

Sonia Gandhi's grim resolve created Telangana: Jaipal Reddy

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There is no one like Science and Technology Minister Jaipal Reddy in the Congress. He is slotted to be one of the contenders of the first Congress chief minister of Telangana if and when the party gets hold of the reins of power. Ten minutes after the Lok Sabha passed the Bill, Reddy spoke exclusively to rediff.com's Sheela Bhatt in the corridors of Parliament.

What's your take on the historic day?

I am extremely happy that the 60-year-old wish of the people of Telangana has been fulfilled at last. It started in 1953. The extent of satisfaction will be comprehensive in Telangana. The problem in Indian politics is that when political parties take a stand, they don't remain consistent.

The Congress didn't take a stand in favour of Telangana until 2004 when it was mentioned in the United Progressive Alliance manifesto. The same was repeated in President's address.

Everybody says that we did it in pursuit of votes. It is not correct.

We gave the original commitment on December 9, 2009, when the elections were four years away. It would not have been possible without the grim resolve of Congress president Sonia Gandhi. It was not an easy decision for anybody.

It was not an easy decision for the Bharatiya Janata Party either. They have been demanding Telangana for the last 45 years. Towards the end, they were confused and divided.

Even in Jan Sangh days they supported the idea of Telangana. They have supported it since some 45 years. Its much longer than anybody else. Why are they getting confused and seem divided today?

Today, Advaniji and the BJP are looking so confused. But on the distinguished occasion, Sushma ji rose to the occasion.

What's your message to the people of Seema-Andhra today?

My solemn assurance is that Seema-Andhrapople will not be discriminated against in any manner whatsoever. Their fears are completely misplaced. We, after all, belong to one nation and we are governed by one Constitution.

You have been exemplary parliamentarian. Are you not embarrassed by what you saw inside it today?

No, it's not true. Those who moved amendments were in the Well. The majority of members were not opposing it. There was no doubt that the bill carried the backing of the majority. The UPA had overwhelming numerical support to the Telangana. Those in minority had right to oppose it. They were not in their seats.

Do you expect violence in Andhra Pradesh?

No. There won't be any violence. Not many Telangana people live in the Seema-Andhra region. And, I can tell you with absolute certainty that the Seema-Andhra people will have no problems whatsoever, and their liberty won't get affected.

Who will get the credit (for the passage of the Bill)?

At the end of the day, the BJP will get some credit. But, the real credit will surely go to Sonia Gandhi. She was the moving force. She came to be hated in Seema-Andhra for no apparent reason.