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Hijab Controversy Reaches Supreme Court



- Controversy over 'Kashmir Files' film
- International day against Islamophobia
- Ceasefire declared in Yemen for Ramzan
- China's effort to spread its influence in Arab countries

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Summary

The horrific atrocities unleashed on Kashmiri Pandits in 1990 have been unravelled in the popular movie 'The Kashmir Files' by its director Vivek Agnihotri. When lakhs of Kashmiri Pandits had to leave behind all their assets in the Valley and take refuge in their own country's refugee camps in order to save their lives, there was little coverage in media except some newspapers reports since the media had limited resources and the private TV channels were yet to be launched. Hence majority of the people in the country remained ignorant of this gruesome truth. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi correctly said, it is through this film that the real truth is presented before the people of the country after 32 years. The sad part is that along with the leaders of Congress and other pseudo-secular parties, Muslim leaders and their organisations are also trying to ensure that this disgusting and painful truth should not be presented before people. Hence they are making this misleading propaganda that the Muslims of Kashmir Valley are also victims of terrorism. But the question that comes here is that after the rise of terrorism, how many Muslim families were forced to flee the Valley to save their lives? This is a question which no pseudo-secular party or their leaders want to answer.

There is no resolution in sight for the controversy erupted over the ban imposed on hijab in Karnataka schools. The Karnataka High Court has refused to lift the ban imposed on hijab in educational institutions. The court said that hijab is not an essential part of Islam. This decision has not gone down well with the Islamic extremists in the country. This is the reason why Muslims not only held huge protests in different parts of the country but also organised a public strike as well. The most interesting thing is that in majority of the Muslim countries in the world, there are restrictions on hijab and burqa even today. Saudi Arabia is the only country where the purdah system is strictly enforced. However, after Mohammad bin Salman assumed power, women in Saudi also received major relief from the harsh purdah system in the country.

Recently, celebrations were held in different parts of the country on the completion of 200 years of Urdu press in the country. It cannot be denied that the number of Urdu readers is declining day by day. Though the extremists are blaming the government for this, the truth is that the new generation of Muslims are more interested in getting modern education than the traditional Urdu and Arabic education. During these celebrations, the contributions of non-Muslim journalists have been totally ignored.

After coming to power in Afghanistan, Taliban have started forcibly implementing the Shariah law in the country. The government employees have to compulsorily grow beard, offer namaz five times a day and wear Islamic dress. The door to education has been completely closed for students. Harsh restrictions have been imposed on women from doing any job or on travelling. The Taliban had imposed such Shariah rules in the past also, when they came to power in Afghanistan a few decades ago. That time they destroyed the world famous Bamiyan Buddha statues using cannon fire. The Hindu and Buddha relics in Kabul library were also selectively destroyed.

Hijab controversy reaches Supreme Court



The controversy that erupted a few months ago over the entry of students wearing hijab on the premises of colleges in Karnataka is showing no signs of abating. The Karnataka High Court has refused to lift the ban imposed on hijab by stating that it is not an integral part of Islam. Majority of Muslim institutions have refused to accept this decision of the high court and have knocked at the door of Supreme Court. These people want an immediate hearing in the case which the Supreme Court has refused to accept. For the past few months, this issue has been covered in full swing in Urdu newspapers of the country.

Hamara Samaj (March 16) has published this news as its main story like other newspapers and it has been headlined, 'Karnataka High Court decision on Hijab' and 'Hijab not allowed in schools.' The high court division bench, while delivering its judgment, said that women's hijab is not an integral part of Islam.'

Inquilab (March 16) has given headlines like, 'Unexpected verdict of Karnataka High Court on hijab,' 'Deep

discontent among Muslims in the country,' 'Petitioners decide to approach Supreme Court,' 'Hijab-wearing students expelled from exam centre,' 'Muslims react on social media,' 'We know right from the beginning that we will not get justice,' and 'Muslim leaders and organisations describe the decision on hijab as unfortunate.'

Etemaad (March 16) has given headlines, 'High court cancels all petitions on hijab,' and 'Restrictions continue in educational institutions.'

Aurangabad Times (March 16) has its headlines, 'Decision of high court not acceptable under any circumstance,' and 'Frustrated with the verdict, 35 students boycott exams.'

Salar (March 16) has its headline, 'Decision of high court questioned in Supreme Court.'

Mumbai Urdu News (March 16) has its headline, 'Total hartal in Karnataka against decision of high court'.

Siasat (March 29) has given headlines, 'Courts should not decide what is obligatory and what is not in any religion,' and 'Special session of Muslim

Personal Law Board to review the situation.’

Salar (March 28) has its headlines, ‘Students should be allowed to attend classes wearing hijab till the verdict of Supreme Court comes,’ and ‘Muslim Personal Law Board to fight legal battle in courts.’

Siasat (March 21) has given headlines, ‘Threat to kill the judges of Karnataka High Court who delivered the verdict in hijab case’ and ‘Government announces ‘Y’ category security’. Two persons were arrested in this connection in Tamil Nadu.

Majority of Urdu newspapers criticised the verdict of Karnataka High Court in their editorials.

Hamara Samaj (March 16) reports that the head of Darul Uloom Deoband, Maulana Mufti Abul Qasim Nomani had said they would not accept the verdict of Karnataka High Court under any circumstance. The statement of the court that hijab is not an integral part of Islam is totally wrong. Quran has given directions to women to wear purdah. He has directed the Muslim organisations in the country that they question this decision in the Supreme Court. He said that India is a democratic country. No organisation has the right to form a law which is against another religion or tradition. The chairman of the education board of Jamiat Ulema Mufti Mohammad Affan Mansoorpuri said that the judges who delivered this judgment may not have read Quran. Hence Muslims will not accept this. National president of All India Milli Council Maulana Muhammad Abdullah Mugase said the decision was unconstitutional and is an attack against the democratic and religious rights of Muslims. Hence we will question this in the Supreme Court.

Siasat (March 18) reports that the president of All India Peace Party Dr Ayoobhas described the verdict as an attack on the constitutional and religious rights of Muslims. He alleged that the RSS wants to keep Muslim girls away from education by raising the hijab issue. Former Chief

Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Mehbooba Mufti has described it as a disappointing verdict. President of All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, Asaduddin Owaisi said the courts and governments have no right to interfere in the religious affairs of Muslims. He said when it was decided to give permission for hijab and Sikh turban in Ireland, the Modi government welcomed it. He accused the BJP of adopting a double standard.

Etemaad (March 16) reports that the Campus Front of India, the students wing of Popular Front of India, has said the high court is implementing the agenda of BJP. The Education Minister of Karnataka said some people are misleading the students. We will try to make them understand. Education Minister D C Nagesh said girls will not be allowed to wear hijab during examination.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 25) states that while holding a protest march against this decision, the students of Jamia Milia Islamia and Aligarh Muslim University raised slogans against BJP and said they would not accept this decision of the high court under any circumstance.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 24) reports that Dr Batul Hamid, Principal of a Law College situated in Virar in Maharashtra, had to resign from her post due to her hijab. She is linked to Dawoodi Bohra community. She said she was being harassed due to her hijab and hence she had to resign from her post.

Hamara Samaj (March 16) in its editorial has alleged that the BJP has taken the help of hijab ban issue to win the Assembly elections in five states. The newspaper said the government is making deliberate efforts to keep Muslims away from Islam.

Etemaad (March 16) in its editorial, while condemning the decision, said Muslim students have to abandon their education due to the verdict. This is because they are not willing to leave their hijab. The court did not consider the fact that due to its decision the future of thousands of Muslim students has become

bleak. The courts in the country have no right to interfere in the Shariah issues of Muslims. The Muslims need to understand one thing that they are unlikely to get justice from the courts. They should not ignore the decisions right from Shah Bano case to Babri Masjid case and the hijab issue and Muslims should get united and fight for their rights.

Salar (March 17) in its editorial said the courts have nothing to do with the sentiments of Muslims. For example, the decisions that came in Shah Bano case, Babri Masjid case and Triple Talaq case cannot be ignored. Muslims should not keep hope for justice from the courts in matters of their religion and Shariah. Muslim organisations and scholars should

remember that whenever Muslims went to court over Shariah and religious issues, they always got disappointment.

Avadhnama (March 17) in its editorial criticised the decision of the high court and said that Allah through Quran has dictated purdah as mandatory for Muslim women. However, Muslims should work in a peaceful manner and should not create a situation where mischievous elements would be able to fuel riots.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 16) in its editorial, while criticising the decision, said that Muslims should not hope for justice from the Supreme Court.

Inquilab also in its March 16 editorial described the decision as disappointing. ■

Bicentenary celebrations of Urdu Press



The bicentenary celebrations of Urdu Press were organised in different states in the country. The preparations for celebrating the event started almost a year ago. It is being said that the first newspaper in Urdu, Jam-i-Jahan-Numa started its publication in Kolkata in 1822.

Inquilab (March 31) reports that a function was organised at India Islamic Cultural Centre in New Delhi on March 30 on the occasion of the completion of 200 years of Urdu Press. Presiding over the function, former Vice-President Hamid Ansari said that Urdu is not limited to India or Pakistan, but is an international

language. On this occasion, a documentary on the 200-year history of Urdu press was also shown and many journalists were also given awards. Professor Akhtarul Waze, in his inaugural address, threw some light on the various aspects of the history of Urdu press.

Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said during the First War of Independence in 1857, the editor of 'Delhi Urdu Akhbar' Maulavi Mohammad Baki was shot dead by the British for extending support to freedom fighters. He said that the interesting thing is that the first Urdu newspaper was published from Kolkata not

by some Muslim but by Pandit Harihar Datta. Before that, in 1794, Tipu Sultan had also published an Urdu newspaper, and it was known as 'Fauji Akhbar.' In order to publish this newspaper, he had also established a special press in his capital Srirangapatna. Azad said that if Urdu is getting less popular as a language then we are also responsible for it.

Former Vice-President Hamid Ansari said the number of people who speak Urdu is going down in every Census. He blamed the policies of different governments for this situation. He said that efforts should be taken right from the beginning for education in Urdu. All Urdu newspapers in the country published special pages in this connection in which the different stages of the development of Urdu press has been presented. On this occasion, Congress leader and former MP Meem Afzal said that during the time of Partition, there were 540 Urdu newspapers. Among them, 70 were being published from the present-day Pakistan, whereas 470 newspapers were left in India. He said that Urdu suffered a huge setback since the Urdu language got associated with Muslims.

Inquilab (March 28) states that a meeting was also organised in Delhi Press Club on Urdu press which was presided over by journalist Umakant Lakhera. The main speaker at the event was the general secretary of press club Vinay Kumar. On this occasion, journalist Shahid Siddiqui said the freedom struggle of Hindustan was done through Urdu and Urdu had played an important role in uniting Bharat. Many Urdu journalists were tortured by the British government. The Urdu newspapers of Maulana Azad, Al Hilal and Al Balagh, had exposed the atrocities of British. Both the newspapers were sealed due to this.

Many speakers during their speeches accepted that the number of Urdu readers is declining fast and a large number of Urdu newspapers have been closed down recently. He blamed the policy of the government towards Urdu for this situation.

Inquilab (March 28) reports that a function was organised in Patna as well on the occasion of the bicentenary of Urdu press on behalf of Urdu Media Forum. Speaking on this occasion, Bihar's minister for rural development Shraavan Kumar said that Urdu newspapers played a major role in the rebuilding of the country. The Urdu newspapers have a direct relationship with the society. Education minister of Bihar Vijay Chowdhury said that nowadays it is difficult to bring out an Urdu newspaper. This is because there is a huge decline in the number of Urdu readers.

Roznama Sahara (March 27) reports that a meeting was held in Prayagraj as well on the present condition of Urdu, presiding on which the head of the department of Arabic-Persian in Allahabad University, Professor Saleha Rasheed, elaborately highlighted the different aspects of Urdu press.

Comment: It is actually a regrettable situation that a handful of people hold sway over Urdu and Urdu journalism. They have been using Urdu for the past several decades to market their own image. It is with this aim that they have linked Urdu with a particular tradition and religion. This has definitely given a huge setback to the popularity of Urdu. The followers of a particular religion have total monopoly on the functions being organised across the country on the occasion of the completion of 200 years of Urdu press. However, the truth is that all sects and religions in India played a major role in making Urdu popular. The most awkward thing is that at the functions being organised on the completion of 200 years of Urdu press, the contributions of Hindus, Sikhs and Christians have totally been ignored. Hindus had made special contributions to Urdu journalism in Delhi and Punjab. However, in these functions, no discussions were held about the contributions of Banke Dayal, the editor of Paisa Akhbar; Gyani Pindi Das, editor of Swaraj newspaper; Lala Lajpat Rai, editor of Vande Mataram; Mahashay Krishna, founder of Pratap; Kushal Chand Khursand, founder of Milap;

Pritam Ziyai, editor of Vir Bharat; Nanak Chand Naz, editor of Roznama Prabhat; Divan Singh Maftoon, editor of Riyasat; Sardar Jagat Singh, founder of Rahnuma-e-Talim; Gopinath Aman, editor of Sansar newspaper; Lala Desh Dandhu Gupta,

editor of Tej newspaper; and Jamana Das Akhtar, editor of Savera newspaper. Why in the eyes of the self-appointed flagbearers of Urdu, these journalists did not deserve any mention for their contributions to Urdu journalism? ■

Controversy over film ‘Kashmir Files’



Vivek Agnihotri-directed film ‘The Kashmir Files’ is in headlines nowadays. BJP and its supporting organisations claim that the film for the first time presents before the people of the country the issue of torture and brutal killings of Kashmiri Pandit community by the Islamic terrorists in 1990. However, pseudo-secular parties and Muslim organisations claim that the Sangh Parivar and the government have been using this issue to get the votes of majority community.

Inquilab (March 24) reports that in the Rajya Sabha, while replying to a question, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman alleged that largescale atrocities were unleashed on Kashmiri Pandits on January 29, 1989 when the National Conference’s Farooq Abdullah was the Chief Minister of Kashmir with Congress support. She said that Jagmohan was made the Governor of the state in 1990. She said that after the abrogation of

Article 370 of the Constitution, a new era of development has started in Kashmir.

Inquilab (March 29) reports that a huge ruckus took place in Bihar Assembly over distribution of free tickets to the MLAs to watch the film ‘The Kashmir Files’ due to which the session had to be suspended.

Inquilab (March 24) reports that the chairman of Jammu and Kashmir People’s Conference Sajjad Lone claimed that the film was based on imagination and it has nothing to do with facts. Compared to Kashmiri Pandits, Kashmiri Muslims had to suffer 50 times more damages. He said that in order to take political advantage, the ruling party is dreaming of appointing Vivek Agnihotri to the Rajya Sabha. The same way it has used Anupam Kher for political purposes. He said that it cannot be denied that excesses were committed against Kashmiri Pandits.



Inquilab (March 21) reports that a number of Opposition leaders have alleged that the BJP, instead of healing the wounds of Kashmiri Pandits, is rubbing salt on them in order to reap political benefits and is unleashing an atmosphere of hate against Muslims under the guise of this film. Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that the pracharaks are taking advantage of the divide and rule policy. Kashmir Files is promoting the atmosphere of hate. The information given in the film are all wrong and it was presented by twisting the facts. Congress MP Shashi Tharoor said there is no doubt that Kashmiri Pandits had to suffer a lot but by portraying Kashmiri Muslims in a wrong manner, the Kashmiri Pandits will not get any benefits. This will only help grow hatred. Every Kashmiri needs justice. Today there is a need to heal the wounds. Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said that whatever had happened in Kashmir, the Pakistan and terrorists were responsible for it and those affected were Kashmiri Pandits, Kashmiri Muslims and Dogras. The political parties are provoking people in the name of religion.

Samajwadi Party MP Dr S D Hasan demanded that the film should be banned immediately. This is because the atmosphere in the country is getting vitiated due to the film. He said that if a film could be made on the killings of Kashmiri Pandits, then why can't films be created on the anti-Muslim Gujarat riots, Moradabad and Bhagalpur riots.? What is

necessary is to promote communal harmony and rehabilitate Kashmiri Pandits. He said that the government has deliberately made this film tax-free. This is because they want Hindus and Muslims to fight each other.

Roznama Sahara (March 25) in its editorial, described the 'The Kashmir Files' as a propaganda film and said that only aim of this film is to highlight the tragedy and collect money. It is a conspiracy to trap the Hindustani society in an atmosphere of hate, murder and savagery. He alleged that the Prime Minister and all the BJP-ruled governments are involved in a campaign to create an atmosphere of hatred against a particular community. This is an open mockery of the Constitution. It is clear what kind of atmosphere the government wants to create in this country from the manner in which the BJP-ruled states had given passes and holidays to police and administrative personnel to watch the film. Is it not taking the help of 'Kashmir Files' to bury the truth about Gujarat?

Inquilab (March 18) reports that since cinema halls are closed in Jammu and Kashmir, the film could not be screened so far in the state. However, a debate is raging in social media. The director of the film, Vivek Agnihotri, claimed that the film portrays the incidents of 1990 as it is, which the Kashmiri Pandits had to face at that time. The film sincerely portrays the incidents of massacre of Kashmiri Pandits. Human rights activist Riyaz Khader said that the first person who was killed when terrorism started in Kashmir Valley was a Muslim named Yusuf Halwai and he was an activist of National Conference. Hundreds of Muslims have been killed in this terrorism but there is no mention of them in the film. He alleged that the film is provoking the sentiments of people with the purpose of making money and has been made in order to achieve a particular political target.

Avadhnama (March 17) has published a statement of the president of Samajwadi Party, Akhilesh Yadav, in which he has demanded that a film shall be



made on Lekhimpur Kheri incident as well so that people would get to know the truth.

Hamara Samaj (March 18) has published an article written by A Rahman in which it has been alleged that the BJP government is resorting to anti-Muslim campaign in order to implement the basic agenda of RSS. This film is a part of this campaign.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 22) in its editorial said the film has been made to make money. However, politicians are using this film in order to collect votes. But the Kashmiri Pandits will not benefit from this. What is surprising is that Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself has taken the responsibility for giving publicity to this film and he had claimed that the true history of Kashmir has been presented before the people after 32 years. The BJP-ruled state governments have made this film tax-free. Not only this, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma had ordered that every government employee should take a leave and watch the film 'Kashmir Files.' Meanwhile, Shiv Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut in the party's mouthpiece 'Saamna' said that 'Kashmir Files' is an agenda for the forthcoming elections and hence the Prime Minister has happily become its publicist. According to Raut, it is shameful that Kashmiri Pandits are still staying in refugee camps in their own country. The newspaper supported the demand that the entire income from this

film should be used for the rehabilitation of Kashmiri Pandits.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 21) has published a news on its front page headlined, 'Kashmir Files continue to hurt the wounds of Muslims' and 'The entire team of Kashmiri Files film including its director meet Yogi and Modi.' The newspaper alleged that the film has presented a one-sided view in which Muslims have been accused of committing the killings and this increased the animosity between Hindus and Muslims.

Mumbai Urdu News in its March 17 issue has published the statement of chief of All India United Democratic Front, Badruddin Ajmal, in which he had demanded that a ban should be imposed on the film. This is because it is raising communal tension.

Siasat (March 27) has accused the BJP of playing politics in the name of Kashmiri Pandits in order to collect their votes and creating communal tension in the society. The people of the country are being provoked against the Muslims. The newspaper claimed that when the fleeing of Kashmiri Pandits took place, it was BJP-supported V P Singh government that was at the Centre. Hence the BJP is responsible for the torture of Kashmiri Pandits.

Inquilab (March 20) reports that a Muslim organisation, SDPI, has also demanded a ban on 'Kashmir Files.' They also held a demonstration at Jantar Mantar. The issue also carried a statement of Omar Abdullah where he described 'Kashmir Files' as a bunch of lies and alleged that the BJP is using the fleeing of Kashmiri Pandits as a political weapon and mischievous elements are shouting provocative slogans against Muslims in cinema halls and damaging the atmosphere in the country.

Roznama Sahara (March 26) said that after watching the film, a few people in Kushinagar in Uttar Pradesh became so emotional that as soon as they stepped outside the cinema hall, they attacked a shop owned by a Muslim. An IAS officer

in Madhya Pradesh, Niyaz Khan, has also landed in trouble. He demanded that a film like Kashmir Files shall be made on the killings of Muslims in different parts of the country.

Inquilab in its March 27 edition has published a special page on Kashmir Files film in which it has supported the demand of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal that the film shall be put in YouTube so that it becomes totally free and people see

it in just one day. He told BJP leaders in the Assembly that some people are making crores of rupees in the name of Kashmiri Pandits and you people are just doing the job of pasting posters for them. He said that the film has depicted only lies and hence I cannot be a party to the film. The newspaper claimed that the ruling party is involved in giving publicity to the film in order to create an atmosphere against a particular religion in the country. ■

Muslim Rashtriya Manch to organise Iftaar and Eid Milan

Inquilab (March 28) reports that Muslim Rashtriya Manch, an organisation linked to Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, has directed all its activists to contact as many people as possible and associate them with the organisation. The Patron of the Manch, Indresh Kumar, in a meeting with the coordinators of all cells, said that more and more workers need to be associated with the Manch and in order to strengthen the unity, goodwill and brotherhood in the society and the country, Roza Iftaar and Eid Milan functions shall be organised in every corner of the country during the Holy Ramzan month, where the senior office-bearers of Sangh shall also be invited. The purpose of such Eid Milan and Roza Iftaar events is to bring together all classes and communities in the society so that an atmosphere of goodwill and brotherhood could be created among crores of people of the country during the holy month of Ramzan. He said that everyone who participates in the Iftaar would be holding a Tricolour in their hand which conveys the message that the way the Prophet Mohammad delivered the message of faith, love and peace to Muslims, the same should reach all sections of the society. After Roza Iftaar events, Eid Milan functions would also be organised across the country in which Sangh functionaries will actively take part.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 7) reports that RSS-linked organisation Muslim Rashtriya Manch has been running a nationwide campaign to allow Muslim women to offer namaz in mosques and idgahs

in the country. This apart, the Muslim Manch has also decided to launch a nationwide campaign to fix the marriage age of Muslim girls. It is to be noted that as per Islamic Shariah, there is no minimum age for a Muslim girl to get married. As per Shariah, a Muslim girl's nikah could be conducted at any age. However, it is deemed appropriate for her to attain puberty before maintaining relationship with her husband.

It is to be noted that the activists of Manch, under the leadership of its founder and senior leader of RSS Indresh Kumar, had organised a state-wide campaign in Uttar Pradesh to connect Muslim voters with BJP. During the mass contact programme with Muslims, the activists of Muslim Manch felt that the Muslim community in the country wants to get rid of its orthodox traditions. It started with the formulation of a law to get rid of the triple talaq system. Now the Manch has undertaken a nationwide awareness campaign to make Muslim women take part in namaz in mosques and idgahs. Till now, as per Islamic traditions, Muslim women were not able to take part in namaz along with men. For them, a separate system is in place to offer namaz.

Inquilab (March 22) reports that a discussion will be held at the forthcoming meeting of Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, the women's wing of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, in Jaipur on holding a campaign to raise the marriage age of Muslim girls from 18 years to 21 years.



According to the newspaper, a few months ago, the Central government had brought an amendment bill in Parliament on the minimum age for marriage, in which it has been proposed to raise the minimum age for marriage of girls from 18 years to 21 years. On pressure from Opposition MPs, the bill has been sent to the Select Committee of the Parliament. Prachar Pramukh of Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, Sunila Sohvani said that in this connection, the girls themselves should decide on it. We do not want to involve in this controversy whether the minimum age for nikah should be 18 years or 21 years.

Hamara Samaj (March 1) reports that in December last year, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani

had tabled a resolution in the Parliament to increase the minimum age for marriage of girls from 18 years to 21 years which has been sent to the Select Committee for discussion. Now, the RSS has decided that a mass contact programme be launched and present the fact that majority of the people in the society are in favour of increasing the minimum age for marriage. Rashtriya Sevika Samiti is against marriage of teens. Its Prachar Pramukh Sunila Sohvani said that women should marry only after becoming self-dependent. She said that they would organise a mass contact programme across the country in this connection. Senior BJP leader Vinay Sahasrabudhe has sought the opinion of people in this connection. ■

Controversy over implementing Uniform Civil Code



Inquilab (March 17) reports that after registering victory in the recently held

Assembly elections in Uttarakhand, Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhama has announced that necessary steps would be taken to implement Uniform Civil Code in the state. He said the BJP's election manifesto had promised the implementation of Uniform Civil Code. The Uttarakhand cabinet also passed a resolution seeking the implementation of Uniform Civil Code.

Salar (March 24) reports that Pushkar Singh Dhama said the government would form a committee comprising legal experts and intellectuals to prepare the Uniform Civil Code. We want a Uniform

Civil Code for every citizen staying in the country and applicable for all. It would include marriage, talaq, succession and inheritance of property.

Inquilab (March 27) reports that after Uttarakhand, voices seeking implementation of Uniform Civil Code are getting louder in Bihar now. BJP MLA Haribhushan Thakur said the Directive Principles of the Constitution contain the directions seeking implementation of a Uniform Civil Code. Its implementation is beneficial for all. He demanded that the Bihar cabinet should also immediately pass a resolution seeking the implementation of Uniform Civil Code and take necessary steps in this direction. The Rashtriya Janata Dal and Congress have opposed this demand of BJP and described it as a demand for dividing the country. The Opposition said this is an agenda of RSS and it would divide the society. Congress spokesperson Rajesh Rathore said only the Central government can implement the Uniform Civil Code. The state governments are deliberately creating this controversy. He asked Nitish Kumar to make his stand clear in this connection.

Senior leader of JD(U) Dr Khalid Anwar said some people are again seeking implementation of the Uniform Civil Code in society. Whenever the issue comes up, then communal elements makes it a Hindu-Muslim issue and try to create an atmosphere of hatred in the society. He said the intriguing thing is that the discussion to implement the Uniform Civil Code is going on for several years but the government has not presented even its format. There are hundreds of personal laws in this country. Even Adivasis and Christians have their own personal law. Hindus have different kinds of traditions. There are different kinds of cultures in this country. Now if it is implemented, it can create different kinds of problems. The people of this country do not like any kind of interference in their religion and culture. Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar had turned down this proposal right in the beginning itself. It is our clear opinion that interference in any

caste-creed, religion and personal law is against Indian Constitution. As per Article 5 of the Constitution, different Adivasis have got the consent to have their own personal law. If anybody makes any effort to interfere in the religion, faith and culture of anyone, then there would be strong reaction to it. If the government is serious on Uniform Civil Code, then it should first prepare a blueprint for it.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 28) reports that former Solicitor General of India Harish Salve had said that instead of the Uniform Civil Code, the government should take strong steps to provide justice to people as early as possible. This is because it takes generations to resolve each and every dispute in the courts. It is also very important to increase the number of judges in order to reduce the piling up of cases in the courts.

Inquilab (March 28) reports that a meeting of the Muslim Personal Law Board held in Lucknow discussed the aspects of the implementation of Uniform Civil Code. There were ideological differences among the members of Muslim Personal Law Board on the issue and a senior member Maulana Sajjad Nomani had even written a letter in this connection. The interesting thing is that no media persons were allowed to enter the Darul Uloom Nadwa, where this meeting took place, nor any press conference was organised in this connection. Later, a press release was issued in which it was stated that the issue of Uniform Civil Code was not limited to Muslims, and even other communities are also not prepared to accept the Uniform Civil Code. This meeting was presided over by the president of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Syed Rabbe Hasani Nadvi. The meeting decided that the board will make more active the sub-committees formed to discuss the different aspects of Uniform Civil Code and will keep only one account on social media to present its viewpoints so that no controversy erupts in this connection. Those who took part in the meeting include Maulana Arshad Madani, general secretary

of the board Khalid Saifullah Rahmani, Maulana Mohammad Sufian Qasmi, Maulana Khalid Rashid Firangi Mahali, Sayed Saudat Hussain Rahmani, Maulana Mustafa Rifayi, Maulana Umarain Rahmani, Maulana Anisul Rahman, Dr Qasim Rasool Ilyas, Kamal Farooqui, Masood Ahmad, Dr Asma Jehara and Nikhat Parveen.

Etemaad (March 24) in its editorial expressed concern that after Ram Mandir, Triple Talaq and Love Jihad, a discussion on implementing the Uniform Civil Code has intensified in the country. Article 25 of the Constitution has given every citizen the freedom to follow any religion or rituals associated with it without any hindrance. The intention to implement Uniform Civil Code in the country had been unravelled many times in the past. This is not in the interest of the country. Recently, the Chief Minister of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami, has once again fuelled fire to this controversy. Those who talk about Uniform Civil Code should not forget that Adivasis, Dalits, Hindu, Muslims, Sikh, Christians and people of Northeastern states would strongly oppose it. This issue is not linked just to Muslims, but is related to the religious freedom and rights of minorities guaranteed in the Constitution. The Sangh Parivar, for the past several decades, is doing politics with this issue. But so far they have not been able to tell what they intent to do with Uniform Civil Code. The question here is will the people of the country accept this?

HamaraSamaj (March 28) in its editorial said the BJP is deliberately reviving this controversy. The Indian Constitution, however, mentions about implementing a Uniform Civil Code but whether it can be implemented despite the Shariat laws on marriage, talaq, succession and adoption? The contention of Muslim Personal Law Board and other Muslim organisations that any effort in this direction would be setback to the unity of the country is correct. Hence every citizen in the country should unitedly oppose this. What is necessary is that the BJP leaders

should focus on solving issues like increasing unemployment, inflation and poverty instead of getting involved in controversies.

Comment: Goa is the only state in the country where during the Portuguese rule in 1867, a Uniform Civil Code was implemented. BJP has been regularly demanding implementation of a Uniform Civil Code. However, it is very difficult to implement it. As of now, every religion has its own law, based on which marriage, talaq and such things are decided. There are separate laws for Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Parsis. The BJP raised the issue of Uniform Civil Code for the first time in the 1989 general elections and included it in its election manifesto. Later, it included the same in the 2014 and 2019 election manifestos as well. From time to time, Supreme Court as well as different high courts have questioned the government about the implementation of Uniform Civil Code.

In this connection, the Supreme Court in 2019, while expressing its resentment, asked why no efforts were made till now to implement the Uniform Civil Code. Even in July last year, the Delhi High Court asked the government why it was not implemented so far. As of now, Muslims, Christians and Parsis have their own separate personal laws. Whereas the Hindu Civil Law is applicable for Jains, Buddhists and Sikhs. The Uniform Civil Code has been implemented in many Muslim countries of the world. This include Turkey, Sudan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Egypt and Pakistan. The issue of the implementation of Uniform Civil Code was under the consideration of Law Commission but the tenure of the former Law Commission ended on August 31, 2018. Now the Central government has not sent the issue to the newly constituted Law Commission. It is to be noted that Muslim Personal Law Board had sent a memorandum to the Law Commission signed by 1.5 crore people opposing the implementation of Uniform Civil Code. ■

Beard, offering namaz mandatory For employees in Afghanistan



Inquilab (30 March) reports that all government employees in Afghanistan have been instructed to keep a beard, offer prayers and abandon foreign clothes or else they will be dismissed from their jobs. According to a news published in *Dawn*, it has been announced on behalf of Tablighi Jamaat and the country's Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice that the representatives of these departments will conduct surprise inspections of government offices and public places to ascertain whether the government employees are following the instructions of the Taliban government or not. All employees have also been instructed to wear Afghan salwar-kameez, Islamic caps or turbans and offer namaz five times a day. If they are found violating the government instructions, they will be dismissed from the job. The government has also banned women travelling alone. Apart from this, the doors of secondary schools have been closed for girls. Men and women cannot go together in any park in Afghanistan. Parks have been demarcated for both genders. Even married couples and family members are not allowed to visit

any gardens or parks together. When some journalists requested some clarification from the Ministry for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice in this regard, the government refused to comment.

The Taliban made it clear that they will strictly adhere to Islamic Shariah and Afghan customs. Earlier, the Afghan government had said they would allow girls to continue their education in schools. But suddenly the government refused to open girls' schools and said that it is against Islamic Shariah. The US has condemned this decision of the Afghan government and said it is a clear violation of the earlier assurances given by the government in this regard. Because of this step, the talks that were going on in Doha regarding giving financial aid to Afghanistan have been postponed for the time being. Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai opined that there should be no compromise on women's rights and girls' education in Afghanistan. She said in Doha that the situation in Afghanistan is dire and the people are facing financial troubles. Although aid should be given to Afghanistan on

humanitarian grounds, but since Afghan government is violating the rights of women, the world should take stringent action.

According to another news, the Afghan government has banned the viewing and listening of international broadcasts in the country. According to government sources, the ban has been imposed on listening to Farsi, Dari Pashto language programmes of BBC, Voice of America and German Radio. The Taliban government has directed that no one in Afghanistan should listen to these foreign broadcasts. According to the BBC, the Afghan government has instructed them not to broadcast programmes in Pashto, Farsi and Uzbek languages. The cultural department of the Afghan government said that the programmes aired by these foreign channels are against the values and culture of Afghanistan.

Etemaad (26 March) in its editorial has condemned the decision of banning girls from attending schools in Afghanistan and pointed out that the government there

closed the girls' high school hours after they opened it. The United States and the United Nations have warned the Afghan government that if they bar girls from attending schools, they will find it difficult to get global acceptance and financial aid.

The newspaper said that according to the current rules, no girl will be able to get education after sixth grade in Afghanistan. Earlier, the Afghanistan government had imposed a complete ban on women going to work and travelling alone. A spokesperson for the Taliban government said although the government has no objection in educating girls, there is a controversy regarding what their uniforms should be. He said that the Afghanistan government is against co-education of girls and boys as it violates the basic spirit of Islamic Shariah. Therefore, it is the government's endeavour to arrange separate education for both boys and girls but for that a large number of teachers are needed and there is a shortage of teachers in the country.

International Day to combat Islamophobia

Roznama Sahara (March 17), states that the United Nations General Assembly has accepted the demand of Muslim countries to observe March 15 as the 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia.' This proposal was submitted by Pakistan on behalf of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). India had opposed this move. India's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, T S Tirumurti while delivering his speech complained that the resolution did not make any mention of the hatred being spread against Hindus and other religions. The resolution was introduced with the support of 57 OIC countries as well as Russia, China and eight other countries. It condemned all forms of violence on the basis of religious beliefs, opposition to Islamic places of worship and tombs and stated that it is a clear violation of international law. Even though the motion was passed unanimously, it was

pointed out by India, France and the European Union that hatred is being spread against different religions across the world, but the resolution only made mention of Islam. Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Munir Akram, said that Islamophobia is a reality and 193 countries of the United Nations General Assembly have accepted that concrete steps should be taken to stop it. Under the anti-Islam campaign, crimes against Muslims along with hate speeches and discriminatory policies targeting Muslims are increasing rapidly. It is against the basic rights of humanity. Such campaigns have caused deep discontent in the Islamic world.

Munir Akram stated that after the 9/11 attacks in America, Muslims were targeted around the world. An atmosphere of fear and mistrust have been created against the Muslims and they are being

blamed for violence across the world. The manner in which ill will is being instigated against Islam is very dangerous and its goal is to isolate Muslims from society. The campaign which is being run offline and online against Muslims is very dangerous.

The Indian representative expressed surprise that a sense of fear was being instigated against a particular religion and it has come to the point that a day is being observed all over the world to combat that phobia. He said that sentiments are being provoked against Hindus, Buddhists and even Sikhs in many countries. Therefore, it is necessary that efforts should be made to stop the feeling of hatred being spread against all religions.

Siasat (March 17), reports that Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan has expressed happiness over the observance of 'International Day to Combat Islamophobia' and said that the world finally heard Pakistan's voice about inciting the feeling of hatred against Islam.

An article published in **Hamara Samaj (March 21)**, said that on one hand the United Nations has announced to observe a particular day to awaken public opinion against the campaign against Islam while on the other hand, sentiments are being provoked against the followers of a particular religion in India under the guise of 'Kashmir Files' and the Government of India is behind this. However, apart from Hindus, a large number of Muslim youths were also killed in Kashmir. But under the guise of this film, a feeling of hatred is being deliberately instigated against Muslims across the country. The article has appealed to the citizens to expose this communal propaganda so that the campaign of targeting the followers of a particular religion can be put to an end. It pointed out that along with Muslim



organisations, non-Muslim countries such as China, Russia and Japan have also supported the proposal.

Etemaad (21 March) has published an article by Mahmoud Abdali, which states that Islamophobia is meant to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation among the general public about Islam. However, the reality is that in a large part of the world, Muslims are not even allowed to wear their religious attire. Surprisingly, Muslims themselves are becoming victims of discrimination and a campaign is being launched against them. But despite this, satanic propaganda continues against Muslims around the world, which has termed every Muslim a moving bomb. It is because of this sentiment that on March 15, 2019, in a city in New Zealand, a Christian man entered a mosque and killed 47 worshipers by opening fire on them blindly. After that, he shot at many people at the Islamic Centre. Two-and-a-half months after this incident, the OIC convention was held in Mecca, which condemned the incident. Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan, Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad and Turkish President Tayyip Erdogan also condemned the campaign against Muslims and demanded from the United Nations that a law should be made at the global level for the protection of Muslims.

The author expressed surprise that the Representative of India to the United Nations, instead of supporting this resolution, demanded amendments in it.

This has certainly dented India's image in the Islamic world. Muslims around the world are astonished that a country with hundreds of millions of Muslims is opposing a resolution that aims to stop violence and hatred against Muslims. It is a matter of happiness that a large section of Indians has condemned this attitude of India's Representative to the United Nations.

Salar (18 March) in its editorial has condemned the fact that many Western countries and India are inciting hatred against Muslims. The rulers of France, Germany and Britain, including former US

President Donald Trump have furthered their political agenda by opposing Muslims and Islam, due to which the whole world has started looking at Muslims and Islam with hatred. Everyone looks at Muslims with suspicion and the anti-Islam campaign is going on in full swing. In such a scenario, the United Nations has acted wisely and has decided to observe March 15 every year as the International Day to Combat Islamophobia. The newspaper said that the role played by Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan in stopping the ongoing campaign against Islam is commendable.

Iran and Pakistan to strengthen trade relations

Avadhnama (March 31), reports that the external affairs ministers of Iran and Pakistan, during a meeting held in Tehran, have welcomed the meeting of the external affairs ministers of Afghanistan's neighbouring nations held in China and said that it will mark the beginning of a new era in trade relations in the region. It was also decided in this meeting that trade relations between Iran and Pakistan should be strengthened. The Foreign Ministry of Iran emphasised on the support extended to the Afghan people by Iran and China and

said that the other countries of the world need to pay special attention to the problems faced by the people of Afghanistan. Apart from this, it is also necessary for the countries of this region to come together and solve the economic crisis that Afghanistan is currently reeling under. Soon the third conference of these countries is going to be held in China, in which apart from China, Iran, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Russia, Qatar and Indonesia will also participate.

Pakistan hosts OIC conference

Siasat (March 23) reports that a meeting of foreign ministers of 57 Muslim countries was held in Pakistan, in which the Foreign Minister of China also took part in a special capacity. This is the first time in the history of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that China has participated in its conference. The representatives of the Hurriyat Conference of Kashmir were also invited to participate in this conference but the Modi government did not issue them visas. The OIC has condemned this attitude of the Government of India. For

the next one year, the secretariat of OIC will remain in Pakistan. The conference, held in Islamabad discussed the political situation in Afghanistan, Palestine, Africa, Yemen, Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Syria, along with the problems of Muslim countries around the world, and especially in India-controlled Kashmir.

Welcoming this conference, Pakistan's Foreign Ministry stated that it will increase unity among Islamic countries.

Hamara Samaj (March 23), states that Pakistan Prime Minister Imran



Khan, while addressing the conference, said Islamic countries should not join any bloc and instead of becoming a participant in the war, they should jointly promote the spirit of Islamic unity and brotherhood. He said that oil, gas and wheat prices are continuously increasing due to the situation in Ukraine. He urged Islamic countries to try and find a solution to Ukraine's problem. He added that although the number of Muslims in the world is 1.5 billion, they are not being given any importance. He requested the countries of the world to recognise the Taliban government of Afghanistan. To combat the increasing terrorism in the work, it is important that the Afghanistan government be helped financially.

Delivering a speech at the convention, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Affairs Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud said his country wants a peaceful solution to the Palestinian problem on humanitarian grounds. Targeting Iran, he said that some countries are not only supporting the rebels operating in Yemen but are also providing them with weapons. The violence in Yemen must stop. OIC Secretary-General Hissein Brahim Taha condemned Israel's anti-Palestinian stance and urged Houthi rebels not to target civilians in their attacks. He said that all Islamic nations must support Rohingya Muslims and they all want Rohingya Muslims to go back to their country and live there peacefully.

Mass protests over economic crisis in Sri Lanka

Roznama Sahara (March 17), reports that people have taken to the streets in Sri Lanka to protest against the steep rise in the prices of petrol and other essential commodities. Schools and colleges have been closed across the country and examinations have been postponed. The reason for this is that the government has failed in procuring paper for printing textbooks due to the steep rise in the price of paper. All petrol pumps in the country

have been closed. The protesters barged into Rashtrapati Bhawan demanding the immediate resignation of the President and the government. The Opposition also called for the same.

Inquilab (March 23), reports that troops have been deployed at all petrol pumps in the country so that the protesters cannot loot petroleum reserves. At least six persons have been killed in clashes between the army and protesters.

Ceasefire declared in Yemen for Ramzan



Hamara Samaj (March 31) reports that the Saudi-led coalition, which is active in Yemen for the restoration of a constitutional government, has announced a ceasefire in the month of Ramzan so that peace talks can begin. This announcement was made by the Secretary General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Dr Nayef Falah Mubarak Al-Hajraf. He said that as per the wishes of King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia, the ceasefire has been announced for a month to create an atmosphere for peace talks. He stressed that to resolve the Yemen crisis, it is necessary that the constitutional government there be recognised internationally and pressure be put on the pro-Iranian Houthi rebels to abandon the path of war and adopt the path of peace. Earlier, the United States representative for Yemen's affairs announced that the US will make every effort to resolve the dispute in Yemen peacefully and will provide humanitarian assistance in the form of food and financial aid to the Yemeni victims of civil war. Saudi Arabia's Council of Ministers has urged the Houthi rebels operating in Yemen to stop the ballistic missile attacks and drone attacks on the

civilian areas of Saudi Arabia and other important targets in view of the holy month of Ramzan. Saudi Arabia has also emphasised on finding a peaceful solution to the Ukraine crisis.

Etemaad (March 28) reports that Houthi rebels in Yemen have rejected Saudi Arabia's offer of a ceasefire. Mahdi al-Mashat, the head of the Houthi political cell, has said that the Houthi rebels are ready to release all Yemeni prisoners including the brother of Yemen's President Mansour Hadi. Military targets in Yemen's coastal city of Al-Hada have been attacked and Aramco's oil plants in Jeddah were also targeted, according to the latest announcement. The Houthis have said peace talks can only be successful when the Saudi-coalition stops airstrikes on their bases and lifts sanctions imposed on ports. The Saudi-coalition has said that recently Houthi rebels have carried out 16 attacks in Saudi Arabia, but they have been showing restraint as they want the peace talks to be successful. However, the Houthis have remained uncooperative. Significantly, last year also, Saudi Arabia had announced a ceasefire, but the Houthis refused to accept it.

Indian restaurant in Bahrain closed for denying entry to veiled woman

Inquilab (March 28), reports that the authorities in Bahrain have ordered the closure of an Indian restaurant. It is alleged that the manager of the restaurant denied entry to a woman wearing veil. However, the owners of the restaurant have issued a public apology and have also fired the manager who is from Karnataka, India. The Bahrain Tourism and Exhibition Authority has begun an investigation into the matter. The Government of Bahrain has requested all hotels to not resort to any discriminatory practices against any individual. The name of this restaurant is said to be 'Lanterns Bahrain'. In a statement posted on Instagram in Arabic and English, Lanterns said that they have been serving people of all religions without any discrimination for the past 35 years in Bahrain and invited Bahraini citizens to visit their restaurant on March 29 and have complimentary food as a goodwill gesture. It is worth noting that after the High Court in Karnataka banned Muslim girls from wearing hijab in schools



and colleges, this incident is viewed with special importance in the state.

Mumbai Urdu News (March 28) reports that this Indian restaurant is located in Adliya, Bahrain. According to the Bahraini media, when the burqa-clad woman reached this restaurant along with her family to have food, she was not allowed to enter the building by the manager. After the video of this incident went viral, the Government of Bahrain has decided to take strict action against the restaurant.

At least 280 people executed in Iran last year

Roznama Sahara (March 20) reports that at least 280 people were hanged in Iran last year. This has been stated by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Islamic Republic of Iran, Javed Rahman, in his report. The report states that most people sentenced to death in Iran last year were drug-traffickers. Ten women were also among those sentenced to death. He said that these people were sentenced to death by various courts in Iran and after that they

were hanged. At least four teenagers were among those who were hanged, who were under the age of 18. Four Afghans were also among those executed. Those sentenced to death include 40 Balochs and 50 Kurds. It has been acknowledged in this report that there has been an increase in the number of people sentenced to death in Iran recently. The report also alleged that the accused were subjected to violence and torture to make them confess to their crimes.

Cyber attack on Israel

Mumbai Urdu News (March 16), reports that for the first time in the history of Israel, the nation came under a huge cyberattack and the hands of Iran are being suspected behind this. According to government sources, several government websites crashed in Israel, including the websites of the Prime Minister's Office, the Office of the Interior Ministry, the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Justice. Israel's leading newspaper 'Haaretz' published a news in this context, calling it the biggest cyberattack ever in Israel's history.

Meanwhile, Israel's National Cyber Directorate has said in a statement that these websites have now been restored. It said that it was a DDoS attack. By this, the government websites were blocked. The Defence Ministry has declared a state of emergency in Israel following the incident and is investigating whether the safety of any other important Israeli websites like that of infrastructure companies that

provide electricity and water supply in Israel have also been compromised. Israel's communications minister called for a high-level meeting after the attack, in which all telecommunications companies have been instructed to restore these websites on a war footing.

The Israeli government has acknowledged that government websites have been shut down for several hours due to the attack. The Israeli National Cyber Directorate stated that all these attacks are being investigated at a high level so that such incidents can be prevented in the future. According to the news agency AFP, Israeli websites have been the target of cyberattacks several times in recent months, as reported by Net Blocks, an organisation that monitors Internet traffic around the world. Israeli experts suspect Iran's hand behind these attacks. While Iran has claimed that its website was targeted by the US and Israel, due to which their petrol and gas supplies were disrupted.

Saudi oil supply line hit by Houthi attack

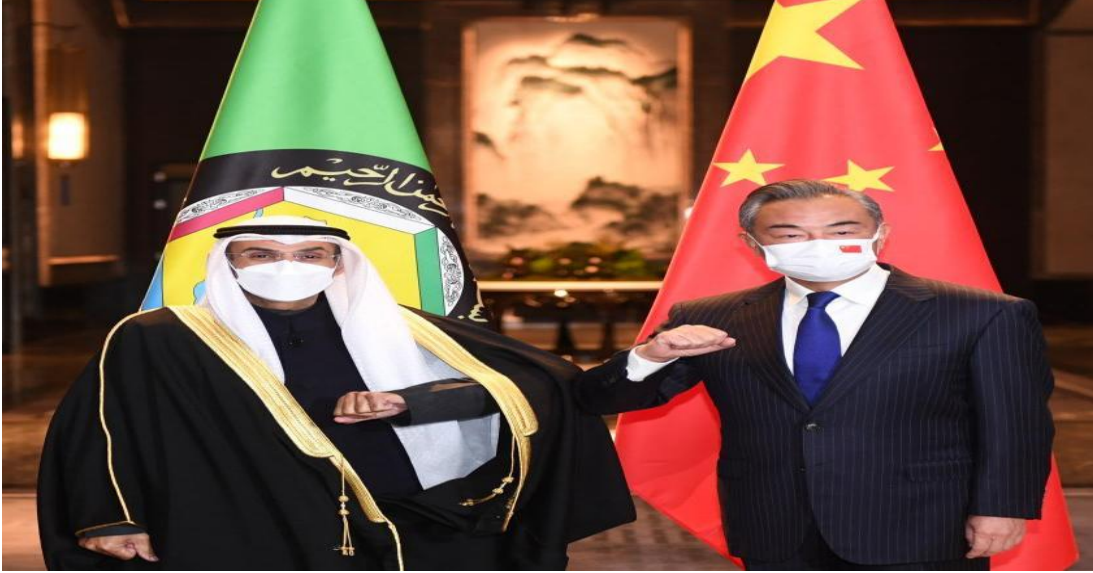
Avadhnama (March 27), states that Aramco's oil plants in Jeddah have been completely burnt down in Houthi attacks and due to this Saudi Arabia's oil supply lines have come to a standstill. There have been massive fire breaks out at Saudi Arabia's oil supply plants. Due to this, there has been a huge increase in oil prices in the global market. The price of crude oil has reached USD 120 per barrel. The war between Saudi Arabia and Houthi rebels in Yemen has left more than four million Yemeni homeless and at least half a million people have been killed. Most of Yemen's economy has been battered and there is a severe shortage of food and medicine, according to Houthi sources. A spokesman for the Yemen operation has said that at least three of Saudi Arabia's oil refineries have been completely destroyed with the aim of breaking the backbone of the



country's economy. Saudi Arabia's power supply system has come to a standstill.

An editorial in the same issue praised Iran's peace efforts and said that a peaceful solution to the ongoing civil war in Yemen should be found. The Houthi rebels have been attempting to destroy Saudi Arabia's oil-based economy. The peace of the world may be in danger due to the civil war of Yemen. The Arab world should support the peace-building efforts made by Iran recently in this direction.

China's expansion drive in Arab countries



Roznama Sahara (March 27), reports that China is speedily increasing its footprints in the Islamic world. In line with this goal, China is negotiating a free trade agreement with the Gulf Cooperation Council. It has also entered into an agreement with Saudi Arabia to buy petrol in its currency. These are the things that China's state media Global Times has indicated while covering the recent meeting of the Organization of Islamic Countries in Islamabad. If China succeeds in its plans, then it will definitely cause a serious setback to America and Western countries. The Vice President of the American Foreign

Policy Council Ilan Berman observed that the Islamic world's growing friendship with China is a very important strategic change. America's interest in the Middle East is slowly waning. Its entire focus is on Iran which is Saudi Arabia's rival. Therefore, in view of the changing situation, Saudi Arabia has also started looking for a new ally. China's recent military agreement with the United Arab Emirates is an important step in this direction. China's policy is to gradually increase its presence in the Arab countries. It wants to use the available oil reserves in these countries to strengthen its economy. ■

Saudi Arabia bans collection of money in mosques

Mumbai Urdu News (March 25), reports that Saudi government has directed that loudspeaker should not be used for offering prayers in mosques. Apart from this, the Saudi government has also directed that the pictures of those

offering namaz should not be published. Imams of all mosques have been instructed not to collect money for Iftaar. They have also been asked to regularly visit mosques and organise prayers during the month of Ramadan. ■

Decision to remove mention of Tipu Sultan from textbooks

Siasat (March 26), reports that the school textbook review committee headed by Rohit Chakrathirtha, constituted by the Karnataka government, has submitted its report to the state government. It is said that this report has suggested a number of changes to be made in the textbooks. These recommendations also included the removal of the exploits of Tipu Sultan from the school textbooks in Karnataka. In addition to this, it has also



been suggested that texts relating to the defeat of Bakhtiyar Khilji by the Ahom dynasty of Assam also be included in the textbooks. This committee was constituted in 2017. Karnataka Education Minister B C Nagesh admitted that the government has received the report of this committee. He added that the government is considering its recommendations to make the necessary changes in the textbooks.

Release of a book on Prophet

Mumbai Urdu News (March 28), reports that in response to the controversial book published by Wasim Rizvi about Hazrat Mohammad, a book has been released by Ajmer Sharif Dargah, titled 'Azeem Muhammad.' This book counters the book of Wasim

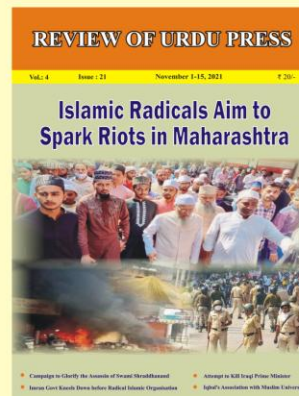
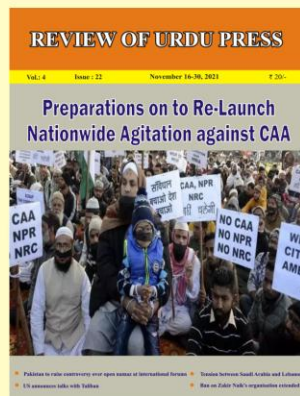
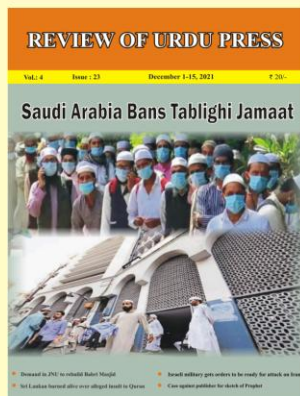
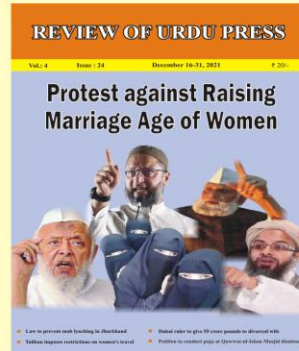
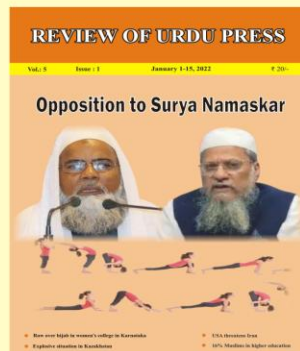
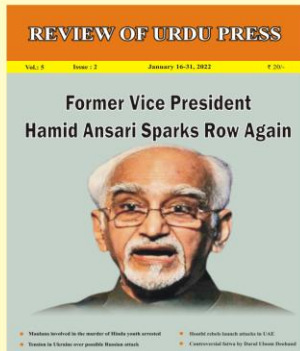
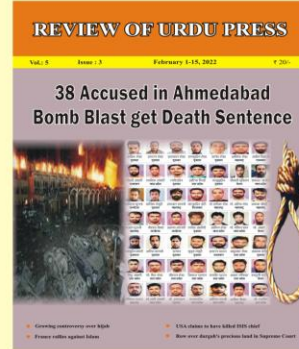
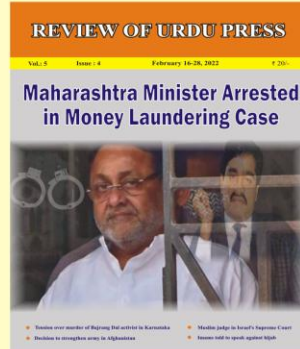
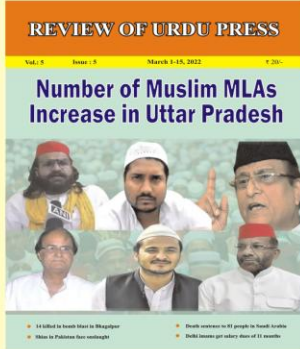
Rizvi. The author of this book is Maulana Ibrahim Asi and the publishers are Moin Mian Ashrafi and Syed Noori, Chairman of the board of Tahaffuz-e-Namoos Risalat. The author of this book has also been given the 'Quaid-e-Millat' award on this occasion.

Demand for separate allocation for Muslims in Maharashtra budget



Aurangabad Times (March 17) Samajwadi Party leader Abu Asim Azmi, participating in the debate in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly, has alleged that

Muslims have been completely ignored in the annual budget of the Maharashtra government. He demanded that the Ismail Yusuf College in Mumbai be handed over to the Muslims of Maharashtra and that the Muslims be given five per cent reservation. He said that as there is a separate allocation in the budget of each ministry for Scheduled Castes and Tribes, similarly there should be a separate allocation for Muslims. He opined that the Maulana Azad Minorities Financial Development Corporation should be constituted to enable Muslims to get interest free loans to start self-employment.



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