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# THIRD CONCEPT

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### Political Twists & Turns

Current political developments obtaining in some states of India demonstrate that an array of new twists and turns is taking place in different forms in these states and these entail the potential of impacting national political narrative in a big way. Parting of ways of old allies and coming together of ideologically poles apart groups against the present dispensation at the helm at the Centre is a new development. Widening of chasm between Shiv Sena and the BJP in Maharashtra after a hiatus of three decades over the issue of sharing power in the state has brought Shiv Sena in alliance with Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), with both these latter parties having been arch rivals of Shiv Sena. Perhaps it is the issue of sharing of power in Maharashtra and the objective of keeping the BJP at bay that has spurred these ideologically poles apart parties to join hands in Maharashtra.

What has happened in Maharashtra is likely to be replicated in the Jharkhand that is going to polls very soon. In Jharkhand, the BJP is contesting elections of its own and its erstwhile allies are also contesting the assembly polls of their own. One should not read too much in the wake of Maharashtra developments and become euphoric about BJP's decline because this party has the potential of staging "Kamal Operation" as it did in Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Karnataka, Manipur and Sikkim. Concurrently, Maharashtra also demonstrates that BJP could not successfully replicate its Operation Kamal despite the initiative undertaken by NCP's Ajit Pawar.

Appellation of Modern Chanakya was conferred upon Amit Shah, former president of the BJP and now Union Home Minister in Modi Government, in the wake of BJP's electoral juggernaut since 2014 Lok Sabha elections till March 2017 when the party wrested power in UP registering a landslide win. The year 2018 witnessed the BJP losing power in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan. Aggressive nationalism, publicity blitzkrieg and massive money power helped the party wrest power at the Centre once again with increased number of seats in the Lok Sabha in May 2019. In the wake of Supreme Court decision on Ayodhya dispute, the BJP is not in a position to evoke emotive issue of Ram temple anymore and with the abrogation of some provisions of Article 370 and Article 35-A of the Indian Constitution, another emotive issue to hoodwink the gullible masses has gone out of the electoral planks of the BJP.

Shiv Sena that had contested the state assembly elections in Maharashtra in alliance with the BJP in October this year tried to dictate its terms in extending its support to the BJP which was not in a position to form the next government of its own. Shiv Sena which had been an ardent proponent of aggressive nationalism and Hindutva had to tone down its aggressive posture in order to enter into an alliance with Congress and the NCP in Maharashtra. People seem to have become fed-up with aggressive nationalism and Hindutva after the Ayodhya verdict and abrogation of Article 370 and they have become more concerned with socio-economic issues that directly impact them.

The BJP under Modi-Shah duo is a new BJP different from Advani-Vajpayee era BJP and there has been a complete transformation of the party where larger-than-party size image of PM Modi has eclipsed the image of the old BJP. Even the RSS is no more in a position to dictate its terms to the transformed BJP, rather it has seemingly become a spokesperson of the policies of Modi government. For Congress it is existential crisis and it has to yield its erstwhile ideological stance and accommodate regional satraps to recover its pan-India identity. Similarly, regional satraps like Shiv Sena, NCP, Samajwadi Party and the Left parties are seemingly under transformation to find a space in the national politics. Reluctance of the BJP leadership to reconcile to the ground realities, even after having exhausted its armoury of aggressive nationalism and Hindutva, entails vast potential for the Opposition to fill the space that BJP may vacate in the poll-bound states of Jharkhand, Delhi, Bihar and UP in coming months. Deliverance on promises is a sure way to be at the helm and non-performance leads to downward slide albeit more rapidly.

— BK