

Trying to be a first-rate reporter on the average American newspaper is like trying to play Bach's 'St. Matthew's Passion' on a ukulele
Bogdikian's Observation

Strange obstinacy

The United Arab Emirates has offered Rs. 700 crore to Kerala flood victims. But the Centre has refused to accept the offer. Coming to the aid of flood or quake or epidemic victims is natural for every human being, every society and every country. The obstinacy to refuse to accept such help is inexplicable. Maybe the amount of the offer (Rs. 700 crore) has hurt the amour propre of the Centre which has sanctioned only Rs. 500 crore for Kerala. Refusing relief for afflicted people shows a strange mentality India itself has gone all out in aid of victims of natural disasters in other countries. The latest such instance was the Operation Amity – the massive relief and rescue operation undertaken by different Indian agencies and the Indian Army in the wake of the devastating earthquake in Nepal in April, 2015. India has very cordial relations with the UAE. The two countries are cooperating with each other in different fields including combating terrorism. That makes New Delhi's refusal all the more strange. Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac has accused the Centre of following a dog-in-the-manger policy.

Disallowing flow of aid to distressed people from a friendly country is very unusual. The official stand of New Delhi is that the Government will not accept any foreign aid for the flood victims. All intended donors will be told "Thank you but no thanks." The BJP justifies its stand on the plea that the decision not to accept foreign aid was taken by the UPA. Did the BJP tell the voters in 2014 that if voted to power it would follow the policies of the UPA and stick to the decisions taken by the UPA? India has also refused to accept the offer of aid from the Maldives. In view of that country's hostile attitude to India, this is fully justified. But UAE does not stand on the same footing as the Maldives as far as relations with India are concerned. The reason for refusal can only be political which the Government does not want to disclose. Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac has accused the Centre of pursuing a dog-in-the-manger policy.

Kerala needs massive aid to rebuild its economy. Essential public utility facilities like hospitals have suffered enormous losses. Hospitals have lost costly equipment and instruments essential for diagnosis and treatment. If the Centre does not revise its stand on accepting foreign aid then other States, philanthropic organizations and common people will have to come to the aid of Kerala by providing money and materials.

Lack of grip on economic management most serious

REFLEX ACTION

K R Sudhaman

Prime Minister Narendra Modi coined a new phrase 'Minimum Government, Maximum Governance' in 2014. Recently in his 'mann ki baat' radio address, he said good governance is the birthright of every Indian citizen like swaraj (independence) and we should have it.

Nearly four and a half years after Modi came to power, has his government delivered on good governance or is it just a hype? Has Modi delivered on his promise of good governance or has he just been a good event manager? The growing perception is he has failed to deliver. The reality is a few good things have happened but many things have gone wrong in fulfilling the promises that he had made in 2014. During his 2014 election campaign, BJP patriarch L K Advani described Narendra Modi as "brilliant event manager". As the 2019 elections approach, the same question is asked and the government has nothing much to show, except to reel out some hackneyed statistics, which make no sense to common man. As 2019 elections approach, it is worth pondering over his achievements and failure. Even his skeptics cannot deny the fact that Modi is a great communicator. But there were other prime ministers as well who had great communication skills. It included Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and so on. Even Rajiv Gandhi, Morarji Desai and BJP leader Advani were good communicators. Modi's great oratory skill is certainly a plus point in a democracy but his ability to shift goal posts to justify his mistakes and failures can fool the people sometimes through his communication skills but certainly not all the time. His polarization politics might have worked well initially and brought him great success in state hustings, particularly in

the cow-belt. This helped BJP capture power quite convincingly in the assembly elections in 20 odd states. But as people started taking law into their hands under the garb of gau rakshaks, polarizing politics began to boomerang and the reactions started getting louder as the general elections approached. This is not a welcome development as this has the potential to trigger violence during the polls. Modi won the 2014 elections on his promise to root out corruption and even promised to bring back Rs 80-90 lakh crore stashed abroad and put Rs 15 lakh in everybody's bank account. Modi by himself may not be personally corrupt like his predecessor Manmohan Singh, but he has certainly underperformed on this front.

Some of his measures like demonetization have had a disastrous effect on the economy. Manmohan Singh, a renowned economist, has been proved right that demonetization was a monumental mistake and has really pushed down GDP growth by more than two percentage points. It has also virtually destroyed India's informal and MSME sector, which provided 80 per cent of the jobs in the country. This also contributed to his underachievement in job creation promise. While the government continues to deliver the people a continuous supply of spectacles – the visuals of stashes of currency notes being seized and 'black money hoarders' arrested or a gigantic statue

of Shivaji in Mumbai – a scrutiny of the PM's statements in the last 12 weeks lays bare a stunning lack of homework for a policy that has affected each of the 1.34 billion people of India. Shourie went to the extent of saying demonetizing of high value currency was the "largest money-laundering scheme ever" conceived and implemented entirely by the government. It was an idiotic jolt in which "everyone who had black money" converted it into white money. There has been serious concern over concentration of power in PMO. Shourie described this phenomenon as "... a government of two-and-a-half persons," that is, Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and one in-house lawyer."

The Economic Survey, the RBI surveys, the SBI's report indicate that GDP has collapsed to 3.7% as per the old series. Several analysts say that while Prime Minister has events in perhaps every state each week, there's hardly any grip on economic management. India is back to high inflation – high interest rates regime, high fuel prices and no respite from taxation authorities. Viciousness and suspicion with which every other company or individual is seen. Rural economy and farming are sore areas where system collapse has been reported day in and day out especially post-demonetization. Virtually, majority states have experienced the farm distress of some variety or other at a time when both Centre and states are run by BJP. Prime Minister's events continue to happen. Virtually every scheme currently run by Modi government was either conceived or begun by the previous regimes.

Overall, Modi has managed events well and his four and a half years of governance and performance seem that of a showman than substance. (IPA)



A woman tying 'Rakhi' to his brother inside Udhampur District Jail on the eve of Raksha Bandhan festival on Saturday

Conventional Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11			
12	13	14	15	16		
17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	
29				30		

- ACROSS**
- 1 Blessian
 - 4 Brave man
 - 8 Mingle
 - 10 Encourage in crime
 - 12 Company of lions
 - 14 and not
 - 15 Bath
 - 17 No score
 - 19 Hairpiece
 - 21 Dash
 - 23 Play for time
 - 26 Ineffectual
 - 27 Form walking
 - 28 Female swan
 - 29 Copied
 - 30 Fasting period
- DOWN**
- 1 Pollen-bearing organ
 - 2 Astury
 - 3 Saturn's largest satellite
 - 4 Ironhour
 - 5 Explet by legal
 - 6 Colour
 - 7 Unites
 - 11 Danger
 - 13 Partic sound
 - 16 Robber
 - 18 Partic sound
 - 20 Chairperson's surface
 - 22 Not any
 - 23 General spring
 - 24 Faucet
 - 25 Woe ahead

SUDOKU : 2293

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

Yesterday's Solution 2292

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

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 301

R	O	T	S	A	I	N	T	S
U	I	D	O	L	E	A	T	
S	R	I	D	L	E	G	A	T
S	T	R	E	M	O	R	R	
V	O	O	T	E	S	T	Y	
I	O	A	T	T	E	N	D	
S	A	T	I	R	E	V	O	
I	C	E	G	A	L	E	W	
T	E	S	T	E	R	R	U	N

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LS elections in Dec a strong possibility?

In the wake of the Independence Day address of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the publication of an opinion poll of a news channel that the Congress has good chance of regaining all the three states - Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh in the coming assembly elections, the highest level of the BJP leadership is seriously thinking of proposing the Lok Sabha poll to December this year coinciding with the assembly elections.

A close analysis is being made by the top BJP leadership at its newly built headquarters, of the mood of the nation at the moment and the possible shift in the next four months taking into account the observations made by the survey carried out by ABP News and C Voter. The war room of the saffron party at 11, Ashok Road, there while party headquarters, is sending to the leadership the results of their media analysis on day to day basis and it is becoming clear that in the crucial assembly polls in the three BJP ruled states, the state leaders including the chief ministers

have failed the expectations of the people and only the Prime Minister Narendra Modi can act as a savior by putting him as the face of the BJP by tagging it with the Lok Sabha elections.

Two important observations come out of the survey. First, the Congress is expected to secure comfortable victories in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh and the grand old party is in a position to have marginal victory in Madhya Pradesh. But the second observation is that the people are still supporting Modi for Prime Ministership against Rahul Gandhi and the political arithmetic might change in the Lok Sabha poll. For instance, in Madhya Pradesh, the survey says that Congress might get 42 per cent of the votes as against the BJP's 40 per cent. In terms of seat tally, the Congress has the possibility of securing 117 seats as against 106 of BJP out of the total of 230 seats. But the scenario changes for projections for Lok Sabha poll as many people who will be voting against the BJP government in Madhya Pradesh, will be preferring Modi as the PM as against Rahul

Gandhi and the projection says that the same people will give 46 per cent vote share to BJP in the Lok Sabha poll as against 39 per cent to Congress. This is just because that Modi emerges as a clear favourite in the race for PM again as against Rahul Gandhi who is still untested as an administrator.

There are other reasons for the BJP leadership to opt for holding Lok Sabha poll in December this year. The lackluster fifth and last Independence Day message has made no additional impact on the masses. It has been a repetition of old tales of breast beating about performance which no one takes seriously. The National Health Scheme is not a new one. It was announced earlier and it will take quite some time to get implemented at ground level after getting all the hurdles crossed. At a time, when the farmers are committing

FOCUS

Nitya Chakraborty

suicides in different states of the country and the joblessness is rampant with few jobs being created, the programme of sending an Indian to space by 2022, is a big joke in the unemployed. Modi has no magic wand left except attacking the Congress and Rahul Gandhi. But he has a savior in the disunity of opposition, as of now. The BJP and the Prime Minister himself are bent on ensuring that the opposition cannot unite and meet his challenge jointly in the Lok Sabha poll. This factor of opposition not being fully united at the moment and the reluctance of some regional parties to work with Rahul Gandhi and the Congress Party, have given some leeway to the BJP despite its despicable record in office. But still the situation may change suddenly if the Congress scores victory in the assembly elections held as

scheduled separately. The momentum that will be generated might lead to a reforming of the unity of the opposition parties since this will generate a mood in the country that the BJP can be defeated in the Lok Sabha poll. The question before the BJP leadership is that can the saffron leadership afford that? That post assembly elections situation might surely have an impact on those voters who preferred Modi as PM candidate in the survey. They might opt for a change - Rahul Gandhi or whoever from the opposition.

The BJP leadership has to resolve this dilemma and has to come to a decision soon. The party machinery is ready for elections in December. They have huge resources, manpower and massive infrastructure for getting feedback of people's mood from the states. There are many agencies, official and non-official which are feeding the saffron top notches with information. But ultimately the final decision will be taken by the PM himself and all indications suggest that he will opt for December. (IPA)