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**Nadda elected
unopposed as
BJP president**

T.H. 21/1/2020

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Union Minister J.P. Nadda was on Monday elected unopposed as the BJP's national president, making him the 11th party chief.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was at the party headquarters to felicitate Mr. Nadda, 59, on his election, called him an "outstanding *karyakarta* [party worker]".

Mr. Modi said the event reflected the party's long-time policy of promoting workers vertically while expanding the party horizontally across the country. "That is the reason why generation after generation, we have leaders to take the party forward."

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NAME OF THE PAPER The Hindu

For Nadda, a steady rise to the top

He cut his teeth in the ABVP and in Himachal Pradesh before shifting to Delhi

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

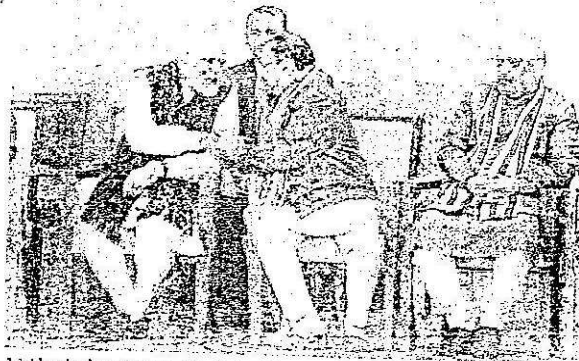
For J.P. Nadda, 59, being elected as the 11th president of the BJP tops off a steady rise from student politics in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the student wing of the RSS, to State politics in Himachal Pradesh and then an important stint in national politics since 2010.

Mr. Nadda, born to Krishna and Narain Lal Nadda, on December 2, 1960, did his schooling at St. Xavier's, Patna, and graduated from Patna College, Patna University.

He joined the ABVP in Patna and continued the association when he and his family moved back to their native Himachal Pradesh after his father retired from Patna University.

Student union chief

Here, Mr. Nadda joined Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla, for a law degree and remained active in student politics, becoming the first ABVP president of the stu-



At the helm: Prime Minister Narendra Modi with J.P. Nadda and Home Minister Amit Shah. *SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

dents' union there.

His organisational skills were recognised, and he was made the ABVP's organisational general secretary in Delhi between 1985 and 1989.

Those were heady days for not just the student movement but also for the BJP, which was coming out of its bad performance in the 1985 Lok Sabha election and raising the pitch for a Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Mr. Nadda's stint in Delhi helped him fight his first As-

sembly election in 1993. In all, he has won in three Assembly elections, and has been a Minister twice in the Himachal Pradesh government.

However, it was in 2010, when Union Minister Nitin Gadkari was the BJP president, that he got his big break in the organisation. Mr. Gadkari first made him national general secretary and then got him elected to the Rajya Sabha in 2012.

He was made a Minister in the first Narendra Modi go-

vernment, but returned to organisational work in the second. His role as Uttar Pradesh in-charge for the 2019 election was much appreciated, and he managed to carve out a valued, trustworthy space for himself in the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah equation soon.

This resulted in his being made the BJP's first working president in June 2019, the understanding being that he would be made president once Mr. Shah's tenure ended.

For Mr. Nadda, not only is the role of the third wheel in the Modi-Shah equation going to be a tightrope walk but will also be tough to follow in the footsteps of Mr. Shah, whose control over the organisation and meticulous electoral planning have acquired legendary proportions. The fact that he faces two tough elections immediately after taking over, in Delhi and Bihar, is significant. The BJP hopes his tenure will be as smooth as his rise to the top post.