

SUBJECT TO PEOPLE'S WILL**Disqualified rebels should not be barred from bypolls in Karnataka**

With the Election Commission of India agreeing to defer byelections to 15 of the 17 vacant Assembly seats in Karnataka, the defectors from the Congress and JD(S) have got a breather. By the dint of this order, the question whether they can contest the elections will be answered by the Supreme Court before the bypolls. The rebel former legislators of the Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) had earlier this year resigned from the Assembly and were later disqualified by the then Speaker Ramesh Kumar. Following these actions, the BJP managed to get to power with the support of 105 of the 208 remaining legislators in the Assembly. The then Speaker's actions disqualifying the legislators who had resigned till the end of the current term of the Assembly added a twist to the tale. This sent the fate of these disqualified legislators into a limbo, as it made it unclear whether they can contest following this ruling. Under the law (the Tenth schedule) though, it is not clear as to how the ex-Speaker could fix a period till which a member can remain disqualified and bar them for the rest of the assembly term. It is evident that the disqualified legislators should not be disallowed by the Supreme Court from contesting in the byelections for the seats.

However, the actions by the rebel legislators and the Speaker, cumulatively beg the question if the letter and spirit of the anti-defection law were undermined. It was clear that the legislators who quit the Congress-JD(S) coalition did so to curry favour with the BJP and to gain new loaves of power in the form of ministerial berths. The fact that the BJP government led by B. S. Yediyurappa has kept portfolios vacant in its council of ministers indicates that these seats have been kept warm for the turncoats. On the other hand, the Congress-JD(S) rigmorole of locking up legislators in resorts and hotels before trust votes, besides the machinations by the Speaker — sitting on the resignations for a long period and coming up with an unusual disqualification order — did not help matters. The fractiousness of the coalition had already led to a stasis in governance and had contributed to its loss in the Lok Sabha election and it is no wonder that the Congress and the JD(S) have decided to contest the byelections on their own. Besides deciding the future of the BJP government, which has a narrow margin of support in the Assembly, the byelections provide a good opportunity for voters of these constituencies to judge the parties and their representatives for their respective roles in the sordid drama this year. It is the people's reasoned will that could ultimately bring a change in the political culture rather than just the implementation of the anti-defection law to regulate legislator behaviour.

| <u>Words</u> | <u>Kind</u> | <u>Meaning</u> |
|--------------|-------------|---|
| Rebel | Noun | Insurgent, revolutionary, mutineer, agitator |
| Bar | Verb | Counter, prohibit, debar, proscribe, preclude |
| Defectors | Noun | Deserter, turn coat, traitor, renegade |

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| Breather | Noun | Break, rest, pause, interval, respite |
| By dint of | | By means of, by use of |
| Legislator | Noun | Law maker, law giver, politician, senator |
| Twist | Noun | Turn, twirl, spin, rotation, roll |
| Tale | Noun | Story, anecdote, narrative |
| Fate | Noun | Luck, destiny, providence, serendipity |
| Limbo | Noun | Oblivion, void, non existence, in abeyance |
| Nebulous | Adj. | Unclear, myopic, esoteric, dunned, incoherent |
| Evident | Noun | Proof, confirmation, verification, affirmation |
| Cumulative | Adj. | Increasing, accumulative, growing |
| Defection | Noun | Desertion, absconding, decamping, flight |
| Undermine | Verb | Subvert, sabotage, threaten, intimidate |
| Coalition | Noun | Alliance, bloc, group, association, union |
| Curry favour with | | Impress someone |
| Berth | Noun | Bunk, bed, cot, bunk bed |
| Portfolio | | Department |
| Indicate | Verb | Signal, betoken, guess, augur, prognosticate |
| Turn coat | Noun | Traitor, renegade, judas, deserter |
| Machinations | Noun | Tricks, ruses, ploys, chicanery, artifice |
| Come up with | | Produce a new idea |
| Fractious | Adj. | Irritating, curmudgeonly, irascible, peevish, riled grouchy, grumpy |
| Stasis | Noun | Equilibrium, balance, counterpoise |
| Contribute | Verb | Give, donate, offer, provide |
| Narrow | Adj. | Limited, restricted, straitened, inadequate |
| Opportunity | Noun | Chance, moment, field day, latitude |
| Sordid | Adj. | Sleazy, seedy, seamy, grubby, dirty |
| Reasoned | Adj. | Logical, rational, clear, lucid, limpid |
| Implementation | Noun | Execution, application, enactment |

TRUMP AND IMPEACHMENT

He may find it hard to shrug off the charge of leaning on Kiev to meddle in domestic politics

U.S. President Donald Trump discussed former Vice-President Joe Biden in a July 2019 telephone conversation with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelensky, allegedly in a bid to influence him

to investigate the business dealings of Mr. Biden’s son, Hunter. Now he faces the prospect of an impeachment inquiry. That happened, first, because of an “explosive” whistleblower complaint filed against Mr. Trump by a national security official, which also alleges that Mr. Trump used the call to “solicit interference” in the 2020 election, and that the White House then intervened to “lock down” the transcript of the call. The whistleblower added that this was “not the first time” that Trump administration officials placed presidential call transcripts in a separate, classified system. The White House further exacerbated matters when they sought to block that complaint from reaching the House Intelligence Committee. Further, Mr. Trump is said to have personally ordered his staff to freeze more than \$391 million in aid to Ukraine, before his call with Mr. Zelensky, making his conditions to the Ukrainian President an outright quid pro quo. The Congress, even the Republican-controlled Senate, was having none of this. In a rare show of bipartisanship, the Senate passed unanimously a resolution calling for the White House to release the whistleblower complaint. Capitol Hill has now got both the memo of the call between Mr. Trump and Mr. Zelensky and the complaint, whose allegations House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff described as “deeply disturbing and very credible.”

It was in this backdrop that Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced an inquiry into impeachment proceedings against Mr. Trump, to begin after she meets with colleagues next week. Neither the complaint nor the edited transcript of the call are exculpatory of Mr. Trump. Even the edited memo of the call makes clear that Mr. Trump is linking the payment of military aid to Ukraine to Mr. Zelensky agreeing to investigate Hunter Biden’s role on the board of Burisma Holdings, a Ukrainian gas company. This, despite Ukraine’s public prosecutor, Yuriy Lutsenko, saying that he had no evidence of wrongdoing by the younger Biden. Contrarily, Mr. Trump may find it hard to shrug off the prospect of an ignominious impeachment. At least 140 House Democrats and one Independent have said that they would support impeachment proceedings against Mr. Trump for leaning on a foreign power to meddle in domestic politics, which would constitute a betrayal of the oath of office and compromise of national security. Ultimately the inquiry leading to such an outcome would turn on whether there is, in the complaint, a “smoking gun” of the kind that brought down Richard Nixon.

| <u>Words</u> | <u>Kind</u> | <u>Meaning</u> |
|---------------------|--------------------|--|
| Shrug off | Verb | Reject, repudiate, rebuff, black list |
| Lean on | Verb | Depend on, hinge on, confide in, rely on, bank on |
| Conversation | Noun | Confabulation, tete-a-tete |
| Meddle | Verb | Interfere, intervene, butt in, poke, pry, nose |
| Allegedly | Adv. | Reportedly, supposedly, ostensibly, reputedly, purportedly |
| Investigate | Verb | Look into, inquire into, go into |

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| Explosive | Adj. | Volatile, inflammable, stormy, violent |
| Intervene | Verb | Intercede, involve oneself, arbitrate, conciliate |
| Transcript | Verb | Written, version, written, copy, record, script |
| Outright | Adj. | Completely, entirely, wholly, totally |
| Quid pro quo | | Exchange, trade, substitute, surrogate |
| Partisanship | Noun | Bias, prejudice, one sidedness, nepotism |
| Unanimous | Adj. | Uniform, consistent, solid, united |
| Resolution | Noun | Intention, resolve, decision, determination |
| Perturb | Verb | Disturb, worry, upset, unsettle |
| Credible | Adj. | Believable, plausible, viable, tangible, feasible |
| Announce | Verb | Declare, herald, aver, avow, proclaim |
| Proceeding | Noun | Events, activities, business, reports, annals |
| Exculpatory | Adj. | Absolved, exonerated, acquitted |
| Evidence | Noun | Proof, confirmation, verification, affirmation |
| Contrary | Adj. | Opposite, opposing, contradictory |
| Ignominious | Adj. | Humiliating, undignified, embarrassing, mortifying shameful |
| Betray | Verb | Be unfaithful, cheat, denounce, sell out |
| Out come | Noun | Results, aftermath, after effects, upshots |
| Lineaments | Noun | Features, characteristics, properties |
| Auspices | Noun | Aegis, backing, patronage, protection |