

The difference between a moral man and a lion of honor is that the latter yields a discreditable cut even when it has not had one and he has not been caught.

H. F. Moncken

Safeguarding defence secrets

The arrest of an engineer working in the Nagpur unit of the Brahmos Aerospace Ltd on the charge of spying for and passing on classified information about the Brahmos missile to Pakistan is disturbing news. In the past, many Indians had been arrested from time to time for passing on to ISI agents sensitive information about deployment of Indian troops along the borders and maps and photographs of military cantonments. But stealing data about the missile project is far more worrying.

After India signed the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) in June, 2016, the ban on India importing or developing with foreign collaboration missiles with a range of over 300 kms was withdrawn. Previously, in conformity with the requirements of MTCR, the Brahmos missile, developed jointly by India and Russia, had a range of 290 kms. After India signed the MTCR, India decided to develop new Brahmos missiles with a range of 600 kms or more. These would be very different and more powerful missiles than those now in use. Pakistan can be expected to try to steal technical details of these new missiles. Much damage seems to have been done before the conspiracy was unearthed and the culprit looked.

Proof-proof protection of sensitive defence information has become immensely more important now. India has just signed an agreement with Russia for the acquisition of the S-400 Triumf anti-missile system. As China already has several squadrons of this missile, it knows everything about the missile. But Pakistan does not. It is now expected to bend its efforts to steal technical and other data of the Triumf which gives India a distinct advantage over Pakistan. If India cannot protect its defence secrets from potential enemies, other countries may hesitate to give India sophisticated military hardware.

One word of caution. While ensuring full protection of sensitive defence information, the authorities will have to guard against possible mistakes in nabbing an innocent person and destroying his career and reputation. The case of ISRO scientist Nambi Narayan who was arrested on the charge of spying for – of all countries – Maldives way back in 1994 is too recent to be forgotten. After fighting a lone legal battle for long twenty-four years, Narayan has been found not guilty and exonerated from all charges. Had he lost the legal battle, he and his entire family would have been permanently stigmatised. Fortunately for him, after losing twenty-four precious years of his life, he has redeemed his reputation. This should not happen to others.

Can lynchings be sugarcoated?

REFLEX ACTION

Amulya Ganguli

It hasn't taken long for the hollowness of the sermons from the RSS chief, Mohan Bhagwat – on accommodating Muslims in an inclusive society – to be exposed. First, an interfaith couple was attacked with a Muslim man being beaten up for being with a Hindu girl while the police looked on. It is not surprising that the incident took place in U.P., which is the new Hindutva laboratory (as Gujarat was when Narendra Modi was the chief minister) under chief minister Yogi Adityanath, who faces cases relating to hate speeches. Then, the relatives of Pehlu Khan, the cattle trader who was lynched by gaurakshaks in Rajasthan, were shot at while they were on their way to depose before a court. Evidently, the saffron warriors had been keeping a watch over the family and were not too keen to let the law follow its own course, whatever the RSS sanghsarchalak may have said.

To them, Muslims remain "internal enemies", according to M.S. Golwalkar's classification which the RSS now claims to be disowning. But the ground reality is different. Golwalkar and Godse are likely to remain the saffron brotherhood's icons for the foreseeable future where the rank and file are concerned even as the Hindutva top brass extolls Vallabhbhai Patel and Deen Dayal Upadhyay.

However, Muslims are not the only victims of the systematic nature of violence which is currently prevailing, resulting in the murder of rationalists, scientists and journalists by the Hindu Right. Along with the encouragement given by Yogi Adityanath's government to "fake encounters" or cold-blooded killings of suspects by the police, the law-enforcing machinery has apparently become more trigger-happy than ever before as the killing of a multinational executive in Lucknow showed.

It is obvious that Bhagwat's objective of mainstreaming the RSS, if that is really his intention, is unlikely to be fulfilled in a hurry.

Instead, if the targeting of Muslims continues, he will be accused of living in a make-believe world of his own with little idea of the forces which drive the RSS. It is worth noting that no other front-ranking RSS leader has reiterated Bhagwat's views. There have only been a few articles by BJP ministers in his support. Among them was a piece by Ram Madhav, who is now on lien to the BJP from the RSS, in which he quoted a significant response by an RSS stalwart to the question as to why the organization does not include Muslims. The reply – that a boys' school does not admit girls – shows that the Hindu-Muslim divide is as wide and irrevocable as the gender gap in the opinion of a majority in the RSS. While co-education is now the norm in schools and colleges, the nine-decade-old commitment of the RSS to a polarized society remains the main obstacle to Bhagwat's efforts to initiate a change.

Considering that there is every possibility of Muslims being targeted on various pretexts – love jihad, gharwapsi, beef consumption, cattle smuggling – the decision of the national opposition parties to stay away from Bhagwat's three-day exercise in grass (openness) was the correct one. Attending it would have conferred a legitimacy on the RSS which it does not deserve if the latest incidents in U.P. and Rajasthan are taken into account. By the same token, it is now clear that former President Pranab Mukherjee and the

corporate czar, Ratan Tata, acted rather hastily in responding to Bhagwat's invitations to attend the functions of the RSS. Tata did not speak, but Mukherjee delivered a long lecture about the virtues of pluralism to no purpose, as is now evident.

If the opposition leaders had attended the three-day conclave at New Delhi's prestigious Vigyan Bhavan, it would have been a similar waste of time by them. Far more concrete examples are needed to demonstrate that Bhagwat is being taken seriously by the camp followers of the RSS and the BJP before his invitations can be accepted.

The caution is all the more necessary because there is no certainty that Bhagwat himself has changed in any significant way from being the person who once favoured the gharwapsi of those Hindu "brothers" who were misled into converting to Islam. "Bhule bhaktey jo bhaji gaye hai nahi na koo wapas leteyenge", he told a meeting of the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) in 2014.

He had also advised the gaurakshaks during his annual Dussehra speech last year but he was distracted by critical comments by "highly placed persons in the government" or the judiciary's remarks, pointing out that those protecting cows have also been attacked by the cattle smugglers.

It is possible that the more moderate tone of Bhagwat's Vigyan Bhavan speech was intended to reassure the middle class that the lynchings and other acts of violence by the saffron cadres are an aberration lest any disillusionment about the BJP hurts the party's electoral chances. The BJP's army of trolls have also been unenthusiastic about Bhagwat's speech either because they sense its tactical purpose or because they reject it outright, as a remark by one of the netizens – buddha sathiya giya hai (the old man has become senile) – suggests. In any event, the social and political scene has not changed in any way for the Hindu Right. (IPA)



Devotees purchasing puja samagri on eve of Navratra festival in Lucknow on Tuesday.

Imran Khan's foggy fault lines

The post-Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) era, steered ahead by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, confronts an opaque nebula of uncertainties afflicting the path of a troubled state. High expectations about the romantic Naya Pakistan, promised by PTI chairman Imran Khan are halted by fault lines of toughening realities within weeks of his taking over as prime minister.

Obviously, the imminent threat is on the financial front, precisely a bail-out programme to prevent a major balance-of-payment crisis. The monthly current account deficit rose to \$2.2 billion in July, although it contracted to \$600 million in August. Negotiations - Article IV consultations - with the International Monetary Fund began in Islamabad. The IMF staff team, led by Herald Fieger, senior economist and advisor, confronts a group led by secretary, finance Arif Ahmed Khan, accompanied by the State Bank of Pakistan governor Tariq Bajwa. The estimated gross financing requirements for the ongoing fiscal year 2018-19, put forward by Islamabad, is somewhere between \$26 billion and \$29 billion. The perusal by the IMF team is scheduled to end by the next week. Pakistan is to place its financial papers for further talks before the annual meetings of the IMF and World

Bank in Bali, Indonesia, between 8 and 10 October.

The next important agenda is a path of solution of Afghan refugees, 'undocumented people' in the lexicon of demography. According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, Pakistan is home to the largest refugee population in the world, with more than 1.45 million, mostly from Afghanistan, residing in the country for over three decades. Those shelter-less people have been treated humanely even when the Afghan war was on its peak, in contrast to what is being witnessed in Assam in India. The UNHCR's high appreciation for Pakistan is well-known. This policy helped Islamabad succeed in voluntary repatriation of 4.1 million. Pakistan's minister for states and frontier regions Abdul Qadir Baloch told members of the Pak-Afghan Track II Dialogue in Islamabad, "The refugees have nothing to do with security situation. Also there is no serious law and order issue or conflict witnessed between the local communities in Pakistan and Afghan refugees," the minister said as Pakistani leaders routinely cite the

FOCUS

Sankar Ray

longer stay of refugees as one of the security issues.

The PTI-led government that carries forward the tradition of treating the Afghan brethren well is committed to other refugees in an identical way, which is why a parliamentary committee, comprising representatives from all parties, is to be formed for working out a strategy to decide the fate of Afghans, Biharis and Bengalis residing in Pakistan. This was revealed by minister for human rights Shireen Mazarri in the National Assembly on a calling attention notice from members of the Pakistan People's Party.

She assured that the Afghan refugees would be provided with security, food and shelter as they would be citizens of Pakistan but there are legal, political and other issues involved in the process of their citizenship and for that the parliamentary panel was suggested. Mazarri added that although Pakistan was a signatory to the 1951 Refugee

Convention, "it still can't banish the refugees from the country by force. But we need to know that the issue cannot linger on for long," very much in contrast to the present Indian government of the National Democratic Alliance.

But the tragedy lies in the sanguinary reality that even this humanitarian policy towards undocumented people will not help Pakistan improve relations with Afghanistan as the terrorists that have been waging war inside Afghanistan include Pakistanis hand in hand with Taliban combatants. According to a fairly recent report, "People from Pakistan, Chechnya, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan are involved in the war in Ghazni." An Afghan lawmaker Erfanollah Erfan, referring to foreign fighters in Ghazni war, including Pakistani citizens, criticized Kabul's silence about this. "We ask the government to report this to the UN Security Council as soon as possible. It should share the evidences to the countries that have fighters in the Ghazni war as well," he said. Well-known Pakistani politician Afrasiab Khattak too sought an explanation from Islamabad to issue a clarification on

Pakistani dead fighters in Ghazni war. Pakistan government needs to explain reports about the dead bodies of Pakistani coming in from the war in Ghazni and Pakistani fighters getting arrested."

The new government in Islamabad, criticised by Pakistan Today as 'infantile' for different reasons, considers fighting terrorism less important than curbing corruption. And the Intelligence Bureau has been accordingly directed to prioritise its strategy, according to the Lahore-based weekly, The Friday Times. "There are other agencies and organisations which were trained for anti-corruption efforts. IB should not do this. Its expertise is in countering terrorism and its focus should not be redirected towards corruption," said Ehsan Ghani, a recently retired former chief of the IB. Chosen to head the IB by erstwhile Premier Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, the days of Dr Khan, who proved his worth by energizing the Counter Terrorism Department to disempower the externally-nurtured extremists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, seem numbered.

If Naya Pakistan remains a slogan only, it will not weaken PTI alone. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword

1	2	3		4	5	6
7						
		10	11		12	
13				14		
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18			19		20	
		21			22	23
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29					30	

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Worker in stone | 1 Atlas contents |
| 4 Soft powder | 2 Mental acuteness |
| 7 Top card | 3 Dry and withered |
| 8 Bashful | 4 Ugly amphibian |
| 9 Money bag | 5 Queen's-wit |
| 10 Operatic air | 6 School group |
| 13 Daubed | 10 Undermine |
| 14 School of whales | 11 Wear away |
| 16 Beast of burden | 14 Decree |
| 18 Tavern | 17 Picturesque |
| 19 Obscure | 18 Drive forward |
| 21 Regain health | 20 Cut grass |
| 24 Skin opening | 21 Emit fumes |
| 26 Strong thread | 22 Passport |
| 27 Tree | 23 Payment for endorsement |
| 28 Wrongdoing | 24 Payment for property use |
| 29 Welsh national emblem | 25 Cereal |
| 30 Precise | |

SUDOKU: 2339

1	2	3		8		5
		8		2		4
7					6	2
		3	9			
			3	6		
				4	9	
	3	1				8
9			4		3	
6		2				7

Yesterday's Solution 2338

2	6	5	1	4	3	8	7	9
9	4	8	6	5	7	3	2	1
1	3	7	9	2	8	6	5	4
5	9	3	8	7	4	2	1	6
6	2	4	3	1	5	7	9	8
7	8	1	2	6	9	4	3	5
4	1	9	7	8	2	5	6	3
3	5	2	4	9	6	1	8	7
8	7	6	5	3	1	9	4	2

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 347

F	A	S	T	R	E	E	D	S
A	T	T	I	R	E	R	I	P
R	E	A	M	V	E	R	G	E
M	T	E	N	E	T	A	C	
S	U	A	M	E	A	S	K	
E	S	E	D	A	N	A		
C	H	E	S	S	L	A	W	S
T	O	W	I	N	S	T	E	P
S	T	E	M	S	O	A	T	S

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