

Congress suffers setback over Rahul Gandhi's stand on women's bill

Agency
New Delhi, July 19,

Asking the BJP to get Women's Reservation Bill passed in the monsoon session of Parliament has boomeranged on the Congress. Agreeing to the Congress' demand, the BJP has clubbed the long-pending bill with those on triple talaq and nikah halala. While the principal opposition party is yet to find a concrete reply to this, it finds itself at the receiving end for appointing only seven women in the 51-member Congress Working Committee.

On July 16, Congress president Rahul Gandhi wrote a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him to get the Women's Reservation Bill passed by Parliament.

The monsoon session of Parliament started today (July 18) and will get over on August 10.

Rahul tweeted, "Our PM says he's a crusader for women's empowerment. (It is) time for him to rise above party politics, walk his talk and have the Women's Reservation Bill passed by Parliament. The Congress offers him its unconditional support."

In his letter to the prime minister, Rahul Gandhi offered his party's unconditional support to the bill and said the time has come for a change, and for women to take their rightful place in state legislatures and Parliament.

Rahul also asked Modi to ensure that the bill gets passed in the ongoing session itself so that women can participate "more meaningfully" in the state elections later this year and in the Lok Sabha polls next year.

Rahul Gandhi said the Women's Reservation Bill, which was passed by the

Rajya Sabha on March 9, 2010, has been blocked in the Lok Sabha on one pretext or the other for more than eight years. He claimed that the Congress has been unwavering in its commitment to the bill and attacked the BJP for not showing the same commitment.

He alleged that BJP appeared to have had second thoughts despite this was one of its key promises in its 2014 manifesto. The Centre sought to turn the tables on the Congress by asking it to support the government in the passage of bills on instant triple talaq and nikah halala along with the one on women's reservation.

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad yesterday (July 17) wrote back to Rahul Gandhi suggesting that the Congress and the BJP join hands to get the three bills, as well as the

measure on providing constitutional status to the National Commission on Backward classes, passed in Parliament.

As if this was not enough, the Congress is being pulled up for appointing only seven women including Rahul's mother Sonia Gandhi in the new 51-member Congress Working Committee which was declared yesterday.

On the one hand, Rahul Gandhi demanded passage of the women's reservation bill which provides for 33 per cent reservation in Parliament and state assemblies, on the other hand, he appointed just 13 per cent women in the highest decision-making body of his party.

One Priti Gandhi, with a verified handle @MrsGandhi, tweeted, "Same Rahul Gandhi who has been shouting on top of his voice about women

empowerment has selected just seven women to be in the 51-member Congress Working Committee. And if you exclude Sonia Gandhi, that makes it six. What percentage is that?"

Rahul Gandhi may have thought that he had timed the letter to PM Modi on Women's Reservation Bill quite well - just two days before the commencement of Parliament session. However, the BJP's response seeking to club it with two other women-specific bills has taken the wind out of the Congress' sails.

Moreover, the timing of the announcement of the CWC was not tuned with Rahul's letter to the prime minister.

The net result has been that the Congress has been shorn of its attempt to take a moral high ground on the Women's Reservation Bill, at least for now.

Building for North Eastern Cultural and Information Centre in Delhi

PIB
New Delhi, July 19,

A plot of land measuring 5341.75 sqm. (1.32 acres) has been acquired from DDA for the purpose of building a North Eastern Cultural and Information Centre in Delhi. The CPWD have been entrusted to take up architectural consultancy and construction of the building. North Eastern Council (NEC) have allocated fund for starting construction work.

The proposed activities of the Centre include showcasing of history, culture, rich heritage, festivals and cuisine of the eight States in the North

East; establishing facilities for promotion of tourism; and to create Common Facility Centre, library, Knowledge and Resource Centre in the National Capital.

This Centre would facilitate dissemination of knowledge about the rich cultural heritage of the North East.

This information was provided by the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Development of North-Eastern Region (DoNER), MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh in written reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha today..

2nd Day Bandh against VC Pandey



OUR TROUBLES - FROM BUDDHIST POINT OF VIEW



By Thangjam Sanjoo Singh

Some quotations in this article are sayings of the great philosophers, free thinkers, scientists, psychologists, politicians and poets and some other publications, too. Their names are given under each quotations. There are also many other statements in this article where references are not given. They are extracted by me.

A difficult situation can be handled in two ways: We can either do something to change it or face it. If we can do something, then why worry and get upset over it - just change it. If there is nothing we can do, again, why worry and get upset over it? Things will not get better with anger and worry.

-Shantideva

Life is continuous journey beset with problems. As long as we live in this world, problems and troubles will always be a part and parcel of human experience. On some occasions, we may be blessed with gain, fame, praise or happiness; and we may also face the unfavorable situations of loss, ill-fame, blame and pain. Live swings like a pendulum. One moment, it swings towards favorable conditions which we receive so heartily; at another moment, it swings towards unfavorable conditions which we so desperately seek to avoid.

Instead of understanding worldly conditions, as what they really are, people sometimes have the tendency to magnify their troubles. This is similar to saying 'making a mountain out of molehill.' When people lose someone or something they love, they feel that they will never be able to be happy again. When disturbed and harassed by people who are insensitive to their needs, they feel they have never before been so harshly treated. And they carry that hurt in their minds, clinging to the pain needlessly and continuing to suffer with those thoughts. Would it be better to let go of such thoughts and realize that since all conditioned things must one day come to an end, so the unfavorable situations they are experiencing will also pass away?

We should understand that there is a way out of the suffering and problems we face in this life. None is hopelessly condemned to eternal misery, unless he/she himself/ herself allows to be it so. It is important to realize that all conditioned phenomena including suffering and all problems, arise out of causes and that nothing can arise by way of independent causes. Having realized this, we can put an end to each and every form of suffering by discovering the root causes of our problems.

We should not be disheartened when faced with problems but instead act wisely in overcoming them. No worldly-minded person can ever be free from problems. Hence, it is not so much who experiences problems that marks the difference between a wise and an unwise person but the manner in which he/she faces them.

Socrates, whose wife was reputed to be hot-tempered would always find fault with him and used to nag him almost daily. One day, when she had finished all what she had to say, Socrates complimented her saying that compared to previous occasions, she had on that particular day shown some improvement in her diction and style of speech.

This shows how a wise person should face false accusation and blame in a humorous way.

Pandit Nehru once said: 'We have to face problems and try to solve them. We have to face them, certainly, on an aspirational background; but not run away from them in the name of spiritualism.'

Ella Willcox gives her viewpoint on smiling one's way out of troubles.

*It's easy enough to be pleasant;
When life flows like a song,
But the man worthwhile,
Is the one who can smile?
When things go dead wrong.
For the test of the heart is trouble
And will always come with the years,
And the smile that is worth
The praises of earth,
Is the smile that shines through the tears.'*

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore, a well-known Indian poet, explains in a prayer, the approach to face problems without harboring fear of worry.

*'Let me not pray to be sheltered from dangers,
But be fearless in facing them.
Let me not beg for the stilling of my pain,
But for the heart to conquer it.
Let me not crave in anxious fear to be saved,
But give to the patience to win my freedom.
Something unpleasant happens, say, our favorite thing or possession is lost or is accidentally broken. There are two ways of reacting to the loss and damage. We can either choose to brood over it, by blaming either ourselves or others. Or we can pass it off by saying 'the thing is gone. It is bad enough to have lost it, but why should we allow it to make us unhappy to suffer to the loss and damage?' It would be useful to trace back to the causes that had led to the breakage and loss so as to avoid such an occurrence in the future. We can also think about how the loss can be replaced, or how to avert whatever problems that may arise from the loss. If the loss is of real consequence to others, we may even start to do something else to take our mind from the incident, since it is in the nature of compounded things that such occurrence happen. Should an unfortunate thing happen and if it is beyond our control, then with the support of our understanding of the nature of life, we must have the courage to face it.*

In other words, adopt a positive frame of mind when faced with such problems, rather than let it dwell on negative states. If unhappiness should arise due to negative frame of mind it is really our doing or seeking.

According to Buddha, 'Mind is the forerunner of all states. Mind is chief; mind-made are these states.' The Buddha also taught that our sorrows are caused by our own actions and arise from our own ignorance. He showed us how to remove sorrow, but we ourselves must work to gain happiness.

The writer is a lay Buddhist and a vocalist of a Rock band called 'No Name'