

Merit gets award at 51st Karnataka Rajyotsava 2007

Governor Rameshwar Thakur gives away 51 awards to various achievers

CHITRA PHALGUNI

The Rajyotsava Awards for the year 2007 were deemed special and unique.

It was the conclusion of the 'Suvarna Karnataka Rajyotsava,' the golden jubilee of the formation of the state of Karnataka in 1956. The state was celebrating its 51st Karnataka Rajyotsava. In keeping with the occasion, the Government of Karnataka picked 51 eminent achievers from various fields to reward them for their contributions to society.

Unlike in the award ceremonies until now, the number of awardees during this year's ceremony did not go past a hundred. As I.M. Vittal Murthy, Secretary to the Department of Kannada and Culture, said, it was just 51 symbolizing the 51 years of Karnataka.

The Governor, Rameshwar Thakur, conferred the awards. This was the first time that the governor and not the chief minister was giving away the Rajyotsava Awards. This was, of course, because the state has been under governor's regime for a couple of weeks.

The award ceremony, however, was not bereft of the usual controversy. The start of the award ceremony was preceded by a



Awardees at 51st Rajyotsava Award Ceremony at Ravindra Kalakshetra Courtesy The Hindu

protest by people in the field of light music (sugama sangeetha). There was no awardee from the field this year, and the musicians expressed their unhappiness over such omission.

A second question also did arise. This, regarding senior citizens being awarded after so many years of their having achieved something in their respective fields. Why had they not been awarded much before, especially since their contributions have been consistent over the years?

A sportsman, who has retired,

was being awarded along with a sportsman in the prime of his career. A scientist in his eighties received this award. A village doctor who was awarded had lived for more than a century. Why had the Government waited for so long, to give them their due?

The achievements of several of the Rajyotsava awardees now surpass the stature of the award itself. Also, after so many years of contribution, getting the awards hardly matters for some of the awardees. They feel the love, recognition and respect they get

from the people rather than the Government more valuable and worth remembering.

A third issue is regarding whether some of the people who were given the award really deserved it. How many of the awardees had actually contributed to the society? Or was it their influence over the powers that be that earned them the award?

This brings us to the issue of the criteria for selecting awardees each year. How long need the people have contributed to society? How far-reaching need their contributions be? How old need

they be, before being awarded? Also, how well known or influential need they be? The Government has a committee of eminent personalities to select the names of people who will be given the award every year. What is the basis on which the members of the committee are selected?

The Government needs to be more transparent in its method of selecting the awardees. It needs to have a balance between various factors like achievement and age. It needs to decide the number of awardees from each field, too. Also, as one of the awardees suggested, it should publicly declare the names of the people to be honoured only after their names are confirmed officially, and not when they are still in the nomination list.

Controversy goes hand in hand with any such public appreciation procedure. The Government will not be able to meet the expectations of everyone. There will always be some shortcomings in the selection, some dissatisfaction because of the standard for selection of the names of the awardees.

The Government would only have to attempt at rectifying these shortcomings and dissatisfaction because of its selection procedure.

JD(S), BJP fill coffers with young netas

Congress netas unhappy about lack of power

ANIL DAS

Young netas are on the rise in Karnataka political parties such as Janata Dal (Secular) and Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP). Karnataka politics has recently become a place for young MLAs from 40 to 55-age bracket, especially within the JD(S) and BJP camps. Within the JD(S) party, out of 39 MLAs, 25 to 28 members are young. In BJP, 35 to 40 members out of 79 MLAs are young.

The scenario in Congress camp is different. All India Congress Committee (AICC) convener Prithviraj Chauhan was in city on

Wednesday to assess the latest developments when he was flooded with complaints from young MLAs stating they had no say in any critical issues such as the current political crisis looming large on the state.

Karnataka State Youth Congress President Sadananda Dangannavar said that Congress is a large party with a lot of senior leaders and experienced MLAs, which makes it difficult to get a proper balance. Previously, the Dharam Singh coalition government gave youth less preference, but now they have assurance from AICC and senior leaders stating that young legislators will get an equal say in the party activities and government in the coming days.

"It shall be good if we have more young leaders as they bring fresh ideas and effectively run the party," said Kumar, a local businessman.

The JD(S) agrees. Aravind Dalwai (Karnataka State Youth Janatha Dal President) said that the JD(S) has always been a youth oriented party, with Kumara Swamy as a living example. They fared well in the Urban Local Body election due to support of youth, he said, and promised that if a government was formed, then they would delegate more responsibility to young legislators and groom them to make them responsible members of the party.

Girish Mattanavar (Karnataka State Youth BJP President) was unavailable for comment.



Young netas: HDK and R Ashok Courtesy Google Images

Left wing extremism on rise in Karnataka



Naxalites in Orissa in 2006, portraying a similar situation in Karnataka

By author

DEBI PRASAD SARANGI

"The naxal movement in the state is under control and the police is competent enough to keep vigil on the extremist outfits' activities," said V.S. Prabhakar, Superintendent of Police, Anti-Terrorist Squad of Karnataka State Reserve Police (KSRP). But the cases of naxal related violence in the state in last two years convey a contradictory story.

On 23rd August 06, naxals attacked the range forest office at Kerekatte in Chickmagalur district. On 15th May, 2006, the house of a schoolteacher was attacked by naxals in Nadappal under Hebri police limit. On, 10th February 2005, eight policemen and one civilian were killed when Naxalites attacked with hand grenades their camp at Venkammanahalli in Pavagada taluk of Karnataka's

Tumkur district. On 6th February 2005, Karnataka police gunned Saket Ranjan, a naxal leader who was also a journalist. On 10th July 2007, five suspected naxalites were shot dead in an encounter with police in Menashinaadhya under Chickmagalur district. All the above-mentioned incidents show the intensity of Left wing extremism in the state. Though these Ultras are only active in Malnad region of North Karnataka, they are trying their best to spread their tentacles to other parts of the state.

Prabhakar revealed that in the year 2006, the state government has asked the Central government to treat Karnataka as a naxal affected state, but the Union government rejected the demand. Again the state government urged the Central government to declare

at least 13 districts as naxal hit. But, there has been no response from the Centre so far. Even not a single district from the state has been selected by the Central government under pilot project. He said the main reason behind this sidestepping is the lack of political willingness.

Of the 11 Anti-Naxal Force introduced by the Central government, only one has been allotted to the state to tackle naxal menace. The state has an Anti-Naxal Force (ANF) of 540 members from KSRP. Some of them are trained under Greyhounds force of Andhra Pradesh police. He informed that constables of ANF are being provided to each bus playing in naxal-hit districts in the wake of a KSRTC bus burnt near Agumbe in Tirthahalli taluk by suspected naxalities.