

UK may deport terror suspects to Pak

Written by Administrator

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Pitched against Rajiv Pratap Rudy of Bihar's ruling JD(U)-BJP combine and Salim Pervez of the BSP, the RJD veteran is aware that the going is getting tougher day by day. Hence, he is leaving no stone unturned in this supposed 'battle of attrition' of his vote base. The constituency (earlier known as Chapra) has remained backward though it has kept electing either Lalu or Rudy in the last 15 years or so. But this time, the RJD supremo's rustic charm will have to hold sway over the voters to give him any hope. He did win the 2004 battle against Rudy by nearly 60,000 margin, but now certain facts may upset his calculations. These are: the development mantra of chief minister Nitish Kumar, the three-way split in the UPA, and the BSP factor. The task is tricky, even daunting. That Nitish has charmed the electorate with visible developmental works on roads, flyovers and hospitals, has given the RJD powerhouse sleepless nights. Above all, the 2004 allies the Congress and Left are not with him any longer. Some of the areas which are dominated by his clan, Yadavs, have been moved out of the constituency, thanks to the delimitation process. The four railway factories which he has announced over the years are yet to show any signs of coming up. Bahadur Singh, a former professor of Botany in Chapra, told Deccan Herald: 'Things were very different in 2004 when jungle raj was prevailing here as it was all over the state. Abhi vikas ka badlaav aya hein (now it has changed into development). In 2004, the polling in the entire constituency was countermanded, still he won in the repolling.' Bholu Prasad, Lalu's election agent, said: 'The RJD will pull it off as it has a strong base of Yadavs who won in five of the six Assembly segments in the 2005 polls to Vidhan Sabha. The Congress has no base here so we don't have to worry.' Lalu's backers point out that statewide, in 2004, the RJD and LJP together garnered 39 per cent of the votes, which was more than the JD(U)-BJP combine's 37 per cent. But BJP leaders are quick to point out: 'It is chemistry rather than arithmetic which matters in Indian elections.' The BJP leaders say that the BSP would help the BJP immensely because of two factors: the dalit base of the BSP will vote for their candidate; and a good chunk of Muslims - the traditional support base of Lalu - will also vote for the BSP, since its candidate is a Muslim. 'Lalu's M-Y (Muslims-Yadav) formula will take some beating this time,' says Devender Gupta, a Nitish supporter. 'Nitish has given reservation to 'the most backward' among Muslims during panchayat elections and they will vote for Rudy.' Difficult task, yes, but wily Lalu has an escape route: he is contesting from Pataliputra, too, which should see him romp home safe.