

# Is BJP's policy of exclusion and segregation backfiring?



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Since losing its only southern stronghold Karnataka, the BJP's political actions have sparked widespread debates and speculations regarding the saffron party's unprovoked assertion of power. The Delhi Ordinance, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to inaugurate the new parliament building himself, instead of the president, are two latest actions that have garnered scrutiny. Opposition parties and legal experts have viewed the recent antics as the ruling party's ongoing onslaughts on democracy and federalism.

On May 19, after BJP lost key state Karnataka to Congress, the Union government hastily promulgated an ordinance that undid the Supreme Court's verdict - passed on May 11 - which gave Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the elected government of Delhi, primacy and control over the transfer and posting of officials in the National Capital Territory (NCT).

The ordinance reincarnates the supreme authority of the lieutenant governor - an arm of the Centre - to have the final word in transfers, postings, prosecution sanctions, disciplinary proceedings, vigilance issues, etc of civil service officers deputed to Delhi government departments. The Supreme Court verdict, derived from the constitution, was meant to solve the issues created by the Union Ministry of State Affairs in 2015, which shifted the power to the LGs and left the Delhi government in the dark while systemic corruption

blossomed. Reports have shown that several honest and efficient officials were often penalised for their merits and subjected to punishment postings under the control of the Centre-appointed bureaucrats.

The ordinance rides roughshod with the Supreme Court's verdict and essentially denies the people of Delhi the right to control their own fate through a government they directly

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lected. It has been interpreted as an assault on the federal structure of the country by attempting to concentrate power in the hands of the Union government. Criticising the Modi government's actions, Supreme Court advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan



India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to inaugurate the new parliament building himself instead of the president is one of the latest actions of the BJP that have garnered scrutiny.

FILE PHOTO: AFP

told *The Print*, "The fundamental principles of democracy and federalism on which the Supreme Court judgment was based has effectively been thrown overboard by a stroke of the executive pen."

Ordinances are passed in emergency situations, and many have been rightly questioning what urgency led the Indian government to risk such a confrontation with the Supreme Court. Not unexpectedly, the move has angered leaders in state governments.

Since the ordinance, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of AAP - which backed BJP on instances such as the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir - is now on a nationwide tour to garner support from non-BJP leaders. In a joint press conference with Kejriwal, Thackeray - former chief minister of the state of Maharashtra - said they're coming together to "defeat forces against democracy." The Punjab chief minister also castigated the ordinance, and tweeted, "If there was a provision

of punishment for the killers of democracy in the Indian Constitution, then the entire BJP could have been hanged."

While state governments unite against the Delhi Ordinance, 20 opposition parties jointly boycotted Modi's inauguration of the controversial new parliament building, built at a high cost of \$120 million, overriding objections from opposition parties, environmentalists, and civil groups. The opposition have viewed Modi's decision to inaugurate the new parliament building himself, instead of President Droupadi Murmu, as an "undignified act insulting the high office of the president," and "a direct assault" on India's democracy. D Raja, a senior Communist Party of India leader, wrote on Twitter: "Obsession with self-image and cameras trumps decency and norms when it comes to Modi ji."

Some analysts have speculated that these recent acts of one-upmanship and showcasing of executive power reflect BJP's strategy for the

upcoming elections. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Sanjay Raut criticised Modi for not inviting the president for the inauguration and said it was "being done for the elections."

But whether the BJP's actions constitute a political strategy or avarice, a united opposition won't bode well for the saffron party's future. For years, the beleaguered opposition has needed reasons to come together and unseat Modi. Satya Pal Malik, the pragmatic, laid-back politician, still a member of BJP, and once vice-president of the party, recently said in an interview, "If one opposition candidate is fielded against each BJP candidate in 2024, BJP will not get over 150 seats."

BJP's current pattern of making more and more enemies comes at a time when Narendra Modi's appeal to the people is not what it used to be, at least not in the southern part of the nation. Despite dozens of rallies in Karnataka, the BJP lost a whopping 36 seats to Congress.

The ruling party's humiliating

defeat in Karnataka - where Congress won by the biggest margin of any victor in the state since 1989 - has been interpreted by political analysts as signs of an anti-incumbency wave towards BJP. By sidelining the head of state for the inauguration of the new parliament building, and repressing state governance, the BJP is igniting the possibility of an opposition coalition that can harvest anti-incumbency fervour in their favour ahead of the elections.

It would definitely be premature to overanalyse the victory of one state, and portend that the BJP is losing its grip, or that the party's electoral strategy of religious nationalism has lost its voter base. BJP is still poised to go into the general elections next year as frontrunners, unless they lose some or all of the remaining elections this year, in the central and the north, according to political analysts. The north is, as Dr DB Ambedkar has described, more conservative, educationally backward, and culturally ancient than the south. BJP's divisiveness continues to work well in the northern region, with the party controlling states like Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttarakhand.

But some political observers have noted that the Congress' Karnataka win displays that swing voters are no longer as enthused by the BJP's fundamentalist narrative (Karnataka had been perceived as a "laboratory" for BJP's Hindu-nationalist ideology). BJP's indifferent manner of operating today by fumbling with the well-established institutional processes in the nation is nothing new, and something a lot of writers had been apprehensively warning about for a while. But after the Karnataka loss, and the latest moves that have antagonised opposition further, the BJP must introspect whether their policy of exclusion and segregation might be backfiring.

# Fishing ban in Bangladesh is a bilateral issue

India and Myanmar need to harmonise regulations to ensure both fishers and fish are protected



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The coastal communities in Bangladesh, with their heavy reliance on the sea for survival, are facing multifaceted threats to their traditional way of life. We need to act now to protect the rights and livelihoods of our coastal fishers who depend on marine resources as their primary source of income.

The government's introduction of a 65-day fishing ban in 2015 - May 20 to July 23 - was an important step towards conserving fish stocks and encouraging sustainable fishing practices. However, the ban has brought about new issues that demand attention and require collaborative efforts to ensure the well-being of coastal communities who are directly affected by the ban.

Foremost among the challenges faced by Bangladeshi fishers during the ban is the intrusion of Indian fishers into Bangladeshi waters. As a research assistant, I was involved in a research project conducted by the Center for Sustainable Development (CSD), which revealed that an overwhelming 85 percent of coastal fishers raised concerns about this intrusion. This sentiment was also echoed by a media personality, who voiced his concerns on social media after this year's ban commenced.

Meanwhile, statistics provided by Save Our Sea revealed stark realities from the ground: eight million tonnes of fish are caught annually from the Bay of Bengal, but Bangladeshi fishers only manage to catch 70,000 tonnes. This is because India's fishing ban ends earlier (June 20) than Bangladesh's ban, which is likely to end on July 23. It is highly likely that Indian fishers will exploit Bangladeshi waters when the fish have matured by the end of June.

Aligning the ban periods between the two countries will not only be appropriate, but also increase fish production, mutually benefitting both nations.

The lack of coordination and enforcement between Bangladesh and India undermines the purpose of the ban. This results in Indian fishers encroaching upon Bangladeshi waters and further depleting fish stocks. To effectively protect the livelihoods of coastal fishers on both sides, it is imperative that both nations work together to establish comprehensive agreements and robust monitoring mechanisms to prevent such intrusion.

The implementation of the fishing ban also throws the lives of Bangladeshi fishers into turmoil, as their livelihoods are affected during this period. Although the government provides some relief measures, they fall woefully short of meeting the needs of the affected communities. Compounding this challenge is the issue of unfair relief distribution, with fishers expressing concerns that local governments favour only a select few when providing assistance.

To address these pressing issues, it is imperative for the government to prioritise monitoring of the distribution process and ensure fairness and accuracy in identifying those in need. Additionally, long-term solutions must be implemented, such as skill development programmes, access to alternative livelihoods, and improved social safety nets, to mitigate the adverse effects of the fishing ban on coastal fishers.

The grievances expressed by coastal communities should not go unheard. These fishers, who contribute significantly to the

country's economy and food security, deserve recognition and support. It is imperative to establish transparent and inclusive governance that not only listens to the voices and concerns of coastal fishers, but also takes effective actions to address them. Collaboration among government bodies, civil society organisations, and local communities can lead to the formulation of policies that ensure the sustainability of fishing practices while protecting the rights and well-being of coastal fishers.

Addressing the challenges faced by coastal fishers also necessitates international cooperation. Bangladesh should engage in bilateral and regional dialogues with its neighbouring countries, India and Myanmar, to establish harmonised regulations and enforce stronger measures against illegal fishing. By promoting information sharing, joint patrols, and adoption of technology, collective efforts can effectively combat cross-border illegal fishing and preserve precious marine resources.

In addition to these pressing concerns, fishers in Bangladesh find themselves burdened by another challenge - exploitation by those who claim to be "protectors of the ocean." Reports have surfaced of naval police, foresters, and coast guard personnel engaging in extortion, adding to the frustrations of coastal communities. It is disheartening that the very individuals entrusted with safeguarding these fishers have become perpetrators themselves, exacerbating the plight of those already struggling to make ends meet.

Immediate and comprehensive measures are required to address the multifaceted challenges faced by coastal fishers in Bangladesh. While the fishing ban is a crucial step towards promoting sustainability, it must be accompanied by robust strategies that protect the rights and livelihoods of these communities. Transparent and inclusive governance, collaboration between nations, and international cooperation are key elements in ensuring the well-being and prosperity of coastal fishers. At the end of the day, the fishers struggling to find ends meet are also citizens of this nation.

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২৫ মে ২০২৩ খ্রি।

স্মারক নং- ১৪৩৭/৪,  
উদ্ধৃত দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি  
দরপত্র বিজ্ঞপ্তি নং-০১/২০২৩-২০২৪, তারিখ-২৫/০৫/২০২৩ খ্রি।

The Public Procurement Act-2006, The Public Procurement Rules-2008 & সংশোধনী ২০০৯/২০১০ মোতাবেক ২০২৩-২০২৪ অর্থ বৎসরে কুষ্টিয়া জেলা পুলিশ বিভাগের নিম্নলিখিত আইটেমসমূহের মালামাল সরবরাহ ও কার্য সম্পাদনের জন্য প্রকৃত যোগ্যতা সম্পন্ন বাংলাদেশের ঠিকাদার/সরবরাহকারী প্রতিষ্ঠানের নিকট হতে নিম্নমোদিতকৃত খামের প্রতিযোগিতামূলক উদ্ধৃত দরপত্র আহ্বান করা যাচ্ছে।

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১৯.	স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন	১. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ	২. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ	৩. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ	৪. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ
২০.	স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন	১. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ	২. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ	৩. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ	৪. স্বাগত/বিজ্ঞাপন/জনসিদ্ধান্ত বিভাগ

২৫/০৫/২০২৩  
(মোঃ মাহিনুর আমিন)  
পুলিশ সুপার, কুষ্টিয়া  
ফোন-০২৪৭৭৭৮২৪০০, ফ্যাক্স-০২৪৭৭৭৮২৪০১