

NAME OF THE NEWSPAPER

HINDUSTAN TIMES

DATE: 4 JUL 2012

Two sides of the same coin

Both the UPA and the BJP are facing difficult times. This is bad news for the common man.

The BJP's internal feud in Karnataka seems to be over for now but don't write off former chief minister BS Yeddyurappa and his band of mischief-makers as yet. They can create more problems in the near future for chief minister Sadananda Gowda as well as the saffron party if the central leaders fail to keep the promises made to Mr Yeddyurappa and his loyalists. On Monday, senior BJP leaders Nitin Gadkari and Arun Jaitley spoke to the rebel leader and assured him that they would be looking into their demands and work out a formula to smoothen the functioning of the state government. While the younger set is talking of a compromise formula, a veteran leader like LK Advani might be keen to go for a fresh mandate in the state than submit to the whims and fancies of a disgruntled lot whose concerns have little to do with governance. In the meantime, in Gujarat, the most important saffron stronghold, former chief minister Keshubhai Patel and his followers are doing everything they can to upset chief minister Narendra Modi's ambitious political plans by trying to tarnish his Mr Clean image before the assembly polls in December.

The problems in the BJP have come at a time when the Congress-led UPA is also in deep trouble. Even though the party has not seen such open infighting as in the BJP, the government it leads at the Centre is also facing several challenges: economic slowdown, rising dollar prices, corruption and truant allies. Not to forget that there are widespread allegations of policy paralysis, even though senior leaders in the government have stubbornly denied it several times. In fact, within political circles, the UPA's policy paralysis is often attributed to the differences among the party leaders on issues like foreign direct investment in retail and insurance and land reforms, a very basic but a crucial reform that needs to happen without further delay.

Unfortunately, with all these problems dogging the two, the ruling party and the main opposition party are looking like two sides of the same coin. The real sufferers of these political problems are the people. With the monsoon session of Parliament set to begin sometime towards the end of this month, one would have hoped that the BJP would play the role of a strong and constructive Opposition and take up important issues on behalf of the aam aadmi. And, as we all know, there is no dearth of ammunition for the Opposition this time around. But as things stand now, with the party in disarray, the BJP will probably miss the chance of putting the government on the mat.