

# Finally, victory!

*The campaign to declare Masood Mohammed Azhar as a global terrorist finally bore fruit when China, which had blocked the effort on technical grounds, agreed to support the move. Prof. P.M. Kamath discusses the reasons behind this, and what it means for India.*



Finally Masood Azhar was declared a global terrorist

For almost a decade, India's effort to declare dreaded terrorist Masood Mohammed Azhar, Founder and the Chief of terror organisation, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) as a global terrorist was being blocked by China on behalf of its all-weather friend, Pakistan, on one ground or the other. However, after incessant efforts, the Modi government succeeded in gaining it on May 1, 2019.

## Importance of the ban

Mohammed Azhar was first arrested in Kashmir in 1994, when the Congress was in power at the Centre. An Indian Airlines flight from Kathmandu was hijacked to Kandahar in December 1999, pressurising the then BJP-led NDA government under A.B.Vajpayee to give into emotional

pressure, and release the three terrorists, including Mohammed Azhar.

Then onwards, Azhar has been a valued asset in foreign policy making of Pakistan, for its Army and its Intelligence agency, ISI. There is a method in the madness of Pakistan using terrorist attacks against India. While JeM has been used against BJP-led governments — NDA I and NDA II, Hafiz Saeed has been used against UPA I and II.

Thus, Masood Azhar and his JeM were instrumental in hitting Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) legislative assembly in October 2001, the Indian Parliament in December 2001, and more recently, to compel the Modi government to initiate talks with their patron-government — Pakistan, at Pathankot airbase, in January 2016,

and Uri in September 2016. The Uri attack prompted the government to conduct surgical strike at the terrorist training camp in POK.

However, what really made the government to say, thus far, and no more at the use of terror instrument by the Pakistan is; the JeM suicide attacks on CRPF soldiers at Pulwama on 14<sup>th</sup> February, 2019, in which 40 soldiers were killed, reducing them to charred bodies beyond recognition. Prime Minister (PM) Modi had said that the perpetrators would be made to pay for their crime. For that the nation was not made to wait long. On 26<sup>th</sup> February, the Indian Air Force stealthily moved deep into Islamabad's Balakot and attacked JeM terror training camp.

(continued on page 35...)

place in day-to-day life, and can one really attain moksha while practicing domestic life? How does one keep detached from issues around us? The entry of Tukaram would also have brought in a male perspective, which is lacking in the present avatar of the play. Tukaram occupies an important place in the history of saint poets of Maharashtra.

The tradition of saint poetry starts with Dynaneshwar who wrote Dyaneshwari when he was in his early 20s, in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D.

## Finally, victory!

(continued from page 33...)

### China relents

How did the changes in the Chinese approach on the issue come about? First and foremost, after the Pulwama attack, the Indian government was determined to deny any more opportunity to China to put off once again the issue of Azhar's declaration as international terrorist on technical hold. It indicated strength of Indian diplomacy and geopolitical manoeuvres, and the mobilisation of international support especially by France, US and the UK (in order of the significance of their contributions). What is significant is: India made even an Islamic country like Indonesia to join the efforts in the UN and force re-evaluation by China.

Both China and Pakistan see India as the common adversary with a history of unresolved national borders. Pakistan sees a perpetual national security threat to its survival. China is using Pakistan as a pawn in its ambition to confine and limit India as merely a South Asian nation than emerge as a Superpower. What is interesting is: China claims a right to remain actively involved with almost all Indian neighbours, by weaving, what Americans call as a 'string of pearls,' all around Indian borders. Yet, it denies a reciprocal right to India to promote its security interests in Southeast Asia.

Third, however, once three

Since the days of Dynaneshwar, saint poets have become integral to Maharashtra, and in this long tradition, Tukaram holds an eminent position. Tukaram's poetry was revolutionary, and challenged the vested interests. So finally they managed to sink his poetry in the River Indrayani. The character of powerful saint poet Tukaram would have raised the intellectual height of this play. Despite this handicap, Sangeet Devbabhali is a huge success, and definitely worth a dekho.

permanent members extended their support to Indian move, it would have been an expose as to how wrongly China is supporting international terrorism for its own interest, especially because the UN had already declared JeM as a terrorist organisation.

Fourth, China was keen to see that India was not pushed further into the US fold under the rubric of India-US Strategic partnership, which was evident with the growing clout of India in the changed perspective of Asia-Pacific region turned into an Indo-Pacific region. Since the US has an ongoing trade war with China, it was necessary to keep India neutral.

Fifth, should China permit entire credit for naming Azhar as an international terrorist to the US, France and the UK, when earlier the terrorist group he led, was named as an international terror group with China's support? China desired to help India, with the reciprocal help in diluting its criticism of One Belt One Road (OBOR), especially on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. The Chinese had also expressed apprehensions of JeM terrorists attacking Chinese workers.

### Domestic critics

In the heat of electioneering, the Congress Party tried to win some brownie points by claiming it was the UPA government that had in 2009 taken Azhar's case to the UN Committee to declare him as an international



**Prof. Avinash Kolhe** retired as Associate Professor in Political Science from D.G. Ruparel College,

Mumbai.

terrorist.

Even if that was true, they have never answered what they did as a follow up action, while the Modi government during its five years pushed the issue on six occasions, to be blocked each time, before success on the 7<sup>th</sup> attempt on May 1!

India needs to learn three lessons in this case. First, the opposition needs to accept significant contrast in efforts made by them while in power to get Azhar named as an international terrorist, and the success of the Modi government. Second, China by obliging India, has extended a hand of cooperation to work for an 'Asian century', expecting Indian help in facing the US trade war. Beyond that, India needs to strengthen its domestic laws. While we have a law to ban terrorist organisations, we do not have a law to name an individual as a terrorist. Enacting immediately such a law will help India to strengthen her hand in claiming international cooperation within the UN!



**Prof. P.M. Kamath** is former Professor of Politics, University of Bombay, and currently Chairman and

Director, VPM's Centre for International Studies (Regd.), affiliated to Mumbai University. His latest book is: *Terrorism Miscellany* (New Delhi: Gyan 2017)