3471

HINDUSTAN TIMES.
4 JAN 1971

Swatantra keeps out of alliance

SSP joins Cong (O), JS in election pact

Hindustan Times Correspondent

New Delhi, Jan. 3—A national democratic front without the Swatantra Party was formally launched here tonight for the declared purpose of defeating the Congress (N) in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

The three constituents of the front, who pledged to fight together the Government, which was taking the country in an "authoritarian and anti-democratic direction," are the Congress (O), the Jan Sangh and the Samyukta Socialist Party.

The Swatantra Party has not opted for the front because its demand for a full-fledged electoral alliance with an agreed programme was not acceptable to the SSP.

The Swatantra Party Chairman, Mr M. R. Masani, left the meeting held at Mr Nijalingappa's house because he could not accept the SSP's condition without consulting his party's National Executive which is meeting in Madras on Jan. 13.

He told newsmen that "vacillation and indecision" in the Congress (O) attitude to the formation of a "principled" electoral pact was responsible for the alliance of his conception not coming into being. This had caused him "deep disappointment."

According to Mr Masani, the draft of the proposed declaration was approved by Mr Nijalingappa and the Jan Sangh President, Mr Atal Bihari Vajpayee, earlier. "The statement had already been signed by Mr Vajpayee and myself and it was to have been signed by Mr Nijalingappa tonight. But the SSP has said that a common programme should be scrapped and the poll adjustments should be scrapped." The agreement was on the basis of the programme envisaged in the AICC (O) resolution of June last.

Same objectives

The announcement about the formation of the front was made by Mr Vajpayee who tersely remarked: "Swatantra is out, SSP is in." The statement bore the signatures of Mr Nijalingappa, Mr Vajpayee, Mr Ram Sevak Yadav, Chairman of the Central Parliamentary Board of the SSP and Mr George Fernandes, SSP General Secretary.

After the announcement Mr Nijalingappa expressed the hope that the Swatantra and BKD and other democratic parties would join them in their endeavour to replace the "Indira Gandhi Government." He was sure that the Swatantra Party Executive would take a decision to co-operate with them. According to him there was not much of a difference between what Mr Masani wanted and what they had done. The only thing was that Mr Masani "wanted to go into the details of the programme."

Mr Vajpayee said: "There was to be a joint statement. The only difference is that the Swatantra is not here but the SSP is here." They had started discussions on a common minimum programme.

According to Mr Ram Sevak Yadav, there was no difference between a "front", "pact" or an "alliance' as long as the objective was the same. In Mr Raj Narain's view the BKD would not lag behind but would join hands with other parties which had decided to throw out this Government of the "Indira Gandhi Congress."

The 150-word joint declaration said: "In order to offer the country an alternative which it urgently needs, we have agreed to come together to fight the elections. We appeal to other parties, groups and individuals who share these objectives to join us. Our endeavour will be to put up one agreed candidate for each Lok Sabha constituency throughout the country who will be supported by all our parties. The allocation of constituencies and the nomination of candidates will be carried out by a co-ordinating committee of these and other co-operating parties."

Mr Nijalingappa said that the co-ordinating committee would be set up in the next few days and

Continued on back page col. 5

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Tenders will be opened on 14-1-'71 at 3 p.m. in the presence of attending tenderers. Director of News Services reserves the right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason. The vehicle may be inspected at any time during working hours i.e. 9-30 a.m. to 4-30 p.m. in the Transport Section, News Services Division, All India Radio, Broadcasting House, New Delhi

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More Classified Advts

Masani explains Swatantra stand

Continued from page 1 col. 7

hoped that the process of selecting common candidates would be smooth.

Present at today's crucial meeting were Mr Masani, Mr Vajpayee, Mr Ram Sevak Yadav, Mr George Fernandes, Mr Raj Narain, Mr Rabi Ray, Mr Madhu Limaye, Dr Ram Subagh Singh, Mr S. N. Mishra, and the AICC General Secretaries, Mr Sadiq Ali and Mr S. D. Mishra.

Hopes about the formation of the front receded when Mr Masani left the meeting shortly before 9 p.m. Mr Nijalingappa told newsmen that the promised joint declaration would not be issued tonight, because Mr Masani had sought time to consult his National Executive.

Mr Vajpayee had not come and an emissary of the BKD was expected. But soon Mr Vajpayee walked in and the discussion took a different turn. A consensus developed in favour of an immediate announcement leaving out the Swatantra for the time being. The BKD representative, Mr Kumbha Ram Arya who, according to Mr Nijalingappa, was to have joined the talks, did not turn up till the announcement was made.

Persuasion

Before the announcement, Mr Vajpayee contacted Mr Masani on phone but could not persuade the latter to join in the declaration. After the statement was made, some of the leaders who attended the meeting continud informal discussions on strengthening the front. In their view the Congress (N) would face a tough opposition now in the whole of north and Central India.

The Swatantra Party's position on the issue of an alliance was known for quite a long time. In its view, the partners in an alliance should be ideologically committed to democracy and secularism and the programme outlined by the Congress (O) itself in the resolution of June last chose not to get involved in the showed the direction. But the SSP chose not to get involved in the commitments of a common programme. The presence of Dr Ram Subagh and Mr Madhu Limaye at the meeting tilted the balance against the Swatantra.

Mr Masani told newsmen that for a long time the Swatantra Party's stand had been well known —that a democratic alternative to the present Government was what the country presently needed.

"It is our view that nothing less that a full fledged electoral alliance with an agreed programme and one agreed candidate in each constituency throughout the country supported by all the parties to the pact can provide such an alternative.

We thought this was well understood and therefore after protracted discussions it was arranged to announce yesterday that the Presidents of the Congress (O), Jan Sangh and Swatantra would meet the Press this evening and announce the setting up of a democratic front in a statement the terms of which were agreed upon by all the three of us.

"Unfortunately it would appear that some last-minute rethinking has once again led to vacillation and indecision on the part of the Congress (O).

Mr Masani said "what is now proposed at the instance of the Samyukta Socialist Party is an attempt at a mere electoral adjustment without a democratic front and without a common programme."

According to Congress (O) circles, the inclusion of the SSP in the electoral front is a definite political gain in that the front could not be dubbed only as a combination of rightist parties.

They also pointed out that the Lucknow session of the party had only authorised Mr Nijalingappa to enter into "electoral adjustments" with other democratic parties.

The Congress (N) circles did not seem to be perturbed at the proclamation of the front which, they said was only a loose arrangement bereft of any firm commitment by the constituent parties to a minimum programme.

In their view, such a front could hardly provide an alternative to the present Government.

Kabligram, however, shot up to Rs 165/190 following reports that the kabligram crop would be smaller this year. Bajra declined to Rs 55/58 and maize to Rs 50/55 for want of support. Wheat farm rose further to Rs 107 on brisk offtake. Towards the year-end, wheat farm eased to Rs 105 for want of support, despite the Reserve Bank's decision to relax control on bank advances against grains.

c. in 1970

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diverted from Bombay to other ports and to north Indian centres because of strict vigilance. Reports that the Gold Control Administration had detained deliveries of standard gold to the dealers also affected the sentiment.

Thereafter, gold vitur and standard came down to Rs 176 and Rs 181, respectively, in August due to increased arrivals of contraband gold coupled with reports that deposits of gold and some other rare metals have been discovered in the Jaspura area of Raigarh district of Madhya Pradesh by the State's Geological Survey unit. Gold production in the country was placed at 1,20,000 ounces. Reports that Britain's gold and dollar reserves rose by £3 million to reach £1,53 million in May and fears that South Africa might resume selling of gold at any time in the free market in the interest of her payments position also assisted the downward trend. The authorities seized Rs 24.24 crores worth of smuggled gold and other goods be-

gur prices

... the announcement of sugar policy for the 1970-71 season by the Union Government, the Muzaffarnagar sugar market continued to display a weak tendency during the week ended on Dec 31 as the demand from upcountry centres remained dull. Under selling pressure from millers, the prices tended to decline further. Khandsari also suffered a setback on weak buying support from Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana. Under pressure of arrivals Gur spot prices also fell. Gur futures also recorded sizable losses on nervous unloading by bulls.

When the news came in that sugar had been decontrolled the market suffered a sharp setback as stockists turned nervous sellers at much lower levels but none came forward to enter into fresh deals as the traders preferred to wait for the market reaction. On learning that the partial decontrol policy would continue, the market recovered soon, but the demand in the later part of the week remained dull. However, some business was done for Punjab and Gujarat destinations at the end of the week but the prices at the same time, fell by 50 paise to Rs 2. The millers and the stockists were eager sellers. Sugar C-29 for February 1971 delivery was offered at the week-end at Rs 175.75 after turning between Rs 173 and Rs 176.50.

The mill delivery prices at the end of the week were B30 Bhatsuli 170; Lhaksar 170; Shamli 162; C30 Daurala 176, Jagdhari 173, Shamli 174, Lakhimpur 170, Rohana 176, C29 Deoband 176, Iqbalpur 175.50, Khatauli 175, Seohara 164.75, Modinagar 172.25, Hargaon and Golagokarnnath 167, D30 Meerut 167, Saharanpur 164.50, Dhampur 165.37, Ramlaxman 164, E30 Amroha 162.50, Sarsawa 166 and E29 Simbhaoli 166.50 per qtl.

Spot sugar ruled easy at Rs 169/178 The levy sugar continued to find its way into the open market.

Sugar factories in West U.P. were reportedly getting heavy supplies of sugarcane, though half of the factories were facing a strike threat over the non-implementation of the wage board award. While the mills offered Rs 7.37 to 8.19 for cane, Khandsari manufacturing units got the supplies at Rs 6.50 to Rs 7. Gur manufacturing kolhus, numbering over 600, were however, getting cane at lower rates without shouldering any responsibility towards payment of the purchase-tax or any other government dues, and they found it much beneficial to manufacture gur rather than khandsari as khandsari units were running at a loss.

Khandsari sustained a fall during the week by Rs 7.50 to Rs 15 owing to weak demand from Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana. Khandsari prices ranged between Rs 110/130 for wet quality, while dry non-crystal and sulphur varieties ruled Rs 130 to Rs 152.50 as against Rs 110 to Rs 162. in the corresponding period of last year.

Gur and shakkar were depressed due to the constant flow of arrivals. Tight money market conditions accounted for a downward trend in prices. The railway loading position was the worst and over 800 indents were pending with the dealers.

Gur chaku earlier remained in good demand from stockists and consuming centres of Gujarat, MP, Rajasthan and Punjab but later prices fell as demand slackened at higher levels. The commodity lost ground by Rs 2.50 to Rs 5. to rule firm at Rs 26 to Rs 29.50 as against Rs 25 to Rs 28.25 quoted last year. Gur Ladoo ruled lower at Rs 26 to Rs 28 and Rusket Khurpa declined to Rs 14/17.

Gur Khurpapar was in poor demand and its prices fell by Rs 2.50 to rule at Rs 26 to Rs 27.25. Shakkar eased from Rs 24 to Rs 60. Arrivals amounted to 54,000 quintals bringing the total arrivals during the current season to 3.73,000 quintals as compared with 8,09,000 quintals in the corresponding period of last year. Stocks of gur swelled to 40,000 quintals.

In the futures section gur Fagun resumed trading at Rs 33.87 against the previous week's closing of Rs