

IN GOVERNANCE MODE**The government in Karnataka should focus on development despite political uncertainty**

The BJP government in Karnataka won a trust vote in the Assembly on Monday, but that does not end the political instability. B.S. Yediyurappa, who has become Chief Minister for the fourth time at the age of 76, can breathe easy for six months now. The irony of his trust vote victory is that his government does not have an absolute majority of the total strength of the House. The exact numbers in favour of the government were not clear as there was no division of votes on Monday, but it is apparent that the BJP is short of the halfway mark of the Assembly's full strength, which is 225, including one nominated Anglo-Indian representative. Winning 105 seats, it had fallen short in the 2018 Assembly election but Mr. Yediyurappa had never conceded defeat. Supreme Court intervention ended his third tenure as CM in just three days then, but he is back in the saddle 14 months on, riding a rebellion in the ranks of the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) which had formed a post-poll coalition and government in 2018. While the coalition had inherent contradictions that weakened it from the very start, it was the BJP's relentless and amoral pursuit of power that led to its collapse. The BJP is evidently elated, and Mr. Yediyurappa said he believed in the principle of "forget and forgive".

Many other characters in the months-long political drama in Karnataka may not be able to "forget and forgive" the machinations that preceded the vote. K.R. Ramesh Kumar, who resigned as Speaker on Monday, disqualified 17 rebels from the Congress and the JD(S) under the anti-defection law. By disqualifying them for the Assembly's remaining tenure, he sought to pre-empt their inclusion in the new government, but the issue is headed for the courts. It might be a while before by-polls are held, and those could alter the Assembly's composition. The bitterness among political parties will linger, and the government will have uncertainty hanging over it. The State houses some of the best companies and has built for itself a reputation as a destination for investors and job-seekers. A dishonourable political culture that involves rent-seeking, high-handedness and rapacity by leaders has dented that reputation in recent years. Karnataka continuing its success as an economic powerhouse is in the interest of the country. While these are medium-term concerns, the State has some immediate challenges to tackle, particularly water scarcity and urban management. With such tasks ahead, the Chief Minister will need all the time and focus he can possibly garner for governance. Now that Mr. Yediyurappa has realised his dream and taken command, he should ensure that his rivals who ended with bloody noses in this battle are drafted for better governance and the progress of Karnataka.

Words

Instability

Kind**Meaning**

Unreliability, uncertainty, unpredictability

Irony	Sarcasm, sardonicism, acerbity, trenchancy
Absolute	Complete, total, utter, outright, entire
Apparent	Explicit, clear, lucid, pellucid, exoteric
Concede	Admit, acknowledge, accept, recognize
Intervention	Involvement, intercession, interposing
Tenure	Tenancy, occupancy, occupation
Saddle	Burden, encumber, lumber, hamper
Rebellion	Revolution, mutiny, insurgence, contumacious
Inherent	Intrinsic, innate, immanent, inborn, ingrained
Contradiction	Denial, rebuttal, opposite, counter statement
Relentless	Persistence, continuing, constant, continuous
Amoral	Unprincipled, without standards, without marks
Pursuit	Activity, hobby, pastime, recreation
Machinations	Tricks, ruses, ploys, chicanery, artifice
Precede	Forgoing, previous, prior, former, precursory
Elated	Happy, cheerful, exultant, gaiety, mirthed
Rebel	Revolutionary, insurgent, mutineer, agitator
Defection	desertion, absconding, decamping, flight
Preempt	Forestall, prevent, seize, arrogate, appropriate
Alter	Change, metamorphose, revamp, refurbish
Bitterness	Sharpness, acidity, pungency, acridity
Linger	Continue, prolong, carry on, go on
High handed	Imperious, arbitrary, peremptory, haughty
Rapacity	Greed, avarice, voracity, usury, extortion
Dent	Diminish, reduce, shrink, weaken, undermine
Tackle	Challenge, intercept, attack
Garner	Gather, collect, accumulate, amass, assemble
Rival	Competitor, opponent, contestant, contender
Bloody nose	To defeat something / someone

TALKS AND TERROR

Afghans suffer from the effects of war even in the middle of peace talks

The attack on Afghan vice presidential candidate Amrullah Saleh's office in Kabul on Sunday that killed at least 20 people and injured 50, including Mr. Saleh, is a grave reminder of the crisis the war-torn country is going through even amid attempts to find peace. Mr. Saleh, a former intelligence

chief and a strong critic of the Taliban and Pakistan, is President Ashraf Ghani’s running-mate for the September 28 election. And the irony is that the assault occurred a few hours after President Ghani officially launched his campaign in which he promised that “peace is coming”. The message the insurgents are trying to send is that even the most fortified political offices in the country or its top politicians are not safe. The insurgents have made it clear they will carry out their offensive irrespective of the peace process, especially when Afghanistan gets down to a full-fledged election campaign. In recent months, even when the U.S. and Taliban representatives have held multiple rounds of talks in Doha, Qatar, insurgents have kept up attacks, both on military and civilian locations. The Taliban appears to be trying to leverage these assaults to boost its bargaining position in the talks with the U.S. And the Kabul government’s inability to prevent them and the U.S.’s apparent decision to delink the negotiations from the daily violence are giving the insurgents a free run in many Afghan cities.

Afghanistan’s crises are many. Half the country is either directly controlled or dominated by the Taliban. In the eastern parts, the Islamic State has established a presence and the group targets the country’s religious minorities. The government in Kabul is weak and notorious for chronic corruption. Its failure to ensure the basic safety and security of civilians is in turn eroding the public’s confidence in the system. At present, the government appears beleaguered. Its security agencies are strained by the prolonged war. It is true that Afghanistan needs a political settlement. The war has been in a stalemate for long. The government, even with U.S. support, is not in a position to turn the war around. The Taliban, on the other side, has expanded its reach to the hinterland, but not the urban centres. While a peace process is the best way ahead in such a scenario, the question is whether the U.S. is giving too much leeway to the Taliban in its quest to get out of its longest war. The decision to keep the Afghan government out of the peace process was a big compromise. The absence of a ceasefire even when talks were under way was another. The result is that Afghans continue to suffer even when the Americans and the Taliban talk. This has to change. There has to be more pressure, both political and military, on the Taliban to cease the violence. And the U.S. should back the Afghan government and the coming elections resolutely, while Kabul has to get its act together.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Assault		Attack, fly at, go for, turn on, round on, someone
Campaign		Crusade, fight, battle, strive, struggle
Insurgent		Rebel, revolutionary, mutineer, agitator
Fortified		Strong, defensive
Carry out		Excute, implement, put into, practice

Leverage	Grip, purchase, hold, grasp
Boost	Enhance, surge, elevate, augment, increase
Apparent	Clear, explicit, lucid, pellucid
Delink	Disconnect, ill famed
Notorious	Infamous
Chronic corruption	Continuous corruption, debauchery
Erode	Destroy, wipe out, pull down, ravage, decimate
Beleaguer	Hard pressed, trouble, in difficulties
Strain	Tension, tightness, tautness, distension
Prolonged	Continuous, perpetual
Stalemate	Full stop, dead lock, impasse
Leeway	Freedom, scope, latitude, elbow room
Quest	Search, hunt, pursuit
Resolute	Determined, purposeful, purposive, decided, tenacious, pertinacious, bent on / upon