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HINDUSTAN TIMES

Swatantra decides to punish Gujarat rebels

Madras, June 1 (PTI)—The National Executive of the Swatantra Party decided yesterday to expel Mr U. N. Mahida, MP, for defying the Party decision and contesting the election to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat recently.

The executive also barred three others—party MLAs in the Gujarat Assembly—from holding any office in the Party or in the Swatantra Legislature Party in the Assembly for a period of three years for supporting the candidature of Mr Mahida.

The MLAs debarred were Messrs Tokore Saheb Chandra Singh Jadeja, Natwarsingh Solenki and Chandrakanth Parikh.

The executive decided not to take any disciplinary action against two other party MLAs in the Gujarat Assembly, who supported Mr Mahida's candidature, after considering their explanation. They are Mr Jammubhai Bhat and Chunilal Vasavi.

Ranga absent

The meeting was presided over by Mr M. Ruthnasamy, MP and Vice-chairman of the party. Among those who attended was Mr C. Rajagopalachari. Mr N. G. Ranga, Chairman of the party, did not attend the meeting as "he did not want his views to intrude upon the discussion on Gujarat affairs." Mr Dandekar, secretary of the party, said:

Mr Dandekar hoped that Mr Masani, who had resigned from the executive over the question of disciplinary action in regard to Gujarat affairs, would take into consideration the decision of the National Executive on this matter.

The National Executive also considered the mid-term elections to be held in Uttar Pradesh in February next year, and decided to make a "concentrated" effort in a small way. The aim was to win at least 35 to 40 seats out of the 100 seats the party intends to contest.

Asked if the party would seek alliances with other parties, Mr Dandekar said it was too early to talk about it. "Our experience of all alliances had not been cheerful. But, we will keep our eyes open on possible beneficial alliances," he said.

Regarding the mid-term poll in West Bengal, he said the National Executive expressed the view that November was a totally wrong

period for holding the elections since half of West Bengal would be facing the problem of floods. It favoured the continuance of President's rule in West Bengal for at least two or three years.

The executive passed a resolution reiterating its earlier decision about the Kutch Award, that it was a binding international obligation which must be accepted as such.

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Clear

Masani reserves comment

Madras, June 1 (UNI) — Mr M. R. Masani, MP, today declined to give his reactions to the Swatantra Party Executive's decision to expel Mr U. N. Mahida, MP, from the party and to suspend three Gujarat MLAs from holding office in the party for three years.

Mr Masani, who arrived here to attend the meeting of the party's General Council, however said he would discuss the subject with party colleagues before commenting on it. He could give his reactions tomorrow, he added.

Mr Masani had resigned from the party's National Executive and Parliamentary Board after the defeat of the official Swatantra candidate in the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha from Gujarat.

Mr Masani insisted that severe disciplinary action should be taken against those who defied the party mandate.

Party General Secretary N. Dandekar yesterday expressed hope that Mr Masani would reconsider his stand in the light of the executive's decision to take disciplinary action.