

BETRAYAL OF THE MANDATE**The Sena overplayed its hand in Maharashtra, and a fresh poll seems the best course now**

The political drama in Maharashtra that continued unabated since the Assembly election results on October 24 has been brought to an end, albeit temporarily, by the imposition of President's rule. The Maharashtra verdict was unambiguous and in favour of the BJP-Shiv Sena pre-poll alliance, but the partners could not agree on the terms of power sharing, leading to prolonged haggling between them. The Sena's claim for the Chief Minister's post initially appeared to be brinkmanship to extract a hard bargain with the BJP but it tripped over its greed and intrigues. The Sena is the BJP's oldest ally and both are bound by a competitive adherence to Hindutva. The Sena's claim was also not justified by the verdict — it got 56 seats of the 288, while the BJP won nearly double that figure. The BJP, ensconced at the Centre and ever willing to use power to constrain its adversaries, did not relent. The Sena overplayed its hand by parting with the BJP and quitting the Union government. It miscalculated the alternative scenario of leading a State government with the support of the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

The idea of a Congress-NCP-Sena coalition government is toxic. The NCP and Congress fought in alliance, and as Sharad Pawar said, got a mandate to sit in the Opposition. Post-poll coalitions are a legitimate route to government formation when the legislature is hung but the situation in Maharashtra is far from it. There were two pre-poll alliances, one got a clear majority and the other clearly lost. If the Congress and NCP want to keep the BJP out of power for ideological reasons, handing over power to a more virulent strain of Hindutva would be disingenuous. The formation of an NCP-Congress-Sena government, whatever may be its facade, will not only be a betrayal of the mandate but also be indefensible in ideological terms besides being suicidal tactically. Such an alliance, if at all formed, would not be stable or sustainable. All these parties will be rightly blamed for being opportunistic and devoid of political convictions. The BJP will be the sole beneficiary of such a thorough delegitimisation of the entire Opposition spectrum in Maharashtra. In the inevitable mid-term election that will happen sooner rather than later, opportunists will pay a price. The Congress and the NCP would be better off losing this opportunity and leave the birds of the same feather to potentially flock together again. That said, it was inexcusable of the Governor to not give the Sena or the NCP adequate time to explore the possibility of an alternative government. While a government without the BJP might lack moral or political legitimacy, the Governor should have exhausted all avenues before recommending President's rule. The BJP must be hoping to pressure the Sena back into the alliance, but the best course now seems a fresh election.

Words

Unabated

Kind

Adj.

Meaning

Uncontrolled, without any reduction

Albeit		Through / although
Imposition		Imposing, foisting, forcing, obtruding
Verdict	Noun	Judgement, adjudication, adjudgement, ruling
Unambiguous	Adj.	Clear, explicit, limpid, lucid, coherent
Alliance	Noun	Association, union, league, compact, entente
Prolonged	Adj.	Continuous, lengthy
Haggling	Noun	Barter, bargain, negotiate, quibble
Brinkmanship	Noun	Shrewdness, politics, astuteness
Intrigue	Noun	Plot, conspire, scheme, manoeuvre, connive, collude
Adherence	Noun	Attachment, commitment to a person / cause, belief
Ally		Combine, couple, amalgamate, merge, join
Ensnore	Verb	Settle, install, establish, lodge, position
Constrain	Verb	Restrain, hinder, impede, curb
Relent	Verb	Change one's mind, do a u-turn, back down
Toxic	Adj.	Venomous, vicious, noxious, poisonous
Coalition	Noun	Alliance, union, partnership, caucus, affiliation
Legitimate	Adj.	Legal, lawful, licit, according to law
Virulent	Adj.	Poisonous, toxic, venomous, noxious, deadly, lethal, fatal
Strain	Noun	Tension, tightness, tautness, shear, tensity
Disingenuous	Adj.	Dishonest, deceitful, dissembling
Facade	Noun	Front, frontage, face, aspect, elevation
Indefensible	Adj.	Inexcusable, unjustifiable, unjustified
Opportunistic	Adj.	Exploiting, immediate, opportunities
Convictions	Noun	Belief, opinion, view, thought, ideal
Spectrum	Noun	Range, ambit
Inevitable	Adj.	Unavoidable, inescapable, unpreventable, predestined, predetermined
Explore	Verb	Traverse, travel over, tour
Avenues	Noun	Line, path, direction, approach, route

ANARCHY IN BOLIVIA

Both Morales and his opponents failed to ensure a peaceful, orderly transition

The forced resignation of Bolivian President Evo Morales has thrown the poorest country in South America into its biggest political crisis in 13 years. As Bolivia's first indigenous President, who

rose to the top office through left-wing unionism, he presided over one of the most stable governments. But cracks began to appear in his Movement for Socialism party when he sought a fourth consecutive term earlier this year. He was declared winner of the October 20 election. But the Opposition contested the results and launched widespread protests, demanding a fresh election. After the Organization of American States alleged widespread poll fraud in an audit report, the military forced Mr. Morales and his allies to resign. In asylum in Mexico, he has vowed to fight the “coup”. According to the Bolivian Constitution, if the President steps down, the Vice-President should take over. The heads of the Senate and chamber of deputies are the other leaders in the hierarchy who could assume acting presidency. But in this case, all four officials, all Socialists, have resigned. And it has left a vacuum, which the military could exploit.

Mr. Morales came to power, in 2006, riding South America’s so-called “pink tide”, and promising economic development and equitable wealth distribution. Under his fairly good track record, Bolivia has seen a drop in extreme poverty, from 33% of the population in 2006 to 15% last year. His government also stepped up public investments, opened more schools and health clinics. The economy has also seen a steady growth rate. Mr. Morales made some major political mistakes as well. Primarily, he failed to bring up a second-rung leadership in the Movement for Socialism to whom he could pass the baton of his “21st century socialist revolution”. In 2016, his push to end presidential term limits through a referendum failed. He then said he accepted the verdict. But later, a constitutional court lifted the term limits, allowing the President to seek re-election. This had galvanised the Opposition, which claimed that the President’s electoral participation itself was unconstitutional. This was followed by allegations of electoral fraud, which further weakened him. Facing protests, Mr. Morales had offered another election. That should have been the way forward. A free and fair election being held under the supervision of international electoral monitors would have allowed the Bolivians to choose their legitimate leader. But the violent protesters who insisted on Mr. Morales’s resignation, the police forces who rebelled against the government, and finally the generals who forced the President to go all destroyed the possibility of a peaceful transition. They threw Bolivia into anarchy and chaos. And more violence could be awaiting the country.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Transition	Noun	Change, move, passage, transformation, conversion
Indigenous	Adj.	Native, aboriginal, local, original, primeval, primordial autochthonous
Asylum	Noun	Place for refugee
Coup	Noun	Seizure of power, overthrow, ousting, deposition
Vow	Verb	Swear, pledge, promise, avow, affirm, commit

Vacuum	Noun	Empty space, emptiness, vacuity, nihility
Pink tide		Revolutionary movement
Revolution	Noun	Mutiny, agitation, rebellion, insurgent, contumacious
Privation	Noun	Poverty, deprivation, hardship, indigence, destitution impoverishment
Peccadillo	Noun	Misdemeanour, minor offence, delinquency, indiscretion
Referendum	Noun	Public vote, plebiscite, popular vote, poll
Galvanise	Verb	Jolt, shock, startle, impel, stir, prod
Allegation	Verb	Claim, assertion, declaration, contention, argument
Attenuate	Verb	Weakened, reduced, lessened, decreased, impaired enervated
Violent	Adj.	Brutal, vicious, savage, aggressive, bullying
Chaos	Noun	Disorder, disarray, confusion, mayhem
Amenable	Adj.	Compliant, acquiescent, manageable, controllable tractable, biddable
Demolish	Verb	Destroy, ruin, wreck, smash, squelch, refute
Proscribe	Verb	Forbid, prohibit, ban, bar, embargo
Forbidding	Adj.	Inimical, animosity, enmity, antagonistic
Desideratum	Noun	Requirement, prerequisite, need
Extripate	Verb	Put to death, destroy completely, wipe out
Hotchpotch	Noun	Mixture, assortment, melange, medley, farrago mishmash