

The UPA makes corruption a cause

ARUN JAITLEY·FRIDAY, 29 MARCH 2019

On 28th March, 2019, an unprecedented protest took place in Bengaluru. Holding party flags, JDS and Congress leaders assembled outside the Income Tax Office to protest against income tax searches with a political motivation. They alleged that Ministers had been searched. The best evidence they could provide for was that the “Nephew” of a Minister was searched. In an unprecedented move the Chief Minister and Ministers of the State decided to join the protest.

What actually happened?

The tax authorities in Bengaluru had issued a press statement. The statement categorically said no MP, MLA, Minister was searched.

The search was not against any politician or even political workers. The search was only against Contractors and Engineers of the PWD Department of the State. This has categorically appeared in the media. If no Politician has been searched, no Minister has been searched, then why the protest?

The needle of suspicion

The disproportionality of the reaction of the Congress and the JDS raises a needle of suspicion. Why the Chief Minister and the Ministers be seen raising slogans on the streets when corrupt Contractors and Engineers are being searched? Was the Minister’s Nephew a PWD Contractor to whom largesses have been given – a case of nepotism? There is a lurking suspicion due to the disproportionality of the reaction that the protestors were more concerned with regard to the “substance” of the search. Did they have a vicarious pecuniary interest in the substance? Is it a case where the PWD Department pays the Contractors, the Engineers being the collecting agents and the principals of the agents turn protestors? These questions have to be answered by the Chief Minister and all the Cabinet Ministers who joined the protest.

Is the States’ attitude a threat to federalism?

Federalism is not merely the Rights of the States. Indian federalism entails India as a “Union of States”. The Rights of the Union are equally important. Security of India, sovereignty, dealing with terrorism, managing the borders, Custom Check Points, Income Tax

enforcement are all amongst the several Constitutional powers of the Union. If the States stand in way of any of them it is guilty of breaching federal norms. Can a State barge its Police into the Customs area and direct the Customs as to what is to be done? This would be a threat to federalism. Many States have stopped giving Police security to Income Tax authorities when they conduct their operations. Alternatively when State Police is asked for, the information is leaked out to the political Government and it reaches the targets of the operations. Tax authorities increasingly have to rely on Central Forces. In the Kashmir Valley recently, searches have conducted under the Governor's Rule after 17 years. These taxes are meant for the welfare of the poor in India.

The above illustrates a text book method of the UPA on 2 fronts: use Government money, round trip it through Contractors and beneficiaries and enrich themselves.

The second is lip sympathy for federalism and destroy it whenever the opportunity arises.

This is a very transparent self goal.

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