

Charan Singh



Vidhan Bhavan,
LUCKNOW :

June 16, 1970.

My dear

When I saw you at your invitation on June 11 in Delhi, it was a traumatic experience, indeed.

You were pleased to make enquiries about the prospects of merger of BKD into Congress. Besides other facts I referred to proceedings of a meeting of the State Executive of BKD held on April 10, and a resolution which was passed by a joint meeting of Executives of State BKD and BKD Party in the legislature held on May 26. I told you that an overwhelming proportion of leading men at the State level were in favour of merger, not because it was part of any agreement between the two parties, but because the interest of their own party and the ultimate national interest so demanded. Not all our co-workers at the district level, however, are yet convinced. With a view to persuade them, prominent colleagues of mine proposed to go out into the districts during the coming 4-day interval from June 13 to June 16.

You told me that quite a good number of Congress members of the legislature as also quite a good few from the BKD were so displeased with the State Government that they preferred Presidential rule to the present set-up. Dissolution of the Assembly could be avoided, you said, if BKD merged into Congress immediately, that is, before June 23 on which date the Appropriation Bill was scheduled for consideration. I told you that you had not been rightly informed : Not a single member of the Congress or BKD, not even those who were arrayed in Opposition, would like to throw the State into the throes of a second mid-term election so soon. When I asked for the name of the leader of these Congress legislators, you could not tell me. I also told you (as I had told the joint meeting of my co-workers of BKD on May 26) that in the circumstances that obtained, Chief Ministership was an unrelieved burden and had no longer any charms for me. The State was too big : The problems were so vast : Inefficiency and corruption in the bureaucracy which numbered more than half a million, were so rampant : The legislators as a whole were so oblivious of their real duties and their interference in administration was so great.

As regards merger, I replied that I had no right to take a decision single-handed and will have to wait for a meeting of our co-workers from all over the State, that was scheduled for June 27 and June 28, as also for a final mandate from the National Executive which was going to meet on July 4 and 5. That, BKD was a democratic party consisting of workers drawn from various parties — that had reached almost every village, at least, in U.P. It is a different matter, though, that my word carried great weight with them. I further told you that in view of the manner you had posed the problem to me, I will have to think afresh and will let you know later, but that one thing was clear, viz., my reaction was likely to be of a nature that could be expected from any self-respecting man placed in my circumstances. I now want to tell you formally through this letter that merger cannot simply be considered under the shadow of a threat. I would

Not issued, but shown to three Congress Ministers, viz., S/ Shri Chaturbhuj Sharma, Jagan Pd. Rawat and Nafain Dutt Tewari.





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prefer the Government went down as the result of a vote on the Appropriation Bill on June 23 rather than purchase peace and office at the price that friends of the Congress want to dictate. The people of Uttar Pradesh who are the ultimate arbiters of the fate of political parties in the State, will be free to draw their own conclusions. I claim that during the short span of four months since I took over on February 17, despite the handicaps that stand in my way, things have improved and are on an upward trend.

Even before I went to Delhi, whispers had reached me that unless BHD merged into Congress before June 23, Government was going to face a heavy weather—to be exact, it will be toppled. Reports attributed to Shri Kamlapati Tripathi appearing in the morning press of June 12, viz., the day next I saw you, confirmed these whispers.

Your talk coupled with the press reports enabled me to read Shri Ganda Singh's resignation in the true light. He had given replies to questions and supplementaries on the floor of the Legislative Council much against facts on record in the relevant file and much against my advice. He was required by the Chairman to make an explanatory statement on the floor of the Legislative Council on June 12, but finding himself in a quandary, he sent in his resignation which contained no reasons. I further understand he was advised by a Congress leader not to act as "a mere rubber stamp of the Chief Minister". His resignation coupled with the rumour that seven other Ministers were going to resign, are, perhaps, intended to create an atmosphere of a crisis in the State where none existed or need exist.

Shri Kamlapati Tripathi had confessed to three representatives of BHD, viz., Sarwari Jairam Verma, Acting President of the State BHD, Shri Pat Mishra, Minister of Education, UP, and Prithvi Nath, MP, that friends of Congress (O) had approached him with an offer of Chief Ministership more than once and that he had told them he was prepared to accept their offer provided a guarantee was forthcoming from their Central leadership. A press report under the date-line of June 13, carrying a statement of Dr. Ram Subhag Singh from Varanasi, is evidence, if any were needed, of what Shri Tripathi told my colleagues. So that one of the partners in the coalition Government of U.P. which had solemnly undertaken, under hand and thumb, to extend "full and unconditional support" to the other, was so brazenly hatching a plot against the latter, undeterred by any moral or political consideration. As everybody here in Lucknow knew, Shri Tripathi had been hobnobbing and carrying on pourparlers with the leaders of the Gupta faction almost since the day the ink of the agreement between Congress (R) and BHD entered into in mid-February was hardly dry. Not only this: He is otherwise behaving in a way that serves to put hurdles in the way of Government. If the Assembly is not functioning as it should, it is largely because of the stance he adopts on the floor of the House as the leader of an independent Party — which may differ from that of the leader of Government. So that there is virtually no leader of the House in the U.P. Assembly. If and when necessary, appropriate will be given.





Your interpretation, therefore, of Shri Tripathi's conduct which involved so much going and coming and so much talk between him and leaders of the 'Syndicate', viz. that he could not refuse to meet if others wanted to, came as a great surprise to me.

On the other hand, BMD withdrew a candidate from the field for a bye-election to the Legislative Council in Shahjahanpur district in order that the Congress candidate might get through, gave up one seat for the Rajya Sabha, virtually won one seat for the Lok Sabha from Sultanpur and presented it to Congress on the platter, as it were, and remained content only with one seat out of thirteen during the biennial election to the Council. It may also be added that while, according to the agreement, the date of induction of Congress representatives into the Government depended entirely on me, I wanted them to join immediately, it being irrelevant for my purpose that Shri Tripathi took full two months to give the signal.

Reports had reached me while I was still in Lucknow, that all sorts of allegations had been made to you against me personally. I, therefore, enquired whether you had been told that I had collected some two crores of rupees from industrialists since February 17. You replied in the affirmative. I told you in reply, and reiterate, that although collection of funds from capitalists for political purposes is made by every political party and every political leader, yet BMD considers such funds as tainted money and the source of so many evils in our public life. While BMD was acutely short of funds during the mid-term election, it did not seek or accept money from industrialists although lakhs and lakhs had been offered.

On my return to Lucknow, I found that a section of the press attributed Shri Genda Singh's resignation to delay in nationalization of sugar mills. Putting two and two together, I concluded you had been told that I was delaying nationalization of sugar mills in lieu of heavy donations, rather heavy bribes from the proprietors of these mills. I had demanded during the course of my talk with you, and repeat the demand, that you may be pleased to order an enquiry not only into this allegation but all other allegations that you might have received against me and that if the allegations were proved, I would retire from public life. If truth is your aim, as I think it is, I would urge upon you the acceptance of this request of mine immediately. In this context I may tell you that you will be rendering the greatest service of your life to the country if you could possibly ask for a similar probe into the conduct of those upon whom you rely for Congress to deliver the goods in Uttar Pradesh.

The thought that you believed I could collect funds from mill-owners, of course, at the cost of public interest and that you would not trust me once the budget had been passed by the Assembly, has been galling in the extreme, and continues to grip my mind although about a week has passed since we met.

It seems leaders of the Congress have two courses in their view, viz., either to form a coalition with Congress (O) or to impose presidential rule once again. I understand that consequent upon recent victory in bye-elections, you have been advised that the time is ripe for a mid-term poll for Parliament and a simultaneous election to the UP Assembly which will bring Congress back into power in its own right.

(P.T.O.)





Indira Ji ! despite all that some of my friends and co-workers have been telling me, I went on drawing all possible presumptions in favour of a sincere and honest desire on the part of Congress to serve the people of the State in collaboration with me and my friends of BMD, in future. It now seems those who sought to advise me, knew better, and that I had tripped once again.

With regards,

I am,
Yours

Smt. Indira Gandhi,
Prime Minister of India,
NEW DELHI.

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