



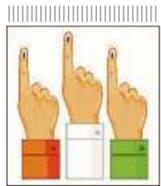
DECCAN HERALD

ESTABLISHED 1948

It's for Parliament to cleanse politics

The Supreme Court has rightly rejected a petition that sought a bar on politicians facing criminal charges from contesting elections. The specific prayer was to disqualify from electoral contest those candidates against whom a court has framed criminal charges. Criminalisation of politics is a threat to democracy and public life. But the means and methods to deal with it should be compatible with the rule of law, the constitutional scheme of governance and democratic processes. The framing of charges does not mean that a person is guilty. Till the time the charges are proved through trial, the charge-sheeted person is deemed innocent. Charges may be framed because of political rivalry, vendetta or other reasons and it will be wrong and unfair if a person is denied the opportunity to contest elections before he or she is found guilty by a court.

The slow process of judicial trial is a major factor that helps criminal politicians to contest elections again and again and hold positions of power. It sometimes takes decades for a case to be decided. The Supreme Court had recently issued directives for fast-tracking cases against politicians, but states have been lax in doing so. The court has now issued some guidelines to be followed by political parties and candidates, which include declaration of criminal cases pending against the candidates at the time of submitting nominations in party websites and candidates' affidavits.



Not SC, people must reject chargesheeted candidates

It also wants these declarations to be given publicly through the media. Whether this will deter criminal candidates from contesting elections or discourage voters from electing them is open to doubt. A survey conducted by the Association for Democratic Reforms some years ago had found that candidates who faced criminal charges had greater chances of winning elections than others.

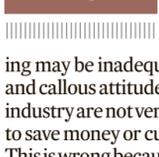
One-third of the members of the present Lok Sabha have a criminal record. The situation in the state assemblies and at lower levels is the same or worse. The Supreme Court is well aware of the problem and has observed that "society has the right to be governed by better people". But it has rightly expressed the judicial limitations in the matter and proposed that parliament may enact a strong law to cleanse politics and make it obligatory for parties to refuse tickets to offenders. Parliament is unlikely to heed the call as no party would want an election bar on criminal politicians. It should be noted that even the present law, which disqualifies convicted politicians from contesting elections or holding office, was sought to be diluted in 2013. It is for the people, ultimately, to reject criminals who seek their votes.

Air safety: plunging standards

A number of recent incidents have exposed the poor safety standards and procedures in India's aviation sector. There was no loss of life in any of the incidents but they caused health problems, discomfort, anxiety and tension for many passengers. Last week, the pilots of a Jet Airways Mumbai-Jaipur flight forgot to switch on the air pressure mechanism in the aircraft after its take-off and it led to many passengers suffering from nose bleeds, ear pain and headaches. The crew were apathetic to the passengers' plight and did not know how to handle the situation. The plane had to return to Mumbai. Earlier this month, an Air India Delhi-New York flight suffered multiple systems failure and had to make an emergency landing in New Jersey. There have also been cases of near collisions, wrong landing, tyre bursts and other scary happenings in many parts of the country.

The seriousness of these incidents may be realised from the possibility that some of them could have led to accidents that cost lives or caused greater inconvenience, monetary losses or other problems. They point to the need to improve the systems and processes relating to operations and attitudes and habits relating to work and service in the industry. The airlines industry has grown fast and passenger traffic has shown rapid growth. This may have led to a situation where airlines found themselves wanting in many respects. Competition may have made things worse. Aircraft are not always maintained and serviced well and may be subjected to overuse. There may be shortage of staff and personnel and their training may be inadequate. They are known for indifferent and callous attitudes and behaviour. The finances of the industry are not very stable and there may be a tendency to save money or cut corners even on essential matters. This is wrong because safety is the most important factor in travel by any mode. The infrastructure and services at the airports also need to be improved. They have an important role in ensuring air safety.

A survey by the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) has found that India's aviation safety score is very low and is even below that of Bangladesh. India's airlines are behind 160 other airlines in the world in respect of safety. It showed that the performance of the regulator, the Directorate-General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), is lacklustre. The civil aviation ministry has now ordered an audit of airlines, airports and flying schools. The ministry and the DGCA must take steps to ensure that the best safety standards are implemented and lapses and violations of norms are dealt with strictly.



India's airlines behind 160 other airlines on safety

around, justice should reach a logical end for a civilised nation to feel secure. **YOGARAJ C GOWDA**, Bengaluru

Comment

CLIMATE CHANGE

Clear and present danger

Empirical data suggests that changing rainfall distribution is resulting in recurring, rapid onset events – floods, storms and droughts.

Gurucharan Gollerkeri

The intensity, spread and relentless fury of the floods in Kerala have set alarm bells ringing. It is important to recognise that this was an extreme climate event – Kerala hadn't seen such extreme precipitation in 125 years – triggered by climate change. We must not forget the floods in Uttarakhand in June 2013 and in Chennai in 2015.

What must concern the executive in the states and at the Centre is the pattern of change in 'average weather' manifesting in the growing intensity, recurrence, frequency and spread of such extreme events, whether floods or droughts. Climate change represents a clear and present danger with long-term implications, and the spectre of significant human development decline in India over the medium to long term.

Climate change is characterised by changes in the average weather, including rising temperatures, changing precipitation patterns and rising sea levels. Evidence from different studies points to the average annual temperatures increasing significantly, but unevenly, across India. Between 1950 and 2010, peninsular India experienced increases of between 1-1.5 degrees Celsius. Changes in the precipitation patterns are more difficult to measure, but again, empirical data suggests that the temporal and spatial distribution of rainfall is changing in ways that are unprecedented, resulting in recurring rapid onset climate events – floods, storms and droughts.

Global climate models are the only tools to approximate the anticipated changes – the Climate Model Inter-comparison Project (CMIP) includes 18 such models. A recent World Bank study draws on this data and points to startling projections that have serious long-term implications for South Asia in general and India in particular.

The prediction by these climate models is that the average temperature in South Asia will increase further, between 1.6-2.2 degrees Celsius; and that the average monsoon precipitation will increase between 3.9-6.4%, depending on whether we traverse a climate-sensitive or a carbon-intensive development path.

Worse still, several 'climate hotspots', including large metropolises like Kolk-

ta, Mumbai and Chennai are emerging in India. That Kerala was not an anticipated climate change hotspot makes the diverse and spatial and temporal effects of changes in average weather more, not less, complex.

There is, therefore, urgent need for governments to go beyond natural disaster management to better understand the long-term effects of changes in temperature and precipitation; how these changes will vary from region to region and manifest in differing extreme climate events; and how the local impact of a global process will significantly challenge the human development prospects and livelihoods of communities.



Enabling evidence-based and community-led climate sensitive adaptation and mitigation strategies through a diverse, decentralised model informing development planning will be the key to building climate change resilience. Policy attention has focused on developing early warning systems, disaster-resilient infrastructure and emergency response, and commendably so, to reduce the economic shocks from extreme weather events.

Little effort has been made, though, to understand the multi-faceted effects of such events on livelihoods, health, and climate change-induced migration. Even less understood are the long-term implications of these changes on poor households and vulnerable communities.

Going forward, devising appropriate adaptation and mitigation strategies at geography-specific and household levels to reduce the adverse economic impact of extreme climate events will require a portfolio of actions. The emphasis will have to be on developing action plans especially for the climate change hotspots in India and investing local institutions and communities with climate change action capacities and the agency to act.

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Memories and memory

Nostalgia is said to be the beginning of old age blues. Oh, my younger days...

Meera Datta

"Memories are all I have to cling to", sang an idol of yesteryears which aptly describes my present predilection. Nostalgia is said to be the beginning of old age blues. Oh, those memories of my younger days when I was so carefree and so happy. The only trauma was studying for exams, which in retrospect seems like a mild price to pay for the joy of going to school and being with friends.

Now that the monsoons have hit Bengaluru with mercurial enthusiasm, it's so natural to snuggle under a warm blanket in the afternoons with a good book and moony songs, the latter available

at the press of a button on your mobile.

One such rainy afternoon I did so, and the memories came flooding in. Elvis crooned, "And I love you so," which brought back not only the mood of the song but the price one had paid. It happened when I was in Class 8. We had song books in those days which we exchanged with our friends regularly. I was caught passing one such leaflet to my best friend, and had been punished.

Not a very pleasant memory, so I switched to the next song on YouTube which turned out to be my favourite Jagjit Singh singing *Yaad kiya dil ne kahan ho tum*, a duet by Hemant Kumar and Lata Mangeshkar from the movie *Patita*. It was this very song that my brother-in-law had crooned to woo my sister. How romantic it was! But he is no more... Unbidden, the tears flowed and I thought of all the yesterdays with him.

Memories drowned me. Enough is enough, I thought, tearing myself away

from the gloom. Armed with an umbrella and a determined chin up, I walked up to the grocery store for some retail therapy. Feasting my eyes on the goodies, I simply walked away from them and bought bitter gourds instead. I congratulated myself on the mature way I was behaving and felt oh-so-smug about my capacity for self-control. When I got home, I stood in front of my door and fumbled for my keys. I panicked then as I realised that I had forgotten to take them.

A friendly neighbour lectured, "Oh granny, at your age this is bound to happen. You see, your immediate recall will be very bad though you will be able to remember even your childhood days. A price to pay in old age," he opined. Well, some consolation that.

Frustrated, I wondered what to do even as my immediate recall informed that I'd left my keys on the bed! So then why couldn't I remember to take the keys in the first place? Any answers?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Towards a pure and strong democracy

Sir, Apropos "Come clean on political past, SC tells candidates" (*DH*, Sep 26), with its statement, the SC has agreed that our present system is neither pure nor strong. If Parliament is to pass a suitable law, it could also undertake other reforms, besides barring tainted ministers from contesting elections. Criminals entering into arena and winning elections by convincing margins is only a byproduct of a corrupt electoral system with many a loose ends.

The most significant one is that a winning candidate has

to represent the majority of those who really cared to vote. The one who scores 25% or fewer votes may end up representing 75% or more votes who didn't actually support him/her. Yet another glaring lacuna is 'horse trading'. By logic, the winning candidate should automatically lose the seat if he/she switches loyalty to another party. That provision is not there in Representation of the People Act! If Parliament is to reform RPA, these points could be noted.

R K DIVAKARA, Bengaluru

Onus on parties

Sir, The SC has left the decision of banning politicians with criminal cases pending against them to Parliament and has advised them to enact suitable laws in this regard. What is unfortunate is that all political parties are guilty of fielding such candidates. Cleaning the Augean stables by purging their parties of candidates with criminal records remains anathema to most political parties. As a result, voters are faced with a Hobson's choice of picking the lesser evil.

CV ARAVIND, Bengaluru

Great setback

Sir, Apropos "75% TB patients visiting private docs treated incorrectly" (*DH*, Sep 26), these shocking findings are a great setback to India's ambitious plans to eliminate the disease

by 2025. The improper management of the rising number of TB patients is a cause for concern. A legislation must be passed to ensure that only qualified specialists prescribe TB drugs. Improving the quality of TB management in private sector must be a priority for India's strategy.

VENUGS, Kollam

Justice lost

Sir, Apropos "All 9 accused in Rajkumar abduction case walk free" (*DH*, Sep 26), reads like a classic case study of a conniving prosecution with police hand in glove, hell bent on denying natural justice to the aggrieved. As the judge rightly noted, prosecution failed on many counts and key people in the case were not questioned. The charge sheet was filed a good 11 years after the incident! Although the major parties concerned are no longer

around, justice should reach a logical end for a civilised nation to feel secure.

YOGARAJ C GOWDA, Bengaluru

Balanced approach

Sir, Apropos "Is English an illness?" by M A Siraj (*DH*, Sep 26), blinded by archaic ideas, we tend to forget that English is a global medium of communication and not just a language of the colonial British. While one supports development of all regional languages, a balanced approach is needed for the future welfare of our youth.

ARUN K RAO, Bengaluru

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SPEAK OUT



"It is a historic judgement... unique identification number that has been accepted after judicial review is an extremely welcome decision."

ARUN JAITLEY, Union Minister

If a victory is told in detail, one can no longer distinguish it from a defeat. **Jean-Paul Sartre**

IN PERSPECTIVE

Protect culture to boost exports, jobs

India's tradition of festivals and rituals create demand for a variety of goods and creative skills.

Sudhansu R Das

India is a treasure trove of micro-economic activities that derive strength from our culture and traditions. Over decades, the country has not put any conscious effort into protecting and preserving these traditions which, in the past, created demand for a wide range of products. The amazing diversity of small economic activities embedded in our culture not only builds a self-sustaining society, but it adds high value to organic and inorganic materials.

Indians buy nearly 40 tonnes of gold ornaments every year on Akshaya Tritiya day. As per Hindu belief, Akshaya Tritiya is the most auspicious day to buy gold, start house construction, buy new property and to get married. And that belief creates demand for gold ornaments that let artisans hone their skills to build a booming gems and jewellery sector.

Today, the sector contributes 7.06% of India's GDP. India exported gems and jewellery worth \$32.71 billion during 2017-18, which constitutes 15.71% of India's merchandise exports. According to Pramod Agrawal, chairman of the Gems Jewellery Promotion Council (GJEPC), "We are a \$41 billion industry and employ five million people. By 2022, we aim to raise that figure to seven million people."

Indians buy nearly 740 tonnes of gold ornaments per annum. The GJEPC, while promoting investment, skills and technology, should necessarily preserve the exclusiveness – the bewitching artistry of Indian jewellery. With sophisticated machines and cheap labour force, China mass-reproduces jewellery of different regions with stylisation. But the machines cannot create the artistry that comes from age-old skill and imagination. The future of Indian jewellery depends on the survival of this original artistry.

Durga puja and Ganesh puja across the country create jobs for thousands of clayidol makers belonging to Hindu and Muslim communities. More than one lakh Ganesh idols are made in Mumbai and Hyderabad alone. Like Diwali in the north, Durga puja in eastern India boosts the domestic market with sale of a wide range of products.

Ancient Cuttack city celebrates Ganesh puja, Saraswati puja, Kali puja, Durga puja, Kartikeswar puja, Lakshmi puja, Vishwakarma puja, etc. The artisans make episodes from the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and the Puranas, with interesting details. They instil finer human emotions: love, anger, pathos, pity and anxiety into the idols with intricate detail. Decades ago, the clayidols were made with such artistry that

godliness could truly be invested in them. Low income and lack of social recognition let the craft-artisans switch over to other professions. The puja committees of the city should spend more on quality clay work.

Some 800 years ago, the king of Puri settled some Muslim artisans in Pipili village to make applique umbrellas, banners, flags and canopies for the rituals at the Lord Jagannatha temple. Today, the applique work is popular in the domestic market, but a few items, such as the garden umbrella, wall hangings and purses, etc., are even exported.

Lack of social recognition, abysmal ignorance about the craft's artistry among officials and low wages threaten the applique tradition. Quality applique works are no longer seen on the chariots, banners, umbrellas and fans during the Rath Yatra in Puri. The Jagannatha culture of Odisha also started the famous Odissi patta chitra, palm leaf carvings, stone carvings and Solapit work.

Similarly, the Sufi culture of Kashmir inspired rich craft traditions like papier mache, wood carvings, carpet weaving, etc. Genuine Kashmiri carpets made by skilled weavers sell at high prices in the global craft bazaar. Long unrest, social apathy, ignorance, loss of aesthetic sense among buyers and entry of cheaper quality products in the market threaten original handicrafts traditions of Kashmir. Craft-making, weaving, tourism, horticulture and spices once flourished amid Hindu-Sufi-Muslim culture in the Valley. But everything fell apart when Kashmir slipped into the mono-culture trap in the 1980s and lost much of its composite culture.

Harvest festivals Onam, Pongal, Baisakhi, Raja Sankranti, Makar Sankranti, Gudi Padwa, Rongali Bihu and Nua Khai, etc., create demand for clothes, religious artefacts, ornaments, houses, consumer goods and varieties of eatables that activate money circulation in the economy. The majority of metal craft artisans of Moradabad belong to the Muslim community and make idols of gods, goddesses, religious artefacts, decorative and utility items.

Moradabad exports metal craft worth Rs 3,000 crore to the US, Britain, Germany, European countries, Canada and West Asia. The city can generate more employment and foreign currency if the government ensures transparency in raw material trade, prevents dumping of Chinese items, protects the skill and artistry of metal craft by giving more wage and social recognition to genuine artisans.

Indian creative art skills can boost export and employment if good governance removes corruption, cartels and middlemen from the supply chain. There is a need to shield Indian artisans from the unscrupulous trade practices in the name of globalisation. Traditional Indian culture inspires a gamut of micro economic activities and fosters peace, prosperity and communal harmony.

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 years ago: September 27, 1968

Centre allots more milo and wheat to State

The Central government has allotted 30,000 tonnes of wheat to Mysore State for October – an increase of 5,000 tonnes. This includes the quota for flour mills.

B Vittal Das Shetty, Minister

ter of State for Food and Civil Supplies, told pressmen in Bangalore that the Centre had also allotted 10,000 tonnes of milo for the same period.

Shetty returned to the city from Delhi on Thursday after attending the Chief Minister's & Food Ministers' Conference.

25 years ago: September 27, 1993

UN forces kill 70 Somalis

Nairobi, Sept 26. About 70 Somalis were killed and six UN soldiers wounded in the Somali capital Mogadishu in a two-hour fighting between Somali gunmen and UN forces after the shooting

down of a US helicopter, Xinhua news agency reported.

The US helicopter was presumed to have been shot down by fighters of the strongest Somali faction leader Mohamed Farah Aidid. Three US soldiers were killed and two others wounded in crash.