

1982

Year of Asiad & Appu

It was a year of mixed fortunes for the nation. If the hosting of the Asian Games in Delhi showcased the confidence of the nation, the Biharharif communal riots made us hang our heads in shame. The highlight in external affairs was prime minister Indira Gandhi's first visit to the United States in 11 years. In Bollywood, Amitabh Bachchan's injury on the sets of *Coolie* created mass hysteria. Pamela Singh won the Miss India contest and in Hollywood Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* won eight Oscars, as Bhanu Athaiya shared the Oscar for Best Costume Design with John Mollo.

Indira Gandhi's US visit



World is Not Enough: It was Indira Gandhi's first visit to the United States in 11 years. In a red and white silk sari and a string of Basra pearls, she looked cool, elegant and younger than her 65 years. The famous white streak was accentuated by the session with hairdressers. In Washington, the first signal of success flashed across television screens when Mrs Gandhi and President Ronald Reagan emerged from their closed-door meeting in the Oval Office wreathed in smiles.

by Inderjit Badhwar, August 31

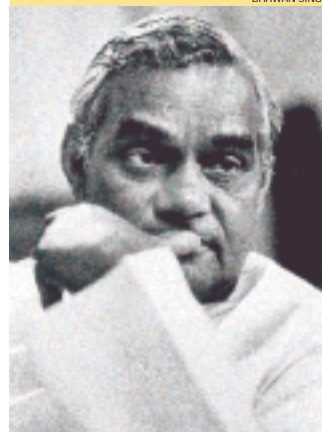
Story of the year AUGUST 31

Flashback

Atal Bihari Vajpayee on the struggle within

"We are all like a family and there is bound to be dissent in a democratic party."

The trouble with Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 55, is he is too transparent. A rotund, dhoti-cad orator given to overheated rhetoric, his misfortune is that he heads a party consisting in large part of hard core adherents of the Rashtriya Swyamsevak Sangh (RSS) and he cannot conceal the fact that the RSS bit chafes. Ever since the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) was formed on April 5,



BHAWAN SINGH

1980, Vajpayee, its president, has been playing out a battle of wits with his opponents within the party. The battle will have no winners or losers—such is the character of the BJP and the men who make up its ranks. But its highs and lows have ruffled the party's façade of solidarity. Vajpayee's differences, particularly with a powerful section of leadership led by General Secretary Lal Krishna Advani and vice-presidents Vijaya Raje Scindia and S.S. Bhandari, surface with almost predictable regularity. Last fortnight he drew fire from critics when he told a meeting in Andhra Pradesh's Telangana region that his party was prepared to cooperate with the Congress (I) government if it came out with "viable programmes" for solving "burning problems" like unemployment.

by Chaitanya Kalbag, April 15

High Point

The Asian Games

Every once in a while an event occurs that lifts a nation above mediocrity. Last fortnight was India's turn when the curtain went up on the biggest sporting event in Asia. The moment the Asiad flame burst into brilliance in the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, all doubts vanished. By the time the games reached the half-way mark, it was obvious that it was to be a spectacular success.

by Dilip Bobb, Amarnath K. Menon and Sreekant Khandekar, December 15



Sheikh's Death

The sun's rays had barely cleared the chill of the valley as the gun carriage, the Sheikh's body in a wooden casket heaped with flowers, son Farooq keeping vigil at his feet, began its journey escorted by lorry-loads of dignitaries, family, army brass, men of the Sikh light infantry with arms reversed, and the pipes and drums of the Ladakh Scouts and Naga Regiment playing the slow death march.

by Suman Dubey, September 30

Low Point

Oomph



ARUNDHATI ROY: She's the ultimate in chic ethnicity. Dusky, petite with a Twiggy figure wrapped in strings of chunky jewellery. At 22, Roy, an architect, has landed, "by sheer fluke" an assignment with the Italian edition of fashion magazine *Vogue*. The magazine is about to print a spread on Rajasthani jewellery, and will feature Roy in striking poses laden with the ethnic glitter. "I hate to be put in an academic slot," pouted Roy.

Eyecatchers, October 31

Oops

JAGANNATH MISHRA: Between giggles and gulps—like a drowning man coming up for air—the chief minister confronts visitors. His hands, flashing six rings nervously, finger first one pen, then another. When asked an uncomfortable question, such as his alleged obsession with tantrik rituals, his face turns a deep chocolate: "*Fareb hai...sab fareb hai*," he mutters, like some desperately beleaguered form of caged ape in a travelling circus.



by Sunil Sethi, September 15

POT CALLING KETTLE BLACK

Charan Singh

Don't ask about that foolish man Raj Narain. As long as he was my friend he was all right; he has gone mad now.

Charan Singh appears to be a mental case.

KETTLE CALLING POT BLACK

Devi Lal, after his expulsion from the Lok Dal

FIGURE IT OUT

Surgeons made **14** holes in Amitabh Bachchan's abdomen. Why not make it 18 holes and play golf on it, he asked.

1982

NTR Takes Andhra

// After NTR, cooperative federalism gave way to bargaining regionalism //

■ By F.D. Vakil

The year was a turning point in the political development of Andhra Pradesh, which also impacted the Indian political process. It saw the emergence of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) as a viable and credible alternative to the Congress(I). Since then, the electoral competition has been between the Congress(I) and TDP.

The emergence of TDP, a regional party with no major regional issues playing on emotive factors, gave a new thrust to the political process of India. The birth of the TDP and its subsequent role in capturing power showcases the interplay of social, political, economic and cultural determinants. A fresh paradigm emerged to understand the dynamics of Indian politics, the immediate impact being the demolition of the most often repeated political rhetoric, "Andhra Pradesh, a citadel of Congress(I)".

The political scenario of 1982 provided a fascinating study of how a regional party with no roots, no history nor an ideology could emerge as an alternative to Congress(I)'s one-party dominance. The founding of the TDP and its immediate success also proved a point that in the South, cinema and politics do gel.

Andhra Pradesh for the first time experienced politics of imagery at its best when film legend N.T. Rama Rao, a novice to politics, applied his cinematic craft and projected himself as a

reel to real champion. It was easy for a veteran of 300 films to create theatrical drama by taking on the Congress(I).

No single politician in India competed with Indira Gandhi as a crowd puller. NTR proved a major contender to her charisma. At this point one needs to understand TDP's emergence from the backdrop of India's social system. India's caste and class mobilisation and polarisation provided a scenario where two dominant communities, the Reddis

was weaned away from the Congress(I). Electoral history was made in 1983 when we look at the Scheduled Castes shift in support structure. The 1983 results also reveal that the Congress(I), which bagged over three-fourths of all Scheduled Castes seats in 1978, lost 68 per cent of the seats to the TDP in 1983.

During 1982-83, there was a new thrust to the regionalisation of Indian politics based largely on linguistic pride and sub-nationalism. Regional idioms such as Telugu self respect and Telugu humiliation dominated the political discourse and showed how emotive forces could be converted into political virtue.

The emergence of the TDP is historic because the party drew new contours in explaining the federal process—the shift from cooperative federalism to bargaining regionalism. TDP transformed

the politics of populism into a vote maximiser as an effective dimension in electoral politics. When it came to power, TDP demonstrated the skillful play of the politics of accommodation, resulting in the emergence of a new political order consisting of the young, educated and professional elite.

What's more, 1982 was a momentous year, for the birth of TDP created a political force which would play an important and effective role in balancing the power of the coalition system.

(The writer is a noted political scientist.)

RAGHU RAI



DEMOLITION MAN: N.T. Rama Rao was a reel to real-life champion

and the Kammas, came handy and helped NTR to strike a balance in search of political power.

It is interesting to note the impact of the political economy of Andhra Pradesh in the formation of the TDP. The Kamma community, largely responsible for the rising economy, felt the need to capture political power. Thus, the Kammas provided a strong support structure. Shifts in politics can be gauged from the fact that a significant support structure of Backward Classes