ্নের উত্তর খুঁজতে বসেছেন দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের অনেক নেতাই।

আর এমনই নানা প্রশ্নে এই মুহুর্তে ছত্রভঙ্গ বিজেপি। পাকিস্তান সফরে জিম্মার প্রশংসা করে দেশের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ মানুষের কাছে নিজের গ্রহণযোগ্যতা অনেকটা বাড়িয়ে তুললেও দল তথা সঙ্ঘ পরিবারের তুলুল তুললেও মুখে পড়েছিল আডবাণী। আর সতাপতির পদ ছেড়ে দেওয়ার পরে এখন তিনি একের পর এক এমন সব সিদ্ধান্ত নিতে শুরু করেছেন, যাতে বিজেপি এক কথায় দিশাহারা। রাজনাথ সিংহ সভাপতি হয়েছেন বাট, কিন্তু রথের রাশি নিজের মুঠোয় রাখতে এখনও আডবাণী অপ্রাণ চেষ্টা করছেন। আর সেই চেষ্টা বারবার ধাক্কা খাচ্ছে দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের নেতাদের বিরোধে। ফলে তিন মাস কেটে গেলেও রাজনাথের নেতৃত্বাধীন বিজেপি-র গতিমুখ অস্পষ্ট।

সনিয়ার বিরুদ্ধে 'বিদেশিনি' ধুরো তুলে আত্মঘাতী হয়েছিল বিজেপি। প্রধানমন্ত্রীর প্রত্যাখ্যান করে সে দিন সনিয়া বিজেপিকে কার্বিত পথে বসিয়েছিলেন। এখন লাজবন্দক পদ নিয়ে বিতর্কেও ইস্তফা দিয়ে সহানুভূতি নিজের দিকেই টেনে নিলেন সনিয়া। সঙ্ঘ

প্রধান কৃষ্ণহস্তি সুদর্শনের ঘনিষ্ঠ এম জে বিন্দ্য দলীয় মুখপত্রে সনিয়ার এই সিদ্ধান্তের রীতিমতো প্রশংসা করেছেন। উপরন্তু তাঁর পরামর্শ, বিজেপি নেতারাও যারা একই ভাবে দুই পদে আসীন। সনিয়ার মতোই ইস্তফা দিন। আর এসএসএসের একাংশের এই মতের সঙ্গে একমত বিজেপি-র নবীন প্রজন্মের বহু নেতাও। তাঁরাও মনে করেন, সনিয়ার বিরুদ্ধে ব্যক্তিগত আক্রমণ ব্যতী এড়িয়ে চলা যায়, বিজেপি-র পক্ষে ততই মঙ্গল। বিজেপি-র সনিয়া-বিরোধিতার কৌশলের পাল্টা চালটা প্রতি বারই ভাল চলেছে কংগ্রেস।

কিন্তু নবীন প্রজন্ম এ কথা ভাবলে কী হবে, আডবাণী চান সনিয়া-বিরোধিতার পথেই হটুক দল। ফলে সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠের শিকার আপাতত এক করুণ পরিষ্কৃতির পাজি বিজেপি। তারা না পারছে আডবাণীকে অগ্রাহ



করতে, না পারছে তাঁর ইস্তফারণ করতে। রথহাতা নিয়েও একই সমস্যা। ৬ এপ্রিল যাত্রা শুরু। প্রাক্তন প্রধানমন্ত্রী অটলবিহারী বাজপেয়ী ফোনে এই যাত্রা সম্পর্কে তাঁর ব্যক্তিগত আপত্তির কথা জানিয়েছেন আডবাণীকে। স্বভাবসিদ্ধ ভঙ্গিতে বাজপেয়ী রাজনাথ সিংহকে বলেছেন, “আনেকই আমার কাছে এসে বসেছেন, কী দরকার এখনই এই যাত্রার।”

অতীতেও অযোগ্য নিয়ে আডবাণীর রথহাতার বিরোধিতা করেছিলেন বাজপেয়ী। এমনকী পলায়মপূরে দলের কর্মসমিতির বৈঠকে যখন রামানন্দর আন্দোলনের

প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হয়েছিল, তখনও তিনি সে প্রস্তাবের পক্ষে ছিলেন না। অবশ্য সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠের মত ছিল আন্দোলনের পক্ষে। জিন্না-অধ্যায়ের পরে আডবাণীর কাছে এই

রথহাতা আশা করতে পারেননি অনেকেই। হঠাৎ আডবাণী রথহাতা নিয়ে এত খেপে উঠলেন কেন, এখন সেই প্রশ্নই তুলছেন বিজেপি-র দ্বিতীয় সারির নেতারা। তাঁরা না পারছেন আডবাণীকে মনের কথা জানাতে, আবার নীরব থেকেও স্বস্তি পাচ্ছেন না।

ক দিন আগে রাজসভার প্রার্থী মনোনয়ন করতে গিয়ে অবশ্য এই চাপা বিদ্রোহ কিঞ্চিৎ টের পেয়েছেন বর্ষীয়ান এই নেতা। তিনি পশ্চিমবঙ্গের প্রাক্তন রাজ্যপাল বীরেন শাহের পুত্র রাজেশকে প্রার্থী করতে চেয়েছিলেন। নরেন্দ্র মোদী থেকে প্রমোদ মহাজন সবাই 'রে রে' করে তা নাকচ করে দেন। আবার বাজপেয়ীর অন্তুলিহেলানে প্রমোদের সাহায্য নিয়ে সাংবাদিক প্রভু চাওলাকে মনোনয়ন দিতে গিয়েও তিনি বিদ্রোহের মুখে পড়েন।

অতীতে আডবাণী যা প্রস্তাব দিতেন, সেটাই ছিল আদর্শ। সম্ভবত এই প্রথম তিনি চোখের সামনে দেখলেন, কী ভাবে তাঁর কর্তৃত্ব ধীরে ধীরে আলগা হচ্ছে। আর যতই সেই দুর্বলতা টের পাচ্ছেন, ততই তিনি নিতানতুন-স্বাক্ষর প্রমাণ করছেন চাইছেন নিজের স্ফুটিক্রিয়তা।

স্বরূপিন চুক্তি নিয়েও সেই একই হাল বিজেপি-র। একটি পত্রিকায় এই চুক্তির খবর প্রকাশিত হয়েছিল কয়েক মাস আগে। তখন বিজেপি চুপচাপ ছিল। হঠাৎ সুবীক্ষণ কুলকার্নির পরামর্শে সক্রিয় হয়ে উঠলেন প্রাক্তন উপ-প্রধানমন্ত্রী। নিজের বাসভবনে সাংবাদিক বৈঠক করে দাবি তুললেন, সরকারকে কমিশন গঠন করতে হবে। তাঁর এক পাশে প্রাক্তন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী জর্জ ফার্নান্দেজ। বৈঠকে যিনি ছিলেন কার্যত নীরব। আর এক পাশে ছিলেন যশোবন্ত সিংহ। তাঁর উৎসাহে অবশ্য ঘাটতি ছিল না। কিন্তু সামগ্রিক ভাবে দল এই বিষয়ে কোনও উৎসাহ দেখায়নি। সাংবাদিক বৈঠক কেন দলের দফতরে হল না, সে প্রশ্নও তুলেছিলেন অনেকে। পর দিন প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায় সাফ জািমিয়ে দিয়েছিলেন, এ নিয়ে বেশি সক্রিয় হলে ইউপিএ সরকারও এনডিএ জমানার কোলেক্টারিগুলি প্রকাশ করে তাদের পাল্টা বিপদে ফেলবে। পর দিন দেখা গেল আডবাণী সংসদে না থেকে চলে গিয়েছেন অসমে নির্বাচনী প্রচারণার

এর পর ছয় মাসের পাতায়

আডবাণীর

প্রথম পাতার পর
অধিবেশনের শেষ বেলায় এমন একটা সংবেদনশীল বিষয় কেনই বা তোলা হল, আর তার পরে কেনই বা মৌনতা, এ সবই দলীয় কর্মীদের কাছে অজানা। অরুণ জেটলি, প্রমোদ মহাজন, অনন্ত কুমার অথবা সুসমা স্বরাজের মতো নেতারা আডবাণীকে শ্রদ্ধা করেন, কিন্তু তাঁর বর্তমান রাজনৈতিক চালচলনের অনেক কিছুই মেনে নিতে পারছেন না।

রাজনাথ সিংহ এখন বিজেপি সভাপতি হলেও আডবাণীর মতো এক জন প্রভাবশালী বর্ষীয়ান নেতার সামনে তাঁর বিরোধিতাও করতে পারছেন না। অতএব ভিতর থেকে চান বা না চান, আপাতত ভারতের মতো খড়ম মাথায় নিয়ে এই মে মাসের দাবদাহে তাঁকেও রথহাতায় সামিল হতে হবে দলের এক দ্বিতীয় শ্রেণির নাগরিকের মতো। পাঁচ রাজ্যে বিধানসভা নির্বাচনের আগে রথহাতার প্রাসঙ্গিকতা নিয়ে সন্দিদ্ধ নেতারা মনের কথা জানাতেই পারেননি আডবাণীকে।

এ দেশের দুঃস্থ বিপ্লবের প্রধান স্থপতি কুরিয়েনকে সম্প্রতি বিদায় নিতে হয়েছে অনভিপ্রেত ভাবে। এখনও পর্যন্ত লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীই আগামী লোকসভা নির্বাচনে বিজেপি-র প্রধানমন্ত্রী পদপ্রার্থী। কিন্তু দলের ভিতর বইছে রূপান্তরের অন্তঃসলিলা স্রোত। তাই দ্বিতীয় প্রজন্মের বহু নেতারই প্রশ্ন, কুরিয়েনের মতো আকস্মিক ভাবে তিনিও কক্ষচ্যুত হবেন না তো?

BJP suspends Madan Lal Khurana

Order follows decision to join Uma Bharti's rally

Staff Reporter

NEW DELHI: Bharatiya Janata Party president Rajnath Singh in consultation with senior party leaders suspended former Delhi Chief Minister Madan Lal Khurana from the primary membership of the party on Sunday.

The process for the suspension was set in motion with BJP vice-president Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi being asked to issue a suspension letter and a show cause notice to Mr. Khurana.

The suspension order comes in the wake of Mr. Khurana's announcement at a press conference earlier in the day that he was going to join the 'Janadesh Rally' being organised by the expelled BJP leader and former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Uma Bharti, here on March 21.

Mr. Singh spoke to Mr. Khurana in the morning and asked him not to take any hasty step. However, Mr. Khurana went ahead and announced his participation in the rally though he had ruled it out this past week.

Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Khurana said he was joining the rally to raise the voice of the people of Delhi who were suffering due to the ongoing demolitions and the court order to seal all shops operating

• To protest against ongoing demolitions in Delhi

• I am prepared for expulsion, but I cannot see the city being ruined: Khurana

• Says he was denied organisational responsibilities

from residential areas. The BJP had not done enough to end the sufferings of the capital's citizens, he said.

Mr. Khurana was suspended last year after he publicly accused the then BJP chief, L.K. Advani, of ignoring senior leaders. The suspension was later revoked after the intervention of the former Prime Minister, Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

"I know I will be risking my membership in the BJP, but I do not care. For me the people of Delhi, who have showered love and affection, come before the party. I am prepared for expulsion, but I cannot see the city being ruined due to the ongoing demolition drive by the municipal authorities," he said.

Stating that he was feeling suffocated in the BJP for the past couple of years as some so-called leaders were working against the interests of party, its workers and the common people, Mr. Khurana Minister said that despite promises, he was denied organisational responsibilities which he deserved as a senior party leader.

He also lambasted party leaders for denying him a Rajya Sabha nomination which, he claimed, was promised to him by the former BJP president and senior party leader, M. Venkaiah Naidu.

"Some leaders are scared of my popularity in Delhi. After the Congress-ruled Municipal Corporation of Delhi began its demolition drive in the city, I decided to lead a campaign against it, but the party and its senior leaders denied me support," he said.

Mr. Khurana, however, said he would declare his strategy at the rally and organise demonstrations against the demolition drive. "I am yet to make a final decision on joining Ms. Bharti's proposed new party," he said. He termed his resignation from the post of Delhi Chief Minister in 1996 on Mr. Advani's advice the biggest mistake of his political career.

20 MAR 2006

THE HINDU

সংহতি যাত্রা ঘিরে বি জে পি-তে ঘোঁট

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি,
১৭ মার্চ: লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণীর সংহতি
যাত্রা ঘিরে ফের সরগরম হয়ে উঠেছে
বিজেপির অভ্যন্তরীণ রাজনীতি।

আরএসএসের সঙ্গে সমন্বয় করে
এক দিকে যখন যাত্রা সফল করতে
তৎপর লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী ও
রাজনাথ সিংহ, ঠিক সেই মুহূর্তে
যাত্রাকে কেন্দ্র তাঁদের মধ্যেই
একটা বিভাজন তৈরি করতে সক্রিয়
হয়ে উঠেছেন দলের শীর্ষ
নেতাদের একাংশ।

আডবাণীর সংহতি যাত্রাকে
সমর্থন করবেন না বলে ইতিমধ্যেই
জানিয়ে দিয়েছেন বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ
নেতৃত্ব দলীয় সূত্রের খবর। অশোক
সিংঘল বা গিরিরাজ কিশোরের সঙ্গে
হাত মিলিয়ে কাজ করছেন মুরলী
মনোহর জোশীর মতো কিছু নেতা।
বেঙ্কাইয়া নায়ডু বা মুরলী মনোহর
জোশীরা প্রত্যেকেই সামিল ছিলেন
দলের সভাপতি হওয়ার দৌড়ে। কিন্তু
ব্যর্থ হওয়ায় এখন লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী
ও রাজনাথ সিংহের মধ্যে একটা
বিভেদের পরিবেশ গড়ে তুলতে তাঁরা
উঠেপড়ে লেগেছেন।

সংহতি যাত্রার রশিটা যে
আডবাণীর হাতে, তা প্রথম থেকেই
নানা ভাবে স্পষ্ট হয়ে যায়। আডবাণী
নিজেই তাঁর রথযাত্রার কথা ঘোষণা
করে দেন। দলের মধ্যেই প্রস্তুত
পাশাপাশি দু'টো যাত্রা চললে
রাজনাথের তুলনায় আডবাণীর
রাজনৈতিক গুরুত্ব থাকবে অনেক
বেশি। ফলে সভাপতি হয়েও তিনি
সেই রাজনৈতিক মর্যাদা পাবেন না।
মতপার্থক্যের সম্ভাবনা দেখে হোলির
দিন আলোচনায় বসেন রাজনাথ ও
আডবাণী। পরে রাজনাথ জানান, তাঁর
সঙ্গে আলোচনা করে এই যাত্রার সিদ্ধান্ত
নিয়েছিলেন আডবাণী। প্রাক্তন
সভাপতি তাঁর গুরুত্ব। আডবাণীর
খড়ম মাথায় নিয়ে চলতেও তাঁর
অসুবিধা নেই।

এই পরিস্থিতিতে আডবাণী-
রাজনাথের ভরসা আরএসএস
নেতৃত্ব। গত সপ্তাহেই নাগপুরে

সংঘের সদর দফতরে গিয়ে বৈঠক
করেছিলেন আডবাণী। আরএসএসের
সহ-সরসংঘচালক মদনদাস তখন
আডবাণীর কাছে জানতে চান, যাত্রা
সফল করতে সংঘের তরফে দল কী
প্রত্যাশা করছে। যে রাজ্যগুলিতে
যাত্রা যাবে, তার সবিস্তার গতিপথ
সংঘকে সে দিন জানান আডবাণী।
সেই সঙ্গে বলেন, ওই
রাজ্যগুলিতে সংঘ কী ভাবে সাহায্য
করতে পারবে তা সংঘ নেতারা
বিবেচনা করে দেখুন।

দলীয় সূত্রে আরও জানা গিয়েছে,
যাত্রা সফল করতে সংঘ এখানেই
থেমে থাকেনি। বিশ্ব হিন্দু পরিষদ
যাত্রা নিয়ে আর প্রকাশ্যে
আডবাণী বিরোধী মন্তব্য না করে সে
জন্য পরিষদের নেতাদের
বোঝানোর দায়িত্বও নিয়েছেন
আরএসএস নেতৃত্ব।

এ দিকে, সংহতি যাত্রার গতিপথ
ও দিনক্ষণ নিয়ে বিজেপি সদর
দফতরে আজ এক দীর্ঘ বৈঠক হয়।
রাজনাথ ও আডবাণীর নেতৃত্বে ওই
বৈঠকে এ দিন দলের সব রাজ্য
সভাপতিকেও ডাকা হয়েছিল।
বৈঠকে ঠিক হয়েছে, সংহতি যাত্রা
শুরু হবে রাম নবমী তথা বিজেপির
প্রতিষ্ঠা দিবস ৬ এপ্রিল। গুজরাতের
দ্বারকা থেকে যাত্রা নিয়ে বেবরোবেন
লালকৃষ্ণ আডবাণী। আর
রাজনাথ যাত্রা নিয়ে বেবরোবেন
ওড়িশার পুরী থেকে।

গুজরাত থেকে বেরিয়ে মহারাষ্ট্র,
কর্ণাটক, অন্ধ্রপ্রদেশ, ছত্তীসগড়,
মধ্যপ্রদেশ, রাজস্থান, হরিয়ানা হয়ে
প্রায় ৫৮০০ কিলোমিটার পথ ঘুরে
দিল্লিতে যাত্রা শেষ করবেন
আডবাণী। আর ওড়িশা, ছত্তীসগড়,
ঝাড়খণ্ড, বিহার, উত্তরপ্রদেশ,
উত্তরাঞ্চল, হিমাচল, জম্মু-কাশ্মীর-
পঞ্জাব, রাজস্থান, হরিয়ানা হয়ে
৫৪০০ কিলোমিটার পথ ঘুরে
রাজনাথও যাত্রা শেষ করবেন
দিল্লিতে। ১০ মে যাত্রার শেষ দিন
দিল্লিতে বড় জনসভা করবেন
আডবাণী-রাজনাথ।

18 MAR 2006

ANADILIPUR PATRIKA

YATRA FINDS SUPPORT WITHIN SANGH PARIVAR

Advani back in favour

Statesman News Service

BJP unfazed by Ulfa threats

NEW DELHI, March 13. — Under attack from secular parties, the Sangh Parivar and the BJP today closed ranks and rallied behind Mr LK Advani on his proposed controversial 'National Integration Yatra' from 6 April announced in the wake of the Varanasi bomb blasts.

Refuting reports and speculation of differences within the Parivar on the Yatra, RSS chief Mr KS Sudarshan, in a strongly-worded statement from the Sangh headquarters in Nagpur, said that there was "no question of the RSS opposing" the twin yatras being undertaken by Mr Advani and party president Mr Rajnath Singh "with the objective of making people aware about the unbridled Muslim appeasement and the threat it posed to national unity and integrity."

He recalled that the recent RSS general council meeting in Nagpur had passed resolutions on the

GUWAHATI, March 13. — The Assam unit of the BJP has put up a brave front in the face of threat from the banned United Liberation Front of Asom (Ulfa) in the run up to the forthcoming Assembly polls. "We know there is a threat. The militants had killed three of our leaders, including the state party general secretary Jayanta Dutta, during the 2001 Assembly polls. But we are not going to be cowed down by the threat," Mr Indramoni Bora, the president of the Assam unit of the BJP said. The BJP leader said that the party was not going to demand additional security cover for its poll candidates. The BJP leader today refuted that there was any dissidence in the party over the selection of party candidates for the forthcoming polls. "There may be discontentment given that so many were trying for party nomination. But there is no dissidence as no one has lodged any formal complaint with the party leadership," he said. — SNS

dangers posed by minority appeasement to national unity and integrity and said "any effort to create public awareness in this regard will have our support." Mr Advani had announced the twin yatras in the wake of the Varanasi blasts on 7 March trigerring speculation that it was a unilateral decision which did not enjoy the support of either the party leaders or the Saffron fraternity. VHP leaders Mr Ashok Singhal and Mr Acharya Giriraj Kishore had publicly

expressed their reservations on the Yatra.

Meanwhile, in Delhi, in the first public statement in Mr Advani's defence, BJP deputy leader in Lok Sabha Mr Vijay Kumar Malhotra asserted that the party was "united" on the Yatra and alleged that the "so-called secularists" have become "jittery and unnerved" by the proposed programme.

The RSS chief's support assumes significance as Mr Advani had to step down last December following a spat with the RSS on the

Jinnah issue. Mr Advani's 'Hindutva-U-turn' seemed to have turned the tides, sources said.

Amid speculation that some BJP leaders including Mr Murli Manohar Joshi were not in favour of the Yatra, Malhotra said the programme was aimed at "providing justice for all and bringing all sections into the national mainstream."

"There are no differences among us. We will appeal to all nationalist forces to extend all support to it. We will try to seek their cooperation," he said when asked about the reservations openly expressed by the VHP leaders.

Charging the Congress, Left parties, Samajwadi Party and the RJD with indulging in a propaganda against the Yatra, he alleged: "For the sake of vote bank politics, they are encouraging fundamentalist and Jehadi mindset. Crores of Hindus in the country are today feeling discriminated against. There is threat to the country's unity".

Advani briefs RSS leaders on his yatra

By Ramu Bhagwat/TNN

Nagpur: Former deputy prime minister and BJP leader L K Advani who has announced plans to embark on his fifth pan-India rath yatra met RSS chief K S Sudarshan and his deputy Mohan Bhagwat here to discuss it. "I don't think anyone from the sangh parivar would oppose my yatra," said Advani on Saturday.

Advani refused to react to reports that VHP was averse to his leading the yatra. There was speculation that his meeting with top sangh leaders was to seek their cooperation for the yatra, more so amid the perception that the RSS bosses were yet to forgive him for the Jinnah episode.

"Party president Rajnath Singh will be there in the yatra along with me. The final dates are to be finalised but the yatra will have nothing to do with the forthcoming elections in five states. In fact our yatra will not pass through those five states and we will cover other parts of the country. During the course of the yatra, I as well as the party president may take time off to campaign in parts of those five states and then return to the yatra," Advani told newsmen here. The BJP leader had a hectic day-long schedule in the city on Saturday, including unveiling a water cascade with statues of RSS founder K B Hedgewar and his successor Guru Golwalkar whose birth centenary is being celebrated this year.

Rejecting his political opponents' stand that such yatras caused communal tension and disunity in society, he said his 1997 'Swarna Jayanti' yatra of 59 days across the country was satisfying as it was aimed at paying tributes to freedom fighters who laid down their lives for the country. "A yatra is the best way to effectively reach out to the people, especially those who are not politi-

cally active," said Advani. The proposed yatra would focus on 'minorityism' of the UPA government. "The yatra is important for us because in the present context minorityism promotes fundamentalism which has dangerous consequences, Advani said. Starting with the move for job reservations in Andhra Pradesh for Muslims, the UPA government's minority appeasement stretched to Aligarh Muslim University reservations, bringing the proposed foreigners Act in Assam and the appointment of the Sacchar committee and introducing a new ministry



for minority affairs at the Centre, Advani said.

Advani said the nature of the coalition at the Centre spelled uncertainty and fresh elections could not be ruled out.

Raking up the Quattrochi issue, Advani said UPA government's 'scandalous favour' to Quattrochi "proved why India should not have a person of foreign origin in high offices. "In the spirit of the Right to information Act, I demand that the Prime Minister should place before parliament all documents related to the Quattrochi case," Advani said. Targeting Congress president Soina Gandhi, he wondered why she did not ask her 'friend' to come to India and face trial instead of being declared a fugitive by Interpol.

Rival stamp, with riders

OUR SPECIAL
CORRESPONDENT

the press from its officials and political leaders before the Prime Minister informed Parliament.

New Delhi, March 5: Three days before Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's scheduled statement in Parliament on George W. Bush's visit, the BJP stamped its seal of approval on the nuclear deal, though with several caveats.

The Opposition party's main reservation was whether the deal would fully serve India's national interests and not become a "nightmare of the future through shoddy and inept implementation".

A four-page statement by Jaswant Singh, leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, said: "India's assertions of being part of the solution, not a problem, appear to have also been compromised by the government's handling of this issue. The government must, therefore, fully satisfy the country (on) how our national interests will continue to be fully subserved."

Jaswant, who is a former finance and external affairs minister, said the various statements related to the issue — the July 18, 2005, and March 2 agreements and those put out by Indian and US officials — created disparities and caused confusion.

"It is the duty of the government to explain (the statements) fully and to the total satisfaction of the country," he stressed.

It was the first substantive response from the BJP and the timing surprised observers as the party's spokespersons had till yesterday said they would speak only after the Prime Minister had spoken.

Asked about the timing of his statement at a press briefing this evening, Jaswant said the government apparently went into an overdrive to give the impression that the deal was perfect through leaks to

Therefore, it was important to focus on the Opposition's concerns and misgivings so that these were not relegated to the background, he added.

Claiming that the latest Bush-Singh statement was an "explicit confirmation by the present UPA government of the continuing validity of the BJP-NDA government", Jaswant alleged that the government had "surrendered" on two "important" counts.

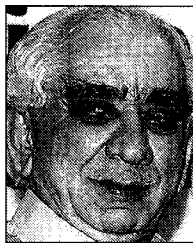
First, according to the reported separation plan, two-thirds of the nuclear power plants would be placed under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards, which

could result in a gap on the fissile material available for weapons purposes.

Second, the March 2 agreement to put the civilian nuclear reactors under the IAEA safeguards "clearly contradicted" the government's earlier assertion that India had been recognised as a nuclear weapons state.

He raised a series of questions such as, if "perpetual safeguards" did not govern nuclear weapons states, why would they now apply to India when the government stated it was on the same high table as these states? "Also, how does this protect India's nuclear programme as also its strategic autonomy?"

Jaswant also demanded to know if India would have the same responsibilities with the IAEA as the other advanced nuclear states, whether "safeguards in perpetuity" will be perpetually locked in with fuel supply, what "India-specific safeguards" with the IAEA meant and whether the government had built exit clauses should this agreement be rejected by US Congress.



Jaswant Singh

06 MAY 2006

THE TELEGRAPH

BJP backs govt stand on Iran N-vote

New Delhi: Toeing the RSS line, the main opposition BJP on Tuesday virtually endorsed the government's vote against Iran at the IAEA meeting saying it was not in India's interest to have another nuclear neighbour in its vicinity.

But the party attacked the government for the "impression" that it has surrendered its sovereign rights to take decisions on key issues and "permitted to be hustled and pressurised into voting in a particular manner."

A statement after a meeting of the BJP parliamentary party executive, chaired by former PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee, stopped short of coming out in open support of the Indian vote at IAEA saying it was not in India's interests to see Iran acquiring nuclear weapons.

"India can clearly neither ignore, nor minimise the strategic implications and adverse consequences of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons. It was, therefore, patently in India's interests to have been in the forefront of that vast majority of the international community questioning the many clandestine devices through which nuclear technology and material have been transferred to Iran from Pakistan and several other countries.

"These acquisitions are in clear violation of the obligations, and commitments under the Non-Proliferation Treaty plus all related safeguard provisions of it," the party said. Later, briefing reporters, leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Jaswant Singh said

Against the backdrop of their current chill in relations, Left party leaders are keeping away from a dinner being hosted on Tuesday night by PMto allied parties, ahead of the budget session of parliament. Even some of the leaders present in the capital may not attend it.

"the BJP is clear that it was not in national interests to have another nuclear weapon power in its neighbourhood but the casual manner in which it treated the issue raises doubts that the arrival of the conclusion was determined by the government at the prodding and pushing upon some consideration."

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, RSS spokesman Ram Madhav had said while it was not in India's interests to have "more nuclear powers in our vicinity," the government should have raised the issue of Pakistan's involvement in Teheran's nuclear programme.

The statement said "It is a nationally humiliating experience thereafter for the country to witness the manner in which the UPA Government, and the Communists have permitted themselves to be hustled and pressurised into voting in a particular manner. This has rightly but sadly generated an impression that India has surrendered its sovereign rights to take decisions on issues of national importance. Agencies

আত্মতুষ্টির খেসারত?

কর্নাটকে কংগ্রেস-জনতা (ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ) জোট সরকার কার্যত অস্তিত্বহীন হইয়া পড়িয়াছে। কারণ কংগ্রেস ছাড়া জোটের অন্য শরিক জনতা দলের প্রায় সব বিধায়কই (অন্তত ৪২ জন) রাজ্যপালের সহিত দেখা করিয়া মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ধর্ম সিংহের সরকারের প্রতি সমর্থন প্রত্যাহারের কথা জানাইয়া বিজেপির সমর্থনে বিকল্প সরকার গড়ার দাবি জানাইয়াছেন এবং বিজেপির ৭৬ বিধায়কও সে দাবি সমর্থন করিয়াছেন। ধর্ম সিংহের সরকারের পতন এখন অতএব কেবল সময়ের অপেক্ষা। মুখ্যমন্ত্রীকে গরিষ্ঠতা প্রমাণের সময় অবশ্য কিছু বেশিই দেওয়া হইয়াছে (আট দিন)। এ ধরনের সময় ঘোড়া কেনাবেচার পক্ষে আদর্শ। তবে রাজ্যপাল টি এন চতুর্বেদী অবসরপ্রাপ্ত কংগ্রেস রাজনীতিক নন, পূর্বতন বাজপেয়ী সরকার নিযুক্ত বিজেপি সদস্য, তাই তাঁহার বিরুদ্ধে অন্তত কর্ণাটকে কেন্দ্রীয় কংগ্রেস জোটের 'এজেন্ট' হিসাবে কাজ করার অপবাদ উঠিবে না, যে অপবাদ ইতিপূর্বে সঙ্গত ভাবেই বিহার, ঝাড়খণ্ড ও গোয়ার রাজ্যপালের বিরুদ্ধে উঠিয়াছিল। তবে সেই সঙ্গে পরিষদীয় গরিষ্ঠতা নির্ণয়ে রাজ্যপালের নিজস্ব বিচার প্রয়োগের সীমানা নির্ধারণের সাংবিধানিক বিতর্কটি এই উপলক্ষে নূতন করিয়া তোলা যাইতেই পারে। জোট ভাঙিয়া গেলে যেখানে সরকার স্পষ্টত সংখ্যালঘু, সেখানে একক গরিষ্ঠ দলকে বিকল্প সরকার গড়ার আহ্বান কেন জানানো হইবে না?

মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ধর্ম সিংহ এবং কংগ্রেস হাইকমান্ড এখনও গরিষ্ঠতা প্রমাণে আশাবাদী, কিন্তু পাটীগণিতে সে আশার সমর্থন নাই। ঘোড়া কেনাবেচায় তাহা সম্ভাবিত হইতে পারে, তবে তাহা গণতন্ত্রের পক্ষে সুস্থ নজির হইবে না। যে ভাবে বিজেপি ও জনতা বিধায়করা আত্ম-ভোটের পূর্বমুহূর্ত পর্যন্ত হোটেলবন্দি থাকিবেন, তাহাতে সে সম্ভাবনাও দূরপরাহত। অস্বার্থ, এই প্রথম বিদ্যাচলের দক্ষিণে একটি রাজ্যে বিজেপি সরকার গড়িতে চলিয়াছে। সত্য, সে সরকারের প্রথম কুড়ি মাসের মুখ্যমন্ত্রী হইবেন এইচ ডি দেবগৌড়া-তনয় কুমারস্বামী, তথাপি ৭৬ বিধায়ক লইয়া বিজেপি সরকারের নীতিনির্ধারণে নির্ণায়ক ভূমিকা লইবেই। পরের কুড়ি মাস তো মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বিজেপিরই। ইতিপূর্বে উত্তরপ্রদেশে বহুজনসমাজ পার্টির মায়াবতীর সঙ্গে মুখ্যমন্ত্রিত্বের মেয়াদ ভাগাভাগি করার অভিজ্ঞতা বিজেপির পক্ষে সুখকর হয় নাই, তবে কর্ণাটকে সেই অতীতের পুনরাবৃত্তি ঠেকাইতে দল যত্নবান হইবে বলিয়াই মনে হয়। নিয়তির পরিহাস ইহাই যে, বিজেপিকে ঠেকাইবার জন্যই কংগ্রেস এবং জনতা (ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ) কুড়ি মাস আগে জোটবদ্ধ হইয়াছিল এবং বিজেপি জোটভুক্ত সংযুক্ত জনতা দল হইতে আপন স্বাতন্ত্র্য প্রতিষ্ঠা করিতেই দেবগৌড়া তাঁহার দলের নামকরণে 'ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ' শব্দটি জুড়িয়াছিলেন। তবে জোট রাজনীতির আঞ্চলিক বলয়ে এ ধরনের পরিহাস আশ্চর্যজনক কিছু নয়। লক্ষণীয় বরং ইহাই যে লোকসভা নির্বাচনে পর্যুদস্ত হওয়ার পর ঝাড়খণ্ড ও বিহারের পর বিজেপি দক্ষিণী রাজ্য কর্ণাটকেও ক্ষমতা হাঙ্গল করিতে চলিয়াছে।

কংগ্রেসের পক্ষে ইহা দুঃসময়, বিশেষত যখন হায়দরাবাদে দলের বর্ধিত অধিবেশনে জোট রাজনীতি অনুশীলনের সাফল্য লইয়া নির্দিষ্ট প্রস্তাব অনুমোদিত হওয়ার কথা। দলনেত্রী সনিয়া গান্ধী তথা হাইকমান্ড দৃশ্যত কর্ণাটকে জায়মান পরিস্থিতির কোনও আগাম আঁচই পান নাই। ওই রাজ্য হইতে ওয়ার্কিং কমিটিতে চার-চারজন সদস্য এবং এক জন পর্যবেক্ষক থাকা সত্ত্বেও দেবগৌড়ার সহিত প্রদেশ কংগ্রেসের সম্পর্কের অবনতি সম্পর্কে কেন্দ্রীয় নেতৃত্ব আত্মতুষ্ট থাকিয়াছে। নহিলে কর্ণাটকের ঘটনা এমন বিনা মেঘে বজ্রপাতের মতো ঠেকিত না। আসলে মেঘ ঘনীভূত হইতেছিল, দেবগৌড়া ও তাঁহার দল মুখ্যমন্ত্রী ও তাঁহার সরকারের উপর অপ্রসন্ন হইতেছিলেন। হাইকমান্ড গুরুত্ব দেয় নাই। দেবগৌড়া প্রধানমন্ত্রী থাকা-কালে কংগ্রেস সমর্থন প্রত্যাহার করায় তাঁহার সরকারের পতন হইয়াছিল, দেবগৌড়া তাহার শোধ লইলেন, এমন বলা হইতেছে। যদি তাহাই হয়, তবে তাঁহাকে অনুনয়-বিনয় করিয়া কিংবা তাঁহার পুত্রকে মুখ্যমন্ত্রিত্বে বরণ করার টোপ দিয়া কাজ হাঙ্গল হওয়ার সম্ভাবনা কম। মুখ্যমন্ত্রিত্ব তো কুমারস্বামী বিজেপির সমর্থনেই হাঙ্গল করিয়া ফেলিতেছেন। কন্নড় নায়কের মর্যাদাহানির পুরাতন ক্ষত তাহাতে নিরাময় হওয়া কঠিন।

Grand alliance hits BJP hurdle

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Lead role for Didi if she quits NDA. 9-1-0

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, January 7

MAMATA BANERJEE'S 'grand alliance' project seemed to receive a shot in the arm on Saturday. But only seemed. Under pressure from the Trinamool to show its anti-Left credentials, the Congress, after an extended executive committee meeting, lobbed the ball back into Mamata's court, inviting her to be part of — even lead — a "progressive, secular and democratic front of all anti-Left forces."

But "secular" was the operative word. Mamata must leave the NDA and dump the BJP, PCC chief Pranab Mukherjee said.

If Mamata will play ball is anybody's guess. But if she doesn't and if the alliance fails to take off, she too will have to take the blame.

"We discussed the matter in detail and we resolved that there should be a secular front. Mamata can lead such an alliance. But she must leave the BJP to make it work," the PCC chief said. For Mamata, it's a difficult choice. And deliberately made so. Out of power in Bengal for decades, the Congress can afford one more term in the Opposition. But if Mamata dumps the BJP at this late hour to ally with the Congress she could be seen as a rank opportunist.

The offer was made difficult, because the executive committee strongly disfavoured any truck with Mamata. Most of its 45 members, including Pranab and P.R. Das Munshi, saw no justification in allying with her. District presidents of the two 24-Parganas, Nadia, Murshidabad, Malda and the two Dinajpurs and two Midnapores pointed out that the Trinamool had been routed in the last Lok Sabha polls in their areas. "Why are we debating this? Can we ally with someone who is with the BJP?" Murshidabad MP Adhir Chowdhury asked. Even Das Munshi shifted his stand and said "We will not repeat the mistakes of 1977 and 1989 when the CPI(M) joined hands with the Sangh Parivar to oust the Congress at the Centre." Asked to comment, Mamata said, "I will speak only after talking to Pranab Mukherjee."

Drama in court over new warrant ✓

HT Correspondent
Kolkata, January 7

THE BARASAT chief judicial magistrate on Saturday passed a fresh order instructing the police to arrest Mamata Banerjee by February 27. The court had set a Saturday deadline for the arrest of seven persons, including Mamata, in a 12-year-old criminal case. But drama unfolded in the courtroom when the police prayed for more time. State police and Kolkata police even traded charges over whose responsibility it was to arrest her.

Chief judicial magistrate Siddhartha Roy Chowdhury sought an explanation why the seven accused had not been produced before the court. A Kolkata police representative said the accused were all political personalities, criss-crossing the districts for various programmes. The police were thus unable to arrest them within the deadline.

The court criticised the police and set the fresh deadline. Public prosecutor Bikash Ranjan Dey said, "It is a defamation of court. The Kolkata Police should have clarified whether or not they could execute the order. Instead, they prayed that the Barasat police should execute it. It is totally up to the courts to decide who should execute the order".

A huge crowd had gathered outside the court in the hope of catching a glimpse of Mamata. But neither Mamata nor her lawyer turned up. Mamata was unwilling to comment on the court order. But she said the whole exercise was a conspiracy hatched by the CPI(M) to malign her before the polls.

She pointed out that the incident for which she was booked took place in 1994. "I wasn't arrested then. And now years later, the police are after me. This is a new CPI(M) ploy, but it won't work. People will drive them out of Bengal if they resort to such practices," she said.

CPI(M) state secretary Anil Biswas, however, said the decision to arrest Mamata was that of the police and the court and the CPI(M) had nothing to do with it. "As for the case being old, such cases had been raked up against our men too. It is nothing new," he said.

8 JAN 2000

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

No compromise on corruption, indiscipline: Rajnath

New Delhi: Taking over the mantle from L K Advani as the new BJP President, Rajnath Singh on Monday categorically asserted there will be no compromise on corruption, misconduct and indiscipline, issues which have plagued the party in the recent past.

In tune with the RSS emphasis on collective leadership, he declared that the party's plans and programmes would be decided collectively and listed strengthening of the NDA and maintaining the party's image among his priorities.

At a brief ceremony at the party headquarters amid bursting of crackers, recital of shehnai and beating of drums by hundreds of party workers, the former Uttar Pradesh CM was garlanded and presented with a shawl by Advani, who resigned in Mumbai on Saturday following a spat with the RSS on the Jinnah issue.

Advani expressed confidence that the party would reach new heights un-

der Singh's leadership and make it an "effective instrument" for the country's progress. Praising Advani for serving the party with honour even in adverse circumstances and successfully taking everyone along, Former PM-Atal Bihari Vajpayee said the party chief's job was a crown of thorns. Lauding Singh as a "dynamic leader," he said the party would not flee from challenges.

"Our four priorities would be to keep the party's image intact, widen its base, strengthen NDA and aggressively oppose the anti-people policies of the UPA Government," 54-year-old Singh told his maiden press conference after taking charge in his new office, garlanding the bust of party founder Deendayal Upadhyaya and addressing party workers.

He said the party's new office-bearers and executive would be announced in the next 8-10 days.

Senior party leaders, including Jaswant



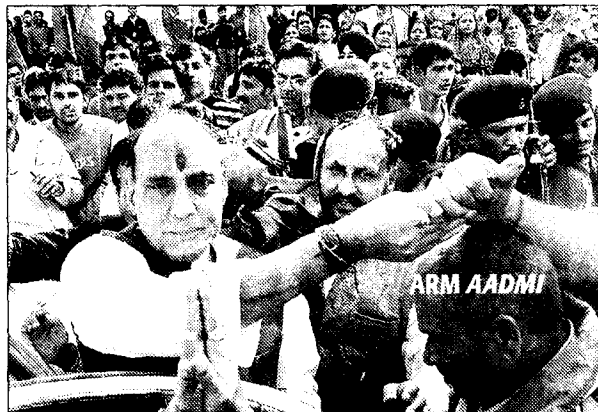
Rajnath Singh took over as BJP president on Monday

Singh, M Venkaiah Naidu, Pramod Mahajan, Arun Jaitley besides Chhattisgarh CM Raman Singh and Jharkhand CM Arjun Munda were present. Senior party leaders from Uttar Pradesh—Lalji Tandon and Kadiraj Mishra—were also present but his arch rival and party's national vice-president Kalyan Singh was conspicuous by his absence though his aides said he was indisposed.

The new BJP Chief said Advani's slogan of 'Suraj (good governance), Shuchita (probity) and Suraksha (security)' would be his beacon lights. Integral humanism and cultural nationalism would be the basis of all party programmes,' he said.

"The honour of Bharat Mata, Janata and Anndata, including farmers and activists, would be my priority. It would also be our endeavour to preserve dignity and decorum (Lok Lajja) of democracy," he said. Agencies

Rajnath all set to give BJP a farm fresh look



Girish Kuber
MUMBAI 1 JANUARY

MAHATMA Gandhi's clarion call was "Let's reach out to the villages". The father of modern India was referring to the need to develop and modernise villages and lift them out of poverty. But successive politicians have used the image of the humble farmer and the rustic way of life to woo voters and win their favour. The BJP was no different. Rajnath Singh, its next president, will be the first farmer to head the BJP in its 25-year-old history.

Rustic and carefree looking Mr Singh may not have an urbane, media savvy appeal. But he certainly has what it takes to lead a party in the Hindi heartland. His distinct oratorical skills along with grassroots connectivity and the fact that he is a Thakur made Mr Singh BJP's best bet in Uttar Pradesh, the state that sends 80 MPs to the Lok Sabha.

Mr Singh has, so far, maintained a somewhat low profile, though in UP the fiery Thakur is

known for his dextrous political managerial skills. "The party is chanting the 'going back to basics' mantra for a long time. Rajnath Singh is its first major visible sign," a BJP leader said, explaining the rationale behind his appointment. An ardent believer in the RSS ideology, Mr Singh's appointment was expected to bring back BJP's traditional upper caste vote bank to it, which of late had deserted the party.

In UP BJP has a strong OBC leader in Kalyan Singh, while Lalji Tandon and Kafeel Mishra are its Brahmin faces. Rajnath Singh as the face of the Thakurs, one of the state's dominant castes, completes the picture.

Always with the RSS, Mr Singh, a former physics lecturer in KB Post Graduate College, Mirzapur in his early days, has worked in various sections of the large Sangh Parivar in different capacities. He was with BJP students' wing, Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarti Parishad, then moved to Jan Sangh, the BJP's earlier avatar and later joined Jay Prakash Narayan's movement as well.

Advani resigns as BJP president

Rajnath Singh to take charge on Monday, says new responsibility is a test

Neena Vyas

MUMBAI: Lal Krishna Advani resigned from his position as Bharatiya Janata Party president here on Saturday and formally declared that his successor would be Rajnath Singh who would take charge at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on January 2.

With this the controversy that started in June this year in the Sangh Parivar after Mr. Advani made his controversial remarks about Pakistan founder Mohamad Ali Jinnah being secular during his visit to Pakistan has come to rest.

Mr. Advani denied that he was forced to resign under the pressure of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. He said he had done what he had declared at the party's Chennai national executive session in September.

Mr. Advani announced his resignation at a press conference here a day after the party's silver jubilee National Council session concluded. His resignation letter had been given to senior vice-president Venkaiah Naidu, he said. Several senior party leaders, including Rajnath Singh, Jaswant Singh, Pramod Mahajan, Venkaiah Naidu Ananth Kumar, Gopinath Munde, Prakash Javadekar and Atul Shah were present.

He said he would continue to be the Leader of the Opposition and remain active in politics. It was not going to be 'sanyas' (exile) for him. "My responsibility as a party worker will be with me all my life," he said. In response to a question he added, "even when I was not party president or the Leader of the Opposition I think the party attached some importance to my face."

Earlier, the national executive committee adopted a resolution moved by Mr. Jaswant Singh placing on record its deep appreciation of Mr. Advani's 'extraordinary contribution' to the party and 'the proud record of 60 years



PASSING ON THE BATON: Bharatiya Janata Party's outgoing president L.K. Advani greets his successor Rajnath Singh in Mumbai on Saturday. Mr. Advani will continue to be the Leader of the Opposition. — PHOTO: AP

in public' as an "ideal 'karyakarta' [worker]" not just as a leader and a former party president and Deputy Prime Minister.

In a brief statement Mr. Rajnath Singh paid handsome tributes to his predecessor, saying that Mr. Advani had made the largest contribution to the rapid increase in the strength of the BJP "from two Lok Sabha seats in 1984 to nearly 200" (the BJP was 180 plus in the 13th Lok Sabha). He said he was accepting the responsibility being given to him

"not as an honour but a test." He recalled the words spoken by Atal Bihari Vajpayee at the first National Council session of the party in 1980 to say that the 'mantra' of the party should be "sangharsh, sanghatan aur sanrachna" (struggle, organisation and construction).

It was a hundred years ago that the call for 'swaraj' was given to the people of India, Mr. Singh said, and today the need was to convert that 'swaraj' into 'suraj, suchita aur suraksha'

(good governance, probity in public life and security for all people).

As he prepared to take over the new responsibility Mr. Vajpayee and Mr. Advani would be the 'motivating force' while his party colleagues would be the 'driving force' of the party.

He underlined the need to remain on the ideological path chosen by the party. "The same political thinking that inspired us to start our political journey will guide us forward."

Answering questions, Mr. Advani said that under the BJP constitution Mr. Rajnath Singh's current tenure would be till February 2007, as he would be completing the three-year presidential tenure that started in 2003 under Mr. Naidu.

But, the party could give him another three-year tenure.

The organisation's election process for that would begin sometime next year with a membership drive.

Advani hands over baton to Rajnath

But Will Continue As Oppn Leader In Lok Sabha

Mumbai: Bowing down as BJP president marking the culmination of a public spat with the RSS over his Jinnah remarks, L K Advani on Saturday rejected suggestions that he was re-

Hailing Rajnath for his services to the party, Advani hoped that under his stewardship the party would "head for a very good patch in 2006". The remarks were a reminder to the



SAYING A SILENT THANKS: Advani at the Siddhivinayak temple on Saturday

signing under the Sangh fountainhead's pressure and said it was up to the party to project him as its face in the next Lok Sabha elections.

Advani, who announced on Saturday he would hand over the baton to his successor Rajnath Singh formally in Delhi on Monday, stuck to his remarks on Jinnah made during his visit to Pakistan in summer. Addressing a press conference at the end of the party's silver jubilee national convention, he said he would continue to be the leader of opposition in the Lok Sabha. "Even now, a very important office is still with me. In parliament, my responsibility is very much there. I have been a worker of the party from the beginning and continue to be so irrespective of the positions I have held," he said.

"bad patch" the party has experienced in the last 25 weeks, following a series of scams and the spat with the RSS.

Advani sought to make light of the remark by former prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee projecting him as Ram and Pramod Mahajan as Lakshman of the party, which has created a row in the second line of leadership due to the sudden elevation of Mahajan. "Vajpayee termed us Ram and Lakshman because

we were sitting by his side at the public meeting at Shivaji Park. Nothing more should be read into it," Advani said, adding that had he been a journalist, he would also have interpreted it for "a copy". He said the former prime minister had retired from active politics as he was keeping indifferent health.

On the Jinnah controversy, Advani said he was a bit disappointed that he could not properly communicate the context of his statement to party workers and others. "I quoted exactly what Jinnah said in the Pakistan assembly on August 11, 1947, and that created all this on both sides. In Pakistan, to call Jinnah a secular person was a slur, while here it was a distortion of history," he remarked. Agencies