

After Shocks in Goa

By aiding defections, the BJP is shrinking opposition space in an unseemly fashion

The near liquidation of the Congress legislature party in Goa, close on the heels of a rebellion of Congress and Janata Dal (Secular) legislators in neighbouring Karnataka, is the latest aftershock of the national election results in May, but it is unlikely to be the last. The BJP's victory in the 17th general election was not unexpected, but its scale and depth appear to have thrown opposition politics into a tailspin. The Assembly election in 2017 had returned a hung Assembly in Goa, with the Congress as the single largest party at 17 of 40 seats. The BJP had only 13, but was quick to cobble together a coalition and form a government. As things stand, the BJP has 27 MLAs and the Congress only five, with the defectors set to escape disqualification under the anti-defection law since they constitute two-thirds of the strength of the legislature party — turning the verdict on its head. This split in the Congress was in the making since May 23 when the party lost three of the four by-elections that were held along with the Lok Sabha polls. Any hope of a bid for power in the State was dashed, and with the party's national standing continuing on a descending slope, the lawmakers did what opportunism impels. Any party is well within its rights to lure members of other parties, and after all, that is how political realignments take place. But by encouraging and welcoming defectors who had won the election on a platform that was its polar opposite, the BJP has further lowered the bar for legitimate democratic processes and expansion of the party.

Apparently learning from the cost of its indecision in Goa in 2017, the Congress had moved swiftly to offer the post of chief ministership to the JD(S) that had won 37 seats out of 224 in Karnataka in 2018. Initially hailed by many as a potential model to build an anti-Hindutva coalition nationally, the JD(S)-Congress coalition has exposed its inherent contradictions. There is little that the current spectrum of Opposition parties have to offer to build a better politics other than their tired dynasties. Opportunistic alliances, devoid of any fresh ideas or inspiration, could only augment the BJP's plank that its opponents have a dark history and a bleak future. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi's abrupt renunciation of the post has forced a churn in the party, perhaps as was intended. It is, however, difficult to predict whether the party will emerge stronger from the churn: the withdrawal of Mr. Gandhi from the leadership is an opportunity for the Congress to rid itself of the dynasty tag, but equally it could be left rudderless for long in the absence of an obvious successor. If the party is looking for a youthful leader, there is none outside of the scions of other political dynasties. The Goa debacle is as much a harbinger of a further shrinking of the opposition space as it is of the continuing advance of the BJP into more regions and social groups. Grace in defeat is difficult to achieve; the BJP's behaviour perhaps shows that even in triumph it is not easy.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Aid		Help, assist, abet, lend a hand
Defection		Desertion, absconding, decamping
Shrink		Get smaller, contract, diminish, lessen, reduce
Liquidation		Closing dow, dissolve, winding up
Rebellion		Agitation, muting, stirring, contumelious
Cobble together		Prepare roughly, improvise, contrive
Verdict		Judgement, adjudication, decision, finding
Dash		Ram, collide
Descending		Lesson, plunge, nosedive, go down
Slope		Gradient, incline, angle, slant, inclination
Impel		Force, compel, oblige, urge, pressurize
Lure		Attract, lucrate, court
Alignment		Line up, arrange, put in order
Apparent		Clear, transparent, explicit, lucid, pellucid
Hail		Call out to, shout to, address
Potential		Possible, Plausible, Feasible, viable
Inherent		Intrinsic, innate, connate, immanent
Spectrum		Range, ambit
Augment		Increase, embellish, boost, enhance, snowball
Plank		Board, floor board, timber
Bleak		Exposed, desolate, denuded, unpromising
Abrupt		Sudden, unexpected, unanticipated, unforeseen
Renounce		Give up, relinquish, abandon, abdicate
Churn		Agitate, beat, whip, whisk
Intend		Want, desire, yearn, long for, wish
Predict		Guess, augur, prognosticate, profesy
Rid		Separate, alienate
Rudder		Steering wheel
Scion		Descendant, heir, successor
Debacle		Fiasco, failure, catastrophe, disaster, mess
Harbinger		Foreteller, fore runner
Triumph		Victory, win, carry off

The Climax

India fell at the last-four stage, and cricket will now have a new World Cup winner

The ICC World Cup awaits its Sunday climax with England taking on New Zealand in the final at Lord's. However, closer home, disappointment lingers over India's exit at the last-four stage. It is a conclusion that has shadowed the Men in Blue for a while as even in the 2015 edition when Australia and New Zealand were the co-hosts, India lost to the former. In the latest championship, it was New Zealand that stunned Virat Kohli's men at Manchester's Old Trafford in the semifinal. India was one among the title favourites and it enjoyed a red-hot streak studded with seven wins besides a loss to England and a washed-out fixture involving New Zealand. The league was topped with 15 points, and its top order led by opener Rohit Sharma, who amassed 648 runs, and a pace attack featuring Jasprit Bumrah, were in form. But there were flaws, primary among them being a flickering middle order. The top troika contributed 69% of the runs while the central core yielded a mere 30%. And once New Zealand seamers Trent Boult and Matt Henry dismissed Rohit, K.L. Rahul and Kohli to leave India hobbling at five for three in five overs, chasing 239 proved incredibly tough. The efforts of Ravindra Jadeja and M.S. Dhoni at best delayed the inevitable 18-run loss. Still, this is a squad that has the right ingredients and it will be able to cope with Dhoni's eventual retirement.

The stage is now set for England and New Zealand to correct some historical deficiencies. One thing is certain: the World Cup will have a fresh champion as neither team has ever won the title since its inception in 1975. The Old Blighty last played a World Cup summit clash at Melbourne in 1992, and at the same venue, New Zealand lost the 2015 final to Australia. Being the host, England is playing on familiar terrain and has the backing of its enthusiastic fans. Skipper Eoin Morgan, himself an attacking player, has a strong top order in openers Jason Roy and Jonny Bairstow with Joe Root stepping in at three. Ever since recovering from a sore hamstring, Roy with a strike rate of 117.03, has been sensational and he demolished Australia with a 65-ball 85. There is all-rounder Ben Stokes in the mix and speedsters Jofra Archer and Chris Woakes head-line a probing attack. From the opposition, New Zealand is expected to mount a strong counter. It has a supreme batsman and crafty leader in Kane Williamson. He and senior Ross Taylor have to shepherd the innings while a clutch of astute seam and swing bowlers helmed by Boult can test the very best. England has the edge but New Zealand, as it showed against India, can punch above its weight.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Climax		Peak, pinnacle, height, highest, point
Linger		Continue, prolong, go on, run on
Stun		Surprise, astonish, astound, non plus
Streak		Period, spell, stretch, run
Studded		Dotted, scattered, sprinkled, covered
Fixture		Schedule, matib
Amass		Collect, summate, hoarde, bank up
Flaw		Defect, blemish, fault, imperfection
Flicker		Twinkle, sparkle, glimmer
Troika		Influence
Yield		Produce, bear, give, supply, provide, afford
Hobble		Limp, walk, with difficulty, shamble, dodder
Incredible		Unbelievable
Inevitable		Unavoidable, inexorable, ineluctable
Ingredient		Constituent, component, element, strand
Cope with		Deal with, handle, manage, address
Eventual		Final, ultimate, concluding, ensuring
Inception		Beginning. establishment, institution, formation
Blight		Disease, affliction, scourge, curse, plague
Terrain		Lard, ground, territory, topography
Enthusiastic		Eager, keen, avid, ardent, fervent
Hamstring		Handicap, constrain, restrict, cripple
Demolish		Destroy, dismantle, disassemble, pull down
Crafty		Cunning, wily, guileful, artful, devious
Shepherd (v)		Usher, steer, herd, lead, guide
Clutch		Grip, grasp, clasp, cling to
Helm		Tiller, wheel, steer, rudder
Edge		Border, fringe, verge, skirt, surround
Punch		Blow, hit, knock, thump