

CHATTERBOX

Position vacant

Is the Tamil Nadu unit of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) going to get a chief anytime soon? Or is the state so unimportant to the party that it really doesn't matter whether there is a chief in place or not? The position has been vacant since Tamilisai Soundararajan was appointed governor of Telangana in September. Former Union minister and the BJP's former chief of the Tamil Nadu unit, Pon Radhakrishnan and BJP state unit's vice president and former state minister Nainar Nagenthiran flew to Delhi last week to hold consultations after they were summoned. From reports in local media, it seems that instead of having one president, the party might decide to have four working presidents who will be responsible for four regions in the state to beef up the BJP's prospects. The party's vice-president, B T Arasakumar, (one of many vice presidents) who earned the wrath of the leadership for praising M K Stalin's leadership skills earlier this month, joined the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) last week.

Problem of plenty

And if the BJP's Tamil Nadu unit is headless, the Congress seems to have many generals and no soldiers. The party's Bihar unit, for instance, not only has a President but four working presidents. The Chhattisgarh unit has a president and a working president (which begs the question as to what the president actually does, if it is the working president who does all the work). The Delhi unit has a president and three working presidents. The Gujarat unit has a president and two working presidents. And the Jharkhand unit has a president and five working presidents. Amazing!

DID THEY REALLY SAY THAT?



"It is a witch hunt. It is a sham. It is a hoax. Nothing was done wrong. Zero was done wrong. I think it is a horrible thing to be using the tool of impeachment, which is supposed to be used in an emergency. And it would seem many, many, many years apart"

US President Donald Trump after the impeachment against him moved to the House of Representatives, December 13

CHECKLIST THE COMPLEXITIES OF THE CITIZENSHIP AMENDMENT BILL

- Chairman, North East Students Organisation, Samuel Jyrwa: "We have already been facing a problem of illegal migration from Bangladesh in border states like Meghalaya, Assam and Tripura. Now instead of protecting us, they want to legalise all these infiltrators."
- Kabindra Chetia Phukan, president of Veer Lachit Sena Assam: "If this entire fiasco ends up hurting the rights of the indigenous people, we will intensify our protests. We are ready to appeal in the Supreme Court also."
- Lalmachhuana, vice president of Young Mizo Association (YMA): "We were primarily against CAB but since Mizoram has been kept out, we're fine with it."
- Hawa Bagang, president of All Arunachal Pradesh Students Union: "We are happy with the exemption to Inner Line Permit (ILP) states, but we are obligated to oppose it as we

- are part of NESO".
- Ninoto Awomi, president of Naga Students Federation: "Even if a small portion in the northeast comes under the bill, the entire region will be affected because of our porous borders,"
- Ningthouja Lancha of Manipur People Against Citizenship Amendment Bill: "It is a misunderstanding to think that ILP will protect influx of foreigners. If that was the case, why do we have a Chakma Autonomous Council in Mizoram?" (referring to Chakma refugees from Bangladesh living in the region for decades.)
- Baichung Bhutia, Hamro Sikkim Party: "We are very close to Bangladesh and there are a lot of issues in Bengal and other Northeast states. So in the long run even Sikkim can get affected. We do not support CAB"



OPINION

P CHIDAMBARAM

We are wrecking the Constitution from within

Sir, I will take less than ten minutes. My colleague, Mr. Sibal, will take the rest of the time. We have a Citizenship Act in this country. It recognises citizenship by birth, citizenship by descent, citizenship by registration, citizenship by naturalisation and citizenship by incorporation of territory. These are universal principles.

Now, this Government is introducing a new category called 'citizenship by arbitrary executive fiat' and asking this Parliament to support the Government in passing what is patently an unconstitutional law. My friends have spoken about it; others will speak about it. We are elected representatives of the people. The Constitution has asked us, in the first instance, to judge the constitutionality of a Bill. We cannot pronounce on the constitutionality. But, we have a responsibility to pass what is constitutional. Not all of us are lawyers. In fact, not all of us should be lawyers. We should be from every walk of life. And, from every walk of life, we must bring our collective wisdom and commonsense to say is this constitutional or not. What are we doing in this House? What we did in the other House and what we are doing in this House is abdicating our primary responsibility in favour of another of the three entities/end organs of the Constitution. What we are doing is: You are pushing the issue to the lap of the Judges. Do you think it will stop here? It will not stop here. It will eventually go before the Judges. And, the Judges are respectable people. But, they are unelected Judges. Unelected Judges and unelected lawyers will ultimately decide what we do is constitutional or not! This is a slap on the face of Parliament. Parliamentarians are being asked to do something unconstitutional and then the baby is passed on to the judiciary and, in the judiciary, lawyers and Judges will decide what you have done is constitutional or not. Knowing this is unconstitutional, I am afraid, this Government is ramming

The Constitution has asked us, in the first instance, to judge the constitutionality of a Bill. We cannot pronounce on the constitutionality. But, we have a responsibility to pass what is constitutional

through this Bill in order to advance its Hindutva agenda. This is a sad day. Thankfully, we are not amending the Constitution; we are only making a law. And, I am absolutely confident and I am absolutely clear in my mind that this law will be struck off.

Sir, I have a few questions and I wanted to know who in the Government found answers to these questions. If the Law Department has advised answers

to these questions, please ask the hon. Home Minister to lay the opinion of the Law Ministry on the Table of the House. If it is a Home Ministry itself, in its wisdom, found answers to questions, let us see the final note placed by the Secretary before the hon. Home Minister. If it is the Attorney General who has been consulted – the Constitution has a provision to invite the Attorney General – please call the Attorney General to this House. We will ask him these questions. But, somebody has to take responsibility for answers to these questions.

These questions are well-known. Let me read it very rapidly. How do you group three countries – Afghanistan, Pakistan and Bangladesh – and leave out the other neighbours? How do you identify only six religious groups – Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian – and leave out others like Ahmadis, Hazaras and Rohingyas?

Ibrahamic religions are three – Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Why have you included Christianity and left the other two? Why have you excluded Sri Lankan Hindus and Bhutan's Christians? Look at the exclusionary, inclusionary hyphenation. Sri Lanka is excluded, Hindus are included! Bhutan is excluded, Christians are included! When you hyphenate the effectives, Sri Lankan Hindus are excluded, Bhutan's Christians are excluded. This exclusionary, inclusionary hyphenation is beyond commonsense and logic. Why only religious persecution? Are people not persecuted for political reasons? Are people not persecuted on linguistic grounds? Are people not persecuted by unleashing internal wars against them? Why only religious persecution? Why not every kind of persecution?

Six, does or does not the Bill violate the three fundamental elements of Article 14 of the Constitution? First, equality before law; unequals cannot be treated as equals. Second, unreasonable or irrational classification. And, there is a third element, which most people forget, Judge-made laws are the third element. Even if unequals are not treated as equals or equals are treated unequally, even if the classification is reasonable, it can be struck down on the ground that it is arbitrary. Arbitrariness is writ large on the face of this Bill.

Now, I want to know who will give answer to these questions. Please let us have the answers. Why are Parliamentarians being told that you will not give answers to these questions and they can go to court and find answers? Let's have answers to the questions. Let somebody take responsibility for answers saying, "Yes, the Attorney General of India has answered these questions. These are our answers and, therefore, this Bill is here".

I dare the Government to lay the opinion of the Law Department; I dare the Government to invite the Attorney General to this House to answer our questions. So, what we are doing today is wrecking the Constitution from within. A small part of the Constitution is sought to be wrecked and demolished by this insidious Bill. Fortunately, we are three organs of the State. The Executive is complicit; the Legislature is being invited to collaborate; hopefully, the Judiciary will strike it down and will save India. December.

Edited excerpts from a speech by Congress IMP, P Chidambaram, on The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the Rajya Sabha, 11 December



ILLUSTRATION BY BINAY SINHA

The ambitious Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PMJAY) was first launched in September, 2018 in Ranchi, Jharkhand. The scheme provided an insurance cover of ₹5 lakh to 100 million 'poor and vulnerable' families identified by the socio-economic caste census of 2011. By December 2, 2019, PMJAY had covered over 6.8 million hospitalisations worth ₹7,160 crore and has issued over 67 million e-cards to beneficiaries. Indu Bhushan, CEO, AB-PMJAY and the National Health Authority (NHA), tells **Swagata Yadavar** what has worked and what hasn't. Edited Excerpts:

'Before expanding, need to consolidate'

How has the first year of PMJAY been? What has been working, and what has not?

In the first year, the momentum has been quite good and we are quite pleased with the way the scheme has rolled out. We have to expand it; there is huge disparity amongst the states, because some states have started the scheme for the first time. When you have to create an ecosystem to start a new scheme, it takes time. This is what is happening in Uttar Pradesh (UP) and Bihar. Also, these states have poorer infrastructure to provide services.

The portability feature has proved to be quite handy. [Portability allows patients seek healthcare in any empanelled hospital anywhere in the country]. For example, 10,000 people have gone outside UP to Uttarakhand-most of them to Rishikesh AIIMS [All India Institute of Medical Sciences]. Many people are going to Delhi. Similarly, Bihar is sending people outside because they don't have health infrastructure.

In terms of recipient states, Delhi is the national healthcare provider and Gujarat and Maharashtra are other recipients in bigger states. We need to improve the performance of the scheme in the green-field states. We need to work on awareness generation and strengthen the supply of services in these states. For that we are working with NITI Aayog [the Centre's policy think-tank] to understand how we can provide incentives for

new hospitals to come out in these places. In some cases, for states which are far away like North-East and some of the islands like Andaman and Lakshadweep, we are working to provide transport cost to the mainland--because it is the major cost component in these places.

We are trying to improve awareness in general, as well as provision and quality of services. We are also trying to get more and more hospitals on board.

We have now also revised our packages. Earlier, some providers had indicated that rates were low and so we are working on that. Our aim is to get all the big hospitals to our scheme.

To ensure quality of services, we are working with the department of health research at ICMR [Indian Council of Medical Research] to develop standard treatment workflow. Our IT systems will ensure that those workflows are followed.

Does this take care of unnecessary treatments that happen in the private sector? Around 3,000 cases of fraud worth Rs 4.5 crore were discovered during audits, said AB-PMJAY annual report 2019.

We are building some checks and balances--like in hip replacement, we are putting in place boards that will examine whether those procedures are required. We are also working on

cancer care so that the right amount of treatment is given--not over or under treatment. If the person needs chemotherapy, radiation, or surgery, that should be decided by qualified treatment provider. Similarly in cardiovascular disease, we have a system where they could scrutinise whether the person needs a stent or if the hospital has prescribed a stent to earn money.

Next is the detection and prevention of fraud and abuse. For that we are strengthening our IT system and when we find some patterns [of malpractice and fraud], we come down heavily on that.

Every week we share with states, the potential fraud cases based on our analysis of the data. We are also finalising a company which will help us with forensic analysis and big data analysis and give us alerts that we can share with states. We are developing the capacity with the states so that they could do it themselves. Finally, we are improving our IT system and have come up with a tool called 'Zero', which will be more robust, more user-friendly, more secure and interoperable.

We provide those triggers, and many of the fraud cases have been detected. Till now, 300 hospitals have been suspended, we have claimed the money back and FIRs [first information reports] have been launched.

At an event in November 2019, Alok Kumar, senior advisor to Niti Aayog, spoke about a plan for health systems to cater to the middle class--which is currently not covered in any scheme. Are there any plans to broaden this pool of beneficiaries?

We are only one year old and right now we have to consolidate what we are doing before expanding. Our aim is to strengthen the ecosystem for providing services for health insurance.

Also, our database is very old. It is a 2011 database so we have to clean it up and exactly identify the people still left out and how to make them part of the scheme.

Once we have covered all the poor people, the call has to be taken by the government whether they want to expand and bring in [the middle class]. So the vision document that Mr Alok Kumar had shared recently shows the long-term vision. But when we go to them, we want to be sure that we have a system and an ecosystem ready.

Is the addition of new beneficiaries being done by the NHA or through various government departments?

We are not adding new beneficiaries, we are only identifying beneficiaries who have been left out. That call [of adding beneficiaries], the government has to take.

So is a list being enumerated?

I would not say enumerated, but we are looking at the group of people who are being left out.

For example, we are working with other ministries: Like the ministry of labour is prepared to pay for all the construction workers and bidi workers, so we will include them. Similarly, we are looking to include workers of micro, small and medium enterprises [MSMEs] in collaboration with the MSME ministry. We have also signed an MOU [memorandum of understanding] with the ESI [Employees' State Insurance], and we are

working with ESI to consolidate those workers.

Since PMJAY has the advantage of having a big pool, has it brought down the cost of medicines?

About the medicine cost, I don't know. In India, the medicine cost is quite low anyway. Medicines comprise a bigger share of out of pocket expenditure. For example, 70% of household cost on health is on medicines.

Now, instead of the beneficiary paying of it, we are paying for that. But we have not conducted a study to show that the costs have come down but hopefully as the scheme becomes deeper, the cost will come down. Not only the cost of drugs and pharmaceuticals but also that of implants and devices should come down.



INDU BHUSHAN

Chief executive officer, Ayushman Bharat and National Health Authority

An October 2019 Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry report said that the rates are not viable for private hospitals to make a profit or even survive and they are going through a slump.

We have revised the rate and we have taken into account all the inputs that we have received from various industry associations.

Do you have insights about how it has improved care in rural areas?

It's been only one year so we can't expect a huge change. We are seeing some development in that direction and many district hospitals are getting more money. They are improving their infrastructure, they are bridging the gap.

We are also seeing that many private players are planning to expand their operations in tier-2 and tier-3 cities which may help in further expansion.

Are the funds for the scheme enough? In 2019-20, ₹6,500 was allocated to the scheme while it is estimated that ₹10,000 crore is needed.

They are more than enough — since the uptake of the scheme was not that much. We had not used the entire amount, so I think money has never been a problem for this scheme.

What are the challenges that you foresee?

There are huge number of challenges: How to reach the last mile, how to ensure the quality of services, how to ensure that no frauds take place and how to ensure IT system continues to work and there are no glitches.

We work on all these every day. We get feedback that due to connectivity, the services are not available in some places. We need to respond to that. In general, we get the feedback that many poor people are being missed out. Those are always there.

This scheme takes care of tertiary care, but what about secondary and primary care because that is where more people are affected? Catastrophic expenditure is for tertiary care, but a lot of it is paid out of pocket at the secondary and primary level.

We are hoping that once we have very strong health and wellness centres, they will take care of much of the primary and secondary care. The government system has to be stronger to provide free drugs and diagnostics. For tertiary and for catastrophic expenditure, we have PMJAY services.

Source: Indiaspend

Chasing the stars

A 19-year-old physics undergrad student has started a venture that helps schools set up their own astronomy labs, writes Sneha Bhattacharjee

If you've the passion to do something big, you'll pursue it with all your might. Nineteen year old Aryan Mishra believes in this wholeheartedly. Son of a newspaper vendor, Mishra has achieved what many at his age might not dare to — From discovering an asteroid at 14 to setting up his venture at 18, and also being a TEDX speaker. His love for the cosmos began in class 5. Often gazing at the night sky, he'd be keen to know in depth about the tiny white shining objects and beyond. His desire to buy a telescope and study astronomy didn't really bode well with his parents who could hardly manage to fund his schooling. So, Mishra saved up on his pocket money for over a year and half and bought his first telescope at the age of 13. Since then, there was no looking back. While pursuing his Class XII, Mishra set up a venture by the name of Spark Astronomy after borrowing money from his friends. The venture helps school set up astronomy labs for children.

"At first, it was extremely difficult to convince schools. They all wanted testimonials

etc to know whether our venture has tasted success. Meanwhile I started worrying about how I would pay my friends back," says Mishra. He realised in order to have a beginning, it was necessary to offer some incentives to the school. "So, I gave almost ₹25,000 discount to the first school on the entire cost," he adds. Mishra and his team of two approach various schools to raise awareness about the importance of astronomy labs and pitch their offer of helping them set it up. Once the proposal is accepted, they tie up with interior designers to assemble things and also aid in the purchasing of equipment, books, as well as, other resources such as telescopes, planispheres, and lunar maps. The venture charges ₹3 lakh from schools for his offering. Most schools recover this from students by collecting an average minimal sum of ₹60 every year.

"Many private schools have astronomy clubs and charge a whopping ₹10,000 or above from students who're willing to be a part of the club. Now that is a sum not every child can afford. I want every child to have accessibility to these labs so that they too can observe the sky and aim for the stars," he says.

It is from his own personal hardships that

Mishra has learnt to do what he is doing now. Not many approved of his desire to learn more about astronomy. His parents and friends hardly paid attention until at the age of 14 when Mishra was awarded for discovering an asteroid as part of an outreach programme hosted by the Astronomical Society of India (ASI) in 2014. "It is not everyday that the son of a newspaper vendor figures on the front pages," he recalls.

From being able to give lectures alongside former NASA Astronaut Nicole Stott to having his idol Rakesh Sharma write a message to him, Mishra has taken it upon himself to spread his love for the cosmos and its discovery. He holds skype sessions and classes with students across the length and breadth of the country as well as across the globe. "I don't want any child to feel leftout. I remember how my friends would ridicule me for dreams. I want every child to explore the unknown and harbour bigger dreams," says, the 19-year-old who's pursuing a BSc in physics from Ashoka University.

Astronomy as a subject is not well integrated in the education system today. Thereby, very few students are exposed to the know-hows and opportunities within the field. "The idea of starting a venture was to bridge this gap. We not only help schools build the layout



One of the astronomy labs set up by Mishra and his team from Spark Astronomy

and interiors of these labs, but also instal equipments," says Mishra. His venture is already in talks with the central government to set up over 500 such labs across all the Kendriya and Navodaya Vidyalayas. He has also been approached by the NITI Aayog for a collaboration with Atal Tinkering Labs.

"Had I not seen hardships myself, I don't think I would have been able to follow my passion so well," he rues.

Boris’ electoral bonanza

But how he will ‘Get Brexit Done’ is an open question

There can be little doubt that the Conservative Party’s emphatic electoral victory underlines the electorate’s hopes that the government would finally “Get Brexit Done”, just as Boris Johnson has promised. The Conservatives won a decisive majority (365 seats in the 650-seat House of Commons) that the party has not seen since 1987, thanks to an unequivocal messaging (including its subliminal promises of keeping out job-snatching immigrants) that resonated strongly in the unemployment-ridden Midlands, which have been Labour strongholds for

decades. This authoritative performance frees Mr Johnson of the party’s reliance on an Irish unionist party to get a withdrawal deal through Parliament. No surprise, the pound staged its biggest rally in almost three years and the FTSE 250 rocketed to a record high as house-builder, bank and utility stocks surged after the election results (as did Tata Motors in India, since its subsidiary JLR derives a fifth of its sales from the UK).

The mandate ends the possibility of reversing Brexit via a referendum or revoking Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty, which outlines the exit process, but the timetable for Mr

Johnson to make good on his campaign promise is challenging. He has until January 31, 2020 — a thrice-extended deadline — to secure Parliamentary approval for a withdrawal deal (the treaty that will govern the terms of the UK’s exit from the EU). The principal sticking point here remains the Northern Irish border, the UK’s only land border with the EU (via the Republic of Ireland). His predecessor, Theresa May, sought to satisfy Irish unionist allies by avoiding a “hard border” and keeping the whole of the UK (including Northern Ireland) in the EU until the new relationship is negotiated, a programme that pleased nobody because it weakened the UK’s position in the interim. Mr Johnson’s scheme sought to make a distinction by drawing a border in the Irish Sea. Northern Ireland would continue to follow EU single market rules on goods and operate a dual tariff sys-

tem, applying the EU’s common external tariff on any goods entering Northern Ireland but destined for the EU. This would require additional border checks and barriers to trade between Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The rest of the UK would exit the EU customs union, leaving it free to negotiate trade agreements with other non-EU countries (the US and India, for instance). This agreement actually passed a second reading but lawmakers — including Conservatives — rejected a fast-track timetable to vote it into law. The party’s manifesto did not offer details on how any subsequent withdrawal deal would be different. In fact, Mr Johnson is now likely to face the prospect of recurring tensions with Northern Ireland, with whom a peace agreement was signed only 21 years ago. The significant electoral gains for the anti-Brexit separatist Scottish National Party will compound

his problems. That he understands this — including the fact that his party gained less than 2 per cent of the vote share — was clear in his post-victory speech in which he stressed the need for unity.

Finally, even assuming the withdrawal deal is ratified by both Parliament and the EU, Mr Johnson will have till December 2020 to negotiate and ratify a full agreement on the future relationship. Given that the withdrawal agreement has taken more than three years and is still to be ratified, a new EU-UK trade deal, which involves issues of far greater complexity, is unlikely by that time. Mr Johnson then has the option of extending, just once, the transition period by one or two years, and the deadline for that is July 2020. The prospect of the UK exiting the EU without a deal and all the uncertainties that this might entail remains a very real possibility still.

Fixing the power sector

The electricity sector’s ills call for sustained intervention by the Central government, which should engage with the states to draw up turnaround strategies

AJAY SHANKAR

The financial health of the power sector is causing anxiety, with even the Reserve Bank of India drawing attention to the risk it poses to state government finances. The last bailout package, UDAY (Ujjwal Discom Assurance Yojana), was put in place by the central government in 2015. Under it, the state governments took over 75 per cent of the debt of the distribution companies (or discoms), and the rest they could service with lower-interest bonds.

The states’ ratio of gross fiscal deficit to gross domestic product went up by as much as 0.7 percentage points, as a result. There were commitments to reduce aggregate technical and commercial losses as well as raise tariffs. These commitments have not been fulfilled by many states and an UDAY-2 is in the pipeline. Overall debt levels of the discoms are creeping up to pre-UDAY levels.

Power sector reforms should have restored the financial health of the sector years back. The Electricity Act 2003 provided for the setting up of independent Central and State Regulatory Commissions. The Regulatory Commissions had to determine tariffs, which were to lead to “recovery of cost of electricity in a reasonable manner”. The Commissions were to also reduce cross-subsidies.

The Tariff Policy of 2005 mandated that the State Regulatory Commission would notify a roadmap within six months, according to which, latest by the end of 2010-11, tariffs would be within +/- 20 per cent of the average cost of supply. The state governments were required under the Act to “pay in advance” the subsidy to the discom if they wanted any class of consumers to have a tariff lower than what the Regulatory Commission determined.

The key premise of the Electricity Act was that state governments would “let go”. Tariffs would be determined by the independent Regulatory Commissions, which would also protect consumers’ interests. State governments could give farmers free electricity, but had to pay for it from the budget. In reality, however, the political leadership across states has yet to fully accept the spirit of the Act. The discoms continue to be owned and micro-managed by state governments. They seek tariff increases only after clearance by the political leadership.

The Independent Regulators raise tariffs only within the band that they sense is acceptable politically. Being retired civil servants and technocrats, they have a finely honed sense of what would be acceptable. So, the expectation that tariffs would result in recovery of cost of supply has been belied. As state governments are perennially short of fiscal resources, their payment of subsidies to the discoms is usually in arrears, notwithstanding the provision in the law of advance payment.

The Electricity Act provides for open access to all consumers above 1 Mw, separating content from carriage for them, with a cross-subsidy surcharge to compensate the discom for its loss of a subsidising consumer. Cross-subsidies have hardly come down and, as a result, the surcharge for open access is still too high. The use of open access remains a marginal phenomenon. There is hardly any point in now contemplating further legislative changes for separation of carriage from content for all consumers, before getting better implementation of existing provisions.

The situation, however, varies considerably across states. Gujarat turned around when Prime Minister Narendra Modi was chief minister. Separation of feeders, which took electricity for irrigation from those that went to village settlements, was a creative solution. Farmers got practically free electricity for



Reforms would have restored the financial health of the power sector years back. The overall debt levels of the distribution companies are creeping up to levels that prevailed before the 2015 bailout

irrigation, but only when they needed it. However, they got uninterrupted supply of electricity in their homes in the villages, and paid for it fully.

Excluding agriculture, the sector became financially viable, with tariffs reflecting costs, with improved governance. For agriculture, supply was effectively rationed and the subsidy for free supply contained to manageable levels. The state’s power sector became commercially viable and provides quality supply to all consumers. Its power companies consistently get the highest ratings.

Sheila Dixit, as chief minister of Delhi, brought in the private sector to run electricity distribution in 2001 with the full support of the then NDA government at the centre. She recognised that only the private sector with independent regulation could set the sector right in the then prevailing commercial, administrative and political culture of Delhi. Losses in distribution, then around 50 per cent, have come down to under 10 per cent, and the quality of supply and service is getting better. The sector is no longer a financial drain on the Delhi government. So much so that it can now afford to offer a subsidy from the budget for free consumption of 200 units per month.

These examples illustrate that focused political

leadership in a state can set the sector financially right and put it on a sustainable trajectory of commercial viability. Avoidable losses can be reduced through better governance, which has been made easier by technology, smart grids, smart pre-paid meters and real time effective energy audit. Where sustainable governance improvement is unlikely in the short term in states such as UP and Bihar, varying degrees of private sector participation — ranging from outright privatisation, to franchisee arrangements, to outsourcing of metering, billing and collection — would be the way forward.

Franchisee arrangements in Uttar Pradesh (in Agra and Kanpur) have shown encouraging results. Tariff increases are, however, unavoidable to get revenue to go above cost per unit. And increasing tariffs should not be politically difficult if farmers are excluded and the lifeline consumption tariff for the first 100 units is not raised. After all, consumers do pay for increased petrol and diesel prices and have, as voters, not imposed real costs on their political leaders.

The situation is really grave in a few states. This needs the political attention of the central leadership and engagement with the political leadership in the weak states. This alone can result in a state-specific turnaround strategy that could be implemented in a time bound-manner with the help of the centre.

The writer is distinguished fellow, Teri, and former secretary, DIPP

How to transform an organisation

ALPESH CHADDHA & ANANT KASIBHATIA

With disruptions fast becoming the new normal, a “business as usual” approach is no longer sufficient for 21st century organisations to compete and thrive. This has prompted many to embrace what has become one of the most commonly used terms in business: Transformation.

We believe true transformation is a fundamental, enterprise-wide shift in the way an organisation operates, with equal focus on both performance and organisational health. Such transformations are difficult to achieve and harder to sustain.

Surveys have shown that 70 per cent of executives say their companies’ transformations failed to deliver and sustain impact. With over 100 successful case examples in the past decade, we have identified typical failure modes, as well as strategic choices that improve the odds of success. Let us start by looking at the major pitfalls.

LACK OF A BURNING PLATFORM

Transformations require a compelling case for change, to shift underlying mindsets and behaviours. The purpose needs to be clear in the minds of the leadership, to help create a buy-in across the organisation. Without this purpose and urgency, organisations are unable to move to a new way of working.

Good-to-great transformation journeys need to go a step further and require leaders to articulate the “why” to energise the organisation. If not done properly, momentum could fizzle out, intensity is lost, initiatives are not monitored, people move on, and challenges continue to mount.

One such case study is of a global logistics organisation where employees faced a new transformation agenda each year. The leadership failed to create an impetus for change — one that would force the organisation to pause and rethink its way of operating. Only after creating a compelling change story could the organisation start to make meaningful progress on its transformation initiatives.

NOT INVOLVING A CRITICAL MASS OF PEOPLE

Several transformations launch with a small task force, and the rest of the organisation gets involved only to help execute changes in their areas of expertise. Studies in neuroscience suggest that people are more likely to accept something if they are involved in decision-making rather than if it is forced upon them. People need to have a sense of agency, to change.

IGNORING CULTURE, MINDSETS, AND CAPABILITIES

While building employee capabilities, it is critical to understand the culture and mindsets that need to shift to enable them to perform at peak potential. Our research shows that 70 per cent of transformations fail because of insufficient focus on culture and capabilities. Rather than treating it

holistically, capability-building is often an afterthought during a transformation, or is limited to training people on new systems and processes introduced as part of the transformation.

KEY ELEMENTS DURING TRANSFORMATIONS

Set the direction at the start: Our research shows that a clear and compelling aspiration from the outset of the transformation journey increases the chances of success threefold. When deeply rooted in the case for change, this aspiration also inspires conviction across the organisation.

Clearly communicating the aspiration as part of the change story is just as important as defining the aspiration. Chief executive officers (CEOs) who drive successful transformations do not merely communicate plans to employees, they share a story that engages the entire organisation. According to data from Quantified Communications, a platform for communication skills, messages that include well-crafted stories are 21 per cent more memorable and 35 per cent more persuasive.

Energise the organisation: Our experience has shown that a transformation can only be achieved when at least 40 per cent of the organisation actively supports the change. A CEO must ensure the entire lead-

ership is not only supporting the transformation agenda, but also role modeling the expected behavioural change. This requires deep discussions with each leader to align personal aspirations with those of the organisation.

The next stage is to develop a critical mass of change agents and focus on building their capabilities. In one of our transformations for a major power sector player, the CEO mandated the setting up of a capability building academy with a dean and trainers to ensure all best practices were codified and adopted across the organisation as part of a training calendar.

Link “talent to value” in staffing: This is done by identifying the roles that drive significant value creation, staffing them with the best talent, and then upgrading their capabilities. These roles can rest anywhere in the organisation and are not necessarily at the highest levels. There needs to be greater focus on the development of people in these roles, to ensure they are put through a structured leadership development journey. The performance metrics of these roles need to be tightly tied to the transformation outcomes and their incentives linked to the success.

CEOs shifting focus to these critical elements, along with monitoring outcome metrics, can see change scaling and cascading to day-to-day working — which is the true test of success of a transformation.

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▶ OTHER VIEWS

Modi 2.0 is fulfilling its stated goals, but there are big risks

It will fuel unrest in key regions, divert attention from economic concerns

The Narendra Modi-led government in its first term had an incremental approach to its core ideological issues. But in its second term, riding on a second consecutive majority, the Modi government is firmly focused on fulfilling its domestic ideological agenda. In the first session of the 17th Lok Sabha, it passed the triple talaq legislation; it strengthened the legal framework governing the National Investigative Agency, and widened the scope of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. It, most significantly, effectively abrogated Article 370 and reorganised Jammu and Kashmir. In this session, the government has pushed through the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill. Home minister Amit Shah, who has piloted all these legislations, has now promised a nationwide National Register of Citizens.

Put it all together and it is clear that Mr Modi and Mr Shah have interpreted the 2019 mandate as a mandate to fulfil their key ideological goals. Two features of this project are apparent. The first is a clear focus in ensuring that the Indian State reflects the priorities and concerns of the Hindu majority as represented by the BJP. And the second is a national security push, where the government believes a strong security-centric



approach relying on the State’s coercive arms will lead to order. It runs the risk of alienating minorities, creating unrest in regions, such as Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast, where India has already witnessed strife, and taking away attention from core economic and development concerns.

Hindustan Times, December 13

Action at last against LeT chief

FATF must stay the course with Pakistan

The framing of charges against Hafiz Saeed by an anti-terrorism court in Lahore is the direct result of actions that the international anti-terror watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force, has taken

and further threatens to take against Pakistan if it does not crack down on terror. Pakistan is on the FATF “grey list”, and even if it is never moved to the blacklist, the possibility is dire. A blacklisting by the FATF, an organisation de facto run by the US Treasury department, would be ruinous for Pakistan. This is why it is now seen to be taking action it previously dragged its feet on — acting against terrorist groups with an address in the country, including the head of the Lashkar-e-Toiba/Jamat ud Dawa, found responsible by

that country’s own investigators for planning and carrying out the 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks. The Pakistan military has used these groups as a hedge in the region.

On July 3, Pakistan’s Counter Terrorism Department booked Saeed and a dozen other leaders under terror financing and money-laundering clauses of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), 1997. Saeed, now, has to appear at a trial that will be held every day. It is important for India that the FATF stays the course with Pakistan because it is the only body that has had a demonstrable effect on the country’s approach to terror groups based on its soil.

The Indian Express, December 15

Banks must disclose NPAs

Else, it endangers the entire system

Even four years after the Reserve Bank directed all banks to come clean on their financial health by declaring bad loans and making adequate provisions, nine banks, including the nation’s largest, State Bank of India, have admitted to under-reporting bad loans to the extent of over ₹20,000 crores in the financial year 2018-19. This under-reporting or divergence (as described by banks) was discovered during an RBI assessment. The errant banks, which disclosed this information to stock exchanges in compliance with Sebi regulations, include SBI, Central Bank of India, Union Bank of India, Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, UCO Bank, Indian Bank, Yes Bank and Lakshmi Vilas Bank. Though the divergence

could stem from differences of opinion on when a loan is bad, it will have material impact on bank profits. For instance, if SBI correctly declared its bad loans at the end of 2018-19, it would have to set aside ₹12,036 crores for provisioning — resulting in a loss of ₹6,968 crores, instead of a profit after tax of ₹862 crores as reported earlier. Banks, however, must understand that hiding such market sensitive information from investors amounts to fraud. At the macro level, the under-reporting of financial stress — like a government’s practice of hiding uncomfortable reports — shows that nobody has any idea about the country’s real financial health.

The Asian Age, December 13

THE MASK IS off and the claws have been bared. Project Hindu Rashtra is gaining speed. The engine is the Prime Minister, Mr Narendra Modi; at the wheel is the Home Minister, Mr Amit Shah. The designer/engineer, the RSS, is watching with great interest.

The only surprise is that the BJP is pushing its agenda so quickly after its massive election victory: criminalisation of triple talaq, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam, the repeal of Article 370 of the Constitution and, now, the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill are part of an elaborate plan to advance Project Hindu Rashtra.

The common intent behind these moves is to send a blunt and unambiguous message to the Muslims of India that they are not equal citizens of this country and to reiterate the Golwalkar-Savarkar theory of 'India is a Hindu nation'.

The Citizenship Act, 1955, recognises citizenship by birth; citizenship by descent; citizenship by registration; citizenship by naturalisation; and citizenship by incorporation of territory. All other persons living in India would be 'illegal migrants'. The Foreigners Act, 1946, and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920, would apply to them and they are liable to be expelled. The religion of a person — whether a citizen or an 'illegal migrant' — was alien to the concept of Indian citizenship.

All the above have changed with the passage of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019. The Bill is suspect. In fact, many scholars and former judges have opined that it is unconstitutional.

Many questions, no answers

What does the Bill do? It picks three countries — Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan. It picks six 'minority communities' — Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians. It *presumes* that any person belonging to one of the six communities from one of the three countries who had entered India on or before December 31, 2014, was '*persecuted*' in home country and could, therefore, by an *executive order*, be exempted from the provisions of the Foreigners Act and the Passport (Entry into India) Act. Such a person shall not be an 'illegal migrant'.

In short, the amendment Bill has introduced a new route to acquire citizenship — citizenship by executive fiat. Questions arise, they were asked, but the government had no answers:

1. Why were only three countries picked for special treatment leaving out other neighbouring countries such as Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Bhutan and Nepal?

2. Why were only six minority communities picked leaving out other communities — discriminated in the home country because they do not belong to the majority — such as Ahmadiyyas, Hazaras, Balochis, Rohingya, Jews etc?

3. Abrahamic religions are three: why was Christianity alone included, leaving out Judaism and Islam?

4. Why were Hindus included, but Sri Lankan Hindus excluded? Why were Christians included but Bhutanese

ACROSS THE AISLE
P Chidambaram

India's soul is wounded



Assamese students during a protest against the Citizenship Amendment Bill in Bengaluru

Christians excluded?

5. The premise of the Bill is religious persecution. What about victims of other forms of persecution, like linguistic, political, cultural, casteist etc? What about victims of civil wars?

6. Why is the cut-off date December 31, 2014? What is its impact on the cut-off date of March 25, 1971, mentioned in the Assam Accord? Has the latter been discarded?

7. What is the purpose of exempting from the provisions of the amended Act "the tribal area of Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram or Tripura as included in the Sixth Schedule to the Constitution" and the area covered under "The Inner Line" notified under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation, 1873? What are the consequences of such an exemption?

8. Are CAB and the NRC not Siamese twins? Which will be implemented first?

9. Will those who claimed they were born in India or entered India before March 25, 1971, have to change their story now and claim that they were vic-

tims of religious persecution in their home country? Which claim will be a lie and which claim will be truthful?

Consequences of excluding Muslims

If both CAB and the NRC will be implemented, the non-Muslims *excluded* under the NRC will be *included* under CAB. The *net result* will be that only Muslims will be identified as illegal migrants and excluded. The consequences will be monstrous.

Once excluded, the government must sequester the excluded persons in camps until any country or countries agreed to accept them. Where will the camps be built and how many will be required? Will the 'illegal immigrants' remain in the camps for the remainder of their lives? And what will be status of their children?

Besides, there will be social, economic and political consequences, in India and abroad, of incarcerating, indefinitely, millions of Muslims in vir-

tual concentration camps. Reacting to the cleansing in India, there will be pressure on Hindus living in Sri Lanka, Myanmar and Pakistan to emigrate to India.

It was apparent that the government had not taken a considered view on the constitutional validity of CAB when tested on the anvil of Articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Violent protests have broken out in Assam and the Northeastern states. Large sections of people across the country, a majority Hindu, have joined the protests.

Despite the serious questions about CAB and the turmoil all around, Parliament collaborated with the Executive in passing an unconstitutional Bill. The task of restoring equality and constitutional morality will now fall on the Judiciary.



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OUT OF MY MIND
MEGHNAD DESAI

Myanmar, and an Asian atrocity

WHEN HE WAS in London in 1931, Mahatma Gandhi was asked what he thought of the European civilisation. Being a master of the English language, he replied, "It would be a good idea". The expression 'would be' was to denote the current absence of, but hoping for better in the future. He was to be proved horribly right as, within his lifetime, the horrors of the Holocaust were revealed. Germany, an old European nation, the cradle of Martin Luther, Goethe and Einstein, inflicted the most uncivilised murder upon six million Jews and left many more damaged forever.

This week, in the Dutch city of The Hague, Asia is on trial. Aung San Suu Kyi, the State Counsellor (de facto Prime Minister) of Myanmar and previous winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, is the head of a Burmese delegation facing trial at the International Court of Justice. The charges relate to genocide of the Rohingya. The tragedy of the Rohingya has been unfolding before our eyes for years now. They have been hounded out of Myanmar. They have flooded into Bangladesh and India and farther away.

Suu Kyi, the granddaughter of former Burmese prime minister Aung San, suffered house arrest for many years as she fought the military rulers of Burma, and won the battle for restoration of democracy in the country. She regained her legacy as a member of a ruling dynasty. But that was a quarrel among the Buddhist Burmese. When it came to othering Muslims, Suu Kyi has proved as seasoned a politician as the worst military general.

There is a huge tragedy here of Asian culture and Asian politics. How is it that a Buddhist country long known (perhaps wrongly?) for

its peace-loving people has conducted one of the world's worst genocides? The Khmer Rouge of Cambodia made a virtue of slaughtering all 'intellectuals' — everyone who wore spectacles or was educated — to build a one-class paradise where only peasantry had the right to live. They killed one-seventh of the total population. They were othering their own. But they were not Buddhists; just Maoists.

Myanmar and Suu Kyi have 'othered' the Rohingya who have lived in Myanmar for centuries, just because they are Muslims. Of course, the Myanmar defence is that Rohingya are terrorists. The word terrorist has become almost synonymous with Muslims across the world since 9/11, regardless of evidence. The idea seems to be that only Buddhist Burmese are authentic citizens.

The astonishing thing is that the case has been brought by Gambia. Not by any neighbouring Asian nation. Not Malaysia nor Indonesia nor Pakistan. It says something about Asian solidarity or humanism that no country in Asia has cast a critical eye towards Myanmar. Of course, the reason is China, which is a strong ally of Myanmar and a country no other Asian nation wants to displease. China has its own Uighur problem which has brought no protests on any street in any Asian country. Only the American Congress seems to be fighting for human rights these days. Though not the American President!

During Gandhiji's lifetime, Burma was a part of India. In 1935, it was separated. Then, in 1947, Partition made Pakistan a different country. In 1971, Bangladesh separated from Pakistan. From one, we have four. How many more?



A poster supporting Aung San Suu Kyi is seen in Yangon, Myanmar

FILE PHOTO: REUTERS

A true anti-hero

Patrick Reed gets booed at the President's Cup for an alleged cheating scandal

OVER THE TOP

Meraj Shah

I'M NO FAN of Patrick Reed and I'll tell you why a bit later. Right now though, depending on when you're reading this on Sunday, the final round—comprising of singles matches—of the President's Cup is underway. The International team went in with an 10–8 lead today morning to try and win the event only for the second time in the event's history. The third match of the day is between CT Pan—the 28-year-old Taiwanese sensation—and Reed. Now even though a number of you may not have heard of Pan, he's already got the better of Reed twice this week, both times in the four-balls format paired with Japanese player Hideki Matsuyama. Reed's been a bit off his usual doughty self, and hasn't quite displayed the fire he's known for, especially in team matchplay events. I mean who can forget Reed's now fabled takedown of Rory McIlroy at the 2016 Ryder Cup at Hazeltine.

The lapse is mental more than anything else for Reed. It all started last week in the Bahamas where, as part of an elite field competing at the Hero World Challenge, Reed was assessed a two-shot penalty for improving his lie in a bunker.

On the 11th hole of the third round, Reed took two practice swings—both of which pushed back sand—and caught the attention of tournament officials. Now golf rules can be complicated (and certainly, the recent amendments have not helped), but not grounding your club in a bunker, is probably the first rule you learn when you play the game. And we all usually learn it the hard way.

"It was not my intention to improve the lie. I don't ever put the club directly behind the ball on my practice swings because I'm always scared of moving the ball. So I'm always going to give myself some room. But after seeing that camera angle—it brushed the sand, and it's a penalty. I accept that," Reed said in his defence. The gracious response from Slugger White, PGA Tour VP of Rules and Competitions, was that intent does not matter when it comes to deciding the penalty.

My response to that, not exactly



Patrick Reed plays from the rough during the President's Cup golf tournament at Royal Melbourne Golf Club in Melbourne

unique in the world of golf, and one which explains why Reed has been lambasted by a legion of past and present players, and heckled non-stop at the President's Cup this week, is: 'Are you

kidding me?' I'm sorry, but a golf professional who's been playing all his life, couldn't tell that he brushed the sand back, not once but twice in a row? I mean that is so ludicrous a suggestion

that I have nothing but admiration for Reed's brazenness.

Others have hardly viewed his infraction through a more forgiving lens. International team opponent Cameron Smith of Australia was the most straightforward. "I don't have sympathy for anyone that cheats. If you make a mistake maybe once, you could maybe understand, but to give a bulls--t response like [blaming] the camera angle... that's pretty up there," Smith said.

Greg Norman, the Australian golfing legend was amongst those viewing the Hero World Challenge on television and immediately brought the infraction to the notice of PGA Tour officials. "I feel for not just the pros. I feel for all the amateurs," Norman said. "Like today when I played in the pro-am, what was the first point of conversation? 'Oh, well Patrick Reed did it. Can we do it?' Well, you can't do that."

Norman later went on air on his radio show to say that he was 'repulsed' by Reed's cheating. "From my personal perspective, you know, I get really repulsed with that because, to me, you've got to protect the integrity of the game, not protect the player," he said.

On cue, the Australian crowd has been giving Reed a mighty hard time in Melbourne where the President's Cup is being played. The gallery burst into applause when Reed's first drive of the event found a bunker; "You're really

going to make your caddie carry 14 clubs and a shovel?" one fan shouted. Heckled constantly throughout his two match-ups, Reed managed to put up a defiant face, but his caddie, Kessler Karain, got into an altercation with a spectator. As a result, Karain has been banned from carrying Reed's bag on Sunday which instead will be taken by Reed's swing coach Kevin Kirk. Kirk's probably not looking forward to the experience.

Reed has never been much of a crowd favourite. In 2018, on the eve of the final round at The Masters Tournament, Reed was asked why some people (especially on social media) tend to give him flak. "I don't know. Why don't you ask them?" he said. "I mean, I have no idea, and honestly I don't really care what people say on Twitter or what they say if they are cheering for me or not cheering for me. I'm out here to do my job, and that's to play golf. I feel like if I'm doing it the right way, then that's all that really matters."

Well, shovelling sand out from behind the ball in a bunker to improve its lie is certainly not doing it the right way. In fact it goes against the very grain of what golf is about—playing with honour and integrity. And that's something that has to be consistent no matter what the camera angle might be. Shame.

A golfer, Meraj Shah also writes about the game



दूसरी नजर

- पी चिदंबरम**

नकाब उतर चुका है और पंजे दिखने लगे हैं। हिंदू राष्ट्र का अभियान रफ्तार पकड़ता जा रहा है। इसके इंजन प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी हैं और इसके मोर्चे पर गृहमंत्री अमित शाह हैं। इसका डिजाइनर-इंजीनियर आरएसएस है, जो बड़े मजे से अब इसे देख रहा है।

मुसलमानों को दो टूक संदेश

आश्चर्य सिर्फ इस बात का है कि चुनाव में जोरदार जीत के बाद भाजपा तेजी से अपने एजेंडे को बढ़ाती जा रही है, जैसे- तीन तलाक का अपराधीकरण, असम में राष्ट्रीय नागरिक रजिस्टर (एनआरसी), संविधान के अनुच्छेद 370 को खारिज कर देना, और अब नागरिकता (संशोधन) विधेयक को पास करा लेना। ये सब हिंदू राष्ट्र परियोजना को आगे बढ़ाने की विस्तृत योजना का हिस्सा है।

इन कदमों के पीछे जो इरादा है, वह मुसलमानों को इस बात का स्पष्ट संदेश देना है कि वे इस देश के समान नागरिक नहीं हैं। ये कदम गोलवलकर-सावरकर के ‘भारत एक हिंदू राष्ट्र’ के सिद्धांत को दोहराते हैं।

नागरिकता कानून, 1955 जन्म से नागरिकता, वंश से नागरिकता, पंजीकरण से नागरिकता, नागरिकता प्रदान करके नागरिकता, और क्षेत्र के विलय से नागरिकता को मान्यता प्रदान करता है। भारत में रह रहे बाकी दूसरे लोग ‘ अवैध प्रवासी’ होंगे। विदेशी नागरिक कानून, 1946 और पासपोर्ट (भारत में प्रवेश) कानून, 1920 इन पर लागू होगा और ये लोग निष्कासित किए जा सकेंगे। किसी व्यक्ति का धर्म चाहे वह नागरिक हो या अवैध प्रवासी, भारतीय नागरिकता की अवधारणा के प्रतिकूल है।

नागरिकता (संशोधन) विधेयक, 2019 के पारित हो जाने के बाद ये सब बदल गए हैं। विधेयक संदिग्ध है। कई अर्ध्थाताओं और पूर्व जर्जो ने अपनी राय व्यक्त करते हुए इसे असंवैधानिक बताया है।

सवाल कई, जवाब कोई नहीं

यह विधेयक किसलिए है? यह तीन देशों- अफगानिस्तान, बांग्लादेश और पाकिस्तान को चुनता है। यह छह ‘अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों’- हिंदू, सिख, बौद्ध, जैन, पारसी और ईसाई को चुनता है। यह

नक्सलवाद का नासूर

विवेक ओझा

इस वक्त देश के ग्यारह राज्यों के नब्बे जिले वामपंथी उग्रवाद से प्रभावित हैं। इनमें झारखंड के कुल तेईस में से उन्नीस जिलों को नक्सल और माओवाद प्रभावित माना गया है। गृह मंत्रालय के आंकड़ों के मताबिक वित्त वर्ष 2017-18 और 2018-19 के लिए झारखंड के तेरह जिलों को विशेष केंद्रीय सहायता के तहत वामपंथी उग्रवाद से निपटने के लिए क्रमशः अस्सी करोड़ और दो सौ साठ करोड़ रुपए निर्गत किए गए हैं।

नक्सलवाद और माओवाद से निपटने के उद्देश्य से इस वर्ष जुलाई में केंद्रीय गृह सचिव की अध्यक्षता में वामपंथी उग्रवाद (एलडब्ल्यूई) को लेकर समीक्षा बैठक की गई, जिसमें प्रमुख सचिव, प्रभावित राज्यों के पुलिस महानिदेशक (डीजीपी), खुफिया ब्यूरो के निदेशक (डीआईबी), केंद्रीय सशस्त्र बलों के महानिदेशक शामिल हुए। इस समीक्षा बैठक में निष्कर्ष रूप में कहा गया कि पिछले पांच वर्षों में

वामपंथी उग्रवाद की हिंसा में लगातार कमी आई है और भौगोलिक रूप से भी इसके प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में गिफ्टव दर्ज की गई है। जब 2018 में वामपंथी उग्रवाद प्रभावित क्षेत्रों को लेकर समीक्षा बैठक हुई थी, उसमें पाया गया था कि वामपंथी उग्रवाद का प्रभाव एक सौ छब्बीस जिलों से कम होकर बयासी जिलों तक सिमट गया है, लेकिन सशक्तगो के तौर पर आठ और जिलों को इस सूची में जोड़ लिया गया है। इसके साथ ही वर्ष 2018 में चौवालीस जिलों को वामपंथी उग्रवाद प्रभावित जिलों की सूची से बाहर निकाल दिया गया था।

सरकार का मानना है कि उसकी नीतियां, सामाजिक-आर्थिक समावेशन रणनीति, सुरक्षा बलों का आधुनिकीकरण और अन्य ठोस उपाय इस स्तर पर किए गए कि सरकार को इस समस्या में सफलता मिली। राज्यों की ओर से सुरक्षा के संबंध में उनकी चिंताओं और सुझावों को दर्ज किया गया। वामपंथ उग्रवाद प्रभावित क्षेत्र में तैनात सुरक्षा बलों का कार्य स्थिति में सुधार करने और उन्हें प्रभावी बनाने के लिए मोबाइल कम्युनिकेशन पर भी चर्चा की गई।

हाल ही में भारत सरकार के गृह मंत्रालय ने वामपंथी उग्रवाद और विशेषकर नक्सलवाद से निपटने में मिली सफलता पर आंकड़े प्रस्तुत किए हैं। 2014 से अप्रैल, 2019 के दौरान इसके पहले के पांच वर्षों की तुलना में नक्सली हिंसा से जुड़ी घटनाओं में तैतालीस फीसद तक कमी आई है। गृह मंत्रालय के अनुसार नक्सली हिंसा की दौ-तिहाई घटनाएं सिर्फ दस जिलों में हुई हैं। भारत सरकार का मत है कि नीतियों के प्रभावी क्रियान्वयन के कारण नक्सली हिंसा और इसके भौगोलिक विस्तार में कमी आई है। 2016-19 के बीच नक्सली हिंसा की संख्या 2013-15 की तुलना में 15.8 फीसद कम रही, और इस कारण होने वाली मौतों की संख्या में भी 16.6 फीसद कमी आई। केंद्र सरकार ने यह भी कहा है कि वह नक्सलवाद से निपटने के लिए एक समग्र नीति लागू कर रही है। इसके तहत नक्सल प्रभावित क्षेत्रों में सुरक्षाबलों की तैनाती करने के साथ ही विकास कार्य किए जा रहे हैं। इसी का परिणाम है कि माओवाद से प्रभावित अब केवल दस राज्य- छत्तीसगढ़, झारखंड, ओडिशा, पश्चिम बंगाल, बिहार, महाराष्ट्र, तेलंगाना, आंध्र प्रदेश, मध्यप्रदेश और उत्तर प्रदेश हैं, जो आंतरिक सुरक्षा के समक्ष चुनौती उत्पन्न करते हैं।

वामपंथी उग्रवादी विचारधारा से प्रभावित होकर की जाने वाली नक्सली और माओवादी हिंसक गतिविधियां भारत की आंतरिक सुरक्षा के समक्ष एक बड़ा खतरा है। शासन तंत्र, पूंजीपति और उद्योगपतियों को संदेह की नजर से देखने वाले नक्सली और माओवादी लोकतांत्रिक रूप से चुनी गई सरकार के खिलाफ अपनी समानांतर

सरकार चलाने में विश्वास रखते हैं। वामपंथी उग्रवाद प्रभावित जिलों में बुनियादी सुविधाओं का अभाव, विकास के लाभों का समतामूलक वितरण न होना, गरीबी और बेरोजगारी आदि के चलते उग्रवाद का प्रसार हुआ है। जनजातीय समुदाय में अत्यंत रक्ताल्पता और अन्य बीमारियों से होने वाली मौत, जीविका के साधनों का अभाव, लघु वन उत्पादों के स्वामित्व को छीनने, भूमि स्वामित्व और अधिग्रहण के मामलों के फलस्वरूप उत्पन्न विस्थापन और सामाजिक आर्थिक बहिष्करण आदि आधारों पर वामपंथी उग्रवादी सरकार की विष्वसनयीता पर प्रश्न चिह्न खड़े करते हैं।

भारत सरकार ने इससे निपटने के लिए इन क्षेत्रों में समावेशी विकास की रणनीति अपनाई है। सबसे पहले इन क्षेत्रों में वित्तीय समावेशन पर बल दिया गया है। इन क्षेत्रों में डिपार्टमेंट ऑफ पोस्ट्स ने वित्तीय समावेशन के लिए बत्तीस वामपंथी उग्रवाद प्रभावित जिलों में प्रथम चरण में 1788 ब्रांच पोस्ट ऑफिस (142

महाराष्ट्र में) की स्वीकृति दी है, जिसमें से 1484 ब्रांच पोस्ट ऑफिस कार्यशील हो चुके हैं। इसके अलावा डिपार्टमेंट ऑफ फाइनैशियल सर्विसेज ने वर्ष 2015 से 2018 के अंत तक तीस सर्वाधिक वामपंथी उग्रवाद प्रभावित जिलों में 604 नई बैंक शाखाएं और

987 एटीएम स्थापित किए हैं, जिससे इन क्षेत्रों में वित्तीय सेवाओं और सुविधाओं को बढ़ावा दिया जा सके। इसके अलावा इन क्षेत्रों में रूपे डेबिट कार्ड की निर्गत करने और बैंक मित्रों की उपलब्धता सुनिश्चित करने की भी सिफारिश की गई है। नाबार्ड ने भी भारत के अनुसूचित बैंकों को ऐसे क्षेत्रों में बैंक शाखाएं खोलने में मदद करने और सौर शक्ति वाले वीसैट कनेक्टिविटी देने का भी प्रस्ताव किया है।

सामाजिक समावेशन के तहत इन क्षेत्रों में जीविकोपार्जन के लिए रोशनी नामक स्कीम चलाई गई थी, लेकिन भारत सरकार के गृह मंत्रालय ने अब समाधान नामक रणनीति बनाई है, जिसमें कुशल नेतृत्व, आक्रामक रणनीति, प्रोत्साहन एवं प्रशिक्षण, कारगर खुफिया तंत्र, कार्ययोजना के मानक, कारगर प्रोद्योगिकी, प्रत्येक रणनीति की कार्ययोजना और नक्सलियों के वित्तपोषण को विफल करने की रणनीति को शामिल किया गया है।

हाल में भारत सरकार द्वारा अवसरचरनात्मक विकास और सुरक्षा बलों के आधुनिकीकरण और आपूचना प्रणालियों को मजबूती देने के चलते वामपंथी उग्रवादी में अधोमुखी प्रवृत्ति दिखाई दे रही है। इसके अलावा पुलिस बलों का आधुनिकीकरण भी किया जा रहा है। उग्रवाद प्रभावित राज्यों में स्थानीय पुलिस की सतर्कता और दक्षता के र्णना वामपंथी उग्रवाद समाप्त नहीं किया जा सकता, इसलिए उनकी भूमिका महत्त्वपूर्ण है। केंद्र सरकार द्वारा विभिन्न मंत्रालयों की प्रमुख योजनाओं के अलावा वामपंथी उग्रवाद से प्रभावित क्षेत्रों के लिए विशिष्ट पहल की गई है, जिसमें प्रमुख तौर पर सड़क और टेलीकॉम कनेक्टिविटी में सुधार, वित्तीय समावेशन, कौशल विकास तथा शिक्षा शामिल है।

इस दशकों पुरानी समस्या से निपटने के लिए, संबंधित राज्य सरकारों के साथ विभिन्न उच्चस्तरीय विचार-विमर्श के बाद यह उपयुक्त समझा गया है कि तुलनात्मक रूप से अधिक प्रभावी क्षेत्रों के लिए एकीकृत दृष्टिकोण के परिणाम मिलेंगे। इसे ध्यान में रखते हुए वामपंथी उग्रवादी हिंसा के संबंध में इसके विस्तार और प्रवृत्तियों का विस्तृत विश्लेषण किया गया है और योजना तैयार करने, विभिन्न उपायों के क्रियान्वयन और उनकी निगरानी के संबंध में विशेष ध्यान देने के लिए ग्यारह राज्यों में नब्बे सर्वाधिक प्रभावित जिलों को लिया गया है। इसके पीछे सौच माओवादी खतरे से एक ठोस तरीके से निपटने के लिए राज्य सरकारों की क्षमता में वृद्धि करने की है।

मानकर चलता है कि इन तीन देशों में से किसी भी एक देश में इन छह समुदायों में से किसी एक भी समुदाय के व्यक्ति, जिसने 31 दिसंबर, 2014 या इससे पहले भारत में प्रवेश किया था, वह अपने गृह देश में ‘प्रताड़ित’ था और इसलिए कार्यपालिका के आदेश के जरिए उसे विदेशी नागरिक कानून और पासपोर्ट (भारत में प्रवेश) कानून से छूट प्रदान की जाती है। ऐसा व्यक्ति ‘ अवैध प्रवासी’ नहीं होगा।

संक्षेप में इस संशोधन विधेयक ने नागरिकता पाने का नया रास्ता बना दिया है- कार्यकारी व्यवस्था से नागरिकता।

कई सवाल खड़े होते हैं। ये सवाल पूछे गए, लेकिन सरकार के पास इनका कोई जवाब नहीं था- 1- इस विशेष व्यवहार के लिए सिर्फ तीन देशों को क्यों चुना गया और श्रीलंका, म्यांमा, भूटान और नेपाल जैसे पड़ोसी देशों को छोड़ दिया गया?

2- इस विशेष रियायत के लिए सिर्फ छह अल्पसंख्यक समुदायों को ही क्यों चुना गया और दूसरे समुदायों को छोड़ दिया गया, जो अपने गृह देश में भेदभाव के शिकार हैं, क्योंकि वे वहां बहुसंख्यक नहीं हैं, जैसे अहमदिया, हाजरा, बलूच, रोहिंग्या, यहूदी आदि?

3- इब्राहीम धर्म तीन हैं, सिर्फ ईसाई धर्म को ही क्यों शामिल किया गया, यहूदी धर्म और इस्लाम को क्यों छोड़ दिया गया?

4- हिंदुओं को क्यों शामिल किया गया, और क्यों श्रीलंकाई हिंदुओं को बाहर कर दिया गया? क्यों ईसाइयों को शामिल किया, लेकिन भूटान के ईसाइयों को छोड़ दिया गया?

5- विधेयक का आधार धार्मिक उत्पीड़न है। लेकिन जो लोग भाषायी, राजनीतिक, सांस्कृतिक, जातीय आदि आधार पर प्रताड़ित किए जा रहे हैं, उनके बारे में क्या है? गृह युद्ध का उत्पीड़न झेलने वालों के बारे में क्या है?

6- निर्धारित तिथि 31 दिसंबर, 2914 ही क्यों रखी गई? असम समझौते में रखी गई निर्धारित तारीख 25 मार्च, 1971 पर इसका क्या प्रभाव डड़ता है? क्या 25 मार्च, 1971 वाली निर्धारित तिथि को खारिज कर दिया गया है?

7- संविधान की छठी अनुसूची में शामिल असम, मेघालय, मिजोरम या त्रिपुरा के आदिवासी इलाकों और बंगाल इस्टर्न फ्रंटियर रेग्यूलेशन, 1873 के तहत अधिसूचित ‘द इनर लाइन’ के अंतर्गत आने वाले क्षेत्रों को संशोधित कानून के प्रावधानों से छूट देने का मकसद क्या है? इस छूट के नतीजे क्या होंगे?

इस हफ्ते मेरा पक्का इरादा था नरेंद्र मोदी के दूसरे शासनकाल के बारे में कुछ अच्छा लिखने का। इस एक इरादे को अमल में लाने के लिए मैं भारत सरकार के एक आलाा अधिकारी से मिलने गई, यह जानने के लिए प्रधानमंत्री का जल शक्ति मिशन कहां तक सफल हुआ है। इस नए मिशन का लक्ष्य है 2024 तक ग्रामीण भारत के हर घर तक पानी पहुंचाने का। फिलहाल हमारे देहाती भाई-बहन जीवन की इस सबसे जरूरी चीज से इतने वंचित हैं कि अनुमान लगाया जाता है कि सिर्फ अठारह फीसद ग्रामीण घरों में जल नल से आता है। आलाा अधिकारी के साथ बातचीत चल ही रही थी कि असम और त्रिपुरा से हिंसा की खबरें आने लगीं। घर पहुंची और टीवी लगाया तो ऐसे दृश्य देखने को मिले, जिन्होंने असम की पुरानी, डरावनी यादें ताजा कर डालीं।

नेली जनसंहार के दृश्य आँखों के सामने घूमने लगे। खेतों में बिछीं लाशों की वे कतारें और उन कतारों में छोटे बच्चों की नन्हीं लाशें, जैसे शिकार के बाद जानवरों की लाशें बिछाई जाती हैं। 18 फरवरी, 1983 के दिन हुआ था यह कत्लेआम, जिसमें सरकारी आंकड़ों के मुताबिक 2191 लोग मारे गए थे, लेकिन जिन चौदह गांवों में यह रक्तपात हुआ था, उनका अनुमान है कि मौतों की संख्या तीन हजार से दस हजार तक जाती है। मरने वालों में बंगाली मुसलिम और हिंदू दोनों थे। उनके घर जलाए गए थे, उनकी संपति लूटी गई और उसके बाद लंबे समय तक असम में अशांति रही। असम आंदोलन चला तब तक, जब तक राजीव गांधी ने प्रधानमंत्री बनने के बाद असम समझौता करके लोगों के आक्रोश को शांत नहीं किया। तबसे लेकर पिछले हफ्ते तक शांति रही है असम में, बावजूद इसके कि हाल में वहां नागरिकता सिद्ध करने के लिए मोदी सरकार ने मुहिम चलाई है, जिसके तहत उन्नीस लाख विदेशी पाए गए हैं। इनमें ग्यारह लाख हिंदू निकले। कई राजनीतिक पंडित मानते हैं कि यही मुख्य वजह रही है नागरिकता कानून में इस संशोधन को इतनी जल्दी लाने की।

मगर ऐसा लगता है कि गृहमंत्री जी ने असम के इतिहास को भुला कर कदम उठाया है, वरना इतनी जल्दबाजी नहीं करते। असम में स्थिति इतनी गंभीर हो गई थी नागरिकता संशोधन विधेयक पारित होने के बाद कि सेना को तैनात करना पड़ा। त्रिपुरा में भी हिंसक भीड़ें सड़कों पर उतर आईं। कानून तो बन गया है अब, लेकिन असम और त्रिपुरा के लोगों को आश्वस्त कैसे करेगी सरकार कि लाखों बंगाली हिंदुओं और



इस कानून ने हमारी अंदरूनी समस्याएं भी बढ़ा दी हैं। संसद में गृहमंत्री ने कई बार कहा कि इस कानून का भारत के मुसलिम नागरिकों से कोई वास्ता नहीं है, लेकिन मुसलमानों में डर का माहौल बना हुआ है, खासकर गरीब मुसलमानों में।

चकमाओं के आने से उनकी सभ्यता, संस्कृति, भाषा और उनके रोजगार को कोई फर्क नहीं पड़ने वाला है? प्रधानमंत्री झारखंड में चुनाव प्रचार में व्यस्त थे पिछले सप्ताह, लेकिन स्थिति इतनी गंभीर हो गई थी कि उनको एक आमसभा को संबोधित करते हुए पूर्वोत्तर के लोगों को कहना पड़ा कि ‘ आप अपने इस मोदी पर भरोसा कीजिए।’

सच पछिए तो इस नागरिकता कानून की प्राथमिकता मैं अभी तक समझ नहीं पाई हूं। माना कि मोदी सरकार का दिल इतना बड़ा है कि चिंता रहती है आसपास के इस्लामी देशों में रहने वाले हिंदू, सिख, जैन, बौद्ध और ईसाई लोगों की। मगर क्या इस कानून को प्राथमिकता मिलनी चाहिए या भारत की बिगड़ती अर्थव्यवस्था को? मोदी के दूसरे दौर में मंदी ऐसी छाई रही है कि अब आम आदमी को भी चुभने लगी है।

रोजमर्रा की चीजों के दाम इतने बढ़ गए हैं कि आम लोग बाजारों में सब्जियों के दाम देख कर हैरान रह जाते हैं। प्याज इतने महंगे हो गए हैं कि उनका आयात मिश्र से करना पड़ा।

मुंबई में हाल यह है कि बड़ी-बड़ी कंपनियां बंद हो रही हैं। जिनकी क्षमता अभी तक है, जिसमें हर नागरिक को अपनी नागरिकता का सबूत देना अनिवार्य होगा। सवाल है कि इस मुहिम से हासिल क्या होगा? भारत की समस्याएं और भी हैं प्रधानमंत्री जी, जिनका समाधान ढूंढ़ना ज्यादा जरूरी है।

दौर की बदबू आती है। पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री ने खतरे की घंटी क्या बजाई कि बांग्लादेश के दो मंत्रियों ने भारत के अपने दौरे रह कर दिए, इसी नागरिकता कानून का हवाला देकर।

इस कानून ने हमारी अंदरूनी समस्याएं भी बढ़ा दी हैं। संसद में गृहमंत्री ने कई बार कहा कि इस कानून का भारत के मुसलिम नागरिकों से कोई वास्ता नहीं है, लेकिन मुसलमानों में डर का माहौल बना हुआ है, खासकर गरीब मुसलमानों में। यह इसलिए कि गृहमंत्री ने स्पष्ट कर दिया है कई बार कि देश भर में नागरिकता साबित करने को मुहिम चलने वाली है, जिसमें हर नागरिक को अपनी नागरिकता का सबूत देना अनिवार्य होगा। सवाल है कि इस मुहिम से हासिल क्या होगा? भारत की समस्याएं और भी हैं प्रधानमंत्री जी, जिनका समाधान ढूंढ़ना ज्यादा जरूरी है।



शुक्रवार की सुबह जिस वक्त अदालत अपराधियों की पुनर्विचार याचिका पर सुनवाई कर रही थी, उससे पहले ही, लगभग सभी चैनल फांसी फांसी चिल्लाते दिखते थे। एक चैनल ने लाइन लिख कर सीधे अभियान ही चला डाला : उनको अभी लटकाओ!

के डिब्रूगढ़, दिसपुर और गुवाहाटी से लेकर त्रिपुरा के अगरतला में लोग टूटी-फूटी हिंदी में अपनी व्य्था सुनाने लगते हैं कि ‘बाहरी को हियां लाता तो हम कहां जाता ? ये बील एकदम ठिक नई।..’

बृहस्पतिवार के प्राइम टाइम में एक एंकर देर तक चीखता- चिल्लाता दिखा कि निर्भया के अपराधियों को तुरंत फांसी पर लटकाया जाए, ताकि अपने चैनल पर वह उसे लाइव दिखा सके कि जब ऐसे दरिंदों को फांसी पर लटकाया जाता है, तो किस तरह उनकी जान निकलती है और किस तरह से उनकी जीभ मुंह से बाहर निकल कर लटक जाती है।.. देर तक वह यही कहता रहा कि फांसी के बाद उनकी लटकती जीभों को वह बार-बार दिखाना चाहता है, ताकि हर रेपिस्ट के मन में इतनी दहशत भर जाए कि वे फिर कभी ऐसी दरिंदगी न कर सकें।

नई दिल्ली

8- क्या सीएबी और एनआरसी एक दूसरे से जुड़े हुए नहीं हैं? किसे पहले लागू किया जाएगा, सीएबी को या फिर एनआरसी को?

9- जो लोग ये दावा करेंगे कि वे भारत में पैदा हुए हैं या 25 मार्च, 1971 के पहले भारत में आए हैं, क्या अब उनको कहानी बदलनी पड़ेगी और यह दावा कि वे अपने गृह देश में धार्मिक उत्पीड़न के शिकार थे? कौन-सा दावा झूठ होगा और कौनसा सही?

मुसलमानों को छोड़ने के नतीजे

अगर सीएबी और एनआरसी दोनों लागू हो जाएंगे तो एनआरसी के तहत बाहर किए गए गैर-मुसलिम सीएबी के तहत शामिल कर लिए जाएंगे। कुल मिलाकर नतीजा यह होगा कि सिर्फ मुसलमान अवैध प्रवासियों के तौर पर पहचाने जाएंगे और उन्हें बाहर किया जाएगा। इसके नतीजे बहुत ही डरावने होंगे।

एक बार बाहर किए जाने के बाद सरकार को निकाले गए लोगों को हिरासत केंद्रों में तब तक रखना होगा जब तक कि कोई देश या संबंधित देश उन्हें स्वीकार करने के लिए सहमत नहीं हो जाते। ये हिरासत शिविर कहां बनाए जाएंगे और ऐसे कितने शिविरों की जरूरत पड़ेगी? क्या ‘ अवैध प्रवासी’ अपनी बाकी ज़िंदगी तक इन शिविरों में गुजारेंगे? उनके बच्चों की कानूनी स्थिति क्या होगी?

इसके अलावा भारत और विदेशों में इसके सामाजिक, आर्थिक और राजनीतिक नतीजे भी होंगे, लाखों मुसलमान अनिश्चित काल के लिए बंदी बन कर शिविरों में कैद हो जाएंगे। और भारत में इस सफाए का असर यह होगा कि श्रीलंका, म्यांमा और पाकिस्तान में रह रहे हिंदुओं पर देश छोड़ने के लिए दबाव बढ़ेगा।

यह स्पष्ट था कि सरकार ने संविधान के अनुच्छेद 14 और 21 और मानवाधिकारों की सार्वभौमिक घोषणा के संदर्भ में जांचे जाने पर सीएबी की संवैधानिक वैधता पर सोच-समझ कर विचार नहीं किया।

असम और पूर्वोत्तर के राज्यों में हिंसक प्रदर्शन शुरू हो चुके हैं। देश की आबादी का बड़ा हिस्सा, जिनमें सबसे ज्यादा हिंदू हैं, वे भी प्रदर्शन में शामिल हो गए हैं।

सीएबी और चारों ओर भड़की अशांति से उपजे सवालों के बावजूद संसद ने कार्यपालिका के साथ मिल कर इस संवैधानिक विधेयक को पास करा लिया। अब समानता और संवैधानिक नैतिकता की बहाली का काम न्यायपालिका के पाले में जाएगा।

रोजमर्रा की चीजों के दाम इतने बढ़ गए हैं कि आम लोग बाजारों में सब्जियों के दाम देख कर हैरान रह जाते हैं। प्याज इतने महंगे हो गए हैं कि उनका आयात मिश्र से करना पड़ा। मुंबई में हाल यह है कि बड़ी-बड़ी कंपनियां बंद हो रही हैं। जिनकी क्षमता अभी तक है, जिसमें हर नागरिक को अपनी नागरिकता का सबूत देना अनिवार्य होगा। सवाल है कि इस मुहिम से हासिल क्या होगा? भारत की समस्याएं और भी हैं प्रधानमंत्री जी, जिनका समाधान ढूंढ़ना ज्यादा जरूरी है।

ऊपर से मोदी की समस्या यह भी है कि नागरिकता कानून के कारण उनकी छवि पर दुनिया की नजरों में दाग लग गया है। पिछले हफ्ते संयुक्त राष्ट्र के एक प्रवक्ता ने पत्रकारों से कहा कि इस कानून का विश्लेषण उनकी मानवाधिकार संस्थाएं कर रही हैं इस नजरिए से कि क्या यह मुसलमानों के साथ भविष्य में अन्याय का आधार तो नहीं बन सकता है। यह बात इस प्रवक्ता की पूरी ही हुई थी कि इमरान खान का बयान आया कि इस कानून से नाजी

दौर की बदबू आती है। पाकिस्तान के प्रधानमंत्री ने खतरे की घंटी क्या बजाई कि बांग्लादेश के दो मंत्रियों ने भारत के अपने दौरे रह कर दिए, इसी नागरिकता कानून का हवाला देकर।

इस कानून ने हमारी अंदरूनी समस्याएं भी बढ़ा दी हैं। संसद में गृहमंत्री ने कई बार कहा कि इस कानून का भारत के मुसलिम नागरिकों से कोई वास्ता नहीं है, लेकिन मुसलमानों में डर का माहौल बना हुआ है, खासकर गरीब मुसलमानों में। यह इसलिए कि गृहमंत्री ने स्पष्ट कर दिया है कई बार कि देश भर में नागरिकता साबित करने को मुहिम चलने वाली है, जिसमें हर नागरिक को अपनी नागरिकता का सबूत देना अनिवार्य होगा। सवाल है कि इस मुहिम से हासिल क्या होगा? भारत की समस्याएं और भी हैं प्रधानमंत्री जी, जिनका समाधान ढूंढ़ना ज्यादा जरूरी है।

फिर उसे लगा कि इस तरह के ‘कंपटीटिव’ फांसी प्रसारण के लिए यह मांग तो बहुत कम है, क्योंकि ऐसा तो सब दिखाएंगे। इसलिए और भी उत्तेजित होकर बोलता रहा कि वह चाहता है कि इनके गले में फांसी का फंदा डाल कर उनकी ‘पब्लिक हैंगिंग’ की जाए, ताकि उनकी जीभ बाहर लटक जाए और वह इसी रूप में उनको लाइव दिखा सकें ताकि रेपिस्टों में दहशत भर जाए और फिर कोई रेप करने से पहले हजार बार सोचे। उसने कहा भी कि उसके लिए बदले का नाम है न्याय!

यों उसने अपने साथ दो पेशेवर जल्लाद बिठा रखे थे, लेकिन इस वक्त वह उनसे भी सवाया जल्लाद और लिंचर बना नजर आ रहा था।

वह फांसी पर लटकाने का आनंद बेच रहा था। एक महिला वकील भी उसकी हां में हां मिलाए जा रही है, जबकि दोनों पेशेवर जल्लाद स्वयं शांत भाव से अंग्रेजी की यह हिंसक गिटपिंट सुनते जाते थे।

जब एंकर ही जल्लाद बना जाए, जब एंकर ही फांसी पर लटके आदमी की जीभ को मुंह से बाहर लटकता देखने और दिखाने को उत्तेजित होता दिखे, तब न कोई डिबेट बचती है न तर्क-वितर्क बचता है, सिर्फ फांसी का तख्ता बचता है, जिस पर एंकर स्वयं रस्सी लिए खड़ा नजर आता है।

शुक्रवार की सुबह जिस वक्त अदालत अपराधियों की पुनर्विचार याचिका पर सुनवाई कर रही थी, उससे पहले ही, लगभग सभी चैनल फांसी फांसी चिल्लाते दिखते थे। एक चैनल ने लाइन लिख कर सीधे अभियान ही चला डाला : उनको अभी लटकाओ! निर्भया परिवार ने मांग की : उनको तुरंत लटकाओ! एक चैनल लाइन देने लगा : ‘इंडिया सेज नो मर्सी’ यानी भारत कद रहा है कि ‘कोई दया नहीं’! एक अन्य चैनल ने खबर ब्रेक की कि तिहाड़ जेल अधिकारियों ने जल्लाद को निर्मात्रित किया है।

राहुल ने ‘मेक इन इंडिया’ को एक रैली में ‘रेप इन इंडिया’ कह कर ताली दी, तो शुक्रवार की सुबह भाजपा के सांसद राहुल से माफी मांगवाने पर अड़ गए और शोर इतना हुआ कि अध्यक्ष जी को लोकसभा की बैठक कुछ देर के लिए स्थगित करनी पड़ी!