Twitter Thread by Sreevidya Balasubramaniam



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My take on @AmitShah 's visit of Chennai 21 - 22 November.

Those interested in TN politics may read.

1. Amit Shah looked extremely pleased with the trip overall, evident from the way he got out of the cavalcade and walked.

I saw that rare smile on his face throughout his visit

He is also pleased with EPS's performance in the state - best implementation of central schemes.

Maybe reason for no anti-incumbency in the state, especially after last year's debacle.

Why is it important for Shah to be pleased with AIADMK's warm position towards BJP/ Shah?

It is important because the alliance is a two-way bridge. Shah needs AIADMK at the centre, especially in Rajyasabha more 'involved' to pass some of the heavy weight and controversial bills he has up his sleeve.

He is pleased because AIADMK is willing to partner. In exchange,

Shah may need to give cabinet position/s. I suppose a cabinet reshuffle is round the corner.

Two-way bridge because

a. It looked for some time BJP was a dead rubber for AIADMK post 2019 LS elections. This might mean that AIADMK may have decided to ditch BJP.

b. The old cry of BJP contesting alone still lingers in BJP leadership. This isn't good for now for two reasons:

~ That may inadvertently let DMK form a govt in TN

~ May make some key constitutional amendments Modi and Shah are planning at the centre difficult to pass

However, thanks to the hard working leadership under @Murugan_TNBJP , @annamalai_k and the likes, BJP has emerged a formidable player in the arena prompting AIADMK to continue the alliance with them.

Shah's visit has confirmed a mutual respect and acceptance.

Shah may have also gathered clear intelligence of Stalin's deepest fears and issues - some of which Stalin has openly agreed in their party meetings - that the contest is extremely tough.

Shah may have also got information on the misfired tactics of PKP.

So, he is happy.

2. I speculate from @sgurumurthy 's meeting with Shah in the dead of the night (hear it lasted a few hours), that they discussed Rajnikant among the many other issues of TN politics and wider (upcoming reforms?).

I deduce from this that Rajnikant is NOT forming a third front.

It's possible that they also discussed ways to get Rajnikant endorse the NDA alliance.

A tough move, but like Cho, SG might succeed considering his role in TN politics post JJ.

3. Seat sharing between AIADMK and BJP will be purely on winnability basis as clearly indicated by Shah in his address during the govt function. He spoke out on 'family politics'.

So, it is clear that the strategy is to ensure DMK does NOT win.

For that, BJP might agree to smaller share of seats where it is sure of win.

We must not take that as weakness of BJP or its leaders.

It will be done only to ensure winnability, which is mostly for AIADMK thanks to EPS's rising stature currently.

However, BJP will retain enough number of seats to ensure they could be king makers as pointed out by L Murugan a while ago.

They may negotiate enough seats to gain a double digit win. Will think more on these in the New Year.

Since AIADMK cadres are still intact and they are pro-Modi this time, votes might transfer, but it is easier to consolidate the 10% BJP votes towards AIADMK than otherwise.

So, this is very clear that fewer BJP seats can be expected from the alliance, but BJP will be second.

4. As I rightly predicted, Shah did not meet any actor, did not discuss alliance or seat sharing.

He seems to have set the tone, agreed on possible cabinet roles, larger outlook as national alliance, and approach to TN

election - maybe clarifying BJP's specific strategy.

5. I think if AIADMK did not object to Vel Yathrai, it wouldn't have become this big. So, agreeing to disagree on some key concepts of BJP is productive. A good confidence builder for public.

As a public, I would respect if alliance partners differ explicitly on various matters.

This will help keep all voices heard and cared for. This will be a promising new style of "no-compromise but together-for-larger-good alliance".

As is usual with Shah's style, other key people from the central administration will start descending in TN and Kerala soon.

I also speculate that Shah will pitch RSS in full swing this time. Remember how Ram Madhav helped J&K and NE?

Also Kerala in 2015?

I think that will happen for the first time in TN.

Amit Shah has visited Bengal, and TN, so I think his visit of Kerala is next. Please comment if you know about the plan.

I hope @surendranbjp and his work impresses Shah just as Murugan and team have done in TN. (He is not going to be happy with some people as I see it).

A word about the controversy on Amit shah 'speaking politics in govt function'.

The biggest govt function is the Parliament. Nothing but politics is spoken there day in and day out. No one has an issue?

Politics should not be in governance such as recruiting your own people in key positions like CPM in Kerala.

While developing and implementing policies/ law, schemes, no political bias should be taken.

But Ministers can speak politics wherever they go.

Overall, BJP's tone is set for TN.

Help AIADMK to come to power or BLOCK DMK from coming to power in 2021.

Grow at booth level exponentially over the next five years, and gain power in 2026.

Now, waiting for the Kerala visit.....