

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

The Cockroach Janata Party are seeking to spread mayhem in India or else why would some random people rise against a system and a hugely elected government. The members of this group had been given a long rope to protests and vent their grievances but enough is enough. India is a democracy with rule of law. Governments are made and thrown out by peoples’ mandate and not by a group of protesting people who spring up from nowhere and are a proxy for the defeated leaders and parties. If the CJP leaders want to challenge the leadership they must fight elections and do so; if they are unhappy with certain decisions of the Election Commission of India or any other organ of the system, they can approach the courts. Holding demonstration is surely a democratic right but the protests cannot go on endlessly and become an events for anti-national and indecent blabbering.

The world is facing a lot of problems due to the ongoing wars, which followed the nearly three year COVID clampdown across the world. Indian economy has withstood all these tumults but now the dangers are close. As External Affairs Minister Dr S Jaishankar said the world, including India, can face food crisis, due to the unending disruption of global supply chains. The latest trouble is the Hoiuti emerging as another spoiler in the West Asia. Indian economy can be show only a limited immunity to the impact of all these developments. Surely at this critical stage, we don’t want any more internal disruptions. The CJP protests are meant to generate a Nepal like situation in India. India is doing well in dealing with its internal conflicts liker Kashmir, left wing extremism, etc. and its economy has been consistently doing well despite the global upheavals and challenges. You Tubers and social media influencers can spare us disruption in India’s growth story.

Shri Ramdas Athawale

A just and inclusive society is built on the assurance that every citizen can live with dignity, equality and security. For the Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs), this commitment finds concrete expression through strong constitutional safeguards, effective laws and responsive institutions. The Government of India has, therefore, continued to strengthen the legal and institutional framework for preventing atrocities, protecting victims and ensuring timely access to justice.

Two key legislations form the foundation of this framework: the Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, commonly known as the PCR Act, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, popularly known as the SC/ST (PoA) Act. Over the years, these laws have been strengthened through legislative amendments, enhanced relief and rehabilitation provisions, special judicial mechanisms, grievance-redressal systems and financial assistance to States and Union Territories.

A Stronger Legal Framework for Justice The SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 has evolved significantly to respond more effectively to the challenges faced by communities vulnerable to caste-based atrocities. A major step in this direction came through the amendments that came into force on January 26, 2016.

The amendments provided for Exclusive Special Courts for the speedy trial of offences and the appointment of Exclusive Special Public Prosecutors. Several new forms of atrocities were also incorporated into the Act, thereby widening the legal protection available to SC and ST communities.

Equally important was the insertion of a dedicated chapter dealing with the rights of victims and witnesses. The responsibilities of State Governments towards victims, their dependants and witnesses were strengthened, recognising that justice must extend beyond the registration and trial of a case to the protection, dignity and rehabilitation of those affected.

The SC/ST (PoA) Rules, 1995 were subsequently amended on April 14, 2016. These amendments strengthened the relief and re-

habilitation framework, enhanced the prescribed relief for 47 offences of atrocities and emphasised timely disbursement of financial assistance to victims and their dependants.

Ensuring Timely Access to Justice Further important changes were introduced through the amendment of the SC/ST (PoA) Act on August 20, 2018. The amendment removed the requirement of a preliminary enquiry before registration of a First Information Report in cases under the Act. It also removed the requirement of prior approval for the arrest of a person accused of committing an offence under the Act.

The objective was clear: procedural requirements should not become an impediment to the registration, investigation and prosecution of offences involving atrocities against SCs and STs.

The SC/ST (PoA) Rules, 1995 were also amended on June 27, 2018, further strengthening relief provisions in cases involving death, injury, rape, gang rape, acid attacks, damage to property and other offences covered by the law.

These reforms underline a important principle that the law must not only be strong on paper but must also be accessible and responsive when a victim seeks protection and justice.

Strengthening Exclusive Special Courts for Speedy Trial

As reported by States and Union Territories, 217 Exclusive Special Courts have been established in 15 States and Union Territories for trial of offences under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The Act also provides for designation of Courts of Session as Special Courts in districts where the number of cases is relatively lower, with the concurrence of the Chief Justice of the concerned High Court.

The establishment and strengthening of Exclusive Special Courts is aimed at facilitating speedy trial and effective disposal of cases under the Act and ensuring that victims have access to specialized judicial mechanisms.

Taking Grievance Redressal Closer to Citizens

Legal protection is meaningful only when citizens are aware of their rights and can access appropriate assistance. Keeping this in

view, the National Helpline Against Atrocities (NHAA) on SCs and STs was launched on December 13, 2021 subsequently re-named SAMBAL.

The Toll-Free 1800-202-1989 and short code HELPLINE 14566, is designed to create greater awareness about the provisions of the SC/ST (PoA) Act and facilitate access to information, guidance and grievance-redressal mechanisms. It provides an important avenue for individuals affected by atrocities to understand their legal rights and the remedies available to them.

By strengthening awareness and accessibility, the helpline complements the broader institutional framework for protection and justice.

Strengthening Implementation on the Ground

The effectiveness of any legislation ultimately depends on its implementation. The Government has therefore issued Scheme Guidelines after consultations with stakeholders and concerned Ministries and Departments to facilitate the effective implementation of the PCR Act, 1955 and the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989.

The guidelines provide a structured framework for extending assistance to States and Union Territories and strengthening measures relating to prevention, protection, relief, rehabilitation and awareness.

The Government has also responded to practical challenges arising during implementation. For instance, questions had arisen regarding the authority responsible for providing relief to victims or dependants who had migrated from one State or Union Territory to another.

To bring clarity and uniformity, a clarification issued on June 20, 2025 established that the relief amount prescribed under the SC/ST (PoA) Rules shall be provided by the State or Union Territory in which the FIR has been registered under the Act.

Such measures are important because the protection available under the law must remain effective even when victims or their dependants move across State or Union Territory boundaries. The clarification facilitates timely disbursement of relief and strengthens consistency in implementation.

Central Assistance with a Focus on Victims and Social Inclusion

The Centrally Sponsored Scheme for the

implementation of the PCR Act, 1955 and the SC/ST (PoA) Act, 1989 provides financial support to States and Union Territories for strengthening enforcement mechanisms, providing relief and rehabilitation to victims and promoting social integration.

Since 2014-15, Central Assistance of ₹5,012.17 Crore has been released under the scheme. During this period, approximately 7,26,588 Victims Of Atrocities have been provided relief, while 2,21,716 Couples have received incentives for inter-caste marriages.

These figures represent more than financial allocations and beneficiary numbers. They reflect the Government’s continuing effort to ensure that victims receive support when they need it and that social harmony is encouraged through measures that promote equality and integration.

Justice, Dignity and Equality at the Centre The strengthening of the SC/ST (PoA) Act and Rules, establishment of special judicial mechanisms, enhancement of relief and rehabilitation provisions, creation of a national helpline, issuance of implementation guidelines and sustained Central financial assistance together constitute a comprehensive approach towards the protection of SC and ST communities.

Our commitment is not limited to responding to atrocities after they occur. It is equally about prevention, awareness, institutional accountability, timely relief, rehabilitation and creating conditions in which every citizen can live with dignity and without fear.

The Constitution of India guarantees equality, dignity and justice to all citizens. Protecting these values requires continuous vigilance, effective implementation and close cooperation between the Centre, States and Union Territories.

The Government will continue to work towards strengthening these mechanisms, addressing implementation challenges and ensuring that legal safeguards translate into meaningful protection on the ground. For SCs and STs, justice must not merely be a constitutional promise it must be experienced as a lived reality of dignity, security, equality and opportunity.

(The Author is Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment)

THE PILGRIMAGE WITHIN



cause most of us fail to understand the fact that such a transformation takes place only in the soul and cannot be brought about by a physical exercise of going on a pilgrimage.

Remember! A holy place can inspire us, but it cannot change us unless we work on ourselves. Hence, true pilgrimage begins not at the first step on a mountain trail, but at the first moment of honest inner intro-

spection. We must thus understand that a subtle transformation requires spiritual effort, and for that the soul has to travel to the holiest of abodes, which is called the soul world, which is the home of all souls as well as the Supreme Soul. It is a region of eternal peace and purity from where all souls come down to this planet to play their role in the world drama.

The practice by which the soul journeys

to that abode is called Rajyoga. One must understand that the soul itself does not travel there, but goes there by a thought, by remembering that abode and its Father, the Supreme Soul, who lives there. When the soul thus establishes a link of love with its home and Father, the qualities of peace, purity, love and power begin to flow into it.

This unique experience nourishes the soul, empowers it and cleanses it of all the impurities that it has acquired by coming under the negative influences of this world. This lovely spiritual journey, when performed even for a short while daily, gradually makes the soul strong enough to resist all that is harmful to its well-being, and get rid of vices that give it sorrow. This journey does not require any money, prior bookings, other material resources or physical strain. In fact, it can be performed in the comfort of one's home, any time one likes, and for as long as one wants. Isn't it exciting? So what are you waiting for? Let's embark on this wonderful journey of self-transformation and get empowered from within.

The writer is a spiritual teacher and a popular columnist; Views presented are personal.

India’s blue economy: The next wave of opportunity

Jitendra Singh

For centuries, the ocean has carried India's trade, shaped its coastal cultures and strengthened its strategic influence. Today, with an 11,098-kilometre coastline, vast marine resources and a commanding position in the Indian Ocean, it offers a new frontier for India's development.

As the nation advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047, the Blue Economy is emerging as a powerful pathway to prosperity, sustainability and national strength. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has placed this opportunity at the heart of India's growth vision. His 80th Independence Day speech identified the Blue Economy as one of the seven streams, or Sapta-Dhara, that will propel the country forward.

The Blue Economy is not simply an economy of the ocean, but of people, ideas and possibilities. It is about securing better livelihoods for fisherfolk and coastal communities, creating opportunities for entrepreneurs and investors, strengthening food and energy security, and using science to build climate-resilient coasts. Above all, it is about ensuring that economic progress and environmental responsibility move

together.

This opportunity is accompanied by urgent challenges. Marine pollution and climate change are putting tremendous pressure on marine resources. These challenges can become catalysts for innovation, sustainable intervention and investment. By accelerating technology development, enterprise creation and capital mobilisation, India can transform emerging sectors such as offshore renewable energy, marine biotechnology, advanced aquaculture, ocean data services, sustainable tourism and deep-sea technologies into powerful engines of Blue Economy growth.

A strong Blue Economy can transform sustainable fisheries and aquaculture to improve incomes and nutritional security. Modern ports, shipping and logistics can enhance trade competitiveness. Offshore renewable energy can support India's clean-energy transition. Marine tourism can generate local enterprise and employment, while ocean science, forecasting and digital services can protect lives, assets and livelihoods. Together, these sectors can strengthen maritime security, technological self-reliance and India's leadership across the Indian Ocean Region.

India therefore sees the Blue Econ-



omy not as a collection of isolated schemes, but as an integrated national development strategy. Its guiding principle is that science must shape policy, policy must enable enterprise, and institutions must deliver measurable value for people and the planet. The Ministry of Earth Sciences is building the scientific, technological and institutional foundation for this transition.

Through the Deep Ocean Mission, marine spatial planning pilots, ocean-observation networks, digital platforms, forecasting systems and advanced marine services, the Ministry is converting ocean knowledge into public value. Indigenous capabilities in deep-sea exploration, marine biotechnology, ocean energy and desalination are

opening pathways for resource security, innovation and self-reliance. Fisheries advisories, early-warning services and shoreline-management interventions are supporting coastal livelihoods and strengthening disaster preparedness.

The next phase must be defined by scale, speed and impact. India requires integrated ocean governance, stronger coordination, credible project pipelines and wider use of digital technologies for evidence-based decisions. With Blue Economy investments projected to rise from approximately Rs 3.9 lakh crore during 2015-2025 to nearly Rs 25.8 lakh crore during 2026-2035, the opportunity is historic. Innovative finance, responsible private capital, startup participation and transparent

implementation will be essential to translate this potential into sustainable outcomes. Coastal communities must remain active partners and primary beneficiaries throughout this journey. The most exciting chapter belongs to India's youth. To every young entrepreneur, investor, scientist, technologist, professional and skilled worker, the ocean economy offers a horizon without limits. Traditional sectors such as ports, shipping, logistics, fisheries and tourism are being reimaged through automation, digital platforms, cleaner fuels, electric mobility and sustainable operations. Emerging fields such as offshore renewable energy, marine biotechnology, deep-sea technologies, aquaculture, marine robotics, artificial intelligence for oceans, island tourism, electric boats and green maritime systems are creating new careers, enterprises and investment possibilities.

This is the moment to build future-ready skills, launch startups, develop indigenous technologies, invest responsibly and transform research into scalable solutions. Our universities, laboratories, industries and coastal communities must become connected spaces of experimentation and enterprise. Young Indians can design smarter fishing systems, cleaner ves-

sels, resilient ports, ocean-data platforms, bio-based products and technologies that explore the deep sea while protecting its fragile ecosystems.

The Blue Economy is not a distant promise. It is a national mission waiting for a generation bold enough to lead it. I call upon India's youth to bring their imagination, courage and ingenuity to this blue wave of transformation. Let our oceans become laboratories of innovation, engines of livelihoods and pathways to sustainable prosperity. Together, we can build an ocean economy that is productive yet responsible, globally competitive yet locally empowering, and aligned with the spirit of Sapta-Dhara. The journey towards Viksit Bharat 2047 will be shaped not only on land, but across the vast blue expanse that surrounds and connects us.

As the nation advances towards Viksit Bharat 2047, the Blue Economy is emerging as a powerful pathway to prosperity, sustainability and national strength. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi has placed this opportunity at the heart of India's growth vision

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