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# MUSLIM TODAY

VOL. 2 ISSUE-9-10 (Combined) August-September, 2016

*Thinking Ahead*



**MUSLIM  
RESERVATION  
HOW MUCH  
WATER DOES  
THE CASE HOLD?**



Thousands laid down their lives so  
that our country is breathing this  
day never forget their sacrifice



*Happy Independence-Day*  
*15th August 2016*

From  
**MUSLIM TODAY**  
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Owner, Printed, Published & Ed-  
ited By Agha Khurshed Khan From  
J-46, G/F, Abul Fazal Enclave, Jamia  
Nagar Okhla New Delhi-110025  
Printed at Bharat Graphics C-83  
Okhla Industrial Area Phase-1 New

www.muslimtoday.in

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Agha Khurshheed Khan

## State supported mob violence against Dalits and Muslims not internal matter of India

**O**ne doesn't often see a respected international media house asking a democratic republic's prime minister to break his silence in an editorial. Even more rare is it to see this "silence" tagged with the adjective "shameful". The New York Times did exactly that today, 8 August 2016. The editorial forewarns Mr. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India, of the bleak future awaiting him and his political party if he "does not break his shameful silence on cow vigilantes, and reset his political compass on a course of economic opportunity, dignity and justice."

Poignantly, the newspaper has done its homework. It has recounted a number of instances of vigilante violence against the country's Dalits and Muslims. It has also documented the very visible and vocal support these vigilantes are getting from elements entrenched in the regime. It quoted the President of the Bhartiya Janata Party, a right wing political party in power, as well as elected members of the country's legislative bodies. As a result, the newspaper cannot be faulted by say anti or post-colonial victimhood pretensions, racism, or even the time tested patriotic "don't interfere in our country's internal affairs" ruse. The government of India has in the past claimed caste issues as an "internal matter of India". It did that, for instance, when it opposed demands to make caste based discrimination an aspect of racial discrimination at the Durban World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, 2001 and also in its failed opposition to Britain's decision of including caste based discrimination as aspect of racism in its Equality Act, 2010. It has repeatedly asserted that the Indian State was making all attempts to put an end to caste-based discrimination. This, ironically, goes against its own glorious legacy of struggle against apartheid in South Africa. One can simply ask, as was asked earlier too: "If caste issues are an internal matter of India, would not apartheid be an internal issue of the governments of apartheid-era South Africa? Vigilante violence is essentially lawless, and any government supporting it either by commission or omission cannot claim to be a government abiding by the rule of law and thus immune to the international community's scrutiny in its internal matters. Sadly, the incumbent government of India has supported such violence since it came to power in May 2014. Instead of strengthening police and justice institutions, it has been accused, often convincingly, of trying to align law enforcement with vigilantes affiliated with regressive politics. India has witnessed numerous

cases of cow vigilantes attacking those they suspect of smuggling cows, with the law enforcement agencies choosing to look away. The police have mostly remained a silent spectator to such attacks/ beatings/lynchings and have then booked the victims, not the tormentors, under the animal cruelty act. Ironically, it would be difficult to fault them for what India has become today: It is an India where the remarks of Bihar M.P. Rajesh Ranjan, alias Pappu Yadav, were expunged from the records of Lok Sabha, the lower house of the Indian Parliament, for privileging the life of a human over that of a cow, and thus offending sensibilities of a few fellow parliamentarians! Yes, you have read right. The Parliament of India found the statement privileging life of a human over that of a cow being unparliamentarily and expunged it!

Now, the recurrent and increasingly violent cow vigilante attacks on Dalits and Muslims should have put the government in a fire-fighting mode and restore the law and order, at least. Its tacit support to the lawless crowds, on the other hand, has sent a different message altogether: any group capable of indulging in violence can get whatever it wants. The country has seen the gory consequences of the message ever since: the violence that rocked Gujarat when the Patels, a caste community, demanded reservation; when Haryana burned for days over a similar demand by the Jat community; and when in Andhra Pradesh the Kapus came to the streets. This time, however, the stakes have gone up; is not merely the vigilantes who are on the streets. The victims, dejected with the State's failure in protecting them, and convinced of its tacit support to perpetrators, are on the streets too. Gujarat has been on the boil, as Dalits are on the streets seeking justice. Had they turned violent like the vigilantes, it would have resulted in mayhem. Alas, it is not about Gujarat alone. Both the attacks and anger against these attacks are at a tipping point, at the very least in the states of Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh. This is almost half of India in terms of population. With Gujarat alone having caused so much consternation, the message is on the wall. It is high time for the government of India, and its Prime Minister, to take heed of the advice, act against cow vigilantes, and invest in providing economic opportunity, dignity, and justice. It must also remember that just reigning in the vigilantes will not suffice; disbanding them altogether is the only way ahead. ●











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# A Wild Goose Chase Called **Muslims Reservation**



Wasim Akram Tyagi



*The nation has just seen the Patidar reservation movement and after that the Jat Reservation movement in Gujrat. On one side we keep seeing reservation demands by the communities that are socially and economically very strong, and in many cases they succeed in getting their demands fulfilled even after causing as much mayhem and destruction as in Gujrat and Haryana, and on the other hand the communities like Muslim- which are repetitively found to be in condition worse than those of the schedule castes. Were these committees just a sham? Why no government has shown the will to implement the recommendations of these committees? Why has the Sachchar Committee Report been made to languish in darkness for almost ten years?*

**T**he Muslims today are deeply aware that they don't have much role when it comes to getting government jobs. The jobs and the opportunity to get the job are extremely negligible for most of them. And the lack of opportunity and representation just can't be removed without the provision of some specific reservation. Forget about implementation, there hasn't even been a single government, from then till now, who has even thought about doing anything with the 2007 Rangnath Mishra Report. The Sachchar Committee Report is at least gets its name mentioned when people talk about Reservation for the Muslims but the Rangnath Mishra Committee Report does not even enjoy the mere mention in any

regard, though it is a report that that stated that denying reservation to the Muslims is actually the infringement of the Constitutional fundamental right of equality.

The condition of Muslims is pathetic in Uttar Pradesh. Be it the field of education or in other government jobs the Muslim share is just 7.5% against their total population share of 18.5. The Sachchar Committee Report and the Rangnath Mishra Report both advised the then UPA government to accept the Muslims as an extremely backward class and to earmark, at least, 15 % government jobs in the center as well as states. The condition of the Muslims are actually so poor 38% Muslims in the urban areas and 27 % in the rural areas are living

well below the poverty line. Seeing this condition the Rangnath Mishra Report advised provision of a special 8.5% quota for the Muslims within the 27% quota of the OBC. But what has anybody done in this regard? Nothing! To keep its recommendations away from any political controversy, and to make their necessary recommendations implemented as quickly as possible the committee didn't even use the word reservation in its recommendation, it instead, just, used the word 'earmarked'. The recommendations are completely in accordance with the Article 16 (4) of the constitution as the constitution provides for the adequate representation of the backward classes in the services under the state. The right to equality of opportunity is our fundamental right as well.

The leaders and the constitution makers of our country envisioned India to be a country free from any bias or inequality- a country where nobody is made to feel inferior than anybody, and where no one will be subjected to any injustice etc. The constitution provides for checks and balances, the Preamble and the fundamental rights in our constitution and the Directive Principles are testimony to the will of our constitution makers. But sadly this wish remains denied even after 68 years

of independence.

Provision for the reservation too was also to remove the untouchability, the inequality and other biases that were, and still are, deep rooted in Indian society, and to ensure proper representation of the backward and the oppressed classes in all walks of life including government offices, and so that we become a balanced, ideal and truly progressive nation.

And it is but a need of the hour that the Muslims be brought into government offices so that the nation as a whole prospers. We should not resort to allow any inequality to prevail anymore and leaving our country backward in certain areas. We must do away with the fear that the reservation for the Muslims will create any divide within the nation. It is actually a call for justice. Reservation is actually a variety of a small struggle for upliftment in a democratic society.

## The Problems With Muslim Reservation

In the recent 'Husool e Insaaf' conference of the Jamiat e Ulema e Hind the demand for the Muslim reservation was raised, and also demanded the implement the recommendations of the Rangnath Mishra Commission. The Jamiat has been raising this demand for a long time, but again without any response from the governments. The standard reply to this demand, as given by the minority affairs minister Salman Khursheed, under the UPA regime is that there cannot be any religion based reservation in our country. The Andhra Pradesh government tried to provide this reservation after taking the entire Muslim community there as a backward class, but the measure was refuted by the Supreme Court. Later the matter was resolved for the time being by providing a quota within the OBC to the backward Muslims. That matter is still under consid-







**That reservation is needed only by the socially, economically and educationally backward people. That is the ground on which the constitutional provisions are on. The Muslims coming in the already existing OBC category have the right of 27% reservation. Though, another fact is that they don't get the required benefit in this slot as here they have to vie with the financially strong Muslims as well. With the Rangnath Mishra Commission recommendations would get them free from this biased competition. So, instead of raising for a demand of Reservation for all Muslims, which is not constitutional, and is also inviting competition from the Sangh and other quarters the demand should be for the implementation of Rangnath Mishra Commission recommendations and nothing else.**

**—Dr. Ayyub Ansari Peace Party**

eration with the Supreme Court.

Muslim leader demanding the reservation for the Muslims too know that the demand cannot be fulfilled according to the constitution. Why they raise this demand again and again is under suspicion. When it is not a constitutional probability, is it then just a trick to exploit Muslim emotions and thereby the Muslim vote bank? Is it just to show the voters that the leaders did raise the demand, and if it went unanswered the fault is of the government and not of the Muslim leaders?

Actually the matter is complicated. The Rangnath Mishra recommendations and the constitutional provisions are prima facie contradictory as far as the basis is religious. The way to get through is to include the backward Muslims, which are at par with the scheduled castes into the SC category. There already are Hindus, Sikhs and Buddhists in this category. The Para 3 of (Scheduled Caste) Order 1950 does not allow the people from the re-

ligion other than Hinduism to be included in the scheduled caste category. But later, at the demands of the Sikhs they were included within the purview in 1955, and in the same way the Buddhists too were included in 1990. The Narsimha Rao government, in 1996, tried to provide the same benefit to the Christians by bringing in an ordinance but was forced to retract due to fierce opposition of the BJP then. Since then the Christian organisations are struggling for the inclusions of the backward Sikhs in the SC category. With this the Muslims who were, or are, in a poor social or financial condition, have started demanding and expecting for some similar consideration. The matter is now pending before the Supreme Court and the Central Government has to submit its response before the court.

It was as a result of this struggle of the Christians and the Muslims that the government constituted the Rangnath Mishra Commission to look into the reality of the matter and to apprise the government in this regard, and the commission reported that it will be against the constitution to deny the reservation to the Muslims and the Christians. The suggestions were also made to accomplish the task without altering the then reservation structure and by merely providing for the quota within the quota. This recommendation also was accepted by the National Commission of Scheduled Caste. The matter presently is in the hands of the Prime Minister and if the Muslim representatives could advocate the matter properly the matter could be resolved quickly.

All parties except the Congress and the BJP are in the favor of this provision. The question is why not even a single Muslim representative has thought of any movement for getting the Rangnath Mishra Commission recommendations implemented. These recommendations if implemented will open new doors for the developments of the Muslims. They would get the huge benefits that the scheduled castes get and the right to contend on 79 Lok Sabha and a total 1050 reserved seats in vari-

ous assembly elections. This will also provide the reservation within the reserved women's seats.

The strange thing is that the Muslim organisations are pressing only for Muslim reservation and not for the implementation of the Rangnath Mishra Commission. It is strange that they are asking for something that cannot be provided without amending the constitution, which at the moment is a big improbability, and not for the constitutional recommendations of Rangnath Mishra Commission.

Moreover reservation is not even required for all Muslims. Dr. Ayyub Ansari of the Peace Party says

Sangh and other quarters the demand should be for the implementation of Rangnath Mishra Commission recommendations and nothing else.

## Why no Reservation for Dalit Muslims

There cannot be any doubt about the financial and educational backwardness of the Muslims. The doubt was not there even before the Sachchar Committee report. But the Rangnath Mishra Commission report and the Sachchar Committee report that the conditions of the Muslims is different in within the three social categories of Muslims namely- Ashraf, ajlaf and arjal. Ashraf are the developed classes of Muslims. Ajlaf is the category similar to the Hindu 'Shudra' and Arjal is similar to the Hindu Dalits. But, as the Constitution does not accept any idea like the Muslim Dalits that's why Ajlaf and Arjal are taken to be a single class category, and this category is called the 'Pasmanda Muslims'.

Secularism is a vital need of the country. We have willingly chosen secularism as our social mindset as no other idea can contain so many religious classes, with justice, within a same country, like secularism.

Secularism was also chosen as it is the idea that prevents any bias and makes the progress of classes other than the religious ones possible.

Our secular constitution directs the government and its various offices not to show any discrimination on the basis of religion. But many a governments have many a times been seen not behaving in accordance with the constitution. A proof of which is the Presidential Order, 1950, forwarded in accordance with the section 341 of the Indian Constitution. This order discriminates on the basis of religion. In its third part, even before 1956, it provided that no other religion will be included in the SC category except the Hindu religion. 1956 the order was amended and the Sikhs were included in the dalits. In 1990 the Buddhists followed. So, the

that reservation is needed only by the socially, economically and educationally backward people. That is the ground on which the constitutional provisions are on. The Muslims coming in the already existing OBC category have the right of 27% reservation. Though, another fact is that they don't get the required benefit in this slot as here they have to vie with the financially strong Muslims as well. With the Rangnath Mishra Commission recommendations would get them free from this biased competition. So, instead of raising for a demand of Reservation for all Muslims, which is not constitutional, and is also inviting competition from the



religions created in India can be included but the people of the religions coming from outside have to face the bias. The Muslims and Christians have, hence, so far been denied this support. And not only that, the people who converted to Islam or Christianity too lose the right which they have prior the conversion. What is this if not blatant injustice? And that too on communal ground! Does the per-

maintained that the caste does not get changed within the change of religion. The problems associated with caste chase a person even after the change of religion. The caste bias runs across all religions in India, and even today it is as prominent as it has ever been. And the fact that Islam, Christianity and Sikhism do not have any scope for caste bias does not change the fact that their followers,

in practice, are very much infected by the caste bias virus.

There are people who argue that the Muslims and Christians cannot claim reservation on the caste basis as their religion does not acknowledge castes conveniently forget that the Sikhism and the Buddhism too does not have any room for the caste differences, so, why is it that they have been provided reservation and the Muslims and Christians cannot! Does it sound fair that a Hindu 'dhobi' or a needs reservation but a Muslim 'dhobi' doesn't?

Many a reports in this matter have been submitted by various bodies.

sonal social and economic condition change with the change of religion? Unfortunately, the caste of Hindu Dalits too, if not always then often, migrates along with them. Their socio-economic conditions just can't leave anyone with the change of religion. So, what is it if not communal bias to deem these Dalits as non-dalits just due to change of their religion. In the 1985 Soosai Versus Union of India 1985 (Supp SCC 590) the Supreme Court of India

Elyaperumal Committee in 1969 maintained that the Scheduled Caste benefits should be provided for the non-Hindu Dalits too. Mandal Commission in 1980 stated that though castes exist only in Hindu Religion but other religions in India are not alien to castes as well. The Gopal Singh Commission in 1983 recommended amendment in Presidential Order, 1950 so that the dalits in other religions too may benefit from it. National Com-



mission for Minorities too demanded this amendment so that the Muslims and the Christians backwards too could receive its benefits. There are 3 Writs in the Supreme Court and 7 in various High Courts against the Presidential Order of 1950.

The Rangnath Mishra Commission too declared the 1950 Presidential Order to be unconstitutional and advised that the religious base contained in the order must be removed and all dalits irrespective of religion must get the reservation. The report also pointed out that this Order prevents a dalit from choosing a religion of his choosing which is against the right to freedom of religion provided by the constitution. It is against section 14, 15, 16 and 25 of the Indian Constitution. According to law reservation cannot be provided nor can be taken away on the ground of religion, but the Presidential Order of 1950 does exactly that. The people who are fighting for the rights of the Dalits should raise the voice for the amendment of the Presidential Order. The dalits have been oppressed for centuries; a mere change of religion must not take away their right for education and job opportunities.

If the Dalit leaders fail to do this then it will mean that the downtrodden dalits are downtrodden dalits only and only if they are Hindus, and their right to get support and opportunity dies with the change of religion and that they no longer deserve to uplift themselves socially, economically and educationally. And that the Dalit leaders too wanted their betterment by the time they were Hin-



us, otherwise their poverty or upliftment do not concern the Dalit leaders. And that the crusade of Baba Bhimrao Ambedkar against the caste system has been abandoned by the Dalit leaders.

The Presidential Order of 1950 negates the secular foundation of the country and of the constitution. This error must be corrected at an earliest. We hope that the Supreme Court will soon pass a positive judgement in this regard, and that the religion clause be removed from this issue. If this clause remains despite the recommendations and findings of so many reports than it will be a question mark on the secular spirit of our country. The country must develop as a whole. There should not be any bias towards anybody in law or in the government. All classes and all religions must have a judicious representation in all walks of life including government jobs, education, politics, and all downtrodden Dalits, irrespective of religion, must be protected by the laws like SC /ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act , 1989 , Prevention of Civil Liberties Act ,1955. The benefits, opportunities and rights in a secular nation must not be on the basis of religion, but must be available for all. ■



# It is a Duty of a Real Hindu to Stop the 'Hindutva Brigade': *R B Sreekumar*

*R B Sreekumar was the additional DGP of Gujrat during the 2002 riots there. From April 9 to September 18, 2002 he was the additional DGP (Intelligence). He was extremely famous for not coming into any pressure and for maintaining his impartial stand during that period. As additional DGP (Intelligence) he deposed that after the riots Mr. Modi, the then Chief Minister of Gujrat was making the already tensed situation worse with his speeches. He filed several affidavits before the Nanavati and Mehta commissions wherein he alleged that the government prevented the police from carrying out their duties during 2002 Gujrat violence. He paid a huge price for his deposition as was denied promotion by Gujarat government to the rank of Director General of Police after he deposed against the government before the Nanavati- Shah Commission. Gujrat government made him sit in an isolated room without any work for four years. He took his case to the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) that gave its ruling in September 2006 in his favour. He retired in 2007. In 2015 he published his book 'Gujrat Behind the Curtains', in which he extensively exposed the pre and post 2002 conditions in Gujrat. In his book he tells hoe the violence that ocured was approved by the gover4nment and the police He presents many proofs top support his arguments. **Javed Anis** had a chance to talk to him while he was in Bhopal for his book launch.*

## ***Tell us something about your family background.***

I was born in a middle class family. My grandfather was very impressed with Gandhiji's philosophy. He was a school teacher, and was one of the founding members of Kerala's Congress Division. He took a lot of interest in social issues. He worked a lot for Dalit rights at that time. He struggled for getting the Dalits to enter the temples, and to stop the discrimination against the dalit children in the schools. The youth of that time was highly influenced by the progressive and the communist ideas. I was very much motivated by my grandfather. It made me very democratic and tolerant. I learnt to respect the existence of other thoughts and religions. I learnt that my religion is good for myself but somebody else may not like it much, and I have to learn to respect his choice.

My father was in the army. In 1969 I completed my MA in history and also topped my state. Then I worked as a lecturer at a college for two years. In 1971 I was selected for Indian Police Service. After joining the police force I did my LL.B and LL.M I was put on shelf for the last four years of my service by Mr. Modi. Not a single file was sent to me during that period. I was made to sit in a room with no work and a peon. As I was workless there I did two more MAs there- one in Gandhian Philosophy and one in English Literature. I often tell my wife that the last two degrees I owe to Mr. Modi!

## ***At what posts have you served with Indian Police?***

I got Gujrat Cadre after completing my training. I served as SP police in 7 districts. The local leaders and MLAs could not tolerate me for more than ten months in any area. Earlier, the politicians were comparatively gentle. Many a times I have been called by the Chief minister who were satisfied with my service and apologized that they were transferring me because I could not maintain good coordination with the local MLAs. Anyhow, from 1979 till 84 I worked with CISF. After coming back from there I was posted with Gujrat Electricity Board, and

then with the IB for 13 years. Where I was posted in Delhi for 5 years, and at Kerala for 8 years as in charge of IB. In 2000 I came back to Gujrat and became the DGP Additional (armed unit) and stayed on that post till 8 April 2002. After that I was the DGP Additional (Intelligence) from 9 April to 18 September 2002.

## ***What changes do you feel have been there in the Police during your long service?***

Things have changed a lot, especially after the Emergency. After emergency the political bureaucracy (the ministers etc.) has been sending the message to the civil bureaucracy (police- administration) hinting that they have to work according to the will of their 'political masters. Earlier the politicians were not that offended if a police officer did not exactly work according to their will, but now the police force has been very much politicized, and the politicians just want the police to work according to their diktats. In term it as anticipatory sycophancy of the politicians. The police too take it as their duty to please their political bosses. That is why we see that the police is often accused and is also found guilty of various crimes including the encounters. The CRPC contains clear-cut rights and jurisdiction of the constable to the DG, but instead of working efficiently within their jurisdiction they choose to succumb to political pressure.

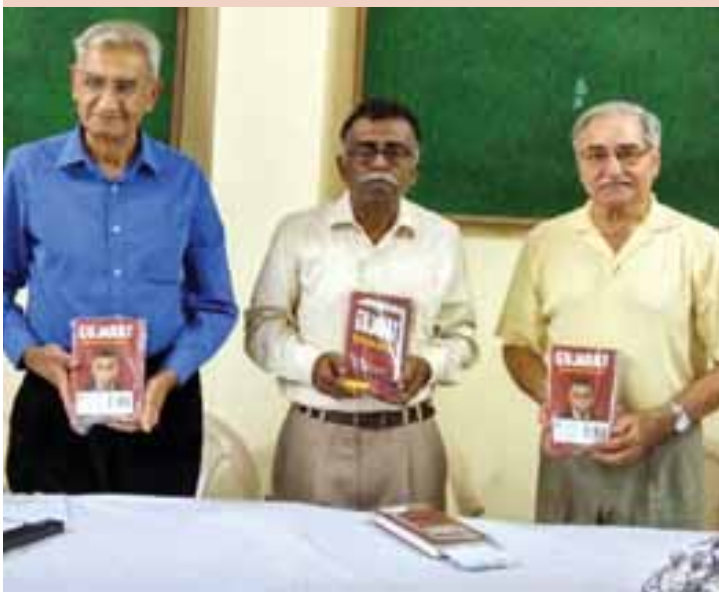
## ***What are your experiences of 2002 riots?***

Those were terrible times. I used to go to office from Ahmadabad to Gandhinagar. One day I saw that rioters



were killing people and were burning public property and the police remained mere onlookers. The riots were planned well in advance because the Muslim houses and shops etc were marked before destruction. One day I saw a Bata shop burning. I asked one of my men why that shop was burnt, I was informed that the Memon brothers had 50% stake in that showroom. The Metro shoes shops were targeted because the owners were from the Muslim community. In short all this was planned in advance. Even many setups with Hindu names were targeted because there was the information that the owners were Muslims. One intention was to destroy the Muslim community financially.

***Can you throw more light on the role of the government and the police in those riots?***



The riots were well planned in advance that I have already told you. There were continuous incidents of violence in 11 districts of Gujrat, the month of February and March, because there was the consent from the government for this violence. In my investigation I found that the 'Hindutva Brigade', protected by the Modi govern-

ment, affected that violence. Modi provided an uninterrupted outlet for the angst of the Hindus towards Muslims. The bigger incidents happened only where the government and the administration either stood silent or even supported it. The civil society too did not respond properly to this violence. Only few protests were registered in few cities, and that's all. This all happened after a long silent preparation of converting the Gujrati society into a communal society. The Hindus were made to believe that the Muslims are some alien species which in no way deserve any compassion. It seemed that the communal hatred was injected into the very core of many Hindus there. The Congress too is responsible for that as it kept a mum against all this due to the fear that by opposing it it will invoke the ire of the Hindu majority.

***What challenges are faced by any secular and unbiased officer like you in Gujrat?***

The Gujrat Police did a lot of positive work even in those situations. The performance of the Gujrat police is comparatively even better than the police of other states. There were 30 Police Administered districts in Gujrat at that time and only 11 districts witnessed serious violence. The riots were not a failure of the system. Though the people who opposed the violence were made to suffer in one way or the other. I, myself, am a victim of that penalization. The police manual has a SOP (Standard Operating Procedures Manual) to help it decide what kind of action it has to take in face of any condition like riots etc. But many officers were made to submit wrong affidavits which were in fact prepared by the Modi government itself, and obviously favored the government itself. We paid the price for that. Gujrat government accused me of preparing secret documents and for providing them to the investigating teams. I was also threatened that there will be serious consequences if I will speak the truth. I was put on a shelf and was denied the promotion which was legally mine and I actually got but not without the intervention of the Supreme court. ■

*(More to come in the coming issue)*



Ram Puniyani

# *Should RSS Volunteers be permitted to join Government Services?*



**A**n old controversy resurfaced lately. After the alleged denial of government jobs to candidates linked to the RSS, Minister of State in the PMO, Jitendra Singh, said last week that “the central government has not issued any such order (prohibiting government staff from

joining RSS activities) recently”, and “if any old order exists, we will review it.” (16 June, 2016) RSS Prachar Pramukh Manmohan Vaidya had already stated that, “Banning RSS members from joining government service; is unjust and undemocratic. Such bans hardly affect RSS work and morale of swayamse-



vaks.” (Indian Express 11 June 2016)

As such civil servants are banned from participating in the political organizations. RSS calls itself cultural organization, and that's what has been used as a ruse by the state governments on couple of occasions to permit the civil servants in joining RSS. In Gujarat when this permission was granted (Jan 2000), the President on receiving the protests intervened, and the Mr. Vajpayee prevailed upon the state BJP and got this permission revoked. Later in MP Chouhan Govt. lifted the ban; thereby the government servants could join and carry on the RSS work openly (2006).

The basic premise of Indian constitution and parliamentary democracy is that the civil service should be neutral. Already RSS has infiltrated into various wings of the state apparatus by sending its trained swayamsevak to work in different areas of bureaucracy in states as well as at Center. In addition to these elements the 'social common sense' is so doctored that in the times of violence a big chunk of police and other state officials aid and abet the violence against minorities, putting aside the norms of constitution and even the civic decency. Thus far many a reports on the communal carnage have indicated the role of RSS and the complicity of police and other officials in the anti minority pogroms. Such permission to the civic service opens the flood gates for the total communalization of the civil service which is the backbone of the state apparatus.

What about the argument that RSS is not a political organization; it is an organization which is cultural, committed to build a Hindu nation. This claim itself gives the game away; building a nation is a political process so how can this organization claim to

be merely a cultural one? After seeing the actions of RSS and its role in the political arena, its role in dictating its political progeny, the BJP, any doubt about it's being a cultural organization vanishes into thin air. RSS is a political organization which operates through its different progeny; some of which claim to be non political to achieve its political goal.

Initially, it was just training the political volunteers, swayamsevak, and from 1952 it started floating the direct political organizations, first Bharatiya Jansangh and then BJP (after earlier floating Rashtra Sevika Samiti in 1936 and ABVP in 1948). It acted as controller of Janasangh and whosoever disagreed

with its' polices was removed from being the office bearer, Balraj Madhok, the President of Jana Sangh who was removed from his post for disagreeing with RSS line. Many more examples abound. Earlier in 1998 one saw it dictating the process of cabinet making, the allotment of portfolios, like wanting to have Yashwant Sinha as Finance minister, instead of Jaswant Singh. It came out openly against its' Lal Krishna Advani, when he stated that Jinnah was a secular.

In one of the affidavits filed, miscellaneous application No 17 of 1978, two of its functionaries, Deoras and Rajendrasingh, stated, "The work of RSS is neither religious nor charitable, but its objects are cultural and patriotic as contra-distinguished religious or charitable. It is akin to political purposes, though RSS is not at present a political party as much as RSS constitution bans active participation by the RSS as such, as a policy Tomorrow the policy could be changed and RSS could participate even in day-to-day political activity as a political party because policy is not a permanent or irrevocable thing."

*The work of RSS is neither religious nor charitable, but its objects are cultural and patriotic as contra-distinguished religious or charitable. It is akin to political purposes, though RSS is not at present a political party as much as RSS constitution bans active participation by the RSS as such, as a policy.*

# National Story



How do we assess the nature of organizations, by their own claims or from the outcome of their activities? One has to note the claims of RSS being a cultural organization is a pure make believe. It operates in the political arena by remote control, by mechanisms which are direct as well as indirect. Its swayamsevaks have been involved in Gandhi murder, murder of Pastor Stains, demolition of Babri masjid and running of political parties. Two noteworthy incidents are one when the Jansangh component of Janata party broke away from Janata party since their double membership, of RSS and of Janata party was challenged. Also Vajpayee himself claimed with pride that he is first a swayamsevak and than the prime minister of India. Recently faced with similar criticism Home Minister Rajanath Singh said ' we are RSS'.

Different progenies of RSS have been allotted the work in diverse social arenas to be able to control the basic thought process of society, starting from Saraswati Shishu Mandir right up to RSS shakha where through the bauddhiks the indoctrination into political ideology is carried on. It does monitor all its

progeny and coordinates their activities through All India Pratinidhi Sabha (All India representatives Association) which meets regularly to coordinate their activities. Its goal is political, its actions are political and its outcome is political through and through.

Even without being in power it is able to control the politics through various mechanisms. Currently through the compliant Government its agenda runs exponentially faster, the way Gujarat and many other states has demonstrated. Now its agenda is running from bottom to top and top to bottom both ways since the BJP is the ruling party at the centre. With the employees being openly participating in RSS the divisive processes will move faster and running the administration on the lines of Indian Constitution will become all the more difficult. Despite know-

*Different progenies of RSS have been allotted the work in diverse social arenas to be able to control the basic thought process of society, starting from Saraswati Shishu Mandir right up to RSS shakha where through the bauddhiks the indoctrination into political ideology is carried on.*

ing that such a provision is not legally tenable, many in the seat of power are asking for government servants be permitted to be part of RSS and vice versa.

The present opinions being articulated by RSS leaders should neither be legally permissible nor are in tune with the principles of Constitution of India.

## *In 2 years of Modi govt only 13 village level cluster in Minority Concentrations Districts (MCDs) identified*



» **Amjad Suri**

**O**nly 13 Village level clusters have been identified in the states of Tripura, Manipur and Meghalaya, in

Multi-Sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) division of ministry of minority affairs. The figure emerged in a reply to right to information (RTI) application seeking answers on details of village

clusters identification and reminders issued to the respective state's government.

For the rest of the other states, no such data is available on village level cluster identification.

Plans and schemes under the MsDP seeks to improve the socio-economic conditions of minorities by providing improvising of facilities such as better infrastructure, sanitation, education, health-care and income generation schemes in districts where minorities constitute 25 per cent of the population or more. Thus far, previous governments at the Centre have identified blocks in 90 minority concentrated districts across the country.

## Multi-sectoral development programme at a glance

- Multi-sectoral Development Programme (MsDP) is a centrally sponsored scheme (CSS) approved by the government of India in 2008-09 to follow up action on the Sachar committee recommendations.
- It was launched in 90 Minority Concentration Districts (MCDs) to address the development deficits of minority concentration areas by creating favorable socio-economic infrastructure.
- The objective of the scheme would be to fill the gaps in the existing schemes of the Govt. of India by providing additional resources and to take up non-gap filling projects (innovative projects) for the welfare of the minorities.



Cluster of minority concentration villages falling outside the identified minority concentration blocks: Within the blocks of backward districts not selected as MCBs, cluster of contiguous minority concentration villages

(having at least 50 percent minority population) would be identified. In case of hilly areas of North Eastern States, such villages having minority's population of 25 percent may be identified. About 500 villages



which are falling outside the minority concentration blocks would be covered through such clusters. Identification of the clusters fulfilling the above criteria would be done by the States/UTs[i].

For identification of Village level clusters of Minority Concentrated villages in backward districts the Ministry of Minority have send a letter to states and UTs to send the identified villages but, till date the they have not received the details from Backward districts[ii]. There is a complete discrepancy on the level of information sharing between the ministry of minority and the

concerned states.

The circulars were issued to states/UTs for village level clusters across India in July-August, 2015 regarding identification of village level clusters is available on ministry of minority website.

Only 3 districts in UP, Shahjahanpur, Pilibhit and Allahabad have sent the identified backward villages with have more than 50 percent minority population and in Bihar, district administration is yet to identify the village level clusters in backward districts with more than 50 percent Muslim minority population[iii], said the central public grievance system for Uttar

Pradesh and Bihar in reply to the grievance filed. Assessment and monitoring authority in the ministry of minority is not reconstituted in the present Modi government[iv].

Therefore, the state government should be proactive in identifying the village level clusters for the development of minority concentrated villages in backward districts of India. The proactive Muslim minority activism is required to get the development projects of Muslim minorities like, MsDp, Minority Cybergram, Nai Roshni, and Minority Scholarship to reach the respective beneficiaries. ■

# *Dr. Frank F Islam on Trump, Muhammad*

**Given below is the text of the speech delivered by Dr. Frank F Islam during an event organized in his honor by London based Progressive Muslim Forum. Many distinguished personalities were present on the occasion.**

## **Good evening**

Distinguished guests, Members of the Progressive Muslim Forum, Mayor Khan, Friends, and Ladies and Gentlemen:

I want to thank all of you for your warm welcome and thank you for your hospitality.

Thank you for that kind introduction.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Khurshid Alam for inviting me to deliver this address. Let us give him a big round of applause.

It is my distinct honor and privilege to be here with all of you this evening for this wonderful event during the season of Ramadan. I want to extend best wishes to all Muslims a joyful Ramadan Kareem. May the spirit of Ramadan illuminate the world and show us the way to peace and harmony

If you looked at the program, I have been allotted 20 minutes for my remarks tonight. Rest assured that I will not take up all of that

time, as I know it is late in the evening and we are all ready to break our fasts.

I am also mindful of what President Woodrow Wilson said when he was asked to give a speech. He responded, "How long is it to be. If it is to be twenty minutes, I am ready now. If it is to be ten minutes, it will take me two weeks to prepare. If it is to be 5 minutes, it will take me one month."

I haven't had one month to work on my talk, but I have put in considerable time to keep it short, focused and to the point. The topic that I was asked to speak on is "The importance of tolerance and diversity adding value to Peace & Economic progress of global Nations."

Now, that's a mouthful and somewhat abstract and conceptual. I will speak to that topic. But, to make it a little more concrete, the title that I have given to my talk is "ISIS, Donald Trump, Muhammad Ali, You and Me."

Let me begin with ISIS. As you all know, a

# n 'ISIS, Donald d Ali, You and Me'



**Dr. Frank F Islam**

little more than one week ago, a Muslim terrorist in Orlando committed the largest mass shooting in the history of the United States killing more than 50 innocent victims and wounding more than 50 others. In the midst of this horrendous act, he made a 911 phone call and pledged allegiance to the leader of ISIS, Abu Bakr Al-Bagdadi.

Needless to say, the actions of this lone wolf terrorist have touched off a wide-ranging fire storm of commentary, concern and controversy across the United States.

I raise that cowardly act at the outset of my talk because it represents the tragic circumstances and conditions that we are dealing with in the 21st century in attempting to bring

tolerance and diversity to nations and a world that are becoming increasingly intolerant and fragmented.

I also raise it because that act has absolutely nothing to do with the Muslim faith that you and I know. It is the attempt by a radical terrorist, as have been others in places such as Paris, Boston, and Brussels, to hijack our religion and to misrepresent it and to try to turn others in countries around the world against us.

The leading imams in the United States have reacted to this brutal shooting by calling for a day of Muslim unity to be convened on the mall in Washington, D.C. on July 23 to condemn these killings and other hostile acts and to take pro-active steps to prevent them from happening in the future. They have asked all Muslims and supporters of a tolerant, diverse and peacefully society to join with them on that day.

This action by the Muslim community is a big step forward. Muslim communities should do everything possible to help eradicate the menace of terrorism, hatefulness, and bigotry.

Unfortunately, at the same time in the United States, there is a countervailing force and a big step backward being urged by the presumptive Republican nominee for President of the United States, Donald Trump.

Again, as you know, Trump has called for

a ban on all foreign-born Muslims entering the United States. He doubled down on the call for that ban after the Orlando shootings – even though the shooter there was a native born American of Afghanistan heritage.

Trump does not restrict his attacks on Muslims. He doesn't use a gun but because of his machine gun mouth he doesn't need one.

He has also gone after Mexicans. He doesn't want to ban them. He just wants to build a wall on the border between Mexico and the United States to keep all illegal immigrants out of the country.

In a recent interview with Jake Tapper of CNN, Trump repeatedly said, "I am building a wall." I reacted to that comment by Trump by writing a blog for the Huffington Post.

In that blog, I stated, "That comment struck me as odd in that Trump is not building a wall. He is talking about building a wall. Moreover, if a wall was ever to be built, Trump himself would not build it.

Then, the more I thought about it, I came to understand that for once Mr. Trump is being accurate in his pronouncement. He is indeed building a wall.

That wall is one of bigotry, hatred and divisiveness between the American people and America and much of the rest of the world. This is no small feat. But, it is a mean feat and demeaning one for our nation and its citizens.

Near the end of the blog I concluded, "Donald Trump has said he is building a wall. And, this great nation and its citizens are paying the price."

That's not just my opinion. It's also the opinion of Michael Hayden, former four star general in the United States Air Force and head of the CIA and the National Security Agency under President George W. Bush. Hayden has declared

that Trump's Muslim comments are helping ISIS and putting Americans more at risk in the United States and around the world.

In contrast to Donald Trump who moves the United States backward on the issues of tolerance, diversity and peace, Muhammad Ali moved the United States and the world a giant leap forward on those same issues during his lifetime and his memory continues to do so.

This was attested to by the tribute and memorial service convened in his home town of Louisville Kentucky a few weeks ago.

Ali led his life in three acts. In the first act, he was a three time heavy weight champion of the boxing world. In his second act, he stood up against and refused to go into the service during the Vietnam War because it was against his religious beliefs as a Muslim. He gave up his heavy weight crown because of that courageous act. In his third act – and the one that most people know the least about – he campaigned continuously across the United States and around the world for interfaith peace, love and understanding among people of all creeds and colors and background and belief.

His three hour ecumenical memorial service brought that third act to national and international attention in a truly powerful and stunning way. If you have not seen it, I commend it to your viewing. It reaffirms who we are as Muslims and the fundamental generosity and kindness of our Islamic faith.

The service featured imams, and religious leaders of all other faiths including Jewish, Christian and Buddhist. It also included members of Ali's family and President Bill Clinton and comedian Billy Crystal who were close friends of the champ and whom he invited to speak

During his comments, President Clinton described Ali as "a universal soldier for our com-



mon humanity.” Crystal told the story of how he invited to Ali to be the co-host with him for an event at Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1999.

Ali not only served as the co-host he went to Jerusalem and helped raise a lot of money. As Crystal described it, here was the most famous Muslim man in the world working together to help a Jewish friend accomplish something important.

The money from that event was used to establish a group called Peace through the Per-

***let that greatness shine not for us personally but upon and in collaboration with others”.***

This brings me back to you – to all of you here this evening, and most especially to the members of the Progressive Muslims Forum.

But, by looking at the Forum’s mission which includes the following words, “We stand for peace, tolerance and friendship with one another and share the vision of strengthening our society through understanding, valuing diversity and a true respect for each other. Our focus is in working together with all communities, faiths & government bodies including statutory and voluntary bodies”. It seems to me that I am preaching to the choir.

You have found your greatness by practicing “civic engagement”. In my opinion, civic engagement takes five primary forms:

- **Individual** : being the best one can be and personally responsible for one’s actions
- **Organizational** : contributing to the success of the groups (e.g., business, religion, associations) to which one belongs
- **Political** : participating in those processes that shape the structure and nature of government
- **Community** : collaborating to make the locale and the world in which we live a better place
- **Social** : advocating for justice and equality of treatment and opportunity for all

I applaud each and all of you for your civic engagement efforts no matter what form they take. I am especially pleased to be here with Mayor Khan and to recognize his political leadership which is focused on unifying London rather than dividing it as his predecessor was prone to do. I say carry on!

forming Arts at Hebrew University. The group comprised of Israelis, Arabs, Palestinians actors and directors working together in peace to mount theatrical performances. This integrated group still performs plays that promote “our common humanity.”

In other words, they carry on the work of Ali. As so, should all of we.

***”Muhammad Ali always said that he was the greatest. But, he also understood both implicitly and explicitly that each of us has greatness within and that the challenge and opportunity during our lifetime is to find our calling and to***

# National Story

Finally, let me turn to me for a brief moment. I am a Muslim with the last name of Islam.

Think about that. Depending on who is looking at it, it might be said that I am doubly blessed or doubly cursed. Seriously, like Ali, I have led my life in three acts. As you can probably tell, none of those was as a heavy weight boxer.

“My first act was “Developing.” It was focused on going to school at Aligarh Muslim University in India and then coming to the United States to get two degrees and to pursue the American Dream.

The second act was “Doing.” It was focused on becoming an entrepreneur, building a successful information technology firm and achieving the American dream. I am now in my third act “Giving Back.” In this act, I am focused on making contributions which I consider investments to help world become a better, safer, and saner place”.

Through our Foundation, my wife Debbie and I provide scholarships to a number of higher education institutions in the United States. We also have committed to build a new school of Management Complex at Aligarh Muslim University in India. I would not be the person I am today if it were not for Aligarh education. Aligarh students have always been our best hope. My investment in the School of Management is my way of saying thank you and keeping the hope alive. I firmly believe my investment will yield exponential return.

Here, the progressive vision of America is worth thinking about for a moment. America has long succeeded because it has been open to new people and new ways of doing things. The most successful parts of America are often the most diverse and also the most tolerant.

That is not an accident.

“In the modern world, ideas and creativity is an essential driver of innovation and thus growth. And diverse societies are more creative and inno-

vative. They are a post-modern alchemists dream”.

Mr. Mayor, creating cities that can attract talent from around the world, and that can create an environment where people of different cultures, different faiths, different races, genders and sexualities can all work together in peace and harmony is now critical to success in the global economy. It is a challenge that I am confident you will rise to, and one your friends in America would be delighted to help you accomplish. That is part of my story in striving to find my greatness by sharing and to helping others find theirs. I have been uniquely blessed. And, I am certain that those of you here have been as well. That is why I am so pleased to be with here with you my fellow Muslims and your friends during Ramadan to reflect upon those things that we can do to benefit society and most importantly to help others in need.

“Ramadan is a month of deeply spiritual time of reflection and recommitment and a special time for compassion, caring, sharing and giving. This is our chance not only be grateful for all the blessings we have been allotted, but an opportunity to give to those who are poor, who are hungry, who are less fortunate, and who have no means to break the fast. Ramadan reminds us that we have common obligation to uphold the dignity of every human being. Ramadan also reminds us that we need to stand firmly by rejecting the voices that seek to divide us or limit our religion freedom or civil rights”. I hope they have been an appropriate rhetorical appetizer before we break our fasts. I also hope our paths will cross again as we continue our quests as Muslims with a common mission.

Thank you for your attentiveness and thank you for letting me share my thoughts with you in this regard Until then, good luck and God speed. God bless you all May God’s peace be upon you. ■

# Our Youths Have to Change The Direction of Thinking

## —Salman Taj Patil IPS

In 2012 Salman Taj Patil cracked the UPSC exam in first attempt and became the first Muslim IPS officer from Solapur. In this candid conversation with Imran Inamdar the 31 year old talks of issues concerning the Muslim community, of the state of education among Muslims and of his own preparation for UPSC a few years ago.

### ***How did you manage to achieve this feat?***

I immersed myself into the preparation completely. There was only one aim in my mind and that was to crack UPSC. My parents provided very good emotional support and my father Mr. Jafar Taj always encouraged me saying that 'you are too energetic and brilliant, you can easily crack UPSC, just focus on your studies and be consistent.'

### ***Who is your role model and Why?***

Being a Muslim obviously Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) is my role model. He has showed us the complete way of life. My parents are also firm pillars of support for me. They are always there to guide me.

### ***How to study to appear for UPSC exam?***

The preparation starts at school level. Reading news papers, taking part in extracurricular activities, essay writing, debate competition play a key role. One needs to be updated about all current events. Critical analysis is also very important and it improves and polishes writing skill. Practice makes a man perfect. Nobody comes to the world with all the knowledge and skills. Effort, positive atmosphere, focus and support of near and dear ones matters most.

### ***Why are Muslim youths far behind in cracking UPSC exam?***

This is very important question. In my opinion our educational infrastructure and negative mentality are fully responsible for this. It has been hammered that qualifying this exam is very difficult or nearly impossible for minority community youth. This type of thinking is damaging and we should come out from this depressing thinking. It is a very fair competition. Achievement is a result of hard work only.



It's time to change our direction of thinking. When we focus and work hard Allah also helps us.

### ***How do you feel serving as an IPS officer?***

It's a wonderful experience. In fact working as a police officer is a great social work itself where one gets an opportunity to help the oppressed, put criminal behind bars and provide safety and security to women and children. For this service we are getting salary from the government and will surely get Ajar (reward) from Allah too.

### ***Sachar committee reports reveal tremendous decline of Muslims in India in all walks of life. What are the reasons behind it?***

We are ourselves responsible for this backwardness. We don't follow the path of Prophet Mohammed (PBUH) and teachings of Quran which shows the complete way of life. We don't read, and think over it. 'Iqra' which means read was the very first Quranic word to be revealed. How many of us follow the same? Education should be on our top priority specially girls' education.

### ***During studies what did you do to relieve stress?***

I used to study for about 10 to 12 hours a day. That was hectic so I played cricket with friends and took a walk in the park to get myself mentally fresh again. And horse riding is also my hobby. ■



Neha Dabhade

# Emergency

**T**he Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) often accuses its political opponent, the Congress party of imposing emergency in India in 1975. Recently on the 41st anniversary of emergency, Kiren Rijiju, Minister of State for Home Affairs, said that 26th June must be observed as anti-emergency day. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi added, "Do you remember June 25-26, 1975...it was the darkest night for democracy. Democracy is our strength and we will have to always make our democratic fabric stronger" (Business Standard, 2016). It is indeed true that emergency was the darkest and most condemnable period for democracy. But the question is whether or not India is facing the horrors of an undeclared democracy today? Mr. L. K Advani, a BJP veteran himself cautioned that another emergency in the future cannot be ruled out. "At the present point of time, the forces that can crush democracy, notwithstanding the constitutional and legal safeguards, are stronger," he pointed out last year (Mishra, 2015).



## Emergency in 1975

The then Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi imposed Emergency under article 352 of the Constitution that lasted for 21 months and is considered a blot on Indian democracy. Threat to national security and deteriorating economic conditions were cited as reasons to impose emergency. In reality, Emergency was declared by Mrs. Gandhi to consolidate her political power and eliminate political opposition. Emergency gave her total power and opportunity to

function in an authoritarian manner. Democracy was endangered. This, on ground, spelt taking away of fundamental rights- freedom of expression, freedom of life and liberty, freedom of association. Media was under strong censor-



# Then and Now

ship where only views approved by the government were allowed to be printed. Same was the case for books and journals. Journalists, academicians and thinkers were threatened and intimidated if they dared to criticize the government policies or express a view that differed from that of the government's. Political opponents were arbitrarily detained and imprisoned under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act for political vendetta on a wide scale. This resulted in a society where fear was widespread. The implications of emergency mean control in the hands of the executive at the centre to suspend fundamental rights of the citizens.

In a nutshell, Emergency essentially meant- censorship and muzzling of voices and different perspectives that is plurality of thought, arrests of political oppo-



nents- use of State's coercive power and finally striking fear in society in general. The elections that ended the emergency reinstated faith and assurance in India's political democracy and proved its resilience. However would it be correct to assume that the worst is over and India will never experience the horrors of another emergency? Are there no arbitrary detentions today? Is there no censorship of films, books or news? Is there no atmosphere of fear? Are fundamental rights not infringed upon today? The plight of writers, film makers,

Dalits, minorities, Adivasis foregrounds a discussion on this undeclared emergency.

## Freedom of expression curbed through censorship

Censorship of media amounts to infringement of the right to freedom- freedom of choice and expression. A progressive society thrives on ideas and plurality of perspectives. In a democracy, intelligentsia must have space for expression. However censorship aims at a conformist society. The hardliner Hindu organizations in

India have been systematically silencing voices of rationality. It doesn't stop at that. The author of the work is threatened and intimidated into submission, spelling an end to new ideas. For instance, Tamil writer Perumal Murugan was forced to give up writing after his book 'One Part Woman' was published. He was attacked by Hindutva organizations and caste based organizations which took objection to the book which narrates the story of a childless couple and indicates that sexual intercourse between a married woman and another man outside the marriage was permitted in ancient India to beget a child if the couple had problems conceiving a child within the marriage. He was forced to write his own obituary as a writer on Facebook and also pressurized to withdraw his book from the market (BBC News, 2015).

While the above instance reflects that writers can be muzzled for their views which locates women in active agency and free from societal norms and stigma, caste is still a reality in India, which will remain-so till Dalit intellectuals are muzzled for challenging caste oppression. Dalit writer Huchangi Prasad in central Karnataka was threatened and beaten up by right wing activists for his alleged "anti-Hindu" writings and vermilion was smeared



on his face while he was told that he was born a Dalit due to the sins he had committed in previous birth. He wrote a book called 'Odala Kichchu' which speaks against caste system in India (Indian Express, 2015).

Colleges and Universities which are centres of learning and supposed to introduce students to varied perspectives are now gradually being controlled by bodies like ABVP and VHP. The result is an assault on academic freedom. The Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the students' wing of the BJP, disrupted the screening of a documentary on the 2013 Muzaffarnagar riots at Delhi University's Kirori Mal College (KMC), allegedly for being "anti-Hindu". In another incident, Lucknow University (LU) authorities expelled the Uttar Pradesh president of All India Student's Association (AISA) — the youth wing of Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) for organising a talk on 'Love Jihad'. The talk

was disrupted by members of ABVP when CPI (ML) Politburo member Kavita Krishnan was delivering her address. She was also manhandled by ABVP workers. In Rajasthan, following a representation by the ABVP and the RSS, an FIR was filed against Prof. Vohra by the Rajasthan Higher education minister Kalicharan Saraf for his views about Hindu Gods during a seminar, which did not go well with the RSS and ABVP.

## Creating atmosphere of fear

The above goes on to demonstrate that any view which has a different position than the ideology of the State is ruthlessly crushed. When ideas are so brutally stifled it leads to an atmosphere of fear and insecurity. Non-state actors in collusion with the state have been deliberately creating an environment of paranoia and threats which results in shrinking of democratic spaces. Three powerful

tools have been used to wreck fear in the society- the beef ban, propaganda against 'love jihad' and defining 'true' nationalism. It is no surprise then that an innocent man in Dadri is lynched by a mob upon suspicion that he stored beef in his fridge. Similarly, Muslim drivers are hauled up and beaten up or killed, suspecting them of transporting or selling cows. This doesn't only infringe the freedom of choice in terms of food habits, but leads to particular communities feel threatened. The consequences are life threatening.

At Hyderabad University, young scholar Rohith Vemula was compelled to commit suicide when he was slapped with false cases by the University management. He and Ambedkar Students Association opposed ABVP activities on the campus. Rohith was part of the group that organized a



rally for protesting capital punishment to Yakub Memon and the rally to protest the disrupting of film screening of 'Muzzaffarnagar Baki Hai' by ABVP members. He is called 'anti-national' by ABVP and University management (The Hindu, 2016). What perhaps stirred the hornet's nest and fed into the debate on nationalism were the charges on JNU student, Kanhaiya Kumar of sedition and the attacks by ABVP students for

'anti-national' slogans. ABVP went as far as allegedly announcing a reward of Rs. 5 lakhs for anyone who cuts Kanhaiya's tongue or shoots him down! This comes after the attack on Kanhaiya in the court premises in Delhi (Times of India, 2016). Similarly JNU was called a den of anti-nationals and its teachers banned from delivering lectures in other campuses (Tripathi, 2016).

There is a palpable atmosphere of fear in the country after the murders of renowned writers and rationalists, Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare and Kalburgi. The tardy investigation in these murder cases, even after substantial time has elapsed since their killings in broad daylight, it sends a message of foreboding. Shockingly, their killings are cited as examples to intimidate other writers. Playwright Girish Karnad has been threatened he would meet the same end as murdered writer MM Kalburgi for demand-



ing renaming of the Kempegowda International Airport after Tipu Sultan (Times of India, 2015). Senior journalist Nikhil Wagle has been getting threats from right-winger Prasad Attavar from Sanatan Sanstha. Prasad Attavar posted on his Facebook account a message saying that those mocking Hinduism would die like MM Kalburgi. Prasad Attavar is the former Sri Rama Sene district President, who is also the accused in the pub attack case in Manguluru in 2009 (The Hindu, 2015).

The emergency in 1975 banned institutions, organizations and political outfits to crush dissent. Today the State is doing the same by coming down heavily on organizations working for human rights of the marginalized or monitoring and questioning state policies. The State has resorted to banning or cancelling the registration of licenses of such NGOs citing FCRA norms. Greenpeace and Sabrang Trust are two such examples amongst many. This crackdown on NGOs has achieved both, censorship and also instilling fear in the minds of those who will challenge state policies. This amounts to gradual elimination of institutions put in place for ensuring accountability of the State since civil society organizations and international human rights bodies work as watch dogs of rights demanding that states take

proactive measures to secure rights of the marginalized.

The third tool to instill fear and polarize communities is the propaganda against inter-religious marriages or the derogatory term coined by Hindutva groups popularly known as 'Love Jihad'. VHP and Bajrang Dal has time and again raised this issue to reach out to Hindu families and exhorted them to 'control' the girls in their family to ensure they are not 'trapped' by Muslim men. And Muslim youth are beaten up or intimidated so that they don't pursue the Hindu girls for marriage. What this actually amounts to is that two adult individuals exercising their right to choice and wanting to marry are hounded and brutally prevented from getting married or being in a relationship. This is the worst form of assault on personal liberties. Paranoia and hysteria are created around such unions to such an extent that families and communities on a whole face violence. The slightest signs of inter mingling sets alarm bells ringing and vigilante actions. A Muslim youth was tied to a pole and beaten up by Bajrang Dal members for being together with a Hindu girl, his colleague who he claimed to be giving a ride (Indian Express, 2015). In another incident, Hindutva activists threatened Ashita and Shakeel when they decided to get married in

Mandya. Both the families were happy about the planned wedding and had to seek police protection (Times of India, 2016).

## Freedom to life and Liberty

One of the most fearsome aspects of the emergency is facing the might of the State in its most naked form that is its power to make arrests and detentions. The arrest and torture of Adivasi activist Soni Sori and other Adivasis like her who are fighting for land rights, is a grim reminder that the State wont shy away to lock up vocal opponents. In another incident, Professor of English in Delhi University, G N Saibaba was ar-



*Surviving Emergency 1975*



rested and imprisoned for 14 months on charges of having Maoist links. He was campaigning against operation Greenhunt and fake encounters of Adivasis.

There are scores of Muslim youth who are under trials in prisons across India. Though Muslims comprise only 14.2 percent of the total population of the country according to a recent census data, they constitute 26.4 percent of the prison population as per statistics (Premkumar, 2015). Not only Muslims but Adivasis are killed in extra judicial executions. This concern was also echoed in the Amnesty report (Amnesty International, 2016). It is ironical that while marginalized community

are so unapologetically stripped off their life and liberty, there is no punitive action taken against Hindutva leaders like Yogi Adityanath and Sadhvi Prachi when they openly instigate hatred and enmity against other religions and communities. Their hate mongering and hate speeches are trivialized by terming these Members of Parliament, sworn under the Constitution, as fringe elements. They are not punished or publically condemned or pulled up.

## Conclusion

All of the above indicates that fundamental rights in India are infringed unabashedly even today. The difference between the emer-

gency of 1975 and this undeclared emergency is that while then the state used its police and security forces to curb fundamental rights and democracy, today the state by its collusive inaction against vigilante Hindutva groups is violating fundamental rights. While emergency in 1975 was declared under article 352 which is mentioned in the Constitution and also had constitutional remedies, this present emergency has no basis in the constitution and more difficult to eradicate since its driven by non state actors with a discriminating ideology. In the face of this threat to democracy one needs to ponder on the sentiment of the PM of having a stronger fabric of democracy. The way ahead is fraught with many formidable challenges but it will take sustained vigilance and struggle on part of the people of India and civil society organizations to demand for accountability and rule of law from the current political dispensation. This is possible by exploring legal means and approaching the judiciary. Citizens must be made aware about the rights enshrined in our Constitution and how there are forces which want to violate those rights. Adult franchise is a significant feature of Indian polity and must be practiced by the citizens to make their voices and choices heard. ■



## A Tale of Two Vehicles

# Sadhvi's Motorcycle and Rubina's Car



» **Ram Puniyani**

**C**an there be two type of Justice delivery system in the same country? This question came to one's mind with the U turn taken by NIA in the cases related to terror acts in which many Hindu names were involved. Now the NIA in a fresh charge sheet (May 13, 2016) has dropped the charges against Pragya Singh Thakur, has lightened the ones against Col Purohit and others. Along with this new line of NIA is that Hemant Karkare's investigation in these cases was flawed and that it was ATS which had got the RDX planted in Purohit's residence to implicate him in this case. The implication is that all this was being done at the behest of previous UPA Government.

A brief recap is in order. Maharashtra in particular and many other places in the country were witness to acts of terror. The first major attention to this phenomenon took place when two Bajrang Dal activists were killed while making the bombs in the

house of one RSS worker Rajkondawar (May 2006). There was a saffron flag flying atop the house and a board of Bajrang Dal was put up in front of the house. At the site of bomb explosion fake moustaches, beard and pajama-Kurta were also found. This was followed by many other blasts, Parbhani, Jalna, Thane, and Panvel etc. In most of these case police investigated on the lines in which generally Muslims were blamed for such acts. After every act of blast few Muslims young men were arrested who were later; after long grueling court cases; were released as no evidence was found against them.

The Malegaon blast in which Sadhvi's role came to surface; took place in 2008. In the blasts those returning from Namaj (prayers) were killed and many injured. Following this the usual suspects, Muslims, were arrested. Then while investigating the cases the Maharashtra ATS Chief Hemant Karkare found that the motorcycle used for the blast belonged to Sadhvi Pragya Singh Thakur, ex-ABVP worker. The trail of investigation led to



Swami Dayanad Pande, Retd. Major Upadhyay, Ramji Klasnagra, Swami Aseemanand amongst others. They all belonged to the Hindu right wing politics. There was lots of evidence in the material recovered. One of the helpful evidence came in the form of the legally valid confession of Swami Aseemanand. This confession was made in judicial custody in presence of a Magistrate.

In the confession Swami spilled the beans and said that after the Sankat Mochan blast of 2002, they had decided that bomb will be replied by bomb. He was then looking after the VHP work in Dangs. He gave the detailed narrative of the whole process in which all the people were investigated and became part of the charge sheet of NIA.

When Karakare was investigating the case and many of Hindu names started coming under the shadow Bal Thackeray wrote in Saamna that 'we spit on the face of Karakare'. Narendra Modi; then CM of Gujarat; called him Deshdrohi (Anti National). Advani also reprimanded Karkare. Feeling the heat of this pressure from Hindutva political outfits Karkare went to meet his professional peer Julio Rebeiro. Rebeiro has a record of high level of professional integrity. Rebeiro appreciated his painstaking work. Karkare asked that what should be the stand of a person like him when facing such a heat from politicians. The senior officer told him to

honestly do the work and ignore these insinuations.

Meanwhile the global terror phenomenon hit Mumbai. On 26/11 ten terrorists, armed to the teeth attacked Mumbai. On this occasion Karakare got killed. There is a strong controversy about this killing also. The then minority affairs Minister A. R. Antulay said that there is terrorism plus something else which is behind the killing of Karakare. Narendra Modi who had earlier called Karkare as Deshdrohi landed up in Mumbai and wanted to give a cheque of Rs. one Crore to widow of Karkare, she refused to accept the amount. After Karkare's death the investigations continued on the lines laid down by him. The charge sheet was ready and all the involved were to be tried for acts of terror. Meanwhile Government changed at the center and the NIA adopted the line which has



led to the present situation where the efforts to release Sadhvi are marching with intimidating speed. The change in the line got reflected in the statement of Public Prosecutor, Rohini Salian. She stated that she was told to go soft on these cases. As she refused to toe this, she was sacked.

One recalls that in Mumbai 92-93 violence over one thousand people died. This carnage was followed by the bomb blasts in which over two hundred people

died. As far as the communal carnage is concerned not many got severe punishments, no death penalty- no life imprisonment. In the cases of bomb blasts many have been given death penalty and many more life imprisonment. One of the people undergoing life imprisonment is Rubina Memon. Her crime, she owned the car which was used to ferry the explosives. She never drove the car with explosives.

Sadhvi owned the motor

cycle used for Malegaon blasts; she will be out from the prison soon. Rubina owned the car; she will be in prison all her life. In Mumbai carnage so many died. No severe punishment to anybody. So many severe punishments in bomb blast case! So where does our democracy stand at the end of all this? It seems two type of justice delivery systems are out there in the open. While shrill debates on TV will defend Sadhvi and blame

Karkare for faulty investigation, the people in Malegaon are protesting furiously and planning to go to the court against the change in the stance of NIA. Two political parties seem to be preparing to save the honor of Karakare and press for sincere examination of the evidence collected by him. One hopes the guilty will be punished and innocents will be protected. But this seems a bit too much to expect in current scenario! ■



# Gulbarg Society Carnage Who Cast the First Stone?



► **Ram Puniyani**

**C**ommunal violence is the big bane of Indian society. While on one hand the innocents are killed the guilty mostly get away without any punishment.

The rate of prosecution of riot cases is very low. Even where punishments are meted out the big fish are let off while the foot soldiers get punished. Apart from these observations what is popularized and what has become part of the 'social common sense' is

that 'it is Muslims who begin the riot and then they get killed'.

The Judgment in case of Gulbarg society violence, delivers on 2nd June 2016 was only partly giving the justice to the victims and is mostly falling on this pattern outlined above. Of the ac-

cused only 24 were punished, 11 for life and others for some small sentences. The real forces behind the carnage were untouched and the Gujarat states' prosecution theory that violence was catalyzed due to the private firing by Ehsan Jafri was accepted by the judge. Just to recall the Gulbarg society was ransacked and the butchering of residents took place on 28th February, the day after train in Godhra was burnt. Right from the morning the well armed mob started accumulating around the society where Ahsan Jafri, the ex Member of Parliament was staying. The mob was shouting slogans against minority community.

This episode is presented as a spontaneous anger in response to the Godhra train burning and the prosecution theory is that the mob became aggressive after Jafri fired on the mob. The question arises as to why the mob was mobilized in the first place. Can the people surrounded by such a mob feel calm? In response to Court accepting that carnage took place due to Jafri's firing; Jafri's son Tanveer says that this judgment is an insult to the life and work of his father, "What were the 24 police officers present doing for four hours, watching the show? The Judgment not only appears to

have ignored the violent build up but appears to have been standing some of the evidence on its head. "

In the analysis of communal violence the general observation is that the narrative of events is so constructed as to blame the victim. The 'victim as the culprit' is the pattern of propaganda. The



pretext of violence is well constructed by communal forces. To begin with the whole violence was orchestrated on the pretext of Godhra train burning, the reasons of which itself is a matter of debate. The very theory which was popularized that train was burned from outside by the Muslims holds no water as trains cannot be burned from outside and same came to be proved in this

case also. By the time the truth comes out the people are made to believe through various mechanisms about the assault to the minority and then mobilized for the violence. In one of the best studies on mechanism of communal violence, V.N. Rai, ex DGP of police UP, points out "In order to guard them against external crit-

icism and to preserve their self righteousness, violence is projected to be started by Muslims. It is as if a weaker person is pushed into the corner by a stronger, forcing him to raise his hand so that he may be suitably punished for his 'attack'. Before the punishment is meted out a suitable hue and cry can be made about the fact that because the person cornered is naturally



wicked and violent, he is bound to attack first" (Combating Communal Conflicts Pg. 56-57).

The court also rejects the conspiracy theory and accepts that this was a spontaneous act by the angry crowd. How does one explain the well recorded calls from Ehsan Jafri to the police and Chief Minister for help? How does one explain the police did not respond to the call for protection when it was desperately sought by Ehsan Jafri? How does one explain the police and administration's inaction, when a possibility of police force coming and protecting the people did exist except through conspiracy theory? Those responsible for protecting the life of residents lapsed in their duty, starting from the then Chief Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and other officials and have been totally let off.

In a parallel case of Naroda Patiya, the presiding judge upheld the conspiracy theory and punishment of life term was handed down to two major leaders of BJP and associates, Mayaben Kodnani and Babu Bajrangi. Yagnik points out "This was a pre-planned conspiracy and it cannot be mitigated just by saying it was a reaction to [the] Godhra train burning incident." (The Wire, 2016) After delivering this judgment the learned judge has been getting threats of different types. The question is how conspiracy theory can be rejected in Gulbarg when the dynamics of both the cases; Gulbarg and Naroda Patiya, has been similar.

The judgment brings to our notice, many other aspects of the state of justice delivery system in general and that related to communal violence in particular. The state has been lapsing in such

matters as for as prevention, controlling and giving the justice is concerned. This has led to a situation where one finds that the rate of convictions in cases of violence is poor as observed in massive cases of violence like e.g. anti Sikh (1984) post Babri Demolition (1992). Lately in Gujarat it has slightly improved. The factor in this direction has been due to the role Human rights Commission, many judges and the dogged work of civil society groups, particularly that of Teesta Setalvad, who have pursued these cases relentlessly leading to the situation where part justice is coming in. Many elements claim that this reflects the fairness of things in Gujarat. On the contrary this justice has been procured despite the heavy social and institutional biases prevalent in Gujarat, biases against the religious minorities.

Zakia Jafri, the widow of the slain Ahsan Jafri's, determination to get justice for the violence victims is remarkable again. It is in the same Gulberg society that Rupa Mody lost her son and she is relentlessly pursued her struggle to locate him. Based on this tragic episode the film Parzania captures the human tragedy which visited this residential area.

One does hope that higher courts, where the matter is being taken, will give full justice to the victims of violence. ■

# Government should tell t is not a terrorist : Achary

Acharya Pramod Krishnam is the President of Akhil Bhartiya Sant Samiti is one of the few who command equal respect and equal audience across all religions in India. His acceptance is universal be it among Hindus or among Muslims. He is a peaceful entity and faces all issues with a calm and balanced mindset, and though he is a revered elder his thoughts are as youthful as anything! Our correspondent **Wasim Akram Tyagi** had a conversation with him regarding the ongoing **Zakir Naik** issue. Here are the main excerpts from the conversation.

*Zakir Naik was in the eye of a storm after the terror attack in Dhaka. Media even labeled him a preacher of terrorism. Is it fair to do so?*

Zakir Naik has never favored terrorism in any of his talks, but he favors fanaticism, and fanaticism could lead to separatism, and separatism could lead to terrorism. He has never preached terrorism as the world knows it; hence he should not be labeled so. But it was his fanaticism which made people speculate that he might be involved so in any way. Media has taken the undue advantage of this. Media

needs sensation creating material, and this time Zakir became that material.

*When all religions teach peace why is there so much violence in the name of religion?*

In this era, which is also called the 21st century, if any religious leader wants to fight against terrorism, or for saving the humanity, then he has to oppose all thoughts that could lead to terrorism. So, we also have to fight against fanaticism, as it too could lead to terror acts. The sad thing is that there are some people, Muslims as well as Hindus, who are contributing towards terrorism by fanning fanatic thoughts in our country! The truth, though, remains that neither Hinduism nor Islam has any place for terrorism or for fanaticism. Had Islam been so rigid how the people who opposed Prophet Mohammed were pardoned by him? And, had Hinduism been so unforgiving could Gandhi have asked for the forgiveness of his own murderer, while Gandhi was and still is one of the greatest Hindu who ever lived?

What I want to say is that fanaticism is a bad thing and all leaders- political or religious must shun fanaticism and fight against it as they fight against terrorism.

*How does one define fanaticism? Is giving more importance to one's own religion fanaticism?*

A person has the right to say that his religion is the best. But when he or she says that his religion is the best, and all other religions are wrong then obviously he is hurting others and starting a conflict. Because ever since we can remember the world has had multiple religions, and if we want to pick just one religion for the whole world then that religion would be 'Humanity' as all religions exist for the





# The nation that Zakir Naik ya Pramod Krishnam

sake of humanity. So, obviously, if there is any religion that opposed humanity just couldn't be a religion in any way.

Now, if I start saying that Sanatan Dharm is the best religion people would have no problem with that, but if I would further add that except Sanatan all religions are wrong, will people agree?

I believe that in all countries which have religious base too have people of other religions, maybe in a very small number, but they do exist, be it in Pakistan, Saudi Arabia or elsewhere. In such a situation it is the duty of the majorities to respect and safeguard the minorities. But if we are mocking or criticizing their faith then we are having fanaticism in us.

***If anybody has a huge following, and if any fol-***



***lower does anything wrong, could the ideal of that person be held guilty for the follower's crime?***

No, not at all. I can never hold Zakir Naik responsible for any terror act by any of his follower. Islam does not permit hurting any innocent. Zakir Naik may be fanatic to any limit but he has not done anything to favor or to promote any terror act until yet. The government must fulfill its duty here. If it has no proof against Zakir Naik then it must tell the nation that the allegations against Zakir Naik are wrong. Because nobody has the right to assassinate anybody's character and it is the duty of the government to safeguard the honor of its citizens.

***Then what about the media trial of Zakir Naik?***

That is a very dangerous thing. Being famous can now lead you into trouble. Some people are always looking for things that can be used against famous people, often just to create sensation. The personal life of a celebrity is no more personal. Baseless journalism that assassinates characters without verification of the facts has hurt so many. The press council should seriously look into this.

***Anything you would like to say to Zakir Naik?***

Zakir Naik is a great speaker and an extremely influential person. If he believes that terrorism is a bad thing, then I would like him to stop advocating fanaticism as fanaticism is just not meant for today's scenario. He should present Islam in the real sense; the Islam that I know has no place for fanaticism. And if he says that Islam does have any place for it then I have a problem with 'his' Islam.

Islam forbids anybody from insulting religious personalities of other religions as they may be your messengers as well. So, how could this Islam allow anybody to do what Zakir Naik often does? Being an educated man he must think about it. He is an Indian. Here we won't even allow any BJP fanatic to say that India is only for Hindus and that it should be declared a Hindu Rashtra. I am thoroughly against it. I want people of all religions to coexist peacefully here. We as citizens vow to be secular and to respect each other's religious beliefs according to our constitution.

Islam itself does not allow anybody to hurt anybody's sentiments. I would like to request Mr. Naik to consider this and to present that Islam which preaches love, compassion, tolerance and service. Islam needs submission to Allah. And he who hurts the humanity can never be a worshipper of Allah.

Indian government too must take a right stand. No person in India has the right to denigrate anybody, but Zakir Naik has been denigrated. I do not agree with Mr. Naik but that does not mean that he can be denigrated without a reason. ■



Jugnu Bhati

# Kairana Exodus

# Electoral Short

Recently in the poll bound UP, the BJP raked up the issue of a mass exodus from Kairana, a small town in Shamli district in UP. According to MP Hukum Singh “many Hindu families were forced to leave Kairana town in Western Uttar Pradesh due to ‘threat’ from a particular community”. (PTI, 2016 ) Stating the above he released a list of 346 families who had been forced to flee the town. A day later he added that the 346 Hindu families who had fled their homes in Kairana town had done so due to “threat and extortion by criminal elements belonging to a particular community” (PTI, 2016). He added “It is not about communal incidents...It is not about Hindus or Muslims, the list may not be foolproof. This is about law and order.” The MP alleged that “Muslim gangs” such as the Mukem Kala and Furhaan gangs were a “menace in western UP and that “local criminal elements have established their roots in Kairana by getting political patronage of a particular party”. (PTI, 2016) Step by step the MP highlighted that the reason for the mass exodus were threats and extortion by a local Muslim gangster who had political patronage from the Samajwadi party government.

Soon after the list of 346 persons was released BJP party chief Amit Shah said at a massive rally in



Allahabad, that only the BJP can defeat the Samajwadi Party in Uttar Pradesh and exhorted the state not to take "Kairana lightly." (Biswas, 2016). The issue was taken up by number of Ministers from the BJP party and the cabinet issuing statements in media that the law and order issue ought to be taken seriously. Home Minister Rajnath Singh, member of the BJP party called for action by the State government if the incidents were true (PTI, Ahmedabad, 2016). Minister of State for Home Kiren Rijiju spoke of the deteriorating law and order situation in Uttar Pradesh under the current government. Maneka Gandhi said that there is neither development nor

# Sightedness



safety, adding the Samajwadi Party Government has no shame about the rising crimes in the state (ANI, 2016). Ministers of the BJP were indicating that law and order under SP government had deteriorated through their remarks.

In the past the SP government was criticized for the increasing number of rapes and other offences pertaining to violence against women. It may be worth mentioning that BJP had attributed 'love Jihad' which implies Muslim men trapping innocent Hindu girls into love affairs and impregnating them in order to increase Muslim population and convert the Hindu girls so trapped. The love jihad campaign

was, like the present 'exodus of Hindus' campaign, is to demonize the Muslim community as terrorists and at best anti-social elements from whom Hindus need to be protected and only a BJP Government would do so.

Sample this e.g. – Laxmikant Bajpai, the then UP state president of the BJP while addressing a party meeting on 23rd August 2014 in preparation for UP poll in 2017 said it was shocking but true that in UP state, 71 of 100 crimes were against women, and that 99.99% of the accused in these crimes were Muslims. In order to make out a case of UP government protecting anti-social Muslims, Bajpai further said that the UP government was defending 'love jihadis' while 'victims'

were murdered or harassed by the police (IANS, 2014).

In statements made at election campaigns the BJP leaders have time and again sought to point out a 'particular community' (read Muslims) as responsible for communal riot, terror and hooliganism. On the eve of the bypoll in UP in August 2014, Sangeet Som BJP MLA said that "youth from a particular community are involved in eve-teasing Hindu girls, the situation was so bad that girls cannot move out freely." (Verma, 2014). Yogi Adityanath made similar statements to demonize Muslims and blame

them for being responsible for communal riots (Express News Service, 2014). In the by-election campaign in 2016 in Uttar Pradesh, Muslims were demonized as hooligans and terrorists emphasizing the need to prevent the migration of Hindus and restore their honour (Bhardwaj, 2016). The Kairana BJP MP has added another (false) incident to sustain the charge of Muslim criminals would not let innocent Hindu law abiding citizens live in peace. Each of these public statements was an offence under S. 153-A of IPC for promoting disharmony, or enmity, hatred or ill will, between different religious communities. In most cases neither the FIR was registered nor was any prosecution launched. This emboldens the BJP leaders to be more and more explicit and aggressive in promoting disharmony, enmity, ill will and hatred against the Muslim community for political objectives.

## Crime and patronage

The BJP and its leadership is expressly and impliedly demonizing the Muslim community on half-baked and twisted facts. A section of Media checked the list of 346 Hindus who were supposed to have left Kairana. A team of journalists sent by The Milli Gazette found, “The Kairana list had the names of four dead persons and 68 who left Kairana long ago. It also includes name of 20 families which are still living in Kairana. This indicates that these allegations are part of a well-designed plan to polarise the society ahead of the upcoming Uttar Pradesh assembly elections next year.” (India Resists, 2016).

Investigation and tracking down of names by the Indian Express and Times of India exposed that people on the list had died and some left looking for better prospects (Ranal, 2016) (Vatsa, 2016). By fact some on the list who were interviewed said that they had left due to tension during the Muzaffarnagar riots fearing that they will not be able to earn a liveli-



hood in such an environment. Another investigation by Shamli administration found that out of the 346 families listed by Mr. Singh the administration probed 119 of which it found 68 had left Kairana 10-15 years ago for employment, business, and education of children, health and other services. Several on the list were dead and some were found still living in Kairana. It was also reported that some BJP party workers were themselves confused about the names on the list. (Rai, 2016) A group of Hindu sants submitted a report to the Chief Minister in which they rejected the exodus. (PTI, 2016)

ABP News, The Indian Express, similarly found the claims to be false. BJP's claim regarding the ruling SP patronizing Muqem Kala Gang too is false. Kala was arrested in October 2015 by STF. Criminals have no religion and their activities are neither inspired nor supported by any religion or religious community. In fact Muslims were as much victims of Muqem Kala Gang as members of other communi-



ties. They work for monetary gains.

It is interesting that during Lok Sabha election campaign, BJP's slogan was "sabka sath sabka vikas". Yet the BJP has never spoken a word about internally displace people belonging to the minority communities, even while its national leadership and Union Cabinet ministers problematize alleged exodus of 346 Hindu families. More than 50,000 Christians were displaced following riots in Kandhamal in 2007 and 2008. More than 50,000 Muslims have been displaced and are living lives of misery, nay, lives fit for animals in Muzaffarnagar and Shamli districts following communal riots in 2013. To this day 5200 families of internally displaced people (IDPs) live in 63 relief camps in

*"The Kairana list had the names of four dead persons and 68 who left Kairana long ago. It also includes name of 20 families which are still living in Kairana. This indicates that these allegations are part of a well-designed plan to polarise the society ahead of the upcoming Uttar Pradesh assembly elections next year."*

Shamli and Muzaffarnagar district. Many IDPs are settled in camps in Kairana. The families fear return due to the volatility of the political and economic situation back home. More than 1.5 lakh were displaced in 2002 communal violence from their homes and have not been able to return even today in Gujarat state. In Assam hundreds of Muslims have been displaced in several incidences of communal violence and are living miserable lives.

Organized criminal gangs and vigilante groups routinely operate in various states seriously jeopardizing law and order but if they belong to Hindu community, BJP either chooses to remain silent and Hindu nationalists tacitly even extend justification and political patronage. For example Mohammed Akhlaq was lynched in Dadri on unfounded allegation of storing beef in his house. The mob was instigated by local cow vigilante group. Such groups exist throughout the country and commit gross violation of law and order, indulge in extortion, lynching and killing over beef. The extortionists claimed the lives of five persons through mob violence in Haryana, a BJP ruled state (Countercurrents.org, 2015). Similar incident of extreme violence by cow vigilantes occurred on 19th March 2016 in Jharkhand Latehar district where two Muslim herders herding eight buffalo

to a Friday market were beaten up and hanged from a tree (Abraham, 2016). In Madhya Pradesh, on 15th January 2016, A Muslim couple was assaulted by members of the Gauraksha Samiti in the general compartment of the Kushinagar Express at Khirkiya railway station, in Harda district of Madhya Pradesh, when they objected to their luggage being searched on suspicion that they were carrying beef (Ghatwai, 2016). These crimes have created

currents of fear in the states and a much larger state of insecurity in the country. Slowly and silently they produce ripple effects of forced migration to safer places.

Assaults against Tribals occurred in Chhattisgarh, a BJP ruled state by goons such as hurling of acid on tribal activist Soni Sori (Dahat, 2016). In Haryana, two young children from a Dalit family were burnt alive and their parents suffered injuries after their home in a village was set afire deep in the night (Singh, 2015). In what appeared to be a clear move to protect the central government from the tragic event in a BJP ruled state, Minister of State for External Affairs General V. K Singh remarked that "If someone throws stones at a dog, the government is not responsible" (BS Web team, 2015). Shirking of the responsibility for mob violence indicative of absence of law and order in numerous incidents the BJP government at the centre and in the states has encouraged criminal elements even under their own governments in the states.

MP Hukum Singh openly discarded the communal angle to the mass exodus in his statement, but party members tried to stir the communal pot while attacking the SP government and pointing out 'certain kind of criminals'. Sangeet Som BJP MLA had proposed to take up a Padyatra from Kairana to Kandhla as a response to the mass exodus of Hindus, which was prevented by MP Singh. A party leader claimed that the BJP was scouting for other 'Kairanas' in the State, where similar migration has taken place (Rashid, 2016). The Minister released a second list titled "Kandhla

se palayan karne wale pariwaron ki soochi" – a list of 63 on 14th June. (Express News Service, 2016)

In multiple ways indirectly the party aimed at polarization in Shamli. The party members have indulged in hate speech propaganda in the villages of Bijnor, Rajhaar, Badwar in Shamli and Muzaffarnagar districts in the past (Aaj Tak, 2014) (PTI, 2014). At Rajhaar village in district of Shamli, the BJP party President while campaigning for Lok Sabha elections in 2013 referred to the Muzaffarnagar violence and addressed the gathering saying,



'the revenge for insult will have to be taken'. (India Today, 2014)

## Conclusion

If the BJP indulges in communally polarizing the situation for electoral gains, India would be unwittingly marching towards the alleged slogan shouted on JNU campus "Bharat ke tukde tukde hong in-shallah". That should be avoided and resisted tooth and nail by those loving democracy. ■



## The quest for understanding feminine pain and protest

**The special issue of Urdu literary journal *Andaz-e-Bayan* evaluates women's biographies to explore feminine pain and understand voices of protest, a positive effort which should stir a fresh debate about the unjust and inequitable treatment meted out to women, views **Manzar Imam****

Subjugated for centuries, women have come a long way to getting their voice heard even in the most so-called progressive societies. These suppressions have led to the emergence of global women's rights movements. Alike other parts of the world, the Indian subcontinent too, of late, has witnessed a surge in the feminist writings and debates. However, more needs to be done to let the half of humanity have its justifiable place in society.

Eminent Urdu litterateur Haqqani Al-Qasmi's inaugural issue of the Book Series of *Andaz-e-Bayan* can be termed as a positive effort to bring to fore diverse issues of women; especially of women from marginalized sections of society. The virgin issue of the single-subject literary journal dedicated to analytical evaluation of women's problems of abuse, betrayal, displacement, divorce, loneliness, separation, widowhood, etc in the light of their biographies is a valuable addition to the existing feminist literature about marriage, love, life, liberty, pain and sufferings across the globe.

Although it contains biogra-

phical analyses mostly of women writers from India and Pakistan, it also has references from women writers from West Asia besides references from Western feminist writers who have been facing more or less similar kind of challenges in a male-dominated literary discourse.

Most patriarchal Asian societies have long devalued or undervalued women's participation in one of the key components of development: education.

While there is too much talk about building 'knowledge societies' across the world, women still figure among the least visible partners in this development discourse.

History of origin and varied views about where to and whether or not to place biographies in the genre of literature are also discussed. Ishrat Zafar's review of Professor Sajida Zaidi's autobiography is wonderful, whereas Abrar Ahmad Ijravi's review of women's biographies in Arabic is informative. Ijravi writes that there is no difference between men and women in wisdom and intellect and, both intellect and lack of it are a natural phenomenon. Shahidur Rahman's review of Kusum Ansal's biography is thought-provoking while Faiyaz Ahmad Wa-



**Andaz-e-Bayan-1, May-July**

**Editor:** Haqqani Al-Qasmi,  
Arshia Publications, New Delhi

**Pages :** 295

**Rs. :** 300

jeeh's Anatomy of My Story does justice to Kamala Das, whose writings had even earned her the moniker of nymphomaniac.

Andaz includes analyses of biographies of Urdu, Punjabi, Marathi, Hindi, Kashmiri, Arabic and other writers. Jannat se Nikali Huwi Hawwa (The Expelled Eve of Paradise), an autobiography of Nafees Bano Shama narrates a woman's plight in these words:

Dressed in the best kind of the modern attire, with make-up, necklace of a precious-stone, rings outnumbering the fingers, long dangling pendants were indicative of her happiness. I wondered how gracefully a woman had concealed her sorrows under diamonds and jewelries. People would call her lively, smiling and chirpy. She had mastered the art of pleasing and flirting people on every occasion, making the welled-up eyes smile. She looked a picture perfect, full of life. But only she knew how to conceal tears every moment and suffer in silence.

Haqqani writes, "Spread here and there, there are many such stories with aspects of pain and agony which are absent from eyes. Andaz-e-Bayan is dedicated to them."

His ideas find resonance in the two biographies of Zahra Daudi which Razia Hamid explores. Like many men, Zahra was a staunch nationalist who had never thought of migrating to Pakistan. She would even oppose her classmates who justified the two-nation theory, as a result of which she discontinued talking to them. Yet, she could not resist her husband's decision to migrate to Pakistan. She, however, continued visiting India and considered Patna her real home where her heart lay. "I don't know what attraction was there in a [then] small city and word Patna which I could never forget."

The stories of loss and gain steeped in pathos abound as revealed by Shabana Saleem who revisits the lives of four prominent women from different spec-

tra: Wazir Sultan Begum, Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum, Shaista Suhrawardy Ikramullah and Bimla Das. Sultan Jahan Begum, the famous begum of Bhopal who became Chancellor of Aligarh Muslim University and contributed hugely to the University's expansion in terms of donations as well as ideas. She did not like the traditional purdah but also did not follow the West. A big admirer of India's diversity of traditions, she expressed great happiness over the opening of the Department of Sanskrit at AMU.

Suhrawardy's autobiography From Purdah to Parliament (1963), talks about the struggles of the author who succeeded to become a Member of Pakistani Parliament and also served as its Ambassador to Marrakesh (Morocco).

The story of yesteryear actress Bimla Kumari (Prema) reveals the darker side of the film industry where the actress is made to suffer threats, taunts and abuses. It talks about the mirage of the life behind camera.

Haqqani says that inequitable treatment to woman has become a social norm. She is curbed. The biographies tell us how

women are partially treated. However, there are hopeful stories like that of Maharani Brinda of Kapurthala when women have risen to the occasion and challenged such practices.

Author of critically acclaimed Filisteen (Palestine) Ke Chaar Mumtaz Shu'ara, Renu Ke Shaheer Mein, La Takhaf and Tawaf-e-Dasht-e-Junoon, Haqqani's pen never dries to bring to life characters that embody shades of hurt sentiments and deep pain. It is in this pursuit that the editor wanted to discuss about and explore the biographies of women in all languages to inform readers about "feminine pain" and voices of protest. However, he expresses helplessness due to "shortage of time and resources". Nevertheless, whatever efforts have been put in, I am sure, will chart a new course and provoke a meaningful debate and discussion among Urdu readers of the subject. ■



Haqqani Al-Qasmi



# Did Ashoka's embracing Buddhism Promoting Ahimsa Weaken India?



►► **Ram Puniyani**

**P**ast is used by communal politics for their present political agenda. In India on one hand we have the use of medieval history where the Muslim Kings are presented as 'aggressors due to whom Hindu society had to suffer', on the other now we are witnessing

the distortion of ancient history being marshaled to undermine Buddhism vis a vis Brahmanism.

The figure chosen to make this point by communal forces is that of Emperor Ashoka. Incidentally Noble Laureate Amrtya Sen regards Ashoka and Akbar as the two greatest Emperors to have ruled India. A publication from RSS progeny, Rajasthan Vanvasi

Kalyan Parishad claims that it was due to Ashoka's conversion to Buddhism and his promotion of ahimsa that India's borders opened up to foreign invaders. It also goes on to say those followers of Buddhism under Ashoka played a seditious role, they assisted Greek invaders with the goal that they would destroy "Vedic religion" and restore Bud-

dhism. Here, what is being referred to as Vedic religion is Brahmanism as such.

Interestingly the article regards Ashoka to be a great ruler till he embraced Buddhism, while most of the thinkers show that his humane policies, making him a great emperor, were brought in after he embraced Buddhism.

There are many components of this formulation which are concocted as per the political requirement of Brahmanical Hinduism. One of these concoctions is the very notion of India being the state from times immemorial. One understands that India as a nation state emerged during freedom struggle. The earlier formations were kingdoms, Empires. The boundaries of these kingdoms were not fixed and depending on the bravery and other associated factors kings were expanding their area of rule or had to retreat into smaller areas or even getting decimated at times. Even before Ashoka came to power Alexander had attacked India. Such forays of kings into other territories are not unknown. Mauryan Empire was a major Empire the sub continent has seen.

So many dynasties have ruled large parts of the subcontinent, no single ruler has ruled whole of what is India today. So why is

Ashoka being targeted today? Ashoka was successor to Bindusar, from Maurya lineage. Chandragupta Maurya had built the Empire and Ashok's annexed Kalinga (modern Orissa) into his kingdom. This battle was very bloody and as is famously known the bloodshed shook Ashoka and



he decided to embrace Buddhism. From this point on the transformation of an aggressive insensitive king to a very humane person began with the embracing of Buddhism. He undertook the measures for welfare of the people, opposed the Brahmanical rituals and opened the gates of his palace for listening to woes the people of his empire. Inspired by the teach-

ings of Buddhism he took steps towards building a compassionate state, the guardian state.

His ideas and polices are deciphered from the number of edicts carved on pillars and stones which are vast in number. What emerge from these edicts are very compassionate and impressive norms

being propagated as back as in the period of third Century BC. What is remarkable is that though he embraced Buddhism he accepted the diversity as the norm of society. One of his edicts says that a ruler must accept the diversity of his subjects' belief. He did transform Buddhism in to a World religion. The spread of his ideas was not through force but through moral appeal and persuasion. His message was to reduce suffering and to pursue peace, openness and tolerance. This is why he is regarded as Great contrary to the said articles' claim that he was great till

he embraced Buddhism.

Ashoka's was the largest Empire in the history of the sub continent. His Dhamma was a moral code for the ruler as well as for the subjects who were exhorted to follow the moral path. His Rock Edict XII is something which we need to remember in current times as well as it has great relevance even today. It is a call for re-

religious tolerance and civility in public life or as he puts it, 'restraint in speech', "not praising one's own religion or condemning the religion of the others without good cause...Contact between religions is good." (Sunil Khilanani, Incarnations, 'India in 50 Lives' page 52). 'He did not foist his faith, Buddhism on his subjects... He is important in history for his policy of peace, non aggression and cultural conquest'. (R.S. Sharma, Ancient India, NCERT, 1995, 104) Ashoka inspired the leaders of freedom movement for his principles of justice and non-violence. He did represent the agenda which symbolized cultural and religious pluralism which were central to the ideology of Gandhi and Nehru in particular. His symbols of four lions adorn Indian currency and the wheel has become part of Indian flag.

The problem with Ashoka's rule was not the military one. His Empire continued till 50 more years. In 205 BC Greek Emperor Antiochus attacked from North West and established his rule in some part (North-West: Punjab, Afghanistan). The bigger problem was from within the empire. This is related to Brahminical counter reaction to the spread of Buddhism. Ashoka had put a ban on the slaughter for rituals. This led to reduction in the income of Brahmins. The spread of Buddhism led to the erosion of Varna-

caste system. What the communal forces are calling as Vedic religion is as such the dominant stream which was prevalent then, Brahmanism.

These factors led to the counter revolution. Pushyamitra Shunga, a Brahmin, the Chief Commander of Brihadrath, who was Ashoka's grandson, led the counter revolution. He killed the Emperor and founded the Shunga dynasty in Sindh part of Ashoka's empire. The counter revolution launched in the society led to the disappearance of Buddhism from this land. Ambedkar writes, "Emperor Ashoka proclaimed complete ban on killing animals. So nobody engaged Brahmins to perform rites and rituals. The Brahmin priests were rendered jobless. They also lost their former importance and glory. So the Brahmins revolted against the Maurayan Emperor Brihadrath under the leadership of Pushyamitra Shunga, a samvedi Brahmin and the army Chief of Brihadrath." (Writings and Speeches, Vol 3 P 167) Eighth Century onwards Shankara led the ideological battle against the philosophy of Buddhism. Buddhism urged the people to focus on the life in this World. The Shankara's philosophy called this World as illusion and restored Brahmanism here in full glory. Due to ideological and social counter revolution Buddhism dis-

appeared from this land around 1200 AD.

So why is Ashoka's reign coming under criticism now? Ashoka embraced Buddhism and this was a setback to the Brahminical system. Brahmanism is the dominant part of Hindu religion as understood today. Ashoka talked of non-violence and promoted pluralism. All these stand totally against the Hindu nationalist agenda of sectarian nationalism where violence is part of the politics. This wants to promote neo Brahminical values. So on one hand there is the attempt to co-opt Dalits and other hand the aim is to keep the ideological message of social hierarchy loud and clear and so Buddhism is attacked. The symbols of casteless ideology of Buddhism and accompanying respect for pluralism and peace are being attacked as a part of Hindu nationalist agenda, the garb in which it is presented is 'weakening of India' due to non-violence. As such Maurayan was an Empire, not a nation state, empires rise and fall due to social political factors of the time. Despite adopting non-violence the Empire continued well till 50 more years. The weakness starts coming in due to Brahminical counter-revolution. The forays of communalists in the ancient Indian history are an attempt more to denigrate the Buddhist values under the garb of attacking Ashoka. ■



Nabrass Mehdi Zaidi

## INFLUENCE OF POLITICS ON INDIAN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM : THE CURRENT PICTURE

**E**ducation is one of the most pious achievement, which one can achieve through educational institutions globally. The importance of education can never be counted or even explained in words. education is one of the most important asset which we need for our over all development. Only An educated society can save and preserve the essence of humanity i.e. dignity of life or life with dignity.

To be very honest ,education has nothing to do with politics neither today nor ever .Education make us to keep our heads high and let our thoughts float freely in the air of knowledge and wisdom. But ironically, the encroachment of politics into our education system have ruined the freedom of thoughts ,expression , belief, faith ,wisdom and knowledge and this proved to be the most alarming and destructive obstruction in the educational and psychological development of our youth .The case of Kanhaiya Lal of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi is an open and very recent example that how political tacts have been used to ruin the words and thoughts of students. Is there really any law that a student can not enjoy freedom of speech and expression ? If yes, kindly update me ,if no, kindly update them who believe and depict

that its a crime. Very sorry to say that involvement of such dirty politics have made educational system corrupt and now what they are imparting is no more a pious education.

We seek education for making ourselves more civilized ,more cultured and more intellectual but in reality we are becoming more and

life because it adds meaning to the life by promoting knowledge, enhancing wisdom and spreading love amongst them." And now-a-days the scenario is just reversed and all credit goes to this ugly face of politics. The Situation arose in NIT ,Kashmir is the result of this hatred which was nurtured by these political hypocrites. And again who is the



more aggressive and yes how can we forget intolerance ,which is a part of the same. education is what distinct us from those of animals and other species present in the universe. But this type of political weapons are used politely to make us more insensitive than animals. If we talk about Vedas and the holy Qur'an they explained that "education is the most important part of a human

victim? The students ,their emotions, their values and their life .This is the time to understand the value of education which is free from all such obstruction because it leads towards destruction and nothing else. Stand with a head high and you will never need an ugly political platform to uplift you when you prove yourself as an intellectual in the real sense. ■

## *The failed coup and the challenges before Erdogan*



► Dr. Aslam Abdullah

The failed coup in Turkey should not make people think that the danger is over. Those who wanted to replace President Erdogan and his party are still there in Turkey and they would do everything possible to destabilize the country. However the ball is in the court of the President and if he responds to the crisis in a magnanimous manner, he could turn the tables against his foes and create a democratic model that would be the envy of every country. Rather than locking up all his foes, he needs to win them over to his vision of Turkey. He needs to initiate a dialogue with those who see his understanding of Islam irrelevant to Turkey and the modern world. Doubtlessly, Erdogan and his party is committed to Islam and aspires to present the country as a leading example of Islam to the world. There are certain areas where the vision that Erdogan has of Islam needs to be focused. He would have to prove that Turkey under his leadership is an open society that respects human rights and promotes peace and progress. He would have to set the example through concrete actions that science and technology are the foundations of the emerging Turkey where corruption has no place. He would have to prove to the world that his country can give a balanced education system to the people that integrate science with reli-

gious ethos and universal ethics.

In particular the following major areas would deserve his utmost attention.

In particular the following major areas would deserve his utmost attention.

- Emphasis on Islamic values should not lead him to deny non Muslims their right to preach and practice their religion or no religion freely.
- Women should not be forced to a lifestyle they do not want to identify with and their rights to seek equality in all spheres of life should be respected.
- Moral values should not be imposed on those who do not believe in them.
- Rather than reacting on the basis of political expediency, a principled position should be taken on matters of concerns to Turkey and the Muslim world. In other words, Turkey should emerge as a voice of decency and support for all those who are denied justice and equality regardless of their background.
- Negotiations should open with Kurds and Armenians and other dissident groups to find a solution of the bitterness that has lingered long and caused tensions in relationship.
- An education system that integrates ethics with science and technology should be the foundation to lay the future social fabric of the country.
- Peaceful opposition should be encouraged and those in power should always be ready to consult even their foes on matters of public interests.
- Witch-hunt of those involved in the failed coup should be replaced with dialogue and reconciliation. Rather than turning Gulenists into enemies, efforts should be directed to secure their support for a unified Turkey with prosperity for all.
- Better and stronger relations with neighbors should be the mainstay of Turkish policies as it would prevent possible incursion and infiltration.
- Living conditions of people regardless of their social and religious background should be improved so that their basic needs are guaranteed. ■

## SHOTS MISFIRED

**Direction:** Tinu Suresh Desai

**Actors:** Akshay Kumar, Ileana D'Cruz, Esha Gupta

**Rating:** 2 / 5

**R**ustom is a baffling movie. The plot is taken from the sensational Nanavati case, which unfolded in Mumbai in 1959. The real-life story had love, heroism, betrayal, murder, honour, adultery. It also had such moral complexity and power that it has been reworked through the decades for screen, stage and books. Two Hindi films – *Yeh Rastey Hain Pyar Ke* (1963) and *Achanak* (1973) – have already been made on it. Nanavati, rechristened Commander Sabarmati, even made an appearance in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*. But director Tinu Suresh Desai's take on this landmark crime is flat and uninspired.

Rustom begins by proclaiming that it's a work of fiction, but writer Vipul K Rawal unabashedly borrows the dramatis personae from the Nanavati case. We have Rustom Pavri, the decorated officer who comes home and discovers that his beautiful wife is having an affair with his friend. Just like Nanavati, Rustom fires three bullets into the man's chest and then surrenders. He is tried before a jury. But public opinion, whipped up by a newspaper publisher, is on Rustom's side. He is, one of the jurors says, an honourable murderer.

Even details in the film come from the real-life crime. Nanavati's wife was Sylvia. Rustom's wife is Cynthia. Like the real-life lover Prem Ahuja, Vikram Makhija in the film dies wearing only a towel. The officer in charge in the film is Vincent Lobo – the real guy was named John Lobo. The phrase honourable murderer was actually used in an interview by a juror on the Nanavati case.

Tinu and Vipul take the framework of the Nanavati case and add a generous dollop of fictional tadka. It's a compelling idea but the result is a half-baked drama.

Rustom has flashes of power, which peter out too

quickly. To begin with, the screenplay is inert, especially in the first half. The second half, which is set almost entirely in a courtroom, has more vigour. Usha Nadkarni, playing Rustom's maid, gets a standout moment. But the world in Rustom never fully comes to life because the characters don't feel authentic.

The women – Ileana D'Cruz and Esha Gupta – flit around in Fifties fashions. I spent some time marvelling at the rigid curls in their hair. Esha, playing Vikram's sister, keeps narrowing her eyes and pursing her lips. I wonder if her inspiration was Angelina Jolie in *Maleficent*. For reasons I couldn't figure out, the film is saturated with lurid colours. Walls are bright green and blue, cheeks are



red. Everyone looks a little ripe.

Still, Akshay cuts a dashing figure in his naval uniform. His erect spine is shorthand for a man of duty and determination. But his character doesn't have vulnerability or an arc. There is one nicely done jail scene when Rustom meets Cynthia for the first time after the murder. He grips his own arms so that he won't hug her. It's sad and moving.

The film is brave enough to give us a man who is so evolved that he understands and forgives his errant wife. But instead of exploring the dynamics of this, we get lost in heroism, corruption and courtroom dramatics. And truthfully, the only thing Parsi about Akshay is his character's name. ■

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DELENG/2014/62786

ISSN 2455-748X



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