

PROLOGUE

Congress rule in UP, 1952-67

The State of Uttar Pradesh has been a stronghold of Congress ever since independence, even though the Congress Party was divided within its ranks. In fact the Congress exercised enormous influence in the State of Uttar Pradesh even before independence. After independence G.B. Pant became the Chief Minister as the Congress had an overwhelming majority in the first General Elections. Out of a total of 430 seats, it won 390 seats. At that time the socialists and Independents were the principal opposition parties with a strength of 19 and 14 respectively in the Assembly.

In 1955, G.B. Pant was invited to join the Union Council of Ministers. After Pant's resignation Dr. Sampurnannd took over as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh. In the Second General Elections the Congress maintained its overwhelming majority but the strength of opposition in the Assembly had increased and PSP, Jana Sangh and Communists became the principal opposition parties. No threat was posed to the claim of Sampurnannd because of his eminence and his senior position in the cabinet of G.B. Pant. Even C.B. Gupta who was a strong candidate for the Chief Ministership conceded Dr. Sampurnannd's claim.

Dr Sampurnanand continued to lead the government till 1960. Though he enjoyed majority support in the State Legislature, he failed to control the Party organization. Dr Sampurnanand's candidate for the PCC Presidentship, Munishwar Dutt Upadhyaya, was defeated by the rival group and Sampurnanand tendered his resignation.

After the exit of Sampurnanand, C.B. Gupta became the leader of the Congress Legislature Party and there was no open contest for the Chief Ministership. It was felt that with the assumption of Chief Ministership by C.B. Gupta, there will be no factionalism at the State level and the State would have a stable government. It may be noted that C.B. Gupta became the leader of the government by virtue of his unanimous election by Party and not due to intervention of the Party High Command.

In the Third General Elections there were many more Political Parties on the scene to contest the elections in U.P. The efforts of opposition Parties reduced the strength of Congress in the Third General Elections just to 249 as against 286 in 1957 and 390 in 1952. The Socialists secured 24 seats, Jana Sangh - 49, Independents 31 and PSP 38.¹ But this election too did not pose any threat to the continuing

1. Poplai, S.L., 1962 General Elections in India, Allied Publishers, New Delhi, 1962, p. 21

stronghold of Congress in the State.

C.B. Gupta who took over as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh in 1960 continued to be in chair till August 1963, when he quit office under the Kamraj Plan. Mrs. Sucheta Kriplani became the new Chief Minister and earned the distinction of being the first woman Chief Minister of a State in India. It may be noted that the election of Mrs. Sucheta Kriplani was not unopposed; she had to face a rival in Kamalapati Tripathi. Though there were factions within the Congress ranks the Congress Party continued to head the Government till 1967.

In the Fourth General Elections the Congress failed to secure a clearcut majority in the State Legislature, although it emerged as the single largest Party. In March 1967 the Congress formed a Ministry under C.B. Gupta with the support of Independent members. However, this Ministry could not survive because of frequent defections. In the meanwhile, the non-Congress political parties at the initiative of Jana Sangh formed the Samyukta Vidhaya Dal (SVD) with Ram Chandra Vikal, an independent MLA, as its leader. Subsequently, Charan Singh, a prominent member of the Congress left the Party and joined Jana Congress. This Party also merged itself with the SVD and Charan Singh was elected as its new leader.

Thus the ground was clear for the formation of the first non-Congress Government in Uttar Pradesh under Charan Singh. The establishment of a non-Congress Government in UP can be attributed to the efforts of opposition parties.

Kerala was the first State where an alliance was made to oust the Congress, and a non-Congress government was formed. But immediately President's rule was imposed and then in February 1961, mid term elections took place where the Congress got some more seats compared to its performance in 1957. The same thing was repeated when the Government of India declared that the elected administration having collapsed a replacement was made by the direct rule of President. Kerala did not have a stable government in the State for years. In 1963 there was a mid term poll which returned the Communist Party in near majority to the Assembly. Some of the Communists elected had been in detention under the Defence of India Rules. The Communist Party made an announcement that with the help of some non-Communist members, who had promised support, it was in a position to form a Government, and claimed that it should not be deprived of the constitutional right to form a ministry as a majority Coalition Party. The Centre did not respond; on the contrary it dissolved the newly elected Assembly and

continued the President's rule.

The February (1967) General Elections were held against this background. Most of the people grew sore over what they regarded as abuse by the Congress Party of the constitutional provision meant for emergencies. All opposition parties were distressed and annoyed. From this arose a bitter feeling, and many of those who had been voting for the Congress became its opponents. The opposition Parties of the State grew more conscious and stood solidly against the Congress. They formed an United Left Front to give Congress a straight fight in every constituency.

The Fourth General Elections can be considered as a major watershed in the political development of India as well as that of Uttar Pradesh. Apart from proving the basic soundness of Indian democracy, it completely altered the pattern of political power which emerged after the Fourth General Elections. It was qualitatively different from the situation that had so far prevailed. Hitherto, the Indian National Congress exercised virtually unchallenged monopoly of power at the Centre as well as in the States. The Fourth General Elections ended the era of one Party domination. Though the Congress retained power at the Centre, its majority in the Lok Sabha was drastically reduced. In eight of the Seventeen States the Congress

lost its majority (as shown in the table on the next page) and non-Congress coalition governments came into power.

In the State of Uttar Pradesh, (one out of the eight non-Congress States) the biggest State of India, the Congress could secure only 198 seats (Total seats - 425).¹ The opposition in U.P. which moved into the treasury benches on April 1, 1967, after the fall of Congress government, consisted of eight parties. The Jana Sangh had 97 seats, SSP - 44, Communist (R) - 14, Swatantra - 12, PSP - 11, Republican - 9, and the Communist (L) one seat only.²

2. Formation of SVD Government in U.P.

In a dramatic move to oust the Congress from power all the opposition parties came together and formed a SVD government (Samyukta Vidhayak Dal) in U.P. in 1967. Their combined strength was 188 in a House of 425. The 37 independents held the balance but later on they lent their support to the Congress.³ At that time there were two candidates for leadership - Charan Singh and C.B. Gupta. But the Central leadership chose C.B. Gupta in the belief that he commanded the support

1. Ram Gopal, Spotlight on Democracy in India, Pustak Kendra, Lucknow, 1970, p. 99; Also see: Shastri, KN. Ramnath. An Analytical Study of 1967 General Elections in India, V.B. Prakashan, Agra, 1968.

2. Gopal, Ram, op.cit., p. 112

3. Ibid., p. 102

Party Position in the State Assembly Elections, 1967

| S.No. | States | Total seats | Cong-ress | 4 | 5 | Swatan- tra | Jana Sangh | SSP | CPI | CPM | PSP | Others | Indepen- dents. |
|-------|---------------------|-------------|-----------|----|----|----------------|---------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|--------|--------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| 1. | Andhra Pradesh | 287 | 165 | 29 | 3 | 1 | 10 | - | - | - | 2 | 68 | |
| 2. | Assam | 126 | 73 | 2 | - | 4 | 10 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 25 | | |
| 3. | Bihar | 318 | 128 | 3 | 27 | 47 | 24 | 4 | 18 | 1 | 46 | | |
| 4. | Gujarat | 168 | 93 | 64 | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 1 | 46 | | |
| 5. | Haryana | 81 | 48 | 3 | 12 | - | - | - | - | 2 | 16 | | |
| 6. | Jammu & Kashmir | 75 | 61 | - | 3 | - | - | - | - | 8 | 3 | | |
| 7. | Kerala | 133 | 09 | - | - | 19 | 19 | 52 | - | 19 | 15 | | |
| 8. | Madhya Pradesh | 296 | 167 | 7 | 78 | 10 | 1 | - | 9 | - | 24 | | |
| 9. | Tamil Nadu (Madras) | 234 | 49 | 20 | - | 2 | 2 | 11 | 5 | 138 | 8 | | |
| 10. | Maharashtra | 270 | 203 | - | 4 | 4 | 11 | 1 | 7 | 24 | 16 | | |
| 11. | Mysore (Karnataka) | 216 | 126 | 16 | 4 | 6 | 2 | - | 29 | 9 | 34 | | |

continued

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
|--------------------------|------------------|-----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| 12. | Orissa | 140 | 31 | 49 | - | 2 | 7 | 1 | 21 | 17 | 12 |
| 13. | Punjab | 104 | 48 | - | 9 | 1 | 6 | 2 | - | 29 | 9 |
| 14. | Rajasthan | 184 | 89 | 49 | 22 | 8 | 1 | - | - | - | 15 |
| 15. | Uttar Pradesh | 425 | 198 | 12 | 98 | 44 | 14 | 1 | 11 | 8 | 39 |
| 16. | W. Bengal | 210 | 127 | 1 | 1 | 7 | 16 | 43 | 7 | 47 | 31 |
| <u>UNION TERRITORIES</u> | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Goa | 30 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 28 | 2 |
| | Himachal Pradesh | 60 | 34 | 1 | 7 | - | 2 | - | - | - | 16 |
| | Manipur | 30 | 16 | - | - | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 9 |
| | Tripura | 30 | 27 | - | - | - | 1 | 2 | - | - | - |

of the majority. But Charan Singh staked his claim and offered himself as a candidate for the leadership. The Central leaders sent an observer to Lucknow to persuade Charan Singh to withdraw his candidature. The agreement leading to Charan Singh's withdrawal was said to have made it incumbent upon C.B. Gupta to consult Charan Singh in the choice of the personnel for the ministry. Charan Singh made some proposals and Gupta turned them down. The former therefore refused to join the ministry. But on the day when the Assembly was in session, some 30 members of the Congress met at Charan Singh's house and discussed the possibility of their leaving Congress Party. On April 1, 1967, 17 of the Congress members crossed the floor in the Assembly with their leader Charan Singh, announcing that "Gupta's intransigence had compelled them to take the painful decision."¹

The Assembly was that day to accept or to reject the Governor's address, a policy statement of the Government. The opposition moved an amendment and carried it through with the support of defectors from the Congress. The Congress government had to bow out and Charan Singh, the leader of SVD took over as the Chief Minister of U.P. For the first time in U.P. a

1. Dutt, Brahm, Five Headed Monster, Surge Publications, New Delhi, 1978, p. 1

Coalition government of assorted parties was thus formed.

3. Formation of BKD

Prof. Humayun Kabir was the first to take an initiative to form an all-India political party to fight the reactionary forces and to replace the Congress in course of time. He had invited all the important non-Congress leaders from different States to meet at Delhi on December 6-7, 1966 to review the situation and take a decision. About 75 leaders representing all the States met and decided to form an All India party, namely Kranti Dal.¹

The alternate party was launched with an aim "to promote the ideal of nationalism and democratic socialism, with emphasis on democracy than Socialism." The new party felt that the Congress had professed the old ideas but it lost the spirit, initiative and capacity to enforce them. Besides this the Congress started losing its members day by day who either were to form a new political party or to join the newly formed anti Congress parties.

1. Kashyap, Subhash, C., Indian Political Parties, Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, 1971, p.283.

Since the elections were due in 1967, and the time being short, the party could not be officially formed and therefore could not contest the 1967 elections.

On April 9, 1967 Mumanyun Kabir called a meeting of all the then Chief Ministers of non-Congress State governments and other important leaders.¹ This meeting was held at Delhi where all the leaders who were present agreed in principle that an All India Party be formed but decided to discuss the matter further. Mahamaya Prasad Sinha, the then Chief Minister of Bihar, invited all Chief Ministers of non-Congress governments, presidents and secretaries of like minded parties and some other important leaders from different States to meet on May 14-16, 1967 at Patna. The Convention lasted for three days and had finally decided to form the Bhartiya Kranti Dal (BKD).

According to the Steering Committee of the BKD the main aim and objective of the Party was "to work according to the philosophy of Mahatama Gandhi to create a democratic society, free from economic, political and social exploitation." During the party convention on November 11 & 12, 1967 the draft of the Constitution of the Party was approved and adopted.

1. Kashyap, Subhash, C., Indian Political Parties, Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies, New Delhi, 1971, p.283.

The BKD did not contest the elections of 1967. But it started to take an active part in political activity.

4. Efforts of BKD to topple the SVD Government in U.P.

In U.P. where the SVD government was formed in 1967 Charan Singh was urged to resign from the leadership of the SVD government and to join the BKD. A few months after the formation of SVD government in U.P. an atmosphere of uncertainty was created by some constituents of the Coalition government. The BKD in a unanimous resolution said: "the party executive considered the political situation in the State and sorrowfully noted that the activities of some constituents of the SVD were increasingly creating difficulties for the government, which not only prevented it from giving the necessary attention to public affairs, but were undermining the administration."¹

The BKD Executive was of the opinion that such an atmosphere of uncertainty could not be permitted to continue for long, and it therefore authorised its leader Charan Singh to take any action he considered appropriate in the public interest. On December 16, 1967 Charan Singh mooted his resignation from the leadership of the SVD Coalition at a joint meeting of legislators and the State Executive of his party, the Bhartiya Kranti Dal.² On the resignation of Charan Singh,

1. The Statesman, New Delhi, December 17, 1967

2. Ibid.

there were allegations and counter allegations. The SSP leader Raj Narain accused Charan Singh of violating all the agreements.

While Charan Singh kept on forcing his resignation for the second time in three months, the ruling coalition parties requested him to continue as Chief Minister and promised to devise a machinery to ensure proper conduct of the coalition and the government. These promises were made in an unanimous resolution of the General Body of SVD-while this resolution was passed on by the Chief Minister to a high power Committee of his own party for consideration, the BKD had unanimously decided that Charan Singh should certainly resign. A committee of nine was constituted on December 17, 1967 to take a decision on Charan Singh's own proposal that he be allowed to resign.¹

After the Chief Minister had resigned, Jhar Khande Rai (CPI), a former Food and Civil Supplies Minister suggested that the whole issue of resignation be taken up by the coordination committee. Charan Singh rejected the proposal and said that "when he had to resign in August, 1967, he had sent his resignation to the Coordination Committee but that body cared little to carry out the promises it had made, when it persuaded him to withdraw the resignation." Therefore, he said, he did not give his resignation directly to the general body, but was prepared to send the same to the Governor instead. Ugra Sen

1. The Statesman, Delhi, Dec 17, 1967

had confessed that the Coordination Committee of which he was the Secretary and Convenor, had failed to fulfill the assurance made in August, but this time they would give a better account. Ram Chandra Vikal (Ind) Minister of Forests, who was the leader of the SVD before Charan Singh joined it, had declared that the coalition could not exist without Charan Singh and that his continuing as Chief Minister was also a popular wish. On December 19, 1967 the Congress demanded the resignation of Charan Singh since there was a serious crisis in the Coalition government.¹ On voting the SVD government was defeated on a snap vote but the Congress opposition failed to take advantage of this to bring a vote of no Confidence against Charan Singh.

The third national conference of the SSP which was held on January 1, 1968 adopted a resolution directing the party's five ministers in UP to resign from the SVD Ministry immediately in protest against the non implementation of accepted minimum programmes, particularly land revenue abolition, release of detenus and discontinuing of use of English in administration.²

1. The Statesman, Delhi, Dec 20, 1967

2. The Times of India, Delhi, Jan 2, 1968

On the other side the national executive of PSP, in a resolution directed its legislators in U.P and Bihar to insist on the government for the abolition of land revenue and introduction of graded sales tax. On January 5, 1968 the Governor accepted the resignation of three SSP ministers in U.P. and two deputy ministers from the State Cabinet.¹ Charan Singh alleged that the SSP tactics were aimed at the coming elections. He said: "due to coming General Elections these leaders are making ground to win the favour of cultivators, State government employee and the people in general."²

As a result of the resignation of Ministers and Deputy Ministers from the SSP, two Ministers, one Deputy Minister and one Parliamentary Secretary were sworn in on January 8, 1968 raising the strength of the Council of Ministers of U.P. to 22, all being independents.³ In spite of the rise in Charan Singh's Ministry, a great threat to the Ministry developed as the Working Committee of the U.P. Unit of Jana Sangh warned the Chief Minister that if he did not change his arbitrary ways the SVD might be left with no alternative but to elect a new leader in his place.

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1. The Times of India, Delhi, Jan 6, 1968
 2. Ibid, Jan 7, 1968
 3. Ibid, Jan 9, 1968

The ministerial crisis deepened further more on the decision of Chief Minister Charan Singh to boycott the meeting of the Coordination Committee and the general body of the SVD being held in Lucknow to take stock of the latest developments in the State. Charan Singh's complaint was that since he had not been consulted about the holdings of these meetings, he and other members of his party did not propose to attend them. He felt that the Jana Sangh and other constituent units of the Dal should have sounded him before calling these meetings because he was still the leader of the SVD.

On February 17, 1968 Charan Singh had resigned and advised the Governor to dissolve the Assembly and to order mid term elections unless another leader elected by the SVD was thought capable of forming the government. After Charan Singh's resignation was accepted by the Governor, the SVD requested and tried to persuade Charan Singh to continue as its leader. But Charan Singh was not agreeable to accept the leadership anymore. On the confusion created by the SVD and its obvious failure to elect a leader acceptable to all its constituents after Charan Singh's resignation, the Governor of U.P. sent a report to the Centre recommending takeover of the State administration by the President.

5. President's rule in U.P.

On February 25, 1968 President's rule was declared in U.P. and the Assembly had been dissolved in view of the political stalemate there.¹ After his resignation from the SVD government and the dissolution of Assembly, Charan Singh formally launched the Bhartiya Kranti Dal in September 1968, which, however had come into being earlier in November 1967.

After the dissolution of the U.P. Assembly, elections were declared to be held in U.P., Bihar, Punjab, Haryana and West Bengal. In U.P. the elections aimed to secure a stable government. Preparations were made by all political parties: the Congress, Jana Sangh, the leftist parties and the BKD, to contest the mid term elections. The Jana Sangh which won 98 seats in the 1969 elections and emerged as the second largest party in U.P., decided to contest all the 425 seats.² There was a revolt of large number of SSP workers in U.P. and some of them left the Party, some joining the Congress and others joining the BKD. Those members of the Party who belonged to Scheduled Castes joined the Republican Party. Among the leftist Parties, the PSP and the Communist Parties were very weak. The PSP objected to Marxist Communists, and the Communists were opposed to the Jana Sangh. This made the

1. The Statesman, Delhi, Feb 26, 1968

2. Mathur, R.N., 'Mid Term Elections in U.P.', Indian Political Science Review, Delhi, Volume IV, 1969-70, p.192

pattern of disunity in the anti-Congress rank complete.¹

The Party which offered formidable challenge to the Congress Party was the BKD. It commanded solid support of the underprivileged and backward classes, whereas in the Congress list for elections Caste Hindus predominated. The BKD list contained 51 Rajputs, 36 Muslims, 17 Banias, 48 Ahirs, 88 Harijans, 10 Jats, 5 from backward communities and 26 others. The Congress list contained 115 Brahmins alone besides representatives of other castes.

6. Mid Term Poll 1969

Following table shows the Party position in the 1969 Mid-term Poll in U.P.:

| Party | Seats won | Percentage of votes polled |
|------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| Congress | 211 | 33.69 |
| Jana Sangh | 49 | 17.93 |
| Swatantra | 5 | 1.25 |
| BKD | 98 | 21.29 |
| CPI | 4 | 3.08 |
| CPM | 1 | 0.19 |
| SSP | 33 | 7.82 |

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1. Mathur R.N., 'Mid Term Elections in U.P.' Indian Political Science Review, Delhi, volume IV, 1969-70 p.193.

| Party | Seats won | Percentage of votes polled |
|------------------|-----------|----------------------------|
| PSP | 3 | 1.72 |
| Republican Party | 1 | 3.48 |
| Hindu Maha Sabha | 1 | - |
| RPM | 1 | 12.12 |
| Forward Block | - | 0.07 |
| Independents | 18 | 7.09 |

In the mid-term poll the Congress had secured the largest number of seats (211 out of 425) and 33.69% of the votes polled with BKD trailing behind as the second highest, thereby becoming the biggest opposition party in the Assembly. The smaller parties were practically wiped out. The strength of the independents was reduced to 18 from 37 in 1967. The dominance of the upper castes was broken. Further development that took place was that government in U.P. became very unstable. The Congress party headed by C.B. Gupta with the support of Independents and Swatantra formed a Ministry on February 16, 1969.¹ The Gupta Ministry could not last for a long time and stability shaken due to split in the Congress. The New Congress under the leadership of Kamlapati Tripathi joined hands with the BKD to topple the C.B. Gupta Ministry.

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 17, 1969

7. Congress (N) and BKD joint move to topple the Gupta Ministry

The New Congress had joined hands with the BKD to topple the Gupta Ministry but the question of leadership that in coalition government who will be the leader, was very confusing. Both the New Congress and the BKD were interested in their leaders to head the government. For the solution of this issue both the leaders, Kamlapati Tripathi and Charan Singh met on January 27, 1970 and declared that the issue of leadership would be resolved to the satisfaction of both; they had not reached any agreement as to who would head the alternate government in case the Gupta Ministry fell.¹

The New Congress Legislature Party in U.P. which met on February 3, 1970 passed a resolution authorising its leader Kamlapati Tripathi to hold negotiations with other political parties to topple the government headed by C.B. Gupta. The resolution also authorised Tripathi to enrol the party legislators who were keen to join it.²

On February 5, 1970 H.N. Bahuguna, the New Congress General Secretary, sought President V.V. Giri's intervention for ensuring that the minority government of C.B. Gupta in U.P. should not be allowed.³ According to Bahuguna the no confidence

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Jan 28, 1970

2. Ibid, Feb 4, 1970

3. Ibid, Feb 7, 1970

motion should get precedence over the debate on the Governor's address to a joint session of the legislators. The address would be the policy statement of the minority government.¹ The fear of the New Congress legislators that the Assembly might be adjourned immediately after the debate on Governor's address without taking the no confidence motion was also conveyed by him to the President.

On the issue of leadership, Charan Singh declared that "even if he were not made the leader of the combined opposition, the BKD would extend full support to Kamalapati Tripathi unconditionally in toppling the minority government headed by C.B. Gupta and forming an alternative government."²

On February 10, 1970 C.B. Gupta tendered his resignation to the Governor advising him to invite the opposition leader Charan Singh to form the government. The Governor B. Gopala Reddy accepted the resignation of Gupta but asked him to

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1. A no confidence motion against the C.B. Gupta government was tabled by the BKD Gen. Secretary, Shiv Raj Singh. In a House of 425, those who had publicly voiced no confidence against C.B. Gupta numbered 233. They included 125 of the New Congress, 95 from BKD, 7 from SSP, 4 from CPI, one each from CPM and Republican Party.
 2. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 7, 1970
 3. Ibid., Feb 6, 1970

continue till alternative arrangements were made. The Jana Sangh and SSP endorsed Gupta's recommendation that the BKD leader be invited to form the government. But the Governor said that he would consult legal opinion before he gave his decision.

Paying rich tributes to C.B. Gupta, Charan Singh said: "when summoned I will not flinch from shouldering the responsibility of the high office."¹ He said that Gupta deserved all the thanks of the people of state for "saving them from the ordeal of another mid-term poll which some of the politicians seemed to be working for."² He also thanked the Jana Sangh and SSP for endorsing Gupta's recommendation for calling him to form the government.

Following is the text of C.B. Gupta's resignation letter:³

My dear Shri Rajpal,

"I have devoted more than 50 years of my life in the service of the country in pursuance of my convictions. Democratic way of living has been a part of my life and I hold democracy as the achievement of the dream of the father of the nation. Unfortunately, the country has been passing through peril. Authoritarian trends have raised their ugly head, forces of disruption and disintegration are active. Public life is being polluted by horse trading elements with extra territorial loyalties are also

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 6, 1970

2. Ibid., Feb 11, 1970

3. Ibid., Feb 6, 1970

trying to harm the nation to an irreparable extent. Discipline is the mainstay of democracy and the same has also been at ransom. This has very much harmed us and our orderly progress has been checkmated. It seems now that there is definite style to plunge the State in the whirlwind of another mid term poll. This is no solution to our problems and the State has already suffered a lot in the past. In the larger interests of the State, I have decided to relinquish the office that I hold and to my mind the leader of opposition Mr Charan Singh may be called upon to succeed me to shoulder the responsibility of the office. He has been my valued colleague for a long time.

"It is in pursuance of authority given to me by the legislature party which held its meeting on 9th Feb. 1970 and authorised me to take such a step. As deem proper that I make the statement. But before I part I may say in fairness to all that I owe a sense of gratitude and appreciation to the Jana Sangh, the Samyukta Socialist Party, the Swatantra Party, the Praja Socialist Party and the Independents for their valuable support and coordination to me on the basis of a definite programme. I am also thankful to my own party colleagues who imposed confidence in me and whose unstinted loyalty was a source of strength to me all these years. I am confident that on the basis of same programme the support and confidence of the above parties will be available to the new government headed by Mr Charan Singh.

"I hereby resign as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh and request you to kindly postpone the session of the legislature which was to start from tomorrow to Feb.23."

Yours sincerely,

C.B. Gupta

The New Congress leader Bahuguna however asserted that the Governor must invite Kamlapati Tripathi, leader of the largest group in the Assembly to form a ministry, and only when he expressed his inability to do so, could he ask the leader of any other party to form a government. He said that it was not in the competence of the Chief Minister, who had resigned because he had been reduced to minority in the assembly, to recommend to the Governor who should be the next Chief Minister.

On February 11, 1970, the New Congress Legislature Party leader Kamlapati Tripathi met Governor Gopala Reddy to stake his claim as leader of the largest single party to form the government.¹ Claiming majority support, he told the Governor that if he did not have it, his government could be voted out on the floor of the house; it would be grossly unfair to deny him the first opportunity to form the government, said Tripathi.

The Central leaders were still hopeful of preventing the BKD - Old Congress Coalition from forming the government in U.P. They wanted the Governor to give Kamlapati Tripathi a chance to form a ministry and hoped that he would be able to

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 12, 1970

do so because many MLAs from the Old Congress, the BKD as well as Jana Sangh and SSP were not to support Charan Singh for Chief Ministership.¹ The New Congress President Jagjivan Ram hinted that it was still possible to form government with BKD support. He said: "the final act is not yet over, the drama is still going on. What is the sanctity of C.B. Gupta's advice to the Governor when he has lost majority? If it is contended by anybody that he had not lost the majority then let the Assembly decide." He further said that he had yet not given hope of an understanding with the BKD.²

Meanwhile the SSP legislature party in a meeting unanimously pledged its support to Charan Singh on the basis of a "time bound concrete socialistic programme." It felt that "this was necessary to frustrate the efforts of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for imposing President's rule." Through another resolution the party reaffirmed its full confidence in its leader Anant Ram Jaiswal, and authorised him to take necessary steps in connection with the formation of government under Charan Singh's leadership.³

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 12, 1970

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., Feb 13, 1970

On February 14, 1970, the New AICC treasurer B.P. Mishra announced that "full accord had been reached between the two parties ... the agreement provided for the formation of a single Party government headed by the BKD Party leader Charan Singh with the New Congress supporting it from outside.

The Coordination Committee of the Old Congress, SSP, Jana Sangh and Swatantra selected former FWD Minister Giróhari Lal for leading the alliance and sent a letter to the Governor withdrawing the support it had pledged to Charan Singh following C.B. Gupta's resignation. After the formal announcement of alliance between the New Congress and BKD, the Old Congress informed the Governor about Girdhari Lal's election as leader and urged that he should be invited to form the ministry.¹

Charan Singh said that his party never made any comment about forming government with the help of the alliance. About the stability of the government by cooperation between the New Congress and BKD, he said that the strength of New Congress was 138 while his party had about 100 members in the 425 member State Assembly. When asked by the Governor Gopala Reddy to give him the exact figure of the strength of respective alliances Charan Singh claimed 240 including 96 of his party.²

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 15, 1970

2. Ibid.

Girdhari Lal, leader of the four party alliance, namely SSP, Jana Sangh, Kisan Mazdoor Party (KMP) and Swatantra, claimed 220 members.

Charan Singh requested the Governor to summon the House on February 26, 1970, while Girdhari Lal wanted the House to be summoned on February 23. The resigning Chief Minister C.B. Gupta had also suggested the House to be summoned on February 23. Under constitutional provisions the House should have met on or before February 28, 1970 when the six months interval since the last session would have expired. The Assembly Speaker and the Council Chairman, accompanied by their secretaries, also met the Governor and advised him that he was competent to call the House any day he liked.

Before Girdhari Lal met the Governor, a delegation consisting of old Congress legislature Party Secretary Krishnanand Rai, PSP leader Raj Narain, SSP Legislative Party leader A.R. Jaiswal and Jana Sangh leader Tripathi met Gopala Reddy and delivered to him a letter from C.B. Gupta informing him that Girdhari Lal had been elected leader of the alliance and requested him that he be invited to form the government. The letter also withdrew support to Charan Singh. C.B. Gupta said in his letter that he was not defeated on the floor of the House. He had resigned and recommended Charan Singh's name

for being invited to form the government on his "solemn commitment to the economic programme of the alliance." But he said that since Charan Singh had now declined to accept the programme, and broken the agreement, he was free to suggest another name and that he was doing so in favour of Girdhari Lal.

About the New Congress - BKD alliance Charan Singh had not agreed to give in writing that the BKD will be supporting the Indira Gandhi government in Parliament. Charan Singh was of the view that it was not necessary to put it in writing. The agreement was understood to cover mainly three conditions: (i) the BKD would form the one party government by Charan Singh, (ii) the New Congress would give full support; and (iii) after working together when the leaders came closer and consider it timely the New Congress would join the ministry, making it a coalition government.

On February 15, 1970 President V.V. Giri had asked the U.P. and Bihar Governors to exercise their constitutional power and not be guided by any political considerations in permitting the formation of new Ministries in their respective States.¹ Leaders of the Old Congress felt disturbed that the institution

1. The Hindustan Times, New Delhi, Feb 17, 1970

of Governor was being abused. They felt that the summoning of U.P. Governor to Delhi by the Prime Minister amounted to exercising undue influence on him in favour of her group which was reflected in the statement, issued by the Governor. They took strongest objection to this and urged the President to intervene and to "stop the subversion of the constitution."

In a statement S.D. Mishra, the Old Congress Secretary, said that "the part played by Charan Singh in U.P. Politics would be recorded as a black deed in the history of democracy." He said that the BKD chief, by changing his stand all of a sudden and making alliance with the New Congress, had "not only stabbed Mr Gupta in the back but had also gone against the wishes of some of the members of his own party who had invited the move of alliance between C.B. Gupta and Charan Singh."

On February 16, 1970 it was declared that the Charan Singh government was likely to be sworn in the next day. The New Congress had agreed to give its full support to Charan Singh in the formation of the Ministry accordingly.