

COMMENT

SONIA GANDHI KNOWS BEST

MEGALOMANIA CAN WREAK havoc and leave in its wake unimaginable wreckage. This one-liner may encapsulate Indira Gandhi's fall from grace when she declared Emergency in June 1975 and compromised grievously all the state institutions.

There was an authoritarian streak in her that had virulently surfaced first in the 50s when she, as Congress President, sought the overthrow of the most popular, democratically elected, Nambudiripad government of Kerala, and on her "advice", the then Prime Minister, Pt Nehru, had obliged. No legalese, no casuistry in the name of the Constitution, could suffice to cleanse this move of its patent malafides. Honestly speaking, it was ultra vires of the spirit of the Constitution. But the overthrow was fobbed off as "preserving law and order".

Uttar Pradesh (UP) may not be the best administered state. Economically, educationally, and industrially it remains among the most backward states of India, part of the inglorious combine deservedly called BIMARU. But Mulayam Singh Yadav may not be the worst of the Chief Ministers. That he is the bete noire of the Congress is quite another matter. But that gives Sonia Gandhi, another Congress President, no carte blanche to do as she pleases and conspire to overthrow his government. Yes, it would be nothing less than overthrow.

The euphemisms like 'removal', 'President's Rule', 'legislature in suspended animation', 'mid-term elections', etc., will fail to provide even the skimpiest fig leaf needed on such ignoble occasions bearing witness to the egregious violation of the Constitutional order and a brutal assault on the democratic protocol.

That there is law and order problem in UP which has stirred Sonia Gandhi is a big lie. Before anyone else she knows it only too well. That Mulayam has proved too slippery an eel, not amenable to her designs and dispensations, is too obvious a fact to need elaboration. But she must be warned against any precipitous and peremptory resort to constitutional mayhem. She must be reminded that Congress is only a major component of the UPA government in New Delhi. Congress presuming a mandate solely in its own rights, is insufferably obscene hubris and willful detachment from the reality calculus of a government composed of many parties.

Sonia Gandhi must be dreaming that she can revive the Congress fortunes in UP by this maneuver. Whoever has fed her this advice is living in the fool's paradise. Indira Gandhi too was given advice that she liked, but nothing unpleasant or disagreeable. That proved her undoing.

Had Sonia Gandhi really been concerned over law and order, there were many candidates for dismissal and dissolution. Why not Modi's Gujarat? She would be alone in the world, except for the Atals and Advanis, to believe that things are normal in Gujarat in terms of law and order. Did it ever prick her

conscience that total failure of the "Modi estate" called for New Delhi's intervention long ago?

And, why have she, Congress, and UPA opted for total blindness and paralysis vis-a-vis the Gujarat carnage that took a toll of over 2000 lives and rendered over 100,000 innocent citizens into homeless refugees overnight, for ever? Eloquent inaction in the case of Gujarat bared her pretensions, and Congress posturings to universal condemnation, finding them , to their surprise, as collaborators and bed-fellows of theo-terrorists.

No reprise of Indira will be tolerated even by UP. ~~████████~~