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Other State Matter

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The Hindu

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A familiar pattern, says Cong.

Party lashes out at the BJP for toppling the Narayanasamy govt. in Puducherry

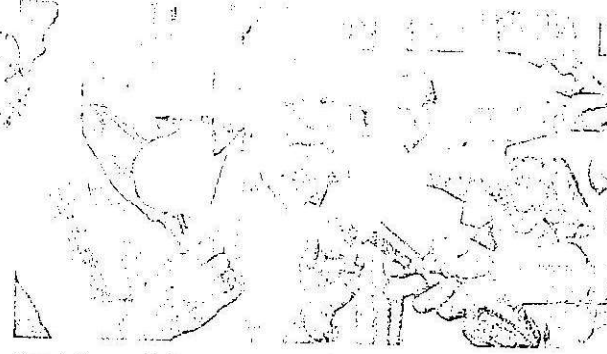
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

As the V. Narayanasamy government in Puducherry collapsed on Monday, Congress leaders lashed out at the BJP for "toppling" elected governments, with Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot alleging the saffron party had tried it in his State too.

The elected government in Puducherry became the second Congress government to have been dislodged in an identical manner in less than a year.

Last March, the Kamal Nath government in Madhya Pradesh lost power after 22 MLAs, many of them Jyotiraditya Scindia loyalists, resigned from the Assembly. Many of them eventually joined the BJP and have been re-elected.

Reacting to the developments in Puducherry, Mr. Gehlot, in a series of tweets, said this was yet another case of how the BJP was destabilising the Congress governments to grab power



Tough Times: V. Narayanasamy addressing the media after submitting his resignation on Monday. - T. SINGARAVELU

through unethical means.

"First, they created problems in running the administration through the Lieutenant Governor and now this has happened," Mr. Gehlot said. "Luring Congress MLAs has been their *modus operandi* in all Congress-ruled States. We saw this in Karnataka, M.P. & now in Puducherry. They tried it in Rajasthan but people of Rajasthan taught them a lesson."

In the past few years, open revolt against a Chief Minister followed by resigna-

tion of MLAs has been a common route to bring down State governments while escaping the provisions of the anti-defection law. The law requires two-thirds of the lawmakers to quit the parent party to legally merge with another party.

In 2018, the Congress-Jannata Dal(S) government led by H.D. Kumaraswamy collapsed after 15 MLAs from the two parties resigned.

"@BJP4India kills democracy again. Using ED, IT & other agencies, spending

crores of rupees they have toppled an elected govt," tweeted Dinesh Gundu Rao, the All India Congress Committee in charge of Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Goa.

While a section of the Congress leaders in Delhi believe that the fall of the Puducherry government may help the party with the "sympathy" factor and negate anti-incumbency, others believe it to be a warning sign for poll-bound Tamil Nadu. During the 2017 Assembly elections in Goa and Manipur, the Congress had emerged as the single largest party but the Governors had invited the BJP-led alliances in these States.

Pinarayi's charge

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan accused the BJP of replacing democracy with money and communalism. He said Congress MLAs had reduced the party to a commodity.

(With inputs from
T.N. Bureau)