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Morarji Desai New Prime Minister

First List of Cabinet to be Announced To-day

From G. K. Reddy

NEW DELHI, March 24.
The Chairman of the victorious Janata Party, Mr. Morarji Desai, was sworn in as Prime Minister by the Acting President, Mr. B. D. Jatti, at a solemn ceremony in the Asoka Hall of Rashtrapati Bhavan, after he was unanimously chosen leader of the new ruling party in Parliament.

The new Prime Minister, who was conducted to his office in Parliament House by the Cabinet Secretary, Mr. B. D. Pande, and the Secretary to the outgoing Prime Minister, Mr. P. N. Dhar, after his formal election, said that he would announce the first instalment of his Cabinet to-morrow and the rest in stages providing balanced representation to all regions.

The choice of Mr. Desai was announced amidst thunderous cheers at a meeting of the Janata Party in the Central Hall of Parliament House by Acharya J.B. Kripalani, in the presence of Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan, who had jointly assessed the consensus within the party on the leadership question. It was a historic occasion which had all the elements of high drama and great excitement that characterised the momentous events of the last few days culminating in the ouster of the Congress from power at the Centre after a bitter electoral struggle.

Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan, who was brought to the meeting in a wheelchair, recalled in a voice choked with emotion, the famous words of the well-known Hindi poet Dinkar which he had used during the agitation for calling upon Mrs. Gandhi to vacate the throne because the people were on the march to redress the many wrongs done to them. He cautioned the Prime Minister-designate not to repeat the mistakes of his predecessor which led to this silent revolution and amidst deafening cheers, Mr. Desai assured Mr. Narayan that he would certainly live up to his expectations.

It was announced by Mr. Kripalani that a "decision" and an "award" by them, not as consensus as such, that Mr. Morarji Desai and not Mr. Jagjivan Ram should be chosen to head the new Government. He said that under the circumstances prevailing and examining all conditions, our decision is that you choose Mr. Morarji Desai. He used the word "award" later on while expressing the hope that Mr. Jagjivan Ram would take this decision in a sporting spirit.

Mrs. Gandhi, Chavan Congratulate PM

The former Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, and the Leader of the Opposition, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, lost no time in congratulating Mr. Desai and extending their best wishes to him for his success in discharging the heavy responsibilities of the onerous office. Mr. Chavan was present at the swearing-in ceremony when

self-assurance pledging himself to a wide range of tasks to rekindle the old faith and confidence in the Indian democratic system. He was in a relaxed mood ready to answer any question on external or internal policies ranging from nuclear issues to prohibition with his characteristic bluntness spiced with good humour and lively banter to drive home his points without hurting the feelings of the new Opposition.

He did not mince words in giving the assurance that he would avail himself of the first opportunity to annul the many black laws enacted by the previous Government and provide enough built-in safeguards in the Constitution to make it impossible for any future Government to promulgate the kind of Emergency that was imposed by Mrs. Gandhi for questionable purposes.

He promised to restore protection for publication of Parliamentary proceedings, repeal the oppressive press laws, remove the curbs on the Judiciary, revoke the many wrong amendments of the Constitution, legislate against defections and ensure the fullest personal freedom for the people. At the same time he said there would be no roving enquiry into various happenings during the Emergency although the new Government would investigate specific complaints without appearing to be vindictive, if only to ensure that such things did not happen again in future.

For Mr. Desai, it has been a long night's journey from the days of his removal from office by Mr. Nehru under the Kamaraj Plan, his reinstatement as Deputy Prime Minister and subsequent dismissal by Mrs. Gandhi, his imprisonment during the Emergency and finally his triumphant return to power as Prime Minister in vindication of his life-long struggle for political fair play and justice. So there was a puritanical fervour and reforming zeal in the tone of his pronouncements to-day, whether it was at the party meeting or press conference or in his speech at the mammoth public meeting or radio and television message to the nation. He spoke with great humility and modesty with no sign of any anger or bitterness, let alone hatred or revenge, in spelling out firmly his basic philosophies of both politics and life, despite all the sufferings he had gone through over the years in stoic silence.

As a poignant climax to this big change-over at the Centre through this peaceful revolution, the alling Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan called on Mrs. Gandhi this evening at her residence. She was greatly touched by this gesture which came a few hours after Mr. Desai binned the Congress and tried to stay as long as she wanted at her present residence. This glorious day in the history of Indian democracy, which witnessed such an orderly transition from the Congress rule to the non-Congress Government, was unfortunately marred by the animosities aroused among the Janata-CFD leaders over the handling of the leadership issue. An attempt was therefore being made to-night by some well-meaning intermediaries to heal the breach before it assumed the dimensions of a rift with unfortunate consequences. And those that have been actively involved in the succession politics were trying to avoid publicity to these differences in an earnest move to settle the whole affair in the course of the formation of the new Cabinet.



"... The reason for the decisions I made and the risks I took so easily was that from my childhood I had an unshakable faith in God. Till I was 25-27 years old this faith was instinctive, but after that it got strengthened because of my life's experiences. From these I was convinced that no one can stop what happens according to the laws of God. The things that happen to one

are the results of one's past actions. A man has to undergo what has been determined by his past actions. A man who faces his task gladly should not make any attempt to escape difficulties. If a man has faith in God, he can remain cheerful and peaceful even in the most difficult circumstances. As a result of this he gets additional strength and his life becomes richer. He also gets inspiration to be useful to others."

— From Morarji Desai's "The Story of My Life" (Preface)

New Kerala Ministry

TRIVANDRUM, March 24.
Mr. K. Karunakaran and Mr. C. H. Mohammed Koya, Leader of the Congress and Muslim League Legislative parties, will be sworn in to-morrow morning as Chief Minister and Minister respectively pending formation of the full Kerala Cabinet. The swearing-in ceremony will be held at Raj Bhavan at 9-45 a.m.

Mr. Karunakaran told pressmen here to-day that the Cabinet expansion will take place in the first week of April after the State Assembly passed the vote of confidence. The Assembly session opens on March 28.

CFD Sore Over Way of Choosing Leader

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, March 24.
The show of solidarity by the Janata Party in electing Mr. Morarji Desai as leader was to-day marred by differences between it and the CFD. This resulted in the non-participation of CFD in the election process and Mr. Jagjivan Ram's decision not to join the new Government.

Persistent efforts by Janata Party leaders, throughout the day to persuade Mr. Jagjivan Ram to change his decision did not succeed. Undeterred by the setback, intermediaries including Mr. Chandrasekhar, Mr. George Fernandes and Mr. Madhu Limaye continued their efforts for a compromise till late at night. As a result Mr. Jagjivan Ram called on Mr. J. P. Narayan and some proposals for retrieving the situation were believed to have been discussed. There was no advance however. Mr. Narayan is due to return to Patna to-morrow but the move for settlement had not been given up.

Mr. Fernandes felt that a group who claimed to speak for the majority and no consensus was taken. "Pledged words should not be broken and democratic process should not be sacrificed in an effort to create what is called consensus but what amounts to the point of view of a group." On the other hand, Mr. Ram Dhan, General Secretary of the Janata Party, resigned from his post in protest against the "Congress-type dictatorial style" adopted in deciding the leadership issue. A tragedy of two errors was responsible for the CFD's decision. One was the misunderstanding about the modalities of choosing the leader of the Janata Party-CFD combine. The second was the missed appointment between Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan and Mr. Jagjivan Ram—the two

were to meet minutes before the meeting but, could not do so. The fact of the misunderstanding was brought out by the two letters, which, according to inside accounts, were sent by Mr. Jagjivan Ram to Mr. J. P. Narayan in the 24 hours preceding Mr. Desai's election. The letter of resignation by Mr. Ram Dhan, the comments of Mr. H. N. Bahuguna and of Mr. Fernandes.

The arrangement announced last night that Mr. J. P. Narayan and Acharya Kripalani would and the views of the members of the Janata party were interpreted differently in different camps. Mr. Jagjivan Ram thought it meant sounding each and every member on who should head the party and declaring the name favored by the majority. Others thought that the consensus could be obtained in more than one way, and that the individual soundings was not the only method. The CFD view on the modalities was given by Mr. Bahuguna after Mr. Desai's election. Addressing an angry crowd that had gathered at Mr. Jagjivan Ram's house, he said, in effect last night they were told there would be a vote in the party, but to-day it was stated there would be no vote.

RAM DHAN'S PROTEST

In his letter sent to Mr. Narayan last night, Mr. Jagjivan Ram, it is learnt, agreed to abide by his decision and that of Acharya Kripalani (which, he obviously, felt would be based on the cumulative opinion of party members). This led to the belief in the Janata Party camp that, apart from other things, the CFD would become part of its parliamentary wing, even though the organisational merger outside Parliament may take time.

work under Mr. Jagjivan Ram could not be confirmed. Mr. Narayan received the second letter from Mr. Jagjivan Ram after the meeting in the Gandhi Peace Foundation hall. As the time for the formal meeting of the parliamentary party approached, Mr. Narayan sent word to Mr. Jagjivan Ram that they meet in Parliament House. This meeting did not take place. J. P. waited for Mr. Jagjivan Ram in a Parliament House room but left for the central hall, the venue of the election meeting. After a while when Mr. Jagjivan Ram came, Mr. Narayan had left.

CHANGE IN PLAN

To-day, he sent another letter to Mr. Narayan expressing his inability to act as stated by him last night. This followed the early morning discussions in the hall of the Gandhi Peace Foundation where J. P. was staying. The Lok Sabha members of the Janata Party had gathered there after they had taken a pledge at Rajghat to serve the people. They were joined by senior leaders Mr. Narayan, Acharya Kripalani and others who had discussions among themselves. Some one proposed that Mr. C. B. Gupta, former U.P. Chief Minister, preside over the meeting. A resolution, moved by Mr. Raj Narain, seconded by Mr. Vajpayee and supported by Mr. Madhu Limaye sought to authorise Mr. Jaya Prakash Narayan and Acharya Kripalani, to name the leader. Mr. Jagjivan Ram, too, came when the meeting began. According to sources close to him, he was not aware of the change in the plan for assessing the consensus.

There was a 'change' and if so why? Opinions differed and a concrete account was not available. It was, however, known that Mr. Charan Singh (who is not well) sent a letter from his hospital room to Mr. Narayan and Acharya Kripalani, indicating his clear preference for Mr. Desai over Mr. Jagjivan Ram. The latter was received by them after the Rajghat ceremony. Regretting his inability to be present and express his opinions there because of health reasons, Mr. Charan Singh said that he would favour Mr. Desai's choice. A report that Mr. Charan Singh had expressed his reluctance to

He said his party would fight in case any one sought to do what Mrs. Gandhi had tried to do. Mr. Chandrasekhar, too, pleaded with the crowd to be restrained. Mr. Suresh Kumar, son of Mr. Jagjivan Ram, wanted them not to mix the two issues—of Prime Ministership, and of the attitude adopted by Janata Party.

KRIPALANI'S AWARD

The suspense over the choice of leader lingered almost till the last moment. It had been building up since yesterday, as reports of meetings of various groups of the Janata Party got currency. If the reported support of a section of the Jan Sangh seemed to tilt scales in favour of Mr. Jagjivan Ram, the stand of Mr. Charan Singh improved Mr. Desai's chances. The suspense was cleared only when Acharya Kripalani gave the award on his behalf and on behalf of Mr. Narayan at the formal meeting of the Janata Parliamentary party.

Samachar reports: After meeting the Janata leaders including Mr. Madhu Limaye who were making efforts to secure the CFD's participation in the Government, Mr. Jagjivan Ram met Mr. Jayaprakash Narayan. Mr. Limaye told newsmen that they are hopeful that a resolution would be found soon.

Stand of Fernandes and Ramdhan —Details on Page 19

Mrs. Pandit Joins Jagjivan's Party

NEW DELHI, March 24.
Mrs. Vijayalakshmi Pandit has joined the Congress for Democracy, its General Secretary, Mr. H. N. Bahuguna, announced here to-night.—Samachar.

Jagjivan Assures Full Support to Morarji

FROM OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI, March 24.
A categorical assurance that he would fully co-operate with the new Government in fulfilling the tasks ahead was given by Mr. Jagjivan Ram, Chairman of the Congress for Democracy, here this evening.

Mr. Jagjivan Ram called upon the people to strengthen the hands of Mr. Morarji Desai, the new Prime Minister, so that the objective of progress and betterment could be achieved. He was addressing a public meeting held under the auspices of the Janata Party at the Ram Lila grounds to celebrate the electoral victory.

Another key speaker at the meeting was Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. Mr. Jagjivan Ram said there was no parallel in the world for the Lok Sabha election in India. It was not merely an election but a revolution, and had heralded the dawn of a new chapter in Indian history.

More than anything else, the election had proved the maturity of the judgment of the Indian people and their deep faith in democracy and a democratic Government, he added. Both Mr. Jagjivan Ram and Mr. Vajpayee emphasised that the people had seized the earliest opportunity to break the chains which had completely fettered their freedom for 20 months. In a reference to the difference in the preferences of the people

of the North and the South, as reflected in the electoral verdict, Mr. Vajpayee said this would not stand in the way of the Janata Party treating the South fairly and justly. The South would continue to have the affection of the Janata Party.

Details of Meeting Page 9

Tamil Nadu Assembly Poll Soon

NEW DELHI, March 24.
Elections to the Tamil Nadu State Legislative Assembly would be held soon, the Prime Minister, Mr. Morarji Desai, said here to-day.

He was answering a question by a correspondent who had said that the poll to the State Assembly was overdue.

In reply to another question, Mr. Desai ruled out the holding of fresh elections to the Assemblies of States where the Congress had been defeated in the recent Lok Sabha poll. "There is no question of dissolving legally constituted Governments or Assemblies", he observed.

Desai's Foreign Policy

NEW DELHI, March 24.
India's foreign policy would be a properly non-aligned one, with friendship based on reciprocity with all countries and no special relationship with any the Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai told newsmen here to-day.

"Our relationship with all countries will be uniformly good, provided they also reciprocate", he said. "We will not allow our relations with one country to come in the way of relations with another. We will not have any special relationship with any country."

To a specific question about the Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship, Mr. Desai said India would act on it in such a way that it did not come in the way of friendship with any other State.

Would there be any change in the treaty? A foreign correspondent had asked. Mr. Desai said it was upto the Soviet Union to do what it wished in the light of India's stand. "We cannot disown what has been done by the past government in international affairs. At the same time if anything had to be done to protect the interests of the country, it would be done."

A foreign correspondent said that while India had been talking about the presence of the United States in the Indian Ocean nothing was said about the Soviet presence there.

Mr. Desai said that two wrongs would not make one right. The United States should realise that it should not have its activities here. We should also see that the Soviet Union does not have (its activities here). We should have equal treatment for both", he said.

He, however, said that he could not say what the actual position now was because he had not studied it.—Samachar.

Madras Weather

MEENAMBAKKAM on March 24:
Max.: 33.4°C (92.4°F); Min.: 23.9°C (75.0°F); Humidity at 8-10 p.m.: 77 per cent.
NUNGAMBAKKAM on March 24:
Max.: 32.5°C (90.5°F); Min.: 23.7°C (74.6°F); Humidity at 5-30 p.m.: 74 per cent.
Forecast (valid until Saturday morning): Mainly clear sky. No significant change in day and night temperatures.

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