

The Rise, the Fall

Be that as it may, but it is not yet time to completely write off Nawaz Sharif from Pak scene, says
Mansoor Mamoon

BARELY three years ago the city of Lahore was literally gripped with the euphoria of Nawaz Sharif's unprecedented landslide victory in the general elections in Pakistan. The ecstasy resembled a high-pitched popularity fever riding at the crest of which Nawaz assumed the office of the Prime Minister of Pakistan for the second time. Before him no other Prime Minister in Pakistan had bagged such massive mandate — more than two-thirds majority. But on October 6 last, when the Anti-Terrorist Court in Karachi pronounced its verdict against him — life imprisonment along with varying fines and compensation amounting to thirty lac rupees and confiscation of all his moveable and immovable properties — excepting a handful of his hardline supporters and close relatives, there was the slightest murmur neither in his home city Lahore nor anywhere in Pakistan.

The tragedy of Sharif was that the majority in Pakistan described the verdict as fair and well deserved. Some even went to the extent of hailing it as "the fruits of reckless politics" which the deposed Prime Minister of Pakistan pursued during his tenure and that he needed a lesson. Where did all his past support go? How could it melt so quickly? Why the apparent glee and widespread public indifference to the tragic fate of a popularly elected leader at the hands of a military regime that usurped power in an unconstitutional manner brandishing guns? The reasons are not far to seek. It is said that power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Sharif's popularity proved to be his fall accomplice.

Instead of using his popularity for building strong democratic institutions in Pakistan, he started exercising it for monopolising his firm grip over everything and against his political opponents. He would not tolerate any dissenting voice and started behaving like bull in China shop hitting at the very base of the existing democratic institutions. He first clipped the wings of the President of the Republic turning him into a mere figurehead and then forced him to resign along with the Chief Justice entering into open hostility with Presidency and the Judiciary. As already stated he would not allow any opposition and came down heavily on his dissenters.

The leader of the opposition former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had to live in exile and her husband Asif Zardari was thrown behind bars for long years. Jehangir Karamat, the army chief, was abruptly removed as he was not going well with him on certain policy matters. In his place he appointed Pervez Musharraf, his nemesis. He constituted Anti-Terrorism

Courts for speedy disposal of cases mostly to harass the opposition leaders initially without any right to appeal. The Supreme Court of Pakistan later intervened and provided for the incorporation of the right to appeal. Ironically, Nawaz himself is availing of this right to appeal to the High Court against the verdict of the Karachi Court. He then proceeded towards introduction of the draconian Sharia Law — a retrogressive step in a bid to turn Pakistan into a fundamentalist Islamic state.

Nawaz also greatly frustrated the people of Pakistan. He could not curb ethnic strife which was increasingly taking heavy toll of life. He had promised eliminating corruption, but instead encouraged it through cronyism, nepotism and favouritism. His pledge for making Pakistan self-reliant by stopping aid-dependency proved to be a stunt and bluff. During his premiership he instead sought more foreign aids. The millions that he collected from the masses as his election funding simply evaporated leaving no trace.

This way Nawaz made lot of powerful people his enemies and in the process became isolated from the masses. Even inside the party not many like the style of his leadership. In 1998 after the series of nuke tests in response to India's similar experiments Nawaz's standing among the euphoric masses sky-rocketed and not long after that he made the blunder of his life. The Kargil episode with India proved to be an expensive misadventure. The retreat of the Pakistani troops at the behest of Clinton administration (which was a ploy to ensure the victory of the BJP-led NDA coalition in the 1999 Indian polls) sealed the fate of Nawaz. The Pakistani troops were not agreeable to accept a stage-managed defeat and when Nawaz smelt of an imminent military putsch he made the pre-emptive strike against Pervez Musharraf, who was not the person to accept it lying down like his predecessor Jehangir Karamat.

So the inevitable happened, Nawaz had to bid an ignominious exit. Nawaz's bid for hijacking the plane carrying the returning general from Colombo was aborted. He (Nawaz) instead found to his dismay that his own government has been hijacked. What might be the reaction in the outside world, the people in Pakistan, by and large, had welcomed the change over. It is said that three As — Allah, America and Army — determine the course of Pakistan's politics and state of affairs. After her second dismissal former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto had reportedly quipped that it was difficult to be in power in Pak-

istan if the USA and the country's armed forces are displeased. During the last one decade Prime Ministers were dismissed and replaced one after another as in a game of musical chair. During over half of the 52-year period of independent entity of Pakistan the army had been in direct and full control of state power. Pakistan has come to be known in the outside world as a coup-happy country — either there is the army coup or presidential coup — contributing to dismissal of popularly elected governments.

Pakistan's first Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan was assassinated in a mysterious way in October 1951 in the garrison city of Rawalpindi. Another elected Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was hanged after being implicated in a controversial murder case in April 1979. Ten years later army dictator Ziaul Haque, who took over power from Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was himself killed in a plane crash along with several other high ranking army officers.

Nawaz Sharif was inducted into politics by his mentor Ziaul Haque some two decades back. He started as the Finance Minister of the Punjab — the province which in every respect dominates Pakistan. In the eighties he rose to become the province's Chief Minister. Side by side the wealth of his family registered a fabulous upward swing. When he became Prime Minister in the early nineties his family's wealth burgeoned to over 112 million US dollars. Wealth and power blinded Sharif and helped him in establishing family rule with his brother Shahbaz becoming the Chief Minister of the Punjab.

Sharif still has a long way to go in his cumbersome legal battle in courts in filing appeals and counter appeals. He has been spared the death sentence not because President Clinton had asked for clemency, but mainly to show to the outside world that the procedure of his trial was not influenced by the military ruler. Keeping this in mind the six co-accused were given the not-guilty verdict. But none of them is, however, going to be released soon. Volley of charges like evasion of taxes, misuse of official power, corruption and kickbacks will follow. Had the era of Martial law of Ziaul Haque brand persisted Nawaz would have been sent to the gallows.

Meanwhile, Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League is already in the throes of intense inner-party squabbles for leadership. A triangular fight has ensued among the aspirants — Sharif's wife Kulsum, the present Chief Coordinator of the party Raja Jafarul Haque and Vice President Ijazul Haque, who happens to be the son of late Ziaul Haque, as to who will act as the party chief during the confinement of

Nawaz. His brother would have been a good choice but there is little possibility of his early release due to litany of charges being framed against him to keep him along with his brother continually in the dungeon. His party is also seeking to enter into some sort of alliance with the opposition parties which Nawaz through his high-handedness had earlier antagonised. Since the people are not at all interested to go for movement against the military rule Sharif supporters have started to woo their opponents so as to untidily pressurise General Pervez to restore democracy.

Sensing no immediate backlash among the masses against the verdict the military ruler will have every reason to be extra-happy. General Pervez Musharraf has already made it known that he will start building leadership from the grass-roots — tehsils and Zilas — for what he termed as establishing real people's democracy free from the pervasive influence of feudal and wealthy politicians. By the middle of next year the phase-wise elections to local bodies are expected to be completed. After that the general will be required to give a time-frame for the national elections. When the reckoning will come at long last he will not be able to stop Sharif's party from participation in the fray. Yet another dynastic leadership like that of Benazir Bhutto might emerge with Kulsum in the vanguard. A jailed Nawaz might appear to be stronger than a free Nawaz. How will General Pervez Musharraf counter such a possibility of sympathy vote for Nawaz? This will evidently pose to be a dilemma for the Pakistan's Chief Executive. Nawaz's son has already announced that the day his father comes out of jail it would herald the political death of General Pervez.

Be that as it may, it is not yet time to completely write-off Nawaz from Pakistan's political scenario. He is likely to continue to influence the turn and twists of his country's volatile politics from inside his cell. The leaders of Third world countries which are experimenting with fledgling democracy have a lesson to learn from Sharif's case — it is indeed too dangerous to act in the manner of an elected autocrat. Democracy and authoritarianism do not go hand in hand. An individual, however, popular he might initially be, must not consider himself bigger than the established institutions. In such a situation the lure of extra-constitutional measure often attracts the usurpers as witnessed in the case of Pervez Musharraf. Nawaz Sharif, hence, is to blame his own follies and foibles.

SINCE 1977, when our good or bad democracy was derailed in post-1971 'new Pakistan' by General Zia'ul Haq all the preceding presidents, Prime Ministers, Chief Justices and the Chiefs of Army Staff had to retire with their own share of disgrace.

President Zia died in an air crash, while Ishaq Khan and Farooq Leghari had to resign prematurely. The elected prime ministers Mohi-ud-Din Khan Jinnah, Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif were ousted on charges of corruption.

Among the Chief Justices Muhammad Haleem faced an allegation that he was influenced by the then military top brass regarding the verdict on the restoration of Junejo's Assembly. Justice Afzal Zula faced pandemonium in his courtroom. Justice Naseem Hassan Shah was accused of succumbing to 'chamak' (glitter) when he restored Nawaz Sharif in 1993. Justice Sijad Ali Shah experienced the worst (i.e. storming of the Apex court) and was unceremoniously ousted by fellow judges. Justice Ajmal Mian faced a petition accusing him of tempering with his date of birth and recently Justice

Siddiqui had to go home for re-signing oath under military's Provisional Constitution Order.

The armed forces, often eulogised as the so-called symbol of stability and only functioning institution left in the country, lost it's longest serving chief General Zia'ul Haq in an air crash. His predecessor Aslam Beg was accused of distributing secret money for political manoeuvres.

Later General Asif Nawaz died in mysterious circumstances. General Waheed had to face the so-called 'Islamic coup' of General Zaheer Abbasi, and General Jahangir Karamat had to resign before the expiry of his term. Meanwhile a Naval Chief, Admiral Mansoorul Haq was sacked on charges of corruption. Interestingly, incumbent chief executive General Pervez Musharraf had been sacked by now ousted premier, Nawaz Sharif and the man occupying the top of the hill, Rafiq Tarar's very nomination papers for the presidency were rejected on charges of 'contempt of the court' by then chief election commissioner.

All these episodes were shaped by different circum-

Pakistan: Time for Citizen's Action?

The sole reason behind the October 1999 cyclical return to military rule wasn't just democracy deteriorating into mediocrity. Zafarullah Khan explains

stances but what they establish beyond doubt is sole truth that no institution, be the Executive, the Judiciary or the Army can claim to have stable and clean track record of performance. It is a crisis of governance in the era of weakened nation states. Why to blame the politics alone for the failure? Especially when it has transpired on many occasions that none of the four general elections we had in 1985, 1990, 1993 & 1997 respectively were free and fair from the manipulations of 'secret hands'. Secondly the caretakers during 1988 and 1993 signed the Structural Adjustment Programs with the International Monetary Fund and the so-called representative government had to live within the pre-defined economic boundaries.

More shockingly today we have reached the stage that anybody who can exhibit his/her skills to be a successful international beggar could be placed in the driving seat, either by abrogating the constitution or through staged elections. We have reached this situation because the country's revenue base is not sufficient enough to foot the bill for defence and honour commitments on the repayment of foreign debts worth US \$ 32 billion.

Now, the military government is rather over-enthusiastically following the IMF agenda by imposing the GST, privatisation, down-sizing etc. without the fear of becoming unpopular at the polling booth. And its 'borrowed' economic wizards will one day return to Washington (like Shahid Burki and Moeen Qureshi) to receive their salaries in dollars, perhaps with increments for further tightening the shackles of economic slavery around poor

Pakistanis. However all this does not absolve the country's third generation of politicians namely Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif of their incompetence and alleged crimes. Whether they made fortunes out of our miseries or not is up to the courts to decide. But what irks most is their failure to reform the rot and the absence of sincere efforts to overcome the democratic deficit.

Instead what they perpetuated was politics of patronage and capitulation to false security paradigms.

The nation which had heroically struggled for democracy and whose leaders were hanged, flogged and imprisoned for raising slogans for freedom, today teeters as a ruined romance. A land of lost hopes and shattered dreams. The Pakistani people have yet to take their

democratic revenge on the incompetent lot by voting them out forever. Despite unnecessarily prolonged erosion of trust by the political leaders and military dictators, the majority of Pakistanis would still prefer democracy whenever they will be consulted independently.

If democracy will be delayed or denied the risks in nuclearized, economically weak, donor-dependent Pakistan is that it may become vulnerable to something like 'Talibanization'. Secondly, the military government is raising the temperature vis-a-vis India, which means more expenditure on defence and less on education, health and civic infrastructure. In this scenario what we need to learn is that in the post-cold war period countries can't be conquered or captured, (one example is Iraq's invasion

The RSS' Tactical Retreat

M Abdul Hafiz looks at recent problem regarding Sangh Parivar in India

SINCE Mr Atal Behari Vajpayee assumed office as India's prime minister for the third time in October last year, not a day passed without the BJP patriarch being embarrassed by some activities or other of the members of the Sangh Parivar. The most prominent among them are, of course, the activists of the RSS — the oldest, largest and best organised. Their pinpricks become unbearable at times even to Mr Vajpayee who himself is the product of the RSS. Only during his third government the RSS created problems that plunged the BJP in deep controversy and first serious deadlock in the parliament.

The RSS unceremoniously asked the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh to oppose the 'anti-Swadeshi' policies of the Vajpayee government. The Sangh Parivar as a whole organised 'Chintan Bolthak' to oppose the BJP's economic policies. The RSS also called on Centre to follow Gujrat government's footsteps and lift ban on participation in RSS. The Sangh disrupted the shooting of Deepa Mehta's film Water in Varanasi after the central government cleared the script. In a bizarre display of patriotism the Bajrang Dal activists went on the rampage in Kanpur, hounding boys and girls on Valentine's Day. The VHP raised alarm by announcing a rath yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya, brushing aside BJP's plea for status quo. The RSS chief Rajendra Singh termed the government decision to exchange terrorists for hostages in the Indian Airline hijacking as 'soft' and blamed it on 'cowardice' of Hindu society. The RSS mouthpiece the organiser taunted Home Minister L K Advani for saying that the BJP

had given up the 'contentious' issues on its agenda.

But nothing had been more damaging to BJP government than Gujrat government's decision to lift the ban on the participation of the state government servant in the activities of the Rastriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Initially the opposition to January 3 order of Gujrat government remained feeble within the state and it emboldened the BJP government at the Centre to broker it out. Both Prime Minister Vajpayee and Home Minister Advani made pronouncements amounting to the empowerment of the action of Gujrat government. At the national level the Congress-led opposition attempted only to expose BJP's hidden agenda and drive a wedge between the BJP and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) over the issue. Surprisingly it did not strike a harmonious chord even with the stridently secular elements within the NDA.

Telegu Desam Party (TDP) of Chandrababu Naidu had been, at the worst, lukewarm on the question of supporting Vajpayee government on this issue. The Dravida Manetra Kazhagam (DMK) first endorsed Vajpayee's clean chit to RSS then changed the tone and wanted the government only to rein in the RSS. Ms Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress showed its flexibility. The TC supremo opposed Gujrat government's order but committed itself to back the BJP government. Intoxicated with new found power for themselves within the NDA fold no one seemed willing to put the government in jeopardy. Only Ms Sonia Gandhi, the Congress President, crisscrossed the country even with her image badly dented after Congress' continuing bad

performance in four state assembly elections to garner support against what she called grand conspiracy of the BJP for saffronising the nation.

However there was a crisis in Loksabha which was held hostage to Gujrat government's decision and its messy aftermath. During its budget session from 23 February the lower house of the parliament remained virtually paralysed. The RSS issue held up the proceedings in the Loksabha although the Finance Minister Yashwant Singh was allowed to present his economic survey on February 28 and the union budget the next day. As regards Gujrat government order on RSS issue the opposition parties, mainly the Congress insisted on a debate under Item 184 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Loksabha. But the government wanted to discuss the issue under Rule 193 which would have merely debated the issue and returned for the day. But under Rule 184 the discussion would necessarily have to be rounded off with a vote. The differences between the alliance partners — so far discussed only privately or in the NDA meetings — would then be out in the open for the opposition to cash in on later.

Throughout the session of the parliament the Treasury and Opposition benches lashed out each other while the Speaker Mr GMC Balayogi remained a helpless spectator. For obvious reasons the Treasury could not agree to a debate that words end up in voting. But the opposition exactly wanted a division in the house. Finally the Speaker, in an extraordinary move, asked the prime minister to resolve the issue himself. By hurling the ball into PM's court the Speaker

who was a TDP nominee, in fact betrayed the feeling of his party chief and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu who said earlier in no uncertain term that the RSS was a problem that the BJP — and not the NDA partners must tackle.

But the BJP top brass continued to justify the action of Gujrat government. L K Advani asserted that the central government did not have any constitutional authority to ask the state government to rescind its order. The Parliamentary Affairs Minister Promod Mohanjan talked of the concept of the federalism and said that it was a question of the centre interfering in the rights of the states. Prime Minister Vajpayee not only defended the ban but justified the lifting of the ban on the ground that the RSS was only a patriotic cultural out fit. He, in his meetings with the coalition partners harped on the fact that his party already abandoned its core issues like uniform civil code, abrogation of Article 370 and Ayodhya in the national agenda. In the meantime the deadlock in Loksabha continued.

After two weeks of deadlock in the parliament, the government, needling lender pressure for a debate under Rule 184 relented and asked through Gujrat government, the party channel to rescind its controversial order. Two party general secretaries KN Govindacharya and M Venkaiah Naidu were deputed post haste to Gandhi Nagar to plead for the withdrawal of the order. When the withdrawal was made on 10 March, Haren Pandya, Gujrat's Home Minister grudgingly said that the government had decided on a tactical withdrawal in the larger national interest.

Sonia and a Season of Discontent

Sonia Gandhi's probationary period is at an end. Now, writes Angana Parekh, Congressmen want results - those that translate into power

IT'S THE season of discontent in the Congress(I). Small eruptions that threaten to spawn bigger ones are bursting forth and disturbing the superficial inviolability of the 10, Janpath bastion. And Sonia Gandhi, still tentative after over two years as Congress(I) president, seems unable or unwilling to quell indiscipline with an iron hand as her predecessors were wont to do.

Never before has the authority of a Congress(I) president been challenged to this extent and allowed to go unpunished as it has in the cases of mass cross-voting in the Rajya Sabha elections in West Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Orissa and Karnataka. The Delhi, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh State units are already in a ferment; and Orissa is waiting to happen.

Sonia Gandhi's probationary period, when indecision and aloofness were tolerantly overlooked, is at an end. Now Congressmen and women want results those that translate into power. And since she took over as Congress(I) president, Sonia Gandhi has not displayed the one virtue that, in the Congress(I) scheme of things, outweighs all other considerations: vote-getting ability.

It has now become de rigueur when anything goes wrong to criticise the 'coterie' around Sonia Gandhi and blame it for 'misleading' her. The message, intended or unintended, is that the Congress(I) president is innocent of the nitty-gritty of politics and policymaking and can be led by the nose by her advisors. Congress(I) culture demands that the leader lead from the front. So far, party leaders have stopped short of criticising Sonia Gandhi directly but they are clamping at the bit now.

Kapil Sibal, a Rajya Sabha MP regarded as a Sonia loyalist, set off ripples a few days ago when he gave television and press interviews to express his serious concern at the deterioration of the Congress(I) and its growing marginalisation. While stoutly defending Sonia Gandhi's leadership on the grounds that no individual should be blamed and that it was 'collective responsibility', he indirectly hit out at the coterie and suggested it was time

to sit down to do a rethink on the constitution of the Congress(I) Working Committee.

Sibal was also critical of the Rajya Sabha nominations and said it was a pity that people like Natwar Singh and Jairam Ramesh, who could have made a positive contribution to debates in the Upper House, were left out.

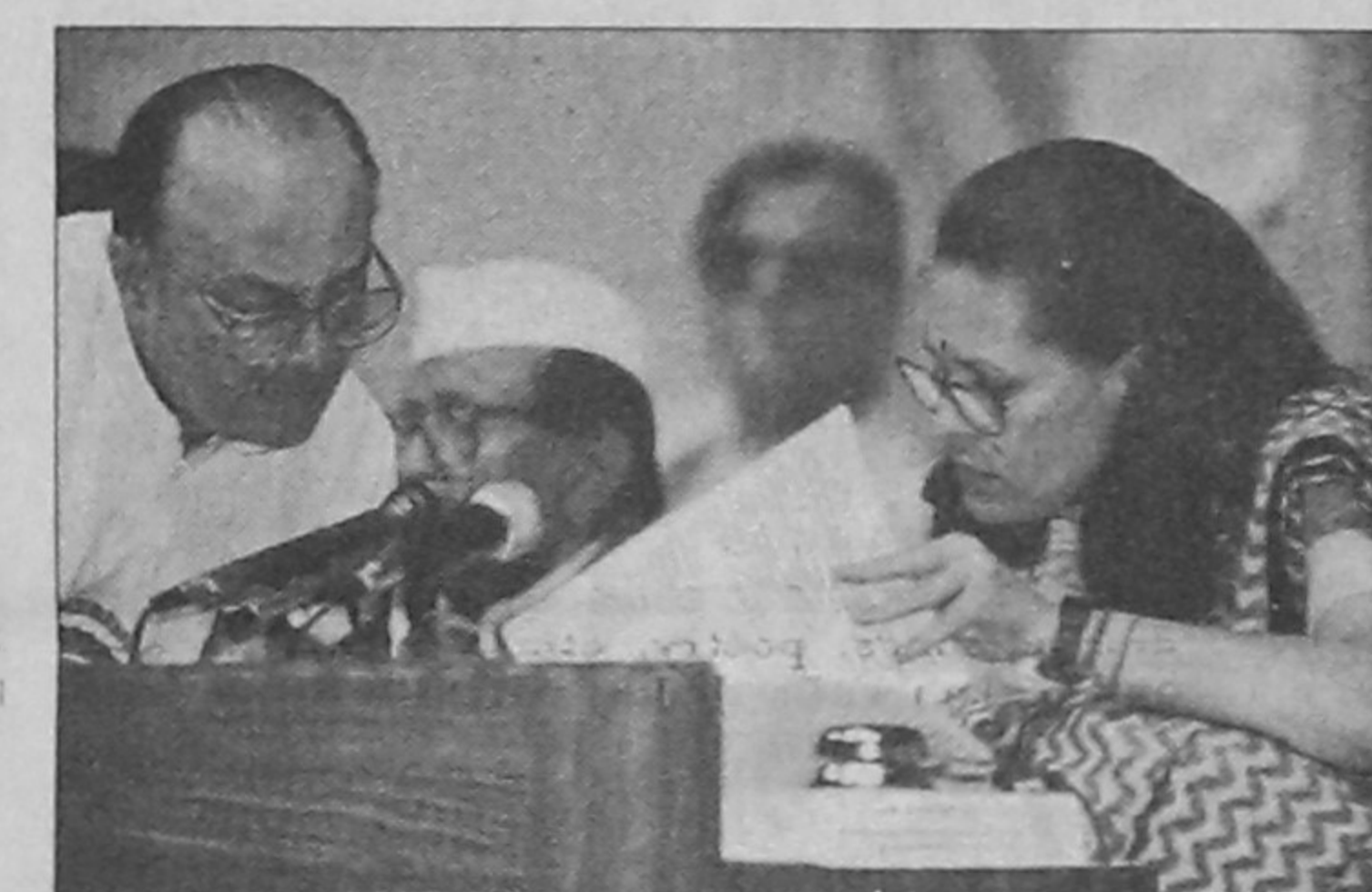
Balram Jakhar, senior Congressman and former Lok Sabha Speaker, has also blamed the 'central leadership' for mishandling the Rajya Sabha elections, as have State leaders in West Bengal. Earlier, the former Gujarat Chief Minister, Chhaidas Mehta, wrote a letter to Sonia Gandhi asking her to step down from party presidency; but this was not given much weightage as Mehta is a political lightweight and was himself a disappointed aspirant for a Rajya Sabha ticket, as was Jakhar.

Sibal, however, has no axe to grind since he is already in the Rajya Sabha. And his opinions are echoed in private by several senior party leaders, including CWC members, who are viewing with concern the party's steady downward spiral. But their question is: If not Sonia, then who?

It has virtually become a practice now to get protestations of loyalty whenever there is a hint that Sonia Gandhi's leadership is being questioned. This time, too, the Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister, Digvijay Singh, issued a statement swearing by her leadership and criticising those who dared to think differently. The Rajasthan Chief Minister, Ashok Gehlot, and the Haryana leader, Bhajan Lal, followed suit.

But even members of the inner circle, like Natwar Singh, Pranab Mukherjee and Manmohan Singh have been alienated for one reason or another.

Singh, because he was not given a Rajya Sabha nomination, Mukherjee because of the embarrassment he is facing over the nuclear deterrent issue during the Gandhi-Clinton meeting; and Singh because he is under fire from within the party over economic reforms and the impending threat posed to his position by Arjun Singh who is now in the Rajya Sabha.



Consulting?

But the larger issue is what exercises others. The Rajya Sabha nominations, they say, have sent out the message that no effort is being made to rebuild the party. Choosing candidates such as Inder Khosla, D. P. Roy, Bimla Raikar and Jamuna Berupal at a time when the party desperately needs good parliamentarians has not gone down well.

For many, the disillusionment set in when Sonia Gandhi reconstituted the CWC and revamped the party set-up three months ago and again chose those without a mass base. Instead, if younger, more dynamic leaders such as Digvijay Singh and S. M. Krishna (the Karnataka Chief Minister) had been included in the CWC, this would have sent out a positive signal that sincere efforts were being made to revive the party and its top decision-making apparatus.

The erosion of Sonia Gandhi's authority is obvious after last month's Rajya Sabha elections. No disciplinary action has been taken against the MLAs who cross-voted nor against partymen who contested as independents or worse, as candidates of other parties. Of the three candidates who were seen as Sonia Gandhi's 'personal' choice — D. P. Roy in West Bengal, Inder Khosla in Uttar Pradesh and R. P. Goenka in Rajasthan — only Goenka won.

All this is in marked contrast to Sonia Gandhi's uncompromising attitude in 1998.

when her advisor, R. D. Pradhan, was defeated because party MLAs cross-voted in the Rajya Sabha election in Maharashtra. At that time, two Lok Sabha MPs and half-a-dozen MLAs were issued show-cause notices and one MLA was suspended. But as a party leader remarked tellingly, "There is a vast difference between Sonia Gandhi's authority in 1998 and now."

In West Bengal, the situation has gone beyond Sonia Gandhi's control. Though the Congress(I) had enough MLAs, and more to spare, to ensure the victory of its Rajya Sabha candidate, Roy, nearly two dozen MLAs defied the party and voted for Bhattacharya. This was followed by a spate of public statements by State Congress(I) leaders blaming the 'central leadership' for 'messing up' the nominations and foisting an unpopular candidate on the MLAs.

A shocked Sonia Gandhi summoned the West Bengal PCC president, A. B. A. Ghani Khan Chaudhary, and his predecessor, Somen Mitra, to Delhi for an explanation earlier this week. But far from being repentant, they in turn threw a bombshell. They said the State unit was in favour of forming an alliance with Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, an ally of the BJP, with the objective of ousting the CPM from Bengal when the Assembly elections are held early next year.

Courtesy: The Hindu of India.

of Kuwait and we know what happened) rather internal impositions have destroyed a few countries, like the former USSR, Rwanda, Somalia, Burundi, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia etc. Can we afford such future?

Let's break the spiral of silence and instead of muddling in the muck should try to rekindle some hope in hell. In this regard if the so-called military regime is enthusiastic to give us what it claims 'real democracy', then why can't it reform the rot through an executive order or a provisional constitution order the instruments until now used only to molest the already over-mutilated constitution. Why not a series of reforms to:

- Make tenure in power term-specific. Maximum two terms for the President and the Prime Minister in their respective office as is the case for the President in United States of America. Such a measure will block yet another betrayal from the twice tested and now exhausted visions. It would also discourage the trend of life long family ownership of political parties.
- Make local bodies a third tier of governance, with a

meaningful decentralisation to take care of local taxes and matters pertaining to health, education and police.

- Create a totally independent Electoral Commission. The government should make voting compulsory, as is the case in Australia and Greece.
- Return the money collected under 'Iqra surcharge' (tax for education) to education sector, which would enable the creation of the critical mass vital for protection of democratic freedoms and serve as a catalyst for vibrant economy.
- Introduce long awaited agricultural reforms and later ensure free-market economy mechanisms both for the industry and agriculture.
- Erase the present provincial boundaries and re-draw administratively feasible provinces.
- Make accountability a permanent and on-going process.

— IM/JW
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