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Protest against Raising Marriage Age of Women



- Law to prevent mob lynching in Jharkhand
- Dubai ruler to give 55 crore pounds to divorced wife
- Taliban imposes restrictions on women's travel
- Petition to conduct puja at Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid dismissed

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Summary

Muslims are protesting against the decision taken by Modi government to raise the minimum age for marriage of girls. Though Muslim leaders are not clearly spelling out the reasons for their opposition, Muslim religious leaders have raised the allegation that the step has been taken to fulfil the goal set by the present government to bring a Uniform Civil Code. They said that as per Shariah, there is no minimum age for a girl or boy to get married. The Nikah could be conducted at any age but the girl could leave her house only after her menstrual cycle begins. Leaders of different political organisations of Muslims have avoided holding any direct discussions on the controversy over Shariah or Uniform Civil Code. They have been demanding that the government should reconsider its decision because if the marriage age of girls is raised, it would lead to adultery in society and increase in sexual offences. They demanded that the government should take a decision on the issue only after holding consultations with Muslim religious leaders. However, a section of Muslim women is openly supporting the government decision. In several places in Hyderabad and elsewhere in Telangana, burqa-clad women openly welcomed this decision of the government and garlanded the photos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and showered milk on them. During a speech in Prayagraj, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the government's decision to raise the minimum age for marriage of girls is being welcomed by women but it has caused worry to some people.

The new controversy created by Shahi Imam Ahmad Bukhari over the maintenance work at the historic Jama Masjid in Delhi has resulted in a discussion from the streets to the Parliament. Earlier this year, Shahi Imam Bukhari had alleged that the condition of the historic Jama Masjid was deteriorating day by day due to the negligence of the Central government. When the issue was raised in Parliament by a Muslim MP, P V Abdul Wahab, Union minister of state Meenakshi Lekhi made it clear that since the Jama Masjid is not a protected monument under Archaeological Survey of India, the archaeology department cannot undertake its repair work. When Bahujan Samaj Party's Muslim MP Kunwar Danish Ali raised this issue in the Lok Sabha, Minister for Culture and Tourism G Kishan Reddy said the matter could be considered if the state government urges the Centre to intervene in it. The controversy has assumed political colours as an election season has come again. Chairman of Delhi Waqf Board and Aam Admi Party MLA Amanatullah Khan told reporters that the Delhi government would urge the Central government to undertake the maintenance work of Jama Masjid immediately as a special case.

In Afghanistan, the Taliban is coming back to its old self. Despite opposition from various countries in the world, they have slowly started implementing Shariah rules. Recently, they issued an order directing that no woman should travel alone and those who break this rule would be given stringent punishment. Along with it, the Taliban have also issued an order that a woman's photo should not be published along with any advertisement. Earlier, it was announced that in future the administration of Afghanistan would be done as per Islamic Shariah under which criminals would be punished publically by cutting off their hands and legs.



Protest against raising marriage age of women



Inquilab (December 22) reports that despite strong protests from the Opposition and Muslim leaders, the Central government has passed a Bill in Parliament to raise the minimum age for marriage of women from 18 years to 21 years.

While presenting the Child Marriage (Prohibition) Bill in Parliament, Union minister Smriti Irani said the Bill would be sent to the Standing Committee and the legislation would be made applicable to all the religions within two years of getting President's approval.

Roznama Sahara (December 23) states that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, while delivering a speech in Prayagraj, said the government has brought a law to raise the minimum age for marriage of women in order to empower them and to improve their health which has been welcomed by every woman in the country but some men are worried about it. Chief of Ittehadul Muslimeen, Asaduddin Owaisi, said that it is against the religious freedom enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. If an 18-year-old girl can elect the Prime Minister and she can have a live-in relationship, then why she is prevented from getting married? TMC MP Saugata Roy said the Bill has been brought in a hurry due to political reasons. Hence he is against it.

Roznama Sahara (December 17) states that the bill has been opposed by

Muslim organisations and Khap panchayats. But despite this, the government has been implementing it due to its stubbornness.

Siasat (December 22) reports that the BJP has launched a campaign in entire Andhra Pradesh and Telangana in favour of Centre raising the marriage age of women. In a function at Girls Degree College at Nampally in Hyderabad, burqa-clad women, while supporting this decision, poured milk over the photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The newspaper complained that Muslim organisations are opposing this dictatorial decision of the government and so far they have not hit the streets on this issue. This is a direct intervention in the religious freedom given to minorities.

Etemaad (December 25) states that various Muslim Ulema have described this decision as interference in Islam and Shariah and alleged that the Central government is interfering in the freedom given to minorities by the Constitution. The newspaper said that in Islam there is no minimum age for a woman to get married. The boy and girl could get married at any age. Until a girl's menstrual cycle begins, one cannot have physical relationship with her. It is said that as per Hadis, Prophet Mohammad married Hazrat Aisha at the age of six and at the age of nine she was

sent to the Prophet's house. As far as India is concerned, there was Shariah law in the country under Islamic rule. Later the British slowly changed it and brought British law in its place. Now, the present government is interfering in our Shariah. It alleged that the present government is trying to impose Uniform Civil Code through backdoor and hence Muslims should oppose it.

Siasat (December 20) states that Maulana Arshad Madani and Mehmood Madani of Jamiat Ulema have condemned this decision and said that the government has to withdraw this decision. Samajwadi Party MP Shafiqur Rahman Warq said that in India, the menstrual cycle of girls begins at the age of 14 and hence if the marriageable age of women is kept at 21, then it would lead to adultery. Also, the danger of girls and boys getting astray also increases. He said that this law should not be imposed on Muslims against the Shariah law.

Aurangabad Times (December 21) also while opposing the decision of the government said the general secretary of All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Khalid Saifullah Rahmani said the government should not interfere in this matter. If the marriage age is raised, it would lead to adultery in the society. Hence it is necessary to withdraw this decision and hold consultations with religious scholars of Islam before imposing such a decision.

Siasat (December 21) in its editorial has described the law to raise the marriage age of women as a dictatorial decision of Narendra Modi government and said that this would have bad consequences and there would be a huge increase in illicit sexual relationships. The newspaper has appealed to the people to oppose this decision.

Inquilab (December 24) said that this law is a violation of different laws applicable to religions in the country. As per Sarda Child Marriage Prohibition Act, the minimum marriageable age for Hindu

women was 14 years which was raised to 18 years in 1955. Christian Marriage Act also has the same provision. Among Muslims there is no concept of a minimum age to get married. The boy and girl could get married at any age. But the two can have physical relationship only after the girl attains puberty. The newspaper said that the law is against the Shariah Act and it would be questioned in a court of law. It would be better if the government could focus on getting women more education than raising their marriage age. It would be better to make them self-reliant and improve their health but the government is not concerned about these things. The government is interested only in raising their marriage age.

Roznama Sahara (December 24) also in its editorial opposed this decision and said that the government has to reconsider its decision. The newspaper said that last year, while delivering his speech from Red Fort on August 15, Prime Minister Modi had indicated the intention to raise the marriage age of girls and after that a 10-member task force was formed under the leadership of Jaya Jaitley to discuss the matter and to provide necessary advice to empower women. The newspaper stressed that instead of creating unnecessary controversy, the government should focus more on providing facilities to women.

Inquilab (December 24) states that a strong protest is brewing among Muslims against the decision to raise the marriage age of women. Fatehpuri masjid Shahi Imam Mohammad Mukaram Ahmad said that the decision would lead to social evils and nobody in this country would like this decision. Dr Zafarul Islam of Muslim Majlis Mushawarat said that in this country girls used to become eligible for marriage at the age of 14 and it is wrong to impose a ban on them getting married till the age of 21. Imam Syed Mohammad Mohsin Naqvi of Shia Jama masjid has described it as an unwarranted interference in the religious affairs of Muslims.

Row over maintenance work at Jama Masjid in Delhi

Inquilab (December 19) states that the maintenance work of the more than 500 year-old Jama Masjid in Delhi is in the midst of a controversy. When a Muslim MP, P V Abdul Wahab, raised the issue of the maintenance of Jama Masjid in Rajya Sabha, Union minister of state Meenakshi Lekhi said that the Jama Masjid does not come under Archaeological Survey of India Act, 1958 and hence the Central government cannot do its maintenance work. However, when the issue was raised in Lok Sabha by Kunwar Danish Ali, Union minister for Culture and Tourism G Kishan Reddy said that there are 4,000 protected monuments in the country which are under the Archaeological Survey of India but Jama Masjid is not included in it. This apart, he also said that if the state government recommends for the maintenance work at Jama Masjid, then the Centre would consider it.



For the past few months, the issue of maintenance work at Jama Masjid has become a topic of discussion right from the streets to the Parliament.

Roznama Sahara in its edition on December 17 published a detailed report in this connection in which it has widely discussed different aspects of the issue. Jama Masjid Shahi Imam Ahmad Bukhari's complaint is that he has been continuously writing to the Prime Minister and the Archaeological Survey of India since June 6 regarding the maintenance work at Jama Masjid but till now he has not got any reply in this regard. Ahmad Bukhari claims that starting from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru till 2014, the Indian government has been doing the maintenance work of the historic masjid. Now the government's interest in this has changed. According to the newspaper, a resident of Delhi, Mohsin Babar, had filed

an RTI application on November 2, 2020 seeking details of the amount spent by the Central government for the maintenance work of Jama Masjid in the past five years. As per the government information, Rs 43,10,956 was spent on the maintenance work of the masjid during a period of four years. Ahmad Bukhari had also said that in this connection he had written a letter to Aga Khan Foundation on June 21 urging them to undertake the maintenance work at Jama Masjid. The foundation has indicated to him that unless the Central government directs it to do so, it would not be able to undertake the maintenance work of any historical building.

Chairman of Delhi Waqf Board and AamAadmi Party MLA Amanatullah Khan visited Jama Masjid and held a detailed talk with the Shahi Imam. On his directions, a team of engineers surveyed Jama Masjid three times and made a plan for the maintenance work. Amanatullah said that since the drainage system of the Jama Masjid is quite old, there is water seepage in different parts of the masjid resulting in stone tiles falling apart. Hence we have decided to fix this first. It would cost up to Rs 2 crore. As far as the total maintenance work of Jama Masjid is concerned, it is likely to cost between Rs 40 to 45 crore. He said that the Central government is finding excuses on this issue.

Aam Admi Party's Matia Mahal MLA Shoaib Iqbal alleged that ever since the BJP came to power at the Centre, it doesn't want to give money for the maintenance work at Jama Masjid and hence it is making all kinds of excuses. He said that the maintenance work should continue in the same way it was being done earlier. In this connection, he would also meet the Lt Governor of Delhi. He said that Ahmed Bukhari showed him several documents from which it could be established that the Archaeological Survey of India had done maintenance work of Jama Masjid from 1956 till 2019 as a special case. But now it has been stopped. He said that Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh has also promised to raise this issue in Parliament.

Inquilab (December 13) states that Congress leader Meem Afzal has alleged that the Central government is deliberately sidestepping the maintenance issue of Jama Masjid. If the Central government can undertake the maintenance work of the worship places of other religions, then why it is dilly-dallying on the issue of Jama Masjid. If the government has no funds, then it can give the responsibility for the same to Aga Khan Foundation. He said that during the reign of V P Singh, due to his efforts, the Central government spent nearly 1 crore for the maintenance of Jama

Masjid. The newspaper also claimed that when the King of Saudi Arabia came to India in 2006, he held discussions to provide funds for the maintenance of Jama Masjid but the Central government did not accept it.

Inquilab (December 19) states that Prof Akhtarul Wase claimed that on August 10, 2004, Shahi Imam Ahmad Bukhari wrote a letter to the then prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh in this connection and brought his attention to fact that the Archaeological Survey of India was not doing the maintenance work of Jama Masjid for the past few years. The department had indicated to him that until the Jama Masjid is not declared as a protected monument, it would not be able to do its maintenance work. In reply to this, on October 20, 2004 Dr Manmohan Singh had written a letter to Imam, in which it was said that he had directed the archaeology department to do the maintenance work of the masjid. He expressed surprise that along with the change of government at the Centre, the government's stand on Jama Masjid also changed. He urged the Central government especially Prime Minister Narendra Modi that if his claim of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikaas and Sabka Vishwas' is correct, then it should immediately start the maintenance work of Jama Masjid. ■

Law to prevent mob lynching in Jharkhand

Inquilab (December 22) reports that the Jharkhand Assembly has passed a 'Prevention of Mob Violence and Mob Lynching Bill, 2021' against killing by mobs in the state. While protesting against the Bill, Opposition BJP boycotted the Assembly and said that the Bill was brought in a hurry in order to appease a particular community. As per the provisions of the new law, murders committed by two persons or more than two persons would be considered as mob lynching and those who participate in such killings would get a punishment of life-term apart from a fine of up to Rs 25 lakh. If any person is injured by the mob, then all those who participated in the mob attack would get

punishment starting from 10 years in jail to life-term and they would also have to pay a fine of Rs3 lakh up to 5 lakh. This apart, if anyone is found involved in destruction of evidence related to mob lynching, then he would also get a punishment of one-year jail term apart from Rs 50,000 as fine. Participating in a discussion in the Assembly on this Bill, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Alamgir Alam said that 56 incidents of mob lynching took place in Jharkhand from 2016 till now. In such incidents, people belonging to the weaker section often become the targets. Hence this law has been made to provide security to the weaker section and give stringent punishment to those involved



in such activities. In order to stop such incidents, a provision has also been made in the law to ensure that an officer holding the rank of Director General of Police become the nodal officer to hold a state-level meeting every month with the heads of intelligence wing in all districts and review the situation.

Mumbai Urdu News (December 24) reports that just two days after the passing of the law against mob lynching, a mob of Hindutvavadis surrounded a Muslim youth named Sajid and thrashed him. This incident took place in Karama village under Lesliganj police station limits. After a video of this incident went viral, the police started an investigation into the issue. The villagers claimed that the Muslim youth molested girls in the village and hence he was given punishment. Till now, the police have not arrested anyone.

Inquilab (December 24) reports that human rights activists Prof Apoorvanand said that such a law would send a strong message to the society and would help in stopping such incidents in future. He said that the way Muslims are being targeted in this country, it is an attack on the Constitution and the secular fabric of the country. Chief of Momin Conference and senior Congress leader Shakeel Uzzaman Ansari welcomed the law and said that until stringent laws are made to stop such incidents, it would not be able to stop them.

Roznama Sahara (December 25) states that chief of Jamiat Ulema Maulana Mehmood Madani welcomed the law and

said that it would instil a sense of security among weaker sections.

Mumbai Urdu News in its editorial on December 24 welcomed the law and said that Jharkhand Mukti Morcha had promised to bring such a law in its election manifesto in 2019 which it has fulfilled now. The newspaper expressed surprise that despite the directions of the Supreme Court, the Modi government has not taken any step to formulate such a law. The newspaper alleged that those involved in mob lynching often make videos of their misdeeds and informs their political masters about their actions. In such a situation, how can the BJP that comes to power through mob lynching create a law to stop such activities? This is the reason why the BJP, which is the main opposition party in Jharkhand, has given it the description of black law while opposing it. The newspaper said that the provision made in the law to provide compensation for the victims should also be welcomed. It is necessary that the other state governments in the country should also create similar laws to stop such incidents.

Aurangabad Times (August 28) has also supported such a law and said that after Manipur, Jharkhand is the second state to create a law against mob lynching. Interestingly, before this the Rajasthan and West Bengal government had also created similar laws but the law created by Jharkhand government is a more stringent one and it also has the provision to give punishment to those who instigate mob lynching. ■

Row over public namaz in Gurugram reaches Supreme Court



Inquilab (December 17) reports that a state of uncertainty has arisen over the offering of namaz in Gurugram after Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar cancelled the permission to hold namaz in the open and gave a statement against not allowing it all the times. The local administration has not provided a list of designated places for the Muslims to offer the Jumanamaz. Former MP Mohammad Adeb has filed a petition for contempt of court in the Supreme Court for not taking action against mischievous elements. In the petition, he has sought legal action against Director General of Police P K Agrawal and Chief Secretary Sanjiv Kaushal for failing to take legal action against the mischievous elements who stopped the offering of Jumanamaz in the open. He said in the petition that those who are spreading hate against Muslims are known to all but the police have not deliberately taken any action against them. The Supreme Court was also told that the spots where Muslims tried to offer namaz were allotted to them by the local administration. Mohammad Adeb said that he had appealed to Muslims not to create tension and go to nearby places and offer the namaz.

As per another news, Muslim leader from Gurugram Maulana Sabir Qasmi, along with a delegation met the Chief Secretary of the state and told him that the issue of offering namaz at Gurugram is a sensitive one. Hence this controversy should be resolved at the earliest. He demanded that the masjids, khabristans and Waqf properties under illegal custody of others should be freed from them and handed over to Muslims. Plots should be allotted for masjids in all sectors of Gurugram so that Muslims could offer namaz there. He also demanded construction of a Haj House in Sector 49 on Sohna Road. He also demanded the removal of seal from the masjid at Sheetala Mata Mandir area which was sealed by the administration in 2016.

Inquilab (December 11) published a report and complained that Muslims were not given permission to offer namaz in Sector 37 in Gurugram. Vehicles were parked at the designated spot for namaz due to which namaz could not be offered there. People belonging to extremist Hindu organisations also raised anti-Muslim slogans on this occasion. The police were deployed in huge numbers on the spot. However, they did not make any

effort to stop the mischievous elements. President of Hindu Sangharsh Samiti Mahavir Bharadwaj said that we will not allow Muslims to offer namaz at any open places in Gurugram. Whereas Muslim Ekata Manch demanded that they should be given permission to offer namaz at the spots which were designated for the same by the administration.

The newspaper also published a statement of Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar in which he had stated that the government would not give permission to anyone to offer namaz in open places. Namazis should offer namaz in masjids. He said that we are holding discussions with the minority community in order to find a solution to the controversy so that no clash would erupt over it.

Inquilab (December 10) reports that three Muslim MLAs of Haryana Assembly met the Governor of Haryana and urged him to intervene in the controversy over namaz in Gurugram and ensure that those offering the namaz are given their democratic rights. The delegation included Aftab Ahmad,

Chaudhary Mohammad Ilyas and Maman Khan.

Mumbai Urdu News (December 23) states that the issue of namaz in Gurugram echoed in the Haryana Assembly too. Raising the issue during the Question Hour, legislator Aftab Ahmad condemned the recent statement of the chief minister leading to a war of words between the MLA and the chief minister. Aftab Ahmad alleged that the chief minister is watching the spectacle of people hindering the namaz. He demanded that the government take stringent action to free the masjids and properties of Waqf board under the illegal occupation of some anti-social elements.

Inquilab (December 12) states that former MP Mohammad Adeb has alleged that RSS wing Rashtriya Muslim Manch is deliberately interfering in the issue of offering of namaz in Gurugram. He said that a few Muslim leaders of the manch, who do not stay in the area, are deliberately complicating the issue. Hence we have filed a petition on the matter in Supreme Court. ■

Row over neglect of Urdu

The moment elections are announced, a few people launch a campaign to provoke a section of society against the government. This time, the issue is over stopping the teaching of Urdu in colleges in Delhi.

Inquilab (December 20) has published a news report which states that Urdu department has been closed in the colleges affiliated to Delhi University like Khalsa College, Lady Shriram College, Miranda House and Hindu College. The newspaper has written that in these colleges the posts of professors in Urdu department would remain but no new appointments would be made in place of retired teachers and the Urdu department is being closed and students

are no longer given admissions. The issue was strongly raised at a meeting of the Academic Council of Delhi University on October 10 and the executive council meeting on December 17 and a demand was raised to restart the teaching of Urdu in these colleges. Dr Imtiaz Ahmed alleged that the step has been taken at the behest of the anti-Urdu lobby. We had raised this issue many times, but the then Vice-Chancellor did not take any interest in it. In all the colleges, there are vacant posts of Urdu professors. Despite this, it is very unfortunate that the teaching of Urdu is not started.

Roznama Sahara (December 22) reports that the National Commission for Minorities has issued a notice to colleges

affiliated to the University of Delhi over the issue of stopping the teaching of Urdu in these colleges. Minorities Commission Vice-Chairperson Atif Rasheed said that he issued the notice after taking cognisance of the reports published in newspapers in this connection and sought



a reply from them. The commission will decide on the future course of action after receiving a reply on the notice.

Inquilab (December 23) states that the issue is not limited to Urdu and several other Indian languages have become the target. Dean of Faculty of Arts in Delhi University and the head of the department of Urdu, Dr Najma Rahmani said that when she raised the issue before the Academic Council, some people described it as due to changing political situation in the country. She said that it was not due to any communal issue but many other Indian language departments are also being closed. Hence it is not proper to give it any communal colour. She said that in Khalsa College, the Urdu department was closed in 2004. In Miranda House, the Urdu department was closed in 1980 and in Hindu College it was closed in 1970. However, nobody has raised this issue before. Now this issue is being raised and it is given a communal colour. She said that majority of the students who were given admission on the basis of cut-off marks are not interested in learning Urdu. The St. Stephen's College is a minority institution and the Urdu department still functions there. In Indraprastha College, both Urdu and Bengali departments got closed. She said that the Urdu department is closed not due to some religious reasons.

Inquilab (December 12) states that the neglect of Urdu is not limited to Delhi and even other parts of the country are affected. Safdar Imam Qadri has complained that for years, nobody has been appointed as heads of the institutions linked to Urdu language in Bihar. Due to government's policy of enmity to Urdu, nearly 12,000 Urdu teachers in the state are on roads because there is no provision to teach Urdu in government schools. He expressed regrets that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is deliberately neglecting Urdu.

Siasat (December 24) published a news item prominently on its front page with the headline 'Conspiracy to prevent Muslims from receiving their right to education in mother tongue.' The news also makes the complaint that recently Urdu has been made the second official language in Telangana but despite that it is given step motherly treatment. There are 18 degree colleges in 33 districts of Telangana where the medium of instruction is Urdu. Through them 400 students are studying for Urdu degree in colleges. In the 13 other districts also there is a system for Urdu medium of instruction but now majority of such Urdu medium classes are being shut down and new people are not given admissions in them. The newspaper has demanded that the injustice done to Urdu should be rectified.

Taliban imposes restrictions on women's travel



Inqilab (December 27) reports that Taliban has announced that in future no Afghan woman should travel alone and no woman would be allowed to travel in any vehicle without wearing a burqa. There is only one way that Afghan woman can travel, that is by being accompanied by a man who had married her as per Shariah. This apart, restrictions have been imposed on Afghan women from appearing in various programmes in Afghan television. Television anchors have been asked to wear hijab while presenting news.

However, Taliban has not clarified yet whether hijab means the women have to cover their heads only or use a veil to cover the face or cover the entire body using a burqa. Till now, it was mandatory for Afghan women to wear a scarf. It is clear from this direction of Taliban government that Afghanistan is moving ahead in the direction of extremist Islamic governance.

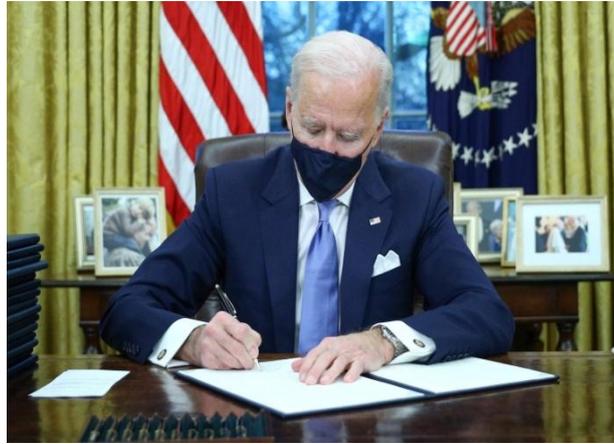
As per another news report, Afghan government has dissolved the election commission. Government spokesperson Bilal Karimi said that they don't need an election commission. It is to be noted that

the election commission was constituted in 2006 and it was empowered to hold all kinds of elections in the country. Aurangzeb, who was the head of the election commission during the time of Ashraf Ghani government, said that Taliban took this decision in a hurry and its repercussions will be huge. He said that he was 100% sure that now there would not be any elections and the administration would be run as per Shariah. This would only aggravate the problems being faced by people of Afghanistan. Former governor Halim Fidai said that the clear meaning of Taliban government dissolving the election commission is that they don't believe in democracy and want to run the administration as per Islamic Shariah. Their faith is not in ballot but in bullet. After Taliban came to power, several officials of election commission were brutally murdered. The new government has made an announcement to dissolve the important ministries. They include the ministry for peace initiatives and parliamentary affairs. Before this, the Taliban government had announced closure of all wings related to women welfare.

Commission to investigate failures in Afghanistan

Inqilab (December 17) reports that the US government has announced the setting up of an investigation commission to look into the failures that took place in Afghanistan. The two houses of US Congress confirmed the formation of the commission. It is to be noted that the US President had announced the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan in order to end the civil war in that country but the way the US had to beat a hasty retreat from Afghanistan is considered as a failure by the US administration. According to the US government sources, there would be 16 members in the inquiry commission who would be jointly nominated by both the houses of US Congress. The commission would submit its final report within a year and would hand over a detailed report to the US President within three years. The commission would discuss the matters related to the US policy and security in Afghanistan and would also probe why the US policy failed in Afghanistan. The commission would also make its recommendation in preparing a strategy to deal with such situations in future.

It is to be noted that in 2009, the then US President Barack Obama had sent



thousands of soldiers to stop the increasing hold of Taliban in Afghanistan. However, this long war had resulted in a setback for the US and the Taliban captured power in Kabul even before the time set by his successor Donald Trump to withdraw troops from Afghanistan. The commission would also closely study the US policy in Afghanistan from 2001 right from the time the then US President George W Bush launched the war in Afghanistan. Recently, in the defence budget passed by the US government, there is an increase of 28 billion dollars compared to that of the previous year and an approval has also been made to increase the wages of soldiers.

France shuts down mosque

Mumbai Urdu News (December 17) reports that the Interior Minister of France Gerald Darmanin has announced that a mosque in Beauvais, a city nearly 100 kilometres away from Paris, would be shut down for six months. It is reported that the population of Muslims in this city is nearly 50,000. He said that the imam of this masjid had been spreading hate against French society through his speeches and he has been targeting Christians, homosexuals and Jews. He said that in some masjids in the country, people are being incited to hate, spread violence and jihad. The government will not tolerate this.

According to a local newspaper, the said imam had abandoned Christianity and accepted Islam in the recent past. The interior minister said that the French government has launched a nationwide investigation against extremist and terror organisations. It would now be widened. The drive was launched in October 2020 in the wake of the murder of a school teacher by a student. In the recent months, the French interior ministry had conducted an investigation into the activities of more than 100 masjids out of a total 2,623 masjids in the country. This is because these masjids have been continuously



propagating separatism and jihadi ideology. So far the government has closed 21 masjids. He said the government is conducting an investigation into the

activities of several other masjids and stringent action would be taken against those organisations that are found guilty.

Pakistan in the grip of terrorism

Roznama Sahara (December 19) reports that at least 16 people were killed and more than a dozen were injured in a bomb attack that took place in Sher Shah, a prominent locality in Karachi. Among those killed include the father of the Member of Parliament from Karachi, Alamgir Khan. While attempting to suppress the issue, the government claimed that the explosion took place due to accumulation of gas in the sewerage line. A two-storied building was totally destroyed in the explosion. A petrol pump, showroom and other buildings located in the vicinity also suffered damages. Following the explosion, an emergency was declared in the city.



According to Mohammad Shakib, a representative of Voice of America, those who were killed include three bank employees and two guards. Since the bank was closed there were very few employees. A government spokesperson has announced that efforts were being made to clear the

debris and recover maximum number of bodies. Chief of Karachi police Ghulam Nabi Memon said they are investigating into every aspect of the incident. Till now, no confirmation has been received about the involvement of terrorists behind this blast. However, managers of Sui Gas Corporation said they do not see possibilities of an explosion in the sewerage line. Hence it is necessary that the government conducts an investigation from all the angles.

Inquilab (December 25) states that armed rebels attacked Pakistani Army in Balochistan in which it has been confirmed that at least two soldiers were killed. According to media sources, Baloch Liberation Army, which has been running a campaign to separate Balochistan from Pakistan, is suspected to be behind the attack. Government sources said the attackers were more than two dozen in number and were equipped with most modern weapons. They launched the attack on a security check post. Pakistan

government claimed that those who organised the attack have their headquarters in Afghanistan. Extremist organisations are active in Balochistan and Sindh for a long time now. According to German news agency DPA, armed rebels active in Balochistan are against the increasing influence of China in Pakistan. They are consistently opposed to the economic corridor between Pakistan and China. They say that by investing in Pakistan, China wants to make Balochistan their slave from the financial point of view.

Agreement likely between Ukraine and Russia



Hamara Samaj (December 25) reports that the US authorities have given the indication that talks are likely to be held next month over the tension that erupted following the deployment of troops on the border between Ukraine and Russia. Recently, Russian President Vladimir Putin said that he is hopeful of a positive outcome in the talks to be held in Geneva. He had given the indication that Russia may take some military action in this connection. However, he refuted charges of attack on Ukraine. However, the defence ministry of Ukraine claimed that more than one lakh Russian soldiers were despatched to its border. The US has threatened Russia that if it tries to attack Ukraine, then they would land in such a situation which they had never faced in the past. The White House spokesperson has refused to comment on the demand of the Russian President in which he had said that the US should stop all the activities of NATO in

Eastern Europe and stop Ukraine from joining the alliance. The spokesperson said the US is trying to ensure that the situation does not deteriorate further. If Russia doesn't change its attitude, then the US would impose economic sanctions on Russia.

Recently, when the issue of increasing tension near the Ukraine border was discussed with the Russian President, he said that we did not go near the border of either the US or Britain but are at our own border. He alleged that the US had cheated Russia five times under the guise of NATO and now we are not willing to tolerate it any longer and if the US begins the talks again, it doesn't mean that it is willing to accept the demand of Moscow and the NATO troops would withdraw to its 1997 position.

It is reported that along with Poland and Balkan states, the Western European nations are also opposing the stand that the US leaves them at the mercy of Russia. One demand of Russia is also that the US gives the guarantee that it won't allow Ukraine and Georgia to join the NATO alliance. Russia had attacked Georgia in 2008 and sliced away Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Recently, Russia sent additional forces to Crimea and the Russian Army is currently conducting military exercise there. Germany has expressed concern over the activities of Russian troops.

Dubai ruler to give 55 crore pounds to divorced wife



Mumbai Urdu News (December 23) reports that the verdict in the divorce case between Dubai ruler Sheikh Mohammed Rashid Al Maktoum and his wife Princess Haya, which has been going on for the past two years, has been delivered. As per the verdict, the Dubai ruler has to pay his former wife, 47-year-old Haya Bint Hussain, 55 crore pounds as alimony.

Inquilab (December 22) reports that this apart, the Dubai ruler has to pay Princess Haya an amount of 73.3 crore dollars for the upbringing of his two children. According to media sources, the British high court has also directed that out of the total amount, he has to hand over 25.1 crore pounds within three months to his former wife. Whereas in the same period, he has to give 30 lakh pounds and 1 crore pounds respectively to his 14 year-old daughter Jalila and 9 year-old son Zayed. For the security of the children he has to give 1.13 crore pounds every year. Interestingly, it is the biggest compensation amount in the history of the British family court though the demand raised by Princess Haya for 1.5 billion pounds in return for Talaq and the properties was rejected by

the court and she has been given only half of the amount.

It is to be noted that Dubai ruler Sheikh Rashid Al Maktoum married Haya, daughter of King Hassan of Jordan in 2004. She was his sixth wife. Two years ago, Princess Haya fled Dubai along with her two children and reached Germany and sought political asylum from the government there. She alleged that her husband used to thrash her and she was held as a prisoner in his palace and hence she got fed up and decided to flee from there along with her two children. After publication of the reports of her reaching Germany, Dubai ruler Al Maktoum announced that he had cut off all relationships with his wife. However, he expressed the wish for the return of his two children. Since Princess Haya is the sister of the present King of Jordan Abdullah II, the incident has led to strain in the relationship between the two countries.

Princess Haya is also a British citizen and hence she went to Britain from Germany and filed a case for divorce and maintenance allowance for her children. The Dubai ruler is aged 72 years and he has

23 children from seven other wives. The court in its decision had also directed the Dubai ruler to give his former wife two palaces as well. The court also directed that the Dubai ruler had to bear the entire expenses for the holidays of his wife and two children every year. This apart, the Dubai ruler has to bear all the expenses of

Princess Haya's and her two children's maids and pet animals. The court also directed that Al Maktoum has to give his children 56-56 lakh pounds every year. In order to ensure that the children get these amounts regularly, the court directed that Al Maktoum shall deposit 29 crore pounds as security deposit in a bank in London.

Decision to double the number of Jewish settlers on Golan Heights

Inquilab (December 28) states that Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said that his government has decided to double the population of Jewish settlers on Golan Heights. The project has been duly approved by the Israeli cabinet. It is to be noted that Israel captured this territory after the 1967 war and the United Nations has not approved this occupation till now and it is considered as a disputed territory. However, three years ago, former President of United States Donald Trump had recognised this territory as that of Israel. Later the US also made huge investments in the territory. However, many countries in Europe even now consider it as a disputed territory. However, the new President of US has approved the decision of the former US President. The Israeli Prime Minister said that two new cities for Jews would be created in the land. Nearly 21 crore dollars would be spent for this.



It is to be noted that currently more than 50,000 people reside on Golan Heights. Half of them are Israeli Jews. The rest are Arab and Alawite Shias. As per the new decision of Israeli government, the

population of Jews in the area would go up to more than one lakh.

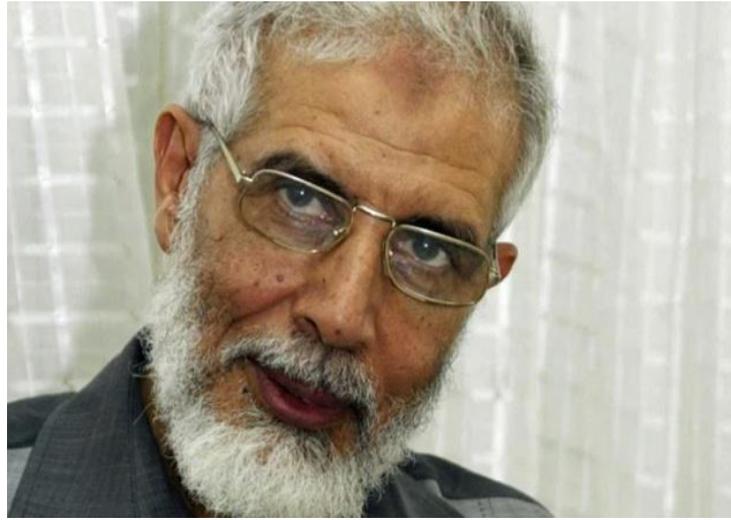
During the 1967 war, Israel had seized this portion of land from Syria. Later in 1981, it was duly declared that the land would be merged with Israel. However, the United Nations had refused to accept it. It still considers the territory as part of Syria. The Israeli Prime Minister had said that since the US President had recognised the region as part of Israel, it has decided to make investments in the territory. However, according to Syria and its militia Hamas, it is necessary to liberate the land from the clutches of Israel for the protection of Syria. Analysts believe that the Israeli decision could lead to more tension in the Arab world.

Muslim Brotherhood leader gets life-term in Egypt

Mumbai Urdu News (December 21) reports that the Supreme Court of Egypt has awarded life-term in jail to the chief of Muslim Brotherhood Mahmoud Ezzat

on charges of forging alliances with foreign organisations and putting the security of the country in danger. According to a government lawyer, in

order to promote terrorist activities in the country, he had spied on his own country for Iran's terrorist organisation Pasdaran-e-Inquilab, Hamas and Hezbollah and with their cooperation conspired to unleash violence in the country. The government also alleged that he provided information regarding the security of the country to foreign sources and forged secret



alliances with various groups working against the interests of Egypt. Not only this, he also provided funds for violent activities and ran secret terror camps in Gaza region and provided them financial help so that with their cooperation the strategy of Muslim Brotherhood could be reinforced throughout the world and rip apart the security and stability of Egypt.

The government has also confirmed that Mahmoud Ezzat, along with the chief of Ikhwan, was the main organiser of all the events in January 2011. It was on his instigation that the activists of Ikhwan started a psychological war, spread rumours and started using weapons and gave training to damage properties. His intention was to overthrow the government of Egypt in collusion with foreign elements. In order to achieve his aim, he took part in several meetings and secret conferences in foreign countries. His aim was to capture power in Egypt.

Comment: Ikhwanul Muslimeen (Muslim Brotherhood) is a fundamentalist Sunni Islamic extremist organisation. It was founded by renowned Islamic scholar and teacher Hassan al-Banna in Egypt in 1928. With help from different extremist Muslim organisations, the organisation captured

power in Egypt in 2012 under the guise of elections that took place following the revolution in 2011. In the past too, at least three times, in 1948, 1954 and in 1965, this organisation had intended to capture power after killing the then rulers of Egypt. This organisation's influence is spread over 80 countries in the world. The headquarters of its chief is in Cairo. It played a major role in founding organisations like Hamas. In the elections held in 2012, the candidate of this organisation, Mohammad Mursi, captured power in Egypt as its fifth President. However, in July 2013, Army chief General Abdul Fatah Al-Sisi raised the flag of rebellion and arrested Mursi who later died under suspicious circumstances in the jail. The new ruler, Al-Sisi declared Ikhwanul Muslimeen as an illegal organisation and put behind bars 50,000 people linked to the organisation. There were massive protests in the country against it but it was crushed with an iron hand by the military. Thousands of people were killed in this action. Later, the military administration filed treason charges against people linked to Muslim Brotherhood and special courts were set up for their trial and the court awarded death sentence to nearly 1,500 to 2,000 people. ■

Christmas celebrations in Saudi Arabia



Mumbai Urdu News (December 27) states that the Saudi government is playing in the hands of Jews and Christians. This is the reason why for the first time in the history of Saudi Arabia, the festival of Christmas is celebrated with lot of fanfare. On this occasion, decorative items related to Christmas were sold in a largescale in the markets of Saudi Arabia. A number of Muslims also purchased items to celebrate Christmas festival. In this connection, many burqa-clad Muslim women were also seen celebrating Christmas in several parks in the country. They purchased chocolates, decorative trees, the red colour dress and cap of Santa Claus in large quantities. A US woman residing in Saudi Arabia for the past seven years told Arab News that when she first came to Saudi Arabia neither there was permission for any Christian to celebrate Christmas nor one could find any decorative items related to Christmas in the markets. Nobody had permission to celebrate Christmas even inside their home. And if anyone was caught

celebrating Christmas secretly, the person used to get harsh punishment. She said that now the atmosphere has changed. Communal amity has increased. This time, even special events were held in many hotels and restaurants on the occasion of Christmas.

This newspaper in its edition on December 22 expressed surprise that in Saudi Arabia, Islamic tradition and Shariat are being destroyed. Saudi Crown Prince Salman is playing in the hands of Christians and Jews. Riyadh and its neighbouring regions have come alive with dances and music and it has been named as Sound Stardom Music Festival. More than seven lakh Saudi men and women took part in the festival. Majority of the Muslim women who took part in the festival did not wear burqa. A large number of young men and women sang and danced together without any masks. Islamic scholars are criticising the changing atmosphere in Saudi Arabia. Recently, the government has sent a number of scholars to the jail. ■

Campaign by Saudi Arabia against Houthi rebels

Inquilab (December 28) reports that the military alliance headed by Saudi Arabia has alleged that Iran and Hezbollah are helping the Houthi rebels in Yemen in launching drone and missile attacks on Saudi Arabia and at least two persons were killed in such attacks recently. However, Iran has refuted this allegation. Spokesperson of military alliance Turki Al-



Maliki has alleged in a press conference that the Houthi rebels are using the Sana'a airport to launch ballistic missiles and drones against Saudi Arabia. He alleged in a press conference that Hezbollah is giving training to Houthis on using landmines in secret camps set up in Sana'a and they are also trained to use explosives in drones. Al Maliki said that the all nations in the world have to impose a ban on the terrorism of Iran. From January 2018 till now, the Houthis have launched 430 ballistic missiles and 850 drone attacks on Saudi Arabia.

According to media, the Saudi military alliance has increased its air strikes on Sana'a. Major General Al Maliki said that they know the stations of Houthis and would destroy them. He claimed that till now more than 30,000 Houthi rebels have been killed. More than 100 small ships supplying weapons to Houthi militia from Iran have been destroyed.

Siasat (December 28) in its editorial expressed concern over the increasing attacks by Houthis in Saudi Arabia and said that the Houthis captured Yemen at the behest of Iran in 2014 and forced the Saudi supported government of Mansur Hadi to flee from there.

Mansur Hadi and his ministers have taken refuge in Saudi Arabia and are currently running a parallel government within the borders of Saudi Arabia with the support of the US. The US planes are targeting the positions of Houthis regularly.

The newspaper has written that Yemen was once divided into two parts and later a unity was established due to the efforts of Saudi Arabia. The newspaper said that Sunnis led by Mansur Hadi were ruling a part of Yemen. The other part was under the control of Shias. Till now, thousands of people have been killed in this Shia-Sunni war. According to United Nations, it is said that the number of killed would be more than 1.3 lakh. Unfortunately, there is no such leader in Arab nations who could guide the Islamic world and establish unity among different sects of Islam. Due to the increasing clashes between Sunnis and Shias, the Muslim world has got divided and due to this Islam has got weakened. The cooperation of Islamic nations established by Shah Faizal is no longer influential. What is required is to strengthen organisation of Islamic countries and promote Muslim unity.

Petition to conduct puja at Quwwat-ul-Islam Masjid dismissed

Inquilab (December 16) states that a court in Saket has dismissed a petition seeking right to conduct puja at Quwwatul Islam masjid located on Qutb Minar premises. The petition was filed in the name of Jain Thirthankar Bhagwan Rishabh Dev and Bhagwan Vishnu. The petition was filed by Harishankar Jain and Ranjana Agnihotri. In their petition, they claimed that Mohammad



Ghori built this masjid after conquering Delhi and destroying several Hindu and Jain mandirs located in the same place of Qutb Minar. Even today several pillars of this masjid bear the sculptors of Hindu devatas and devis. The court said that it would not be able to interfere in it as the Parliament had passed a law in 1991 in which it has been stated that the status of places of worship should be retained as it was in 1947.

It is to be noted that the petition of Harishankar Jain and others was questioned by Mohammad Asad Hayat and others on

behalf of Legal Action for Justice Trust and urged the court to reject the petition. On behalf of this trust, the court was informed that the India government had stated that Qutb Minar and its entire premises had been declared as a protected monument on January 16, 1914. In this building, no puja or archana were offered in the past 800 years. Nobody has questioned this government notification so far and neither there was any temple there. Senior civil judge Neha Sharma accepted the contention of this trust and directed the dismissal of the petition.

Muslim youth should keep away from Zakir Naik's organisation

Siasat (December 18) reports that Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) has announced that the organisation of controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, Islamic Research Foundation, has been declared as an unlawful organisation and if anyone maintains any kind of relationship with this organisation, then action would be taken against them



under UAPA and arrest them. The Central government has extended the ban imposed on this organisation. If any youth maintains any kind of relationship with this organisation, then action could be taken against him. This apart, nobody has any right to collect funds in the name of the organisation and take part in any activities related to the organisation.

Demand to arrest Shabnam Sheikh

Mumbai Urdu News (December 23) states that a delegation of Raza Academy met the Additional Commissioner of Mumbai Police Dilip Sawant and demanded the arrest of Shabnam Sheikh who has been accused of making an objectionable video of Prophet of Islam and against Islam. The delegation has claimed that Abdul Razak Mansoori has filed an FIR against Shabnam Sheikh at J J Marg police station. The provisions

under which the FIR has been registered are non-bailable. However, despite that, even after two weeks, she has not been arrested and she still continues to make objectionable videos against Muslims and the police are not taking any action against her in this connection. They also alleged that these people are planning communal riots in the country. The Maharashtra police should take immediate action in this connection.

Saudi Arabia extends help to Afghanistan

Roznama Sahara (December 20) reports that the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia Faizal bin Farhan has announced an aid of one billion Riyals to Afghanistan. He said that the help has been extended on



then lakhs

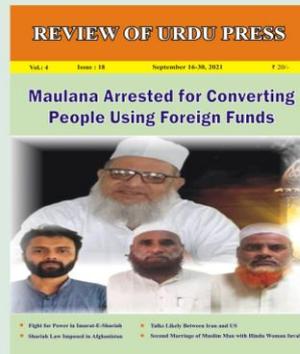
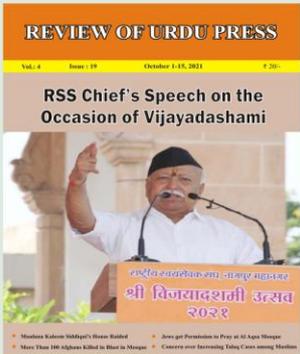
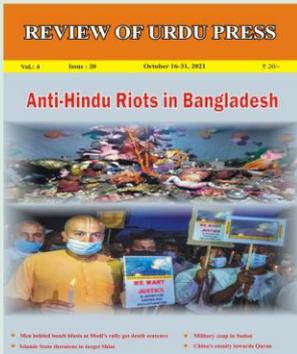
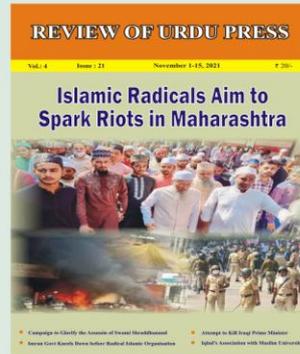
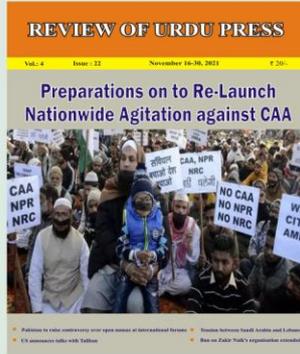
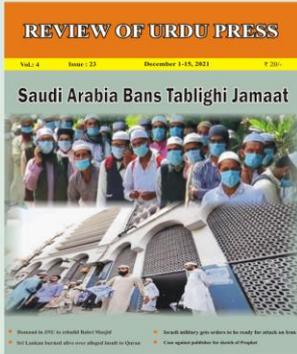
of people would die there. humanitarian basis. This is because there is a famine-like situation in Afghanistan and the economy is in doldrums. If people do not come forward to help the poor in that country,

Holiday on the death anniversary of Benazir Bhutto



Inquilab (December 26) states that the Sindh government has declared a holiday in the province during the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto. A large number of activists of Pakistan People's Party arrived at her mazaar in Larkana from different parts of the country to pay obeisance to her. Former political

secretary of Benazir Bhutto, Naheed Khan, has raised this issue that her party remained in power for a long time but did not do an investigation into the murder of Benazir Bhutto. He said that today Pakistan needs a person like Benazir Bhutto. This is because the present administration is leading Pakistan towards destruction.



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