

Lok Sabha Polls 2024: 'Suicidal for us if.,' Why BJP-BJD alliance talks failed in Odisha

Odisha's ruling Biju Janata Dal (BJD) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) alliance talks ended without any fruitful solution and now both parties have decided to contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections 2024 solo. BJP state president Manmohan Samal denied that there were no alliance talks with BJD and his recent visit to Delhi was focused on preparations for the upcoming elections. "There was no talk on alliance and we (BJP) will go to polls alone," Samal said as quoted by news agency PTI. "We had

gone to Delhi to hold discussions with the central leaders on our preparations for the upcoming

Lok Sabha and assembly elections in the state. No talks on alliance or seat-sharing with any party were held during the meeting. The BJP will contest the twin polls on its own strength."

What went wrong?

According to sources close to PTI, the alliance talks hit hurdles primarily over seat-sharing ratios. While both parties had

initially agreed on the idea of a pre-poll alliance, disagreements emerged over the distribution of seats. The BJD sought to contest over 100 seats in the 147-member Odisha Assembly, a proposition the BJP found unacceptable. Conversely, the BJP sought 14 out of the 21 Lok Sabha seats in Odisha, a demand rejected by the BJD. In the 2019 general elections, BJD secured 12 Assembly seats, while BJP won eight in Odisha. "The BJD is demanding about 75% of the assembly seats which is not accept-

able to us," a senior BJP leader said, adding such a situation would adversely affect the prospect of the saffron party in the state. Meanwhile, BJD leadership claimed "It would be suicidal for us if we contest in less than 10 LS seats." Both parties had an alliance for around 11 years between 1998 and 2009, contesting three Lok Sabha and two assembly elections together. The BJD-BJP pact was formed in 1998, orchestrated by senior leaders Bijay Mohapatra and the late Pramod Mahajan

Chinese warning to India on the Central Sector is plain double-speak

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): Sanctimonious statement of Chinese spokesperson on Indian Army proposing to reorganize its Central Command under a new Corps Headquarters to guard 565 kilometres of LAC with Tibet in the Central Sector reeks of Beijing's double standards as PLA has deployed no less than six combined armed brigades across Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh in October 2022. The Chinese spokesperson on Friday hinted at increased border tensions if India deployed more troops in the Central sector and that the PLA was committed to de-escalating in the border areas. Both countries have had 21 rounds of military dialogue since the PLA transgressions in East Ladakh in May 2020 but even the first step of disengagement is not complete in Depsang Plains and Charding Nullah Junction in Demchok area. India is clear that it wants the PLA to disengage, relocate its forces back to barracks and then de-escalate the border areas situation. Presently the PLA has deployed some 50,000 troops apart from heavy combined

armed brigades as reserve across the LAC in East Ladakh and is involved in military upgradation all along the 3488 km LAC up to Kibuthoo in Arunachal Pradesh. Despite media stories appearing on India strengthening its Central Sector with more troops, the plan is merely at the proposal stage. Fact is that the Indian Army is planning to reduce manpower by one lakh personnel to reduce the teeth to tail ratio. In the central sector, China is contesting the Barahoti plains and Palam Sumda area and deliberately sends PLA troops to mark their presence. While India Army is prepared to meet the PLA aggression all along the LAC, it has no intentions to unilaterally expand the dispute in the Central Sector. The proposal to set-up new Dehradun based 18 Corps is to reorganize the formations in what is now called Uttar Bharat area without accretion of forces for better response to any contingency in Central Sector, given its proximity to the Capital. India needs to be prepared for PLA aggression as China unilaterally



launched military aggression in East Ladakh against India in May 2020 under the cover of the coronavirus epidemic, which had its origins in Wuhan in China. The basic objective of the May 2020 aggression was to make unilateral cartographic changes on the LAC with the intention of imposing the already rejected 1959 line (proposed by PM Chou En-Lai) in East Ladakh. While Chinese Foreign spokesperson has apparently warned India on not increasing one battalion worth troops in Central Sector, Beijing has quietly deployed six CABs (each brigade has 5000 troops with accompanying armor and artillery elements) across the Arunachal

Pradesh and Sikkim LAC in October 2022, before 20th National Party Congress of the Chinese Communist Party. Initially, the Indian assessment was that the troops had been moved in eastern sector to quell any internal disturbance in Tibet while Xi Jinping was 'elected' as President of China for the third time but this turned out to be false as the CABs are still stationed across key areas including Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh and Siliguri corridor in the Sikkim sector. The self-righteous statement of the Chinese spokesperson reflects the bullying attitude of the Middle kingdom towards what it presumes to be tributary states like Pakistan or Maldives. It also reeks of typical Chinese double-speak as the PLA is fully deployed all along the LAC on ground with rocket regiments, artillery guns and fighter aircrafts in the hinterland. The Chinese warning is just to pressurize India to accept the present status quo and move towards normalizing relations with Beijing. This situation is unacceptable to the Narendra Modi government.

Asif Ali Zardari, once Pakistan called 'Mr 10%', to return as president today

NEW DELHI (ROYAL JOURNALISM): Asif Ali Zardari is set to become the 14th president of the country in the election to be held today. The new president would replace the incumbent Dr Arif Alvi, whose five-year term ended last year. However, he has continued since the new electoral college was not yet formed. Zardari, the widower of Pakistan's slain-first female premier Benazir Bhutto, was stained by a bevy of corruption and other allegations, including absurd kidnapping plots and taking kickbacks lavished on hoards of jewellery. The 68-year-old co-chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is supported by the coalition government led by the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) which has the necessary numbers. This is part of a quid pro quo deal after the February 8 polls delivered a fractured mandate: PPP supported PML-N's candidate for prime minister's post and also got to form the government in the Punjab provincial assembly while Zardari got the support of PML-N and his party got to rule the Sindh province. Despite a reputation as "Mr. Ten Percent" -- the alleged cut he took for rubber-stamping contracts -- a sympathy vote propelled him to office when his wife was assassinated in a 2007 bomb and gun attack. Between 2008 and 2013, he ushered in constitutional reforms rolling back presidential powers, and the 68-year-old's second term will see him steer a largely ceremonial office. He has spent more than 11 years in jail, a



long time even by the standards of Pakistani politicians, with a wheeler-dealer's talent for bouncing back after scandals. Back in 2009, the New York Times said he had a knack for "artful dodging" -- "manoeuvring himself out of the tight spots he gets himself into". Newly sworn-in lawmakers were set to vote him in under the terms of a coalition deal brokered after February 8 elections marred by rigging claims. Under that deal, Zardari's Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will take the presidency, while its historic rivals the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party secured the prime minister's position for Shehbaz Sharif, who was officially sworn in on Monday.

'Polo playboy'

Zardari was born in 1955 into a land-owning family from the southern province of Sindh. "As a child, I was spoilt by my parents as an only son," he said in a 2000 interview with the Guardian newspaper. "They indulged my every whim." He expressed only limited political ambitions as a young man -- losing a 1983 local government election. It was his 1987 arranged mar-

riage with PPP leader Benazir Bhutto that earned him a spot in the political limelight. Their union -- brokered by Bhutto's mother -- was considered an unlikely pairing for a leader-in-waiting from one of Pakistan's major political dynasties. Bhutto was an Oxford and Harvard graduate driven by the desire to oust then-president Mohammad Zia-ul-Haq, who forced her father from the prime minister's office and had him executed. Zardari was a university dropout with a reputation for brawling, partying and romancing women at a private disco in his family home. On the eve of their wedding, Bhutto's team issued a formal statement denying he was "a playboy who plays polo by day and frequents discos at night". Their nuptial celebrations were dubbed the "people's wedding" -- doubling as a political rally in the megacity of Karachi, where a crowd of 100,000 fervently chanted PPP slogans. Initially, Zardari pledged to keep out of politics. On the make Bhutto served as prime minister from 1988 to 1990 -- the first woman to head a democratic government in a Muslim country -- and again from 1993 to 1996. PPP insiders regarded Zardari as a liability, considering him likely to embarrass her leadership. Their fears were perhaps well-founded. In 1990, he was embroiled in accusations of an absurd plot to extort a businessman by tying a bomb to his leg. He was jailed for three years on extortion and kidnapping charges but was elected to the national assembly from behind bars. In

Bhutto's second term, he served as investment minister. A bombshell New York Times investigation detailed how he tried to engineer vast kickbacks on military contracts over this period while lavishing huge sums on jewellery. After Bhutto's government fell in 1996, Zardari was back behind bars within half an hour. Accidental president In December 2007, Bhutto was assassinated while on the campaign trail for a third term in office. Her killing shook the nation to its core, a wave of sympathy carrying the PPP to victory in 2008. The party nominated Zardari as president. In 2010, he was widely criticised for continuing a European holiday when the nation was devastated by floods that killed almost 1,800 and affected 21 million. He was also head of state when US commandos trespassed onto Pakistani soil for the 2011 assassination of Osama Bin Laden, an episode that humiliated many compatriots. He did, however, usher in constitutional reforms rolling back the sweeping powers of the presidency and bolstering parliamentary democracy that had been undermined by three decades of military rule since 1947. In 2013, Zardari became the first Pakistani president to complete his full term. He was jailed once again over money laundering charges in 2019 but was released months later. Zardari and Benazir had three children, including Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the current chairman of the PPP.

Vijayendra Will Resign as BJP Karnataka Chief After LS Polls: Ex-Deputy CM Eshwarappa

Former Deputy Chief Minister KS Eshwarappa claimed on Wednesday BJP Karnataka unit President BY Vijayendra would quit his post after the Lok Sabha election results are declared. Eshwarappa, who has announced that he would contest the election as an independent candidate, alleged that the BJP central leadership succumbed to former Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's obduracy and made his son Vijayendra the BJP state

chief. Reacting to it, Yediyurappa said he would not respond to such irresponsible statements' and that only people will reply to it. Eshwarappa, a former State BJP chief, had said he would contest against Yediyurappa's son and incumbent MP, B Y Raghavendra, in Shivamogga. He had alleged that Yediyurappa promised to get his son K E Kantesh ticket to contest in the neighbouring Haveri segment but betrayed him, a charge de-

nied by the former Chief Minister. I am confident that once I win the election, Vijayendra will resign from the BJP state president post, Eshwarappa said. Eshwarappa claimed that there was a delay of six months in appointing Vijayendra as the BJP state chief. Why did the delay happen? The central leaders were not ready for it. Due to Yediyurappa's obduracy, he was made the state president." He wondered why Vijayapura BJP MLA

Basanagouda Patil Yatnal was not made the BJP state president though he was also a Lingayat, a dominant community in Karnataka, just as Yediyurappa. Eshwarappa said C T Ravi quit as a minister to serve as BJP in-charge for Goa, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu but he too was not considered for the post. Yediyurappa does not want anyone, be it Lingayat, Vokkaliga or anyone from backward caste, as the BJP state president.

After poll win, will take up Maharashtra land deal: National Conference

Srinagar : A controversy is brewing over Maharashtra state's purchase of land in Budgam for Maharashtra Bhawan, with former CM Omar Abdullah stating that once the National Conference (NC) government comes to power after Assembly poll victory, it will relook at the deal.

that Kashmir is perhaps Pakistan's part. He has perhaps forgotten that on August 5, 2019, Jamp;K's full integration was done with the Union of India forever." Speaking in a rally in South Kashmir's district of Kulgam, Omar said the government is constructing large buildings in Kashmir, creating rooms specifically for accommodating tourists. He expressed concern that these buildings would be used to host tourists who are currently staying in hotels, thereby threatening the livelihood of local hoteliers. The Maharashtra Bhawan, set to be the first state Bhawan in the Valley, will be situated in Budgam, near Srinagar

airport, spanning 2.5 acres. The Maharashtra Cabinet recently approved the land purchase, with the Jamp;K government granting land transfer for Rs 8.16 crore. The Maharashtra Cabinet sanctioned the purchase of the land on Wednesday. On June 11, 2023, during his visit to Kashmir, Shinde requested Jamp;K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha for land. "It will help showcase Maharashtra's art, culture and food in Kashmir," Shinde had said. BJP's Jamp;K spokesman Altaf Thakur described Omar's statement as direct provocation and a message to Maharashtra government to ask all



Kashmiris earning their livelihood there to flee.

Will BJP-BJD tie up in Odisha after 15 years ahead of polls? A look at past numbers

Odisha: The poll bugle for Lok Sabha Elections 2024 has been sounded and all political parties have immersed themselves in their campaigns to garner support for their respective parties. The seven-phase general elections in the country will start on April 19. As polls are due to start within a couple of weeks, political parties, apart from their campaign are also busy making new alliance partners. As the contest is going to be between two major blocs -- NDA and I.N.D.I.A. -- both the groups are taking a keen interest in aligning with regional parties to expand their dominance further. Speculations have been around for a long time now that in Odisha, the ruling Biju Janata Party (BJD) under Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik may align with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for the upcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly elections that will take place simultaneously. Amid this, Patnaik's close aide and BJD member VK Pandian (ex-IAS officer) has made a statement saying that the BJP-BJD alliance goes beyond politics and marks the coming together of two

great leaders for a larger cause. Pandian further said that BJD doesn't require the support of BJP to form the government in the state and neither does BJP needs BJD's support to form government at the Centre. So the cooperation between both parties goes beyond politics. Since speculations are still around that both the parties will enter tie up again for Lok Sabha and Assembly polls, Pandian's statement has further added to this buzz but the confusion exists. Odisha has a total of 21 Lok Sabha seats but neither BJP or BJD have so far announced their candidates for Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. The state will vote for Lok Sabha and Assembly elections simultaneously in the last four phases on May 13, May 20, May 25 and June 1. So if BJP and BJD enter into alliance, will it help the parties individually? Let's take a look. BJP and BJD alliance is not going to be a new thing as both the parties in the past have contested several elections together including Lok Sabha and Assembly polls. Naveen Patnaik, who was the former minister of mines and minerals, founded Biju Janata Dal in 1997 as a



breakaway faction of the Janata Dal. In 1998, Naveen Patnaik was named as Minister of Mines under the NDA-led Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. In 1999, BJD contested the Lok Sabha elections in alliance with BJP and won 10 seats in Odisha. Further in 2000 and 2004 Assembly elections, BJD managed to win the majority of seats in the state. In 2004, though the NDA lost the general elections, the BJP-BJD alliance in the state worked well. But in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, both the parties parted ways as no conclusion was reached on seat-sharing as the BJP was being offered very few seats. And ever since then, the two parties have not entered into any sort

of alliance for Lok Sabha or Assembly polls. So, it will be after a gap of 15 years, if BJP-BJD tie up again for the elections.

Who will benefit from this alliance if it happens?

Considering the latest remark by Patnaik's close aide Pandian, both parties are self-sufficient to pull the elections on their own, the BJD in the state, and BJP at the national level. So the tie-up if it happens is really going to be about a larger cause. For Naveen Patnaik to align with the BJP, it may attract more votes given the popularity of the Prime Minister and a national sentiment which seems to be in the favour of the BJP as of now. And for the BJP, the objective behind the alliance could be to consolidate its chances of getting more seats in order to achieve its target of crossing the 400 mark. So, in totality, the alliance if it takes shape may help both the BJP and BJD. Moreover, according to India TV-CNX opinion poll projections, telecast before the announcement of the Lok Sabha election dates, predicted that BJP-led NDA is likely to get 378 seats while the Congress may get restricted to 37.

Gaurav Bhatia Roughed Up By Lawyers In Surajpur Court, SCBA Takes Note

New Delhi: Tensions erupted on Wednesday at the local court premises in Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh, as Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) spokesperson and senior advocate Gaurav Bhatia engaged in an altercation with lawyers from the local bar association. The incident unfolded when Bhatia arrived at the court in the Gautam Buddha Nagar district for his legal duties. Upon his arrival, he was informed

by the president of the local bar association and other advocates about the ongoing strike, which had halted court-related work. This communication sparked a heated exchange between Bhatia and the local lawyers. Subsequently, the altercation intensified, leading to a confrontation between Bhatia and the advocates. Supreme Court Bar Association takes note Following the incident, the Executive Com-

mittee of the Supreme Court Bar Association issued a statement condemning the actions of a lawyer present during the altercation. The statement highlighted that despite Bhatia's willingness to adjourn the matter in light of the strike, a lawyer misbehaved and forcibly removed Bhatia's band. The Supreme Court Bar Association strongly condemned such unprofessional and illegal conduct, urging the au-



thorities to identify and take strict action

