

A close-up portrait of Rajeev Chandrasekhar, a man with a beard and glasses, looking directly at the camera. The background is a gradient of blue and black.

# MY WORK AS A PARLIAMENTARIAN

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR

**SPEECHES & LETTERS**

VOLUME II

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My Work  
As A  
Parliamentarian

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

SPEECHES & LETTERS

Volume II

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# PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

## INTRODUCTION

The #ProtectOurChildren campaign is an initiative that I launched in July 2014 that seeks to ensure a, more robust institutional response to incidents of Child Sexual Abuse.

It seeks to do so by formulating solutions through strong consultative processes that have the active involvement of diverse stakeholders- parents, students, teachers, counsellors, school managements etc. apart from academics and legal experts in deliberations to ensure a more proactive approach to child safety.

The campaign advocates a three pronged approach to tackling the malaise of Child Sexual Abuse, through increasing accountability, bolstering mechanisms for prevention, and ensuring swifter prosecution.

### **I. Increasing Accountability**

- a. Amending the POCSO Act:
- b. Hold the Department of Public Instruction of various states accountable. State Governments must be responsible for safety of all children and must be held to account

### **II. Better Prevention**

- a. Protect our children from known child predators and make India unwelcome for child predators: Create an Online Sexual Offenders Registry.

- b. Rigorous, mandatory verification processes for hiring of school staff and others placed in positions of responsibility for the protection of children.
- c. Need for effective Special Child Crime Cells in Police Stations - ensure the proper working of Special Juvenile Police Stations.

### **III. Swifter Prosecution**

- a. Sensitizing the institutional response to CSA : How a sensitive police, judiciary, medical personnel and others involved will ensure increased reporting of Child Sexual Abuse.
- b. Instituting Fast Track Courts and appointing Special Public Prosecutors.
- c. Reviving the NCPCR
- d. Improve child residential care facilities and orphanage

PROTECT OUR  
CHILDREN

Speeches



# 1

## Parliamentary Discussion on the Working of the Ministry of Women & Child Development

Rajya Sabha

13th August, 2014

Sir,

Thank you for allowing me to speak on the working of the Women and Child Development Ministry.

Sir, the challenges faced by Women and Children in India are many, and despite some improvements, they continue to struggle in almost all aspects of safety, development and opportunity. I would like to talk about all these areas, but given the time constraints, I will focus on the issue of safety of children.

In a 2013 report, the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) confirmed that incidents of crime against women and children in cities, have seen a disturbing upward trend – the rate of crime in

the 53 mega cities of our country is a high 69.7, up from 21.0 in 2011, which is significantly higher than the national rate of 52.2. The report also shows an upward trend in crimes committed against children, which went up from 33,098 cases registered in 2011 to 58,224 cases registered in 2013.

Only recently, my city Bengaluru has seen a number of shameful cases of pedophilia ranging from 2-year to 6-year olds being molested and raped, even in so-called private schools, with many hundreds of cases going unreported.

In response to a Question that I raised in this House on 17th July, 2014, the Ministry claimed that the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) is “already empowered enough under the provision of POCSO”. Given that the number of cases registered have risen from 97 in 2011 to 270 in 2013 and the number of people convicted have only risen from 13 in 2011 to 17 in 2013, one cannot agree with this statement by the Ministry.

My recommendations to address this situation holistically are as follows:

1. Amending existing legislation to make it more effective and create specific mandates and targets for NCPCR and creation of State Commissions for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCRs).
2. Create an awareness, sensitivity, focus and accountability in the Education Department that regulates schools, our police, prosecution and judiciary, including the need for Child Crime Units and fast track courts.
3. Creating an awareness in Society and communities reporting these crimes, and creating counseling capacities for children and parents affected by these crimes.
4. Creating Annual Report Cards for States on women and child safety to highlight State Governments that are making real progress.

Sir, I will touch on one of these issues, i.e., to make the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act more effective. Let me share the case of one 2½ year old child in Bangalore who was a victim in January this year. While the police and the investigating team moved quickly in that case and charged the criminal, who was a school bus driver, and some others as accessories – two weaknesses in POCSO quickly emerged. One is that the school and its management - who are responsible otherwise for every other safety aspect - are not covered by POCSO, and secondly, that the case has yet to come to trial despite all this time because States have yet to create the Fast Track Courts mandated under POCSO. My own studies show that no state in India has yet formed Fast Track Courts for POCSO crimes despite the Act being passed such a long time ago. So the question arises - What has the Ministry been doing and what has the NCPCR been doing all this while?

Sir, on 23rd July this year, I had submitted a Zero Hour Mention in Parliament on the need for strengthening the POCSO Act so as to bring School Managements under the ambit of the law and therein equip the system to take strong action. Before this, I had also submitted a notice in Parliament for a Short Duration Discussion on the subject of child safety. Unfortunately these discussions couldn't happen due the priorities of the House. I urge the Ministry to ensure the amendment of the POCSO Act to ensure school managements are brought under the ambit of the law and are made accountable for the safety of children within the school premises. The police must create child crime cells in all police stations where FIRs and complaints can be registered immediately. Public prosecutors must create specialists in prosecuting these cases, which in turn must be tried in Fast Track Courts to ensure speedy trials and convictions. Exemplary punishment and sentences must be prescribed under POCSO. These would aid in creating a culture of Zero Tolerance towards crimes against children – regardless of their stature, caste or creed.

Sir, to end, I would like to suggest a bifurcation within the Ministry, of Child Safety and Women's safety and welfare. To a Parliamentary Question I had asked, the Minister had replied - "As the issues relating to women and children such as health, hygiene, development, protection, nutrition etc. are interlinked, the Government is not considering to have a separate Ministry for Child Welfare". While the case may not exist for a separate Child Welfare Ministry, it is clearly not the case that children's' safety and women's safety are linked. They are two very different issues – Child abuse and assault occur at homes and schools, and women's safety issues are in the external world. There are over 400 million children in India, which constitutes approximately 30% of the population. Children have specialized social, psychological and health needs – and these cannot be subsumed into a mandate for a group of people – women - who have equally complex needs. The focus on these two separate issues needs to be driven by either departments or institutions like National Commission for Women (NCW) and NCPCR that have to date not covered themselves with glory.

Sir, as a nation, we have let down our children on this issue of safety and are continuing to let them down. Let the Hon'ble Minister change this permanently by making Child Safety the focus of the Ministry for next five years – to tackle this shameful scourge head-on, with a combined effort of legislation, enforcement and advocacy. The Governance and Parliamentary response needs to be driven proactively, and not in reaction to the next horrific crime.

Thank you. Jai Hind.

## 2

# Parliamentary Discussion on Crimes Against Children and the Need to Amend POCSO Act

Rajya Sabha

23rd July, 2014

I draw your attention to the heinous crime that took place in Bangalore recently, where a six-year student of Class One was raped in a school, allegedly by school staff. This is the second reported case including one involving a two-year old child in January this year.

These incidents raise several questions about the procedures / steps being taken to ensure the safety of children inside school. As mentioned, Bangalore has seen a similar crime a few months ago where a 2½ year old child studying in a pre-school was molested by the driver of the school bus inside the school premises. The police subsequently arrested the driver.

I had raised a Question in Parliament on 17 July, 2014 on the total number of cases of child exploitation & sexual offences recorded

this year & those being prosecuted under the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act. The facts provided in the Government's response on the matter were shocking. The POCSO Act effectively addresses the heinous crimes of sexual abuse & sexual exploitation of children. While the Ministry of Women & Child Development claims that the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights is already empowered enough under the provision of POCSO, the percentage of convictions against the cases registered does not reflect that. It is alarming to note that while the number of cases registered have risen from 97 in 2011 to 270 in 2013, the number of people convicted have only risen from 13 in 2011 to 17 in 2013.

Children are the most vulnerable members of our society. It is the duty and obligation of society to care and nurture them. Sexual offences and crimes against children are the worst and most horrific forms of cruelty, especially when perpetrated by adults, because it violates basic trust and humanity. Crimes committed at school are even worse because it violates the trust that the parents and children repose on the school and teachers.

Given the heinous nature of these crimes, I urge the Parliament and Government to take all the necessary steps, including amending the POCSO Act to ensure school managements are brought under the ambit of the law, and school management and teachers are made accountable and responsible for safety of children in school premises. The police must create child crime cells in all police stations where FIRs and complaints can be registered immediately. Public prosecutors must create specialists in prosecuting these cases and the prosecution of these cases must be in special fast track courts to ensure speedy trial and conviction of guilty. Exemplary punishment and sentences must be sought under POCSO act for those convicted of crimes against children. The Government must create a culture of zero tolerance towards crime and criminals - however big or small, regardless of caste or creed.

# 3

## Parliamentary Discussion on The Juvenile Justice (Care & Protection of Children) Bill, 2015

Rajya Sabha

22nd December, 2015

Thank you for permitting me to speak on The Juvenile Justice Bill, 2015.

### **1. Preamble: Victim's Rights Need to be Protected**

I believe that this is an important Bill that requires discussion and passing. Sir, this Bill could and should have been debated before Jyoti Singh's juvenile murderer's release triggered the public outcry. That would have shown Parliament as being responsible and responsive. But I suppose better late than never.

This recent release of the Juvenile accused in the brutal murder of Jyoti Singh Panday, has spotlighted a grave lacuna in our criminal justice system that lets juveniles committing violent crimes go scot free – putting a spotlight on justice and victims' rights. A desire

for justice should not be seen as Vengeance. This Bill is addressing women victims' rights.

## **2. Premise: Need for a New Juvenile Justice Bill**

Sir, let me quote some data about juvenile crimes reported by the NCRB. There has been a staggering 143 per cent increase in the number of rapes committed by juveniles between 2002 to 2012.

In the same period, figures for murders committed by minors went up by 87 per cent, and a whopping 500 per cent increase was noted in the number of kidnappings of women and girls by minors. Last Tuesday, the Hon'ble Minister informed Lok Sabha about 50.6 per cent increase in Juvenile Crimes and 42 per cent increase in Arrests.

Significantly, the percentage of violent crimes registered against juveniles in 2012 was about 15.6 per cent of total IPC crimes committed by juveniles in 2012 of which murder (990) and rape (1,175) constituted only 7.7 per cent of total IPC crimes committed by juveniles (27,936). This clearly indicates that violent crimes, such as murder and rape, constituted a sizeable proportion of the crimes registered against juveniles.

Sir, since the tragic and brutal murder of Jyoti Singh, it has become clear that the people of India are calling for Parliament to review the law pertaining to violent crimes committed by Juveniles. In light of the data I quoted earlier, it is certain that some deterrent may be required to prevent the alarming pace of increase in these crimes.

In light of these shocking facts, I would like to assert that I am in full support of the principle behind section 15 of the Bill, which requires that Juveniles above the age of 16, who have been accused of heinous offences, be assessed for their maturity and understanding of the consequences of their criminal actions.

I will make two points about the Bill:

**A. Justice for victims is important. However, at the same time, we must protect the Constitutional Rights of juveniles to due process and make sure wrong juveniles are not thrown into the criminal justice system.**

Sir, as far as our Constitutional Principles are concerned, a child is a child is a child. Sir, under Chapter 1, Clause 2 (33), the definition of “heinous offences” is too broad. This is a vital definition because this definition is what flings a juvenile into our criminal justice system. It is too broad and vague. The definition of “heinous offences” must be explicit. I must urge the Minister to make explicit the definition of “heinous offences” and not link it to all crimes with a certain prison term. Let heinous offence be defined as Murder, Rape, terrorism and/or child trafficking. On this clarity hinges our decision to treat a child as an adult. Madam Minister, please amend this.

I also agree with my colleague, Derek, that Clause 82 that penalizes child traffickers with lower punishment than those who supply intoxication to children needs correction. Sir, Child trafficking is widespread and needs cracking down on. The punishment in clause 82 must be more than that of clause 78. But since the Leader of the House has clarified this, I will assume that this is the intention.

**B. Mechanism Proposed by the Juvenile Justice Bill requires a re-look today or at least sometime soon.**

Sir, we must not lose sight of fact that many of these children committing crimes or being accessories to crime are between 16-18 years and will be from poor backgrounds, and not able to defend themselves through a complex and long process. Given the importance of JJB and CWC to the child’s custody and prosecution, genuine fears of extortion of families have arisen.

The robustness of the mechanism that the Juvenile Justice Act will prescribe to determine whether a child must be tried as an adult or as a juvenile, is something that needs further study.

Section 15 of the Bill, which deals with the preliminary enquiry conducted by the Board, is of immediate relevance. The section prescribes that the *“Juvenile Justice Board shall conduct a preliminary assessment with regard to a Juvenile’s mental and physical capacity to commit such offence, ability to understand the consequences of the offence and the circumstances in which he allegedly committed the offence.”*

The provision further suggests that the Board “may take the assistance of experienced psychologists or psycho-social workers or other experts” in making this assessment.

Sir, JJB is critical to the juveniles’ rights. JJB will assess whether a child alleged to have committed a heinous offence, has the physical and mental capability to commit the offense, and also the *‘circumstances in which he allegedly committed the offence’*. In order to protect our children, we must ensure that this mechanism is as foolproof as possible.

Sir, we must recognize that this law is merely suggesting that the Board consult with *“experienced psychologists and psycho-social workers”* for its Preliminary Assessment. The composition of the Board, as defined by Section 4(2) of the Bill comprises of a Magistrate and two social workers, including a woman. It loosely states some generic criterion for the selection of members, which is as follows:

*“The members must be involved in health, education, or welfare activities pertaining to children for at least seven years or a practicing professional with a degree in child psychology, psychiatry, sociology or law.”*

This is vague in terms of capacity and capability that is being sought to be created, given the fact that the Board holds the powers conferred by the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973, and in essence, plays God on the future of a Juvenile produced before

it. It may be fraught with an “adhocness” that may condemn far more children to the adult criminal justice system than it ought to. There are many other issues that will need improving in the process leading from JJB to courts.

It, therefore, becomes imperative that the procedure prescribed by law is water-tight and immune to influences as well as build capacity and capabilities within these institutions, so that the constitutional right of children to equality, liberty and special protections under Articles 14, 21 and 15 (3) of the Constitution is protected.

Sir, I urge the Minister to focus on improving capacities and capabilities in CWC, JJB and child courts. The Government must take the initiative of Creating a Cadre of Trained and Certified JJB Magistrates, Child psychologists and other staff specially trained and certified to be equipped with the skills to make this complex assessment.

In ending, I hope the Minister doesn't stop with passing of this Bill, and focuses on many actions required to keep the women and children of our country much safer than they are now.

Thank You.

Jai Hind.



PROTECT OUR  
CHILDREN

Letters



# 1

## Letter to the Karnataka Home Minister on Abuse of a Two-year Old by Preschool Staff

20th February, 2014

Dear Shri KJ George,

This has reference to the heinous crime that took place in Bangalore on January 07th 2014, where a two and half year old child studying in a pre-school was molested by the driver of the school bus inside the school premises. The police subsequently arrested the driver.

This incident, which has severely traumatized the child and her parents, raises several questions about the procedures/steps being taken to ensure the safety of children inside school and when travelling on school vehicles. As demonstrated in this case, this shameful incident took place inside the school premises and allegedly in the presence of a Lady Assistant, but no action has

been taken against the Lady Assistant or the School Management.

The parents of the child have serious concerns about the manner in which the investigations are progressing pointing out that the school has managed to release the school van – where the crime took place – and the Public Prosecutor did not object to this, and no action was initiated against the Management, Principal and staff of the school, even after 45 days after the incident.

**Given the heinous nature of the crime and in the interest of justice, I urge you to take the following action:**

1. Ensure that the Public Prosecutor objects to the Court order for releasing the school van, and ensures its seizure. Since the crime was committed on the school premises, the incident points to a clear case of callousness on the part of school authorities. Therefore, criminal action must be initiated against the school authorities and management, including the Principal, Attendant and other teaching staff.
2. Although the Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO) Act requires the setting up of a Special Court to try such cases, Karnataka state is yet to establish such a court. A Special court must be approved at the earliest to fast track the case.
3. Given that the accused was a serial offender, other children of the school must be examined for physical and mental health and the school must be shut until the investigations are completed.
4. The government must institute a policy to ensure schools follow a rigorous verification process while hiring drivers, janitors and other support staff. It must conduct an enquiry into the due diligence currently employed by schools while hiring staff. Such an enquiry can serve as an empirical basis to design suitable institutional procedures that schools

must adhere to in order to prevent such incidents in the future.

Most importantly, effective prosecution in a crime such as this is of utmost importance. In order to ensure effective prosecution of the case, I request that you appoint an advocate of appropriate seniority and experience from the criminal side of the Bar, as a Special Public Prosecutor, to prosecute the matter. An unsuccessful prosecution would not only fail to vindicate the crime and the trauma of the victim and her parents, but will also erode the faith of an average citizen in the judicial process in the State.

I look forward to your urgent action on this matter to ensure our city and state become safe for our children.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri K. J. George

Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs,

Government of Karnataka,

Bangalore.

Copy to,

Commissioner of Police,

Bangalore City,

Bangalore

## 2

# Letter to the Home Minister on the Extradition of Paul Meekin

4th December, 2014

Respected Rajnath Singh Ji,

**SUB: Bring back Paul Meekin to face justice**

This has reference to the shocking case of sexual harassment of a twelve-year old child in a Bengaluru school in 2012 by the school Principal, a British citizen named Paul Meekin.

The police had arrested Paul Meekin and filed a charge sheet against the accused in January 2013, under Section 23 of the Juvenile Justice Act and Section 67 of the Information Technology Act of 2000. Now, it has emerged that the accused has jumped

bail, fled the country and is reportedly teaching in a school in Kuwait under a false name.

Sir, it is essential that the Home Ministry take up the matter to extradite Paul Meekin at the earliest and bring him back to stand trial under the law of the land. The children of our country need assurance of our protection and this case is just one such in the long list of recent cases of child sexual abuse in schools.

I would request your ministry to bolster the Karnataka government to bring the accused back to India and face trial under more stringent charges to send a message of zero tolerance towards paedophiles.

I will seek an early meeting with you, to discuss this urgent matter and I look forward to your positive response.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Rajnath Singh

Hon'ble Home Minister,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

# 3

## Letter to the Minister of Women and Child Development on the Amendment of the POCSO Act.

10th December, 2014

Dear Manekaji

**Sub: Need for urgent Government action on POCSO Amendment  
& Child Safety**

As you and Government are aware, child abuse cases are increasingly on the rise all over the country amidst the growing perception of Government institutional inadequacy both in terms of response to prevent such crimes and to the response in prosecuting these crimes.

These crimes against Children rank as most heinous and is another form of Terrorism, which requires urgent, deep and concerted against by Governments at the Center and State.

As you are aware, I have brought this to your attention in the last Session of Parliament repeatedly with interventions in Parliament and questions posed to you. I have also specifically raised the need for amendments to the Protection of Children against Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) to bring in complete Accountability, ensure Prevention and administer swifter Prosecution for crimes against children.

Even this session of Parliament, the various responses from the Government only serve to reinforce the casual and non-urgent response to this threat to our children. The responses of the Government to this terrorism against children is far from adequate. I am urging you to take the initiative to start an atmosphere of Governance to achieve a zero tolerance to paedophiles in our country and to make a country safe for our children.

To start, the Government must ensure stricter liability of school managements for the safety of children on their premises. This is of critical importance as the recent cases have taken place on school premises when the children are under school supervision. Exemplary punishment and sentences must be sought under POCSO Act for those convicted of crimes against children.

I have raised this issue through Parliamentary Questions and a Short Duration Discussion in the previous session. In my speech in Parliament in July this year during the discussion on the functioning of the Ministry of Women & Child Development, I had made several recommendations on the issue of Child Safety. These included:

1. School managements to be fully accountable to child's safety whilst in school or in school buses.

2. Better Prevention by protecting our children from known Child predator by creating a Child Sexual Offenders Registry.
3. Training and deploying specially trained public prosecutors for handling child abuse cases.
4. Setting up special fast track courts to ensure speedy trial and conviction of the guilty.
5. Ensuring protection of victims and witnesses under the POCSO Act, considering that in most cases, witnesses are also children themselves.

I also enclose my letter to the Hon'ble Home Minister on the extradition of Paul Meekin, the British citizen who was arrested for molestation of a school student and who has since fled the country and reportedly teaching in a school in Kuwait.

It is essential your Ministry takes cognisance of the alarming rise in crimes against children and take visible and effective action. I will seek a meeting with you to discuss the urgent issue of Child Safety and look forward to your immediate and decisive leadership on this clear and present danger to our children and society.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Maneka Gandhi

Hon'ble Minister for Women and Child Development ,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

## 4

# Letter to the Minister of Women and Child Development on the Safety of Children in Orphanages

8th June, 2015

Dear Manekaji,

I am writing to you with reference to a series of highly disappointing responses I have received from your Ministry, to my questions in Parliament over the last 4 sessions of the House on issues relating to the safety of our Children.

As you will recall, I had met you in November last year to communicate my deep involvement in this issue as a father of two young children as well as an MP from Bengaluru which has seen several incidents of sexual assaults perpetrated against children in recent months. I had in that meeting also raised the issue of responses from your ministry to my questions in Parliament.

This seems to be continuing even now, as you can see from responses delivered by your Ministry, to my questions enquiring about the status of orphans in India. As you are no doubt aware, research suggests that orphanages are hotbed of child sexual abuse - with recent media reports corroborating this with instances of organised sexual trafficking rackets prevailing in orphanages being exposed -- which is the reason I asked these questions.

Please find enclosed copies of the three responses received to Parliamentary Questions 1754 (unstarred), 1373 (unstarred) and 129 (starred), answered on the 12th March 2015 and 7th May 2015.

My questions, as you will see from the enclosures, make pointed enquiries of your Ministry about the number of orphans and orphanages in India, and the information the Government possessed, on the condition of these orphans. The response I received to this from your Ministry to these and other questions I have posed point to a startling lack of either ability, capability or intention within successive Governments over the last 60 years, to protect our children.

It is disconcerting that your Ministry has in response to my Question on the number and condition of orphans in India blatantly stated that “no such data is maintained centrally”. This response certainly does not cut ice, especially in the light of research suggesting that there are as many as 20 million orphans in India.

This, as you will appreciate, is a significant number, higher than the 2011 census population figures of many large Indian metropolises, including Delhi and Bangalore! Furthermore, matters concerning minors and infants, including orphans are listed under item 5 of the Concurrent List of the Indian Constitution, and clearly do not absolve the Ministry of the official or moral responsibility of protecting these children.

You may also be aware that in a case titled *Exploitation of Children in Orphanages in State of Tamil Nadu v. Union of India* [Writ Petition (Criminal) No. 102 of 2007], the Supreme Court has taken note of these concerns, and issued mandatory directions to the Chief Secretaries of all States, inviting them to file an Affidavit within a period of 8 weeks disclosing relevant information on Child Protection, including, data on orphans and orphanages.

In light of these disquieting facts, I would urge you to consider a comprehensive approach to the challenge of ensuring all our children are protected from child sexual abuse especially those in orphanages :

1. Make “Protect Our Children” a national priority. While I accept and support the many Government projects for children, including the “Beti Bachao Andolan”, the safety and protection of our children from sexual predators and abusers is an issue that has not featured under the Government’s priority - despite a 2011 Government report itself suggesting, that 51% of all Indian children have been exposed to some form of sexual abuse. This apathy or lack of focus is made further obvious from the lacklustre responses I have received to questions posed to your Ministry on the malaise of child sexual abuse - a form of terrorism perpetrated against our children, especially children residing in orphanages and the institutional care homes.
2. Evolve an overall framework of laws, institutions and awareness within Government, Police and judiciary for Protecting Our Children, that this Government can over the next 4 years commit to transform child safety in India, and ensure that there are enough protective institutional mechanisms in place that shall guarantee the safety of our children from sexual predators in all institutions, including

schools and orphanages. Revamping and equipping with better capacity the existing institutions of centre and State level like NCPCR urgently.

3. Urgently establish a framework for the monitoring and regulation of Indian orphanages, and involve all concerned stakeholders including child rights groups and citizens groups in its designing. As an immediate priority, undertake an exhaustive fact-finding study/Audit on the number and condition of children living in orphanages.

India is a home to over 400 million children, who represent one of the most vulnerable sections of our society. As adults, we are responsible for ensuring that our children are provided with a happy, fulfilling and healthy environment that enables their personal and social development. I shall hope that this Government, which was elected on a people's mandate for change, shall take the urgent transformational steps needed to provide for the well being and protection of our country's children.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Maneka Gandhi

Hon'ble Minister for Women and Child Development,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

Copy: Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

## 5

# Letter to the Karnataka Chief Minister on Lack of Decisive Action on Child Abuse

6th August, 2015

Dear Siddaramiah avare,

I write to you to draw your attention to the continuing lack of decisive action by your government on the repeated instances of child sexual abuse in our City.

As you are no doubt aware, another child – this time a 3 year old was sexually assaulted a private school in Indiranagar, Bengaluru , on August 03rd 2015. As you will be aware, the alleged perpetrator was – a security guard of the private school - who was subsequently arrested under the POCSO Act. This incident follows from a slew of similar incidents of sexual assault against children in schools in Bengaluru over the last one year, and is an unfortunate testimony

to the continuing insensitivity, indifference & negligence of your government, which is responsible for the safety of every child & citizen in the state of Karnataka.

Success and failure of Governments are measured and critiqued in many ways. But when a Government repeatedly fails in its obligations to protecting its most vulnerable i.e. Children, then the Government can be said to be a failure and disappointment to those they serve

This recent sexual assault on a 3 year old is the consequence and result of a Government that did not take the actions required of it, last year when other children were also subjected to these crimes. At that time, amidst the outcry and outrage, the Government was aware of the steps it had to take to make city schools safer for our Children. Mandatory verification, periodic audits, fast track prosecution, better policing etc were all suggestions made by NGOs, parents and myself.

I had urged you and your Government through both letters and public statements about need for specific action. I had written a letter to Minister of Home Affairs in February 20, 2014 (copy enclosed) when a similar crime was committed and had specifically urged to take immediate & stringent measures to ensure such crimes are prevented in future. But today it is clear that except for an announcement of Child Sex Offenders registry, very little determined action has been taken by this Government. I urge you to wake up to the seriousness of this issue - it's a most shameful indictment of your Governments apathy and callousness.

Continued apathy will not be either overlooked or forgivable because Child sexual abuse is a form of terrorism perpetrated against children and it is abominable that such incidents continue to transpire in Bengaluru. If the Government had acted strictly on my suggestions of ensuring schools follow a rigorous verification

process and ensured implementation of guidelines in all schools in the city, this crime would have been prevented.

The Government and specifically the Police department has to adopt a zero tolerance approach to Paedophiles and crimes against children. It is the moral responsibility of Government, and as its head also your duty, to strictly enforce stringent guidelines to prevent such heinous incidents from occurring again. You and your Government are responsible for safety of our children in Bengaluru & in Karnataka, and I emphasize that people of this city and state will hold you to account if Government doesn't take all necessary steps now to ensuring safety for the children of our state, rich & poor and irrespective of their caste & creed. And if you fail again, every child in Bengaluru & Karnataka will see you and your Government responsible and culpable for the crimes.

I am enclosing a letter written to the Home Minister. Please wake up at least now! Let there be no more such crimes. Please take the steps suggested and make the city safe for all children.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah

Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Bangalore.

## 6

# Letter to Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi on Child Sexual Abuse in Karnataka

7th August, 2015

I write to you to draw your kind attention to the many instances of Child Sexual Abuse that are being reported in my city Bengaluru.

Just a few days ago on 3rd August 2015, in another horrifying incident - a 3 year old child at a private school in Indiranagar, Bengaluru was sexually assaulted by a school guard. Subsequently the guard and the school management have been arrested as per law including POCSO Act.

This recent incident follows from a slew of similar incidents of sexual assault against children in schools in Bengaluru & Karnataka, over the last year. During the last set of incidents, I along with various citizens/NGOs had petitioned/appealed/written to the Government of Karnataka, the Chief Minister, Home Minister, Education Minister and Women and Child Development

Ministers - who are squarely accountable and responsible for the safety and well-being of children.

Specific policy and governance suggestions were given by citizen organisations and by me as well. I am enclosing my letters to Karnataka Home Minister dated February 20, 2014 and my public appeals. The suggestions were to make verification of staff mandatory in schools, periodic safety audits and aster prosecution by designating POCSO Courts. In my letter in 2014, I had specifically urged the Government to take immediate and stringent measures to ensure such crimes are prevented in the future. Unfortunately excepting for the Child Sex Offenders Registry, very little has been done despite the heinous nature of these crimes and the shame it brings on city, society and Government.

In effect if these suggestions made last year would have been implemented, this child as well as other children would have been spared from this crime. Child sexual abuse is a form of terrorism perpetrated against children and it is abominable that such incidents continue to transpire in Bengaluru. If the state government had acted on my suggestions and ensured that schools followed a rigorous verification process while hiring staff, this incident could have been prevented. If the Government had ensured implementation of guidelines in all schools, such horrific incidents could have been averted. Despite repeatedly urging the government, no action has been taken by the Government which came to power on assurances of good governance and hence my letter to you with a request to intervene.

The indifference to this issue will be seen and is being seen as a kind of continuing insensitivity, indifference and negligence to our children - instead of being responsible for their welfare and happy childhood which should be the solemn obligation of the Karnataka government, which is responsible for the safety of every child and citizen in the state of Karnataka. Failures of Governments are

measured and critiqued in many ways. But when a government repeatedly fails in its obligations to protect its most vulnerable i.e. children, then the government can be said to be a failure and disappointment to those they serve.

I write to you as a citizen who is concerned about all the children of Bengaluru as well as an MP who represents this proud city and its fine citizens. As the head of the party which is governing the state of Karnataka, I request your urgent intervention in the matter and urge you to direct Chief Minister of Karnataka to take decisive Policy and Governance actions that will ensure safety for the children in Karnataka, rich & poor, irrespective of their caste and creed. It is high time that the Government of Karnataka led the process of creating a system within the state that ensures that the children of Bengaluru and Karnataka are assured of a safe and happy childhood.

I look forward to your early response.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Sonia Gandhi

Chairperson - UPA

10, Janpath, New Delhi.

Shri Rahul Gandhi,

Vice President, Indian National Congress,

12, Tughlak Lane, New Delhi.

## Letter to the Kerala Chief Minister on Child Sexual Abuse in Educational Institutions

4th December, 2015

Dear Shri Chandy,

I write to you to draw your attention to recent allegations about the sexual abuse of children in Education Institutions in Kerala, and lack of response from your Government to these. As you are aware, journalist VP Rajeena and film-maker Ali Akbar have recently related their experiences of abuse as children, in certain Education Institutions.

Section 19 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, mandates that *any individual or authority who has apprehension that an offence under the Act has been committed or is likely to be committed, shall mandatorily report the matter to*

*the concerned authorities.* In light of this, and the recent revelations made, it is clear that the State Government of Kerala is not discharging its responsibility and accountability in connection with these allegations. It would be appropriate that your Government immediately order a probe of these allegations and prosecute the perpetrators and enablers of these crimes, if any.

You will recall that in March 2014, nearly 500 children from the state were rescued from an alleged trafficking attempt. While the CBI has registered a case in this regard, I am surprised at the silence of the State Government on this very serious issue. The 2014 incident is possibly the tip of the iceberg and points to possibly a wider, more flourishing Child Trafficking phenomenon and Child Sexual Abuse being highly pervasive in Kerala. Child Sexual Abuse, a form of terrorism perpetrated against children, requires the urgent and immediate intervention by your Government and not silence. The conspiracy of silence that has prevented people from talking about Child Sexual Abuse is being broken and the focus is now on Government's response to protecting our children against these crimes and to bringing criminals to book.

Kerala has reported the highest number of Child Trafficking cases in India, and has therefore, unfortunately developed the ignominy of being home to a large number of sexually abused children. Your Government is vested with the responsibility of ensuring the safety, well-being and protection of children, and I hope that your Government will take cognisance of this by taking requisite action. If the State Government fails to take the necessary action, I will as a concerned representative of the people, take to legal recourse to address the problem. I am attaching a copy of a press statement I have issued in this regard, for your perusal.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Oommen Chandy

Hon'ble Chief Minister,

Government of Kerala,

Thiruvananthapuram.

## 8

# Letter to the Finance Minister on Increasing the Funds for Child Protection

23rd February, 2016

Dear Arunji,

**Sub.: Increased Allocations to the Ministry of Women & Child Development in Union Budget 2016-17**

I write to you on behalf of parents around the country, child rights activists and the National Coalition to Protect Our Children (NCPOC), seeking an enhancement of budgetary allocations to the Ministry of Women and Child Development, specifically in the areas to ensure child safety against abuse in general and sexual abuse in particular.

The budget allocations for the Ministry has been reducing year on year. In 2015-16, there was a 29% reduction in the budget for programme for children, and hence this request.

As you would be aware, several state Governments had written to you in July 2015, seeking extra funds for strengthening the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), the judiciary, the police and other institutions that are involved in ensuring a swift and effective response to the issue of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) – that affects an estimated 53.1% of India’s children, according to some studies/reports.

In order to ensure that the Government puts in place systematic, swift and effective response to CSA incidents, it is crucial that these allocations in particular, be suitably increased. In particular, India’s 676 districts will require **Rs. 2 lakh per month per district** to start the proposed counselling services within the District Child Protection Units, which are the first point of contact for children who have faced abuse. The infrastructure costs associated with strengthening DCPUs alone, are estimated at **Rs. 162 crore**. An additional **Rs. 35 crore** is needed, at the rate of *Rs. 1 crore per state/UT*, for monitoring and awareness generation on CSA. The members of the NCPOC, who have been engaging with the Government to propose a solution set to the malaise since December 2015, urge your immediate intervention in this regard, to at least allocate an additional **Rs.197 crores** suitably for this purpose.

Further, the schemes launched to address a range of wider child protection centric issues, including malnutrition, right to education, health, child protection and to support disadvantaged groups - the scheduled tribes and castes - have also faced significant cuts. Allocations have been significantly less than required, and these cuts have further jeopardized the Government’s Child Protection mechanisms. The proposed “devolution” to the state budgets will

not help, since State Governments continue to list CSA low on their list of priorities.

Additionally, as you would be aware, the Nirbhaya Fund was allocated **Rs. 1000 crores** in the last Budget. In terms of numbers alone, there are many more children that experience abuse than women who are sexually assaulted. The estimate that 53% of children experience sexual abuse means approximately 220 million children in real terms. Taking into account the extra vulnerabilities and difficulties in cases of child abuse - and concurrent increase in costs for investigating, prosecuting and rehabilitating - the overall expenditure is going to be higher in cases of children.

Also, the new Juvenile Justice Act is now in place and will require additional infrastructure for its implementation. The current budget for integrated child protection stands at about **Rs. 500 crores**. This amount should be suitably increased to **Rs.1500 crores** for an effective redressal of the problem. We request that the so far unutilized funds from the Nirbhaya Fund be channeled towards protecting children from abuse – as this could also serve towards ensuring a more efficient and effective use of resources.

Given the above facts, we, the members of the NCPOC, request that Budgetary allocations towards the Ministry of Women and Child Development, especially with regard to strengthening institutions involved in addressing the issue of Child Sexual Abuse, be suitably increased in the upcoming Budget, to make up for the reductions in the previous years.

Given the opportunity, we would be happy to meet with you to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

iProbono

Indian Law Society, Pune

FXB Suraksha India,

Sahayam Intervention Centre,

Counsel to Secure Justice,

Sumit Mandhwani, Representative, Delhi Public School,  
International, Vasant Kunj

Shri Arun Jaitley

Hon'ble Finance Minister,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

Copy to:

1. Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister
2. Smt. Maneka Gandhi, Hon'ble Minister of Women and Child Development

## 9

# Letter to the Minister of Women and Child Development on the Draft Trafficking of Persons Bill, 2016

28th June, 2016

Dear Maneka ji,

I am writing to you with reference to the Draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2016 which was released for comments from stakeholders by your Ministry on June 1st.

As you will recall, I had met you in December last year to submit a petition on the issue of protecting our children from sexual abuse, signed by nearly 2 lakh citizens across India. I had also written to you back in June 2015, regarding the disappointing responses I had received from your Ministry to my questions in Parliament on the issue of child sexual abuse reported in orphanages across

India. In the same letter I raised the issue of organised sexual trafficking rackets prevailing in orphanages and the vulnerable status of children in such institutions.

**Background:**

The scale and pervasive nature of sexual exploitation of children is corroborated by studies conducted by your Ministry which estimate that there are 3 million people involved in sex work across the country, of which an estimated 40% are children - some as young as 5 years of age.

The problem does not end there, as several alarming trends such as child sex tourism, paedophilia, sexual trafficking rackets in orphanages, prostitution in pilgrim towns and tourist destinations and cross-border trafficking have been on the rise in recent years putting our children at further risk. A 2002 report by the National Human Rights Commission states that 40% of the traffickers admitted that they had trafficked in children, of which almost 80% stated that the purpose was commercial sexual exploitation. Back in 2008, the Government acknowledged the gravity of child trafficking and sexual exploitation in the foreword to the India Country Report:

*‘There has been a significant shift in the perception of the problem of sexual exploitation of children and adolescents, especially through devious means of trafficking, by seeing it not just as a law enforcement issue, but as a heinous crime which violates basic human rights, including their right to live with dignity and self-respect.’*

Further, the 2015 US State Department Trafficking In Persons report has observed that, *“The Government of India does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking ... the government’s law enforcement progress was unknown as the government did not provide adequate*

*disaggregated anti-trafficking data and official complicity remained a serious concern.”*

**Comments on the Draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2016:**

It is in this background that I wish to make the following comments on the *Draft Trafficking of Persons (Prevention, Protection and Rehabilitation) Bill, 2016* which has been released by your Ministry. The bill, unfortunately suffers from several legislative and procedural flaws, as identified by the country’s most credible and experienced child rights activists.

The legislative flaws in the bill are as follows:

- i. There is no definition of ‘*trafficking*’ in the Draft Bill.
- ii. The Draft Bill does not state what forms and purposes of trafficking it will cover since no offence that amounts to trafficking is mentioned in the Draft Bill.
- iii. Section 41 of the Draft Bill states that “Save as otherwise provided in this Act, the provisions of this Act or any rule made thereunder or any order made under any such rule shall, have effect notwithstanding anything inconsistent therewith contained in any other law for the time being in force or in any instrument having the force of law” i.e. that it will have an overriding effect on other laws, including the Immoral Trafficking Prevention Act, 1956.
- iv. Since some of the sections of the Bill are weaker than the ITPA, this is another weakness in the bill.
- v. There is a need to define many more terms within the Bill, such as ‘*sexual exploitation*’, ‘*sex tourism*’, ‘*pornography*’, ‘*brothel*’ and ‘*public place*’.
- vi. The Draft Bill does not make the trafficking of children for domestic servitude by placement agencies as an offence.

- vii. The Draft Bill seeks to override all other laws even if its provisions are inconsistent with such other laws. This is a serious issue requiring attention as matters governing rehabilitation of children will have to be addressed through the Juvenile Justice Act, 2015 and the mechanisms set up there under.
- viii. The Draft Bill does not make mention of the Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs), on reporting of missing children to AHTUs or treatment of cases of children missing for more than a certain period as a case of trafficking.

Further, the procedural process followed in seeking comments and consultation to the Draft Bill is flawed. The Draft Bill has been put up for public comments over the Ministry's website without due regard being given to the decisions taken in the meeting of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) held on 10 January, 2014 under the chairmanship of the Cabinet Secretary on the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy (PLCP) to be followed while formulating principal and sub-ordinate legislation.

The PLCP explicitly states that:

- i. *“Every draft legislation or rules, placed in public domain through pre-legislative process should be accompanied by an explanatory note explaining key legal provisions in a simple language”.* **This has not been done.**
- ii. *“The Department/Ministry concerned might, in addition to placing the proposal in public domain, also hold consultations with all stakeholders. However, the degree of participation and mode of consultations may be decided by the Department/Ministry concerned and may vary according to the nature of the subject and the potential impact on those who will be affected by such legislation.”* **This has not been done.**

- iii. *“The Department/Ministry concerned should publish/place in public domain the draft legislation or at least the information that may inter alia include brief justification for such legislation, essential elements of the proposed legislation, its broad financial implications, and an estimated assessment of the impact of such legislation on environment, fundamental rights, lives and livelihoods of the concerned/affected people, etc. Such details may be kept in the public domain for a minimum period of thirty days for being proactively shared with the public in such manner as may be specified by the Department/Ministry concerned”.* This has been done only partially.

In light of the above facts, I would urge you to initiate a detailed and comprehensive consultation on the issue, involving prominent child rights organisations, and coalitions such as the National Coalition to Protect Our Children. My specific requests with regard to this are as follows:

1. The consultation process to obtain comments from the public on the Draft Bill must be extended by another 30 days. In the meanwhile, the Ministry should hold an Open House Pre-Consultation on the Draft Bill with the participation of all the necessary stakeholders like the National Coalition to Protect Our Children (NCPOC). The comments submitted by the stakeholders should be made available publically.
2. The Ministry should strictly follow the guidelines laid down by the meeting of the Committee of Secretaries (CoS) held on 10th January, 2014 under the Chairmanship of Cabinet Secretary on the Pre-Legislative Consultation Policy (PLCP).
3. The Ministry should take into consideration the existing provisions under the Immoral Traffic (Prevention) Act,

1956 and the extensive consultations which were held on the ITPA (Amendment) Bill, 2006. There are existing provisions under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) under s.370, s.372 (selling minors for purpose of prostitutes), s.373 (buying minors for purposes of prostitution), s.339 (wrongful restraint) and s.340 (wrongful confinement). With the enactment of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 (in 2013), for the first time there were very specific provisions on human trafficking in India. These reforms reflect a step towards aligning the country with its obligations under the Palermo Protocol. It does so by redefining human trafficking under Section 370 of the IPC, where in it draws upon the definition in the UN Trafficking Protocol.

The Pre-Legislative Consultation should take into consideration the above facts and ensure the Draft Bill is reflective of this.

You will agree that any effort towards addressing this deeply entrenched institutional malaise will have to be thorough and comprehensive - and that any compromise in the quality of consultations issued by the Ministry would only serve to undermine the rights of our children.

While I commend the intention of the WCD in attempting to address the problem, it is my hope that you will consider these suggestions, which have the support and backing of the undersigned individuals and organisations – all with decades of experience on this issue. Our children deserve better.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Maneka Gandhi  
Hon'ble Minister for Women & Child Development,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Copy: Shri Narendra Modi  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

# 10

## Letter to the Kerala Chief Minister on Child Sexual Abuse within Educational Institutions

28th June, 2016

Dear Shri Pinarayi Vijayan

Congratulations on your recent appointment as Chief Minister of Kerala.

I write to you to draw your attention to reports that suggest the high preponderance of Child Sexual Abuse cases in Education Institutions in Kerala, and lack of a determined response to these incidents by successive Governments. Please find attached with this letter, a copy of my letter dated December 04 2015 to your predecessor.

As you will be aware, in December last year, journalist VP Rajeena and film-maker Ali Akbar related their experiences of abuse as

children, in certain Education Institutions in the state of Kerala. Attached with this letter are copies of media reports with the statements of the aforementioned persons. More recently, in March this year, the Indian Express reported that the vacancy for the Nodal officer for the implementation of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, remains unfilled to date. This, you will acknowledge, is testimony to the continuing apathy towards our constitutional responsibility as authorities to ensure the protection of child rights and ensure the best interest of our children.

Section 19 of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012, mandates that *any individual or authority who has apprehension that an offence under the Act has been committed or is likely to be committed, shall mandatorily report the matter to the concerned authorities*. In light of the explosive revelations made by these prominent figures, and the absence of any response on this issue from any official from the state administration, it is clear that the Government of Kerala is not discharging its responsibility and accountability in connection with these allegations.

It would be appropriate that your Government immediately order a probe of these allegations and prosecute the perpetrators and enablers of these crimes, if any.

You will recall that in March 2014, nearly 500 children from the state were rescued from an alleged trafficking attempt. While the CBI has registered a case in this regard, I am surprised at the silence of the State Government on this very serious issue. The 2014 incident is possibly the tip of the iceberg and points to possibly a wider, more flourishing Child Trafficking phenomenon and Child Sexual Abuse being highly pervasive in Kerala. Child Sexual Abuse, a form of terrorism perpetrated against children, requires the urgent and immediate intervention by your Government and not silence. The conspiracy of silence that has prevented people from talking about Child Sexual Abuse is being broken and the

focus is now on Government's response to protecting our children against these crimes and to bringing criminals to book.

Kerala has reported the highest number of Child Trafficking cases in India, and has therefore, unfortunately developed the ignominy of being home to a large number of sexually abused children. Your Government is vested with the responsibility of ensuring the safety, well-being and protection of children, and I hope that your Government will take cognisance of this by taking requisite action, proactive policy, active framework and protect our children.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Pinarayi Vijayan

Hon'ble Chief Minister,

Government of Kerala,

Thiruvananthapuram.

# 11

## Letter to the UP Police on Swift Investigation into the Death of a Schoolchild

17th February, 2017

Dear Ms Singh,

**Subject: Urgent request for a proper and swift investigation into the unnatural death of Gazhal Yadav on 31 January 2017**

I write to you regarding the death of eight-year-old Gazhal Yadav, Grade II student of DPS World School, NOIDA Extension on 31 January 2017. As you are well aware, an FIR on the same with Case Crime no. 0052, has been filed at Ecotech III Police Station on 3 February 2017. The crime alleged is the death of Gazhal Yadav due to negligence of school teachers and authorities punishable under IPC 304 A.

The details of the FIR state that Gazhal Yadav was brought dead to the hospital by school personnel after she complained of a headache. While the school personnel at the hospital claimed that the child had died a natural death, the parents have questioned this pointing that the events of the day indicate it was an unnatural death and that the school management is complicit in covering-up the real reason for the death of an otherwise healthy eight-year-old girl. They believe their child's death occurred due to an injury sustained in school during the Taekwondo/Karate class that was aggravated by the delay in medical attention.

It is clear that a crime has been committed, the child Gazhal Yadav has died an unnatural death and it is expected that the Police will conduct a proper, fair and impartial investigation into the circumstances under which this child died. It must also be ensured that the ownership of the school will not come in the way of justice for the parents of Gazhal Yadav.

The parents, who are devastated by the untimely death, have approached me to ensure justice for their deceased child.

I consider issues relating to safety of children as deeply important and so also the crimes committed upon them. I have assured the parents of Gazhal Yadav that I will follow through and ensure that a thorough investigation is conducted into the circumstances leading up to their daughter Gazhal's death.

I request you to, therefore, keep me informed about the progress and outcome of the investigation at the earliest.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Ms Sujata Singh, IPS  
Superintendent of Police,  
Greater Noida (Rural),  
Gautam Budh Nagar,  
Uttar Pradesh.

12

## Letter to the Minister of Human Resource Development on Swift Investigation into the Death of a Schoolchild

17th February, 2017

Dear Prakash Ji,

**Subject: Unnatural death of Gazhal Yadav on 31 January 2017  
due to negligence of school authorities**

This is to bring to your attention a tragic incident involving the death of an eight-year old girl, Gazhal Yadav due to the criminal negligence of the authorities of her school, DPS World School, NOIDA Extension, and of her parents' efforts in making sure that justice is done to her and that that persons responsible are held accountable for her untimely death.

The case has raised a serious concern regarding the physical safety of our children in educational institutions and the lack of proper child safety guidelines outlining the responsibilities and the accountability of the schools in our country.

While the school has been trying to maintain that Gazhal died a natural death, her parents claim that she died because of an injury sustained in school during the Taekwondo/Karate class that was aggravated by the delay in providing her medical attention. According to the parents, the events of the day indicate that it was an unnatural death and that the school management is complicit in covering-up the real reason for the death of an otherwise healthy eight-year-old girl.

I have also written a letter to the SP Greater Noida (Rural), Ms Sujata Singh, asking her to conduct the investigation swiftly and in a proper, fair and impartial manner. (Letter enclosed).

I urge you to take an interest in this tragic matter given that the alleged crime took place within the school premises and help Gazhal's parents in ensuring that justice is done.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Prakash Javadekar

Hon'ble Minister for Human Resource Development,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

# 13

## Letter to the Minister of Women and Child Development on Swift Investigation into the Death of a Schoolchild

17th February, 2017

Dear Maneka Ji,

**Subject: Urgent request for a proper and swift investigation into the unnatural death of Gazhal Yadav on 31 January 2017**

This is to bring to your attention a tragic incident involving the death of an eight-year old girl, Gazhal Yadav due to the criminal negligence of the authorities of her school, DPS World School, NOIDA Extension, and of her parents' efforts in making sure that justice is done to her and that that persons responsible are held accountable for her untimely death.

The case has raised a serious concern regarding the physical safety of our children in educational institutions and the lack of proper child safety guidelines outlining the responsibilities and the accountability of the schools in our country.

While the school has been trying to maintain that eight-year old Gazhal died a natural death, her parents claim that she died because of an injury sustained in school during the Taekwondo/ Karate class that was aggravated by the delay in providing her medical attention. According to the parents, the events of the day indicate that it was an unnatural death and that the school management is complicit in covering-up the real reason for the death of an otherwise healthy eight-year-old girl.

As you are aware, I consider issues relating to safety of children as deeply important and so also the crimes committed upon them.

I have also written a letter to the SP Greater Noida (Rural), Ms Sujata Singh asking her to conduct the investigation swiftly and in a proper, fair and impartial manner. (Letter enclosed).

I urge that your office also take an interest in this tragic matter given that the safety of our children and their welfare is our primary duty, and help Gazhal's parents in ensuring that justice is done.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Maneka Gandhi

Hon'ble Minister for Women & Child Development,  
Government of India, New Delhi.

# SERVING OUR NATION

## Introduction

*“Soldiers of the Indian Armed Forces who serve and those who have served, are the epitome of Service to the Nation, it is our duty to honour their service and sacrifices.”*

My Parliamentary career has been about National and Public Service; and this has been defined by my being from a service family and living amongst the warriors of the Air Force and Armed Forces all through my growing years which left me with a deep, abiding commitment to the cause of Armed forces and the men, women and families who serve and have served. My endeavour to be the voice for these men and women in uniform who serve, and the veterans who have served in the Armed Forces since I stepped into Parliament in 2006 has been driven by my background as the son of an Air Force officer.

Under the title of “Serving Our Nation” I spearhead a number of endeavours for Veterans, Widows, Families and serving Armed Forces personnel – ranging from One Rank, One Pension (OROP), National War Memorial, voting rights for Armed forces personnel, Housing, ECHS, 7th CPC, financial aid to widows and children of martyrs and is deeply engaged on these issues that affect the men, women and their families who make up the backbone of our Armed Forces and Veteran community.

One of the first issues I raised when I entered Parliament was that of OROP. As the lone Parliamentarian to persistently fight on this

matter, my long standing endeavour saw victory on 05 September 2015, when the Government accepted OROP and announced its implementation with effect from 01 July 2014. The announcement was the biggest and most significant welfare measure for veterans in Post-Independent India by any Government.

Another significant reform I have been working towards has been the introduction of the Armed Forces Covenant Bill that envisages “pledging of commitment” that soldiers — both retired and serving — and their families will be provided with medical support, education; good quality and affordable accommodation; a comprehensive compensation system; maintenance for disabled soldiers and bereaved families; reservation in civilian jobs particularly related to security, and more.

I believe all countries honour their soldiers and the stories of sacrifice with Memorials that bear testimony to their supreme sacrifice, and we, as a Nation, must show deep gratitude to those who in times of war and peace have faithfully defended the Nation. Independent India has been waiting for seven decades for a National War Memorial to honour the over 22,500 martyrs and it's something I have been pursuing with the Government since 2008. Also in 2008, I made the proposal to construct a National Military Memorial in Bengaluru and after a long strenuous battle and opposition many quarters, in February 2009, the foundation stone was laid for the National Military Memorial in Bengaluru. It was a very proud moment for me as my Bengaluru became the first city to have Independent India's first National Military Memorial. I continue to pursue for the National War Memorial in New Delhi and hope it will become a reality soon as now that the Government has made good their promise to the families of Martyrs by announcing construction of the War Memorial in 2015.

Of my many fights for our Armed Forces personnel, one of the most significant has been the fight for their right to vote. Even as we, the citizens of India, continue to celebrate our democracy with free and fair elections involving the largest electorate in the world. It was a little-known fact then that for decades, in the world's largest democracy, and a country with the third largest army in the world, the right to vote for about 14 lakh armed forces personnel, 9 lakh Paramilitary personnel and their families had effectively been denied. I took this fight to the citizens urging them to support the right to vote for our soldiers and even filed a PIL. My long standing endeavour witnessed a historic victory in March 2014 when the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India passed orders on my petition that serving soldiers in peace areas have the right to be registered at their place of posting and vote. In the recently concluded Assembly elections in five states, service voters were for the first time extended the provision of e-ballot voting. It gives me an immense sense of satisfaction knowing that our soldiers and their families are finally celebrating their victory to vote.

Through my foundation - Flags of Honour, I reach out to the families of Armed Forces martyrs ensuring them of financial and social assistance and keeping the service and sacrifice of each braveheart alive in public memory. Soon after the Uri Terror attack in September 2016, I had said that the Parliament of India, as a responsibility to the people of India, must declare Pakistan a terror state and I had vowed to introduce this Bill for the same. I fulfilled my promise by introducing a Private Member's Bill in the Rajya Sabha titled "The Declaration of Countries as Sponsor of Terrorism Bill, 2016" in November 2016. The purpose of my Bill was to start a discussion within and outside Parliament to signal, internally and externally, the depth of our national resolve that there will be no more half measures when it comes to protecting India and its people from terrorism. The Bill was discussed by

many Parliamentarians and I am look forward to a change in India's stand in exploring the middle ground of options that have to do with economy, trade and other forms of sanction and other forms of pressure on Pakistan that go beyond doing nothing and doing only military action.,

I have been fortunate to have received recognition of different sorts through my career in Technology, Entrepreneurship and Politics. But one that ranks up there amongst my most valued was being felicitated by the General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western Command, Lt Gen KJ Singh, PVSM, AVSM (Bar) with the GOC-in-C Commendation Card at HQ Western Command, Chandigarh for my support and work for the Armed Forces, veterans and their families.

My office in New Delhi has pictures of Param Vir Chakra bravehearts. Seeing them every day as a politician reminds me of the acts, deeds and lives of real heroes who have served our Nation and inspires me to do more every day. I consider it an honour and privilege to do what I can for the men and women of the Armed Forces, Veer Naris, veterans, and their families. I consider it my way of serving those who serve the nation – as plain and simple as that.

SERVING OUR  
NATION

Speeches



# 1

## Parliamentary Discussion on the Armed Forces Tribunal Bill

Rajya Sabha

3rd December, 2007

Thank you for the opportunity to speak on this bill.

Sir, We all recognize that the Armed forces of our country are one of the most highly respected institutions of our country - Respected for their demonstrated abilities of professionalism and patriotism. Indians today from all walks of life remain inspired by the stories of Valour and unflinching patriotism demonstrated by names like Maj Harshan or Col Vasanth in recent times or Nirmaljit Sekhon, Abdul Hamid, Albert Ekka in times past. As son of a Proud Air force officer, I believe it's our duty to do whatever we can to continue to sustain the dignity of the Services and the women and men who serve in these services.

Sir, while the Armed forces remain a professional and committed family of Officers and men and their family, it is inevitable that

there would be disputes and issues that need resolution. So far these disputes have got settled within the respective services. In recent times, there have been increasing instances where Armed forces personnel have been dissatisfied with the internal dispute/legal process and chosen to appeal to High courts.

This bill is aimed at creating a smoother, quicker and a more dignified way to adjudicate these appeals and I welcome it. I completely support the objectives of this bill. I only wish that this bill hadn't take 2 years to pass, especially there are many similar tribunals that have been enacted through Parliament. I would urge Parliament to ensure that bills that deal with the Armed forces and other Services are focussed on with more urgency and that we don't subject them to such delays in the future.

Sir, the objectives of the tribunal are two fold – one is to expedite the adjudication of appeals and the second is to create a bench that understands better the nuances of disputes arising in the Armed forces, that are usually very different from normal civil, criminal or contractual disputes that crowd our courts. I wish to draw the attention of the Minister to some practical issues that will actually be far more important in determining the success of this tribunal than just the bill itself.

Sir, for the two objectives to be realized, the main issues will be that of the people who compose the tribunal and the case capability and capacity that's built in to the secretariat and infrastructure to handle the necessary volumes of cases to ensure speedy disposal.

Experience with some other tribunals/Regulators formed by Parliament with strong support in terms of law, have been less than stellar and I believe the main reason has been the lack of focus on these practical points.

Therefore I would strongly recommend three specific points to the Minister in connection with the operationalizing of this bill.

Firstly, I urge the Minister to ensure that only the most capable and committed people are appointed on the tribunal and its secretariat. I will strongly request the Minister that this tribunal not be another parking place for political favourites or retirees looking for a relaxed pace of work. Additionally I would also urge him to make an amendment in Section 6(1) that the Chairman of the Tribunal could also be a Retired Chief of one of the Services, subject to one of the members being a retired Justice. This is a very practical suggestion since the appeal of this tribunal will eventually anyway lie in the Supreme Court.

Secondly, I urge the minister to ensure that the secretariat, infrastructure capacity and budget are planned at this stage to be large enough to handle large number of cases so that there are no people/infrastructure related capacity constraints that come in the way of ensuring that adjudicatory work of the tribunal is expeditious

Thirdly, I would recommend that for the first 1 or 2 years of the tribunal, the ministry tracks the performance and operations of the tribunal from a point of view of pro-actively working to ensuring its speedy and smooth operationalizing.

Let me end by saying again, that I support this bill and hope that the minister will take note of my suggestions.

Jai Hind

## 2

# Speech to Retired Officers and War Veterans

RSI Bengaluru

24th September, 2008

Distinguished Gentlemen,

Good morning and thank you for having me here this morning.

There are many challenges facing our nation today – notwithstanding the rhetoric of us becoming a superpower etc. I am one of those who believe that there is a lot that requires to be done before we can achieve that objective.

I am focused therefore on the issues that are critical to building a strong and confident India. One of the issues is the important issue of building and strengthening the institutions that are the building blocks of our great nation. The Armed forces are one of them – and the Armed forces are the people who make up the forces. I

strongly believe and have always believed that the forces are the last of the few professional, secular institutions that are still driven by a sense of nationalism and duty - Values that unfortunately have disappeared or are disappearing from almost all other areas of public service.

It is in this context that I have been working since I have joined active Politics – to put a spotlight on these critical challenges and issues facing the men and women of the forces. The issues that I have taken up and am following are the Pay commission, War veterans’ memorials, modernizing of the forces etc.

The war Veterans memorial is one way that people of Karnataka are giving their thanks to the years of service and duty of the many officers and men from this State. We have to thank our Chief Minister, who, without a minute’s hesitation, sanctioned my idea. I hope that other States follow the lead and that we also have an Arlington War memorial type Veterans Park in Delhi. I have discussed this with the Raksha Mantri and will try and jog him into action as well.

I will continue to do that in my own way as well by working with other MPs to create a consensus and momentum around these issues and ideas. For all the stories of bad politicians you hear, I can assure you that there are as many well meaning Political activists and players who mean well for their nation and feel as much for it as you and I do.

Jai Hind.

# 3

## Speech During the Foundation Stone Ceremony of the National Military Memorial

NMM Bengaluru

10th February, 2009

Excellency Governor Shri Rameshwar Thakur, Hon'ble CM Dr BS Yeddyurappa, Shri Pallam Raju, Minister of State of Defence, Government of India, Admiral Suresh Mehta, Chief of Naval Staff and Chairman Chiefs of Staff committee, Air Chief Marshal Major Chief of Air Staff, Lt Gen Noble Thamburaj, Vice Chief of Army Staff, Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, Friends:

On behalf of Government of Karnataka, the Chief Minister and the National Military Memorial Committee, it is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to today's Foundation stone ceremony.

I would like to start by thanking His Excellency Rameshwar Thakur for committing to this function despite his hectic program today. Thanks also to the Honble Chief Minister for presiding over this function today despite a obviously busy day. On behalf of all

of you and myself I thank the guests of Honour who have come all the way from Delhi and agreed to be here – Lt Gen Thamburaj, Air Chief Marshal Major, Admiral Mehta and Shri Pallam Raju – Thank you for your presence, encouragement and support to this function and endeavour.

This endeavor by the Government of Karnataka to build a memorial to the soldiers from Karnataka, who have served and protected our nation – is a noble one. This is one way that people of Karnataka are giving their thanks to the years of service and duty, of the many officers and men from this State and to their families. It is even more significant because this Bengaluru Memorial will be the first instance of a Military memorial being built in Independent India – a fact that sometimes surprises many, given the many conflicts fought by our forces and the many lives laid down and sacrifices made.

Armed forces personnel from Karnataka have participated in all the conflicts and threats on Post independence India including the Indo-Pak wars, Indo-China wars, the 1984 IPKF operations in Srilanka, Kargil Operations, Anti-Terrorist Operations and 26/11 Terrorist attacks on Mumbai. 351 soldiers from Karnataka have laid down their lives and 132 severely wounded in service of the Nation. The state has produced many Senior Officers and Soldiers who have been decorated with gallantry awards – including the most recent sacrifices of Col Vasanth, Col Jojan Thomas and Major Unnikrishnan – all Posthumous Ashok Chakra awardees.

That is why for all of us, today marks a very important milestone - which started with a request that I made in October 2008 of my Chief Minister, as I have of many previous Chief Ministers. Without pausing even a minute, he agreed to the Government of Karnataka's support and sponsorship of this project. His support has been key to taking the project from our dream to this important milestone. All of us in the committee are deeply grateful for his

support. We look forward to his continued support to build the memorial and have it ready by Republic day, 2010. As you saw in the AV before the program, the memorial complex spread over 8 acres, will consist of the memorial and will include Exhibits of equipment, An amphi-theater and a museum and Park.

As a Member of Parliament, I am focused on the issues that are critical to building a strong and confident India. One of them is the important issue of building and strengthening the institutions that are the building blocks of our great nation. The Armed forces are one of them – and the men and women who make up the forces. I strongly believe and have always believed that the forces are the last of the few professional, secular institutions that are still driven by a sense of nationalism and duty and live and die by the simple idea of Nation First! - Values that unfortunately have disappeared or are disappearing from almost all other areas of public service.

So apart from the obvious reason of creating a memorial to honor their sacrifices, this memorial will also serve other important purposes. The memorial will serve as a beacon of inspiration to the young and upcoming generation of India – a generation in whom we are bestowing so much hope for the future of our great country. To this young generation, this should become inspiration not just about the brave people for whom this memorial is being built, but in a larger way, the ideals and values that the armed forces represent. Values of national service, commitment to the idea of a strong, progressive and united India, values of nation first or as the armed forces say it “*Seva Parmo dharma*”!

There is yet another reason for such a memorial. It is to make all of us in civil society more familiar and connected to the Armed forces. At a time when our nation is under threat from within and out, from low intensity conflicts and terrorist attacks – the armed forces represent not just the form of protection and defence to our way of life and democracy, but also represents the ideals on which

this country was built – of commitment to nation and nation first. Even today, they are the only institution where the men and women go out to work saying Bharat Mata ki Jai and greet each other with a Jai Hind! I believe that we don't value enough - our living soldiers, serving or retired. You need to only look at the protesting Ex-servicemen in Jantar Mantar, Delhi and see how little the media and civil society has bothered to question, why men of such great honor and record of service, are being forced to return their medals. It's a sign that as a nation we are not caring enough or valuing their service enough. I consider it our duty to protect and nurture the forces and personnel and their families and have worked to the best of my ability in my few years of public service for this and I hope many-many more in civil society and media will be motivated by this memorial to do so today and in the future.

Let me end, by hoping that other states follow the lead of our Chief Minister and our state and build memorials as well. I also look forward to the day when we have an Arlington War memorial type National memorial in Delhi, preferably on the banks of the Yamuna, an idea that I have discussed with Hon'ble Minister of State of Defence on a number of occasions.

I thank each of you for taking the time to be here this evening. It's a special evening for all of us and made more special by your presence and support.

Thank you, Jai Hind

## 4

# Special Mention of Kargil Vijay Diwas

Rajya Sabha

23rd July, 2009

I draw the attention of the House and its Hon'ble Members to the 10th Anniversary of the Victory of the men and women of our armed forces over our enemies at Kargil- on the 26th July.

This day represents not just the victory of our proud country and its will prevailing over those of its enemies, but most importantly it represents the inspirational sense of duty and sacrifice by the thousands of men and women of our Armed Forces.

I remember every day of that conflict as do many Indians. These are the men and women whose actions, sense of nationalism and duty-should inspire our younger generations. I believe the actions of the men and women of our armed forces in that conflict and every other conflict deserve our shraddhanjali, respect and salutes. I appeal to the Ministry of Defence and Government to memorialize

this day and celebrate it every year. I also appeal to my colleagues in this House to join me in this demand, and it is our duty to our nation to memorialize these sacrifices and duty.

Thank you, Sir. Jai Hind.

## 5

# Special Mention on Renaming Flag Day as “Veterans Day”

Rajya Sabha

26th August, 2011

Sir,

The nation celebrates Flag Day on 7th December every year, which is graced by the President of India. This day was selected by our first Prime Minister, the late Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, during the early days after Independence. Today, the nation has seriously come of age with over 19,000 post-Independence martyrs on record and more than two million military veterans living, after having sacrificed a lot for the security and integrity of the nation.

However, we still do not have a day reserved to remember and honour the noble sacrifices made by our Armed Forces martyrs, veterans and serving personnel. India must have a dedicated day to enable citizens to express their gratitude and appreciation, and honour the Armed Forces personnel.

Therefore, I urge the Government to rename the Flag Day as “Memorial Day” or “Veterans Day”. This will help citizens understand the importance of the day and demonstrate the nation’s commitment to the Armed forces veterans and their families.

This is also the norm in other countries, such as the USA.

## 6

# “Reserve One Seat in Parliament for Armed Forces Veterans” - Special Mention

Rajya Sabha

25th November, 2011

Sir,

The nation is aware of the services and sacrifices made for the country by the Armed Forces personnel in times of war, natural calamities and civil turmoil. While the Armed Forces selflessly guard and protect the nation, there is a feeling that the country does not understand their concerns and that they do not have a forceful platform to voice their grievances and demands. The time has come for the nation to address this concern.

To facilitate this, I demand that the Government should seriously consider giving an independent, non-political voice to the Armed Forces veterans by reserving at least one Parliament seat - anywhere in India – for a representative of the Armed Forces veterans. Alternatively, the Government must nominate one representative

each from the veterans to the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha by making suitable amendments to the Constitution of India, to ensure that they are able to represent the voice of the over 26 lakh ex-servicemen and their families.

I urge the Government to seriously consider giving representation to the Armed Forces veterans in Parliament. This will certainly send a message to the Armed forces personnel and their families that the nation understands their concerns and accords the highest priority to their welfare.

Thank you.

## Special mention on the Need to Strengthen the Indian Army

Rajya Sabha

19th December, 2011

Sir,

I draw your attention to media reports about the unpreparedness of the Indian Army, essentially on account of slow pace of its modernization, shortage of warfare equipment procurement, delay in replenishment/recruitment of officers and lack of infrastructure.

The Indian Army is crippled with a shortage of 12,000 young officers who actually lead its sections and companies in the battle. Its 400-odd infantry battalions are currently functioning with less than half the sanctioned strength of 40 officers.

It is shocking to note that there is a delay of more than a decade on commissioning two critical projects to equip infantry with modern assault rifles, night vision devices and devices for high

speed encrypted communication and another Field Artillery Modernization Plan.

This issue assumes greater significance in view of the fact that our neighbour China has been aggressively building up along the Leh border and Arunachal Pradesh with connecting roads and rail network, increasing its troops on the border and strengthening capabilities to amass a million troops in a short duration – while we are still grappling with bureaucratic issues.

These deficiencies are extremely worrying, and put the nation at a formidable risk. I urge the Government to take immediate action to strengthen the capabilities of the Indian Army.

## 8

# Parliamentary Speech on National War Memorial and OROP

Rajya Sabha

7th May, 2012

Dy. Chairman Sir,

My colleagues have spoken in some detail and many more will speak about the Defence Budget and the working of the Defence Ministry – and one can speak about a number of issues in this connection, ranging from weaknesses in defence R&D to the need for transforming the Armed Forces etc.

Sir, from a security point of view, as a nation, we are faced with unprecedented transformations and challenges around us – As nations like Bangladesh, Burma and Sri Lanka attempt to transform into stable democratic nations, some others in our region pose challenges and represent clear and present danger

to our nation. Some of these neighbours represent very different forms of challenges to us as a country and to our Security – be it to shipping lanes or geopolitical influence or proxy terrorism attacks.

Countries that have engaged in a proxy war with India will eventually fail – faced, as they have so far, with the determination of all Indians, but more specifically with the indomitable and undefeatable spirit of, patriotism and service of the many generations of our servicemen and women and their families. These men and their families form the basic backbone of this nation's efforts at providing a stable and secure country for all its people.

It is about these men and women and their families that I wish to speak about today.

Sir, our Defence Minister is one of the most decent and unassuming men that I have come across in our Politics. I am sure he realizes that as Defence Minister and civilian custodian of the Defence Ministry – he is, in effect, the trustee of the great institution that is the Indian Armed forces and the millions of men and women and their families that have served and are serving and will serve this nation in times of war and peace.

It is to this role as trustee of the Armed Forces that I address him today.

Sir, he is aware that our nation has had to fight and defend itself against many aggressions and wars and is being challenged almost every day on various fronts.

He is aware that the country has asked thousands of young men and women and their families to a call of duty – and to sacrifice life and limb to protect our nation and all our people over the last several decades.

He is aware that almost every day since Independence till today, some family somewhere is asked to go through the pain of knowing that they have lost a family member in service of the nation.

He is also aware that despite all this, we the people of India and indeed, the Government of India, have failed in our duty and continue to fail - to build a National Military Memorial in our nation's capital to honour these sacrifices and service to the nation. Every nation honours its heroes who have perished on the battlefield with a memorial, except us.

Sir, my state Government of Karnataka has undertaken the project of a Memorial and it will be completed soon. It will be inscribed with names of each and every son of Karnataka who died in the service of our nation. But a National Memorial for all the sons and daughters of India, who have perished, is missing in Delhi.

Sir, this is a shame and embarrassment which should NOT be allowed to continue. I urge him, as I have been urging the Government for several years, to act on this. Do not leave this in the hands of a group of insensitive bureaucrats to comprehend the deep emotional need for the country, and indeed, the families of those who perished, to have this memorial.

Sir, the other issue is that of One Rank, One Pension.

This is a deeply emotional issue of honour for many thousands of retired soldiers and their families. We must not forget that our veterans have served this country under the most trying of economic and security challenges. We must not forget that whilst all around us in our region, militaries subverted democracies – the men of our Armed Forces protected it and helped it grow into what we are today. Honour isn't a concept that is very well understood or respected in the corridors of Delhi, but sir, I urge you to recognize honour and pride which is what makes a man put his life on the line for his nation – placing his country ahead of himself and his family or religion.

Sir, the Standing Committee on Defence has recommended OROP. Recently, the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha - comprising

of all Parties – has, after detailed consultations and hearings on the matter, tabled its Report in the Parliament on 19 December 2011, recommending the immediate implementation of OROP and constitution of a separate commission to determine pay and other service conditions and benefits of the Armed Forces. But even now, the Defence Ministry refuses to act on this, and the old excuse trotted out by the bureaucracy that all other central services will ask for it certainly holds no merit, because of the very different nature of serving in the Armed Forces. The right thing for the Hon'ble Minister to do is to respect the views of Parliament and MPs, as has been communicated to him on more than one occasion. Ignoring the sense of Parliament on this issue would be wrong and a big error on his part.

Sir, both these issues are not about money. Given the amount of money that is wasted or frittered away or even looted from the Government – these amounts for the OROP and Military Memorial are nothing. In an overall defence budget of Rs.1,94,000 crores, this will be insignificant in terms of cost – but very, very powerful in terms of the message it communicates to the men and women in uniform. This is about our determination or lack of interest to do the right thing by our servicemen and doing the right thing by the idea of service to the nation.

Lastly, before I end, let me touch on another issue – A few months ago, I had written to the PM and the Defence Minister, and also raised a Special Mention in Parliament about nominating an Armed Forces Veteran to the Parliament who can be the voice of the over one crore ex-servicemen and their families. I was given an answer saying the Constitution doesn't permit it. Be that as it may, if the Government can consider Cricket and Film stars as icons of National service, I would urge the Defence Minister to consider nominating Veterans to at least one of the nominated Seats in Parliament. I think he would agree that battlefield service

in Kargil, Siachen etc to the nation ranks at least as high as cricket or movies.

Sir, as we move forward as a nation, our Armed Forces needs to continue to attract the best and most motivated of our young generation in service of our country. Let us do these basic fundamental duties by the generations that have served us and let them inspire the future generations to serve. Let them be confident that the country and people haven't forgotten their service and value their service to our country.

And to our Defence Minister, I would like to quote our own Kautilya, the great political strategist, who wrote to Chandragupta Maurya centuries ago: *"The day the soldier has to demand his dues will be a sad day for Magadha. For then on that day, you will have lost all moral sanction to be king"*.

Jai Hind.

## 9

# Speech at the Flag Hoisting Ceremony, National Military Memorial

NMM, Bengaluru

23rd January, 2014

His Excellency, Governor Hansraj Bharadwaj, Hon'ble Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Home Minister K. J. George, Our MLA and Minister Roshan Baig, My colleague from Parliament Naveen Jindal, our MP P.C. Mohan, Our corporator, distinguished veterans, guests, friends, ladies and gentlemen.

Thamellarigu Swagatha. Good Morning and Welcome!

As the Vice Chairman of the National Military Memorial Trust, I welcome you to the National Military Memorial. Today marks one more milestone in the journey to complete India's first post-Independence Military memorial - the ceremony of hoisting India's largest national flag, on its tallest flag mast. It is a day of pride and celebration for Bangaloreans, Kannadigas and indeed for every Indian!

The initiative by the Government of Karnataka to build on behalf of the people of Karnataka, a memorial to the soldiers, who have served and protected our nation – is a unique and noble one. When work on the National Military Memorial is completed – in next few months – this will be Independent India’s first military memorial, a fact that sometimes surprises many, given the many conflicts fought by our forces and the many lives laid down and sacrifices made. I am particularly proud that the Karnataka Government and people of Bengaluru are doing what the rest of India has forgotten to do all these years.

Our State has produced many Brave warriors who have been decorated with gallantry awards by a grateful nation – including Col. Vasanth, Col. Jojan Thomas and Major Unnikrishnan – all Posthumous Ashok Chakra awardees, Rifleman K. S Ravindra, Havaldar Major C. Yogananda and so many others. Our city is also home to many thousands of veterans and their families who have served the country selflessly and with distinction and made our state their final home.

The National Military Memorial is more than just a memorial. Firstly, it is a symbol of grateful thanksgiving that the Government and people of my city, Bangalore, and our state Karnataka give to the many men and women who serve in our Armed Forces. It is a sacred space for citizens to pay their respects to the brave men in uniform who risk life and limb in the line of duty and to honour the sacrifices of our soldiers and their families, and the lives and service of our veterans. It is also a place for the families and descendants of these heroes to visit and remember with pride and honour the sacrifices made. It is a place that visitors to our city can visit and be inspired by the spirit of India and Government of our state.

Most importantly, the Memorial will also serve as a beacon of inspiration to the young and upcoming generation of India – a

generation in whom we are bestowing so much hope for the future of our great country. The Memorial is indeed the symbol of India and a symbol of national service, especially for them. To them, this should become an inspiration - not just about the brave people for whom this Memorial is being built, but in a larger way, the ideals and values that the Armed Forces represent. Values of national service, commitment to the idea of a strong, progressive and united India, values of nation first or as the Armed Forces say it "*Seva Parmo dharma*"!

This is the reason for such a Memorial. It is to make all of us in civil society more familiar and connected to the Armed Forces. At a time when our nation is under threat from within and out, from low intensity conflicts and terrorist attacks – the Armed Forces represent not just the form of protection and defence to our way of life and democracy, but also represent the ideals on which this country was built – of commitment to nation first and national service.

This rekindling of our national spirit is even more important today, as our nation struggles with divisions on lines of caste, religious and region. I strongly believe that our Armed Forces are the last of the few professional, secular institutions that are still driven by a sense of nationalism and duty and live and die by the simple idea of Nation First —Values that unfortunately have disappeared, or are disappearing, from almost all other areas of public service. At a time where contemporary debates invariably meander into polarized conversations based on caste and religious lines, our Armed Forces have continued to remain most secular —untouched by the myopic perspectives other institutions are subject to.

The National Military Memorial is unique - it is the first in India; it is the first one built by a state and its people but to be dedicated to the nation; it will be the first to have all the names of fallen martyrs to be carved on stone; it is unique that it was built as a partnership

between Government and volunteers and donors; it will perhaps country's largest monolithic stone veeragallu; it has India's tallest and largest flag; it will have India's first museum and motivation hall dedicated to the lives of our martyrs; it is located in the heart of Bangalore making it easy for visitors, citizens and children to visit and pay respects and be inspired; and most importantly, it has seen support across the political spectrum in our state - a fact that makes me even more prouder.

As Mahatma Gandhi said "*A flag is a necessity for all nations. Millions have died for it*". The Indian Tricolour represents the hopes and aspirations of the people of India - the result of a long struggle for independence.

The 210 feet flag pole on which the flag will be hoisted is amongst the tallest in the country. The glorious tricolour that will be raised onto the mast today will be the largest flag hoisted in India, measuring a monumental 48 feet in width and 72 feet in height, weighing 31 kgs.

The flag and the memorial blend seamlessly. The National Military Memorial being a place to honour the valour of those who protect this very flag. The beauty of this monumental flag rests not merely in the fact that it will fly 24x7, but the special illuminated lighting from the ground will make it visible both, in day and at night.

So, apart from the obvious reason of creating a sense of pride for independent India's first memorial to honor sacrifices of our soldiers, this flag, I hope, will also be an inspiration for the youth to uphold, and help in the progress of our country that our soldiers fight, and our forefathers fought so valiantly to protect.

I must take this opportunity to extend my gratitude, to Naveen Jindal and his Flag Foundation of India, New Delhi, which has generously donated this monumental flag and the mast, and for his efforts at promoting the spirit of nationalism and patriotism.

I thank the Home Minister and Home Ministry and the team at BDA for their support, especially the BDA for bringing this project this far and proving to everybody that they have the ability to build a beautiful memorial like this, if given opportunities.

I thank the Chief Minister, for his support and leadership of this project, and His Excellency, our Governor, whose unrelenting support for this memorial and for all his advise and lessons in history that I am deeply grateful for.

I end with a quote by James Bryce: *“Patriotism consists not in waving the flag, but in striving that our country shall be righteous as well as strong.”* Let us, in our daily lives as conscientious citizens, strive to not reduce the flag to a mere symbolism, but to enumerate the ideals it embodies.

I thank each of you for taking the time to be here this morning. It’s a special day for all of us and made more special by your presence and support.

Thank you.

Jai Hind, Jai Karnataka

# 10

## Army Western Command Felicitation Address

Chandimandir

19th February, 2016

Lt Gen K. J. Singh, GOC-in-C, Western Command, ladies, officers and all present

I thank you for this honor. I have been fortunate to have received recognition of different sorts through my career in Technology, Entrepreneurship and Politics. But this one will rank up there amongst my most valued – not so much for what I did, but for who has given me this. To be recognized by the men and women and families of the Armed Forces – means more to me than I can express in any words – because I respect them more than any other group of people in our country!

I will not say too much except to say, that when people ask me what my defining experiences in my life are, I say two things - one is the time I spent in the US as a Microprocessor Designer in the

Silicon Valley, where I witnessed, worked with and met some of the biggest, tallest and greatest minds of the world that are responsible for the world as we know it today, and the other is my growing years spent as a military child, spent amongst many, many men, women and families who represented all that is right and good about India and the concept of service.

As a nation, we are faced with a peculiar set of challenges today – global economic and trade challenges, new global security and geopolitical challenges, including a new nature of threat from within as well as external driven, growing aspirations and restlessness of the young etc. It would be expected that in this hierarchy of challenges, respect and love for our armed forces and veterans would take a back seat, as indeed it was for several years. But in the last 9 years that I have been in Parliament, I have seen the public respect and admiration grow from the apathy of the early years to the scenes that we see today when a martyr returns home. This is partly because the narrative is no longer being controlled or curated by Bureaucrats and others. I remember the time when I first approached the CM of my state Karnataka for land for a National Military Memorial and there was a huge protest from many, including some so called Technology company leaders! It puzzled me and then I was told that it was because it would disrupt their morning walks! That would never happen now.

As for me, I consider it an honor and privilege to do what I can for the veterans, forces and their families. I consider it my way of serving those who serve the nation – as plain and simple as that. I didn't seek any recognition for this, and so today is very special and I am deeply grateful for it.

Thank you again. Jai Hind

## Parliamentary Speech on The Declaration of Countries as Sponsor of Terrorism Bill, 2016

Rajya Sabha

17th February, 2017

Sir, I Beg to move that the Bill to declare any country as state sponsor of terrorism and withdraw economic and trade relations with such country and to create legal, economic and travel sanctions for citizens of that country and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto, be taken into consideration.

Sir, I thank you for allowing this Bill to be debated. On 18th September 2016, there was a terror attack in Uri and 19 lives were lost. This was one more incident in a series of incidents that this country had seen and those were lives in a series of lives that India had lost over many decades confronting terrorism.

These attacks marked a turning point in my mind and I publicly promised that I would take on the important responsibility of calling Pakistan for what they are and what they have always been – A State Sponsor of Terrorism.

That is why, in the Winter Session of Parliament, I submitted a Resolution declaring Pakistan a terror state and I also moved a Private Member's Bill which is the Bill that has come up today for discussion and consideration. It is to call out countries like Pakistan that continue to associate, promote, patronise and sponsor terrorism against our nation.

I also wrote to the leaders of all political parties to support this Resolution. Regrettably, the Resolution was not taken up. But the Bill was introduced in the Winter Session. Today, I am very happy to have this discussion commenced.

Why this Bill? Many people told me that this is like another Private Member's Bill and that it will not see light of the day, etc. As I have seen from my colleague Shri Tiruchi Siva's Bills, Bills like this do have a purpose. They start a discussion and a conversation in this House that will perhaps not end here and give the people of India a conversation or start a conversation on what should be really our relationship with Pakistan given that there is incontrovertible evidence that they support terrorism.

For decades, India and other countries in the region have been victims of numerous terror attacks from organisations and individuals based in and with the support of elements in Pakistan. Yet, for decades, we have remained engaged with Pakistan in an attempt to draw it into the mainstream.

Sir there is a basic tenet in criminality which you as a lawyer will recognise. Basic tenet of criminality and criminal conduct is that if criminals are not declared criminals and are not made to bear the consequences of their criminal actions, they will continue to be criminals. I am not a lawyer, but I extend this hypothesis or thesis that this is also true for countries that aid and abet terrorism and use terrorism as a misguided tool of their State policy. If they are not brought to account, they will continue to violate all established

laws and conduct. Therefore, this Bill is to finally put into motion the process of calling terror sponsors to account for years of terror sponsorship and for causing losses of innocent lives not just in India but also in other parts of the world.

There is another important reason. The world is getting tired and has lost patience with rogue nations, nations that don't conform to global standards of civilised conduct and compliance with law and act as State sponsors of terrorism. As the world opinion consolidates around the conduct of some countries like Pakistan, the focus will naturally come on what the approach of India and the Indian Parliament to this threat is.

Sir, I humbly state that it cannot be our case, as Parliament and as a country, that the world declare and treat Pakistan as a terror-sponsor while all we have done is a 1994 Parliamentary Resolution. It is time that we stopped running to other countries to declare Pakistan a terror State and stood up and did this job ourselves.

What is Pakistan's record? There is not one man or woman in this country that does not recognise its direct role in fostering terrorism against India and not just for the last few years but for several decades. Pakistan's history and track record of fostering terrorism and terrorists is long and indeed distinguishable and incontrovertible.

For example, the year 2016 that has just gone past began with a terror attack in Pathankot on 2nd January, in which seven people lost their lives. This was followed by a series of attacks in Gurdaspur, Machil, Pampore, Uri and Nagrota to name just a few. The year 2016, itself ended with an attack in Pampore. In all, we lost 87 lives and 165 militants were killed in 2016.

How can we as Parliament forget 13th December, 2001 when this very Parliament, the temple of our democracy, was attacked by Pakistan-based terrorists killing as many as 15 people and injuring at least 20 people before our security forces gunned them down?

How can we forget 26.11.2008, the Mumbai terror attacks? As the world watched in horror on television screens, Pakistan-based terrorists created a bloodbath in a series of 12 coordinated shooting and bombing attacks which lasted four days, killing 164 and wounding over 300 people. Despite overwhelming evidence, including from captured terrorist Kasab and David Headley pointing to Pakistan, that country continues to do nothing about prosecuting those responsible, confirming and reconfirming its deep involvement as a State that supports these attacks.

The irony is, despite undeniable evidence and widespread desire of the people of India, we have continued to engage with Pakistan diplomatically, culturally and economically in a meaningless engagement, which, in my opinion, serves only one purpose - for time to pass by and memories to fade about the last terror attack. These meaningless dialogues have exposed one fundamental reality that Pakistani State will not do anything unless they are coerced or pressured to do so. It is a fact, we all must recognise, that it is only after the Kargil bloody nose on Pakistan, that Pakistan turned responsive.

According to data from 1988 to 29th January, 2017, 14,741 civilians have been killed in terror attacks in our country, 6,274 security force personnel lost their lives and we have killed 23,146 terrorists. On 22nd January, 1994, we, in this very House, unanimously adopted a Resolution condemning “strongly the continued support and encouragement Pakistan is extending to subversive and terrorist activities in the Indian State of Jammu & Kashmir”, stopping short of a stronger resolution to send a message to not only Pakistan but also the rest of the world that we will not take Pakistan sponsored terrorism as business as usual.

Until now, successive Governments, except for Shrimati Indira Gandhi's 1971 defeat of Pakistan in Bangladesh and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee's crushing of Pakistan in Kargil, have done very

little and continued to have meaningless debates and kept running to major powers to pressure Pakistan. It is for first time with this Government that we have demonstrated military resolve and use of the Army with its surgical strikes. But there is more that we can do and must do by using our diplomatic, legal and economic strengths. Our basket of options to bring Pakistan to book must be expanded beyond military. Which is precisely why I have introduced this Bill to use economic trade, sports, cultural sanctions with Pakistan, to review and repeal the 'Most Favoured Nation Status' given by India to Pakistan and to review the Indus Water Treaty and to further punish those who aid and abet Pakistan.

Sir, let me just describe the Bill in a few sentences. The Bill is to declare any country, this is the format that will help India, and the Parliament and the Government to declare any Government, any state that sponsors terrorism against India. Whilst we recognise Pakistan as our principle aider and abettor of terrorism, this Bill can apply in future to other countries also that directly or indirectly aid terror attacks against India. I will not mention the names, but we have a fair understanding of which the other countries are.

This Bill, in Section 2(b), defines what a state sponsor of terrorism is. It is any country which, through its instrumentalities or retired officials or through deliberate negligence, provides support to terrorist acts directly or indirectly. This Bill defines terrorist act. It defines in 2(b) the state sponsor of terrorism and in 2(c) it defines terrorist act.

As one of the principal victims of terrorism for many, many decades, we can set the basis of defining what a terror act is even while the United Nations still struggles to define terrorism. It is one of the ironies of the contemporary age that the United Nations even today struggles for declaring Hafiz Saeed a terrorist because they are quibbling about the definition of terrorist act. So, this Act defines under 2(c) what a terrorist act is. Through the following

clauses, it lays out in very clear form what the economic and other consequences are that would be applicable to a state sponsor of terrorism that aids, abets, directly or indirectly, the terrorist act.

For example, it talks about Heads of States of state sponsor of terrorism being prohibited to travel to and from India. It talks about business entities that are linked to the state sponsor of terrorism being sanctioned against conducting trade, investment or any form of other economic and commercial activity with any entity or the state, the country of India. It talks about overflight restrictions for entities that are linked to the state sponsor of terrorism and coastal prohibitions for entities that are linked to the state sponsor of terrorism.

Sir, I will conclude by saying that I believe that the Government and Parliament must act now. The winds of change are blowing in the world against terrorism and terror sponsors. This was obvious in the universal condemnation of Pakistan during the Uri terror attacks.

In a sense it is a little ironical that we, as a Parliament, have not done anything more than the 1994 Resolution because in September, 2016, the US Congress introduced a Bill. Senator Ted Poe and Congressman Dana Rohrabacher introduced a Bill titled, "Pakistan State Sponsor of Terrorism Designated Act". They were quite clear. They actually included the name "Pakistan" in the name of the Bill. I am trying to be much broader and saying this is not directed at Pakistan, but it is a declaration of state sponsor of terrorism. Senator Poe introducing the Bill stated and I quote, "Not only is Pakistan an untrustworthy ally, Islamabad has also aided and abetted enemies of the United States for years. From harbouring Osama Bin Laden to its cozy relationship with the Haqqani network, there is more than enough evidence to determine whose side Pakistan is on in the war of terror and it is not America's."

Sir, if you just take the word “America” out of that quote and insert “India”, that quote holds good for us. Therefore, it is ironical and I repeat that while the US Congress, a nation that is miles away from Pakistan, has introduced a Bill and is debating a Bill or has debated a Bill, our Parliament has done very little since 1994. I am going to cite one more quote from the same gentleman. He states, “Pakistan’s reckless behavior in this regard is a serious security risk to its neighbours and India unfortunately, pays the price all too often. Not only is Pakistan an untrustworthy ally, Islamabad has also aided and abetted enemies for years.”

So, Sir, let me end by saying, the terror attacks on India has not just caused loss to lives, it has caused significant economic loss to us. On one hand our businesses bleed due to Pakistan-sponsored terror, yet on the other hand we have continued to grant Pakistan the ‘Most Favoured Nation’ status without the same being granted to us reciprocally. Pakistan poses a continual risk to the peace, security and stability of the region, harbouring terrorists and funding terror outfits that have orchestrated terrorism world over.

In addition to its diplomatic and military options, India can and should use its economic and trade strengths to send out a strong and firm message that we intend to change the relationship with Pakistan into one where Pakistan is a more responsible and accountable neighbour. There is no justification in the world that allows a nation or group to perpetrate violent crime against innocent people.

With this Bill, Sir, we in Parliament can reflect the will of our people because there is not a man or woman as I said earlier in this country who does not want that Pakistan be declared a State that sponsors terrorism. It is time that we should define what national interest means because we are seeing what the rest of the world is doing to protect their nations and their own people.

I appeal to the House and all my colleagues here to start a discussion around this Bill to signal, internally and externally, the depth of our national resolve that there will be no more half measures when it comes to protecting India and its people from terrorism.

Thank you, Sir.

Jai Hind.

## 12

# Parliamentary Discussion on The Declaration of Countries as Sponsor of Terrorism Bill, 2016

Rajya Sabha

10th March, 2017

Thank you, Sir,

Let me start by thanking all my colleagues who participated in this debate and I am grateful to them for their support through the course of the passage of this Private Bill for the last many months.

Sir, let me just start by saying, I think the objective of this bill and as I said it very early on was to start a debate in this house because since 1994 this house has said very little about Pakistan's role in sponsoring terrorism and Pakistan's role in the claiming of thousands and countless of innocent lives in India.

Sir, I would like to just put in front of my friends, I would like to place four quotes, one is what Sushma ji said in the 71st United

Nations General Assembly in September 2016 and I quote “We must acknowledge that terrorism is undoubtedly the biggest violation of human rights. It targets the innocents and kills indiscriminately. Terrorism has gone way beyond affecting individuals or nation. It is a crime against humanity itself and it is important to ask, who’s behind this and who benefits from this? Terrorists do not own banks or weapon factories, so let us ask the real question: who finances these terrorists, who arms them and provide sanctuaries?”

I am putting this quote out there for us to just ponder, because this is the thought that is also crossing, these are the questions that are being put by every man and woman in this country as they hear about terror acts regularly.

Sir, let me just put another quote to you, this is the former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi talking about the context in which India has never been the aggressor and she said in 1971 and I quote “India always tries to be on the side of peace and negotiations and so on, but of course we can’t endanger our security in anyway. We have never ever attacked anybody but we have been attacked many times.”

Sir, in February 2000 the then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji did not mince words when he said and I quote again “Pakistan is sponsoring cross border terrorism as it has its internal compulsions. Pakistan has been smarting ever since its defeat in 1971 and the formation of Bangladesh, and now it has been humiliated in Kargil. Though the battle of Kargil is over, the war against terrorism will continue till Pakistan does not stop sponsoring terrorism. There can be no meaningful talks with Pakistan till it stops cross-border terrorism.”

Sir, the point here is for seven decades our neighbor has managed to leverage the sponsorship of terror as an instrument of statecraft. This is the fact, this has been going on for 70 years and I think like

my colleague Maheshji said it is now time for us as a nation and the people and as Parliament to say enough is enough.

I think some of our members who were talking about various points including the fact, there was a question raised about whether there is any utility of this bill. Sir there is a utility of this bill and the utility is very simple, since 1994 the Parliament has not spoken about this issue and I think for the Parliament to speak about the fact that Pakistan is a state sponsor of terrorism is in itself a big thing.

It may not translate into the necessary executive actions immediately on passing of the bill or on the discussion of the bill but the fact is that the Parliament of India and indeed the Rajya Sabha has not spoken of this issue since 1994. So just by speaking sir, we are sending a message.

I don't want to go on to extraordinary lengths to reinforce and reemphasize the need for such a debate, need for such a bill, but I want to clearly address some of the doubts that have been raised by the members because these are doubts that exist today even among some pockets in India.

So if you give me some time Sir, I would like to say this, one of the points that for example K.T. Tulsi ji has said is that the executive has power so why should the Parliament do anything about it but that is precisely why this bill is necessary, that is precisely why this debate is necessary because over the last seven decades successive executives have abrogated their responsibility in declaring and calling out Pakistan for being a state sponsor of terrorism. So if the executive does not want to do it, the Parliament can't just sit around and say we will just stand by, sit silently and have the executive decide what the people of India want.

So sir, there is a utility and this Parliament has a role to talk about Pakistan's role in terrorism regardless of what the executive does

or does not do. So that argument that the executive has the power and so the Parliament should sit on its seats and do nothing, I think is a moot point.

There is another point raised again by a colleague saying ‘we need action, we do not need bills’, but that is precisely what this bill is supposed to not allow the discourse to drift into. Today when there is Terror Act, we are left with two options, one is you take a candle and do a candlelight vigilance and say ‘Aman ki Asha’ or we say surgical strike or a military action. The whole contention of this bill is to argue that we have a broad space between doing nothing and doing military options and that is precisely what this bill is about. This bill is about exploring the middle ground of options that have to do with economy, trade and other forms of sanction and other forms of pressure on Pakistan that go beyond doing nothing and doing only military action.

Sir there is another point raised about we must also declare Cuba and Israel, the point is we can as a Parliament only talk about who impacts us, who harms us. Cuba and Israel don’t harm us, if some other country is affected by Cuba, some other people are affected by Israel, they will in their Parliament, in their legislature declare them a terrorist state. This is India, we represent the people of India and the clear and present danger to the people of India is Pakistan so therefore the argument that we should drag in Cuba and Israel is moot.

Another point that was raised was that we should work with other countries, now this is again a bit farcical because if we are the victims of terrorism, we have to take the first move on this issue rather than rely on other countries to work with us to declare our enemy a terrorist state.

My colleague Manu Singhvi ji said this thing about graded response and their I agree with my friend Subramaniam Swamy, I

think the time for graded response is over, there is no need for us to investigate whether Pakistan is a terror state, we already know that it is a terror state and now it's the question of debating options.

Sir I will just end by also again repeating what my colleague Dr. Swamy said, just yesterday the US Congressman Ted Poe, the Chairman of the House Subcommittee on Terrorism has introduced H.R. 1449, the Pakistan State Sponsor of Terrorism Act 2017 and he quotes during the introduction and I quote "Not only is Pakistan an untrustworthy ally, Islamabad has also aided and abetted enemies of the United States for years. From harboring Osama bin Laden to its cozy relationship with the Haqqani network, there is more than enough evidence to determine whose side Pakistan is on in the War on Terror. And it's not America's, it is not the World's. It is time we stop paying Pakistan for its betrayal and designate it for what it is: a State Sponsor of Terrorism."

Sir, I'll end by requesting the government that the status quo not continue, that the government explore options that go beyond just candle raising or military option and explore a whole plethora of option that lie in the economic and the trade area, so that we can approach the issue of Pakistan and the relationship with Pakistan afresh.

Thank you Sir

Jai Hind

SERVING OUR  
NATION

Letters



# 1

## Letter to the Prime Minister on Threat to National Security

15th July, 2006

Respected Prime Minister,

I have read with great enthusiasm your statements during the visit to Mumbai yesterday 14.07.06, about terrorism and your determination to fight it.

This statement of determination to take on those who do us harm was long overdue and is the firmest indication of our resolve that I have heard from you since you assumed office as our Prime Minister.

It is sad and tragic that it took the loss of more than 200 lives, for us to wake up and realize the threat that terrorism and its supporters, pose to our proud and hardworking people, our country and way of life.

Most political leaders have stopped at simply saluting the fortitude of the citizens of our country and cities where lives were lost. That is not enough. It is important that we do not forget these lives lost and people get to hear that the Government and the political leadership are determined not to lose any more - lives or at least fight hard to prevent any more lives from being lost.

We must accept that our country and unfortunately our innocent citizens have been pushed into battle with terrorism and terrorists. Given this, it is important we recognize that state of war that we are in and act accordingly. Our proud nation has won many wars and taken on many enemies and always protected the integrity of its people. It's vital that we do so even in this battle and win.

To do this, the Government must go beyond statements and back these with actions to give a sense of confidence that we are acting and can win this war. Acting in not just in the sense of publicizing the hauls of weapon caches and explosives, since even a naïve follower of counter terrorism knows that terrorists have a strategy of allowing the nabbing of some caches to distract and/or to create complacency. But real decisive action should mean the actual dismantling of cells, apprehension of the leadership of local support groups and taking the fight to the enemy through a comprehensive counter terrorism strategy.

The growing perception of India as a well-meaning but weak nation must change and it can change only through a determination to make our national security as the No. 1 priority and back that up with a steadfast determination to fight those who cause us harm.

Under your leadership, the country has conquered many of its economic challenges and I trust that you will lead us the same way in overcoming the threat to our nation's security and integrity and if there is any way I can assist and contribute, I would be happy to do so.

## 2

# Letter to the Defence Minister on Display of Gallantry Medals by Families

10th August, 2006

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

Earlier in this session of the Parliament, I had asked an unstarred question about Gallantry awards and families of the Gallantry award winners. Unfortunately I think because the question was not correctly understood, the answer that I received from your Ministry was not satisfactory. I am enclosing the question and your response to the same for your information and review.

I am writing this letter to bring this issue to your attention again and for serious reconsideration of my request.

As you are aware, gallantry awards like PVC, MVC are awarded by a grateful nation to a few brave men of our armed forces, to

recognize and commemorate these actions of sacrifice and courage. You would agree that these men and their actions have tremendous symbolic value and inspiration to future generations of young men and women.

As you are aware some of these gallantry awards are won posthumously and also with advent of time some of these brave men pass away with age and ill health. The unfortunate consequence of this is that with the passing away of these men, the memories of their bravery and action fade as well.

It is my request through this letter, that it is in the interest of the country and in the interest of the future generations that these gallantry awards should continue to be worn and displayed as visible symbols of bravery and sacrifice and not fade away. I propose the way to achieve this is to allow family successors of deceased gallantry award winners to participate in the Republic day parade whilst wearing the medals. This way these gallantry awards and symbols of sacrifice and bravery remain displayed through successive generations and their memories never fade.

This is not an unusual practice. I am personally aware of this being practiced by the Australian Defence Forces since I happened to see young Australians wearing the medals won by their grandfathers proudly and marching in the Gallipoli day parade.

I would request you to seriously consider this. I have no doubt that it will go a long way for our nation and its future generations to never forget the sacrifices of the past.

If you require any clarification on this subject, I would be happy to meet with you and/or concerned officials to share my views.

# 3

## Letter to the Prime Minister on Civil Defence Preparedness

23rd August, 2006

Subject: Civil Defence preparation of our Country

It is quite obvious that our country is going to be repeatedly challenged by terrorism and terrorist acts in the foreseeable future. Arising out of this, the country and the government has rightly been focused on the issues of prevention of terrorism and related and justifiable discussion about improvements in our Intelligence and Counter terrorism infrastructure.

However, knowing fully well that despite the best efforts at prevention terrorists will always succeed in some instances in breaching the fortress (The Mumbai and J&K blasts are an example of this), you would agree that it is as important to focus on our post-attack/ civil defence preparedness.

It is quite clear that our main cities and economic hubs are woefully inadequately prepared in this department. E.g., A city like Bangalore — clearly one of the most important economic hubs of our country has only 257 firemen for a population of almost 7 Million citizens. Further more these firemen are ill equipped and ill trained.

I would strongly urge you to give importance to this vital issue. How well prepared are we as a country and as states, to cope with and respond to terrorist attacks? Even countries like the US have had to re-invent their civil defence and crisis management organizations and procedures. But it seems to me that we have done precious little in this vital area. Unfortunately the inadequacy of our preparedness will only become obvious in the event of a disaster.

My suggestion is to ensure that a comprehensive structure be developed that knits together the various local civil defence agencies like Fire Services, Territorial Army, Police, Central Reserve Forces, Ambulance and Health teams — which today operate with independent jurisdiction and oversight. Along with this restructuring/realignment of our resources, there should be a central government audit of state/city preparedness that identifies the weaknesses and subsequently is used to ensure preparedness levels remain consistent and high at all times.

I hope through this letter, I would have achieved the objective of drawing to your attention to this important and urgent issue.

## 4

# Letter to the Defence Minister Urging the Government to Recognise Noor Inayat Khan

23rd August, 2006

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Subject: Noor Inayat Khan**

Please refer to my unstarred question on the above subject and your response to the same. I am enclosing the same for your information.

I would like to draw your attention to the issue and urge you and the Government to recognize this truly inspiring story of bravery of an Indian during the World War II.

I urge you to take the initiative and recognize Noor Inayat Khan. As my Parliamentary question has pointed out, she has been

recognized by the British and French Governments and people. It is appropriate that India does the same. A fitting tribute and recognition would be of naming the Children's bravery awards in her name, because it is the younger generation that would be inspired by her story.

The story of Noor Inayat Khan is even more telling given the recent debate about the role of women in our Armed forces. I am amongst those who firmly subscribe to the belief that virtues of courage, patriotism and service to the nation are not and cannot be gender restricted.

I hope and trust that you will take the initiative in giving Noor Inayat Khan the belated recognition she deserves.

Respectfully,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Pranab Mukherjee,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
No. 104, South Block,  
New Delhi.

## 5

# Letter to the Defence Minister on Arrest of Army Men

05th February, 2007

Dear Hon'ble Raksha Mantriji

**Subject : Arrest and Detention of Army men in New Years eve in  
Kolkata**

I have read and followed this story through the media with considerable dismay. It is with even greater regret and sadness that I have read the Honble Prime Ministers and your comments on this incident in the Media about 'bringing the Army men to Justice etc'.

This incident has created much disquiet amongst the Armed forces and Ex-servicemen around the country and there has

been considerable debate about this incident and the response of the Government - This issue has been discussed extensively by Servicemen, Ex-Servicemen and concerned citizens on the Internet and various blog sites, some of which I have personally read.

I am attaching an article in the Asian Age dated 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007, which reports the growing anger and disquiet about the way this incident is being handled.

The Army is an institution that millions of Indians admire and respect. Importantly, It remains the only institution in our country that continue to inspire the growing population of youth in our country. I believe it is completely unacceptable that we mete out this kind of treatment to our Uniformed men, to whom we go to in a hurry in event of any National Calamity.

I urge the Government to conduct an urgent in-depth enquiry into this incident, including the conduct of the Local Police authorities and make public the findings. It is important for truth be established on this issue to safeguard the institution of the Armed forces.

I would request that your Ministry or yourself keep me informed about this issue.

Respectfully,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri. A. K. Antony,

Hon'ble Minister for Defence,

Government of India,

New Delhi .

## 6

# Letter to the Prime Minister on Arrest of Army Men

24th April, 2008

Respected Prime Minister,

As you are aware the Defence forces the Chiefs and Officers and Ranks - are very unhappy about the recommendations of the 6th Central pay commission. It has also been reported that several officers of Major/Lt Col/Col and eqvt rank hove sought premature retirement from the three services increasing an already disturbing and disconcerting trend of Attrition.

I om sure you are aware that there is widespread resentment in the services and it is obvious to all that this whole episode could have been avoided if there had been a representative of the Armed forces in the pay commission. The reasoning trotted out at that stage

that “There will be similar requests from other services” is totally unacceptable reasoning because Armed forces and their needs have to be treated as different from other arms of the government given the nature of what they do and what the nation asks them to do.

Sir, the Armed forces remain one of the true professional and committed groups of people in our country with a truly admirable sense of duty to their nation. It is our responsibility to ensure their and their families welfare to the maximum possible.

You have already demonstrated and spoken about your commitment to the some and I look forward to you resolving this urgently.

Respectfully,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Service Chiefs on Adverse Implications of 6th CPC Report

30th April, 2008

I am enclosing copies of my letters written to the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence, dated 24 April, 2008, highlighting the adverse repercussions of the 6th Pay Commission Recommendations, which was the result of an absence of a representative of the Armed Forces in the Commission.

Subsequently, I have also met the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence on this issue.

To me, the Uniformed Fraternity holds a very special place of esteem. As a Member of Parliament, I will endeavor to do my best in representing this matter to the government and persevere in getting their attention to resolving this on priority.

Very truly yours,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

General Shri Deepak Kapoor, PVSM, AVSM, VSM, SM, ADC,  
Chief of the Army Staff,  
Army Head Quarters,  
South Block,  
New Delhi.

Admiral Shri. Sureesh Mehta, PVSM, AVSM, ADC,  
Chief of Naval Staff,  
Navel Head Quarters,  
191, South Block ,  
New Delhi.

Air Chief Marshal Shri. Fali Homi Major, PVSM, AVSM, SC, VM,  
ADC,  
Chief of Air Staff,  
Air Head Quarters,  
Vayu Bhawan,  
New Delhi.

General Shri N. C. Vij, PVSM, UYSM, AVSM (Retd.),  
Deputy Chairman,  
National Disaster Management Authority,  
Government of India,  
Centaur Hotel, Near I.G.I. Airport,  
New Delhi 110 037.

## 8

# Letter to the Defence Minister on War Memorial

12th June, 2008

Dear Shri Antony,

I am enclosing copies of my letter addressed to Shri BS Yeddyurappa, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka and Shri V S Achutanandan, Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerela.

I would request your support for doing the similar thing in other States of our country as well. It will go a long way in demonstrating civil society and our country's support to the Armed Forces and their families.

Very Truly Yours

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri. A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister for Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi .

## 9

# Letter to the Kerala Chief Minister on War Memorial

12th June, 2008

Dear Shri Achutanandan

### War Memorial

You are aware that many sons of Kerala in the Armed forces have laid down their lives in the service of our country.

The Armed forces, today, continue to represent one of the finest traditions of national service, commitment, patriotism and professionalism to their motherland. It should be our endeavor not only to recognize the sacrifices of these men in uniform but also preserve their memories. We owe it to the families they leave behind as well as to the future generations to whom they will serve as examples and sources of inspiration.

I would request the Government to sanction the creation of a War Memorial in Thiruvananthapuram - a simple, dignified memorial dedicated to the past, current and future soldiers from the State who serve and lay down their lives for our country. This would also go a long way in setting an example for the other States to follow suit.

I look forward to your support and approval of this project. I would also be happy to mentor and guide the implementation of the project.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Achutanandan

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala,

Room No 141, 3rd Floor, North Block

Thiruvananthapuram.

10

## Letter to the Karnataka Chief Minister on War Memorial

12th June, 2008

Dear Yeddyurappaji

### War Memorial

You are aware that many sons of Karnataka in the Armed forces have laid down their lives in the service of our country.

The Armed forces, today, continue to represent one of the finest traditions of national service, commitment, patriotism and professionalism to their motherland. It should be our endeavor not only to recognize the sacrifices of these men in uniform but also preserve their memories. We owe it to the families they leave behind as well as to the future generations to whom they will serve as examples and sources of inspiration.

I would request the Government to sanction the creation of a War Memorial in Bengaluru - a simple, dignified memorial dedicated to the past, current and future soldiers from the State who serve and lay down their lives for our country. This would also go a long way in setting an example for the other States to follow suit.

I look forward to your support and approval of this project. I would also be happy to mentor and guide the implementation of the project.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri B S Yeddyurappa,

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka,

Bengaluru

# 11

## Letter to the Home Minister on Code of Conduct for Media Covering Security Action

2nd December, 2008

Dear Thiru Chidambaram,

Congratulations on assuming the office of the Home Minister of India. It is in many ways an honour as well as a challenge, given the circumstances our country and people find themselves in today.

While I am sure, you will have many pieces of advice from many quarters, as you move to shaping a new strategy and response to the challenges posed by Terror, I would like to suggest the following for your consideration.

**Code of Conduct for Media:** I strongly recommend a code of conduct to enshrine in law for the media, especially those that cover Security actions like that in Mumbai. There have been instances of

media coverage wittingly and unwittingly letting out Operational and Force Deployment information that can prove the source of information and intelligence to the terrorists. As you are aware, the current batch of terrorists was found to have blackberries with which they were monitoring media and news.

I have read today a news report that said - The suspected team leader “kept an eye on the round-the-clock coverage of the ongoing commando operations carried out by news channels’. This code of conduct is important because information revealed like this wittingly or unwittingly as the case may be, will pose a serious danger to the lives of the anti-terror personnel as well threaten the success of the anti-terrorist operation as well. Media in general is responsible and important in our democracy, but in some cases is irresponsible, insensitive and unaccountable for the consequences of its actions. The collateral damage of this, in national security situations cannot be accepted or allowed. I recommend these guidelines be enacted and find place in the law as well.

**Crowds in Scene of Action:** I further recommend a code of operations for local police in times of such operations — where local citizens are evacuated or cleared and then prohibited from entering a certain area around the scene of the operation. I draw your attention to the Nariman House operation, the scene of which was chaotic and had huge crowds of milling citizenry (and for good measure local politicians looking for photo ops!). This kind of situation presents additional opportunities for chaos for terrorists who can easily mingle with these crowds to create collateral damage as well to use the crowds and confusion to slip away. This represents further challenges and threats to the anti-terror operations itself if it has to be worried about crowd maintenance functions at the same time. I would urge you to examine this issue.

Given the anger, despair and fright that have gripped millions of our countrymen, I wish your stewardship of our nation's security all success. We will all pray for your success, for in that is the safety of all our people and nation.

Very truly yours,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Thiru P. Chidambaram,  
Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

12

## Letter to the Home Minister on Notes on FICCI Conference on Terrorism

17th December, 2008

Dear Thiru Chidambaram,

As you are aware, FICCI had arranged a Conference on Terrorism and National Security on 12 December, 2008. The Conference consisted of many experienced panelists on the subject, and expectedly, given the national concern, was heavily attended.

I am enclosing a copy of my notes of this Conference in the hope that this would help you in your efforts at creating a national counter-terrorism strategy. A copy of the Conference programme is also attached, along with a copy of the national strategy for Homeland Security (2007) of the U.S.A., for your reference.

I am sure you are already quite aware of the widespread and deep concern amongst business in particular, and the larger community of citizens in general, about our nation's preparedness in this war against terror.

FICCI is available in any manner to assist you and the government in your efforts in the same.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Thiru P. Chidambaram,  
Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

13

## Letter to Mr. Harsh Singhania on First Meeting of FICCI Task Force on Terrorism and Nationalism

21st January, 2009

Dear Harsh,

**Sub. : First Meeting of the FICCI Task Force on National Security  
and Terrorism**

Further to my earlier email, I propose that the First Meeting of the FICCI Task Force on National Security and Terrorism be held on 11 February 2009, from 11:00 a.m. — 1:00 p.m. at Federation House, Tansen Marg, New Delhi.

The primary outcome expected from the Task Force is a National Counter-Terrorism Blueprint, with other outcomes as we continue

our deliberations. As a key member of the Task Force with immense expertise and knowledge of the subject, your presence at this meeting will be crucial to discussing and formulating a comprehensive 'Interim Report' on the critical subject to be presented to the government and various political parties by the end of February 2009, for its consideration. The meeting is also intended to set the future agenda of the Task Force in its effort to meeting its objectives.

I, therefore, request you to kindly make it convenient to attend and participate in the first meeting to be chaired by me, and enrich the deliberations. The FICCI Secretariat will be in touch with you to ascertain your availability. The coordinates of the contact person in my office are as follows:

Looking forward to an early confirmation from you.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Mr. Harsh Pati Singhanian

Managing Director,

JK Paper Limited,

Nehru House,

4, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg

New Delhi 110 002.

14

## Letter to the Home Minister on the New American Cyber Military Command

25th June, 2009

Dear Thiru Chidambaram

The U.S. Defense Department is in the final stages of creating a new military command to defend against attacks on the nation's military computer systems.

In this connection, I am enclosing herewith an article that appeared in Reuters, dated 23' June 2009, for your information.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Thiru P. Chidambaram,  
Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

### **Pentagon approves creation of cyber command**

**By Andrew Gray**

**Tue Jun 23, 2009**

**Washington (Reuters)**

The Pentagon will create a Cyber Command to oversee the U.S. military's efforts to protect its computer networks and operate in cyberspace, under an order signed by Defense Secretary Robert Gates on Tuesday.

The new headquarters, likely to be based at Fort Meade, Maryland, outside Washington, D.C., will be responsible for defending U.S. military systems but not other U.S. government or private networks, Pentagon spokesman Bryan Whitman said.

Asked if the command would be capable of offensive operations as well as protecting the Department of Defense, Whitman declined to answer directly.

"This command is going to focus on the protection and operation of DoD's networks," he said. "This command is going to do what is necessary to be able to do that."

U.S. officials have voiced growing concern in recent years about being vulnerable to attacks on the country's civilian or military networks as technology takes on an ever-increasing role, including in military operations.

President Barack Obama said last month he would name a White House-level czar to coordinate government efforts to fight cybercrime.

The United States has said many attempts to penetrate its networks appear to come from China but it has stopped short of accusing Chinese authorities of being responsible.

Whitman said the new command will consolidate existing Pentagon efforts to protect its networks and operate in cyberspace.

Those efforts currently come under the auspices of U.S. Strategic Command in Nebraska, which will also oversee the new headquarters.

The U.S. Department of Defense runs some 15,000 electronic networks and runs some 7 million computers and other information technology devices, Whitman said.

“Our defense networks are constantly probed. There are millions of scans every day,” he said.

“The power to disrupt and destroy, once the sole province of nations, now also rests with small groups and individuals, from terrorist groups to organized crime to industrial spies to hacker activists, to teenage hackers,” he said.

“We also know that foreign governments are trying to develop offensive cyber capabilities,” he added, saying more than 100 foreign intelligence services were trying to hack into U.S. networks.

The new command should begin initial operations by this October and be fully up and running a year later.

The head of the Cyber Command would also be the director of the U.S. National Security Agency, which conducts electronic surveillance and communications interception and is also based at Fort Meade.

**(Editing by Eric Walsh)**

15

## Letter to the Defence Minister and the Minister of State of Defence on National Military Memorial in Delhi

04th August, 2009

Dear Shri Antony,

**Sub. : National Military Memorial in Delhi**

The unending conflicts in the Indian Subcontinent have resulted in casualties, both Civilian and Military. The bravery and the sacrifices made by our uniformed personnel go largely unrecognized and unappreciated by the country. In contrast, governments and civil societies in other countries such as the USA, have undertaken several initiatives to recognize their Armed Forces through financial support, career counseling, housing assistance, recreational therapy programmes and complete and unstinted community support.

At a time when our nation is under threat from within and out, from low intensity conflicts and terrorist attacks, uniformed forces represent not just the form of protection and defence to our way of life and democracy, but also represent the ideals on which this country was built - of commitment to the nation, and nation first.

Therefore, the continued lack of progress in finalizing a National Military Memorial is an embarrassment for all of us as citizens, and the nation as a whole. I understand that there are issues with identifying land within the city for such a Memorial and this is the reason for the lack of progress thus far.

May I, therefore, recommend that the Government look at having this Memorial on the banks of the Yamuna and create a 50-60 acre Arlington War Memorial-type National Military Memorial Park. This would be similar to Rajghat / Shantivan complexes.

I am enclosing herewith some ideas for the design and layout of such a Memorial, for your consideration.

I remain available for any other assistance that you or the Ministry may need in getting this vital project of a National Military Memorial in Delhi off the ground.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri. A. K. Antony

Hon'ble Minister for Defence

Government of India

New Delhi

Dear Shri Pallam Raju,

**Sub. : National Military Memorial in Delhi**

The unending conflicts in the Indian Subcontinent have resulted in casualties, both Civilian and Military. The bravery and the sacrifices made by our uniformed personnel go largely unrecognized and unappreciated by the country. In contrast, governments and civil societies in other countries such as the USA, have undertaken several initiatives to recognize their Armed Forces through financial support, career counseling, housing assistance, recreational therapy programmes and complete and unstinted community support.

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Very truly yours,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri M. M. Pallam Raju  
Hon'ble Minister of State for Defence  
Government of India  
New Delhi

16

## Letter Regarding the Launch of Flags of Honour Foundation

6th August, 2009

### **Sub. : Launch of Flags of Honour Foundation**

I write to inform you about the launch of the Flags of Honour Foundation on the Tenth Anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas on 26 July, 2009 in Bangalore.

The Flags of Honour Foundation has been established with an objective to support the martyrs / wounded veterans (including military, paramilitary and state police forces) and their families by ensuring the much needed support (financial, material and logistical) and channelise them in an effective manner to reach the beneficiaries.

At a time when our nation is under threat from within and out, from low intensity conflicts and terrorist attacks, uniformed forces represent not just the form of protection and defence to our way of life and democracy, but also represent the ideals on which this country was built - of commitment to the nation, and nation first.

The unending conflicts in the Indian Subcontinent have resulted in casualties, both Civilian and Military. Bravery and the sacrifices made by our uniformed personnel go largely unrecognized and unappreciated by the country. In contrast, governments and civil societies in other countries such as the USA, have undertaken several initiatives to recognize their Armed Forces through financial support, career counseling, housing assistance, recreational therapy programmes, and complete and unstinted community support.

The Flags of Honour Foundation is an endeavour to be a platform and a bridge between the citizens who seek to help, and the families of martyrs/wounded veterans. The Foundation will identify the need and requirements of these families and effectively route financial, social, and material support. The Foundation will expand to have a Pan India presence. It will affiliate with other Foundations across the country to enhance reach.

A base corpus of Rs. 1 Crore has been created for the Foundation, with an initial donation from me, which we will expand and grow by tapping various other sources.

The Council of Advisors of Flags of Honour comprise of the following :

- Air Chief Marshall F.H. Major (Retd) (PVSM, AVSM, SC, and VM)
- Lt. Gen. Satish Nambiar (Retd) ( PVSM, AVSM, VrC-1971)
- Air Marshal Mc Mahon (Retd) (PVSM, AVSM, VM)

- Air Commodore M.K Chandrasekhar (Retd) (VM, VSM)
- Commodore Franklin (Retd) (AVSM, VSM)
- Mrs. Subhashini Vasanth (Wife of Late Col. V. Vasanth, Ashoka Chakra)
- Shri Manvendra Singh, Ex-Member of Parliament
- Shri Sajjan Poovayya , Chairman of FICCI Karnataka State Council
- Lt. Col. Mohanlal, and
- Rajeev Chandrasekhar, Member of Parliament (myself)

Please visit [www.flagsofhonour.org](http://www.flagsofhonour.org) to view the video / presentation outlining the mission of the Foundation in greater detail.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Mr. Rahul Singh

Defence Correspondent

Hindustan Times

Hindustan Times House

18-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg

New Delhi 110 001

Shri T. V. Mohandas Pai

Member of the Board & Director – Human Resources

Infosys Technologies Limited

Hosur Road, 3rd Cross

Electronics

Bangalore 561 229

Dr. Devi Shetty

Narayana Hrudayalaya

258/A, Bommbasandra Industrial Area

Anekar Taluk

Bangalore 560 099

Shri M. P. Kumar

Chairman & CEO

Global Edge Software Ltd.

#218, JP Royale

Sampige Road, Malleswaram

Bangalore 560 003

17

## Letter to the Minister of State for Communication and IT on FICCI Conference on Terrorism and National Security

11th November, 2009

Dear Sachin,

The spectacular march of the young Indian Republic is facing complex security challenges, which have the potential to derail its economic and social progress.

The year 2008 exhibited that terrorism and internal insurgencies remain the biggest threat to our national security, our businesses and way of life. The 26/11 Mumbai attacks and the rising tide of Maoist / Naxal violence have definitely changed the ways in which both the public and the private sectors deal with extreme events.

The real priorities facing the government are two-fold — one to ensure that all steps are taken to prevent further attacks elsewhere

in the country, and the second to revive the confidence of the people here and worldwide by being seen to be taking the necessary steps to secure our nation and people from future attacks.

To kickstart its active participation in the national policy making on terrorism and national security, FICCI organized a Conference on Terrorism and National Security in the aftermath of 26/11, where a series of action points were finalized and published. The Conference was followed up with the convening of the FICCI Task Force on National Security and Terrorism, with some of the finest minds in the field of national security and terrorism. The deliberations of this Task Force to lay down a consultative framework and put together a comprehensive set of policy suggestions that the government, the corporate world and the civil society must adopt without further delay, has now culminated in this first Volume of the Report.

This report was submitted to Shri P. Chidambaram, Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs, on 09 November, 2009.

I am pleased to enclose a copy of Report for your perusal. I believe that the recommendations included in this Report would help the Government enhance and augment the nation's internal security.

I look forward to your views/comments on the same.

Shri Sachin Pilot,

Hon'ble Minister of State, for Communication and IT,

3, Tyagaraj Marg,

New Delhi

# 18

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Army Officers Being Denied Entry into the Airport to Pay Homage to Captain Jass

25th February, 2010

Dear Shri Antony,

I draw your attention to the martyrdom of Captain Davinder Singh Jass, Paratrooper Imtiyaz Ahmad Thokar and Naik Selva Kumar in operations in Sopore.

I am informed today that Army officers were denied entry into the airport to pay homage to the body of Captain Jass, including a serving Brigadier and Kirti Chakra winner who lost both his legs in combat.

I request your personal and urgent intervention to prevent these kinds of incidents that make a mockery of the sacrifices of these brave sons of India.

Very truly yours,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

19

Letter to the Defence Minister  
Regarding OROP and on the  
Enhancement of Pension of  
Ex-Servicemen

9th March, 2010

Respected Shri A.K. Antony,

I write to you with reference to the Government Order dated 06 July, 2009 on enhancement of pension of ex-servicemen.

It is distressing to note that the enhancement of pensions to JCOs and Jawans announced by this Government Order are yet to be implemented. Further, it is learnt that an enquiry made in the Service Headquarters reveals that no orders for enhancement of pensions of JCOs and Jawans, vide this Order, have been received.

Additionally, officers are still not covered under One Rank One Pension, thereby creating divisions in the structure of the Armed

Forces. These officers were responsible in allowing our armed forces to develop into an apolitical and professional institution that we can all be proud of.

Sir, the Armed Forces is a truly unique and dedicated group of people, whose sense of selfless service and nationalism is a matter of great pride and dignity. It is unfortunate that the issue of One Rank One Pension still remains unaddressed, and the officers of the Armed Forces are being denied their due.

I strongly urge you to resolve this matter urgently to ensure that the commitments by the Government made on “One Rank One Pension” are honoured.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A.K. Antony,

Hon'ble Minister of Defence,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

20

## Letter to the Prime Minister Regarding OROP and on the Enhancement of Pension of Ex-Servicemen

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I strongly urge you to resolve this matter urgently to ensure that the commitments by the Government made on “One Rank One Pension” are honoured.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,

Hon'ble Prime Minister of India,

New Delhi.

## 21

# Letter to Defence Minister on Modernization of Aviation/ Training Platforms

17th March, 2010

Dear Shri Antony,

We write to you as a group of citizens who are deeply concerned about the increasing loss of life in peacetime operations in our Armed forces, especially in aviation.

As you are aware, last week in Hyderabad two young Naval aviators Cdr S. K. Maurya and Lt Cdr Rahul Nair perished in a crash of their HJT-16 mk II Kiran trainer.

The exact cause of their death will no doubt be ascertained by the Naval Enquiry. But for all of us, they join a list of Airforce and Navy aviators who have volunteered to serve their country and have died recently in peacetime flying – not due to enemy action or hostilities.

It is obvious that these fatalities are a direct or indirect consequence of our aviators being made to fly or being trained on aircraft such as the Kiran which are platforms that are almost 4 decades old. Worse still these bravehearts are being made to conduct modern missions and doctrine with equipment and support that are completely mismatched and inadequate to these missions (Eg these aerobatics teams).

We do understand that it is the Governments stated objectives to modernize the armed forces as was mentioned in the Presidents address. This is clearly an overdue statement of objective by the Government.

But we seek your personal attention to this vital issue of modernization of aviation platforms and specifically that of training platforms. With recent incidents the basic trainer HPT-32 and the Jet trainer Kiran have been grounded. The HAL-IJT project has slipped, the Hawk AJT is still to reach volumes. Training and Model Platforms are the cornerstone of preparedness for any Armed forces. But being compromised at the training and Platforms is causing so much loss of precious life – of young men who otherwise would've served the nation proudly in times of hostility. Whilst this is being played out in all three armed forces, it costs more lives in the Air force, because aviation is far more unforgiving of errors and flaws.

**Sir, whilst many young men and women of India are ready to serve their country in the forces, it is the responsibility of all of us and especially those in Government such as you – to ensure that these young men and women who serve are given the best training inputs and equipment for their jobs. This is the beholden responsibility of the Government and especially the Raksha Mantri and we hope you will move swiftly on this.**

We remain available to you to assist and help in any way.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Milind Deora

Member of Parliament

M. V. Mysura Reddy

Member of Parliament

Member - Standing Committee  
on Defence

K. B. Shanappa

Member of Parliament

Member - Standing  
Committee on Defence

## Letter to the Minister of External Affairs on the Whereabouts of the Missing Officer from Gulf Aviation

22nd April, 2010

Dear Shri Krishna,

This is with reference to a news clipping in the Deccan Herald of 21 April, 2010 (copy attached) about the sudden disappearance of Shri Nivedan Prakash from a vessel owned by Gulf Aviation. Shri Prakash was employed as a Mechanical Engineer with the company. It has been reported that the last time his parents heard from their son was on 14 April, 2010, and their attempts to reach him after that have been futile.

With no information forthcoming from the employers on the whereabouts of their son, Shri Prakash's parents are naturally distraught and are pleading for help to locate their son. The

parents suspect foul play in the rather sudden and mysterious disappearance of their son.

Given the gravity of the situation, I request your immediate intervention to help the traumatised parents to know the fate of their missing son.

I urge you to kindly issue the necessary directions to get information about Shri Nivedan Prakash at the earliest.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri S. M. Krishna,

Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

## 23

# Letter to the Defence Minister on Destruction of 1971 War Records

04th June, 2010

Dear Shri Antony,

I refer to recent newspaper reports about the destruction of the official records of the 1971 India-Pakistan war at the Eastern Army Command headquarters in Kolkata.

The media stories say that the records have been deliberately destroyed and they include documents pertaining to creation of the Mukti Bahini, assessments made by the army during the war period, orders issued to fighting formations and other sensitive operational details. If true, this is indeed tragic and the country has lost invaluable documents that should have been part of the national archives.

As you aware, the 1971 war is one of the great success stories of Indian intelligence and the Indian Army. It is shocking to know that the documents about such a historic war are destroyed deliberately. This is extremely disconcerting and an insult to the martyrs of the country.

I urge you to order an enquiry into this reported obliteration of records and take stringent action against the guilty; and put in a mechanism to ensure all records of battles fought by India since 1947 be archived with the Military History Museum and National Archives.

It a matter of national duty to keep these records safe and preserve them for posterity.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

24

Letter to the Defence Minister  
Regarding Standardization of  
Compensation and Rehabilitation  
Measures for Families of  
Martyrs' by States

30th July, 2010

Dear Shri Antony,

**Sub.: Standardization of Compensation and Rehabilitation  
Packages for families of Armed Forces Martyrs**

As you are aware, one of the sad and tragic consequences of instances of heroism by our Armed Forces is that families and wives find themselves alone having lost their loved ones in uniform, in service of the nation.

While the Armed Forces and the Government of India do take care of the families through compensation and other rehabilitation

measures, it is noticed that different states follow very different compensation and rehabilitation packages for the families of martyred Armed Forces officers.

While some states are generous and do take good measures in easing the pain of the families, in terms of compensation and processes, some states have meager compensation packages and often complex and traumatic processes to disburse the same.

You will agree that these men and their families, while they may be from different states, all serve one cause – the cause of the nation. Therefore, they deserve to be treated similarly regardless of where they come from.

I would urge you to kindly take the necessary steps to standardize the compensation and rehabilitation packages of every state to martyrs, bravery award winners and the wounded – by advising the various State governments about a standardized terms.

I trust you will act on this at the earliest and address the sense of injustice that is currently prevailing.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

25

## Letter to the Minister of External Affairs to Secure Safe Release of Mazhar, a Pilot from Karnataka, Captured in Congo

30th July, 2010

Dear Sir,

This is with reference to recent news reports about Syed Mazhar, an Indian pilot from Karnataka, who has been taken hostage by rebels from Rwanda.

It has been reported that the aircraft, belonging to an airline company called The Goma Express, was attacked by rebels in a tin mining zone in the North Kivu province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

I request your immediate intervention to secure the release of Syed Mazhar at the earliest and also ensure that no harm is done to him while in custody.

I urge you to kindly issue the necessary directions in this regard at the earliest.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri S. M. Krishna,  
Hon'ble Minister for External Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

26

## Letter to the Prime Minister Declining Salary Hike Until OROP Issue is Resolved

25th August, 2010

Respected Prime Minister,

**Subject: Salary hike to MPs, One Rank, One Pension**

This is with reference to the ongoing debate in the public domain on the issue of salary increase for Members of Parliament.

I concur with the Government's view that MPs must be compensated better and good performing MPs thus have a financial safety net that allows them to serve the people they represent — better and with more dignity, and not have to depend on other sources of income to supplement their meager Income.

However, there are many questions that arise from this decision and the process used by the Government to arrive at this decision. One, around the lack of objectivity and independence of the process and speed of the decision, and two, the seemingly double standards adopted when there are other legitimate demands that have been pending for many years with the Government.

The lack of objectivity and independence of process relates to the fact that in this case, the Government has accepted the recommendations of a Parliamentary Committee comprising MPs on this issue, whilst in other cases like the One Rank, One Pension — the government has chosen to use bureaucratic committees to evaluate and decide. As you would agree, this leads to the perception that when your Government wishes to deny a claim, you rely on committees of bureaucrats, who by now have developed a fine tuned reputation of obstructive conduct — as demonstrated recently in the case of questioning the citizenship of one of finest sons - Vishwanathan Anand.

The issue of double standards is a far more damaging and hurtful one. The demands of One Rank, One Pension of the Armed forces veterans is a known issue. The Parliamentary Committee of Defence has repeatedly recommended it to the Government (just as in the case of MPs compensation). This request has been endorsed by a wide section of society, including icons like Marshal of the Airforce Arjan Singh, but has been repeatedly blocked by Government which moved astonishingly fast on the issue of increased salaries to the MPs,

Sir, I say this with humility but with absolute conviction — that these actions of your Government send very misleading and somewhat dangerous signals to the country and all its people, majority of whom are young Indians — that there are two sets of standards in this country — that public service and duty to nation as exemplified by the Armed Forces veterans are secondary to political expediency and politics.

I have written to you many times urging your intervention to resolve the issue of One Rank, One Pension. However, the issue remains unresolved even as MPs demanded and received a generous salary hike. Given this continued injustice to the demands of Armed Forces veterans, I shall decline the pay increase for myself individually for the above reasons till the Government re-examines the case of the One Rank, One Pension.

I am marking copies of this letter to H. E. Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Hon'ble Vice President of India and Chairman, Rajya Sabha.

I realize that as an Independent Member of Parliament, my action may not amount to much, and in the kind of politics being practiced today, may not cause concern to anyone in Government. But I hope that somewhere in the Government and in the political system, there still exist some people who value ideals and principles and will deem it worthy of response.

Respectfully,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Copy :

H. E. Shri Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Hon'ble Vice President of India and Chairman, Raiya Sabha

27

## Letter to the Prime Minister on Padma Awards

25th August, 2010

Respected Prime Minister

This is a difficult letter for me to write, but I believe it needs to be written and the questions asked here need to be asked because it concerns matters of principle and ideals.

As you are quite aware, I was a Telecom entrepreneur for almost 15 years, before I chose to enter Parliament in 2006 — as a way to contribute and serve my country and people. My role and contributions as a Telecom pioneer is reasonably well documented and known to and acknowledged by many - who have chosen to understand the growth and history of the Telecom sector in India.

I have neither sought nor expected any form of recognition all these years which have come my way including being the youngest FICCI President, but was pleasantly surprised and indeed honored when I was informed by my State Government of Karnataka and others, about my nomination to the Padma Awards for my contributions. I believed then and as I do now, that in itself is a great honor for me and I was and remain humbled and overwhelmed.

I would've chosen to remain silent and accept your decision at choosing to deny me such recognition and that would have been the end of that story — except that your choice of awardees compels me to break the meek acceptance and silence and seek some answers from you to the questions that are reasonable under the circumstances :

1. What was the criterion that some nominees were chosen for the award over others? Were these subjective or personal relationship based?
2. Do you consider my achievements and contributions to the Telecom sector as any less significant than the awardees of this year?
3. Is there some rule that MPs who have contributed in previous careers in Science, Technology, Trade, Culture etc are to be denied recognition for them?
4. Does denying MPs awards make sense when you on the other hand on many occasions call for 'better' people to enter Politics or is it your contention that all MP's are undeserving because they are MP's?

I have remained an admirer of you for many years and continue to be impressed with your personal integrity.

This letter shouldn't be treated as a case of anger or disappointment, but rather an attempt to rebuild the capability of these once

prestigious awards – awards that are meant for ‘exceptional and distinguished’ service! The winners of the Padma Awards must inspire all Indians with the story of exceptional achievements and service. There are many Indians who meet the criteria, if you know where to look. Its not difficult to find other awards in India – look at Param Vir Chakra, Ashok Chakra, Kirti Chakra winners – see how their stories cause reverence and inspiration!

I am sure that you share and agree with these thoughts and values. I look forward to your responses to these questions posed in this letter at the earliest and to earnestly start the process of rebuilding credibility and stature of the Padma awards – as our founding fathers had envisioned it in 1954.

Respectfully,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,  
Hon’ble Prime Minister,  
New Delhi.

28

## Letter to the Governor of Andhra Pradesh Regarding OROP

9th September, 2010

Dear Excellency

**Sub. : Request your Support for One Rank, One Pension for the Armed Forces Veterans**

I am enclosing herewith my letter to the Hon'ble Prime Minister requesting again for a sympathetic and compassionate view on the long standing demands of the Armed Forces veterans for One Rank, One Pension.

The action of the Government to accede to the demands of Members of Parliament for a hike in their salaries – *which while*

*being fully justified* – is in stark contrast to the delay in responding to the long pending demands of the Armed Forces veterans. This sends a very misleading and somewhat dangerous signal to the country and all its people that there are two sets of standards in this country – that public service and duty to nation as exemplified by the Armed forces veterans are secondary to political expediency and politics.

The Armed Forces remain one of the most important institutions with a rich history of selfless duty to the nation. When companies and corporates walk away with doles, concessions and payouts in a blink, we as a nation are reducing our brave men to begging for a fair deal. As Kautilya, the great political strategist wrote to Chandragupta Maurya centuries ago: “The day the soldier has to demand his dues will be a sad day for Magadha. For then on that day, you will have lost all moral sanction to be king.”

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence has already endorsed and recommended One Rank, One Pension to the Government of India. I now request your support, as a Hon’ble Chief Minister, for this legitimate and urgent demand of the Armed Forces veterans. Millions of Armed Forces personnel, who serve the nation everyday selflessly and silently, and their families, will remember and be grateful for your support.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

H. E Shri E.S. L Narasimhan,  
Governor of Andhra Pradesh,  
Raj Bhwan,  
Hyderabad-500041.

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## Letter to the Home Minister on Offsets in Internal Security Contracts

26th November, 2010

Dear Thiru Chidambaram,

**Sub. : Offsets in Internal Security Contracts**

I am writing to you on the second anniversary of the 26/11 attacks on our country and I thank you for all your efforts at making India safer since that day.

I trust that your efforts at improving India's security, and indeed the security of our people through better preemption and intelligence gathering and analysis with creation of NCTC and NatGrid - are also progressing well.

I am writing to suggest a few points for your consideration.

It is clear that the Government of India, and the Ministry of Home Affairs in particular, will be investing significant financial resources in this effort of securing India. While in the short term, we may have to depend on international procurement of technologies and solutions, it will be critical for us to develop such technology and platform capabilities in-country over the medium term.

This is particularly critical for our country because we have some unique dimensions to our security challenges, which are single dimensional terrorism oriented in most countries. We have Naxalism and other forms of indigenous security challenges that are very different from the Trans-border Terror being exported from our neighbor. So it is very likely that the technologies and solutions for our requirements will need considerable customization keeping in mind our unique challenges.

Since procurement related to Internal Security will increase over the coming years, I would recommend that the Home Ministry also insist on Offset clauses for all its International procurements - currently being followed by the Ministry of Defence - and also follow its recent thrust for indigenous capacity and capability building in-country, through both the Public and Private sector. Offsets involve a certain percentage of the value of purchase which has to be discharged by local firms. This will ensure transfer of technology and developing of indigenous capability of support and manufacturing over a period of time.

In addition to saving revenue and Forex, this will also help create employment opportunities and industry capability to service not just India but the Middle East and Asian countries – thus improving our influence in those countries as well.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Thiru P. Chidambaram,  
Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

30

## Letter to the Defence Minister on the Success of Tejas and for the PSUs to Follow Protocol

13th January, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

At the outset, I would like to congratulate you on the initial opening clearance of the indigenously built Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Tejas at Bangalore on 10 January, 2011.

It is truly a proud moment for the country. In a nation which has been plagued by scams in the recent past, this positive development provides a ray of hope.

I must inform you that I was very disappointed at not receiving an invitation from HAL as a Bangalore based Member of Parliament, and I think it would be appropriate that Members of Parliament in Bangalore are invited to such ceremonies in the future, by all PSUs

to give them an opportunity to also participate and witness PSUs success, such as the opportunity to witness HAL programmes and future Tejas test flights.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A K Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

31

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Poor Rehabilitation of Disabled Soldiers

24th February, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

As you are aware, our Armed Forces personnel defend the nation, fighting enemies, terrorism and other security challenges, and in the line of duty, suffer grievous permanent injuries. It our duty as a nation to take proper care and rehabilitate such disabled soldiers, so that they can lead the rest of their lives with dignity and honour, and without financial worries.

However, this does not seem to be the case, and my attention was drawn to an article that appeared in The Week magazine (enclosed for your reference) that mentions that more than 30,000 disabled soldiers are waiting for proper rehabilitation and have been victims

of red tape and apathy. These include soldiers who have fought for the nation in the Kargil war, were part of the IPKF in Sri Lanka and the low intensity war on the LoC border.

It is distressing that these heroes are neglected by the Government, left to fend for themselves and have to be dependent on contributions from individuals and NGOs for their survival. Such neglect is tragic and certainly does not augur well for the nation.

I urge you to immediately study the plight of the disabled soldiers, get a report on their rehabilitation and ensure that these heroes are treated with the dignity and respect which they truly deserve and adequate financial support is extended to them.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A.K Antony,

Hon'ble Minister of Defence,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

32

## Letter to the Defence Minister Urging him to Address Grievances of Gallantry Medal Winners of Armed Forces

25th February, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

I draw your attention to the grievances of the recipients of Sena/ Nao Sena/ Vayu Sena Medals for Gallantry of the personnel of our Armed forces. I understand that the recipients of these prestigious awards are eligible for monetary compensation along with certain other facilities and concessions. But whereas the recipients of the Police Medal for Gallantry continue to get travel concessions in Indian Railways and Air India, the recipients of Medals for Gallantry in our Armed Forces are not getting these concessions at all. Additionally, the recipients of the Police Medals are also getting higher monetary compensation as compared to the recipients of Medals of Gallantry in our Armed forces.

This glaring discrimination persists despite the fact the Sena/Nao Sena/ Vayu Sena Medals for Gallantry ranks two places above Police Medals for Gallantry in the table of precedence of wearing medals and decorations promulgated by the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of India. These grievances have demoralizing effects on the recipients of Medals for Gallantry in our Armed forces as they feel that they have been let down by the government. I feel that the grievances are genuine and need to be addressed on a priority basis to boost the morale of the recipients of Medals for Gallantry in our Armed Forces.

I, therefore, urge you to look into the matter and ensure that monetary compensation issue is settled by your Ministry appropriately at the earliest and also take up the travel concession issue with your counterparts in the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Railways to ensure that the recipients of Sena/ Nao Sena/Vayu Sena Medals for gallantry do get the similar concessions and facilities - at least at par with the recipients of Police Medals for Gallantry. This will go a long way in boosting the moral of the recipients of Medals for Gallantry in our Armed Forces.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Progress of National Military Memorial, Bengaluru

17th March, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

India's first Military Memorial Park in Bangalore that pays tribute to the memories of the martyrs is fast nearing completion. The National Military Memorial Park, Bangalore, being constructed by the Bangalore Development Authority, is a symbol of thanks from the citizens of Bangalore and Karnataka to the families of the martyrs and serves as a shining inspiration of National service, Patriotism besides familiarizing the younger generation with the real heroes of India and to serve as icons for them as they grow up.

Work on this project began two years back on February 10th, 2009 with the then Governor of Karnataka, Mr. Rameshwar

Thakur laying the foundation stone in the presence of Mr. B.S. Yeddyurappa - Chief Minister of Karnataka, Mr. Pallam Raju - Minister of State for Defence, Air Chief Marshal Fali Homi Major - Chief of Air Staff, Admiral Sureesh Mehta - Chief of Naval Staff, Lt. Gen Noble Thamuraj - Vice Chief of Army Staff and members of martyrs families.

Spread over 7 acres in the heart of the city, the War Memorial Park will be a landscape concept with lush greenery and central piece is the Veeragallu – *monolith that symbolizes courage and bravery* - a 70 feet imposing and traditional monolithic monument that symbolizes the strength and courage of conviction of our soldiers in memory of the brave martyrs. The Memorial Park will have an amphitheatre, underground museum that will have short films, artifacts' such as medals, rare photographs, letters, weapons etc. from the archives of Indian Military and exhibits such as Arjun battle tank, a Missile boat, and a MIG 23 - all of which are bound to instill a sense of pride and patriotism among the visitors, especially the children.

Interestingly, the National Military Memorial Park forms a part of a perfect **circuit of inspiration** for the young Indians residing in Bangalore or visiting Bangalore, who can visit places of importance that are educational and inspirational - all located in the vicinity of the Memorial Park. Citizens can visit **Vidhana Soudha** - learn about the statesmen and great leaders of Karnataka, move to the **High Court** get a sense of the judicial system, then go to **Nehru Planetarium** where they explore the space and explore the mysteries of the solar system, and move to the **National Military Memorial** which will inspire them about with a sense of patriotism, valour and sacrifices of our soldiers and pay homage to the warriors. The children finally move to **Vishweshvaraiah Industrial Museum** and understand the marvels of science and know about the engineering legacy of Bharat Ratna Sir M. Vishweshvaraiah.

The Memorial Park incorporates designs of a forested Park – an inspirational space in the heart of the city - and will be one of the most beautiful, green and lush parks in Bangalore. Work on the construction of the Military Memorial Park which began in February 2009 is progressing briskly and will be ready to be dedicated to the nation by June, 2011.

This letter and the enclosed presentation is to keep you informed about the progress of this sacred project and to request for your continued support.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A K Antony,  
Minister of Defence,  
9 Krishnamenon Marg,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Action Against Officials Responsible for Misleading Courts

22nd March, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

I refer to recent media reports relating to strictures and fines imposed by the Punjab & Haryana High Court on the Government, for misleading the Court in a case relating to a petition filed by a boarded out disabled personnel, Sukhjinder Singh, requesting for disability pension.

The facts of the case, as reported by the media, are as follows.

A single Bench of the High Court had allowed the grant of disability pension to ex-recruit Sukhjinder Singh on the grounds that his disability was attributable to military service. The Government, had thereafter, filed a Letter Patents Appeal (LPA) before the Division Bench challenging the Order of the Single Bench.

The Division Bench has expressed “amazement” at the conduct of the Appellant and its officers and observed that “the perusal of the Appeal found that a false plea had been set out which is simply against the record.” Further, in the original proceedings of the Medical board, it was categorically found that the disease was aggravated by military service, whereas the proceedings of the Board were misquoted in the Government’s Appeal to show otherwise.

The Division Bench has further held that the filing of the appeal by the Appellants in this case was wholly unwarranted as the matter was already decided in respect of the issues concerned, and that this appeal was an “illustration of frivolous litigation initiated at the instance of Union of India and its officers.” Accordingly, the Division bench has imposed a fine on the Government to the tune of Rs.50,000.

It is distressing to note that officials of the Ministry of Defence are resorting to subterfuge to deny legitimate justice to our Armed Forces Veterans.

I urge you to initiate an enquiry into this matter at the earliest and determine which officers were responsible for filing such an appeal in the Court. I also request you to keep my office informed on the action taken against these officers by the Government.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A K Antony,  
Minister of Defence,  
9 Krishnamenon Marg,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to Sonia Gandhi Regarding OROP Issue

11th April, 2011

Respected Mrs. Gandhi,

I thank and congratulate you for your initiative that has caused the Government to accept the need to pass the Lokpal Bill, and importantly, Civil society involvement in the drafting of this Bill through in the committee.

Through this letter, I would like to draw your attention to another serious issue that, for the last few years, has been a blot on our country and people.

All nations and their people, treat the veterans and serving men and women of their armed forces with respect and love. However, our conduct and responsibility towards the over 25 lakh veteran

men and women of the Armed Forces and their families, especially on the issue of One Rank, One Pension (OROP), has been unfortunate and indefensible.

The Armed Forces is a truly unique and dedicated group of people, whose sense of selfless service and nationalism is a matter of great pride and dignity. These proud men and their families have served our nation selflessly, with a certain belief that the nation and their people will look after them, when it comes to their turn to be looked after.

The OROP issue is about honour and izzat, and intends to remove the feeling of injustice which the earlier retirees experience when they find that their pension is less than that of someone who was in the same rank in service.

OROP implies that the pension entitled to the military personnel should be same for the personnel in the same rank irrespective of the date of retirement which currently depends on the length of service and rank of personnel on the day of their retirement. I am attaching herewith a note on OROP, for your review.

As you are aware, the Armed Forces veterans have repeatedly sought Government's positive response on this issue and have been agitating peacefully and non-violently at Jantar Mantar for several months. While there has been sympathy for this issue, it has been stymied by bureaucratic obfuscation and prejudice within the government.

I have personally raised this issue in Parliament and outside on several occasions, including writing to senior members of the Government. As a result, a petition has been admitted in the Parliamentary Committee on Petitions.

I request your urgent and personal intervention in this serious issue - to prevent further alienation and disenchantment amongst this large group of people who have served the nation selflessly

and with distinction in the most trying times in the history of our democracy.

May I kindly request you for a meeting – for a group of veterans to represent in person their just demand for honour.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Sonia Gandhi,

Chairperson – UPA,

10 Janpath ,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Prime Minister on Armed Forces Covenant Bill

6th June, 2011

Respected Prime Minister,

I would like to bring to your notice a path breaking, Armed Forces friendly initiative by the UK Government where it proposes to convert its existing military covenant (a commitment to care for members of the Armed Forces and their families) into a Law.

As you are aware, the military covenant is an agreement under which the state pledges a duty of care towards its military personnel in return for the sacrifices that they make. The covenant officially applies only to the Army, but its core principles are taken to extend to the Air Force and the Navy. Although a long established tradition, the covenant is an unwritten understanding between the nation and the Armed Forces and is not legally binding.

This revolutionary move by the UK Government underlines the country's commitment and honour towards the armed forces personnel when they retire from active service and is worthy of emulation by India.

You are well aware of the bravery and sacrifices made by our defence forces personnel who are protecting the nation at the borders as well as fighting enemies within. Ironically, their sacrifices – of loss of life, limbs, staying away from their families for long durations – go unsung and unrecognized and there is no institutional mechanism that values, honours and rewards the unique service rendered by the members of the Armed Forces and their families.

In every civilized country, soldiers are treated as someone special and given far more attractive pay and perks than the civilians to draw in the best talents for preserving the sovereignty and independence of the nation. In our country, however, things are different. India is the only country where veterans are being treated in an unjust manner when it comes to pay and pension with one of their long pending demands for 'One Rank, One Pension' continuing to remain unaddressed by the Government.

The Armed Forces constitutes a truly unique and dedicated group of people, whose sense of selfless service and nationalism is a matter of great pride and dignity. These proud men and their families have served our nation selflessly, with a certain belief that the nation and their people will look after them when their turn comes to be looked after.

I earnestly urge you to consider passing a UK-like law for India and demonstrate the nation's commitment to the honour and bravery of our retired Armed Forces personnel and their families.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Shri A K Antony,  
Minister of Defence,  
9 Krishnamenon Marg,  
New Delhi.

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Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A K Antony,

Minister of Defence,

9 Krishnamenon Marg,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Restoration of Medical Facilities to the War Veterans

15th June, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

I wish to bring to your attention the plight of Short Service Commissioned Officers (SSCOs) and other ex-servicemen/women (Emergency Commissioned Officers) who are being denied medical facility by the Government.

These officers include thousands who joined the Indian Army as a national duty in the wake of Chinese aggression on our nation in 1962 and served the nation when their services were needed the most. These soldiers do not earn pensions (as they had to leave before the mandatory 20 years of service). However, they were entitled to use canteen facility at the CSD (I) and medical facility.

For unknown reasons, the Director General of Medical Services (DGMS) arbitrarily withdrew this medical facility in 1999 which was challenged, and the Armed Forces Tribunal, Chandigarh, in its Judgment, asked the Government to restore the medical facility to ex-servicemen within three months – which has not been done till date.

If this is true, I am sure you will agree that it is disconcerting, and I request your urgent intervention on this matter to ensure that this medical facility is restored to these ex-servicemen/women at the earliest.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,

Hon'ble Mnister of Defence,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Renaming Flag Day to Veterans Day or Memorial Day

8th August, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

As you are aware, the nation observes December 07th as Flag Day every year - an occasion for citizens to express their gratitude and appreciation to serving and veteran military personnel of India.

Over the years, it has become a tradition to commemorate Flag Day to honour the Armed Forces personnel by collecting funds for the welfare of our soldiers. Since the inception of Flag Day in 1949, India has lost over 19,000 armed forces personnel who have sacrificed their lives for the nation. However, we still do not have a day reserved to remember and honour the noble sacrifices made by our Armed Forces martyrs, veterans and serving personnel.

Therefore, India must have a dedicated day to enable citizens to express their gratitude and honour the Armed Forces personnel.

For this, I suggest that the Armed Forces Flag Day be renamed as “Memorial Day” or “Veterans’ Day”, in line with other countries, such as the USA. The new name will help citizens understand the importance of the day and demonstrate the nation’s commitment to the Armed forces veterans and their families.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,

Hon’ble Minister of Defence,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

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## Letter to the Defence Minister on Donation of DC3 Dakota Aircraft

10th August, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

**Sub. : Gifting of a C47 (DC3 Dakota) Aircraft to the Indian Air Force**

As you are no doubt aware, the Indian Air Force has a rich heritage and history that spans many decades. It is important that this heritage and history is preserved and showcased for future/potential officers/men of the Air Force in particular and future generations of Indians as well.

In this connection, the Indian Air Force is known to be seriously engaged in the process of re-equipping their Vintage Aircraft

Flight with airworthy aeroplanes through outright purchase of refurbished ones or getting their own vintage aircraft refurbished to airworthy standards – and such a vintage fleet being an important way of showcasing the history and heritage of the force. Vintage fleets are maintained and operated by air forces all over the world like the US, Royal Air Force etc.

The DC3 (Dakota, as it is famously known) had an extensive and illustrious career from the mid-40s to the mid-80s in the IAF as well as the civil sector across the country. DC3 was very closely instrumental in the successful outcome of the Kashmir conflict in 1947 and the Chinese conflict in 1962. Air lifting of troops & weapons, road building materials, civil administration in the hills, and air maintaining them with regular supplies along the entire mountainous borders in the North and North east of the country was undertaken by this very famous aircraft. The aircraft was extensively used over the seas for maritime reconnaissance as well as VIP duties for many decades and is an icon of IAF's rich heritage and history of national service in Peace and war.

As you are aware, my father, Air Cmde (Retd.) M. K. Chandrasekhar, VM, VSM has served the IAF and the nation having flown for over three decades, especially the DC3 (Dakota) in the mountainous regions. It is on his behalf that I am keen that the simple-to-maintain Dakota aircraft be seen in the Indian sky for a few more decades in IAF colour and seek to donate free of cost a functioning DC3/C47 to be part of the IAF Vintage fleet.

And so, after an “in principle” understanding that the aircraft could be inducted into the IAF Vintage Aircraft Flight as the first entrant, a DC3, N347DK, Serial No 32820 was purchased and engines, propellers and systems updated to Air Worthiness standards for ferry to India in IAF colours, after being gifted at UK for their Historic Vintage Aircraft Flight. The aircraft has already been flown into Hemble, UK, and is presently located there, during

and after the famous Royal International Air Tattoo held recently, from 15-18 July, 2011.

This DC3, as a part of their inventory, would enable the IAF to retain expertise on tail wheeled, piston-engined, propeller driven aircraft operations at higher levels of professionalism such as Experimental Test Pilots etc. It would also assist the IAF to spread awareness amongst the younger generation, about the Indian Air Force and National Aviation Heritage by staging regular flying displays with the aircraft, and also offering air experience to the School Children.

The Ministry, is therefore, requested to kindly authorize the IAF to accept the gift of this airworthy DC3, **free of cost**, as part of their Vintage Aircraft Flight Inventory for their own regular operations and maintenance under their Rules.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

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## Letter to the Prime Minister Regarding Representation of Veterans in the Parliament

15th September, 2011

Respected Prime Minister,

You are aware of the service and sacrifices made by the Armed forces personnel. However, many of the demands of the Armed Forces Veterans, including better medical assistance, One Rank, One Pension etc. continue to remain unresolved. While the Armed Forces Personnel selflessly guard the nation and protect the country against enemies, there is a feeling that the country does not understand their concerns and that they do not have a forceful platform to voice their demands. The time has come for the nation to address this concern.

To facilitate this, the Government should consider giving an independent, non-political voice to the Armed Forces veterans by reserving one Parliament Seat – anywhere in India - for a representative of the Armed Forces veterans. Alternatively, the Government must nominate one representative from the veterans to the Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha who can be the voice of the over 26 lakh ex-servicemen and their families.

Our founding fathers have recognized the need for giving representation to distinguished citizens such as artists, poets etc. in Parliament and a nomination of one distinguished Armed Forces veteran will be perfectly consistent with this tradition.

I urge you to support the idea of giving representation to the veterans in Parliament. This will send a message to the armed forces personnel and their families that the nation understands and accords the highest priority to their welfare.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to Sonia Gandhi Regarding Representation of Veterans in the Parliament

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Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Sonia Gandhi,

Chairperson – UPA,

10 Janpath ,

New Delhi.

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Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Prime Minister Regarding the Armed Forces Covenant Bill

22nd November, 2011

Respected Prime Minister,

In a landmark move to help reduce veterans' unemployment, the US Senate has recently passed a Bill that will grant tax incentives to companies who agree to hire veterans. The Bill has been passed by a unanimous vote, and will shortly be signed into law by the President of the USA. The provisions of this Bill also include providing specialized job training and counselling to veterans leaving the service.

This revolutionary move by the US Government exhibits the nation's commitment towards the welfare of its veterans, to ensure that no veteran who has fought for the nation should have to fight for a job when they go back home.

As you are aware, a large number of the Armed Forces personnel in India are retired / released every year at a comparatively young age, in order to maintain a youthful profile of the Armed Forces. Consequently, at the time of retirement, majority of service personnel are at an age where they are required to take up a second occupation owing to their family / social responsibilities.

Throughout the history of Independent India, our country has faced many threats and challenges - both external and internal. Through all these years and challenges, the men and women of our Armed forces and their families have consistently and unflinchingly defended our country and its people.

The Government should seriously consider passing a US-like legislation to boost employment opportunities for our Armed Forces veterans. Supporting these proud men and their families - who have served the country with dignity and distinction - is our duty. Such a legislation will go a long way in assuring them that the nation truly values their sacrifices and services, and they don't have to fight for employment opportunities when they retire and return home.

**I am introducing a Private Members' Bill – The Armed Forces Covenant Bill, 2011 – during the current Parliament session, which could be the basis of such a legislation. Through you, I urge the Government to seriously consider supporting this Bill with suitable amendments, as appropriate.**

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh

Hon'ble Prime Minister

Government of India

New Delhi

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## Letter Urging the Defence Minister to Review India's War Preparedness

22nd November, 2011

Dear Shri Antony,

I draw your attention to an article in the India Today edition of 07 November, 2011 titled "Not ready for War" (enclosed herewith). The article details the unpreparedness of the Indian Army vis-à-vis China, essentially on account of slow pace of its modernization, shortage of warfare equipment procurement, delay in replenishment/recruitment of officers and lack of infrastructure.

These reports about unpreparedness of Indian Army and the consequences of this inadequacy are indeed alarming. It is shocking to know that there is a delay of more than a decade on commissioning two critical projects to equip infantry with

modern assault rifles, night vision devices and devices for high speed encrypted communication and another Field Artillery Modernization Plan.

The Indian Army is crippled with the shortage of 12,000 young officers who actually lead its sections and companies in the battle. Its 400-odd infantry battalions are currently functioning with less than half the sanctioned strength of 40 officers.

This issue assumes greater significance in view of the fact that our neighbour China has been aggressively building up along the Leh border and Arunachal Pradesh with connecting roads and rail network, increasing its troops on the border and strengthening capabilities to amass a million troops in a short duration – while we are still grappling with bureaucratic issues.

These inadequacies of the Indian Army are extremely worrying and put the nation at a formidable risk. I urge you to take note of this worrying issue and take action to strengthen the capabilities of the Indian Army at the earliest.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

46

## Letter to Minister of External Affairs Regarding Torture of Kargil War Martyr

6th December, 2011

Dear Shri Krishna,

I draw your attention to the disturbing case of Captain Saurabh Kalia of 4 JAT Regiment of the Indian Army, who was one of the first officers martyred by Pakistani intruders at the young age of 22, after Pakistan invaded the Kargil region of Jammu and Kashmir in May 1999.

The Pakistan army had captured Captain Saurabh Kalia and his patrol party of five other brave soldiers on May 15, 1999 on the Indian side of the LOC. They were kept in captivity for over three weeks and subjected to unprecedented brutal torture, evident from the bodies handed over by the Pakistan Army on 09 June, 1999.

The postmortem revealed that the Pakistan army had indulged in the most heinous acts of burning their bodies with cigarettes, piercing ear-drums with hot rods, removing eyes, and chopping off various limbs and organs of these soldiers, besides inflicting all sorts of physical and mental tortures before shooting them down.

Noting the brutality and establishing that a war crime has been committed, the Ministry of Defence wrote to the Ministry of External Affairs urging it take necessary action to declare this act of brutality as a war crime.

However, I have recently been informed that even after twelve years of this brutal and inhuman tragedy, the Ministry of External Affairs is yet to take up the matter with the UN Human Rights Council. It is extremely shocking and shameful that this matter has been treated lightly and the sacrifices of the brave soldiers who laid down their lives while guarding the nation has been disrespected. This may also send a demoralizing signal to the Army personnel fighting for the nation that our Prisoners of War in Pakistan cannot be taken care of.

The country should be proud of the patriotism, determination, tenacity and valour of these brave soldiers, and it is our duty to ensure that their family members do not feel that the nation does not value the sacrifices made by these bravehearts.

On behalf of the families of these brave martyrs, I urge you to immediately instruct your Ministry to urgently take up the matter with the UN Human Rights Council to declare this heinous act as a war crime and move the international court of justice to expose and pressure Pakistan to identify and punish all the perpetrators of this brutal crime. I also request you to order investigations into why this matter was delayed for over 12 years.

I look forward to your response at the earliest in this regard.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri S. M. Krishna,

Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

Copy to :

Dr. Manmohan Singh, Hon'ble Prime Minister

Shri A. K. Antony, Hon'ble Minister of Defence

47

## Letter to the Chief of the Army Staff on the Issue of his Stand on Integrity and Honour

13th January, 2012

Dear General Singh,

I am writing to you to fully support your recent stand on the issue of your integrity and honour.

I am as disappointed as you are with some of the discourse in the media about this issue. However, I would urge you not to take these views as the views of the people of our country at large – because I believe that most Indians respect highly, the values of integrity and honour that institutions like the Army and you yourself represent.

My best wishes to you and your family for the New Year.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

General V. K. Singh, PVSM, AVSM, YSM, ADC,

Chief of Army Staff,

Army Headquarters,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Chairman of SpiceJet Regarding Ill-treatment of Maj. Mohammad Ali Shah

20th July, 2012

Dear Thiru Maran,

This is with reference to the incident on 28 June, 2012 about the ill-treatment of Major Mohammad Ali Shah (Retd.) by the SpiceJet staff. Going by the details reported in electronic and print media, it seems that Major Mohammad Ali Shah has been treated unfairly and inappropriately by the security staff of SpiceJet.

The Armed Forces is a unique and dedicated group of people whose selfless service and nationalism is a matter of great pride and dignity. Major Shah is a retired officer of the Indian Army and the son of Lt. Gen Zameeruddin Shah- a veteran of 1971 India-Pakistan war, who retired as the Deputy Chief of the Indian Army.

To subject such an officer of the Indian Army to ill treatment and accuse him of being a terrorist, is insensitive and indefensible.

May I request you to ensure that an apology from SpiceJet is issued to Major Mohammad Ali Shah at the earliest.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Thiru Kalanidhi Maran,  
Chairman, SpiceJet Ltd and Sun Group,  
Murasoli Maran Towers,  
73, MRC Nagar Main Road, MRC Nagar,  
Chennai - 600 028.

Copy to :

Thiru Dayanidhi Maran,  
Hon'ble Member of Parliament,  
6 Akbar Road,  
New Delhi.

49

## Letter to the Maharashtra Chief Minister Regarding Desecration of Amar Jawan Jyoti

21th August, 2012

Dear Shri Chavan,

I write to you about the desecration of the Amar Jawan Jyoti Memorial in Mumbai by some criminal elements on August 11th, 2012 that has left me and thousands of Indians in pain, disgust and anger. As you are aware, the Memorial, which was erected to honour and remember two brave sons of India - Sepoy Sayyed Hussein and Sepoy Mangal Gadiya, who were martyred during the Mutiny of 1857 - is a symbol of communal harmony, nationhood and pride of India.

The perpetrators who vandalized this sacred place do not belong to any faith or religion, and by their act, have disgraced hundreds

and thousands of people from all faiths and parts of India and those within and outside of Armed Forces who have served and protected the nation in time of war and in time of peace .

Media has provided the photographs of the criminal elements involved in the incident, who must be arrested and brought to justice at the earliest. To that end, and on behalf of all affronted Indians, I announce a reward of Rupees Five Lakhs to anybody who provides the police with information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators who vandalized the Amar Jawan Jyoti Memorial.

I request you to share information about the reward with the police department to redouble their efforts to nab the culprits.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Prithviraj Chavan,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Maharashtra,  
Mantralya,  
Mumbai.

50

## Letter to the Minister of External Affairs Regarding Justice for Capt. Saurabh Kalia

23rd August, 2012

Dear Shri Krishna

This is with reference to the response from Shri E. Ahamed, Hon'ble Minister of State in the Ministry of External Affairs, to my Unstarred Question No. 649 of 16 August, 2012 seeking details of action taken by Government on the issue of the brutal torture of Capt. Saurabh Kalia and five other soldiers during the Kargil War in 1999. A copy of the same is enclosed herewith for your ready reference.

The response that I have received from the Hon'ble Minister is far from satisfactory and shows that the Government has not initiated any action on this brutal act for the last 12 years. This is despite the fact that this is clearly a case of a war crime, that must be

pursued at International forums for justice. I had also written a letter to you on this issue dated 06 December, 2011.

Such a casual approach to this important and sensitive issue is shocking. No other profession sheds blood at the nation's behest as the armed forces. Lack of any response by the Government to this grievous crime - even after 13 years of this brutal incident - is shameful and is sending the wrong signal to the armed forces personnel and their families about the commitment of the political leadership to those men and women who entrust the nation their lives.

The act of seeking justice for this war crime is not – and must not be seen as - an act against Pakistan or the people of that country, but as pursuit of justice to crimes committed against a soldier during times of war. Seeking justice for a crime perpetrated on Capt Saurabh Kalia and 5 other soldiers is an issue of law and justice and must not be viewed as a political matter between the two nations.

I urge you, again, to take up this matter, on an urgent basis, at the UN Human Rights Council and the International Court of Justice, to declare this heinous act as a war crime, for justice for Capt. Saurabh Kalia's family and all Indians.

I look forward to your response on this issue.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri S. M. Krishna,  
Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

51

## Letter to the Prime Minister Regarding Cabinet Decision on OROP

8th October, 2012

Respected Prime Minister,

This is with reference to the recent Cabinet decision dated 24 September, 2012 that seeks to redress various pending grievances of the retired armed forces personnel.

As you are aware, I have raised this issue on a number of occasions with you personally and in Parliament as well. The implementation of One Rank, One Pension (OROP) was ordered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the Armed Forces Tribunal, and also recommended by several Committees, including the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, in December 2011.

So I am grateful and thank you for addressing some existing inadequacies in the pension parameters, but am disappointed that the core issue of implementation of OROP for the retired armed forces personnel remains largely unresolved. Instead of resolving the long pending issue of OROP, the government decision restricts itself merely to correcting anomalies in the pension parameters, failing to meet the provisions of the Armed Forces Tribunal judgments, as were ruled in favour of the Defence Personnel, with effect from 01 January, 2006.

As pointed out by the ex-servicemen, none of the core issues, including equitable pension, raised by the three Service Chiefs in August 2012 with you, have been addressed. Ironically, the Government appears to have used this opportunity to review certain specified grievances of Pensioners, to project the rectification of their error as a sort of enhancement of the Pension, the ultimate aim of which is to bridge the gap towards OROP. Additionally, by proposing that the implementation of this enhancement will be on a prospective date, an attempt is being made to deny the pensioners 6% interest on the delayed payment of entitled pension since 2006 – as awarded by the Armed Forces Tribunal.

Instead of hope and cheer, the Government decision seems to have caused restlessness and a feeling of hurt amongst the armed forces about the neglect and lackadaisical manner in which several of their long pending issues, including that of OROP, remain unsolved. The armed forces community serves this nation selflessly, with great distinction. Increasingly, a sense of alienation is seeping into the members of this community, and such a decision could lead to further disenchantment among them.

To term the recent proposals, that merely corrects the pension anomalies, as grant of OROP, is factually incorrect and will be considered by the veterans as deliberately misleading. I urge you to announce the acceptance of modified pension as originally approved

by the Cabinet - based on 6th Pay Commission recommendations, to be paid with 6% interest for the duration of the delay. This will lift the spirits of the armed forces personnel and enhance their faith in the Government.

The Government had promised to implement OROP at the earliest, and I urge the Government to honour this commitment. A further delay in conclusively addressing the issue of OROP sends a discouraging message, indicating that the country holds no value for the undemanding public service offered by its armed forces personnel. I request your personal intervention in this matter so as to alleviate the ruffled feelings of thousands of armed forces veterans.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

52

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Cabinet Decision on OROP

8th October, 2012

Dear Shri Antony,

This is with reference to the recent Cabinet decision dated 24 September, 2012 that seeks to redress various pending grievances of the retired armed forces personnel.

As you are aware, I have raised this issue on a number of occasions with you personally and in Parliament as well. The implementation of One Rank, One Pension (OROP) was ordered by the Hon'ble Supreme Court and the Armed Forces Tribunal, and also recommended by several Committees, including the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, in December 2011.

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The Government had promised to implement OROP at the earliest, and I urge the Government to honour this commitment. A further delay in conclusively addressing the issue of OROP sends a discouraging message, indicating that the country holds no value for the undemanding public service offered by its armed forces personnel. I request your personal intervention in this matter so as to alleviate the ruffled feelings of thousands of armed forces veterans.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Finance Minister on Tax Concessions for Corporates Hiring Retired Veterans

21st December, 2012

Dear Thiru Chidambaram,

I had written a letter to Shri A. K. Antony, Hon'ble Minister of Defence, dated 22nd November, 2011 (copy enclosed) drawing his attention to a Bill passed by the US Senate last year, which provides tax concessions to companies who agree to hire veterans, and urging the Government to consider passing a US-like legislation to boost employment opportunities for our Armed Forces veterans. The Bill passed by the US Senate titled 'Returned Heroes Tax Credit', was signed into law by President Obama in 2011 and offers companies a tax credit of upto \$5600 per veteran who has been hired. Additionally, Bills have been passed in the US to provide easy access to education to the veterans and endow

them with skills that will enable them to find employment post their retirement.

These initiatives instill a sense of encouragement in the personnel of the Armed Forces, who perform their duties for the nation selflessly. In a speech that President Obama delivered in 2009, he said that, *'For their service and sacrifice, warm words of thanks from a grateful nation are more than warranted, but they aren't nearly enough. We also owe our veterans the care they were promised and the benefits that they have earned. We have a sacred trust with those who wear the uniform of the United States of America. It's a commitment that begins at enlistment, and it must never end.'*

The Armed Forces personnel lay down their lives in order to protect the nation; in return for their bravery and the sacrifices they make, it is our responsibility as a nation to ensure that they face no disadvantage, as compared to other citizens, in the provision of public and commercial services.

Sir, on 09th August, 2012, I too had introduced a Private Members' Bill in the Rajya Sabha – The Armed Forces Covenant Bill – which could be the basis of such a legislation. The Bill also aims to provide appropriate training and education to service personnel, for personal as well as professional development, including the opportunity to gain nationally recognised civilian qualification, to prepare them for their life after leaving the service. The Government should also include granting tax incentives to companies who agree to hire retired / released Armed Forces Veterans, in this legislation.

### **Request**

To supplement the education and skill development we hope to provide the Armed Forces, it is essential for us to incentivise companies – to encourage them to hire retired or released veterans, which will enable these veterans to lead lives at par with the civilians

of our nation through suitable tax incentives for the corporate that are hiring veterans.

May I request you to add this as a part of budget proposals and include such tax concessions to corporates as a part of the Union Budget 2013-14, as appropriate.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri P. Chidambaram,  
Hon'ble Minister of Finance,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Vice President on Parliament Ignoring the Death of CRPF Jawans

14th March, 2013

Respected Vice President,

**Sub.: Death of 5 CRPF Soldiers in Terror Attacks in Srinagar**

As you are aware, 5 CRPF soldiers were killed in terrorist attacks in Srinagar yesterday. They join many other men in uniform who have laid down their lives in the service of the nation.

I was, however, very disappointed that the House did not pay respects at the beginning of the day in Parliament, in mourning of their passing and sacrifice, and send a message of condolence to their families. This is even more surprising, considering that

you have commenced a good tradition of paying respect with a two minute silence, in the case of other tragic losses of life, in Parliament.

The loss of life and sacrifice by our uniformed men represents an even more important occasion for Parliament to pay their respects.

I urge you to kindly have the House spend two minutes in silence tomorrow morning to mourn this loss, and to do so as a tradition whenever our men in uniform sacrifice their lives for the nation, in the future.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Hamid Ansari,

Hon'ble Vice President of India and

Chairman – Rajya Sabha,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Voting Rights for Armed Forces Soldiers

23rd April, 2013

Dear Shri Antony,

Over the years, I have raised several issues for the welfare of the Armed Forces personnel. However, today I am writing to you, to request your intervention in a more fundamental matter of importance.

In a country where the Constitution provides for Universal Adult Franchise, it is important for us to ensure that every adult citizen of the country gets his chance to vote. To ensure the same, the Election Commission (EC) undertakes several processes – they manage to reach out to individuals in the most remote locations of India. They have put in adequate efforts to set up a polling booth for a single voter in one constituency at Banej, Gujarat.

While this effort of the Election Commission is laudable, it is surprising that the Election Commission overlooks a major voting population in India – the Armed Forces personnel. During every General Election, nearly 14 lakh soldiers / sailors & airmen, 9 lakh personnel of the para-military forces, and the families of all these personnel, are denied their basic democratic right to vote, with most of them having been able to vote only post retirement. Majority of our soldiers are not able to exercise this right as our election system does not provide an efficient mechanism for them to cast their votes, even after 65 years of Independence.

Though the EC provides soldiers with the options of postal ballot system and proxy voting method, these have not been able to yield results due to certain deficiencies. The postal ballot system has proved inadequate and inefficient due to the long delays involved in sending out voting sheets to the different towns where serving defence personnel are posted. The voting sheets have to be filled in and sent back to the respective returning officers before the counting process begins - but this rarely happens on time.

Parliament had approved the proxy voting system through Form 13 F for armed forces personnel in September 2003, whereby they could authorize an adult (18 years and above) family member - usually a parent or a sibling or a spouse - to cast their vote by proxy. This also has proved to be ineffective because soldiers do not even know the provision exists.

In order to address the deficiencies in the existing voting systems for soldiers, the following solutions are suggested:

1. The cantonments and military stations where the soldiers are posted are a part of various constituencies of democratic elections in the country. Therefore, soldiers should be conferred the rights to be registered as voters in the constituency, where they are serving / are posted that time, as ordinary residents of that constituency.

2. During the World War II, the British set up mobile polling booths for their soldiers posted across the different parts of the world. Given how India has moved forward technologically, the EC can provide for virtual voting booths at various command posts before elections so that soldiers are able to cast votes centrally easily and participate in the democratic process. The votes can then be transmitted to their respective constituencies.
3. In many countries, the election booths are open at select places even before the day of the general elections. This ensures that people with travel plans or other commitments still get to vote, thereby increasing voter participation. A similar measure can be adopted in India where a EVM at select locations can be kept open for a longer period.
4. The above facilities should also be made available to the families of the soldiers.

The country owes a great deal to the valour, professionalism, discipline, traditions and selflessness of its Armed Forces and Paramilitary forces personnel, and their families. As Churchill said of the servicemen of the First World War: *“No question of advantage presented itself to their minds. They only saw the light shining on the clear path to duty. They never asked the question, ‘What shall we gain?’ They asked only the question, ‘Where lies the right?’”*

I urge you to take the necessary and effective steps to enable these brave men and women and their families to exercise their right to vote and participate in the democratic process. Given that we are a democracy, providing such privileges to our Armed Forces is a must – they go to war to protect the very same democracy. Their voice is equally significant and it is the duty of the nation not to let them down when it comes to elect their representatives and government.

Yours Sincerely,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Chief Election Commissioner on Voting Rights for Armed Forces Soldiers

23rd April, 2013

Dear Shri Sampath,

I write to you to request your intervention in a more fundamental matter of importance concerning our Armed Forces and Paramilitary Forces personnel.

In a country where the Constitution provides for Universal Adult Franchise, it is important for us to ensure that every adult citizen of the country gets his chance to vote. To ensure the same, the Election Commission (EC) undertakes several processes – they manage to reach out to individuals in the most remote locations of India. The EC has put in adequate efforts to set up a polling booth for a single voter in one constituency at Banej, Gujarat.

While this effort of the EC is laudable, it is surprising that the EC overlooks a major voting population in India – the Armed Forces personnel. During every General Election, nearly 14 lakh soldiers / sailors & airmen, 9 lakh personnel of the para-military forces, and the families of all these personnel, are denied their basic democratic right to vote, with most of them having been able to vote only post retirement. Majority of our soldiers are not able to exercise this right as our election system does not provide an efficient mechanism for them to cast their votes, even after 65 years of Independence.

Though the EC provides soldiers with the options of postal ballot system and proxy voting method, these have not been able to yield results due to certain deficiencies. The postal ballot system has proved inadequate and inefficient due to the long delays involved in sending out voting sheets to the different towns where serving defence personnel are posted. The voting sheets have to be filled in and sent back to the respective returning officers before the counting process begins - but this rarely happens on time.

Parliament had approved the proxy voting system through Form 13 F for armed forces personnel in September 2003, whereby they could authorize an adult (18 years and above) family member - usually a parent or a sibling or a spouse - to cast their vote by proxy. This also has proved to be ineffective because soldiers do not even know the provision exists.

In order to address the deficiencies in the existing voting systems for soldiers, the following solutions are suggested:

1. The cantonments and military stations where the soldiers are posted are a part of various constituencies of democratic elections in the country. Therefore, soldiers should be conferred the rights to be registered as voters in the constituency, where they are serving / are posted that time, as ordinary residents of that constituency.

2. During the World War II, the British set up mobile polling booths for their soldiers posted across the different parts of the world. Given how India has moved forward technologically, the EC can provide for virtual voting booths at various command posts before elections so that soldiers are able to cast votes centrally easily and participate in the democratic process. The votes can then be transmitted to their respective constituencies.
3. In many countries, the election booths are open at select places even before the day of the general elections. This ensures that people with travel plans or other commitments still get to vote, thereby increasing voter participation. A similar measure can be adopted in India where a EVM at select locations can be kept open for a longer period.
4. The above facilities should also be made available to the families of the soldiers.

The country owes a great deal to the valour, professionalism, discipline, traditions and selflessness of its Armed Forces and Paramilitary forces personnel, and their families. As Churchill said of the servicemen of the First World War: *“No question of advantage presented itself to their minds. They only saw the light shining on the clear path to duty. They never asked the question, ‘What shall we gain?’ They asked only the question, ‘Where lies the right?’”*

I urge you to take the necessary and effective steps to enable these brave men and women and their families to exercise their right to vote and participate in the democratic process – especially in view of the upcoming elections in 2014. Given that we are a democracy, providing such privileges to our Armed Forces is a must – they go to war to protect the very same democracy. Their voice is equally significant and it is the duty of the nation not to let them down when it comes to elect their representatives and government.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri V. S. Sampath,

Chief Election Commissioner of India,

Election Commission of India,

Nirvachan Sadan,

Ashoka Road,

New Delhi 110 00.

## Letter to the Chief Election Commissioner on Effective Steps Needed to Maximize Citizen Participation in Elections

6th May, 2013

Dear Shri Sampath,

This is further to my previous letter to you dated 23 April 2013 regarding voting rights for Armed Forces and Paramilitary Forces personnel.

As you are aware, my state Karnataka, had elections on 05 May, 2013. Since I had campaigned about getting increased voter participation, I have received many complaints from citizens before and on the day of the election on the issue of voter registration, and I wish to bring the same to your attention:

1. The EC website prevents users from accessing their applications since the password provided fails to work on the website most

of the time. After three successive attempts, the account gets deactivated. If by any chance, the user is able to access the application form, he/she is unable to get the status of the application.

2. No information is provided on the status of address verification to the citizens who had submitted the forms to the BBMP office on or before the final day of application.
3. Sometimes, the voting forms itself are not available in the ward offices or head offices.

You would agree that the process of registering a voter has to be simple, and not as difficult as it is today, which essentially puts the burden of inconvenience on responsible citizens seeking to exercise their right to vote - especially at a time when low voter turn-outs plague our democratic system.

Additionally, for citizens who live away from their homes, including NRIs, I urge you consider increasing the ambit of the absentee ballot, by moving an amendment to the Representation of People Act, 1951, to enable these citizens to exercise this important duty in the democratic process. As you are aware, several civic society organizations have advocated this amendment to the Act to allow NRIs and people on the move to cast their vote through absentee ballot system, through a combination of internet and postal ballot.

I request you to urgently take effective steps on the above issues to help maximize the participation of citizens in this democratic exercise in the upcoming 2014 elections.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri V. S. Sampath,  
Chief Election Commissioner of India,  
Election Commission of India,  
Nirvachan Sadan,  
Ashoka Road,  
New Delhi 110 001.

## Letter to Sonia Gandhi on Voting Rights for Armed Forces Personnel

17th September, 2013

Respected Madam,

I would like to draw your attention to a fundamental matter of importance concerning our Armed Forces and Paramilitary Forces personnel.

In a country where the Constitution provides for Universal Adult Franchise, it is important for us to ensure that every adult citizen of the country gets his chance to vote. To ensure the same, the Election Commission (EC) undertakes several processes – they manage to reach out to individuals in the most remote locations of India. The EC has put in adequate efforts to set up a polling booth for a single voter in one constituency at Banej, Gujarat.

While this effort of the EC is laudable, it is surprising that the EC overlooks a major voting population in India – the Armed Forces personnel. During every General Election, nearly 14 lakh soldiers / sailors & airmen, 9 lakh personnel of the para-military forces, and the families of all these personnel, are denied their basic democratic right to vote, with most of them having been able to vote only post retirement. Majority of our soldiers are not able to exercise this right as our election system does not provide an efficient mechanism for them to cast their votes, even after 65 years of Independence.

The country owes a great deal to the valour, professionalism, discipline, traditions and selflessness of its Armed Forces and Paramilitary forces personnel, and their families. We must enable these brave men and women and their families to exercise their right to vote and participate in the democratic process.

I have already written to the Chief Election Commissioner and the Hon'ble Minister of Defence in this regard, suggesting solutions to address the deficiencies in the existing voting systems for soldiers.

I request your intervention to take up this important matter and ensure that these brave men and women and their families are accorded their right to vote and are able to participate in country's democratic process.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Sonia Gandhi,

Chairperson – UPA,

10 Janpath ,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister to Investigate NoC's Granted by HAL

17th September, 2013

Dear Shri Antony,

I would like to draw your attention to the irregularities and serious breach of procedure that has come to light during the recent controversy over the issuance of No-Objection Certificates (NoC) by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bangalore (HAL) to a private builder near the HAL Airport in Bangalore.

The NOC letter was issued under the assumption of an incorrect Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) figure submitted by the Private builder. In a gazetted document issued by the Ministry of Civil Aviation, the HAL aerodrome has been shown to be at 888 metres above sea level. It is shocking to note that despite being privy to

the requisite elevation maps from the Survey of India, the NOC was approved without prior checks for the authenticity of the figure submitted by the builder. HAL failed to investigate the submission even after receiving directions from Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike.

A potential catastrophe was prevented due to the vigilance of private citizens compelling HAL to cancel the NOC erroneously given to the builder. While I welcome the cancellation of the NOC by HAL, I urge you to call for an investigation at the earliest into the complicity of officials who allegedly delayed action, despite the illegality brought to their notice by citizens, and also into all NOCs / sanctions granted by HAL since 2008 on the basis of AMSL certificates issued by private agencies which is not in accordance with the Survey of India data.

I look forward to your urgent action on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

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Letter to the Chairman,  
Hindustan Aeronautical Limited  
on Irregularities of NoC Sanctions

10th October, 2013

Dear Shri Tyagi,

I am writing to you regarding the apparent irregularities and serious breach of procedure that has come to light during the recent controversy over the issuance of a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) to a private builder near the HAL Airport in Bangalore.

As you are aware, the NOC letter was issued under the assumption of an incorrect Above Mean Sea Level (AMSL) figure submitted by the Private builder. The actual sea level is established in a number of published documents including maps published by the Survey of India. In spite of this, it would appear that the NOC was approved

without the necessary checks. While I welcome the cancellation of the NOC by HAL, I urge you to call for an investigation at the earliest into the possible complicity of officials who allegedly delayed action, despite the illegality brought to their notice by citizens.

I also urge you to conduct a detailed review of all NOCs / sanctions granted and approvals given since 2008 to ensure there have been no instances of malfeasance in the past. Such an enquiry and review will also help prevent such regrettable incidents in the future. The observations/results of such a review should also be placed on public record.

I am sure that you will agree with me that air safety is of paramount concern not only to those involved in the aviation sector, but also to the thousands of residents who reside in the vicinity of the flight path.

I look forward to your urgent action on this matter and being kept informed of the results.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Mr. R. K. Tyagi,  
Chairman and Managing Director,  
Hindustan Aeronautics Limited,  
Bangalore.

## Letter to the Election Commissioner to Enable Indian Armed Forces Personnel and their Families to Vote

28th January, 2014

Dear Shri Brahma,

This is further to my letter to the Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) dated 23 April, 2013 on the issue of Voting Rights of Armed Forces personnel.

On 20 January, 2014, Flags of Honour Foundation had conducted an open house on the issue that was attended by Veterans, ex-servicemen, activists and members of the media, where you and I were present and spoke as the Guest Speakers.

You had agreed that this issue needs speedy resolution and asked to be appraised of solutions that the veterans and serving forces would find acceptable.

The findings and conclusions of the Open House are provided below. The basic theme of these recommendations was that the Armed Forces should be treated the same as civilian citizens as far as possible.

1. Armed forces personnel, their wives and eligible children should be allowed to vote wherever they are serving. In the event of wives and children staying away, their families should be allowed to vote at the place of residence.
2. There should be no stipulation on the duration of posting for the Armed Forces personnel to be eligible to vote.
3. Polling Booths should be set up at Unit Headquarters/ Regimental Centres.
4. Proxy Voting has been unsuccessful and it should be done away with.
5. The Election Commission must launch an enrolment campaign along with Armed Forces HQs to enumerate the Armed Forces personnel as voters. In the event of this not being completed, local commanders can certify the personnel serving in their local unit and that should serve as a voters list.

Most of the 14 lakh armed forces personnel and 9 lakh paramilitary forces personnel and their families do not get to vote until they retire.

The Election Commission has done yeomen service taking the ballot box and democracy to remotest areas of our country like polling booths for one single voter inside the Gir Forest in Gujarat to exercise his right to franchise.

I am sure you will agree that the Election Commission should and can deliver on the desire of serving men/women to also participate in the democratic process - a constitutionally given right.

I was indeed encouraged by your positive approach, and I would urge the Election Commission to move quickly to implement these suggestions and right the wrong of the last many decades. The country owes it to them.

All of us and the Election Commission have a duty towards the country's Armed Forces. I would urge you to enable India's brave heroes and their families to vote in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri H. S. Brahma,  
Election Commissioner,  
Election Commission of India,  
Nirvachan Sadan,  
Ashoka Road,  
New Delhi 110 001.

### **Annexure**

#### **Findings of the Open House held on 20 January, 2014**

1. Most armed forces personnel get to vote only on retirement.
2. Armed Forces are fed up, they demand their Right to Vote. They want to vote in 2014 elections.
3. Both Postal Ballot and Proxy Vote systems have failed.

4. Postal Ballots do not reach most of the armed forces personnel and when it does reach some it is long after election results are declared.
5. The current requirement of 10 days for ballots to be despatched after the last day of withdrawal and polling is not adequate. In US, the timeline is 45 days, Postal Ballots can be sent online and printouts taken and distributed.
6. The current requirement of being posted at a place for at least six months deprives armed forces personnel the chance to vote. No such restriction on civilians though.
7. There is no regular enumeration of soldiers/sailors/airmen and officers.
8. The Election Commission needs to work with Armed Forces HQs to create awareness.
9. The Election Commission's ERO Handbook 2008 goes against EC's orders of 1995. It states EROs cannot enrol soldiers as voters.
10. Wives of officers and jawans equally affected, they should be allowed to vote at the place of residence or the family station.
11. Proxy Voting has been a non-starter and not reliable. A jawan or officer gets posted around the country and, many a time, has no one from family stationed at what was his original place of residence. He cannot rely on anyone to vote for him and that too, in secrecy.

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## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Disability & Pension Claims of Ex-Servicemen

28th January, 2014

Dear Shri Antony,

This is with reference to our discussion today, further to my letter to you dated 18 January, 2014 - about the memo issued by the Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) on 02 January, 2014 ruling that ex-servicemen who take the Ministry of Defence to court for disability and pension benefits would have to fight their cases all the way up to the Supreme Court.

As I have explained, and you have so kindly agreed, this memo conveys an impression of callousness on part of the Ministry and the Government, since this involves thousands of ex-servicemen who have lost their limbs and/or eyesight and/or sustained grievous harm in the service of our nation.

I request you to have this Order annulled and have a more compassionate approach to dealing with each case of disability and pension claims, without the soldiers and their families having to undergo a long, arduous and often, very expensive battle in the courts.

I look forward to your intervention and resolution of the same. Your compassionate approach will go a long way in signalling the Government's respect for the service of these brave men and women and their families.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Chief of the Army Staff on Voting Rights for the Armed Forces

29th January, 2014

Dear Gen. Bikram Singh,

Even after six decades after Independence, a majority of 14 lakh Armed Forces personnel are unable to vote. It is sad that those who are entrusted with the task of defending India are disenfranchised until they retire.

Over the last few days, I have had several interactions with the Veterans, ex-servicemen and their families - all of whom unanimously demanded that the Armed Forces personnel must be enabled to vote in upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

On 20 January, 2014, Flags of Honour Foundation had conducted an Open House on the issue that was attended by veterans, ex-

servicemen, activists and media, where Shri H. S. Brahma, Election Commissioner and I were present. I am enclosing herewith a copy of my letter to him with the findings and conclusions of this Open House.

I also met with him earlier today in this regard and urged him to ensure that these brave men and women, along with their families, are enabled to use their democratic right to franchise.

I urge you to direct the concerned people to work closely with the Election Commission and make voting by Armed Forces personnel a reality. The Service Headquarters has a duty towards its serving personnel to help them exercise their constitutional right.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

General Bikram Singh,

Chief of Army Staff,

Army Headquarters,

New Delhi.

## Letter to Members of Parliament on Support for Voting Rights for Armed Forces Soldiers

5th February, 2014

I write to you and other fellow Members of Parliament and political leaders, to seek your support for our 14 lakh armed forces personnel and 9 lakh paramilitary personnel who, spend their day and night far from the comfort of their homes to keep India united and protect its sovereignty.

In the next three months when 880 million eligible voters get ready to cast their vote, many of these armed forces personnel and their families will not get to vote – not because they don't want to exercise their democratic right to elect a government, but due to the deficiencies in the existing voting system that does not enable many of them to cast a vote.

A retrograde Election Commission ruling dating to 1971 actually discriminates between Indians when it comes to voting. Unlike

millions of other Indians, armed forces personnel are expected to have a three-year tenure posting and that too, with their families before they are considered eligible to be registered as voters. Surely, as representatives of the people in Parliament, you would not tolerate this gross injustice being meted out to our brave sons and daughters.

Both the postal ballot and proxy voting systems have failed in their implementation. In recent days, I have had Open House sessions with Veterans and ex-servicemen and they all had one demand - that the Election Commission enable them to vote by removing this unjust ruling and install polling booths and EVMs at unit headquarters.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of my article that has appeared in Mail Today, as well as my letters to the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner in this regard, for your reading. There is significant support for this amongst the youth, as is evident from discussions on social media.

The country owes a great deal to the valour, professionalism, discipline, traditions and selflessness of its Armed Forces and Paramilitary forces personnel, and their families. I urge your intervention and support to take up this important issue and enable these brave men and women and their families to vote in the coming Lok Sabha elections.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

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## Letter to Rahul Gandhi Regarding OROP

14th February, 2014

Dear Rahul,

This has reference to media reports dated February 14, 2014 that you are examining the issue of One Rank, One Pension (OROP) for retired armed forces personnel. Thank you for examining the issue, albeit belatedly.

I have been pursuing and fighting for OROP ever since I entered Parliament in 2006, raising the issue in Parliament and outside on several occasions, including through several letters to the Hon'ble Prime Minister, UPA Chairperson, the Hon'ble Defence Minister, and you. I am enclosing herewith a list of letters that I have sent on this issue as Annexure I, along with a copy of all my letters.

On 25 August 2010, I declined and continued to refuse to accept the salary hike given to MPs till the government reexamines the case of One Rank, One Pension. I also facilitated the submission by citizens and veterans, of a petition to the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, in October 2010 (copies also enclosed). The committee submitted its report December 2011 and unanimously recommended OROP to the Government. However, the government has taken no action on this for the past several years.

I urge you to follow these unanimous recommendations made in December 2011 by the Committee on Petitions, Rajya Sabha, asking the government to implement the long-pending demand of OROP by the retired armed forces personnel, implement OROP in defence forces, and constitute a separate commission to determine the pay, allowance and pension of the defence personnel.

Your interest on this issue, even at this stage, is welcome. I look forward to your action in this matter and I hope you will be able to address this serious issue and prevent further alienation and disenchantment amongst the 25 lakh veteran men and women of the armed forces and their families who have served the nation selflessly and with distinction in the most trying times in the history of our democracy.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Rahul Gandhi,

Hon'ble Member of Parliament,

12, Tughlak Lane,

New Delhi.

Encl:

1. Annexure I listing out details of my letters on the issue of OROP
2. Copies of my letters and other relevant interventions on the issue of OROP

### Annexure I

#### Details of my Letters on the Issue of OROP

| S. No. | Letter addressed to         | Date                 |
|--------|-----------------------------|----------------------|
| 1      | Hon'ble Prime Minister      | 08th October, 2012   |
| 2      | Hon'ble Prime Minister      | 15th September 2011  |
| 3      | Hon'ble Prime Minister      | 06th June, 2011      |
| 4      | Hon'ble Prime Minister      | 25th August 2010     |
| 5      | Hon'ble Prime Minister      | 09th March 2010      |
| 6      | Hon'ble UPA Chairperson     | 15th September, 2011 |
| 7      | Hon'ble UPA Chairperson     | 11 April, 2011       |
| 8      | Hon'ble Minister of Defence | 08th October, 2012   |
| 9      | Hon'ble Minister of Defence | 15th September, 2011 |
| 10     | Hon'ble Minister of Defence | 06th June, 2011      |
| 11     | Hon'ble Minister of Defence | 09th March, 2010     |
| 12     | Shri Rahul Gandhi           | 15th September, 2011 |

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## Letter to Rahul Gandhi on Voting Rights for Armed Forces

21st February, 2014

Dear Rahul,

I draw your attention to our 14 lakh armed forces personnel and 9 lakh paramilitary personnel who spend their day and night far from the comfort of their homes to keep India united and protect its sovereignty.

Even after six decades after Independence, a majority of these armed forces and paramilitary forces personnel and their families do not get to vote – not because they don't want to exercise their democratic right to elect a government, but due to the deficiencies in the existing voting systems that does not enable many of them to cast a vote. Both the postal ballot and proxy voting systems have failed in their implementation.

Additionally, a retrograde Election Commission ruling of 1971 actually discriminates between Indians when it comes to voting. Unlike millions of other Indians, armed forces personnel are expected to have a three-year tenure posting, and that too, with their families, before they are considered eligible to be registered as voters. This ruling poses an unacceptable fetter to their constitutional right to vote.

In recent days, I have had Open House sessions on this issue with Veterans and ex-servicemen – all of whom unanimously demanded that the Armed Forces personnel must be enabled to vote in upcoming Lok Sabha elections. I have written letters to the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner, and also met them recently in this regard, and urged them to ensure that these brave men and women, along with their families, are enabled to use their democratic right to franchise, just like any other citizen, at their place of posting / residence.

I am sure you would agree that the current situation is unjust and violates the constitutional rights of our Armed Forces and Paramilitary Forces and their families.

I am enclosing herewith a copy of my recent articles in Mail Today and Amar Ujala, as well as my letters to the Chief Election Commissioner and the Election Commissioner in this regard, for your reading. There is significant support for this amongst the youth, as is evident from discussions on social media.

The country owes a great deal to the valour, professionalism, discipline, traditions and selflessness of its Armed and Paramilitary Forces personnel and their families. I, therefore, urge your intervention on this important issue for removing this unjust ruling and enabling these brave men and women and their families to vote in the coming Lok Sabha elections, just like any other citizen of this country, at their place of posting / residence.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Rahul Gandhi,

Hon'ble Member of Parliament,

12, Tughlaq Lane,

New Delhi.

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## Letter to the Prime Minister Regarding Notification on OROP Implementation

3rd March, 2014

Respected Prime Minister,

This is with reference to the Government's recent announcement to accept the long pending demand by our Armed Forces veterans for 'One Rank, One Pension' (OROP), announced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister while presenting the Interim Budget in Parliament on 17th February, 2014.

For the last several years, Veterans and ex-servicemen have been struggling to get the attention of the government, and have even gone to the extent of surrendering their bravery medals to convey their sentiments and press home the importance of this issue. As you are aware, I have been pursuing and fighting for OROP ever

since I entered Parliament in 2006, both in Parliament and outside on several occasions, over the last few years.

Though belated, the recent announcement by the Government is a welcome move, and I thank you for making this entirely justified and acknowledged demand a reality. However, lack of details and clarity in the statements made by the Hon'ble Finance Minister on 17 February, 2014 has led to diverse interpretation, including apprehensions, amongst the defence fraternity, with regard to the implementation of OROP. This, in turn, raises crucial and critical questions which must be addressed forthwith to instil confidence amongst the defence fraternity that OROP will be implemented holistically and as per the accepted definition with no deviation at any stage.

The Finance Minister's interview with a leading TV Channel recently on implementation on OROP has added to this confusion. He mentioned that to close the gap, OROP has been corrected by the UPA Government three times in the past 9 years i.e. in 2006 , 2010 and 2013 for four ranks (i.e., Havildar, Naib Subedar, Subedar and Subedar Major and equivalent ranks of Navy and Air Force), and what remained was to close the gap in case of two ranks (among the Other Ranks) and Officers category. He has further stated that even the last mentioned situation has been corrected now by "walking the last mile" and the gap closed.

On 20 February, 2014, the Flags of Honour Foundation had conducted an Open House on OROP in New Delhi that was attended by Veterans and representatives of various ex-servicemen's organisations, activists and members of the media. I was a Guest Speaker at the Open House and had an opportunity to listen to different opinions on the issue.

The summary of findings and conclusions of the Open House are provided below:

1. The implementation of OROP must remain consistent with its definition accepted by the Petitions Committee of the Rajya Sabha on 19 December, 2011. The definition of OROP accepted by the Petitions Committee of the Rajya Sabha on 19 December, 2011 is: OROP is “uniform pension to be paid to the Armed Forces personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service irrespective of their date of retirement and any future enhancement in the rates of pension be automatically passed on to the past pensioners”.
2. The unanimous demand was that the notification for OROP’s implementation from 01 April, 2014 should be announced before election dates are declared.
3. Any future enhancement in pension due to implementation of OROP post 01 April, 2014 must be automatically passed on to past pensioners.
4. The allocation of Rs 500 crores for the entire year, as announced by the Hon’ble Finance Minister is way too inadequate, given the number of veterans and ex-servicemen in the country. The government must clarify whether this amount is only the initial allotment, and announce additional funds for implementation of OROP for all ranks to be done in one shot, and not in a piece-meal manner.
5. The Defence family pension for all ranks, including all types of casualties, at every stage, must be equal to the pension drawn by the Pensioner.
6. To implement OROP as defined by the Petitions Committee of Rajya Sabha, additional funds must be worked out in consultation with all stakeholders, including ex-servicemen.

In his Interim Budget address, the Hon'ble Finance Minister admitted that there was a gap in the ranks of Sepoy and Naik and a gap in the ranks of Major and above. These gaps must be addressed at the earliest. The Finance Minister and the government must clarify these concerns and remove apprehensions among the defence fraternity about OROP announcement and its implementation.

In the next few days, the Election Commission will announce dates of parliamentary elections and the Model Code of Conduct will come into effect. I urge the government to issue the notification on OROP implementation addressing all concerns at the earliest, and set to rest the unease and discontentment among lakhs of ex-servicemen and their families.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. Manmohan Singh,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister Regarding Open House on OROP

3rd March, 2014

Dear Shri Antony,

This is with reference to the Government's recent announcement to accept the long pending demand by our Armed Forces veterans for 'One Rank, One Pension' (OROP), announced by the Hon'ble Finance Minister while presenting the Interim Budget in Parliament on 17th February, 2014.

For the last several years, Veterans and ex-servicemen have been struggling to get the attention of the government, and have even gone to the extent of surrendering their bravery medals to convey their sentiments and press home the importance of this issue. As you are aware, I have been pursuing and fighting for OROP ever

since I entered Parliament in 2006, both in Parliament and outside on several occasions, over the last few years.

Though belated, the recent announcement by the Government is a welcome move, and I thank you for making this entirely justified and acknowledged demand a reality. However, lack of details and clarity in the statements made by the Hon'ble Finance Minister on 17 February, 2014 has led to diverse interpretation, including apprehensions, amongst the defence fraternity, with regard to the implementation of OROP. This, in turn, raises crucial and critical questions which must be addressed forthwith to instil confidence amongst the defence fraternity that OROP will be implemented holistically and as per the accepted definition with no deviation at any stage.

The Finance Minister's interview with a leading TV Channel recently on implementation on OROP has added to this confusion. He mentioned that to close the gap, OROP has been corrected by the UPA Government three times in the past 9 years i.e. in 2006 , 2010 and 2013 for four ranks (i.e., Havildar, Naib Subedar, Subedar and Subedar Major and equivalent ranks of Navy and Air Force), and what remained was to close the gap in case of two ranks (among the Other Ranks) and Officers category. He has further stated that even the last mentioned situation has been corrected now by "walking the last mile" and the gap closed.

On 20 February, 2014, the Flags of Honour Foundation had conducted an Open House on OROP in New Delhi that was attended by Veterans and representatives of various ex-servicemen's organisations, activists and members of the media. I was a Guest Speaker at the Open House and had an opportunity to listen to different opinions on the issue.

The summary of findings and conclusions of the Open House are provided below:

1. The implementation of OROP must remain consistent with its definition accepted by the Petitions Committee of the Rajya Sabha on 19 December, 2011. The definition of OROP accepted by the Petitions Committee of the Rajya Sabha on 19 December, 2011 is: OROP is “uniform pension to be paid to the Armed Forces personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service irrespective of their date of retirement and any future enhancement in the rates of pension be automatically passed on to the past pensioners”.
2. The unanimous demand was that the notification for OROP’s implementation from 01 April, 2014 should be announced before election dates are declared.
3. Any future enhancement in pension due to implementation of OROP post 01 April, 2014 must be automatically passed on to past pensioners.
4. The allocation of Rs 500 crores for the entire year, as announced by the Hon’ble Finance Minister is way too inadequate, given the number of veterans and ex-servicemen in the country. The government must clarify whether this amount is only the initial allotment, and announce additional funds for implementation of OROP for all ranks to be done in one shot, and not in a piece-meal manner.
5. The Defence family pension for all ranks, including all types of casualties, at every stage, must be equal to the pension drawn by the Pensioner.
6. To implement OROP as defined by the Petitions Committee of Rajya Sabha, additional funds must be worked out in consultation with all stakeholders, including ex-servicemen.

In his Interim Budget address, the Hon'ble Finance Minister admitted that there was a gap in the ranks of Sepoy and Naik and a gap in the ranks of Major and above. These gaps must be addressed at the earliest. The Finance Minister and the government must clarify these concerns and remove apprehensions among the defence fraternity about OROP announcement and its implementation.

In the next few days, the Election Commission will announce dates of parliamentary elections and the Model Code of Conduct will come into effect. I urge the government to issue the notification on OROP implementation addressing all concerns at the earliest, and set to rest the unease and discontentment among lakhs of ex-servicemen and their families.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony,

Hon'ble Minister of Defence,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Kerala Chief Minister on War Memorial

3rd March, 2014

Dear Shri Oommen Chandy,

I write to seek your support and intervention for setting up of a War Memorial in Kerala, for the many brave men and women of the Armed Forces from the State, who have served in the Armed Forces and sacrificed their lives for the cause of the country. According to the Sainik Board, Kerala, there are 350 martyrs from the State, and there is no memorial that recalls their sacrifice and honours them.

In June 2008, I had written to the then Chief Minister, Shri V. S. Achuthanandan, urging the setting up of a simple, dignified war memorial in Thiruvananthapuram, in honour of the past, current

and future soldiers from the State who serve and lay down their lives for the country. He had promised that the proposal would be examined. I am enclosing herewith a copy of my letter to him, along with his response.

The Government of Karnataka is building a National Military Memorial to commemorate our martyrs. The initiative by the Government of Karnataka to build, on behalf of the people of Karnataka, a memorial to the soldiers who have served and protected our nation, is a unique and noble one. On 23 January this year, the Hon'ble Governor of Karnataka hoisted the largest national flag in India in the National Military Memorial in Bengaluru. The tricolour weighing 31 kg, measures 72 ft by 48ft and is hoisted on a 210 ft tall flag pole which is also among the tallest in the country. Once completed, this will be Independent India's first military memorial.

The Armed Forces have always been an institution critical to building a strong and confident India. The men and women who make up the Armed Forces have been building blocks for the country. I strongly believe that the Armed Forces are the last of the few professional, secular institutions that are still driven by a sense of nationalism, duty and commitment to nation first and national service - Values that unfortunately have disappeared or are disappearing from almost all other areas of public service. We must, therefore, create a memorial to honour their sacrifices.

Such a memorial is a symbol of grateful thanksgiving and honour from the citizens of the State to these brave men and women of our Armed Forces, who risk life and limb in their line of duty. It is also a place for the families and descendants of these heroes to visit and remember with pride and honour the sacrifices made. Importantly, such a memorial will serve as a beacon of inspiration to the young and upcoming generation of India – a generation in whom we are bestowing so much hope for the future of our great country.

I hope that the Government of Kerala will take up the project to build a war memorial, which will be a befitting tribute to these brave men and women and their families. I also remain available for any assistance and guidance that may be required in implementing this vital project.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Oommen Chandy,

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Kerala,

State Secretariat,

Thiruvananthapuram,

## Letter to the Defence Minister to Issue Explicit Clarifications to the Defence Ministry's Order on OROP

7th March, 2014

Dear Shri Antony,

Thank you for your prompt response to my letter dated 03 March, 2014, enclosing copies of the Order issued by the Ministry of Defence to Controller General Defence Accounts (CGDA) and the Minutes of the meeting dated 26 February, 2014 chaired by yourself, on the implementation of One Rank, One Pension (OROP).

In the last few days, I have been contacted on phone and on email by many Veterans and ex-servicemen who, though satisfied with your commitment to the implementation of the OROP, have

concerns about the wording of the Defence Ministry's Order to CGDA. These are:-

1. The Defence Ministry's order to CGDA does not mention the accepted definition of OROP i.e., "OROP implies that uniform pension be paid to the Armed Forces personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service, irrespective of their date of retirement, and any future enhancement in the rates of pension to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners. This implies bridging the gap between the rate of pension of the current pensioners and the past pensioners, and also future enhancements in the rate of pension, to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners".
2. The Order does not mention the execution order i.e., "pensions of past defence retirees will be equal to that of a person with same rank and length of service and same group retiring w.e.f. 01 Apr 2014, and future enhancement in the rates of pensions will be automatically passed to the past pensioners".

Given the past experience, the Veterans, ex-servicemen and their families fear that failure to clearly define OROP in this Order to CGDA will open the issue to wrong interpretation.

I urge you to issue a further explicit clarification to the Defence Ministry's order to CGDA on the points raised above, to ensure that your intentions are not diluted or misinterpreted in future by mischievous bureaucrats. This will also ensure that your role in this effort of OROP is never diluted in future.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri A. K. Antony  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence  
Government of India  
New Delhi

## Letter to the Chairman, Air India on Major Varadarajan Regarding Honouring our Heroes

2nd May, 2014

Dear Mr. Nandan,

It has been brought to my attention that on 28 April, 2014, Air India carried the body of brave-heart Major Mukund Varadarajan - killed in an encounter with militants in Shopian, J&K - from Srinagar to Delhi, and then onward to Chennai, to his family.

A request from an Army officer accompanying the body of the slain officer on the Srinagar-Delhi Air India flight - that an announcement be made that his mortal remains were onboard - was turned down by the airline crew, citing aviation rules.

Major Varadarajan sacrificed his life and future for his countrymen like you and me, but the bureaucratic manner in which the airline

crew responded to this request, is sad and shameful, and conveys an impression of callousness and disrespect towards these brave men and women, on the part of Air India.

In striking contrast, an Air India pilot Captain S. Srinivasan - who flew Major Varadarajan's body onward from New Delhi to Chennai - wrote a touching note (enclosed herewith) to the parents of the martyr, saying that he was honoured to have flown their brave son, and asked them to consider him as one of their own sons!

I urge your intervention on this issue at the earliest to find out the people involved in this incident. I would also request you to let me know what were the 'aviation rules' that were quoted in this instance.

If such rules prevent us from honouring our heroes, then they need to be changed or abolished altogether. A nation must honour its brave men and women who sacrifice their lives for the country and treat them with the dignity and respect that they deserve, even if that means changing rules and attitudes.

I look forward to your response on this issue.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Mr. Rohit Nandan,

Chairman & Managing Director,

Air India Ltd.

Airlines House, 113,

Gurudwara Rakabganj Road,

New Delhi 110 001.

## Condolence Letter to Wife of Sepoy Bikram Singh

6th May, 2014

Dear Smt. Sushila,

I write to express my heartfelt condolences on the death of Sepoy Vikram Singh in Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir, on 25 April, 2014.

The country will never forget, and is indeed indebted for the supreme sacrifice made by Sepoy Vikram Singh. Like millions of Indians, I share your grief in this time of bereavement with deepest sympathy, and pray to God to give you courage and strength.

Words cannot bring back a loving husband, a caring father and a faithful son, or lessen the pain of a loss so overwhelming, but I hope you will find solace in the fact that your husband's heroism and valour will serve as a beacon of inspiration for generations to come.

Such great lives as those of Sepoy Vikram Singh are never lost, but are forever remembered with respect, and honoured as the protectors of the unity and integrity of our motherland.

Should you need any assistance or support for anything – big or small - that you may require now or in the future, please do let me know. My foundation - The Flags of Honour Foundation - works to support the families of martyrs and I assure you of all the support on behalf of the Foundation, my family and I.

Jai Hind.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Smt. Sushila,

W/o Late Sepoy Vikram Singh,

Vill. Kasoli,

Post Bagthal 266 301, Rewari (Teh & Dist.),

Haryana.

## Condolence Letter to Wife of Major Varadarajan

6th May, 2014

Dear Mrs. Varadarajan,

I write to express my heartfelt condolences on the death of Maj. Mukund Varadarajan in Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir, on 25 April, 2014.

The country will never forget, and is indeed indebted for the supreme sacrifice made by Maj. Varadarajan. Like millions of Indians, I share your grief in this time of bereavement with deepest sympathy, and pray to God to give you courage and strength.

Words cannot bring back a loving husband, a caring father and a faithful son, or lessen the pain of a loss so overwhelming, but I hope you will find solace in the fact that your husband's determination,

and more importantly, his indomitable and undefeatable spirit of patriotism and service, will serve as a beacon of inspiration for generations to come.

May your young daughter grow up with the utmost pride in her father's service to her country.

Should you need any assistance or support for anything - big or small - that you may require now or in the future, please do let me know. My foundation - The Flags of Honour Foundation - works to support the families of martyrs, and I assure you of all the support on behalf of the Foundation, my family and I.

Jai Hind.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Mrs. Indu Varadarajan,  
Flat No. B-7, Park View Apartments,  
Tambaram, Distt. Kanchipuram,  
Tamil Nadu.

## Condolence Letter to Father of Major Varadarajan

6th May, 2014

Dear Mr. Varadarajan,

I write to express my heartfelt condolences on the death of Maj. Mukund Varadarajan in Shopian, Jammu and Kashmir, on 25 April, 2014.

The country will never forget, and is indeed indebted for the supreme sacrifice made by Maj. Varadarajan. Like millions of Indians, I share your grief in this time of bereavement with deepest sympathy, and pray to God to give you courage and strength.

Words cannot bring back a loving husband, a caring father and a faithful son, or lessen the pain of a loss so overwhelming, but I hope you will find solace in the fact that your son's determination,

and more importantly, his indomitable and undefeatable spirit of patriotism and service, will serve as a beacon of inspiration for generations to come.

Should you need any assistance or support for anything - big or small - that you may require now or in the future, please do let me know. My foundation - The Flags of Honour Foundation - works to support the families of martyrs, and I assure you of all the support on behalf of the Foundation, my family and I.

Jai Hind.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Mr. R. Varadarajan,

Flat No. B-7, Park View Apartments,

Tambaram, Distt. Kanchipuram,

Tamil Nadu.

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## Letter to the Finance Minister on Tax Exemptions to Companies that Recruit Defence Veterans

5th June, 2014

Dear Arun ji,

**Sub.: Tax Exemptions for Companies who recruit Defence  
Veterans & Martyrs' Families**

I had written a letter to Shri A. K. Antony, Hon'ble Minister of Defence, dated 22 November, 2011 (copy enclosed) drawing his attention to a Bill passed by the US Senate, which provides tax concessions to companies who agree to hire veterans, and urging the Government to consider passing a US-like legislation to boost employment opportunities for our Armed Forces veterans. The Bill passed by the US Senate titled 'Returned Heroes Tax Credit', was

signed into law by President Obama in 2011 and offers companies a tax credit of upto \$5600 per veteran who has been hired. Additionally, Bills have been passed in the US to provide easy access to education to the veterans and endow them with skills that will enable them to find employment post their retirement.

These initiatives instill a sense of encouragement in the Armed Forces personnel, who perform their duties for the nation selflessly. In a speech that President Obama delivered in 2009, he said that, *'For their service and sacrifice, warm words of thanks from a grateful nation are more than warranted, but they aren't nearly enough. We also owe our veterans the care they were promised and the benefits that they have earned. We have a sacred trust with those who wear the uniform of the United States of America. It's a commitment that begins at enlistment, and it must never end.'*

The Armed Forces personnel lay down their lives in order to protect the nation; in return for their bravery and the sacrifices they make, it is our responsibility as a nation to ensure that they face no disadvantage, as compared to other citizens, in the provision of public and commercial services.

On 09 August, 2012, I too had introduced a Private Members' Bill in the Rajya Sabha – The Armed Forces Covenant Bill – which could be the basis of such legislation. The Bill also aims to provide appropriate training and education to service personnel, for personal as well as professional development, including the opportunity to gain nationally recognised civilian qualification, to prepare them for their life after leaving the service. The Government should also include granting tax incentives to companies who agree to hire retired / released Armed Forces Veterans, in this legislation.

### **Request**

To supplement the education and skill development we hope to provide the Armed Forces, it is essential for us to incentivise

companies – to encourage them to hire retired or released veterans, which will enable these veterans to lead lives at par with the civilians of our nation through suitable tax incentives for the corporates that are hiring veterans.

May I request you to add this as a part of the budget proposals and include such tax concessions to corporates as a part of the Union Budget 2014-15, as appropriate.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley

Hon'ble Minister of Finance

Government of India

New Delhi

## Letter to the Home Minister on Request from Col. Mathew Thomas

2nd July, 2014

Dear Rajnath Singhji,

I write to you with regard to a representation that I have received by email, from Col. (Retd.) Mathew Thomas, regarding the functioning of the UID Scheme.

The email states that the UPA Government's UID Scheme has several issues, including the socio-political and economic implications of biometric identity databases, in addition to the problems of legitimacy due to the lack of statutory backing.

In this regard, Col. Thomas has requested my assistance to set up a meeting with the appropriate representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs to discuss and share the results of his study on the issue.

Col. Thomas is a missile scientist-turned-social activist, a veteran of the Armed Forces, and an acclaimed expert on UID/Aadhaar who has worked in depth on the UID Scheme for several years, including researching on the issues of its legality, financial prudence, ethics, and its uses & abuses. He has also filed a contempt petition in the Hon'ble Supreme Court against the UIDAI.

I request you to consider his request for a meeting or nominate an Officer in the Home Ministry to take this forward.

Thanking you,

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Rajnath Singh,  
Ministry of Home Affairs,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Veterans Commission

10 July, 2014

Dear Arun ji,

**Sub. : Veterans Commission**

This is with reference to my Starred Question No. 27 of 08 July, 2014 on 'Veterans Commission'.

I am pleased to hear that the Government is moving forward on setting up a Veterans Commission. This is a very welcome step in addressing the many issues and concerns relating to Veterans and their families, and more so, the general insensitivity of the Ministry of Defence to how these issues are to be handled.

I would like to present the following suggestions, for your consideration:

1. The Veterans Commission must be a Statutory Commission.
2. The Veterans Commission must have the power and authority to deal with, and resolve all issues, including but not limited to, dues and claims for disabled soldiers, war disabled, war widows, families and gallantry award winners etc.
3. The Veterans Commission must be able to adjudicate and resolve the large number of litigations and cases pending on the above mentioned issues.
4. The Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare (DESW) and Ex-Servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) may be folded into or overseen by the Veterans Commission.
5. The Veterans Commission must have, as its members, Veterans of repute and their family members.

I would be available to meet you and discuss this further, if you so desire.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Donation of C47 Dakota Aircraft

16 July, 2014

Dear Arun ji,

**Sub. : Gifting of a C47 (DC3 Dakota) Aircraft to the Indian Air Force**

As you are no doubt aware, the Indian Air Force (IAF) has a rich heritage and history that spans many decades. It is important that this heritage and history is preserved and showcased for future/potential officers/men of the Air Force in particular and future generations of Indians as well.

In this connection, the Indian Air Force is known to be seriously engaged in the process of re-equipping their Vintage Aircraft

Flight with airworthy aeroplanes through outright purchase of refurbished ones or getting their own vintage aircraft refurbished to airworthy standards – and such a vintage fleet being an important way of showcasing the history and heritage of the force. Vintage fleets are maintained and operated by air forces all over the world like the US, Royal Air Force etc.

The DC3 (Dakota, as it is famously known) had an extensive and illustrious career from the mid-40s to the mid-80s in the IAF as well as the civil sector across the country. DC3 was very closely instrumental in the successful outcome of the Kashmir conflict in 1947 and the Chinese conflict in 1962. Air lifting of troops & weapons, road building materials, civil administration in the hills, and air maintaining them with regular supplies along the entire mountainous borders in the North and North east of the country was undertaken by this very famous aircraft. The aircraft was extensively used over the seas for maritime reconnaissance as well as VIP duties for many decades and is an icon of IAF's rich heritage and history of national service in Peace and war.

My father, Air Cmde (Retd.) M. K. Chandrasekhar, VM, VSM has served the IAF and the nation having flown for over three decades, especially the DC3 (Dakota) in the mountainous regions. It is on his behalf that I am keen that the simple-to-maintain Dakota aircraft be seen in the Indian sky for a few more decades in IAF colour, and seek to donate, free of cost, a functioning DC3/C47 to be part of the IAF Vintage fleet.

And so, after an “in principle” understanding that the aircraft could be inducted into the IAF Vintage Aircraft Flight as the first entrant, a DC3, N347DK, Serial No 32820 was purchased, and engines, propellers and systems updated to Air Worthiness standards for ferry to India in IAF colours, after being gifted at UK for their Historic Vintage Aircraft Flight. The aircraft has already been flown into Hemble, UK, and is presently located there.

This DC3, as a part of their inventory, would enable the IAF to retain expertise on tail wheeled, piston-engined, propeller driven aircraft operations at higher levels of professionalism such as Experimental Test Pilots etc. It would also assist the IAF to spread awareness amongst the younger generation, about the Indian Air Force and National Aviation Heritage by staging regular flying displays with the aircraft, and also offering air experience to the School Children.

The Ministry, is therefore, requested to kindly authorize the IAF to accept the gift of this airworthy DC3, **free of cost**, as part of their Vintage Aircraft Flight Inventory for their own regular operations and maintenance under their Rules.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley

Hon'ble Minister of Defence

Government of India

New Delhi

## Letter to the Defence Minister to Allow Army Access to the Shraddhanjali Sthal at New Delhi

10th February, 2015

Dear Parrikarji,

I write to you regarding a matter that reflects utter disrespect to the Martyrs of the Army and one that requires your immediate attention.

As you will be aware, the Army had constructed a Shraddhanjali Sthal to receive coffins of Martyrs near the cargo complex of IGI Terminal 3 on land leased from Delhi International Airport Limited. The facility was completed in August 2014, however, the Bureau of Civil Aviation and Security has, in a move most unwarranted, objected to army personnel entering the premise and stopped issuing passes. Further, they have disallowed entry even after the Army has offered to deposit their arms/rifles with the Airport Security.

It is most unfortunate and a matter of shame for the Nation that the ceremonies on receiving the coffins of our Armed Forces Martyrs are being conducted in the parking lot of the cargo terminal.

No other profession sheds blood at the Nation's behest as the Armed Forces. That we cannot receive the bodies of these martyrs with honour is unacceptable. I would request you to discuss the same with the Civil Aviation Minister and resolve this at the earliest to allow the Army use of the Shradhanjali Sthal and bestow honour and respect to the martyrs.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parikar

Hon'ble Minister of Home Affairs

Government of India

New Delhi

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Gifting Douglas DC3 Dakota

22nd July, 2015

Dear Parikkar ji,

As you are aware, the Indian Air Force has a rich heritage and history spanning more than 80 years, after being established in 1932. It is important that this history is preserved, showcased and celebrated for future generations of Indians, and serve as inspiration for youngsters to participate in our Air Force.

Douglas DC3 (Dakota as it is famously known) had an extensive and illustrious career in India, from the 40s till late 80s, in both the IAF and the civil sector. The DC3 was engaged in Kashmir conflict of 1947 and deployed extensively during the Indo-Sino Conflict of 1962. Air-lifting of troops, ammunitions, road building material, civil administration in the hill and air maintaining them

with regular supplies along the entire mountainous borders in the North and North-East of the country was undertaken by this very famous aircraft. Used extensively for everything from maritime reconnaissance as well as VIP duties for decades, it remains an icon of the IAF's rich heritage of national service in times of war and peace.

You may please be informed that my father, Air Cmde M.K. Chandrasekhar (Retd) VM, VSM, served in the IAF, flying for over 33 years, especially the iconic DC3 (Dakota) in the mountainous regions. It is on his behalf that I am keen that this easy-to-maintain Dakota aircraft be seen in the Indian skies once more in IAF colours. I seek to gift free of cost with no strings attached, a fully functional DC3/C47 to the Vintage Aircraft Fleece, similar to the Tiger Moth, Harvard, etc.

The DC3, N347DK, Serial No 32820 was purchased and engines, propellers, structure and systems updated to full Air Worthiness standards, fit for ferry to India in IAF colours, after being gifted at UK for their Historic Vintage Aircraft Flight .

In response to my previous letter to the Defence Ministry under the previous Government (Letter enclosed) the then Defence Minister Shri A.K. Antony had said that the IAF has a Vintage Aircraft Flight (VAF) unit which has a few unserviceable aircrafts for static display in the IAF museum. Further, in this reply, the Hon Minister stated that no vintage aircraft has ever been accepted by the IAF as a gift and didn't find it feasible to accept this proposal. But, IAF history would prove this statement to be incorrect.

The DC3, as a part of their inventory, would enable the IAF to retain expertise on tail wheeled, piston engine, propeller driven medium aircraft operation at higher levels of professionalism such as Experimental Test pilots' School etc. it would also assist the IAF to spread awareness amongst the younger generation about the

Indian Air Force, its proud history, National Aviation Heritage by staging regular flying displays with this aircraft, and also offering air experience to school children etc.

I, therefore, request the Defence Ministry to kindly authorize the IAF to accept the gift of this airworthy DC3, free of cost, as a part of their Vintage Aircraft Inventory.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Prime Minister to Construct a Memorial for Late President APJ Abdul Kalam

30th July, 2015

Respected Prime Minister,

I write to you with a widely felt request that a Memorial for late President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam be constructed at Rameshwaram, at the location where his mortal remains are buried.

This should be a National Memorial that commemorates the values that President Kalam has exemplified in his lifetime. I would further recommend that his statue be erected at the memorial in his honour, with his quote, “*Take an oath today - my national flag shall always fly in my heart & I will bring glory to my nation*” or any other suitable quote that is attributable to him.

Such a Memorial will serve as a beacon of inspiration for our country's citizens, especially the youth of all faith and religions.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Prime Minister on Announcement of OROP

10th September, 2015

Dear Prime Minister,

Congratulations on the successful announcement of One Rank One Pension. This decision makes OROP the biggest and most significant welfare measure for veterans in Post-Independent India by any Government and I thank you for fulfilling this important promise.

For me personally this announcement marks 9 years of struggle and perseverance on OROP – starting with the dark days of proud veterans giving up their medals in 2006. OROP was one of the first issues I took up after I joined active politics – and expectedly this is a big win for me personally and for my time in public service.

In my letter dated 10th July, 2014 to the Minister of Defence, I had presented a few suggestions on the setting up of the veterans commission for the Government's consideration attached herewith for your reference.

I am aware that OROP still has some issues, however, I hope that the one man judicial commission appointed to reserve the veterans commission will bridge the trust deficit between the Government and veterans.

Yours Sincerely

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Setting up Veterans Commission

18th September, 2015

Dear Raksha Mantri ji,

On behalf of the millions of Veterans, Widows and their families I write to thank you for your and Honble PMs personal intervention and support to the four decade old struggle for dignity and honor-represented by One Rank, One Pension.

As I have already publicly said, this effort by this Government represents one of the most significant welfare initiatives undertaken by any Government in Post Independent India for the well-being of our veterans.

As you are no doubt fully aware, there remains some outstanding issues that relate to this and to the larger issue of the country's

care for veterans. I would request that the Government sets up a permanent institutional structure to address and respond to these issues, which would then provide veterans for a responsive and trusted platform.

May I draw your attention to the idea of Veterans Commission that was mooted by the Government and announced during President's Address to the joint Session of Parliament on June, 09th, 2014. This Veterans Commission would be the correct institutional response to the ongoing issues faced by veterans, for which we as a nation are obliged to find answers and respond. The Veterans Commission will create the institutional mechanism and bridge I have earlier written to you on this subject, including suggestions on scope and terms of reference for it.

I request you through this letter to accelerate the process of forming and notifying the Veterans Commission at the earliest. This would go to a large extent to bridge the trust deficit between the government and the veterans community by addressing the other issues facing them, including long term solutions to veterans rehabilitation and re-employment etc.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar

Hon'ble Minister of Defence

Government of India, New Delhi

Copy: Hon'ble Prime Minister

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Armed Forces Voting Rights

18th September, 2015

Dear Raksha Mantri ji,

**Sub: Extending e-voting provision for Armed Forces in forward areas**

This has reference to the recent Government move on enabling e-voting for Non Resident Indians (NRIs).

As you are aware, in March 2014 the Hon'ble Supreme Court, on a petition filed by me, held that all defence personnel, deployed at peace stations will be entitled to vote from their place of posting. The case is still pending in the Supreme Court for voting rights of

personnel posted at forward/field areas. However, now that the Government is working at enabling e-voting for NRIs, I feel the Government could *suo moto* extend the provision to the Armed Forces personnel posted in field areas.

Of our nearly 14 lakh Armed Forces personnel, 9 lakh Paramilitary forces personnel and a large number of their families a substantial number of personnel posted in forward areas will be able to exercise their franchise by e-voting.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Copy to:

Maj Gen B. C Khanduri, AVSM (Retd), MP & Chairman Standing Committee on Defence.

## Letter to the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting on the Code of Conduct for Media Covering Terror Attacks

7th January, 2016

Dear Arun ji,

This is with reference to the recent terror attacks in Pathankot and the debate/outcry that has arisen about media coverage and/or conduct of certain members of the media during and in the aftermath of these terror attacks.

This points yet again towards the need for a clear set of guidelines that will govern media's conduct during such types of incidents.

I had written a letter about this issue in December 2008 - in the aftermath of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks - to the then Home Minister (copy enclosed), where there were some in the media whose coverage directly compromised our security operations,

and more importantly, the lives of our security personnel. In light of similar observations by others, such as the National Security Advisor, there is clearly a need to revisit the implementation of such guidelines.

I urge you to take necessary action to implement a set of guidelines - to ensure that national security operations and lives of our security personnel are not put at risk by elements of media.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitely,

Hon'ble Minister of Information & Broadcasting,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

Copy to: Hon'ble Prime Minister of India.

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## Letter to the Prime Minister Thanking him for the Implementation of OROP

9th February, 2016

Respected Prime Minister,

I thank you for fulfilling your Government's promise of implementing the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme. With this historic decision, you have reinforced your commitment towards the welfare of our Armed Forces and Veterans.

The OROP scheme has been in the pipeline for 42 years and its implementation is the biggest and most significant welfare measure for veterans in Post-Independent India by any Government. The OROP rollout will benefit the 18 lakh veterans, Veer Naris and widows who have sacrificed and dedicated their lives to the Nation.

As one who has raised this matter of OROP consistently within and outside Parliament for over nine years, I thank you again on behalf of all those who have served and continue to serve our nation, and their families.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

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## Letter to the Defence Minister Thanking him for the Implementation of OROP

9th February, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

I thank you for the full implementation and release of tables of the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme and with this, fulfilling the Government's promise. For the Armed Forces who have waited 42 long years, this historic decision will indeed benefit the 18 lakh veterans, Veer Naris, widows and also families of our Servicemen.

While there are a few issues and anomalies that remain, I am sure having come this far, you will give due consideration to these and settle the matter through the One-Man Judicial Committee set up for the purpose.

As one who has raised this matter of OROP consistently within and outside Parliament for close to a decade, I thank you again

on behalf of all those who have served and continue to serve our nation, and their families.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister Highlighting Anomalies in OROP

23rd February, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub: Anomalies in One Rank One Pension Scheme**

I write to you further to the Government's announcement and release of the One Rank, One Pension (OROP) implementation tables on 06 February, 2016.

At the outset, I congratulate you once again on fulfilling the four-decade long pending demand for OROP.

The One Man Judicial Committee headed by Justice (Retd) L. Narasimha Reddy, set up on 14 December, 2015 to look into the

measures for the removal of anomalies that may arise during the implementation of OROP, is also a welcome step. However, since the Terms of Reference of this Committee state that the Committee shall “examine and make recommendations on references received from the Central Government”, I am hereby submitting my representation to you, so that this could find place in your Ministry’s reference to the One Man Judicial Committee.

Attached is a list of anomalies that require attention and revision in order to fully implement OROP in its true definition.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon’ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi,

Encl.: Annexure I - List of Anomalies in the OROP Scheme

Annexure I

### **ANOMALIES - ONE RANK ONE PENSION SCHEME**

I will not go into details of pensionary anomalies, as these will surely be examined in detail. However, I urge you to ensure that there is no distortion of pensions for any rank, arising from OROP. That should be a principle.

Below are the anomalies/concerns that require immediate addressing:

**1. PENSION EQUALISATION:**

Equalisation of pensions every five (5) years will bring about disparity in pensions and result in senior ranked officers drawing lesser pension than junior ranked officers for five years. This violates the definition of One Rank One Pension. This will also result in permanent violation of the definition as fresh cases will come up every year.

One Rank One Pension should be implemented in perpetuity and should not be linked with Central Pay Commissions. It is pertinent to mention that the Central Pay Commission award must integrate the OROP and should not adjudicate on it.

**2. BASE YEAR FOR FIXATION OF PENSION 2013-14 VS 2014-15**

Fixation of pension as per calendar year 2013 would result in past retirees getting less pension of one increment than the soldier retiring today. This will not only result in past retirees drawing lesser pensions than present retirees, but also result in loss of one increment across the board for past pensioners in perpetuity.

**3. PAYMENT OF ARREARS: Payment w.e.f 01 July, 2014 instead of 01 April 2014**

OROP was approved in the Central Budget 2014-15. Applicability of the same must be 1st April of the same financial year. In the case of OROP, the Government had issued specific orders on its applicability w.e.f 01 April, 2014. Hence, implementation date for OROP from 01 July, 2014 will be against the Parliament approval. Changing the date would result in a loss of three months' emoluments for OROP across the board.

#### **4. DENIAL OF OROP TO PREMATURE RETIREES HEREON:**

It is not desirable that Pension entitlements under the Pension Regulations as per Defence Services Regulations be modified through OROP. It will create a class within a class giving rise to a situation which may not withstand legal scrutiny.

Moreover, the clause on denial of OROP on premature retirement also goes against the recommendations of the Ajai Vikram Singh Committee, which had recommended measures to reduce the age profile of officers. The said recommendations were approved by the Cabinet and implemented by the Government in December 2004.

#### **5. REVIEW OF OROP AFTER 7TH CENTRAL PAY COMMISSION (CPC) IMPLEMENTATION**

In order to bring pre-2013 retirees at par with 2015 retirees, there is a need to review OROP soon after the 7th CPC implementation. This will ensure parity in rank for rank and service for service. It may well be meaningful to do this rationalisation from 01 January, 2016 and then use the multiplication factor - no rationalisation would be needed till the next CPC, unless there is a change in formula of fixing salaries as recommended by 7th CPC.

This will ensure the Government does not face legal challenges by Veterans seeking parity at par with similarly placed officers who were in service on 01 January, 2006. Such a review after the 7th CPC implementation will also settle the issue of Base Year (Point No. 2 above).

Letter to the Defence Minister  
Highlighting Error on Ashok  
Chakra Citation of Lance Naik  
Mohan Nath Goswami

24th February, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub: Error on Ashok Chakra citation – Lance Naik Mohan Nath Goswami**

This is regarding the issue of error in Regimental name on the Ashok Chakra Citation of Lance Naik Mohan Nath Goswami who laid down his life fighting terrorists in Kupwara, Jammu and Kashmir, in September 2015.

As you may be aware, media reports have highlighted this error. Lance Naik Goswami's parent regiment, 9th battalion the Parachute Regiment, Special Forces, has been wrongfully mentioned as 6th

battalion the Rashtriya Rifles, the regiment that held the Area of Responsibility he was operating in.

Such an error on the Citation of the country's highest peace time gallantry award signed and presented by the President to Lance Naik Goswami's widow on Republic Day this year should not have occurred in the first place, given the multiple levels of scrutiny before the parchment is printed. The next of kin of Lance Naik Goswami and his battalion have also requested for rectifying the error. It is therefore with immediacy that this error be corrected for the braveheart who sacrificed his life for the Nation.

It is with honour and pride that soldiers wear their medals and decorations. It is a greater honour and sense of belonging for the Regiment to have their soldiers awarded for their acts of bravery.

It is incumbent upon us to honour Lance Naik Goswami's service and sacrifice rightly.

I urge you to look into the matter and have the error corrected at the earliest.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar

Hon'ble Minister of Defence

Government of India

New Delhi

## Letter to the Defence Minister for Delay in Disbursal of Pension to Widows of Martyred Soldiers

1st March, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub: Delay in Disbursal of Pension to Widows and/or Next of  
Kin of Martyred Soldiers**

I write to you regarding the issue of delay in payment of pension faced by widows and next of kin of the Armed Forces soldiers martyred in the line of duty.

While Pension Regulations are well defined, there is a gap of two to three months, and in some cases, more for pension disbursal to the widow and next of kin of the soldier who has died in the line of duty.

The salary of the soldier stops from the day of his death and along with the delay in pension, the widow and next of kin are left to struggle to make ends meet. This period of gap leaves the family very vulnerable even as they deal with their irreparable loss.

Our soldiers lay down their lives for the Nation, and it is the moral obligation of the Government of India and the Ministry of Defence to ensure that the families of the martyrs are not financially inconvenienced.

For this, I suggest the following measures:

1. At least 50% pay of the martyred soldier continues to be paid to his widow and/or next of kin for the duration of 2-3 months until the pension starts. Any variation in the amount can be settled once the arrears are paid up.
2. For cases that suffer delay due to completion of formalities, the provision of **Pending Enquiry Award under the Pension Regulations of Defence Services Regulations** be authorised with immediate effect in all cases until the pension is disbursed.

As you are aware, **SECTION-2 Pending Enquiry Award, Sub-section-I-General, under 'Object and Nature of Pending Enquiry Award'** states:

*“17. (a) The Pending Enquiry Award scheme is intended to relieve the financial difficulties of Personnel Below Officer Rank and their dependents when such personnel are invalided out of service provisionally or die, and the invaliding disability or cause of death is considered, prima facie, due to military service or is accepted as such by the competent authority with reference to the applicable Entitlement Rules. Under this scheme, interim award shall be made, pending completion of enquiry and other steps which may be necessary before a pension claim can be finally admitted.*”

I urge you undertake these measures at the earliest to ensure that families/next of kin of our martyred soldiers are taken care of and do not suffer hardships.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Follow-Up Letter to the Defence Minister on OROP Scheme

1st March, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub: Additional Points - Anomalies in One Rank One Pension (OROP) Scheme**

Further to my letter to you dated 23 February 2016, with the subject “Anomalies in One Rank One Pension Scheme”, I am enclosing herewith a second representation with additional points on the change in definition of the OROP Scheme in various letters issued by the Government, and also anomalies in particular ranks that go against the principle of OROP.

The same may be annexed with my earlier representation and also find place in your Ministry's reference to the One Man Judicial Committee.

The attached list of issues requires immediate attention and revision in order to fully implement OROP in its true definition.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi,

## Annexure I

### ADDITIONAL POINTS : ANOMALIES IN ONE RANK ONE PENSION (OROP) SCHEME

#### A. CHANGE IN DEFINITION OF ONE RANK ONE PENSION:

Pl refer to:

1. MOD letter no 12(01/2014-D (Pen/Pol) dated 26 February, 2014
2. MOM of the meeting chaired by RM on 26 February, 2014 to discuss OROP

3. Response by MOS Defence, Shri Rao Inderjit Singh to my Parliamentary Question No. 962 dated 02 December, 2014 on 'Implementation of One Rank, One Pension (OROP)'
4. GOI Press Release dated 05 September, 2015
5. GOI letter no 12(1)/2014 dated 07 November, 2015 and
6. GOI letter no 12(01)/2014-D (pen/pol)- Part-II dated 14 December, 2015
  - a) *One Rank One Pension (OROP) implies that uniform pension be paid to the Armed Forces Personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service irrespective of their date of retirement and any future enhancement in the rates of pension to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners. This implies bridging the gap between the rate of pension of the current pensioners and the past pensioners, and also future enhancements in the rate of pension to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners.*
    - I. On 26 February, 2014, the Government vide letter No 12(01)/2014-D (Pen/Pol) accepted the principle of One Rank One Pension as defined above.
    - II. Minutes of the meeting chaired by the Hon'ble Raksha Mantri on 26 February also contained the above definition of OROP.
    - III. The reply given by Minister of State for Defence Shri Rao Inderjit Singh to a question raised by me in Parliament on 02 December, 2014 also gave the above definition of OROP.

However, in subsequent letters and press release issued by the Ministry of Defence, the definition of OROP was altered as follows:

- b) *One Rank One Pension (OROP) implies that uniform pension be paid to the Armed Forces Personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service, irrespective of their date of retirement. Future enhancement in the rates of pension to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners. This implies bridging the gap between the rate of pension of the current pensioners and the past pensioners at periodic intervals.*
- I. In the Press Release dated 05 September, 2014, the definition of OROP was altered from the accepted definition mention in letter dated 26 February 2014. “...*future enhancements in the rate of pension to be automatically passed on to the past pensioners*” to “...*this implies bridging the gap between the rate of pension of the current pensioners and the past pensioners at periodic intervals.*”
- II. The Government of India letter 12(1)/2014 dated 07 November, 2015 also defined OROP as “*this implies bridging the gap between the rate of pension of the current pensioners and the past pensioners at periodic intervals.*”
- III. The Ministry of Defence Notification No. 12(01)/2014-D(pen/pol)-Part-II announcing the appointment of the Judicial Committee to look into removal of anomalies that may arise of out implementation of OROP also repeated the definition as “*OROP implies that uniform pension be paid to the Defence Forces Personnel retiring in the same rank with the same length of service, regardless of their date of retirement, which implies that bridging the gap between the rate of pension of current and past pensioners at periodic intervals*”.

It is essential that the definition of OROP be maintained in its true form in order to successfully implement the scheme. Failing to do so will deprive past pensioners and widows of equivalent pension as present retirees thereby violating the very principle of One Rank One Pension.

**B. ANOMALIES EFFECTING PARTICULAR RANKS:**

The pensions of ranks - Hon. Naib Subedar, Major and Lieutenant Colonel - require to be relooked at.

- a) Pension of Havildars granted with rank of Hon. Naib Subedar in view of their exemplary service, are not granted pension of Naib Subedar, instead he continues to draw the pension of a Havildar. This makes the Hon. Ranks merely ceremonial. It is required that this anomaly be corrected and pension of Naib Subedar be granted. Similarly, this must be accepted as a principle and it should be applicable to all Hon. ranks in case of NCOs and JCOs.
- b) PCDA (Pensions) Circular No. 555 Dated 04 February, 2016 with the subject 'Implementation of One Rank One Pension to Defence Pensioners', Para 11(a) states: "*The officers retired on or after 1.1.1996 in the rank of Major and who have completed 21 years of service have been allowed the pay of Lt.Col. Accordingly, pension of these officers have been revised by issue of Corr. PPOs. It is therefore, requested to revise the pension of post-96 Army Officer with rank Major and its equivalent in the Air Force and Navy who have completed 21 years.*"
- I. The above provisions have created two separate pensions for the rank of Major – one pre-1996 retiree Majors and another for post-1996 retiree Majors with the same length of service.

- 
- II. The above provisions have been added in continuation to Government of India (MoD) letter No 1(13)/2009/D (Pen/Pol) dated 24 September 2012 and PCDA (P) Allahabad Circular No 14 dated 02 January 2013 wherein *Majors, who retired on or after 01 January 1996 with 21 years or more were granted pension of Lt Col by issue of Corr.PPOs.*
- III. These Majors were granted pension of Lt. Col. as they were payed the pay of Lt. Col. under the provisions of SAI 2/S/1998 during the currency of 5th Central Pay Commission.

It goes against the principle of One Rank One Pension that the rank of Major be on two different pension scales. This anomaly should be corrected and all past retiree Majors with 21 years or more of service must be treated at par and paid uniform pension.

Letter to the Defence Minister to  
Rename Armed Forces Flag Day  
to National Day of Remembrance/  
Sainik Smriti Divas

6th April, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub.: National Day of Remembrance / Sainik Smriti Divas**

This is with reference to our meeting and discussion yesterday on renaming Armed Forces Flag Day on 07 December to National Day of Remembrance or *Sainik Smriti Divas*.

This idea of Institutionalizing a National Day of Remembrance has widespread support, including from the United Service Institution of India (USI).

I request you to kindly give your consent to the request and help take this initiative forward.

I am also enclosing herewith a copy of the letter that I have received in this regard, from Lt Gen P. K. Singh, Director USI, wherein he has made a request for this and some other issues that you may kindly wish to consider.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Defence Minister for Protection of Revenue Budgets of Armed Forces

6th April, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub: Protection of Revenue Budgets of Armed Forces and Speedy Reimbursement of HDR Expenses**

This is with reference to our meeting and discussion yesterday about the impact of any shortfall in the revenue budgets of our Armed Forces.

I would urge that the revenue budgets of the Armed Forces be always protected during the year because of its implications on the Forces – as they organize and deploy their manpower & machinery,

and therefore, plan their expenses well in advance - unlike other Government agencies.

Further, in this regard, I had brought up the issue of the need to automatically reimburse the Armed Forces for expenses that they incur during peace time relief operations (HDR). Any delays in reimbursing this also has a material effect on their revenue budgets.

I have raised this issue several times, including formally writing to the then Defence Minister way back in 2014, and am enclosing a copy of my letter and his response, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi,

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Delay in Implementing Military Modernisation Plans and Reforms

29th April, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantriji,

**Sub: Continued delay in implementing Military Modernisation  
Plans & Reforms**

I write to you on the continued delay in implementing military modernisation plans and reforms. These have become obvious as part of the engagement of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence.

**1. Permanent Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee (CoSC)**

As you may be aware, in 2001, the creation of a Chief of Defence Staff was first recommended by a Group of Ministers. Later,

the Naresh Chandra Committee recommended a Permanent Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee in 2012. However, this higher defence reform remains to be implemented.

## **2. 17 Corps/ Mountain Strike Corps**

The decision to raise 17 Corps, meant specifically for India's 3,500-km border with China was approved in 2013. Since then, there has been limited progress on the front and this is yet to get budgetary support.

## **3. Space, Cyberspace and Special Operations Commands**

As you may recall, the Hon'ble Prime Minister's address to the combined Commanders in 2014 and 2015 emphasised the need to retool the military to fight the wars of the future. However, on this front, the cyber warfare command, space command and a special operations command are all pending cabinet approval.

The recent attacks in Pathankot, Jammu & Kashmir and in the North East have shown that the nature of security threats facing our country are rapidly changing and require our Armed Forces to respond nimbly, flexibly and rapidly, and deploy forces in Air, Land and Sea simultaneously, in an integrated manner. It is precisely for this purpose of a rapid and integrated response to national security threats that the above reforms and modernisation plans are urgently required.

I urge you to take necessary action to fast track these critical defence reforms and modernisations plans. I am available for any further discussions on these issues at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar,  
Hon'ble Minister of Defence,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

## Letter to the Haryana Chief Minister on Incident of Killing Army Officer's Kin

23rd May, 2016

Respected Chief Minister,

**Sub: Recent Incident of killing of Army Officers' kin and the State's obligation towards families of soldiers**

This is with reference to the shocking and brutal killing in village Karewari, Sonipat of Shri Jagbir Singh and 25 year-old Anil Chhikara, father and brother of Major Sushil Chhikara of the elite National Security Guard.

Even as the bereaved family is trying to come to terms with their loss, I am aghast, as is the entire Nation, at this criminal act in broad daylight. It is even more shocking as it has laid bare the apathy and inaction of the Police that did not act on Major

Chhikara's call asking for protection for his family in the village after his father reported the threats to him. Had they acted upon his complaint, this unfortunate incident would not have occurred.

As you know, the men and women of our Armed Forces serve the Nation and secure our borders while leaving behind their parents, wives and children at home in cities, towns and villages – confident that they are safe under the care of the State. However, this incident has woken us to the kind of threat and danger our soldiers' families face in their homes itself.

I had, on the day the incident was reported in media, reached out to Major Chhikara and offered all my assistance.

I firmly believe it is the States' obligation to protect and care for the families of those who Serve the Nation. This is the least we can do to reciprocate the service and sacrifices our soldiers and their families make for us.

I would urge you to ensure that the culprits of this heinous crime are brought to book at the earliest and all families of serving soldiers in your State are looked after while their sons and daughters guard us.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Lal Khattar

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Haryana

State Secretariat

Chandigarh

Haryana

Copy to: Shri Manohar Parrikar, Hon'ble Minister of Defence

Follow-Up Letter to the Defence  
Minister to Rename Armed Forces  
Flag Day to National Day of  
Remembrance/Sainik Smriti Divas

20th July, 2016

Dear Raksha Mantri ji,

**Sub: Institutionalising a National Day of Remembrance/Sainik Smriti Divas**

I thank you for your response dated 30 July 2016 to my letter regarding renaming the Armed Forces Flag Day (AFFD) celebrated every year on 7 December to National Day of Remembrance/*Sainik Smriti Divas*.

I appreciate the details on the background of the AFFD and activities held on the day to commemorate our gallant soldiers and the fact that the day is marked by none other than the President of

India, the Prime Minister of India and the Raksha Mantri himself. I am already aware of the facts as I have been actively involved with AFFD activities for many years now.

The primary activity as your letter conveys is collection of funds and donations meant to be utilised for financial assistance of Ex-servicemen and their dependents and I agree that this is the most noble cause for which collections and donations are sought. However, I feel from your response that the essence and point of my suggestion to rename AFFD to National Day of Remembrance/*Sainik Smriti Divas* has not been completely understood.

The suggestion to rename AFFD is not to take away from the already existing activities or even conduct similar fund collection, but rather to give a broader and wider appeal to citizens to honour and remember those who have fallen and sacrificed and those who are serving because the day is about remembering and honouring them. This will not stop the current activity under AFFD, but will become one element under a larger canvas.

I would urge you to reconsider this suggestion to rename the AFFD to the National Day of Remembrance/*Sainik Smriti Divas* as it will go a longer way in establishing the bond between a larger citizenry and the Armed Forces past, present and future.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Manohar Parrikar

Hon'ble Minister of Defence

Government of India

New Delhi

Letter to the Finance Minister  
Regarding Honouring Armed  
Forces Martyrs Gallantry Awardees  
Through Numismatics

20th July, 2016

Dear Arun ji,

**SUB: Honouring martyrs of our Armed Forces' gallantry  
awardees through numismatics**

I write this in connection to commemorative coins commissioned by the Government of India from time to time on special occasions and anniversaries.

While there have been special coins to commemorate many well-known personalities like Mother Teresa, Homi Bhabha and others, there have been no commemorative coins on Military personnel, especially Martyrs and gallantry award recipients up till now. Of

the three armed force services, the Air Force has been honoured through two coins minted on the occasion of its Platinum Jubilee and the Golden Jubilee of the 1965 Indo Pak War was marked with a Rs. 5/- commemorative coin in 2015.

I strongly believe that the valour and sacrifice of our gallant soldiers of post-independence war engagements, namely 1948, 1965, 1971 and Kargil Indo Pak conflict, deserve recognition with commemorative coins of appropriate value, depicting the Param Vir Chakra recipients. The same can be released on Republic & Independence days every year or on anniversaries of wars/conflicts.

The release of such coins would not only instil the unflinching valour and sacrifices made by our Bravehearts in the memory of the general public who use these coins, but also motivate and inspire the youth.

Therefore, I request you to consider my suggestion and authorise a commemorative coin series to honour Param Vir Chakra gallantry awardees.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley,  
Minister of Finance  
Government of India  
New Delhi

Copy:

Shri Narendra Modi  
Prime Minister of India

## Letter to the Home Minister on Need for Stricter Guidelines to Check FCRA Funding to Salafist Institutions in India

25th October, 2016

Dear Rajnath Ji,

I write to you regarding the need for stricter Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) guidelines and checks especially on funds received from Islamic charities.

As you are aware, the Government has, in the past, warned repeatedly of the dangers of the rise of puritanical, Saudi-style Islam in India and that has also been one of the factors behind Kashmir unrest. A recent report by NDTV on scrutiny of records of the past three years on the FCRA website has revealed that approximately Rs 134 crore has been received by Salafist NGO's from Islamic countries.

These funds from Islamic charities are primarily for construction and expansion of buildings – schools, orphanage, and a madrassa. However, of the funds received by organisations in India for such expansion, many are run on core Salafist beliefs, which are against Sufi Islam as practiced in the Indian subcontinent.

It is a matter of concern that pre-eminent Salafist organisation in India- the Ahl-e-Hadees, has over 1,000 madrassas spread across the country which are about 10 times the number of Salafist NGOs listed in FCRA.

Also, FCRA records show the Madeenath Ul-Uloom Education Trust, Rabiya Basri Rahamat-Ulla-Hi-Allayha Charitable Trust, and Sadiya Educational and Charitable Trust all NGO's in Shimoga in Karnataka, received a total of Rs 36.5 crore funding from the International Islamic Charitable Organisation (IICO), based in UAE and Kuwait. It is pertinent to note that a board member of IICO was alleged to have sent funds through committees linked to Hamas and this organisation has also been banned by Israel for having links and making contributions to Hamas and other radical groups. The TV report also raises questions of the extensive work being done inconsistent with official remittances, which also suggest that there are Hawala channels also being used as the main conduit of funding, with official FCRA remittances provided as the legitimate cover for the various projects. These organizations with foreign influenced ideology represent a threat also to all peaceful Indian Muslims and indeed the whole Nation.

It is surprising that if a TV channel can easily unearth such large scale misuse of the FCRA route, that our Intelligence agencies and police are not able to audit and identify such organizations and recipients of this kind of financing. This has gone on unchallenged for so long and has created dangerous pockets of radicalism and fundamentalism as recent NIA arrests are proving.

I therefore urge you to

- a. Completely overhaul the FCRA norms and guidelines, prohibiting funds to Religious institutions, and permit only donations for specific purposes like Health, Skill development etc. which are verifiable and credible.
- b. Undertake audit and investigation of FCRA funds received and the bona-fides of the recipients of these funds so far, and the identification of Salafist NGOs amongst these and conduct a thorough inquiry into the end use of these funds at the earliest so that these are not misused for activities that pose a threat to the Nation.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Rajnath Singh,

Hon'ble Minister for Home Affairs,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

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## Open Letter to Rahul Gandhi About the Four Decade-Long Struggle for OROP

3rd November, 2016

Dear Rahul,

Most Indians are anguished about the sad and tragic suicide of Veteran Subedar Ram Kishan Grewal of 105 TA and DSC. I suspect you were trying to convey your deep feeling and concern by visiting the family of the Veteran at Ram Manohar Lohia hospital along with an entourage shouting "*Rahul Gandhi ki Jai*".

However, may I respectfully suggest that going with an entourage shouting "*Rahul Gandhi ki Jai*" to a hospital full of patients and worrying relatives may not be the best way to show your recently discovered concern for Veterans.

I say recently discovered because you and your UPA governments

actions and conduct on One Rank, One Pension (OROP) are there in the public domain and worth reiterating.

Let me jog your memory, while I have raised the demand for OROP since I stepped into Parliament in 2006, it was during the terms of Congress led UPA-1 and UPA -2 that I wrote several letters and had several meetings on the matter to and with the then Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Chairperson UPA and also to you urging for implementation of the long pending OROP. All of them were met with either a “can’t do” it or a stony silence. There was even a Parliamentary committee of Petitions under Shri Koshiyari that studied a petition that I was instrumental in submitting and even its report submitted in 2011 was ignored by the UPA government.

I had first written to you on OROP and other Armed Forces related issues way back in 2011, but you neither replied to it nor took any action. (Letter enclosed) It probably wasn’t politically ‘interesting’ enough for you then. It took you years to even mention to get to that issue – and even then just before Elections 2014 as a pre-poll election stunt.

It was then I wrote to you in February 2014 where I lauded your belated interest, reminded you how belated it was with a list of all my letters written to then Prime Minister, Defence Minister, Congress Chairperson and yourself requesting you to address the serious issue and prevent further alienation and disenchantment in the veteran community. (Letter enclosed). Even when the OROP was hurriedly announced by your Government prior to Elections, adding insult to injury was your Finance Minister allocating a mere Rs 500 crore – a cruel joke which would not have been enough for enhanced pensions for even 10% of the veterans.

And it took the current Government despite serious objections from the Finance Ministry about the fiscal implications, to announce and implement OROP - costing almost Rs 8300 crore

per annum and a onetime cost of more than Rs 20,000 crore – correcting a four-decade old injustice perpetrated on our Veterans. Because, as its worth reminding you, in 1972-73 it was Smt. Indira Gandhi, then Prime Minister who in one stroke terminated OROP after the 1971 Indo Pak War. In 2002, Congress President Sonia Gandhi spoke and advocated for OROP at a political rally, but then followed it up with being in power till 2014 and not having it implemented. The Congress in 2004 even included the OROP in its manifesto promising a solution, but spent the entire term and then the next denying the same to the veterans.

Perhaps you also need to be reminded that in 2008 then Defence Minister Shri A K Antony stated that the UPA Government had not found the OROP demand acceptable! The UPA government, had rejected the OROP demand, holding that would be huge financial costs of over Rs 3,500 crore then.

When I joined the Veterans in their protest in December 2008 as they sat for a relay fast at Jantar Mantar or when the veterans marched to Rashtrapati Bhawan in 2009 surrendering their medals to the President for non-implementation of OROP, I do not recall you or anyone in your party saying a word in support or doing anything about it.

You may want to be reminded that it was this refusal to implement OROP by the Congress led UPA Government that led me to facilitate a petition by citizens and veterans to the Committee of Petitions Rajya Sabha that resulted in the Koshiyari committee report of 2011, tabled in Parliament only to have your UPA Government respond thus – “Not possible because administrative, financial and legal complications in implementation of the OROP scheme.”

My repeated letters and interventions in Parliament continued through the regime of Congress led UPA -1 and UPA -2 and never once do I recall you showing solidarity with the struggle of the

veterans. In August 2010 I declined to accepted the salary hike given to MP's until the OROP issue is settled completed.

There's much to be reminded of on the larger aspect of welfare of Armed forces and Veterans – like the UPA governments track record on welfare and key issues like - lack of Voting rights for Armed Forces, lack of adequate housing for serving forces and families etc. or maybe these are issues that are not currently politically interesting enough.

Rahul – I accept the premise that yours may be a case of belated wisdom and compassion dawning. That is a good thing. But it's a bit trite to assume that past records of political parties will be forgotten and that the country doesn't realise how far we have come in the cause of serving and repaying our Veterans in the past two years compared to the past four decades.

Yes, there are some pending complex issues in OROP including some fundamental issues to ensure consistency with the definition of One Rank, One Pension. These were referred to the One Man Judicial Committee set up to look after these anomalies. This committee has only recently submitted its report and we should look to them.

The death of Subedar Grewal is a terrible blot on a nation that takes pride in its Armed Forces and the tradition of service and sacrifice they represent. It is indisputable that over the past several decades, the Defence Ministry and bureaucracy has become apathetic and uncaring to the plight of our Veterans, widows and serving forces and their families. There is no doubt that this needs changing and transforming and that must be where the genuine political anger if any must be focussed. Grandstanding and political opportunism tends to stale rapidly and hypocrisy even faster.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

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Letter to the Finance Minister on  
Need for Special Provisions to  
Ease Transition in Demonetisation  
Exercise for Indian Armed Forces  
Posted in Remote & Forward Areas

15th November, 2016

Dear Arun ji,

**Sub: Immediate need for special provisions to ensure ease of transition in demonetisation exercise for Indian Armed Forces & Paramilitary personnel posted in remote and forward areas**

This is with reference to the Government's demonetisation decision to combat the scourge of black money and counterfeit currency. This is indeed an important step in the country's economic

transformation story. While this exercise has witnessed logistical challenges that all Govt./ Banks are working hard to overcome, there are reports emerging that our Armed Forces and Paramilitary soldiers are facing problems in forward/field areas, especially those posted in Kashmir as most banks here are shut and the ATMs lie dysfunctional.

As you are aware, the government's directive asks for depositors to be present in person during transactions and with the absence of banking facilities in forward, field and disturbed areas, it is quite impossible for the Armed Forces and Paramilitary personnel to exchange old notes.

Keeping in mind the deadline of 30 December 2016 to exchange or deposit old currency notes, I urge you to address this problem immediately and provision for special facilities to be extended to all our officers and soldiers posted in remote and forward areas so that they do not face any hardship and that all help is extended to them by the Government to transition through the demonetisation exercise without any difficulties.

Our men and women in uniform posted along the border and in disturbed areas within the country must face such challenges while they battle the enemy day and night.

I urge you to treat this as a priority and take immediate steps to resolve this problem.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley,  
Hon'ble Finance Minister  
Government of India  
New Delhi

Copy to:

- I. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India
- II. Hon'ble Raksha Mantri

## Letter to the Prime Minister on Major D P Singh, Kargil War Veteran & Swachhability Run

4th January, 2017

Respected Prime Minister,

I am enclosing herewith a video of an event, the *Swachhability Run*, which my NGO – Flags of Honour Foundation partnered in. The *Swachhability Run* is a concept of and executed by the inspiring Major DP Singh – Kargil war veteran and known as India’s “Blade Runner”.

The *Swachhability Run* covered seven cities in seven days to culminate on 03 December 2016 to mark the UN International Day for Persons with Disabilities. The run in each city was flagged off by *Veer Naris*, widows of our Armed Forces Bravehearts, parents of Bravehearts and decorated veterans.

This run was unique – because it combines three values that you have espoused and supported. A) The indomitable Patriotism and spirit of our Armed Forces, B) encouraging and empowering *Divyangs* and C) combined with the message of *Swachh Bharat* mission and doing so by involving students from various schools in the seven cities.

I hope this unique and inspiring event, which is planned to be conducted in many cities across the country, will receive your encouragement and support for furthering the cause of inclusion of all *Divyangs* in the mainstream honouring our Armed Forces soldiers, martyrs and their families and the goal of a *Swachh Bharat*.

I would request you to, time permitting, meet with Maj DP Singh and hear from him the goals of the *Swachhability Run*.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Narendra Modi,  
Hon'ble Prime Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Open letter to Ms. Gurmehar Kaur,  
Daughter of Braveheart Captain  
Mandeep Singh

1st March, 2017

Dear Gurmehar,

Let me start this letter to you by saying I have always held martyrs and their families with the highest respect. As the son of a veteran, I have lived my entire childhood amongst men, women and families who served and sacrificed. The service of Martyrs to the Nation is unparalleled and their sacrifices supreme. From Major Som Nath Sharma the first recipient of the Param Vir Chakra who laid down his life in the 1948 Indo-Pak War at the age of 24, 2/Lt Arun Khetarpal at 21 – and then who can forget Captain Saurabh Kalia, Captain Vijayant Thapar and Captain Vikram Batra - all a few years older than you are today. I have had the honour and experience of engaging with families of numerous Bravehearts. It

is true that most have no hate or revenge in their hearts – just a desire that others don't suffer the losses that they did.

And so let there be no doubt in your mind that most in our country consider you and your family as worthy of great respect – for the service and sacrifice of your father Captain Mandeep Singh. What you have gone through, the painful experiences in your life, no child or family should. Losing a father, a husband, son or brother in service of the nation, is a tragedy for any family. And for that, there is only humble salutations and unstinting support that we can offer.

So I consider it unacceptable that anyone in this great nation of ours would think of anything other than only protecting and supporting you and your family – let alone harassment and violence of the kind in recent days by some on social media. Let me assure you of my complete commitment to your total safety and to your right to speak your mind. That commitment is unambiguous and total - I assure you!

I have watched your video and heard your views with great interest. I admire your pluck and courage to stand up and speak what you believe in. Your father would be proud of your courage.

University is a point in life when you are free to experiment with thoughts and ideas, including idealism. So here are two points that I want to leave you to think about as well.

The first is the point you make about absolving Pakistan - while I understand your desire for peace, here is where you are wrong about Pakistan. It is not enough to blame killings today on an amorphous concept of war and look for peace. Over 15,000 people alone have lost their lives to terror attacks and so thousands of families have suffered and lost because of violence exported from across the border – into our territory, into our homes. This is the stark reality we must understand. Many thousands of our men in

security forces have laid down their lives whilst protecting against these terror attacks.

No one wants war – we do not want violence after all India was born out of Mahatma Gandhi’s non-violence movement. But sometimes threats of violence and indeed violence are thrust on us and the nation’s leaders can’t be found wanting then. The 1962 conflict with China should teach us, what happens when seemingly sound moral positions run into nations with a strong force led doctrines of expansion.

Let me quote what President Obama said in his Nobel Peace prize speech in 2009, that may explain the conundrum – between this desire for peace and the need to be also strong militarily to defend ourselves.

“Violence never brings permanent peace. It solves no social problem. It merely creates new and more complicated ones. I am the living testimony of the moral force of Non-violence and there is nothing weak, nothing passive, nothing naïve in the creed of Gandhi and King.

But I cannot be guided by their examples alone. I face the world as it is, and cannot stand idle in the face of threats to my people. For make no mistake: evil does exist in the world. A non-violent movement could not have halted Hitler’s Armies. Negotiations alone can’t convince Al Qaeda to lay down their arms. To say that force is sometimes necessary is not a call to cynicism – it is recognition of history; the imperfections of man and the limits of reason.”

So that’s the thrust of the point I want to make to you. I admire your peace activism. But a desire for peace (even one as deeply felt as yours) will not make the terrorists in Pakistan surrender their weapons. In your desire for peace, we cannot forget that Nations do have an obligation to bear arms to defend themselves, defend

their people. You father did just that. He and all the others like him fought to protect these values. They didn't fight because they like war or hated the people in front of them - they served and sacrificed because they loved India and the Indians behind them.

So while I also share your desire for peace - peace doesn't come from simply desiring it, especially with Pakistan. We (both Indians and Pakistanis) must cause the Pakistan state to change its state policy of supporting Terror and doing so by using all possible options and not simply begging or pleading for peace.

The second point is about debating Political issues. I am a strong advocate of young Indians being more politically active and aware. So if you choose to be active politically, more power to you. I am confident that you would carry with you, the values and principles that your father and family hold dear about our country and nationhood. But be aware that politics is as much about aligning with those who agree with you on some issues and at the same time ensuring that the same people don't have beliefs that are counter to your other core values like national integrity etc. Also be warned, entering a political debate also means opening yourself to criticism and arguments – this should be expected. It's sometimes unpleasant and noisy – but that's the nature of the beast as it is today. So brace and prepare yourself as you plunge in.

I for one believe deeply in our Nation and its younger generation. I hope this letter helps you regain your confidence and composure after the last few difficult days. I also hope through this letter, you are also a little better informed about how others view Pakistan and its terror exports and the need to secure our people.

I wish you and your family the very best.

Jai Hind!

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

103

## Letter to the Defence Minister on Heavy Loss of Revenue to HAL Airport in Bengaluru

14th March, 2017

Dear Arun ji,

**Sub: Heavy loss of revenue to HAL Airport in Bengaluru**

I write regarding the heavy losses being incurred by the Hindustan Aeronautical Airport (HAL) at Bengaluru. The same has been highlighted by several media reports.

As you are aware, a clause in the 25-year agreement between the state government and Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL) does not allow an additional airport within a radius of 150 kms of Kempegowda International Airport, promoted by BIAL, at Devanahalli.

The agreement between the state government and BIAL resulted in stoppage of commercial flight operations/cargo operations from HAL in May 2008 has led to HAL Airport incurring losses to the tune of Rs. 1,480 crores from 2008 to 2015.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) operates the HAL Airport in Bengaluru and functioning of this airport is restricted and with not enough traffic to fetch revenues. This while it continues to support military flying, test flying, chartered and VVIP flights and continuing to maintain its infrastructure and services to the fullest.

The heavy loss of revenue to the HAL Airport is loss to the national exchequer. Therefore, I urge you to look into matter and ensure that some form of royalty is paid to HAL to make up for its losses by the private operator, since it is because of the monopoly that the HAL suffers these losses.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley,  
Hon'ble Defence Minister,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

104

## Letter to the Finance Minister Regarding the Problems Being Faced by Soldiers to Exchange Demonetised Currency

16th March, 2017

Dear Arun ji,

**Sub: Problems being faced by soldiers to exchange demonetised currency**

I write to you on the difficulty being faced by some soldiers of the Armed Forces in exchanging demonetised currency at the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The same has been highlighted in a recent media report.

The RBI had, in a statement, in January 2017, informed that Resident Indian citizens who were abroad from 09 November 2016 to 30 December 2016 could avail facility of exchange of demonetised notes up to 31 March 2017 and NRI citizens, who were abroad

during this period, could exchange their notes up to 30 June 2017. However, there is no provision for soldiers of the Armed Forces who have been posted in forward areas like Siachen or interiors of Jharkhand where there is little or no means of communication and those who have not been able to get sanctioned leave on time to avail of similar exchange for demonetised currency that could be in their possession.

As you may recall, I raised the point on the need for special provisions to ensure ease of transition in demonetisation for Indian Armed Forces & Paramilitary personnel posted in remote and forward areas in a letter to you dated 15 November 2016 shortly after the announcement of demonetisation on 8 November 2016.

Our soldiers serve in far-flung areas in the remotest corners of the country and while it is a good step to allow concessions for citizens traveling abroad and NRI's, but given the nature and location of service, it is even more important that similar concessions be extended to our men and women in uniform and their parents.

I urge you to treat this as a priority and take immediate steps to resolve this problem.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Arun Jaitley,

Hon'ble Finance Minister

Government of India

New Delhi

Copy to:

I. Hon'ble Prime Minister of India

# Big Bengaluru Fight

## Introduction

*“Citizens have Rights under our Constitution and its time we start fighting for these rights and reminding the Government of them. In this Fight to Protect Our City from the Criminal Nexus of Government Officials and Builders, Citizens must Together Demand for Accountability and Government Action against Violators of Laws, as also seek Justice for those who have been Wronged!”*

My quote above highlights the tragedy that has afflicted Bengaluru and I have always believed that citizens are key stakeholders in the growth and development of Bengaluru and therefore, must be allowed to be a part of the process of the City’s development.

Bengaluru has been acclaimed to be one of the fastest growing metropolis in Asia. However, the real benefits of globalisation and the IT boom have eluded the city and has resulted in collusion between politicians, bureaucrats, and a certain number of businesses (builders, contractors and others).

This alliance of vested interests has taken over policy making and made ad-hoc planning and contracting discretion (non-transparency) a hallmark of their functioning.

Bengaluru’s problems – whether transport and mobility, waste management, environment and public health, destruction of lakes and water bodies, water scarcity - are to do with more fundamental issues of planning and institutional performance in terms of delivering public services than the structure or size of the city.

Big Bengaluru Fight is about reclaiming the lost glory of Bengaluru

through active Citizen Participation in decisions for the City; Ensuring a statutory Multi-Year Development Plan, which includes all development aspects of the city; and holding the Government accountable for its actions - this Initiative addresses the core problems arising from mal-governance, takeover of planning and development by vested interests, the decline of neighbourhoods and the need to push for reforms in the administration of civic agencies and the Government.

There are several examples of Citizen Victories through interventions that stopped the Government of Karnataka in its tracks and compelled it to correct wrongdoings. A few are listed here:

1. The recent Order by the National Green Tribunal (NGT, Chennai) that has indicted the Government of Karnataka for not having sought the mandatory environmental approvals required, prior going ahead with the controversial Steel Flyover Project. The project is now scrapped after large scale disapproval expressed by citizens who hit the streets forming an 8000 people long human chain in October 2016 saying #SteelFlyoverBeda (NO Steel Flyover)
2. The National Green Tribunal ruling of May 2016 that lay stringent stipulations for Buffer Zones to protect lakebeds and waterbodies ordering removal of all encroachments falling within the specified buffer zones. The State Government tried to appeal and failed and was forced to ensure clearing all violations of lake buffer zones. This NGT judgment was indeed a big achievement for Bengaluru.
3. The High Court notices sent to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and Government of Karnataka, after my petition seeking a Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) Audit into finances of the BBMP which were lying

unaudited for 5 years. The BBMP is the principal authority in Bengaluru tasked with the responsibility of creating and maintaining public amenities for the City through taxes and Government grants.

As an MP from Bengaluru, I have been a vociferous advocate of planned, intelligent solutions for the varied problems a fast-growing metropolis like this city faces. There is a strong need for the devolution of power to evolve governance reforms based on citizen-centric decision making. I have been vocal about the need for greater transparency and accountability in governance institutions and public authorities alike.

In recent months, the strong opposition sparked for the Steel Flyover project is the evidence of the fact that Bengalureans are willing to assert their right to have a say in the development of their city. Our people, our city and state deserve better than what we are seeing today. They deserve a Government and institutions that work in partnership with citizens, rather than the current situation of conflicts between residents and Government.

I am passionately committed to Bengaluru and proud to serve the City. I believe my City is worth protecting and fighting for.



BIG BENGALURU  
FIGHT

Speeches



# 1

## Address on Model Corporation Council and Governance of Bengaluru

Rotract, Bengaluru

1st March, 2009

Good morning and thank you for inviting me to speak here this morning at this Rotract function.

I understand the focus of today's event is a discussion on a Model corporation council and governance of Bangalore. I welcome this. Our city is a critical juncture at its history today. We are poised at an inflection point, a crossroad in our development, where we need to make a few right decisions as we progress – else we will fall into further chaos, anarchy and corruption - signs of which are already becoming obvious to all of us – who have lived and observed the evolution of our city over the last few decades.

There are many in our country who celebrate our democracy and take pride in it. I am one of those, but I am also one of those who think our democracy needs further checks and balances for the

basic promise of democracy to be delivered, i.e Politics to be public service and government to be of the people, for the people and by the people. Unfortunately over last several decades, a ruling political elite has usurped politics and consequently governance as was envisaged by our constitutional founding fathers has long since being diluted – replaced by a form of governance whose focus is no longer the citizen. Yes citizens are on the radar – once every 5 years during elections . Democracy isnt functional unless there is more accountability and transparency around the functioning of Governments. The current Economic and Security crisis that we find ourselves as a nation, is because we haven't been asking the right questions of our government and holding them to account as we should have been doing in the past and should be doing even more going forward.

Bangalore has grown rapidly over the last decade – a growth that's had very little integrated planning to shepherd and direct it in specific geographical and strategic directions. When there were plans – these plans were developed as narrow departmental plans with no integration between functional areas or geographical jurisdiction. We are struggling today with the consequences of this, be it traffic and transportation, or law/order or the struggle by the Urban Poor. At the heart of all this seems to be a governance model that's unresponsive or citizen focused and at the worst case characterized as leaky and pandering to some interests or the other.

As Convener of Abide, when we set out on our objectives of rebuilding Bangalore a few months ago, it became obvious that there was no lack of plan documents. There were many and many crore rupees of taxpayer money had been spent on it by various departments and ministries within our government over the last several years. But not one of them is a comprehensive Plan for our city.

So the first task we set ourselves is to work on a PlanBengaluru2020. This is a plan that lays out what the city will be like and how it will grow over the next decade. What that growth will cause as demands and needs and the various elements of that. We narrowed it down Transportation (Includes Roads, Traffic Management), Urban Poor, Water and Sanitation, Health, Education, Security, Heritage and Environment and Governance.

One of the other things that became clear to me when we set out to do this is that there was considerable private and citizen interest to participate in visioning and rebuilding this city. But what was clear was the requirements of the knowledge and specialization for the urban planning of a city of 8 million plus people and growing rapidly – was not a job for amateurs as well intentioned as they were. This required specialized skills and knowledge and experience.

So we reached out to Cities like New York and London – similar in size to ours and more importantly with tremendous capacities and capabilities in the planning, delivery of services and citizen centric governance areas. The first delegation from Abide has just returned from its trip to London – we have chosen to privately fund these trips and not use Government financial support or involvement.

The starting point of PlanBengaluru2020 is our population growth estimations. The population growth of the City will take us to more than 1 crore in the Core Bangalore city and 1.6-1.7 crores in the Metropolitan Region. The current growth patterns of city growing inside towards the outsides organically is unsustainable and doesn't lend itself to planning. The architecture therefore that we have proposed is one where there is a core city of 80 lakhs or so and multiple new Cities in the BMR Region that would provide living and working space for another 60 to 80 Lakh people. This 'supply will precede demand' model of building infrastructure and connectivity - will direct growth in a particular geographical

direction. Townships are expected to grow around existing high infrastructure corridors of Bidadi in South and Devanahalli in North and others that are being planned by BMRDA all connected by High capacity junction free Corridors to each other and to Bengaluru.

The PlanBengaluru2020 is underway with four elements in transportation, Urban Poor, Security and Governance already completed and being made available to the Public for their views. Since these were released, we have had over 15000 responses from citizens and I would encourage those of you who haven't looked at them to go through them. They are available on [abidebengaluru.com](http://abidebengaluru.com) and [bengaluruvedike.org](http://bengaluruvedike.org) websites

I am confident that we will implement these plans. We have had the budgets and financial allocations completely aligned to these plans and are currently finalizing the 6,12,18 and 24 month milestones for all of the projects that make up each of the baskets. It's not going to be easy to change the thinking and momentum of current ingrained culture within the agencies and departments involved in Bangalore. But we are ensuring that apart from our own determination, we are backed by the Political leadership and the people of Bangalore through a process of public disclosure and soon a website, [namma-bengaluru.in](http://namma-bengaluru.in), newsletter and annual awards for best city projects and teams – starting with one in May 2009, called the Abide Namma Bengaluru Awards 2009.

But there is a question about the sustainability of our efforts – i.e. what happens after this government – what can we do to ensure that this kind of a citizen effort at directing government continues permanently? The answer to that is simple – we need a new sustainable governance model backed by legislation that institutionalizes a new model of citizen centric governance.

Let me talk a bit more about Governance – It is obvious today the current model of centralized delivery of infrastructure and

services is a model that's clear outgrown the city. The governance model of our corporation and the various agencies, with multiple geographical and executive jurisdiction will fall far below the expectations we have for ourselves as a modern city that should grow inclusively, all of its citizens having a reasonable chance at a dignified life for themselves and their families and with a government that facilitates that instead of coming in the way of that. While we celebrate democracy – there is very little difference in administration and governance of the city with an elected council or without it. That should get the alarm bells ringing. If representative democracy is failing, then the problem clearly is the lack of accountability of the elected councilors, administrative and institutional architecture, capacities and focus and the general lack of transparency and information.

The current law Karnataka Municipalities Act – is the law under which all urban Local bodies exist and function. But given the size and growth of Bangalore and like other cities like Mumbai and Delhi, it is obvious we need a law and act that's Bangalore specific. This has been discussed frequently but the political leadership haven't really taken the initiative for this nor have citizens/media forced this debate. Whatever be the historical reasons, the time is clearly now for us to have such a law to address the infirmities in governance that I referred to earlier.

The Kumaraswamy Government set up the Kasturirangan committee and it submitted the Kasturirangan report for Bangalore Governance. The Kasturirangan report clearly is a big significant step forward and focuses on a number of big issues of Planning and restructuring of agencies. It is a high quality document that also stresses the need for a directly elected mayor as the political and executive head of our city. When Abide set about addressing a new governance model for our city, the Kasturirangan report was one of the inputs we used, in addition to the organization and

structure of Cities of London, New York etc and we fundamentally re-defined our task as Citizen Centric Governance and not just governance and split it into two broad areas – one of political leadership model and the other the administrative and institutional – so that even if there's one failure the other still functions. This kind of redundancy in India is critical because so often democracy and democratic representatives fail and their failure take the institutions and administrative agencies with them. You just need to read the papers and see how many administrative officers and staff are being caught in corruption cases to realize this.

As a result, we have a draft legislation out – which we refer to as Bengaluru Region Governance Act, 2009. This is available on the abidebengaluru website. This is a skeleton and structural document – that addresses political leadership, it addresses devolution of budgets, democracy and administration to ward levels to serve maximum of 50,000 citizens. Wards will have democratic units through Ward Committees and will also have administrative units in form of Ward Offices headed by a Engineer-in-Charge. The act further defines Neighbourhood Areas and Neighbourhood area committees that will have the right to decide the local development issues like Parks, Schools with a specific set of Veto rights like Pubs and bars in residential areas etc. It makes the land bank management by Government a statutory requirement and makes transparency of land use, contracts, contract performance etc statutory.

The Urban planning experts who have seen it have lauded it as far reaching and meeting the definition of citizen-centric completely. But I need more of civil society to read it, understand it and more importantly under the implications it will have on his life, his community and our city. Abide plans to start the next step of political and bureaucratic acceptance of this law in coming weeks and its success will depend largely on public support for it.

A few days ago, I replied to Pranab Mukerjee's budget in Parliament. I said there was a moral in the current Security and Economic crisis that we are suddenly facing as a nation and people. It's a year that has revealed that we had started believing too much of our own marketing hype – that the Indian growth formula was sustainable and continuous. That has proved to be delusional. It has laid bare the fact that exuberant and profligate public spending alone isn't a solution; there are many more structural changes and reforms in Governance including focusing of outcomes of spending that are required before a sustainable growth model can be reached. That same moral is applicable to Bangalore as well. Its not only about money and projects – its also about governance and structural reforms.

When Barack Obama campaigned in the recent American Elections, he did so successfully on the back of a simple promise of 'Yes we can! In a lot of ways that phrase can resonate here in Bangalore and indeed in India as well. But for that, all of us need to join this battle to effect the change we want! It will be tough and maybe a long road but we can!

I thank you for having me here this morning and wish you all the very best in all your endeavors!

Thank you. Jai Hind.

## 2

# Address at Namma Bengaluru Awards 2009

NBF, Bengaluru

13th October, 2009

Justice Rama Jois, Hon'ble MP, Justice Santosh Hegde, Hon'ble Lokayukta, my fellow Jury members of the Namma Bengaluru Awards 2009, Friends from the Media , Ladies and Gentlemen

Thank you for being here today at the formal launch of the Namma Bengaluru Awards 2009 process. The 2009 awards will be the first of an annual process of recognizing and rewarding the people from different walks of life in our city – who are contributing to make this city a better city for all those who live here.

We have a detailed presentation for all of you about these awards – About what this means and how is it relevant to all of us as citizens of this great city!

But before that, I would like to establish the context and background in which, the idea of these awards was born.

As has been discussed innumerable times, we are all very dissatisfied with the way our city has developed over the last many years – and evolved into a full blown urban chaos with an increasing challenging urban environment for all, made even more severe and challenging for the less fortunate sections of our city and society, the consequent loss and disappearance of our heritage and increasingly fragile environment eco system with thinning green cover and depleting water table etc.!

When some of us took on the challenge of putting the cities development back on track and in a direction that all of us would be happy with – it became clear that there were five components to that the solution

1. Blueprint for development that addressed all issues and all people.
2. A more responsive, transparent and citizen centric City government with a law that guaranteed that.
3. Finances and money for implementing
4. Creating the capacity in our public agencies and government to handle the execution of the plan
5. Finally ensuring that there was always a cadre of citizens – in public life, government service, amongst citizen and corporate that are motivated, driven and recognized to serve the city and its people – something that would also bring back the sense of community, belonging and citizenship in our city.

Over the last 8 months or so, we have managed to find solutions to the challenges of planning, reforming city legislation and government, financing and capacity creation – which leaves the last and most critical aspect of recognizing and rewarding the real doers of the city! And that brings to this program.

The Namma Bengaluru awards is intended to be a sustainable institutionalized platform that will every year recognize and reward excellent, commitment, integrity and citizenship in public and private life. While looking around us, it seems sometimes that these values have completely disappeared from our city. And so while it is true that there are many crooked and callous people in public life, citizenry and business, there are also many others where values of public service, integrity, citizenship are alive and well - in thousands of citizens and public officials.

The Namma Bengaluru Awards will be our way of saying a Thank you to all of these 'real stars' of our city. I expect that these Awards will foster Civic pride and community ownership and promote a culture of excellence and strengthen the partnership between citizens and Civic agencies/NGOs/RWAS/Corporates etc . Such a partnership between citizens and all other participants in our city is key to a sustainable and strong future for our city.

I believe it's time for all of us to work together to bring back the sense of belonging in our city and so it would very appropriate for us to recognize those in the various Government, Civic agencies, NGOs, RWAs, Corporates that have been working to keep the spirit of Bengaluru alive despite these growth challenges. To ensure that this is done every year sustainably, a non-profit trust has been formed called the Namma Bengaluru Foundation that will have a corpus to fund the communication and organizational costs of this program every year.

Media must play an important role in this – in starting to move the spotlight to the real doers of this city- For too long the debate and focus in the city has been predominantly on the media savvy , smooth talking, hyperbole ridden, publicity hungry stars of the city – this is doing an injustice to the many thousands who silently toil away – driven only by a commitment to the city and its people – It is time for them to be in the spotlight – as a start at least once

a year through these awards and hopefully over time, the spotlight of these examples of city service and citizenship will encourage more and more people to do the right thing by the city.

The process will be simple, the people of Bengaluru nominate the candidates and the Namma Bengaluru Awards Jury will decide – The jury as you will see has been selected from amongst the committed and passionate citizens of this city – all of whom have a track record of service and excellence! I thank them all for agreeing to be part of the jury and giving us their time. The process of selection will be a transparent process overseen by a reputed Audit firm and will awards will be distributed in a cultural and Entertainment evening of celebration in mid-December.

Bengaluru will be the first city in the country to have such awards – Bengaluru has always been a pioneer in many ways and I am sure with all your support and involvement that we will be setting the standard for citizenship and excellence in public service in coming years! I look forward to you and the entire city getting involved in these awards and making these awards a significant annual event in the process of building the city of our dreams! I look forward to the media especially, to communicate this to your readers and viewers far and wide.

Thank you,

Jai Hind Jai Karnataka

# 3

## Address at Namma Bengaluru Award 2010

NBF, Bengaluru

29th February, 2010

Justice Santosh Hegde, Our most respected Hon'ble Lokayukta, my fellow Jury members of the Namma Bengaluru Awards 2010, Friends from the Media, Ladies and Gentlemen

Firstly, thank you for being here today for the launch of the Namma Bengaluru Awards, 2010. The annual Namma Bengaluru Awards was launched last year, to recognize and honour institutions and individuals from different walks of life in our city – the real heroes who are contributing to make this city a better city for all those who live here. The first edition of the Awards was held in March this year and received tremendous response from the people of Bengaluru and 14 citizens and institutions were recognized and applauded for their extra ordinary contribution to city.

For those who are not completely familiar with the context and background of these awards, let me briefly summarise the background to these awards.

This unprecedented growth of Bengaluru has led to loss of culture, heritage and sense of belonging in our proud city. We are witnessing how in the name of development our communities are being destroyed, our neighbourhoods transformed, unprecedented growth of corruption and decline and crippling of institutions of governance.

Amidst these challenges, the city is blessed to have several men, women and institutions who despite many challenges and several odds are motivated, working hard and driven to serve the city. The Namma Bengaluru Awards will recognize and reward such committed and hard working individuals and institutions who keep the spirit of Bengaluru alive.

The Namma Bengaluru Awards is indeed a unique opportunity for people of Bengaluru to nominate their heroes who have made a difference to the city or their neighbourhood with their contribution. The distinctive feature of these Awards is, it gives an opportunity for every Bengalorean to nominate their heroes and participate in the awards process.

It is easy today to be pessimistic about the future of our city and country. As we see so many cases of our elected representatives and people in power in action. Instead of serving and improving our lives – there are too many cases of exploitation of the city, enriching and serving themselves!.

As someone recently asked me, if some people in power are exploiting and destroying the city, then who will look after it? The answer is simple – you and me and all of us who value and cherish and serve our city! We must work with, encourage and support those in Power or outside, who care about our city and protect our city.!

Yes, it's easy to be pessimistic, but the Namma Bengaluru Awards will make us more optimistic about the intrinsic soul and spirit of our city – represented by the many thousands of nominees and their acts of kindness and service to fellow residents of their neighbourhoods and the city. The Namma Bengaluru Awards are a way for all of us to nominate our heroes – Students to nominate their teachers and Professors, Patients their Doctors and Nurses, Neighbourhoods their RWAs, their BBMP, BWSSB, BDA officials, residents their local Police personnel, Firefighters, Commuters their BMTC staff, auto drivers, Taxi drivers and the NGOs, citizens who in their individual capacities serve people around them or simply someone who is inspirational through their action and service to the city.

Namma Bengaluru Awards is an opportunity for all of us to express our gratitude and honour the services of the individuals and institutions working selflessly and dedicated to make a positive contribution to our city without seeking recognition or returns, So nominating a person is in itself a gesture of gratitude and thanksgiving , and therefore, I urge the citizens of Bengaluru to participate in the awards and nominate their heroes and say “thank you” to all those real stars of the city

Taking note of the over-whelming public participation and support we received last year and feedback about expanding the awards to include more people and institutions contributing to our city, the Namma Bengaluru Foundation and the Jury Members of Namma Bengaluru Awards, 2010 have decided to add three four new Awards this year. The new categories of awards are for Elected Representatives, Entrepreneur, Sports-person and Namma Bengalurean of the Year.

Media has an important role in this– in starting to move the spotlight to the real doers of this city- For too long the debate and focus in the city has been predominantly on the media savvy, smooth

talking, hyperbole ridden, publicity hungry stars and politicians of the city – this is doing an injustice to the many thousands who silently toil away – driven only by a commitment to the city and its people – Its time the some of spotlight was on them – as a start at least once a year through these awards and hopefully over time, the spotlight of these examples of city service and citizenship will encourage more and more people to do the right thing by the city.

Namma Bengaluru Foundation is privileged to have a jury for this year, that personifies service and commitment to our city. We are grateful for their support and look forward to their guidance in picking the real stars of the city.

As you may be aware, Bengaluru was the first and the only city in the country to have such awards – Bengaluru has always been a pioneer in many ways and I am sure with all your support and involvement that we will be setting the standard for citizenship and excellence in public service in coming years!

I look forward to you and the entire city getting involved in these awards and making these awards a significant annual event in the process of building the city of our dreams! I look forward to the media especially, to communicate this to your readers and viewers far and wide.

Thank you, Jai Hind Jai Karnataka

## 4

# Zero Hour Mention in Parliament to Protect Sericulture Farmers of Karnataka and Rest of the Country.

Rajya Sabha

19th December, 2011

Sir,

My home State of Karnataka accounts for 50% of the country's total raw mulberry silk. About 8.15 lakh farmers in the State are dependent on sericulture, producing 8000 metric tonnes of raw silk and 5500 metric tonnes of cocoons every year. This is a major agro-based activity providing gainful employment to poor families with a very short gestation period, but having the potential to generate adequate returns from a very small piece of land.

However, the once thriving silk industry in Karnataka and other parts of the country is in the throes of the biggest crisis in recent years as prices of raw silk have been falling consistently. The

situation has worsened after the Union Government, in its Budget proposals for 2011-12, reduced the import duty on raw Silk from 30% to a meager 5%, without consulting any of the silk-producing States.

The livelihood of lakhs of handloom and power loom weavers across the country, many of whom are daily wagers, has been adversely affected due to this decision. This reduction in import duty has also prompted China to resort to large-scale dumping of Chinese silk into our country – which will virtually kill our sericulture sector and have a detrimental effect on the small and marginal sericulture farmers.

Therefore, as a part of its Budget exercise for the next fiscal, I urge the Government to protect the sericulture farmers of the country by immediately reversing the import duty on raw silk to the earlier 30% or higher. The Government should also announce a minimum support price for silk and cocoons.

Thank you.

## 5

# “Solutions to the Impending Public Health Crisis through Good Governance in Solid Waste Management”

Conference on Solid Waste Management 13th January, 2013  
Bengaluru

Thammelirugu Namaskara...Good morning!

Bengaluru is the proud capital of this great state. It is a city with a tremendously rich history - in particular, a history of heritage and cultural diversity, good urban planning and governance, of people living in different neighbourhoods and areas, availing public services and safety.

At another level, Bengaluru, as we all know, has become a symbol of a new India and an important gateway for technology and other economic activities. And most importantly, for all of us who live and represent Karnataka, Bangalore is the economic engine of Karnataka.

But this great city is ailing today! And today's conference is yet another indication of the sad decline of our city. The reasons for this decline and a solution for this is what I want to lay out for your consideration. Due to lack of vision and planning, we have failed the city on several fronts and poor handling of the garbage issue is an example of how poor governance is crippling the delivery of basic public services.

Like many of you, I am a proud Bangalorean and a frustrated witness to this rapid decline of our city - a city which can, through ISRO, send rockets to moon, develop technologies for companies' worldwide, but we can't manage our waste and garbage.

#### Reasons

Today's discussion is on Garbage and waste management. A few months ago, it was traffic jams, law and order, soon there will be a crisis of water and so on. Why do I say this? I don't enjoy predicting this. But it's a natural conclusion from one basic reality that we must accept. No plan?

What is the reason for this fall of our great city? Our city has 198 cooperators, 28 MLAs, 3 Lok Sabha MPs, Rajya Sabha MPs like me, a district minister, department of Bangalore reporting to CM directly, bureaucrats of considerable experience and seniority, many NGOs and active citizenry - so why does our great garden city get headlines all over the country and the world as a garbage city?

There is no plan for Bangalore. Neither the political leadership nor the bureaucratic leadership has a comprehensive and well thought through plan for our city's future development and various issues relating to it. Many within government tend to deflect the blame of these crises on the rapid growth of Bangalore. This is nonsense. This is an alibi to deflect away from the failure of managing the city. To use a tragic metaphor - blaming Bangalore city's growth

for failing in delivering basic public services, is akin to blaming women's clothing for their lack of security.

So reason number one, is the fact that there is no plan. So there is no one accountable. We have failed the city on this. And by the way, it's not as if the government of the day was not aware of this. In 2008, it had said "Bengaluru has the potential to become the Number One city in India and an internationally prominent metropolis. To make this possible, we need to adopt a new urban planning model, upgrade our infrastructure, improve the social facilities and create a better environment for good quality of life. In other words, we must re-invent Bengaluru".

The government constituted ABIDe, of which Shri Ananth Kumar was the Vice Chairman and I had the privilege of being the Convener. ABIDe, working with several hundreds of citizens and experts, at a considerable cost, put together the Plan Bengaluru 2020 - an integrated vision on all issues related to Bengaluru with implementable solutions - that moved the focus from traffic only to all the other issues that affect the residents of our city.

Despite accepting the Report, the successive government failed to implement the recommendations. The chaos caused due to lack of leadership, vision and planning is there for everybody to see and worry.

So, why this reluctance to adopt a plan and a planned approach to development and investment? Every year during budget time, we all read about Rs.30,000 crore budget for Bangalore or some such headline grabbing number. While a politician/administration's desire to spend money and contracts is well known, the real focus on delivering public services more efficiently just doesn't rank as high in the scheme of things.

In the absence of a transparent and publicly known vision for the city's growth and development, most plans and projects

are arbitrary and almost always contractor/vendor-led. The expectation of good sustainable public services must replace big sounding 1000 crore projects in our political discourse, and only media and citizens can make that change happen.

Some agencies and NGOs are in the process of completing a study of ward-wise contracting by BBMP and other agencies over the last several years, and the statistics are shocking. Huge amounts of taxpayer money have been spent, but with no visible outcomes or in wasteful projects that don't address the specific issues that affect our daily lives.

In a nutshell, I repeat the reason is failure of city governance - and make no mistake about this, the waste management and potential public health crisis is a failure of city governance. This is not politics, but facts.

So what should be the way forward?

In the immediate short term, waste management must be seen as a public health emergency. Nothing less than that. A clean city isn't about beauty and aesthetics; it is about public health and being an economic engine. The BBMP commissioner and the mayor must work in tandem to tackle this in a zero tolerance approach. This is a time when contractors and vendors decide whether they want to be responsible stakeholders and partners to our mission of a sustainable and healthy city, or they wish to be the problem.

In parallel, the political leadership consisting of senior MPs like Shri Ananth Kumar, must ensure that the government adopts a multiyear development plan for our city that becomes statutory and all agencies work from that plan.

In addition, there is a need to reorganize and reform governance. BBMP and all other agencies that deliver public services should ensure that their planning and delivery is built bottom up from the ward and neighbourhood as the lowest component. BBMP must

designate teams for each ward/ neighbourhood area and contracts for garbage and all others in wards/ neighbourhood areas will be awarded with full transparency to the residents. Each resident group should work on developing segregation and collection strategies with local BBMP engineers.

The main reforms should focus on transparency and citizen involvement in various aspects of neighbourhood life. In every successful modern city, citizens have a very powerful voice in the destiny and direction of development around their homes and places of work. With proper planning and implementations, public confidence in administration and governance will naturally increase. The Bengaluru Metropolitan Region Governance Bill – that would have given the power to the people and an opportunity for people participation in the governance of the city – unfortunately still awaits the government's nod. It required a long drawn fight and the intervention of the Karnataka High Court to direct the government for formation of ward committees in all wards – a proposal that ABIDe had recommended in 2010. I hope the BBMP Commissioner will ensure a true neighbourhood level representation from different parts of the ward. The new ward committees will allow citizen oversight and partnership with BBMP and other agencies.

I have stayed away from saying anything specific about solutions for waste management, because there are far more experienced minds who will speak later. But I have tried to draw attention to the larger problem of lack of planning and governance.

The chickens have come home to roost. There are many long term implication at play here - health, sanitation of our residents, standards of living, discouraging investors, and therefore, economic activity etc.

The government, its city MLAs and city bureaucrats must realise they are letting down our city and our people. There is still an

opportunity to live up to the expectations of our proud city and hardworking, taxpaying residents. The political leadership and bureaucracy must realise that they cannot remain unquestioned while our city is destroyed, they will without doubt pay the consequences. Times are changing, and with the Supreme Court orders that give the citizen the right to seek prosecution of public officials and ministers, the power in our democracy is moving back into the hands of citizens. Those within politics and administration must decide if they wish to serve or exploit the people of our city.

The media and citizenry needs to play a bigger role in steering the debate to not just solving this crisis, but also steering the political leadership to an integrated long term vision of our city and discharging their responsibility to the city and its people.

I congratulate Namma Bengaluru Foundation and Adamyia Chethana for putting together eminent panellists on an important topic. I truly hope the seminar – participated by Shri Ananth Kumar, Senior MP of Bengaluru, political leaders, experts, dedicated individuals and voluntary organizations and the BBMP Commissioner – will be able to devise ideas and solutions and ideas that will enable us to rebuild a Bengaluru that we can all be proud of again.

I wish you all and your families on the occasion of Sankranti tomorrow.

Thammaliergu sankranti habbada hardhika abinandagulu.

Jai Hind,

Jai Karnataka

## 6

# Campaign to Reclaim the City from Mafias and Vested Interests

NBF & BRACE, Bengaluru

23rd February, 2014

Respected Gandhian Shri Doraiswamy, Prof. Siddalingiah, Mahalakshmi Parthasarathy, President - Bengaluru Residents Associations Confederation Ensemble (BRACE), N. S. Mukunda, Secretary, BRACE, Office bearers and members of the various Resident Welfare Associations, Ladies and gentlemen, proud citizens of Bengaluru.

A very Good Morning. It gives me great pleasure to be amongst you willing and proactive citizens who have come together to fight to restore our city to the glory it truly deserves.

Our city is a critical juncture at its history today. We are poised at an inflection point, a crossroad in our development, where we need to make a few right decisions as we progress – else we will fall into further chaos, anarchy and corruption - signs of which

are already becoming obvious to all of us – that have lived and observed the evolution of our city over the last few decades.

A group of politicians, bureaucrats and businessmen have in a sense taken over governance and policy making of the city. I won't say too much today. I have heard some extremely inspiring stories. But let us start by understanding one fundamental principal which I think all of you should understand. My most respected Siddalingiahji said "Cities exist for citizens". This is a fundamental truism, a fundamental truth that we must all believe. All modern cities, every modern city in the world, works on this basic, fundamental principle. City governments must, therefore, make it their mission to work for the aspirations of those who live in those cities. This is the fundamental rule that people are forgetting. You can have visions, plans, policies, but at the end of the day, if it doesn't make the citizens, the neighborhood, the community happy, then it is wrong. It cannot be done. For too long, that fundamental truth has been forgotten and we have sat silently by, and allowed people to forget this.

What is most important today, and I say this as a Member of Parliament who has spent many years trying to wake up the city, for the first five years, many people would come to me and give me a petition. This is our problem. They would give it to me and I would go to the then Chief Minister, New Chief Minister, Bangalore District Minister, BBMP Commissioner, to everybody, and invariably, because I have a hundred things on my table, this would become one more issue. But the most important problem was those who brought the petition to me never followed up. That is the fundamental change that is now happening - that the problems have to be solved by the residents. People like me can help you solve the problem. We can be partners in solving the problem. That is why when Siddalingiah-avare said, we cannot, we cannot forget the problem. We cannot say, you protest while

I sit and watch TV in the house. That will not work. We have to understand that our city is under threat. If we are going to get it back, all of us have to play a role. It is not an outsourcing model. It cannot be outsourced to three people of the dais or three RWAs. This has to be a partnership between RWAs, political leaders, intellectuals and the media. But the most important participant in this fight is the residents, the resident welfare associations, because it is their right that is being challenged by vested interests. We are all Power of Attorney holders on behalf of you. We can fight the battle for you provided you are in the battle with us. So that is the most important thing.

This battle can be done. I must tell you, these people are proof. Venkat Subbarao ji and Nitin, Ravindranath and Radhakrishnan tell you these stories. This is proof that we can prevail and these vested interests are not difficult to defeat. It is easy to defeat provided we are determined to fight them . I will not say too much more, except say that this is not a minor issue. If we want to reclaim our city, now is the election time, so people will say ‘this is my vision, that is my vision’. Many “visions” will emerge now. But we should say one thing - “Visions” are fine, but we need “one idea”. The basic idea is governments must be about citizens. And like it was rightly said, citizens must be participating, not lip service, not in a ward committee that hardly meets. He or she must be participating in the development plan of his or her neighborhood without any doubt. The Corporator, MLA, MP should be executing the vision of the resident. Not the opposite. We have to listen to visions not from Delhi, London, New York and Singapore. We want informed thinking from our residents that we translate into plans. Like I said, it is not devolution, but evolution. Plans must evolve from the residents to the government and not the other way round. This is the fundamental change that is happening today, what is being proved by RWAs is that we are forcing BBMP to come to the table and say, tell us your vision. Let us match our financial resources

and see. That is why the fundamental issue of saying we want more road capacity, we don't want road widening, we don't want underpasses, more road capacity on arterial roads means, we have to go elevated.

I feel most optimistic seeing this. I congratulate you. Today, I feel after 7 years in politics, that this is a battle that can be fought and won. I congratulate BRACE and NBF and for the inspiring presence of Doraiswamy–avare and Siddalingiah–avare, thank you for guiding this movement. I pledge to you, and will continue to do what I have been doing all along. I will stand by you like a rock. The proof that this is becoming uncomfortable for politicians is that now I am also being made a target. I find that very flattering. When people call me names in the assembly, that means I am getting the attention of some politicians. That for me is a medal - A medal of honor.

Thank you very much and thank you for having me here today.

## Beyond Carlton Memorial Service - Making City Government Agencies Accountable for Public Safety

Bengaluru

23rd February, 2014

Today, February 23rd, marks four years since the Carlton Towers fire tragedy - a tragedy that could have been avoided, which changed the lives of nine families forever and traumatized family and friends of over 60 who were injured in the tragedy. I want to pause and pay my homage to the families and friends of Savitha, Benzi Shanthakumar, Rajesh Subramaniam, Surabhi Joshi, Purohit Madan, Sunil Iyer, Fayaz Pasha, Akhil Uday and Siddharth Padam.

Let's start by asking ourselves if feel any more safe today than I did four years ago? Do you feel enough has been done to ensure that we never see such a tragedy again? Would most people even remember the devastation caused to the families involved in the tragedy? Such horrific events are often short-lived in public memory, and the only unfortunate wake-up call is yet another tragedy of loss and grief.

It rankles me, that inspite of the precedence of such mishaps, the system and the people part of it often slack back into complacency with time. Why is that status quo so acceptable and almost numbingly comforting?

In the backdrop of the hyper-growth of our city, the mushrooming of multitude of high rises, the geographical extension of the city across the peripheries - is there a supplemental developmental planning process? Is enough time & resources being spent thinking about the potential risks and threat that “growth” brings? And who is responsible for that thinking?

While I take pride in seeing my city grow to the 5th largest metropolis in the country - at the same time, I am appalled at the decline of our city in terms of standard of living, public services and growth of vested interests and corruption.

It's no rocket science to know and realize that it is essential to have public safety systems, anticipate and prepare for a wide range of potential threats and incidents - both man-made and natural. But unfortunately, despite repeated mishaps, our preparedness for disasters remains poor.

Let us all understand one thing first! Cities exist for its citizens, and all modern cities around the world work on that basic fundamental principle. City Governments, therefore, make it their mission to work for the aspirations of those that live in these cities - Living safely being one very simple straightforward aspiration.

There should be proactive planning to have the highest preparedness in the event of any mishap and ensure all safety mechanisms are in order. For this to work, our emergency and disaster response mechanism should be rooted deep with the public administrative functions of the city - and believe that it is no longer a 'feel good' / 'good-to-showcase' public-works department - but a necessity and completely non-negotiable!

A major part of our inability to provide timely fire services has to do with the way our Fire Services are even organized - Safety apparatus in many States, including our own, are often grappling with resource crunch, lack of investment in adequate technology/equipment and a generic lack of training for sensitizing these departments on how to manage, handle and respond to such crisis.

It's not that there is a paucity of funds - but it is the utilization and allocation of these funds which is a cause of concern. For example: The 13th Finance Commission Report for 2010-2015 recommend that grants be provided to urban local bodies which can be used to revamp fire services within their jurisdiction.

The main culprit behind this blatant ill-utilization of resources and the institutional collapse of governance is the absence of safety as a priority, and flowing from that is the complete lack of accountability and sensitization of the government agencies to the issue of citizen safety.

The problem does not end at mere legislation, in fact, it gets compounded by the ineffective implementation and enforcement mechanism. In 2011, my foundation, Namma Bengaluru Foundation, supported Beyond Carlton's PIL in the Karnataka High Court, and resulted in the BBMP forming guidelines for fire safety in high-rise buildings in Bangalore; with the government notifying it in July 2011. The BBMP, being the foremost municipal agency in the Bangalore Metropolitan area, is thus, duty bound to ensure that buildings remain safe.

But, are we safe now? In spite of these fire-safety guidelines being notified in 2011 - in three years, there has been little to no movement in constitutionalizing the process. Enforcement agencies lack teeth and drive to ensure and demand compliance. As is the case with any other rules in our country, NOCs (No Objection Certificates) are obtained through unscrupulous means

with fire safety guidelines continuing to be flouted. This arrogance of apathy is very disturbing - penalties exist but notionally, more and more buildings continue to violate norms, take advantage of the loopholes in our system and authorities continuing to pass the buck.

Post the Carlton Fire Tragedy, I suggested to the then Chief Minister, an urgent review of civil defence preparedness and equipment of our Fire and emergency services. Most of the State Fire Services do not have specialist fire fighting appliances like Turn-table Ladders/ Hydraulic Platforms, Crash Tenders/ Foam Tenders and Rescue Vehicles. Fire Services lack proper type of Rescue Equipments, High Pressure Pumps, Communication Facilities and other specialist type of fire fighting appliances/ equipment. A large number of State Fire Services do not even have adequate conventional fire fighting appliances like Water Tenders, Portable Pumps etc. These remain to be implemented.

On my part, I will continue to work to see all these legislations/ guidelines become non-negotiable and help us achieve what it set out to. I would encourage NGOs like Namma Bengaluru Foundation, to revisit these guidelines and seek stringent penalties, including penal provisions for officers who are involved, as a means to fix accountability. Citizens must persevere in its fight to highlight this massive corruption and institutional failure, misuse of public assets, and the deeply entrenched vested interest and nexus/ conduit of builders with municipal associations/ politicians and bureaucrats. It is imperative that all the people responsible for the systemic failure be brought under the scope of scrutiny.

Many of the most frequent safety violators of the city's high rises have deep-rooted political connections, and it is important that the BBMP ensures that they are held responsible and suitably blacklisted on proven indiscretion - violating norms after getting the initial NOC is a criminal offense under Fire Services Act, 1964.

But all these penalties will continue to remain a dead letter till the BBMP, BESCOM and other agencies get their act together.

On a different note, we must not forget to be thankful for what we have - and step back and applaud the honest policemen, pourakarmikas, or the firemen, who are in our midst today - there are still some good people who didn't fail us in spite of all system deficiencies that surround them. May I recall that the Namma Bengaluru Award for 2012 in the Government Official Category was given to Mr. Chengappa of the Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Services.

It's easy to blame and punch holes in the system - but there are many in Government like Chengappa who are still true to their sense of duty - a sense which helps them go beyond their call. We often take their services for granted. We need to ensure we are helping them to help us better - by investing in their training, skill upgradation and introduction of technology to increase their efficacy. The technical and administrative skills needed to maintain a high level of professionalism and capacity needs to be regularly identified, renewed and suitable training be provided to all personnel in various services agencies.

I will end by saying this - People will continue to be casualties of government negligence till we find effective ways to fix accountability and ensure transparency.

And it starts with all of us as citizens getting determined to make our governments to be responsive to the issues that are important to us, including safety. For my part, I am there to lend my support to any idea and initiative and ensure that NBF will be there to support you. This is our city and we need to ensure we are all doing our bit. Let's not wait for someone else to come and fix our problems - let's take charge of what we can and ensure we keep up that pressure till we are safe. In every way! After all, it is Our city, Our Voice and Our Future.

I congratulate all the four winners Nagaraju, Anil Kumar, Ramaiah and Ramabadraiah, and thank them for their services to our city. I commend Uday Vijayan and others behind the Beyond Carlton for taking the initiative to spread awareness about fire safety among citizens including children, and for instituting the bravery award for Firemen who routinely risk their lives to save others.

I end by urging you to get involved in reclaiming our city! Let us not wait for someone else to take up the cause of our security - let's awaken the crusader inside us and collectively work towards it.

Jai Hind,

Jai Karnataka.

## Short Duration Discussion In Parliament On Prevailing Drought And Heat Wave Conditions And Resultant Water Crisis In The Country

Rajya Sabha, New Delhi

27th April, 2016

Sir,

Thank you for permitting me to speak on this grave humanitarian crisis that is affecting over 33 crore Indians in over 13 states - almost one quarter of our population.

Sir, I have been in Parliament for 10 years now and I have heard almost every year a session to discuss the drought conditions and the serious suffering of our farmers and rural communities around our country. With great respect, I say this - I have heard many similar speeches being made every year on droughts, and it is not surprising that again this year, we are making points that have been made many, many times over the last several years. I say this with all seriousness – that it seems to me that we are all

being mute spectators to this annual spectacle, an annual tragedy that is playing out every year. We believe we have three seasons – summer, monsoon and winter. But most of India sees this as summer, drought, monsoon and winter.

There is an interesting book that I was going through, during my research on this issue, titled “Everybody loves a good drought”. I say this as someone who is not an expert on the subject, but I believe it is my responsibility to speak - We must move beyond the rhetoric and politics of drought to governance of solutions. It is in that context that I make the following two points:

1. We must address the current crisis proactively and completely.
2. We must develop a long term strategy and medium term strategy to this issue of water to ensure that at some point, we do not remain mute spectators to this suffering year on year.

Sir, I come from Karnataka, and I would like to draw the attention of the House to the crisis unfolding in my State. Districts of North Karnataka - Kalaburagi, Yadgir, Bidar, Raichur, Vijayapura, Bagalkot and Uttara Kannada among others are reeling under harsh drought conditions.

In Uttara Kannada alone, 197 villages are facing water scarcity; staples including the major crop paddy, have been damaged due to scarcity of water. More importantly, people are selling away their cattle and property at throwaway prices and are migrating. Farmers are leaving homes for long periods and not returning, even at the risk of losing their farmlands. These have very medium term cascading effects on the overall economy of the region.

Sir, the drought and water situation in Karnataka has only worsened in the last 8 weeks after the Central team’s survey, and I would make a request to the Government to consider immediate special financial assistance for providing water and fodder to the drought hit districts, not only in my State, but in all the 13 affected States.

I would like to briefly touch upon this issue of a medium to long term strategy. I think the Government must address this and we must create a National Water Management Strategy. A comprehensive strategy for improved management of drought in India should be our priority. While train loads of water could bring immediate relief - better investment in rural infrastructure, a Central Water Management policy, focus on climate change and extensive use of technology, is urgently required. With satellite image and other technology tools, we can predict droughts and plan for this in advance. Innovative water conservation methods such as those adopted in Israel like desalination of sea water for coastal areas should also be studied and implemented to meet such crisis in future.

I will end by saying this – I would urge the Centre to look upon the current crisis as a National Calamity and create a special task force to initiate urgent and viable steps which can be enforced in collaboration with State Governments to support an anguished one-fourth of India that looks to the rest us in their time of utmost need.

Thank you.

Jai Hind

Jai Karnataka

BIG BENGALURU  
FIGHT

Letters



# 1

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Fire Accident at Carlton Towers

25th February, 2010

Dear Yeddyurappaji,

This is with reference to the recent fire accident at the Carlton Towers building in Bangalore on 23 February, 2010.

### 1. Safety Audit of Buildings

I am glad that the Government has initiated a safety audit of all multi-storey buildings in Bangalore in a comprehensive manner. I recommend that the report of this audit be made available to the public, so that citizens are aware of unsafe buildings etc.

## 2. Review of Emergency Services Infrastructure and Preparedness

I further recommend an urgent review of civil defence preparedness and equipment for the Fire and Emergency services. This will address some of the concerns that our Emergency forces are not adequately equipped.

## 3. Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedure for Crowds by Police

In addition, one of the observations from the incident was that that hundreds of people were gathered around the building hindering the free movement of fire brigade vehicles and fire personnel. Clearly, there was a breakdown of crowd management during this incident, which caused delays in the fire and ambulance services reaching etc. This kind of crowd gathering also poses a danger in the event of other emergencies like terror attacks. It presents additional opportunities for chaos for terrorists to create collateral damage and use the crowds and confusion to slip away, thereby representing further challenges and threats to the anti-terror operations itself for management of crowds.

Further to the Mumbai terror attacks, I had written to the Hon'ble Home Minister with some suggestions for managing crowds in scenes of action (copy attached).

It is therefore important that in case of emergencies, the local police has clear operating procedures and guidelines that create a No-crowd zone around the incident site. These specific guidelines for crowd management need to be put in place by the police where local citizens are evacuated and prohibited from entering the no-crowd zone around the scene of the incident.

I urge you to issue necessary directions at the earliest.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri B. S. Yeddyurappa

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka

Bengaluru

## 2

# Letter to the Urban Development Minister on Plan Bengaluru 2020

8th March, 2011

Shri Kamal Nathji,

This is with reference to your proposed plan to restructure JNNURM and refocus on revitalizing existing urban centers and creation of new urban centres in the country.

You will agree that it is indeed sad that even after 60 years of independence, India still does not boast of a world class city. You will further agree that our race to be a globally competitive destination for investments having modern, sustainable cities, is vital.

As I have explained, the strategy of JNNURM thus far has been to fund various disparate urban infrastructure projects without

tying them all to a comprehensive, coherent and multi-year city development blueprint - as almost all other cities in Asia and the world have done.

I am enclosing herewith a document – Plan Bengaluru 2020 - developed by us for the city of Bangalore, and I have shared the same with Shri Arun Maira, Member – Planning Commission, as well. I hope you will set a new direction to building modern, sustainable cities.

I am available to you and the Ministry for any clarifications or assistance, if required, in this regard.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Kamal Nath

Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development

Government of India

New Delhi

# 3

## Letter to the Minister of Road Transport & Highways on Jakkur Flying School

15th June, 2011

Dear Shree Joshi,

Karnataka's only flying school in Bangalore – Government Flying Training School (GFTS at Jakkur – (an institution conceived in 1948 by Shri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar, the 25th and the last Maharaja of the princely state of Mysore, and one which gave the country its first woman pilot) - is facing risk of closure as the Directorate of Air Safety, Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has established that Jakkur airport is unsafe for flying fixed wing aircraft due to the ongoing construction of the elevated road on the national highway.

The DGCA recommendation will directly affect the GFTS activities and also that of other light aircraft operators who operate from the aerodrome. In the past, representations have been made to NHAI requesting for elevated highway to be brought down to the existing highway level across the runway alignment by 50 metres on either side. This will ensure flight safety at the Jakkur aerodrome, continued availability of fixed wing operations and provide for higher safety margins for operations by the trainee pilots to avoid incidents / accidents.

Any move to cut down the Jakkur aerodrome for fixed wing operations will limit operations at the aerodrome and adversely affect the future development of Karnataka youth in the aviation sector - who are currently undergoing training in the school.

Therefore, in the interest of flight safety and development of youth from Karnataka in the aviation sector, I urge your intervention in this matter and request you to pass the necessary instructions for freezing of all construction work on the elevated highway till such time experts, including from the DGCA, examine the matter in detail and submit their recommendations.

I look forward to your urgent intervention on this issue.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr. CP Joshi,

Hon'ble Minister of Road Transport & Highways,

Transport Bhavan,

1, Parliament Street,

New Delhi – 110001.

Copy to:

Shri Vayalar Ravi,  
Minister of Civil Aviation,

Shri B S Yeddyurappa,  
Chief Minister of Karnataka.

## 4

# Letter to the BBMP Commissioner on Voters List of Graduates Constituency

18th October, 2011

Dear Shri Siddaiah,

As you are aware, registrations of voters to the Karnataka Legislative Council's Graduates Constituencies (including, this time, the Bangalore Graduate s Constituency) is now open.

Considering that only 6% of eligible voters (60,000 out of 10 La kh) were registered when this election was last held in 2006, this time the enrolment of voters must be much stronger.

After studying the process,I have understood that the big “bottleneck” is the ‘attestation’ of original documents by officials. As there are nearly 15 Lakh college graduates in the Bangalore region, the attestat ion cannot be carried out by “non-dedicated’

staff, if we want to achieve a much higher enrolment this time. Therefore, I request you to appoint sufficient and 'dedicated' staff to attest the applicants' documents in each ward of BBMP. Please send me a list of such officials at the earliest, so that this can be widely published by BBMP itself and by voters' groups also.

Very truly yours,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaiah, IAS Commissioner, BBMP,  
Bengaluru.

5

## Letter to the Urban Development Minister on Annual JNNURM Ranking of Cities

13th December, 2011

Dear Shri Kamal Nathji

Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), which has now completed six years, was launched with the much laudable objectives of reforms driven and fast track development of cities across the country, with focus on bringing about efficiency in urban infrastructure, service delivery mechanisms, community participation and accountability of Urban Local Bodies (ULDs) and Parastatal agencies towards citizens.

However, it is not at all clear how far we have progressed towards these objectives, and the perception is that JNNURM has become just another taxpayer funded programme with little or no focus on

the outcomes or objectives.

To address this gap between the objectives and outcomes, I urge the Government to institute a procedure for Annual JNNURM Ranking of the cities that have been covered under the Urban Infrastructure & Governance (UIG) component, against the metrics outlined in the stated objectives of JNNURM.

Such a review will put a spotlight on the real outcomes of the programme and help the Government to focus on coherent and integrated development of each of the 65 cities that JNNURM supports. This will also create a real competition amongst our cities around the reforms / development objectives of JNNURM.

I would also be available to meet you and discuss this further, if you so desire.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Kamal Nath,

Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development,

Government of India,

New Delhi,

## 6

# Letter to the Chief Minister on Essential Principles for Bangalore Infrastructure Projects

9th February, 2012

Dear Shri Sadananda Gowda Avare,

As discussed in my earlier meetings with you, I have been receiving representations from many Resident Welfare Associations all over the city complaining how neighbourhoods are being destroyed in the name of development thrust on them by some vested interests. You will agree that this model of development - where local residents are neither consulted nor their consent is taken - is not consistent with a Government that believes in public service.

As you further aware, the Karnataka High Court recently stayed all commercial activities in residential areas vide a PIL filed by Citizens' Action Forum (CAF).

Bengaluru has a long history of very livable residential areas, but the renowned feel of a comfortable and attractive city is now at risk. We can only hope to restore this by promoting community engagement on key issues and challenges, and developing the city based on the priorities expressed by its residents. There are many advantages to building and nurturing this sense of community — a feeling of belonging, management of complex problems, and the resulting sense of safety and security while pursuing a multitude of dreams. Citizens are frustrated because they cannot take part in decisions concerning their neighbourhoods and areas in their vicinity.

With a focus on transparency and citizen involvement in various aspects of neighbourhood life, in every successful modern city, citizens have a very powerful voice in the destiny and direction of development around their homes and places of work. For Bengaluru too, we must want the same.

I request you for the following actions:

1. ABIDe under the Chairmanship of the Chief Minister submitted PlanBengaluru2020, a comprehensive blueprint for the overall development of the city in January 2009. I request you to implement the same. This will set the city back on the correct path of sustainable model of development.
2. A note on *Essential Principles for Bangalore Infrastructure Projects by Government Agencies* is attached for your reference. In order to protect the interests of residents and to ensure a sustainable model of development in Bangalore, I would request you to direct all government agencies / departments to follow these principles henceforth.

I am confident that such a move will increase people's confidence and to support for the various development projects of your government.

I look forward to your urgent action on this matter.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri D V Sadananda Gowda,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore.

**ABIDe Task Force for better Bengaluru  
Essential Principals for Bangalore Infrastructure Projects by  
Government Agencies**

- 1. No Project should not start without consent / permission from resident welfare association of that neighborhood**
  - a) Infrastructure projects must not destroy neighborhoods — Bangalore is a city of Neighborhoods — Investors / Visitors / Residents need good neighborhoods
  - b) IMPLEMENT PROJECTS only after consulting RWA's / Residents
  - c) The capacity of Arterial roads must be increased by building elevated roads. And, if required, the same approach of elevated roads must be used to add to the capacity of arterial roads. d)DO NOT ignore Citizens Concerns

## 2. Transportation Infrastructure Projects

- a) Objective should be to expand / increase the capacity and throughput and also have a long term plan of Transportation along with the other city growth priorities
- b) Underpasses are NOT THE ANSWERS as they DO NOT increase capacity
  - i. They divide existing at grade capacity, Disturbs / Destroys residential areas and create chaos for local traffic movement. Local traffic is as important as thru traffic.
  - ii. On Arterial Roads, by creating underpasses, we are splitting the existing at grade capacity;
  - iii. They are driven more by Contractors/ Engineers, vested real estate interests and not by town planners
  - iv. Bangalore and citizens are playing the price for poor planning as demonstrated in cases of Kadirenahalli and Tagore Underpass — which are pending more than 40 months
- c) Answer is **Elevated Roads**
  - I. Elevated Road on Hosur Road, Bellary Road, Tumkur Road and Flyover at Mysore Road are examples of successful creation of elevated road capacity
  - II. On Arterial Roads, by creating underpasses, we are splitting the existing at grade capacity; instead agencies must focus on building New Capacity through elevated roads.

d) Underpasses and flyovers work on locations where junction is a bottleneck such as ORR. Where the traffic exceeds the capacity of the roads, underpasses and flyovers provide only temporary relief. However, along with underpasses and flyovers, we need to enhance the capacity which can be done in following 2 ways.

1. By widening the existing roads
2. By creating the elevated roads

However, given that the most arterial roads have no widening possible without destroying existing buildings and environment. Elevated roads is a viable and preferred option.

Keeping in mind of the future expansion of Metro and other mode of Public Transport and infrastructure projects we propose the following elevated roads on highly congested arterial roads.

Along with elevated roads, we also recommend BRTS to be deployed on feasible arterial and circular roads starting with ORR as already proposed between Central Silk Board to Hebbal

BRTS can also be implemented on these elevated corridors at grade level.

- e) Priority should be given to maintenance of existing roads along with new projects.
- f) Elevated roads required at following routes

| SI No | From                  | To                             | Distance (KM) |
|-------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|---------------|
| 1     | Domlur Bridge         | Varthur Kodi                   | 10 KM         |
| 2     | St. Patrick Cemetery  | Central Silk Board             | 4.4 KM        |
| 3     | Nayandahalli Junction | Central Silk Board             | 13.6 KM       |
| 4     | Mysore Road Circle    | University Junction            | 6 KM          |
| 5     | NK Junction           | Agara Lake Junction            | 3.0 KM        |
| 6     | Ejipura               | Hosur Road (Madiwala Junction) | 3.0 KM        |
|       |                       | Total(Approximate)             | 40 KMS        |

g) Lack of finances is the reason has given not to implement the elevated roads. This is wrong and the same can be easily financed and suitable financing company can be engaged for the same.

**For Example —**

1. All these new roads must be managed by BBMP as the roads can be tolled at a later stage
2. Total recommended four track elevated road - 40 KM
3. Keeping Rs. 45 Crores as approximate cost to construct four track elevated road per kilometer, we would require Rs. 1850.00 Crores.
4. Financing of this can be through 30 years PPP concession with Government Annuity Payments

5. Government Annuity could be about Rs 150— 200 Crores / Year
6. This outflow can be reduced by Toll Collection by BBMP in future

## Letter to the Governor of Karnataka on KGF Nuclear Waste Dumping

24th November, 2012

Excellency

I write this to draw your attention to the shocking proposal by Union Atomic Energy Minister and the Nuclear Power Corporation (NPC) to develop deep-level waste repository at the Kolar Gold Fields (KGF) and convert it into a permanent storage facility for its radioactive waste produced by the Kudankulam power plant. If true, this decision to turn KGF into a dumping yard for radioactive nuclear waste is irresponsible, dangerous and must be immediately withdrawn.

Given its proximity to Kolar, a nuclear site at KGF, will make Bangalore and its 8 million citizens vulnerable to grave dangers of

a nuclear accident or radiation and threatens the lives and safety of the residents in Bangalore causing disastrous and irreversible consequences to the city.

As a citizen of Bangalore and as a Member of Parliament, I have taken up issues affecting Bangalore, welfare of the citizens and stood by the citizens fight for their rights and I firmly believe the Centre's proposal on KGF is ill-conceived and plays with the safety of the lives of citizens of Bangalore besides being a threat to our city.

Government of India must immediately issue an unambiguous clarification on this serious matter, assure the people of Karnataka about dropping this dangerous proposal and instruct Nuclear Power Corporation India Limited (NPCIL) to withdraw its affidavit before the Supreme Court which stated that spent fuel will be dumped at abandoned mines at Kolar Gold Fields.

look forward to your urgent intervention on this matter, which will be greatly appreciated by the people of Karnataka.

Very truly yours

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Hans Raj Bhardwaj

His Excellency Governor of Karnataka Rai Bhavan,  
Bangalore

## 8

# Letter to the Chief Minister to Protect the City by Lobbies & Vested Interest

14th June, 2013

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I have been receiving representations from various citizens and Resident Welfare Associations ( RWAs) expressing their concerns over the recommendations made in the Karnataka Information and Communication Technology Group 2020 (Report) and the dangerous implications and its adverse impact on the development of Bengaluru.

They have pointed out that many recommendations made in the Report do not address the crucial challenges faced by the citizens, especially in terms of real governance reforms and transparency. You will agree that any proposal to develop Bengaluru that does

not address the fundamental issues of statutory planning for the city and ushering in citizen-centric governance reforms is not consistent with a government that has been elected on a promise of better Governance.

The core proposal in the Report recommending increase of Floor Space Index for builders to generate funds for development of Bengaluru, without taking into account the infrastructural constraints in the form of adequate roads, water, electricity and civic services required to service the additional Floor Space Index will sound a death knell to the city. Further it represents a surrender of the city's Development to the commercial interests represented by builders, contractors and real estate companies - many of whose commercial interests are directly responsible for the problems faced by the city and residents.

The development of the city, including various contracts and projects has for long been influenced by vested commercial interests of some builders and contractors, who seem to have overtaken the planning of the city. We are all aware of the large number of elected representatives who also have deep and very conflicted interests in real estate that has become almost symbolic of the poor governance of our city. There is an urgent need to put an end to such a nexus between contractors and officials acting against public interest.

In such a scenario, any proposal like the one mentioned, despite being backed by highly visible industrialists must be seen as what is: An attempt by some builders and the real estate lobby to significantly influence the development plans of our city. Nowhere in the world are builders given the responsibility to build cities and this certainly should not be the case in Bengaluru. Such moves will neither lead to the development of the city nor solve the problems of the city.

This is dangerous and will also represent an abdication of Government of these responsibilities of reforming government and finances through a comprehensive set of policy actions. Shortcuts and so called easy solutions are never without costs and implications.

The government should instead, design a blueprint for development that includes planning and developing satellite towns in the vicinity of Bangalore in locations such as Yelahanka, Kengeri, Devanahalli and Hosakote and reduce the enormous pressure on Bangalore's infrastructure and public services.

Any solution to Bangalore's myriad problems must necessarily follow an intelligent approach that takes into account the aspirations of the citizens of Bengaluru with the interests of all socio-economic groups represented and follow the planning and financing techniques used by other successful cities around the world. Top-most priority should therefore be on important issues including access to adequate drinking water, mass transportation, public health & sanitation and affordable housing for the sections of society that need Governmental intervention.

I urge you to take citizens considerations seriously and protect the city against efforts by lobbies and vested interests.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah,

Hon'ble Chief Minister,

Government of Karnataka, Bangalore

## 9

# Letter to the Chief Minister on Construction of Underpass from Forum Junction to Sarjapur Road

30th October, 2013

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

**Subject: Involve residents if you are to keep your promise of good governance.**

I have received representations from various Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) expressing concerns over the proposed Integrated Underpass from Forum Junction to Sarjapur Road Junction on Hosur Road. They have brought to my attention a potentially serious deficiency with the design of this project, and most importantly its failure to address concerns of the local residents and businesses. Residents have pointed out that the

proposed underpass project disrupts the neighbourhoods because it is riddled with inadequacies, which include lack of planning and accessibility issues for traffic bound to Koramangala, loss of space affecting local movement of traffic and lack of adequate space at or near the entrance of major commercial zones. The design neither facilitates pedestrian crossings nor has bus-stops.

I wish to draw your attention to the Kaushik Mukherjee report in the aftermath of the issue of the construction of the underpass on Sarjapur Road, which asserted the importance of public consultations of all stakeholders in the run up to any development project. The Committee had stated that any integrated underpass solution at Forum Mall must be linked to the immediate deepening of the Madiwala underpass and the widening of slip roads. The current proposal does not take into account these recommendations by the Committee, which was mandated by the state High Court and was accepted by the government.

RWAs and residents are frustrated that they have been excluded from decisions concerning their neighbourhoods and the development of areas in their vicinity. As a government that has made a promise of Better Governance, citizen involvement in key decisions that affect growth and expansion of their neighbourhood are of utmost importance. You will agree that this model of development - where local residents are neither consulted nor their views taken - is inconsistent and incompatible with the objectives of a Government that has been elected on a promise of better governance. I caution you that instead of increasing confidence and faith in government, such projects will raise questions about vested interests and motivations and indeed cause residents to approach judiciary to intervene.

As I have repeatedly stressed, Any solution to Bangalore's myriad problems must necessarily follow a comprehensive Planned approach and also take into account the aspirations of their residents

about changes and developments that impact neighbourhoods, including in the case of this proposed underpass project.

I urge you to direct the BBMP to stop processing the tender for the project and to engage with RWAs and other stakeholders to finalize the plan. Only this will increase people's confidence and support for the various development projects of your government.

Look forward to your intervention and action on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah,

Chief Minister,

Government of Karnataka,

Bangalore.

10

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Flawed Draft MPC Rules

22nd November, 2013

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah avare,

With reference to the Urban Development notification on draft rules for setting up a Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) for Bangalore, I have studied the same and have also received several representations from many Residents Welfare Associations (RWAs) and NGOs such as CIVIC, Namma Bengaluru Foundation - attached for your reference - and I agree with them that there are fundamental flaws in the MPC draft rules making them inconsistent with spirit of the 74th amendment of the Constitution.

The draft rules go against the spirit of citizens' participation in the planning process and devolution of powers to elected representatives as mandated in the 74th Amendment.

The draft rules need several changes and must address the following concerns raised by the citizens:

1. The draft rules appears to comply with the High Court order in letter but not in substance failing to develop an MPC that will be autonomous, participatory and accountable to citizens. Instead, the draft rules maintain the status quo on the current situation of state government control with no independent participation, over the planning of Bangalore.
2. The draft rules do not provide for real and active citizens participation, and without their participation the planning process is a clear violation of the 74th Amendment which envisages a specific role for ward committees, citizens, RWAs and NGOs- a glaring omission that must be addressed.
3. While the draft has the Chief Minister, MLAs and MLCs as Members of the MPC while the Mayor who represents the largest and most important area of Bangalore Metropolitan Area and BBMP commissioner are not included as members. Indicating there is no devolution of planning powers and autonomy to local bodies, which continues to be with the state government. This defeats the letter and spirit of the 74th amendment that mandates real devolution of power to the third tier- citizens and RWAs who are the real stakeholders of the city.
4. There is no representation to the real stakeholders of the metropolitan area - citizens and RWAs - except for a fleeting reference to consult NGOs and other professional bodies in preparing the draft development plan. The citizens need representation on the MPC and given a voice in the decision-making body.

5. The draft rules for setting up an MPC is a public act and if developed in proper consultation would have enhanced the quality of the ultimate decision taken and also be consistent with the requirement of the participation of those affected in a fully informed and effective manner. The opportunity to participate and voice an opinion on the MPC has to be a meaningful one which was not the case in this instance as citizens were caught unawares as no opportunity was given for public consultation and receiving suggestions.

In its current form, the MPC deviates from the mandate of the 74th Amendment Act and will fail to perform its constitutional functions. Therefore, I urge your intervention to address the fundamental flaws in the draft Bill and other concerns expressed by the citizens and RWAs when the final rules of MPC Act are notified, failing which it will be concluded that the state government is being derelict in its responsibility and promise of 'Good Governance'.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bangalore.

## Letter to the Urban Development Minister on Draft MPC Rules

26th November, 2013

Dear Shri Kamal Nath Ji,

As you may be aware, the Department of Urban Development of the Government of Karnataka has released a notification on draft rules for the constitution of a Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) for the Bangalore Metropolitan Area, and invited comments from the general public on these rules.

The Constitutional Amendment Act requiring devolution of powers and responsibilities to municipal bodies was passed in 1992. In all these years, none of the states have met its requirements in full. And while the Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM) laid out many conditions (provisions of the

Amendment Act) that were to be met by the states, the funds under the Mission were released to the states despite their continuing non-compliance with those conditions.

Even today, this charade continues. The draft MPC notification deviates from the mandate of the 74th Amendment Act, both in letter in spirit. Integrated statutory planning, citizen participation, greater executive powers to Mayors and Presidents - all of these have been given the go-by. Even the minimum expectation that the MPC should have jurisdiction over a “metropolitan region” has been diluted.

I urge you to have a proper law enacted - one that adheres to the letter and spirit of the Amendment Act. The Union Government cannot be seen as urging real reforms on the one hand, and cooperating in its dilution, on the other. It is absolutely imperative that the Union Government insist upon the states’ passing MPC laws that achieve all three goals - a formal role for citizens in governance (including budgeting and oversight), a regional scope for the MPC, and enhanced executive powers for elected leaders in municipal bodies.

Only this will have a realistic chance of transforming urban governance. This is especially critical today, as the country is going through rapid urbanization. The framework that is put in place today will have lasting implications for the way our cities are governed in the future, and consequently for their livability, inclusiveness and economic vitality.

I look forward to your intervention in upholding Parliament’s clear intent in passing the 74th Amendment Act.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Kamal Nath,

Hon'ble Minister of Urban Development,

Government of India,

New Delhi.

12

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Bangalore Suffering from Corruption and Misuse of Funds

16th December, 2013

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah avare,

Sub: Bangalore suffering from corruption, misuse of funds and vested interests, not necessarily shortfall in revenue

It is with considerable concern that I have read your statement that Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has no funds to take up development projects for Bangalore.

Bangalore as a city is vital to our state, being a gateway for investments and economic activity. Therefore, its financial health – which is the only guarantor of its sustainable and planned growth and expansion - is even more critical. BBMP is not only the symbol of political devolution in the city, but it is also the most important

administrative institution that delivers public service and maintains and expands public infrastructure. And so, it is distressing and worrying to most citizens, myself included, that BBMP is teetering on financial bankruptcy.

I reject the notion that our city - with 8 million inhabitants, million tax payers and many sources of revenue like Road tax, property tax, significant public assets like Land etc., and which contributes to 30% of the state's GDP – is financially bankrupt. The real reason relates to misappropriation of Government funds and public assets due to rampant corruption, wasteful & unplanned expenditure and deeply entrenched vested interests that have cast their ugly shadow on Bangalore's governance.

This situation has come to pass because of poor Governance and corruption over the last several years continued by successive Governments. It is high time that the decline in Governance of our city is brought to a stop. It is obvious that the reasons for the current situation are:

- a. Lack of proper long term transparent planning for the city – *Bangalore needs a proper statutory long term plan, including a financial plan.*
- b. Very inefficient use of financial resources with a highly corrupt and compromised contracting system that is driven more by vested interests rather than plans. *Contracting and use of money must be more transparent, competitive and efficient.*
- c. Deliberate refusal to plug loopholes in revenue collection. *Expand Tax coverage, establish targets and Prosecute all officials that are complicit in revenue leakages.*
- d. Extremely opaque utilization of Government assets like Land and buildings – used not to maximize financial resources, instead to favour vested interests. – *Land encroached by commercial interests must be taken back. Public land must*

*only be leased or sold at market rates to maximize financial resources for city. Involve RWAs in budget and use of money.*

- e. Failure to tap obvious sources of revenue. *Generate additional revenues by developing Bangalore into a tourist and conference hub with events in entertainment, business to attract tourists from all over the world.*
- f. Failure to attract sufficient private investments into PPPs to supplement or replace Government expenditure. *Attract private investments into Urban infrastructure and services, through properly laid out contracts and commercial terms.*

The finances of Bangalore must be put back on track urgently and must include a long term sustainable financial plan. Those of us for whom Bangalore is home and are anguished about the exploitation of our city, believe you must intervene and deliver the leadership that our city deserves since Bangalore is a substantive part of your portfolio of responsibility. Compounding violations through Akrama Sakrama etc. in the guise of revenue realization is contrary to Good Governance, and instead, encourages a culture of violation and corruption.

The citizens, resident welfare associations (RWAs) and investors are frustrated with the rampant corruption, non-transparency, flawed contracts and vested interests that is driving the city's strategy. This must stop. If residents at grassroots and through RWAs are involved in matters of financing, budgeting and city planning / expenditure, such waste of resources will stop and public money will be used in accordance with the priorities determined by the citizens of Bangalore.

Recent events in Delhi have shown that people are determined to get a change in how Governments govern. The citizens of Bangalore will undoubtedly respond similarly if the decline of the city continues and the city's future continues to be driven by

vested interests. Bangalore has the youngest, brightest and most committed minds in the country as residents. Without doubt, they would be willing to work with the Government to solve such important, but simple issues of financing and rebuilding the future of our city.

Your Government has been elected on a promise of Governance, and to make good this promise, your Government and you must urgently deliver. This can start by making public its strategy for Governance, budgeting and expenditure of our city in a transparent manner with a commitment to remove corruption at the earliest.

I look forward to your response at the earliest.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah,

Chief Minister,

Government of Karnataka,

Bangalore.

13

## Letter to the Home Minister Regarding Death of Student from Arunachal Pradesh

7th February, 2014

Dear Shri KJ George,

I write to you on the backdrop of the recent death of Nido Taniam, a 19 year old student from Arunachal Pradesh in the heart national capital New Delhi last week. This experience with racism is not unique to Delhi. Even in Bangalore, I have seen locals sometimes believe that the youth from the North East belong to a different country – purely based on their features, language, dressing and lifestyle. It is a deeply distressing incident and a wakeup call for all and stresses the immediate need for sensitization.

In the wake of such a shocking instance of racial intolerance, and instances of racism in the state in the past, it is essential that we adopt certain measures to ensure such incidents do not occur

again. The Government of Karnataka must take preventive steps to ensure that the state remains safe for people from all parts of the country and the world.

**There are five specific steps that are needed to address this problem:**

1. First and foremost, there has to be a law against racial discrimination. Work on this should begin immediately. The government must send a strong message of Zero tolerance for racism.
2. Government needs to hold awareness and sensitivity lessons for the police, the lower rungs of which are rampant with issues like discrimination, corruption etc.
3. Our education system needs to include cross-cultural lessons which emphasize the importance of non-discrimination and explain the diversity of India across skin colours, features, gender, cultures, languages, dressing and food habits. The state government must make efforts to feature this in education literature for the state syllabus.
4. Parents need to incorporate, especially amongst young boys, respect - both for women and citizens from other states.
5. Finally, politicians and media need to travel more and provide substantially high coverage to issues and concerns of the North Eastern States.

The freedom to reside and settle in any part of the country is a fundamental right enshrined in our constitution. Our country is a great country where people from the North East should be able to live without fear of discrimination and vice versa.

I urge you to take urgent steps and ensure the state government takes strong measures that indicate zero tolerance for any forms of racism and discrimination against North East Indians in Bangalore and Karnataka.

Thanking You,  
Yours sincerely,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

K J George,  
Hon'ble Home Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bangalore.

14

## Letter to the Electoral Officer, Karnataka on Facilities for Disabled Voters

9th April, 2014

Dear Shri Anil Kumar,

I write to you to draw your attention to a fundamental matter of importance regarding making polling stations more disabled-friendly.

Our Constitution guarantees Universal Adult Franchise and it is important to ensure every adult citizen gets a chance to vote to ensure this the Election Commission has made laudable efforts. However, the Election Commission's steps to ensure voting facilities for the 19 million eligible Persons with Disabilities have not been wholly satisfactory. This, despite the 2010 Supreme Court Order directing the Election Commission to make polling stations accessible for the voters with disabilities.

While your office has instructed polling officers to provide entry to Persons with Disabilities on priority and provide ramps where feasible and wheel chairs for disabled voters, as the initiative of the Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi has shown, there are other steps that must be taken to ensure better accessibility for Persons with Disabilities.

The Chief Electoral Officer of Delhi has carried out laudable initiatives to ensure voting facilities are made more accessible to Persons with Disabilities. These included providing for the registration of Persons with Disabilities and their nature of disability on a website. Sign language experts have been put on standby at each of the polling stations to aid the hearing impaired. They have also sought the help of NGOs and hospitals for providing wheelchairs for the voters with physical disabilities.

In addition to the facilities already initiated by your office, I urge you to replicate these steps in the state of Karnataka to ensure that we leave no stone unturned in providing easy access to Persons with Disabilities to exercise their franchise.

Given that we are a democracy, the voices of our voters with disabilities are equally significant. In this regard I urge you to take the necessary and effective steps to ensure the fullest implementation of the directions as per the Hon'ble Supreme Court of India and Section 59 of the Persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995, to enable voters with disabilities to exercise their vote and participate in the democratic process.

I look forward to your urgent action in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Anil Kumar Jha,  
IAS Chief Electoral Officer,  
Nirvachana Nilaya,  
Maharani's College Circle Sheshadri Road,  
Bangalore

15

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Escalating Crisis over Garbage & Waste Management in Bangalore

18th June, 2014

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I have been receiving representations from various citizens and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) expressing their concerns over the escalating crisis over garbage and waste management in Bangalore.

As a citizen of Bangalore and a Member of Parliament from the city, I write to you on their behalf and mine to express severe disappointment and anger with the Government's handling of the issue.

At a broader level, the cities governance is descended into chaos and crisis management - a fact that is important given that you

had promised better Governance. The rampant corruption, lack of transparency, flawed contracting system and vested interests that are driving the city's governance strategy have rightfully, caused the ire of citizens.

The problems Bangalore is facing, specifically with respect to waste management are less to do with structure or size of the city, but rather of more fundamental issues of planning and institutional performance in terms of delivering public services. The garbage crisis, like several other issues the city faces, is a glaring symptom of unplanned growth. This in turn has serious public health consequences which are not being discussed yet.

What the city needs is urgent Governance reforms and a planned approach to its development. In 2010, post several meetings and consultations with over 40,000 citizens, the 'Plan Bengaluru-2020' (PB-2020) document was drafted and submitted to the Government of Karnataka. Plan Bengaluru-2020 had sought to create a comprehensive integrated region wise plan to address Bangalore's future growth and all consequent issues, including the problem of waste management the city is currently grappling with.

The Plan Bengaluru-2020 document emphasized on planning, pointing out to dangers and costs incurred due to the ad-hoc approach to the city's and its resident's problems. It also dealt with how these problems will become much more difficult and expensive to address, if not resolved immediately – which now seems prophetic with respect to the garbage crisis. This document has already been with the Urban Development Department for several months, without any action.

I urge you to take the initiative now - and start a two track approach - FIRST an immediate emergent solution of alternate waste-fills to prevent further shame and disaster for the city, simultaneously reconstituting the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC)

and SECOND to put into place through the reconstituted MPC a multi-year statutory perspective plan and reforms for our city

The Government must know that citizens are angry and disappointed with the way their city is being governed currently and unless the Government and elected representatives act responsibly, you can expect activism and agitation of the kinds we have seen elsewhere.

I am available to you and the Government to restart the process that has been in limbo for several years for reshaping our city and I hope you will respond appropriately to the crisis facing the city and its residents.

I look forward to your response

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah,

Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka,

Bangalore.

16

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Discrimination against Indians in Bangalore

25th June, 2014

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I write this letter to bring to your notice a news story in media that has exposed shocking instances of discrimination against Indians by a particular Hotel Uno-In in Bangalore. The news story describes how the hotel discriminates against Indians citing exclusivity for nationals of one particular country and turns away Indian citizens who wish to patronise the hotel.

It is shocking that in this day and age, a restaurant operating in our state's capital has the audacity to openly discriminate against our citizens. The "Indians are not allowed" is an untenable and unconscionable act in Bangalore against our people. No hotel or

establishment can deny entry or service to a guest on the grounds of discrimination against race, religion or nationality - and this act is clearly a violation of laws under IPC.

Since such acts amount to blatant violation of laws of the land, I am writing to draw your attention to this and urge that Government responds under law to this and prosecutes the case in a manner that is appropriate under law and do so expeditiously. The response of the Government in this case will send a message to any others who are violating the law in similar manner and discriminating in our city.

**Look forward to your urgent response on the matter.**

Yours Sincerely

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah,  
Chief Minister, Government of Karnataka,  
Bangalore.

17

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Multi-Year Statutory Plan for Bangalore

17th July, 2014

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I write to you with increasing concern about the current state of Governance in Bangalore.

The city for several years has seen a decline into urban chaos and crisis management on all fronts -ranging from Solid waste management and cleanliness and related issues of Public health to law and order and safety of women, children and elderly.

Your government came to power on a promise of Good governance. There is ample evidence that Bangalore is suffering from a severe Governance deficit, as evident most recently, in inept handling of the garbage crisis and now in the CAG Report made public a

few days back, that exposes several financial irregularities worth hundreds of Crores of Rupees at the BBMP, while pointing out how BBMP lost out on Rs.287 Crores grant for waste management under JNNURM grant due to the lack of a Master Plan!

As you are aware, I have been urging your Government to develop a Master plan or vision for the development of our city. This lack of a planned approach for the development of our city is directly responsible for the lack of transparency in governance, an adhoc contracting system and the almost complete dominance of vested interests and corruption. Your government is failing to intervene on this, despite repeated urgings to do so and your commitment during state elections at ushering in Good Governance.

It is obvious to any proper thinking citizen, public servant or public representative that Bangalore's myriad problems, whether they are issues of traffic, waste management, corruption in contracts, and public safety stem from more fundamental issues of governance, planning and institutional performance in terms of delivery of public services. These problems are not searching for miracles but only for leadership interested in protecting and nurturing the city.

As I have reiterated several times in the past, the Government must strive towards a new comprehensive, multi-year plan, formed through a process of consultation. The plan must address the fundamental issues of statutory planning for the city and include governance reform through reconstitution of the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) that will have representation of Citizen Groups, RWAs and genuine town planning experts and reflect its objective of citizen participation in letter and spirit. This reconstituted MPC must take the lead on this vision and reforms for the city.

### **Government can consider a new multi-year plan for Bengaluru**

Every modern city, be it New York, London, Barcelona etc has multi-year plans that drive their growth. In 2010, thousands of

well meaning and thinking citizens working put together Plan Bengaluru 2020 document - an integrated vision on all issues related to Bengaluru. The document emphasized the need for planning and reforms in governance of city, pointing out to dangers and costs incurred due to the ad- hoc approach to city and its resident's problems. Though accepted by the previous government, the recommendations weren't implemented.

If the government seeks to consider a new plan for the city, it is free to do so. But, any such plan must stress on urgent Governance Reforms and a planned approach to the city's development that takes into account the aspirations of the citizens. This is important because our city has no dearth of plans for its development or visions for its development, it is lacking an honest and transparent plan that provides a voice of silent majority of RWAs and citizens. The views of citizens and RWAs are now being drowned out by high profile experts and organizations who are self proclaimed experts in Urban Planning, known for their views in media than real experience and commitment to the city. This was evident in the manner pressure is being mounted on the Government to accept KIG 2020 Report, which is opposed by hundreds of RWAs and Citizen Groups, who feel the Report panders to vested interests and fails to address challenges faced by the city and citizens. The government must take note of citizens' objections.

I urge you to now to take the lead and initiative on this new plan for our city. I urge you to deliver on your promise on Governance and usher in Governance reforms in our city. Our city's decline needs to be stopped and a new period of urban renewal started which our city and millions of hardworking citizens deserve. Government should act now, prevent our city from being ravaged any further, intervene and engage with RWAs and other stakeholders to address the fundamental flaws of the MPC Act and finalise a new multi-year statutory plan for the city.

I look forward to your positive response on this issue at the earliest.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah ,

Chief Minister,

Government of Karnataka,

Bangalore.

18

## Letter to the Chief Minister Regarding Citizen Participation in MPC

11th September, 2014

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I write to you with reference to the recent Government order notifying elections to the Bangalore Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) on the 16th of September 2014. I had written to you earlier about this on 22nd November 2013 and so despite the long delay, this is a welcome move and is a first important step to ensure planned approach to the development and growth of our city.

I am writing to draw your attention that however, there are some fundamental flaws in the MPC rules that prevent them from being truly representative of the letter and spirit of the 74t Amendment

of the Constitution. While the 20 members of the MPC will be elected in the elections schedule for later next week, there is an equally important need to ensure citizen participation in the planning process by ensuring they are duly represented amongst the other non-elected members of the MPC.

The MPC rules need the following changes, which have been raised by citizens and in my letter to you on November 22nd 2013, during the framing of the draft rules (attached for your reference):

1. The MPC in its current form does not provide for the real and active participation of citizens. Without their participation, the MPC is in violation and inconsistent with the 74th Amendment that envisages a specific role for ward committees, citizens, RWAs and NGOs. This is a glaring omission and must be addressed. I would urge at least 2-3 RWAs to be represented in the MPC. Further I would request you that rules prescribe that all ward committees chaired by Corporators have local RWAs nominated to them.
2. Of the remaining 10 members of the MPC, at least 2-3 should be experienced in Urban. By making only a fleeting reference to consult NGOs and other professional bodies in preparing the draft development plan, the MPC in its current form deviates from the mandate of the 74th Amendment Act and MPC will not be able to deliver on the promise of better planning and development.
3. While the rules have the Chief Minister, MLAs and MLCs as Members of the MPC, the Mayor who represents the largest and most important part of the Bangalore Metropolitan Area has been excluded, must be included if there is to be real devolution of planning powers and autonomy. While the draft rules did not include the BBMP Commissioner, I am glad that the Government consented to citizen views on this and the

BBMP Commissioner has been included in the MPC in the final rules.

The 74th amendment of our constitution represents the need for devolved planning and development of cities with active citizen participation. The cities woes and decline are a direct consequence of lack of transparency and citizen involvement in determining the nature and type of development for their cities.

Constitution of the MPC marks a significant Urban Governance reform and I would urge you to implement it in letter and spirit and include my suggestions/requests. That is the only way to reverse the many years of decline and exploitation of this city and to develop our city to be a beacon of investments and tourists and act as gateway to investments and development to our state Karnataka. Our people and our city and state deserve better than what we are seeing today. They deserve a Government and institutions that work in partnership with citizens, rather than the current situation of numerous legal disputes and conflicts between residents and Government.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bangalore.

19

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Saving Bengaluru Heritage Structure

30th October, 2014

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

People have expressed their anger at the administrators' inability.

I write to you about the move by Government to demolish 150 years old heritage structure Balabrooie Guest House to make way for Legislators Club and your clarification that there is no proposal to demolish or alter Balabrooie. I welcome your intervention in resolving and preventing destruction of the heritage structure.

However Bangalore cultural heritage has been under threat and attack for several years and requires permanent institutional solution to safeguard city's culture and heritage. The demolition of such heritage structures undermines Bengaluru city's identity

and inherent character. It is a result of current policy, some of which is recent.

As you are aware, our city Bengaluru in its illustrious 477 years of history, has been home to hundreds of heritage buildings, structures and been a centre of history right from Founder of Bengaluru Kempe Gowda, the Marathas, British rule, and the benevolent rule of the later Wodeyar kings. However, due to years of negligent and the break neck growth of the city, we have lost much of the architectural magnificence of history. It takes hundreds of years to create heritage and a few days to obliterate it.

In less than a decade, our city that was home to more 2,000 heritage buildings – both private and government owned - now has now a mere 400, mainly due to large-scale commercialisation. This is a worrying situation and calls for urgent need for a law or institutional mechanism to preserve the city's past and heritage.

The city's character has long suffered due to unregulated development. Sites, buildings and other forms of heritage have not been properly identified, leaving them vulnerable. There is no agency that is either accountable or responsible for managing nurturing and carrying for the city's rich heritage and history. Several NGOs, architects and urban activists have been working towards preservation of the city's heritage. But the need of the hour is integration of these efforts, evolution of common agendas and escalation of the campaigns in a cohesive and concerted manner until they yield suitable legislations and actions.

In order to protect and preserve the hundreds of historic sites, structures and treasures, both built and natural, I urge you to consider implementing the following:

1. Immediately establish Bengaluru Heritage Commission (BHC) which will be responsible for identification, conservation and protection of heritage and culture and heritage sites/structures in the city.

2. The objective of this Commission should be to save the past and enrich the future.
3. Establish Bengaluru Museum which will house the permanent archive and gallery of the heritage of the city.
4. Establishing a statutory nodal agency for the identification, protection and conservation of heritage in the Bengaluru Metropolitan Region that will be funded and function as an autonomous body to develop, manage heritage policy and coordinate with government departments for ensure policy implementation.

It is our responsibility as political leaders and community as a whole to ensure we do everything possible to preserve, protect our proud culture and heritage for our children and the future generations to come. Before changes start happening on the ground, victories have to be achieved on the political front for support to conservation of built heritage as an agenda on high priority.

I look forward to your early response in this matter.

Yours'

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah

Hon'ble Chief Minister,

Government of Karnataka

Vidhana Soudha

Bangalore

20

## Letter to the Law Minister on Indian Succession Act, 1925

9th December, 2014

Dear Shri Sadananda Gowda Avare,

I write this letter to bring to your attention an omission in the Indian Succession Act 1925 because of which women from the native Christian community in Mysore and Coorg are being denied their equal right to ancestral property for the past several decades now.

As you are aware, the Indian Succession Act accrues that both women and men have equal coparcenary rights. However, the predecessor to this Act — the Indian Succession Act of 1865 specifically exempted the native Christians from Coorg and Mysore in Karnataka from its ambit. When the 1925 legislation was passed, this provision was not corrected and native Christian women from Coorg and Mysore continued to be exempted.

As a result, while women citizens belonging to other communities within the Christian community were able to rightfully claim their rights under the Indian Succession Act, those from the native Christian community of Coorg and Mysore were marginalised.

It is tragic that this lacuna has not been identified and set right by the government for years. A simple amendment to the Indian Succession Act to include the native Christian women of Mysore and Coorg would serve to reinstate the rights of these women.

I would urge you to look into this matter at the earliest and ensure that suitable measures are taken to end this anomaly and take steps to make an amendment to the Act at the earliest.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri D. V Sadananda Gowda,

Hon'ble Minister for law and Justice Government of India,

New Delhi.

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Indian Succession Act 1925

30th January, 2015

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I write this letter to invite your attention certain lacunae in the operation of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, due to which women from the native Christian communities in Mysore and Coorg regions in Karnataka are being denied equal rights to ancestral property.

The Indian Succession Act, 1925 confers equal rights to both men and women in matters of intestate succession. Pursuant to Section 37 of the said Act, property of an intestate deceased is distributed equally amongst his surviving children (both male and female). However, the applicability of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 has

been exempted insofar as native Christians in Coorg and Mysore are concerned. Christian women in these areas have, therefore, continued to be governed by customary pristine Hindu law in matters of intestate succession, which unfortunately does not grant them equal rights.

By virtue of Notification No. 204 dated July 23, 1868 issued under Section 332 of the Indian Succession Act, 1865 (the predecessor to the Indian Succession Act, 1925), all native Christians in Coorg were exempted from the operation of the 1865 Act. Subsequently, the applicability of the said exemption notification was extended to the territories of Mysore, thereby exempting native Christians in the Mysore region as well from the operation of the 1865 Act.

The Indian Succession Act, 1865 was subsequently replaced by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. However, by operation of Section 3(3) of the Indian Succession Act, 1925, the exemption hitherto granted under the Notification continued and has not been repealed to date. As such, Christians in Coorg and Mysore continue to be governed by customary pristine Hindu law. I note that, meanwhile, Hindu law has been codified and amended by virtue of the passage of the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 and the Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005, such that Hindu women are now granted equal co-parcenary rights in matters of intestate succession. However, the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, applies only to Hindus, and the native Christians in Coorg and Mysore continue to be governed by pristine Hindu law, which unfortunately does not grant them equal rights in intestate succession.

It is unfortunate that this evident lacuna in law has not been identified and set right for a number of years, and that Christian women in Coorg and Mysore have long been denied fair and equal treatment under law. This, therefore, is a fit case for the law to be suitably changed to ensure equal rights are provided to women from the native Christian communities in Coorg and Mysore.

I invite your attention to the fact that Section 3(2) of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 empowers the State Government to revoke any order exempting a particular race, sect or tribe from the operation of certain sections of the said Act. I therefore urge your Government to take steps pursuant to Section 3(2) of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 to revoke/withdraw the Notification exempting native Christians in Coorg and Mysore, thereby bringing those communities within the ambit of the Indian Succession Act, 1925 and thereby providing them equal status and equal protection of the laws regarding intestate succession.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

To:

Shri S. Siddaramaiah,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bangalore 560 001.

## Letter to the Chief Minister Regarding the Process of Notification/ De-notification Being a Source of Corruption

19th February, 2015

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I write to you with reference to the notification of the re-modified scheme of the Arkavathi Layout.

While there have been many allegations and counter allegations made on this issue, I wish to draw your attention to some basic realities that you must as Chief Minister address urgently.

Allocation of Land, Dealing with Land, its use and the rampant misuse of administrative and political discretion on these and zoning are becoming the real sources of corruption in Government/ Politics and in turn funding of political parties and activities. There is much evidence of the influence of real estate and land deals in our politics and I am sure you are aware of this.

It is in this connection and with an earnest plea to tackle this that I write this letter to you, especially since you had campaigned during the elections on a plank of “Good Governance”.

The process of Notifying and de-notifying are now become sources of Corruption. The corruption associated with the notification and de-notification of land has almost settled into an all too familiar pattern. The Government puts in great amount of efforts and people’s money on land and develops it for public usage. This leads to a natural increase in land prices in the vicinity. It is however seldom a coincidence that de-notifications happen in vicinity of such developed areas. Several such cases in the past bear testimony to the fact that such de-notifications are made to purely for the benefit of vested interests.

In light of arbitrary land notification and de-notification of public lands, I had in a letter to the then Chief Minister on 5th February 2010 (enclosed) made suggestions to put an end to this practice that benefits vested commercial interests, which I have reiterated for your consideration:

1. Complete ban on ad-hoc notification and de-notification process.
2. De-notification and notification of land must be prohibited except for justifiable and legally provable public interest such as schools, parks, hospitals etc and never for private commercial interests.
3. Government must discontinue the current process of land management and replace it with a transparent and disclosure-driven process.
4. Public land is a resource, like minerals and spectrum, and Government should be equally cautious and using this resource for the betterment of public only and to enhance the exchequer for use in social and infrastructure spending.

I urge you to meet your promise of Good governance and initiate these changes to the notification/De-notification discretion that is being blatantly misused. It is time that the Corruption and funding of politics by economics of Land is put a stop to.

I look forward to your action on this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah,  
Chief Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Bangalore.

Copy to: Secretary, Justice Kempanna Enquiry Commission,  
Bangalore

## NBF Letter to the Chief Minister on Sanction for Prosecution of BBMP Commissioner

27th February, 2015

**Sub: Prosecution of Mr. Lakshmi Narayana, Commissioner of the  
Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike**

Dear Sir,

This letter seeks sanction for the prosecution of Mr. Lakshmi Narayana, Commissioner of the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (“BBMP”), for offences committed under the Indian Penal Code, 1860, as amended (the “IPC”) and under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, as amended (the “PC Act”).

The Bangalore Revised Master Plan 2015 (“RMP 2015”) was notified in June 2007, pursuant to Section 13 of the Karnataka

Town and Country Planning Act, 1961 (the “KTCP Act”). public interest litigation (PIL) was filed before the Hon’ble Karnataka High Court in 2008 by Citizen’s Action Forum (among others), seeking to address inter alia the issue of “mixed land use’ set out in the RMP 2015, whereby commercial developments were proposed to be allowed in residential areas. The Commissioner of the Bangalore Development Authority (“BDA”) had, in February 2014, filed an affidavit before the Hon’ble Karnataka High Court (“Affidavit”) stating, *inter alia*

that:

- (a) There shall be no fresh commercial activity allowed in residential main and residential mixed zones if abutting roads are forty (40) feet or less in width;
- (b) Only specified ancillary usages as mentioned in BDA’s resolution filed along with the Affidavit shall be permitted in residential main and residential mixed zones, if the butting roads are above forty (40) feet in width; and
- (c) Conversion of ancillary usage to main usage shall be permitted only in “Ring 3” areas as defined in RMP 2015, and not in “Ring 1” and “Ring 2” areas as defined in the RMP 015.

In addition, it was indicated in the BDA’s resolution filed along with the aforesaid Affidavit that consideration would be given to restricting commercial activity in portions of the mutation corridor that passes through predominantly residential areas. In light of this Affidavit, the Hon’ble High Court had disposed of the matter stating that revised zoning regulations must be drafted and forwarded to the State Government for approval. A copy of this order of the Hon’ble High Court of Karnataka is attached here, as Annexure A. The Hon’ble Hig Court had also noted that an office order was issued by the Special Commissioner (Planning , of the BBMP on November 8, 2012, withdrawing all sanctioned plans issued subsequent to the court’s interim order dated 25th February, 2012.

Subsequently, amendments to the zoning regulations of the RMP 2015 have been notified on December 11, 2014 pursuant to the provisions of the KTCP Act. In these amended regulations, the specific averments made before the High Court have been disregarded. Detail of the amendments to RMP 2015 are attached in **Annexure B**. The deviations between the affidavit filed before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka and the amendments made to the RMP 2015 are set forth in Annexure C. It is pertinent to note that a subsequent public interest litigation petition has been filed and is pending before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka in connections with these deviations between the Affidavit filed before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka and the amendments made to the RMP 2015.

We note that pursuant to Section 14 of the KTCP Act, every new development in the area covered by the RMP 2015 is required to conform to the provisions of the said plan. Pursuant to Sections 295, 299 and 300 of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976, read with Bye Law 3 of the Bangalore Mahanagara Palike Building Bye-Laws, 2003, a building licence from the Commissioner of the BBMP is required by any person who intends to erect or re-erect a building, or make material alterations to such building in the relevant area. In addition a trade license under Section 353 read with Schedule X of the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, 1976 is required to for carrying on certain commercial activities within city limits. The Commissioner, while considering such application, is required to consider the land use for the relevant area specified in the RMP 2015.

Despite these amendments to the RMP 2015, and the Affidavit filed by the Commissioner of the BDA before the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka, the BBMP has continued to permit the establishment of commercial concerns in certain residential areas of Bangalore in violation of the amended RMP 2015 and the aforesaid Affidavit of

the BDA. The address and description of certain such commercial establishments are set out below:

| <b>Address</b>  | <b>Nature of Establishment</b>             |
|---|--|
| Plot 361, 6th Main road, 1st Block,<br>Koramangala 1st Block, Bangalore<br>560034 | Serviced Apartments                        |
| Plot 329, 5th Main, 1st Block,<br>Koramangala, Bangalore 560034                   | Business: Red Baron<br>International       |
| Plot 154, 8th Main Road,<br>Jakkasandra Block, Koramangala,<br>Bangalore 560034   | Business: Breakfast Club,<br>Teju Boutique |
| Plot 704, 6th B Cross, Koramangala<br>3 rd Block, Bangalore 560034                | <i>Under Construction</i>                  |
| Plot 736, 7th Cross Road,<br>Koramangala 3rd Block, Bangalore<br>560034           | <i>Under Construction</i>                  |

These commercial developments, which are situated in areas demarcated as residential illegal, since they are contrary to the provisions of the RMP 2015 and the averments ma Affidavit filed before the Hon'ble Karnataka High Court. Repeated attempts have been the Residents Welfare Associations of Koramangala, in writing, to bring these violation notice of the BBMP and ask for immediate action. The BBMP has not initiated meaningful action in spite of considerable time periods having elapsed.

As the chief executive of the BBMP, the BBMP Commissioner is responsible for the actions and inactions of all subordinate officers under his control. However, as per the copies of official records received pursuant to an application filed under the provisions of

the Right to Information Act, 2005, it was found that the BBMP Commissioner had personally intervened to obtain a trade license for the “Breakfast Club” establishment situated at Plot 154, 8th Main Road, Jakkasandra Block, Koramangala. In fact, the BBMP Commissioner had, on December 1, 2014, made a note on the application submitted for the purpose of obtaining a trade licence stating “*Please help in getting trade license*”. The trade license was sanctioned by the Health Officer (South) of the BBMP on December 5, 2014, with the note that the license was issued “*as per direction from the BBMP Commissioner*”. These documents also reveal that the local residents’ welfare association had made representations against the grant of the aforesaid license on the basis that, inter alia, the establishment is located in a residential zone, and causes nuisance to the local residents. Copies of these documents are attached here as **Annexure D**.

It is clear that actions of the BBMP Commissioner in permitting, indeed encouraging, such illegal commercial establishments to be set up and continue functioning are against the interest of the residents of Bangalore, since this allows commercial development in residential areas direct contravention of the RMP 2015 and Affidavit submitted by the BDA before the Hon’ble Karnataka High Court. In fact, the BBMP Commissioner has personally intervened and directed his officials to issue trade licenses to commercial establishments. It is clear that these actions have been undertaken with a view to benefit commercial and construction interests, and without any regard to the welfare of the citizens of Bangalore. This in turn raises questions as to Mr. Lakshmi Narayana’s motivations behind showing favours to such commercial and construction interests.

The above mentioned actions of, and failure to take action by, the BBMP Commissioner, go squarely against the law of the land and the interests of the residents of Bangalore. These actions

and selective inaction on the part of the BBMP, and the BBMP Commissioner in particular, have negated the efforts made by the citizens of Bangalore over a number of years to pursue better urban development and city planning.

In this background, it is imperative that Mr. Lakshmi Narayana be investigated for the commission of offences under the following sections of the IPC and the PC Act:

- (a) **Section 166 of the IPC:** Public servant knowingly disobeying any direction of law as to the way in which he is to conduct himself as such public servant, intending to cause or knowing it to be likely that he will, by such disobedience, cause injury to any person.
- (b) **Section 167 of the IPC:** Public servant being charged with the preparation or translation of any document, framing or translating that document in a manner which he knows or believes to be incorrect, intending thereby to cause or knowing it to be likely that he may thereby cause injury to any person.
- (c) **Section 13(1)(d) of the PC Act:** For criminal misconduct, obtaining a pecuniary advantage for himself through illegal means, and for abusing his position as public servant.

It may be noted that although some of the aforesaid offences are cognizable, little or no action seems to have been taken against the concerned officials, including Mr. Lakshmi Narayana.

Mr. Lakshmi Narayana is a “public servant” within the meaning of Section 21 of the IPC as also within the meaning of Section 2(c) of the PC Act.

The facts and circumstances of the present case indicate that it is of utmost public importance that this matter is investigated and examined thoroughly. The present letter therefore requests sanction for the prosecution of Mr. Lakshmi Narayana, since the

alleged offences committed by Mr. Lakshmi Narayana hereunder are attributable to the discharge of his public duty as, public servant. We emphasise that such sanction is necessary for assuring transparency in public administration, and, further, to protect the interest of the citizens of Bangalore.

We submit that this is a fit case for granting sanction for prosecution under Section 19 of the CrPC and Section 19 of the PC Act, for offences under Sections 166 and 167 of the IPC and Section 13(1)(d) of the PC Act, and request that sanction to prosecute be accorded. Further, we are ready and willing to assist the investigation in any manner, and to provide any information or clarifications that may be necessary.

Should you require any further information or clarifications, please contact the undersigned.

Enclosed:As above.

Copy to:

1. Shri Ramalinga Reddy

Minister for Transport and Bengaluru District In-charge  
Minister

Government of Karnataka

Vidhana Soudha

Bengaluru-560001

2. Shri Rajeev Chandrasekhar  
Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha  
11 thFloor , Vishveshwaraiah Towers,  
Dr Ambedkar Road,  
Bengaluru-560001
3. Shri T.K Anil Kumar  
Secretary to the Government of Karnataka  
Urban Development Department  
Vikasa Soudha, Bengaluru

To,

Shri D Satyamurthy  
Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka  
Urban Development Department  
Vikasa Soudha, Bengaluru

24

## Open Letter to the Chief Minister on DK Ravi's Death and Governance

30th March, 2015

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I write today as a Member of Parliament representing Bengaluru - also as a citizen of Bengaluru and an angry witness to the city's decline into chaos being run and exploited by a nexus of corrupt and vested Interests.

I have written to you earlier on many occasions drawing your attention to the issues facing the city and have urged you to step in and change the direction of the city. But you have till date done little or nothing for our city by way of cleaning up the city and tackling the rampant corruption

The issue of DK Ravi's death and the resultant outrage and widespread citizen protests have put the spotlight on the rampant corruption, non-transparency, and vested interests driving the city's governance. While investigations will tell us about cause of the tragic needless death of this officer, the issue needs to be focused on is the real reason for citizen anger over his death – it's not how he died, but what he lived for that should be the real focus. He lived to take on vested interests fearlessly- a demand that the citizens make of you, as their Chief Minister.

I am writing to also caution you on people's intolerance for this kind of rampant loot and conflict of interest that is going on in Bengaluru. I wish to respectfully remind you about the fate of many in the Congress led UPA government and the government itself as a consequence of brazen corruption and ignoring calls for change from people when they were made. The reality of today's politics and democracy is that no political movement or government can survive with the loss of trust of the people they are supposed to serve. Your Government was elected to be for all people, by people and of the people and not of vested interests, by vested interests and of vested interests as the perception seems to be increasingly.

Throughout these years I have represented Bengaluru, I have urged a zero tolerance to corruption with a new approach to Governance Reforms. I urge you to immediately implement the following steps to fulfill your responsibility as CM and head of government.

1. Make Land deals and contracts fully transparent: Public contracts and Land notification/denotification are increasingly becoming the principle causes of corruption and political funding. Your Government has done nothing to change this and indeed can be accused of furthering and continuing the process even more to benefit key contractors , real estate projects and builders. Complete transparency in both contracting and land deals is a must, including regular audit

- by CAG of how taxpayer/public money and land is being used by the Government. There must be a complete ban on ad-hoc notification and de-notification process and such denotifications must be allowed only for justifiable and legally provable public interests such as schools, parks, hospitals etc and never for private commercial interests. The Government must discontinue the current process of land management and replace it with a transparent and disclosure-driven process.
2. A Planned Approach to Bengaluru's Development: Adopt a statutory Development plan through transparent public consultation. Vested Interests, Corrupt Politicians and Bureaucrats do not like plans as they allow no room for discretion, deals or favouritism. The lack of a statutory plan is directly responsible for the lack of transparency in governance, an ad-hoc contracting system and the almost complete capture of development by money, vested interests and corruption. Your government's lack of effort in this only sends a message to encourage vested interests. A Government committed to ending corruption must strive towards a comprehensive, multi-year, statutory plan, formed through proper citizen consultation.
  3. Reconstitute and Activate the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC): The MPC is an effective way to counter the discretion of elected representatives and administrative authorities. Yet, the sad irony is that your Government has failed to capitalize on ushering in transparency through the MPC. While your Government made initial steps by electing a MPC last year, it turned out to be a defunct body, having not met even a single time since it was elected and the 20 elected members were not even allotted a room to meet in! As the ex-officio Chairperson of the MPC, I urge you to ensure the new MPC, reconstituted post the BBMP elections is allowed

the freedom and resources for its independent and effective functioning.

4. Create a Code of Conduct for Elected Representatives and Bureaucrats: I say this with conviction - behind every builder & contractor in Bengaluru is an MLA or Minister acting in conflict of interest. You should make it illegal and criminal for those in public life or government to benefit from government contracts or any public assets. Elected representatives must be warned that they need to ensure clean dealings and disclose any conflict of interest, or they will end up like several Ministers in the UPA did- on the wrong side of the law. Bureaucrats and staff in city government agencies including Commissioner- BBMP must be held accountable for corruption and/or negligence where these cases are detected.
5. Stop Rewarding law breakers through schemes like Akrama Sakrama: The misuse of land and dealings in land lie at the crux of corrupt politics in Bengaluru. With legislations like the Akrama Sakrama, the Government is encouraging and actively rewarding this culture of corruption. With the Akrama Sakrama in its current form, the message sent is amply clear: It is better to be a law-breaker than a law-abiding citizen. I have repeatedly urged you to consider a revised proposal for Akrama Sakrama that ensures it's only for the poor and not the builders. If the Government is in genuinely concerned about the poor, it must revisit the Akrama Sakrama Scheme to ensuring a strong qualification criteria to ensure only the poor and truly deserving benefit. BWSSB and BESCOM are similarly being looted by pilferage by many politically connected projects. The Government must conduct an audit of these leakages and pilferages, because law abiding citizens are ending up paying for these acts of corruption.
6. Conduct BBMP Elections on time -City and citizens deserves

good elected corporators. Trifurcation is neither the solution to the city's corruption nor its Governance ills. Trifurcation is not to be used as an excuse to delay BBMP elections. If it is sought to be done, there will be resistance to this from citizenry and people will not remain silent to political manipulation and tricks being played by political parties.

I urge you to meet your promise of good governance and initiate these changes to clean up Bengaluru. Recent developments have signaled a perceptible change in politics in our country, a gradual shift towards a political system where the corrupt simply have no place. This kind of corruption is no longer acceptable in a new political system. As recent history has shown, even a former Prime Minister and senior ministers cannot escape the citizens' desire to rid themselves of corruption.

I look forward to your early response on this

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

25

## Letter to the Governor of Karnataka on Delay of BBMP Elections

9th April, 2015

Excellency,

**Bengalureans should not be denied their Constitutional Right to timely elections**

Over the past few weeks, there have been attempts by the Siddaramaiah Government to delay or defer the election to the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP), which, according to constitutional mandates, was to be held on or before April 22, 2015. Such a move creates a situation where Bengalureans will be denied an opportunity to have a democratically elected city council and instead will be subject to a municipal administrator controlled by the Chief Minister and the State Government - reinforcing a perception that this is being done to further propagate the rampant culture of ad-hocism, discretion and corruption in governance.

Needless to say, denying our citizens an opportunity to vote, denies them their fundamental right to have their say and elect new corporators to govern the local bodies. Despite publication of census figures 2013, the State Government has deliberately failed to take up the task of delimitation of wards, which again is another ruse for the Government to defer the BBMP elections.

Article 243-U of the Constitution of India in unequivocal terms mandates that elections to a municipal corporation shall be conducted and completed before the expiry of its duration i.e., a period of five years. It further mandates that even in the event of the appointment of an administrator, elections to municipal corporations shall be conducted within the said five year period. Consequently, it is constitutionally impermissible to defer the BBMP elections, on the ground of trifurcation or on any other ground whatsoever.

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has unequivocally declared the above position and indicated in the case of Kishansing Tomar (2006) that elections to a local body should necessarily be conducted and completed before the expiry of five years as contemplated under Article 243-U except in exceptional circumstances such as natural calamities.

In the last 2 years, this Government has done little to start a genuine effort of addressing the real problems of the city, including rampant corruption and conflicts of interest. Even the effort at constituting the Metropolitan Planning Committee under Article 243-ZE of the Constitution was a delayed process.

The inaction of the Government in holding BBMP elections has been frowned upon by the High Court of Karnataka. A Single Judge of the High Court has by her order dated March 30, 2015 directed the State to complete the process of elections to BBMP on or before May 30, 2015. The High Court has further directed

that the State Government shall publish a notification regarding rotation of seats for reserved categories on or before April 13, 2015.

### **Trifurcation: An Excuse to Delay BBMP Elections**

The Government is attempting to use the proposed trifurcation of BBMP as an excuse to delay BBMP elections. It is equally preposterous that those in Government claim that the trifurcation was a part of the party's manifesto which is being honoured. This only begs the question- why didn't the Government ensure this was done much earlier rather than the haste it resorts to now? Why did the Government not propose the trifurcation 6 months ago if it harboured the same concerns for the city it now espouses?

Given the weight of evidence against benefits of trifurcation, the haste shown by the Government conveys the truth - an intention to delay BBMP elections. If one needed any proof of this, consider how it attempted to promulgate an Ordinance.

After deciding on an Ordinance in a hushed meeting, the Cabinet mystically cancelled a press briefing, a routine that follows any Cabinet meeting! Similarly, keeping with its set pattern of only providing lip-service to any consultative process, by completely disregarding recommendations of a three-member BBMP restructuring committee it set up, specially to consult on the move! While well-meaning citizens, RWAs and NGOs made representations to the Committee, none them were considered by the Government, which set up the Committee in the first place! BBMP was created by an amalgamation of the existing city corporation with a whole host of neighbouring city municipal councils. One cannot fathom the reasons for an emergent action of trifurcation dehors consultations.

The entire notification of the Reservation List too, is erroneous, pointing to the lackadaisical approach of the Government. It has

made a slapdash decision to reserve 50% of seats for women, in the guise of positive reinforcements to ensure women corporators are adequately represented. The ad-hoc nature of identifying these reserved constituencies though, reveals the handiwork of those in Government. Even a cursory look at the reservation list reveals that most reserved constituencies are those where sitting corporators are from rival parties- corporators who will lose their seats in the upcoming polls by virtue of this reservation. This however is a calculated move that ensures Government wins both ways. Were anyone to go to court questioning the reservation list, court proceedings would delay the elections, ultimately allowing the Government to further its agenda.

### **Trifurcation Ordinance impinges on Judicial Process**

The proposal of the Government to promulgate an Ordinance to trifurcate BBMP and on that pretext, delay elections to BBMP, is unconstitutional and impinges upon judicial process and independence of the judiciary. A Single Judge of the High Court of Karnataka has on March 30, 2015 directed the State to conduct and complete the entire electoral process for the BBMP elections on or before May 30, 2015. The Hon'ble Court has rejected the arguments of the State that elections to the BBMP could be deferred owing to the proposed trifurcation. The State has preferred an Appeal to the Division Bench of the High Court. Even before the Appeal is considered by the judiciary, the State is attempting to override a judicial decision through an Ordinance, which action is per se unconstitutional and is an incursion on the judicial power of the Hon'ble Court. His Excellency the Governor as the protector of the Constitution in the State, ought not to subscribe his assent to such an Ordinance.

### **Bengaluru needs reforms and transparency not trifurcation**

BBMP is already divided into 198 wards as administrative and

governance units. A sincere Government would focus on ensuring reach of public services and infrastructure to each of these 198 wards directly. Common sense tells us with 198 wards, there is no need for any other restructuring or division.

The Government should focus on real problems of Bengaluru - rampant corruption, a blatant misuse of contracts for private enrichment, numerous instances of administrative discretion being used to benefit vested interests at the cost of citizens and a total lack of accountability of city municipal agencies. Adding to this, is the lack of a code of conduct amongst the class of elected representatives and bureaucrats who have on innumerable occasions, demonstrated a clear conflict of interest in the disposal of public assets. These are core issues that confront the city and none of which are likely to be resolved if the city is divided into smaller units. In fact, the Government's solution of trifurcation is worse than the malady it hopes to cure, as it increases the cost of governance and creates turfs of vested interests.

The problems that Bengalureans face are a result of years of negligence and can only be solved by deep rooted reforms in the way the city government serves the people of all 198 wards including starting consultation through the MPC for a metropolitan regional development plan. Real reforms instead of trifurcation!

### **Trifurcation is deeply flawed and creates more problems**

Trifurcation has another significant negative impact. It creates three structures, increasing costs of Governance and dividing Bengaluru into three pockets of very different economic viability, without understanding the implications of such action on the citizens that would be forced to be in these three pockets. The three new corporations will just be pockets of economic haves and have-nots where a resource-rich corporation will house enclaves of prosperity, while resource-starved corporations will be unable

to provide basic services to citizens. Look to New Delhi for proof. The Delhi Corporation was similarly trifurcated in 2011. However, the municipalities suffering from unequal revenues are being considered for a re-merger now. Bengaluru can surely foresee a similar future if this trifurcation is done in such haste.

Trifurcation is not a solution to any of the problems and challenges of the city. It is simply a smokescreen hiding the real political intent delay BBMP elections.

I appeal to the Governor to return the Ordinance, direct the Government to comply with the directions of the Hon'ble High Court and ensure that BBMP elections are conducted and completed on or before May 30, 2015.

Very truly yours,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Vajubhai Vala,  
Governor of Karnataka,  
Raj Bhavan,  
Raj Bhavan Road,  
Bengaluru 560 001.

## Letter to the BBMP Commissioner Regarding Violations of RMP 2015

23rd April, 2015

Dear Shri Naik,

I am writing to you with reference to a representation from the Namma Bengaluru Foundation (NBF) and the Bengaluru Residents' Associations' Confederation Ensemble (BRACE) about commercial licenses issued by the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) in residential areas of Bengaluru, in violation of the Revised Master Plan (RMP) 2015.

The letter dated February 27th 2015, addressed to the Additional Chief Secretary to the Government of Karnataka and a copy marked to me (enclosed herewith), has highlighted several instances of illegal commercial developments in residential areas. It alleges that despite

amendments to the RMP 2015, basis a Public Interest Litigation filed by citizen groups, that stated that no fresh commercial activity will be allowed in residential main and residential mixed zones if abutting roads are forty feet or less in width, and an affidavit to this effect being filed by the Commissioner of the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) before the High Court, the BBMP continued to permit the establishment of commercial concerns in certain residential areas in Bengaluru, in violation of the amended RMP 2015 and the affidavit of the BDA.

The letter details addresses of several of these illegal commercial developments constructed in violation of the RMP 2015. It further alleges that the BBMP has failed to initiate meaningful action against these illegalities despite several attempts by citizens to bring it to their notice. These allegations point out that the BBMP, in permitting and indeed encouraging such illegal commercial establishments, has clearly acted against the interests of citizens. These actions of the BBMP convey a clear intention to allow such violations with a view to benefit private commercial and construction interests, without any regard for the welfare of the citizens of Bengaluru.

As you take over as the new Commissioner of the BBMP, you will be aware that the misuse of official information, abuse of office, conflict of interest and the misuse of public resources (including fraud and misappropriation) are robbing citizens of Bengaluru of basic city services. Considering this, the facts and circumstances presented indicate that it is a matter of utmost importance that the issue of these violations be investigated thoroughly. As the new Commissioner of the BBMP, I urge to ensure immediate and urgent investigation on the matter. I further urge you to institute an enquiry into the reasons why Revised Master Plan was violated to accommodate commercial interest over public interest in each of the stated commercial concerns which are violative of the RMP 2015.

**I look forward to your response on this issue**

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri G. Kumar Naik, IAS

Commissioner ,

BBMP,

Bengaluru.

CC: Shri T M Vijay Bhasakar, IAS, Administrator,  
Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike, Bengaluru.

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## Letter to the Minister of Environment & Forests on Growing Risk to Bengaluru Lakes Due to Real Estate Projects

30th April, 2015

Dear Prakash ji,

**Sub: Growing risk to ecologically and environmentally sensitive areas in Bengaluru due to real estate projects**

I am writing to you regarding the growing risk to Bengaluru by real estate projects on ecologically and environmentally sensitive areas like lakebeds, catchment areas around lakes, and valley zones.

The city of Bengaluru is not located on a river bank and therefore the water needs of its 1 crore plus population and ground water levels depend largely on a network of lakes and underground water sources. These lakes are a part of the cascading chain, developed

naturally and over many years to take care of Bengaluru and its ecology.

Several commercial developments have encroached or coming up on various lakes like Hebbal Lake, Bellandur Lake, Nagasettiahalli Lake Byrasandara, Iblur, Chikkalsandra and Venkatanarayanakere. These large projects are being constructed often at a huge cost to the natural hydrology of the city and surrounding environment. This rampant, unchecked corruption by the vested interests has resulted in frustrated citizens filing Public Interest Litigations (PILs) seeking the intervention of the National Green tribunal and other courts.

For example, in the case of the Bellandur lake in the south east quadrant of the city, post the initial environmental clearances for this project given by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in 2011, a team from MoEF visited the site to monitor compliance to the Environmental clearance conditions gave an adverse report about the non-compliance of conditions by the project promoters. Despite the adverse report given 15 months back, in August 2013, no action taken against the project.

As the watchdog of the Environment, the Ministry of Environment and Forests must step in to ensure the lakes of Bengaluru do not fall victim to reckless commercialization that benefit vested interests. Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, states that, the Central Government may, in the exercise of its powers and performance of its functions under this act, issue directions, for among other things, the closure, prohibition or regulation of any industry, operation or process to any person, officer or any authority and such person, officer or authority shall be bound to comply with such directions.

The issue here is both about the water needs and the long term environmental impact of such unchecked and rampant development, my city Bengaluru could be impacted significantly if

the large projects, which violate all environmental norms and, are allowed to come up on city's lake beds.

The ministry must conduct an audit and review of all clearances and approvals given to lakebed and ecologically sensitive projects in Bengaluru on an urgent basis, to ensure that no clearances and approvals have been given to these private projects on illegal or corrupt grounds. It must conduct a study on the compliance for environmental conditions of such projects and must make such reports public and take appropriate action against those projects that have failed to comply with the mandatory environmental compliance conditions.

The MoEF must additionally, also ensure strict action against those officials who has been negligent, either by ensuring clearances without due diligence, or by failing to adequately monitor compliance. Such measures will be a first step towards ensuring the natural heritage of Bengaluru does not become an unfortunate casualty of vested interests within MoEF and outside.

I look forward to your immediate action so that the ecologically and environmentally sensitive areas like lakebeds, catchment areas around lakes, and valley zones are safeguarded from projects that receive approvals on illegal or corrupt grounds.

Yours Sincerely

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Prakash Javadekar

Hon'ble Minister of Environment, Forest & Climate Change

Government of India

New Delhi

## Zero Hour Mention to Protect Lakes & Lake Beds In Bengaluru

Rajya Sabha

7th May, 2015

Sir,

I would like to draw the attention of the House to the growing risk to environmentally sensitive areas like lakes and valley zones in Bengaluru due to rampant real estate projects and increasing pollution due to untreated sewage.

The city of Bengaluru is not located on a river bank and therefore the water needs of its One Crore plus population and ground water levels depend largely on a network of lakes and underground water sources. These lakes are a part of a cascading chain of lakes, developed naturally and over many years to take care of Bengaluru and its ecology. Recent Varthur lake incident of rampant effluent discharge is an example.

Several commercial developments have encroached or coming up on Hebbal Lake, Bellandur lake, Varthur Lake, Nagasettihalli Lake, Byrasandara, Iblur, Chikkalasanda and Venkatanarayanakere amongst others. Worse, effluents from these developments and dumping of other pollutants have posed a huge risk to biodiversity in these lakes. Large projects are being constructed often at a huge cost to the natural hydrology of the city and surrounding environment. This rampant, unchecked corruption by vested interests and increasing levels of pollution have resulted in frustrated citizens filing Public Interest Litigations (PILs) seeking the intervention of the National Green Tribunal and other courts.

For example, in the case of the Bellandur lake in the south east quadrant of the city, post the initial environmental clearances for this project given by the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in 2011, a team from MoEF visited the site to monitor compliance to the Environmental clearance conditions gave an adverse report about the non-compliance of conditions by the project promoters. Despite the adverse report given 15 months back, in August 2013, no action taken against the project.

The risk posed by the rampant encroachment is only amplified by the unabated pollution of these lakes from the untreated sewage from these real estate projects and other sources. For example, in the case of the Varthur lake illegal construction and dumping in and on the perimeter of the lake are dealing a huge blow to the freshwater ecosystem and biodiversity leading one of largest water bodies in the city being declared a “dead” lake. No government agency has surveyed the encroachments or pollution levels.

Sir, as the watchdog of the Environment, the Ministry of Environment and Forests must step in to ensure the lakes of Bengaluru do not fall victim to reckless commercialization and unchecked pollution. Section 5 of the Environment Protection Act, 1986, states that, the Central Government may, in the exercise of

its powers and performance of its functions under this Act, issue directions, for among other things, the closure, prohibition or regulation of any industry, operation or process to any person, officer or any authority and such person, officer or authority shall be bound to comply with such directions.

Sir, the issue here is both about the water needs and the long term environmental impact of such unchecked pollution and rampant development. My city Bengaluru could be impacted significantly if the large projects, which violate all environmental norms and, are allowed to come up on city's lakes and lake beds.

MoEF is responsible for this issue. Further, the vision of this government of creating smart and sustainable cities requires the MoEF to play watchdog, regulate and prevent such rampant violations and resultant pollution.

On behalf of the people of Bengaluru who are agitated on this issue, I request the MoEF to conduct an audit and review of all clearances and approvals given to lakebed and ecologically sensitive projects in Bengaluru on an urgent basis, to ensure that no clearances and approvals have been given to these private projects on illegal or corrupt grounds. It must conduct a study on the compliance of environmental conditions of such projects and must make such reports public and take appropriate action against those projects that have failed to comply with the mandatory environmental compliance conditions. I further urge the MoEF to conduct an audit on the pollution levels in each of Bengaluru's lakes and investigate the causes for these increasing pollution levels. Strict penalties must be imposed on real estate companies and other agencies found discharging untreated effluents into lakes.

The MoEF must additionally, also ensure strict action against those officials who has been negligent, either by ensuring clearances without due diligence, by failing to adequately monitor compliance,

or allowing the discharge of untreated sewage into lakes. Such measures will be a first step towards ensuring the natural heritage of Bengaluru does not become an unfortunate casualty of vested interests and pollution within MoEF and outside.

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Underage Drinking

16th June, 2015

Shri Siddaramiah Avare,

I write to you in your capacity as the Chief Minister as well as the State Excise Minister. I have, in the recent past, received representations from several parents of young school children and school teachers expressing their concern and drawing attention to the increasing number of incidents where restaurants, lounges and bars have been found to be serving alcohol to under-aged patrons. Popular establishments in the city including *Bangalore Brew works*, *The Glasshouse*, *Skyye* and *The Social*, have allegedly been serving alcohol to customers under 21 years of age in clear violation of rules and regulations.

I had previously raised this matter in my letter to the Excise Commissioner dated 26th December 2013 (enclosed) and pointed to large scale evidence of such violations and urged Government to take immediate steps to ensure stricter enforcement of the law. However, several up-scale lounges, restaurants and bars in the city continue to flout rules with impunity and are found serving liquor to under-aged patrons including school children in some cases.

It is the responsibility of the Excise Department to ensure the proper enforcement of the law to prevent such violations and further ensure establishments serving alcohol are in strict compliance of the same. Such establishments must be ordered to strictly enforce rules and regulations governing alcohol consumption and request valid identification of age from patrons who appear under-aged.

Serving liquor to the underaged is not just a blatant violation of law but a crime against children. Restaurants, bars and other commercial establishments found to be flouting rules must be brought to book, and penalised to ensure the Government sends a strong message of zero tolerance to both, under-age drinking and those indulging children in this illegal act. I urge the Government to undertake thorough audits of such establishments and conduct surprise checks to ensure strict enforcement of the law. The failure to do so and check these repeated violations should result in officers and officials being held accountable under the law. In the event that the Government/Excise Ministry does not implement the law, I will be forced to seek other remedies to ensure both, compliance, and holding accountable those who are failing in their duty.

I look forward to your response and urgent action on this important matter.

Yours sincerely

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah  
Hon'ble Chief Minister  
Government of Karnataka

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## Letter to the Excise Commissioner on Underage Drinking

19th June, 2015

Dear Shri Umashankar,

This is further to my letter to Chief Minister of Karnataka dated, 16 June 2015 (a copy was marked to you) regarding the issue of several restaurants and bars in Bengaluru flouting rules and serving alcohol to under-aged customers, I request you to issue a circular / notice to all the Pubs, bars, restaurants and other commercial establishments to strictly refrain from serving alcohol to under-aged patrons.

Many parents have approached me about this problem and blatant violation of rules by many pubs/restaraunts in Bengaluru and hence my intervention on this issue. To help parents report violations,

I have initiated an exclusive email-hotline - protectourchildren@rajeev.in to report cases against pubs, bars and restaurants in the city where children and minors under the legally permissible age of 21 years, are served alcohol.

The Excise department being the department of the Government that oversees these laws and its enforcement must act to address this and I hope you will immediately issue this circular and follow it up with periodic audits and inspections of bars and pubs.

Needless to say, I will stay focussed on this issue and will forward any violations reported to you for your action.

Thanking You,

Yours sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri SR Umashankar, IAS,  
Commissioner, Department of Excise,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Bengaluru.

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Government-Citizen Partnership to Protect our Children

24th June, 2015

Shri Siddaramiah Avare,

I am writing to thank you for taking cognizance of my letter dated 16th June 2015, highlighting the increasing incidents of under-aged patrons being served alcohol in bars, restaurants and pubs in the city. Serving liquor to the under aged is not just a blatant violation of law but a crime against children, and I am glad that the issue has received the attention of your Government and the Excise Commissioner.

Since the lack of adequate manpower within the Excise Department is an impediment to strict enforcement, I believe there is a need to create a Government-Citizen partnership to protect our children. In this regard, I urge you to consider the following recommendations:

1. **Excise Department/Department of Women and Child Development should conduct surprise periodic and regular checks/ inspections of establishments serving alcohol:** This will ensure strict enforcement of the law. Restaurants, bars and other commercial establishments found to be flouting rules must be brought to book, and penalised to ensure the Government sends a strong message of zero tolerance to both, under-age drinking and those indulging children in this illegal act.
2. **Start a joint Excise Department / Department of Women and Child Development Hotline where E-mails and calls can be received on violation:** This will involve parent groups, Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) and other citizens in the enforcement process who will call/ mail to report such violations. I have started a similar hotline protectourchildren@rajeev.in to allow parents and citizens to write in anonymously and report / make complaints on bars, restaurants and pubs in the city which serve alcohol to patrons under 21 years of age. The hotline has received several complaints some of which I am attaching herewith for your consideration and action.

Only a Government-Citizen partnership will help tackle this menace of liquor served to the under-aged that has for too long, been actively supported and encouraged by restaurants, bars and other commercial establishments. I urge the Government and the Excise Department to evolve such a partnership to prevent harm and protect our children from this menace.

I look forward to your response on the issue.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Karnataka ,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bengaluru

Copy to:

- 1) **Smt Umarshri**, Hon'ble Minister for Women and Child Development, Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore
- 2) **Dr Rajneesh Goel**, IAS, Principal Secretary to Government, Women and Child Development Department, MS Building, Bangalore
- 3) **Shri SR Umashankar**, IAS, Excise Commissioner, Government of Karnataka.

## Letter to the Chief Minister on CAG Audit on BBMP Finances

8th October, 2015

Shri Siddaramiah Avare,

**Subject: Request Ordering a CAG Audit into BBMP Accounts**

I write this letter in continuation to my letters written to you previously on 16th December 2013 and 2nd April 2015 about the problems facing our city Bengaluru and in particular the rampant mal-governance that is causing these problems.

Most of the problems facing the city today – bad roads, inadequate garbage management capacities etc. are being blamed on lack of financial resources. In December 2013, I had highlighted the issue

of loopholes in revenue collection and leakages and I am writing again to draw your attention to the rampant and deliberate mismanagement of the BBMP Finances resulting in thousands of crores of rupees of its revenues including tax collected from citizens being siphoned off and not being used for the development of our city.

It has been brought to my notice by several concerned citizens and NGOs that hundreds of crores of tax receipts and revenues collected by BBMP have not been credited into the main bank accounts but deposited in miscellaneous accounts by some officials in BBMP. It is learnt that over 900 bank accounts are being operated by the BBMP officials. Such a large number of bank accounts for one Institution located within the same city calls for inquiry as to how these accounts are opened and operated in various public sector and private sector Banks. I understand that subsequently these accounts are being consolidated into 25 accounts, but the issue of the performance in the past of these over 900 accounts remains unanswered or unquestioned.

It is clear that multiplicity of accounts and failure to introduce Accounting standards such as the National Municipal Accounting Manual or the Karnataka Municipal Accounting and Budget Rules are being used by some unscrupulous officials in BBMP to manipulate and misuse the Palike's funds.

There are reports of large sums of tax collected being illegally deposited in private banks and in some cases in banks outside Bengaluru, for personal benefit by some officials. Whether it's in the BDA, BBMP, RDPR or other government departments, there seems to be a pervading culture of illegally parking public funds by corrupt officials thereby depriving the exchequer of interests on deposits and city of the funds required for its development. This is a matter of extreme concern warranting immediate action on your part as Finance Minister of the State.

It is shocking that BBMP finances have not been audited for years and last internal audit was done in 2011. As you are aware the last Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) audit of BBMP was conducted for the year 2009-10 which unsurprisingly exposed large scale financial irregularities. In its report No 5 of 2014 tabled in the Legislature on 14/7/2014, CAG cast serious aspersions on the BBMP accounting and financial practices. Shortfall in certification of accounts by Chartered Accountants during the years 2008-13 has been observed by the CAG. The deficiencies and omissions in the annual accounts of the Palike have been observed by the CAG in several Paragraphs including paras 3.1 to 3.17, 4.5 and 4.6 etc.

As Finance Minister and Chief Minister, you will agree that financial and accounting transparency and integrity are corner stones to running a clean administration. There is a strong stench of malfeasance around BBMP and other agencies financial and accounting dealings. Hence, a special audit to bring the culprits to book and locate the diverted funds that belong to the citizens, is urgently required.

The resources collected by BBMP and other agencies constitute public funds and any mismanagement of these constitute acts of Corruption which is prosecutable under various sections of law including Prevention of Corruption Act.

There is enough evidence that there is widespread revenue leakage and siphoning. I have written repeatedly to you to intervene and clean up this situation prevailing in Bengaluru but you have chosen to do nothing thus far. As a Member of Parliament representing Bengaluru, I call upon you and your government to do the right thing and to immediately order a CAG Audit into the BBMP finances, with special focus on reconciliation between receipts issued and actual revenue receipts from 2010 failing which I will be constrained to take legal recourse in the matter.

Look forward to your urgent and positive response.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramiah

Hon'ble Chief Minister

Government of Karnataka

## Letter to the Minister of Bengaluru Development & Town Planning on Rampant Corruption & Vested Interests

5th November, 2015

Dear Shri George,

Please accept my best wishes on assuming the responsibility of Minister for Bengaluru's Development and Town Planning.

You are no doubt aware, that Bengaluru as a city is vital to our state Karnataka, being a gateway for investments and economic activity. Therefore, its health and orderly growth – which is the only guarantor of its sustainable and planned growth and expansion - is even more critical.

You are aware that I have been engaged with the Government, ever since it took office - on the issue of the chaos and decline of our City and the need for reforms in Governance and in its Institutions

and Agencies. I am writing to you with a request that you initiate the steps necessary to revive our city. As the first Minister who is in charge of the city and all its agencies, you have the opportunity to implement the much required changes and reforms.

Firstly, you are aware there are many Organizations, Citizen Groups and Citizens that are all attempting to in different ways contribute to solving the problems of Bengaluru. They are all proposing different ideas and suggestions. While this is a good sign of robust citizen involvement, it is for the Government to channel and funnel these suggestions through a proper Planning perspective. Otherwise, selectively and non-transparently implementing ideas could mean that public money is being spent on ad-hoc ideas. The Tendersure roads are an example of an ill-advised and poorly thought through spend of public money without a clear comprehensive plan for that zone, leading to legitimate questions of motivations behind the projects location.

I have listed here issues that need urgent solutions planned for:

- 1. Proper Long Term Planning for the city:** Bengaluru needs a proper statutory long term plan, including a financial plan. BDA is currently working on a plan, but that process needs to be made more transparent and must involve citizens and NGOs, before it is put up-to the Metropolitan Planning Committee (MPC) where again it must be discussed transparently. The MPC itself must be reconstituted with proper representation of elected representatives and Experts.

- 2. Improve revenues and investment capacities**

- 2a. Clean up tax evasion and revenue leakages:**

There is rampant tax and revenue evasion in agencies of Bengaluru. Comprehensive financial reforms with a focus on tax collection and efficient use of public moneys is a priority for development of Bengaluru. A multi-year financing plan is

also needed. KUIDFC and other agencies can be tasked with formulating it. Very inefficient use of financial resources with a highly corrupt and compromised contracting system driven more by vested interests rather than plans, has characterized the BBMP.

The Kataria Committee Report pointed to financial irregularities in BBMP from 2007 to 2015 including scams of Rs. 4,000 Crore in areas of solid waste management, allotment of work codes for civil work, advertisements, transfer of khatas, revenue recovery, and repayment of loans among others.

BBMP's contracting and use of money must become more transparent, competitive and efficient. Auditing and Disclosures need to be introduced and BBMP must be brought under the Karnataka Municipal Corporations Act, as other municipalities.

I have already supported a call by citizen groups for an immediate audit of BBMP accounts that have not been audited for 5 years and have also written to the Chief Minister requesting him to order a CAG Audit into BBMP Accounts. As you are aware the last CAG Audit of BBMP for 2009-10 exposed large scale financial irregularities. In its report No.5 of 2014 tabled in the Legislature on 14/7/2014, CAG cast serious aspersions on the BBMP accounting practices and observed deficiencies and omissions in the annual accounts mentioned in several paragraphs including paras 3.2 to 3.17, 4.5 and 4.6 etc. (Letter to CM is attached for reference)

## **2b. Improve Government resources from PPPs and monetization of assets**

Presently, Government assets like Land and buildings are used not to maximize financial resources, instead to favour vested interests. Land encroached by commercial interests must be

taken back and wherever public land is leased or sold, it must be at market rates. These will improve city's finances.

### **3. Start a Bengaluru.Gov website**

Create a citizens portal and integrate all services and Agencies on that making the website, a one-stop portal for all Government – Citizen Interface and feedback from citizens to the Government. The Zonal planning and financing consultations can also be conducted using the Bengaluru.Gov portal. Various NGOs and their suggestions can be showcased to all citizens before city Government decides on them.

### **4. Implement “Citizens’ Charter to Save Bengaluru”**

Recently, the Namma Bengaluru Foundation partnering Citizen Groups and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) has drawn up a Citizens’ Charter in its fight to reclaim Bengaluru and made the following demands which has been supported by many elected representatives including me:

1. Citizen-centric Governance that demands RWAs and citizen participation in Ward Committees
2. A Corruption-free and Transparent BBMP – seeking the BBMP and other civic bodies to come clean on financials through a complete audit of accounts
3. Statutory Planning & Better Coordination between parastatals and implementation of the Metropolitan Planning Committee in letter and spirit.
4. Zero Tolerance for the prevailing Corruption – prohibiting builders and contractors from destroying environmentally sensitive areas like lakes and enforcing a strict code of conduct for prosecution against erring officials in the system

Today, Citizens, RWAs and investors are frustrated with the rampant corruption, non-transparency, flawed contracts and vested interests that are driving the city. Frustration has led them to come out on various platforms calling upon the government to act decisively and without delay.

I urge you to act in a visible and decisive manner so that Bengaluru's citizens long dismayed by absence of good governance no longer have to resort to activism through agitations or PILs for the betterment of their own city.

I remain available to you for anything in regard of this letter and development of the city.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri K J George,

Hon'ble Minister for Bengaluru Development,

& Town Planning,

Vidhana Soudha,

Bengaluru.

## Letter to the Minister of Bengaluru Development & Town Planning on Development of the City

3rd December, 2015

Dear Shri George,

Thank you for calling a meeting of elected representatives to seek inputs and suggestions on Bengaluru's development.

As you are aware, I have already written to you on 05 November, 2015 outlining the priorities for Bengaluru in the hope that you will initiate steps necessary to revive our city (copy of letter attached for your reference).

As the first Minister responsible for the development and planning of Bengaluru, I would like to re-emphasize, through this letter, that the solution for the city's problems is not ad-hoc, piecemeal announcements of infrastructure projects, rather a systemic clean-

up and reforming of a highly corrupted and vested-interest driven group of city agencies. This kind of reform, in addition to aligning Government to citizens' and the city's growth needs, will also ensure financial capacity of the city will improve to attract other forms of funding to invest in infrastructure and services for our citizens.

I urge you to act on this opportunity and act in a visible and decisive manner in the interest of Bengaluru and its citizens.

I remain available to assist the Government in any way in this regard.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Encl.: Copy of my letter to you dated 05 November, 2015

Shri K J Goerge,  
Hon'ble Minister for Bengaluru Development,  
& Town Plannig,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bengaluru.

## Letter to the Home Minister of Karnataka on Reviewing Decisions of Koramangala's Traffic

25th January, 2016

Dear Dr Parameshwara,

I write this to draw your attention to the impact of traffic management on traditional residential neighbourhoods like Koramangala. I have earlier brought this to the attention to Shri Saleem, Addl. Commissioner of Police (Traffic) that his new traffic management rules are creating havoc and safety issues to many families living in these neighbourhoods.

I have received several petitions from Residents of Kormanagala about how such diversions of traffic consisting of multi-utility vehicles, cabs, cars and two wheelers - done without consulting the local residents nor keeping in mind their safety and concerns,

has resulted in massive traffic inflows to their areas putting to risk the safety and movement of the residents, especially the children, women and senior citizens and causing severe hardships. Such disruption of otherwise peaceful residential areas is unacceptable and must not be allowed to continue.

Routing of point to point traffic of Hosur and Sarjapur roads through residential areas in order to improve traffic performance is unimaginative and unacceptable way to address traffic issues. Disruption of residential areas and putting lives of children, elderly and families at risk to speeding traffic is unconscionable and reflects apathy for citizens/residents who are all proud taxpaying citizens.

I am writing to caution you that this situation will surely lead to mishap in the near future - I pray that it is not the case, but this current solution is tragedy waiting to happen. I assure you that your government will held to account in this case.

There is a demand amongst people of our city to hold Governments and administrative departments of the city accountable to safety, law and order and loss of lives. Recent decisions of traffic police are falling under that category and I assure you that I will not hesitate to make accountable those who will put at risk the safety and lives of those living in residential areas by their ad-hoc decisions.

The Traffic Police must find alternative ways to manage smooth passage of traffic other than simply diverting them through the neighbourhoods and creating chaos and risking the safety of local residents. These are shortcuts with no lasting solutions to the traffic problems and are detrimental to the safety of the local residents.

I trust you will use this letter to review these recent decisions and stop the traffic flow into residential areas like Koramangala and other neighbourhoods.

Sincerely,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Dr Parameshwara,  
Home Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Bengaluru.

Copy to:  
K.J George,  
Minister for Bengaluru Development,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Bengaluru.

Shri Saleem,  
IPS Additional Commissioner of Police,  
Traffic,  
Bengaluru.

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## Letter to the Civil Aviation Minister on AAI

29th February, 2016

Dear Shri Gajapathi Raju,

**Sub.: Serious and Repeated Breaches by Airports Authority of India (AAI) and potential to cripple operations of HAL, jeopardizing defence preparedness of the nation**

I draw your attention to the serious and repeated breaches of the Notification bearing No.SO 84E issued on January 14, 2010, by the Ministry of Civil Aviation under Section 9-A of the Aircraft Act, 1934 (the “Notification”). I have earlier brought this to the attention of the Chairman – Airports Authority of India (AAI) via a telephonic conversation, and he had promised to look into it.

Pursuant to the Notification, Airports Authority of India (AAI) was conferred with the responsibility of issuing No Objection Certificates (NOCs) on behalf of the Central Government in respect of civilian airports in India, including state government airports and private airports where civil commercial flights are operated. For Defence aerodromes, the Defence authorities were conferred with the responsibility of issuing NOCs, subject to further restrictions or conditions which may be stipulated by such authorities.

At the outset, I would like to draw your attention to the fact that conferring authority on AAI to issue NOCs in respect of the civilian aerodromes conflicts with the principle of independence and separation of powers, from the perspective of a Regulator and Regulatee. AAI operates a large number of airports in the country. Being an operator itself, it cannot be expected to exercise the powers conferred under the Notification independently. The powers under the Notification, insofar as it relates to civilian aerodromes, should therefore be exercised by the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), in its capacity as the Regulator of civil aviation activities in the country.

Further, although the Notification confers powers on Defence authorities for issuing NOCs in respect of Defence aerodromes, insofar as it relates to the HAL Airport in Bengaluru, the power to issue NOCs is being exercised by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, which itself maintains and operates the airport. Consequently, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited exercises powers and functions of both the Operator and the Regulator. Unfortunately, this dichotomous situation has continued for long.

I, therefore, urge that remedial action be initiated in the matter so as to separate the Operator from the Regulator. In my opinion, for all civil aerodromes, the authority to issue NOCs must vest in the DGCA; and insofar as Defence aerodromes, the authority must

vest in the Ministry of Defence or the Indian Air Force, as the case may be.

In addition, and until a policy change as denoted above is initiated by you, I draw your further attention to the fact that even the Notification, as it stands, continues to be repeatedly breached. I am highlighting below a couple of incidents and occurrences in my city Bengaluru, which will demonstrate the flagrant violation of the Notification:

Mantri Techzone Private Limited, an affiliate of Mantri Developers, is in the process of establishing a massive superstructure admeasuring about 1.2 Crore sq.ft., on the banks of Agara Lake, which falls within the jurisdiction of the HAL Airport. Consequently, in accordance with the Notification, the power to issue a NOC regarding height clearance is conferred upon the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, and not AAI. Despite that, I understand that Mantri Developers has proceeded to obtain a NOC from AAI and begun construction activities. Such actions of AAI in issuing NOCs for construction in locations that fall within the jurisdiction of a Defence airport is grossly illegal.

Yet another case of gross violation is the superstructure being constructed by Raheja Developers through one of its affiliates, Chalet Hotels. The site of construction falls within the inner horizontal surface of the HAL Airport. The developer provided certain erroneous Mean Sea Level (MSL) parameters and obtained an NOC regarding height of the building from HAL. The height clearance exceeds permissible height by almost 22 metres.

A potential catastrophe was averted thanks to the vigilance shown by a few citizens of Bengaluru. I supported the citizens' demand for annulment of the NOC issued by HAL. To further strengthen my request, I also wrote to the then Defence Minister Mr. A.K. Anthony (letter enclosed), inviting his attention to the matter.

Thankfully, HAL later withdrew the NOC. I understand that the developer has challenged the withdrawal vide a writ petition in the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka and I refrain from elaborating or commenting further in that regard, given that the matter is *sub judice*.

However, one aspect of that litigation assumes significance. The Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka directed AAI to conduct a study and indicate if the construction put up by the developer in any manner impinges air safety and regular aircraft operations at HAL Airport. I understand that AAI has submitted a report to the Hon'ble High Court. Whilst it is in the absolute domain of the Hon'ble Court to consider such a report and pass appropriate orders in the litigation, I invite your attention to the fact that AAI, being a non-defence civilian organization, should not be conferred with the powers of conducting an aviation study with regard to Defence airports. In my view, AAI neither has the legal authority nor the functional capacity to conduct such a study.

This is an important case with the potential to cripple the operations of HAL and jeopardize the defence preparedness of the nation. It must be noted that Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, Bengaluru is the sole aircraft design and manufacturing organization in the country promoting a safe test flying environment, which is critical for our defence sector. HAL's flying operations include test-flying of experimental, unproven, developmental airplanes and helicopters. Height restrictions on surrounding buildings are imposed to ensure that there are no risk related elements that can interrupt the HAL's test-flying sorties and special landing exercises.

Given the aspects explained above, I urge you to examine this matter in an emergent manner and direct a detailed enquiry in this regard. It is extremely important that officers who have acted in violation of the Notification be held responsible and culpable for their actions and/or inactions. That apart, I also invite your

attention to the fact that the separation of powers between the Regulator and the Regulatee is an important aspect that needs to be constructed vis-a-vis the Notification and the appropriate amendments thereto ought to be introduced as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju,  
Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation,  
Government of India,  
New Delhi.

Encl.: Copy of my letter to Shri A. K. Antony, former Minister of Defence dated 17 September, 2013

Copy to:

1. Shri Narendra Modi, Hon'ble Prime Minister
2. Shri Manohar Parriker, Hon'ble Minister of Defence

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## Letter to the State Finance Commission for Devolution of Funds to ULBs

21st May, 2016

Dear Shri Chinnaswamy Avare,

**Subject: Culture of Audit and Accountability Necessary before  
Devolution of Funds to ULBs**

Urban Local Bodies are an important third layer in our 3-tier democracy. More financial resources are required in the ULBs to help revive declining cities all around the country. I have been extensively advocating for several years now the need for deep governance reforms, increased accountability and strengthening of institutions at the ULB level.

Recommendations of the 14th Finance Commission have granted more fiscal autonomy to States with the objective of ultimately benefitting the citizen. The Commission's recommendation for increased devolution of funds to 42 per cent has been accepted by the Centre. According to the increased allocation, Karnataka's share has gone up to 4.713 per cent from 4.328 per cent during the 13th FC, an addition of about Rs 8400 crore for 2015-16.

### **Reforms and the BBMP**

The objective of the 74th Constitutional Amendment Act is to strengthen the Urban Local Bodies wherein they are to function efficiently and effectively as autonomous entities to deliver services for economic development and social justice.

However, Urban Local Bodies are the most corrupt set-up today and an increased devolution of funds without checks and balances in the form of performance conditions for reforms will only lead to more looting of funds. The State Government and Finance Commission must ensure that ULBs are made accountable and transparent in executing their functions as trustees of public money and assets.

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is a statutory local government authority mandated to provide civic services and infrastructure facilities to the citizens of Bangalore. But the BBMP's record in particular spotlights rampant misuse of public resources - abuse of land; use of public money in wasteful & inflated projects and massive erosion of revenues as a further instance of corruption (details in Annexure 1). Thus, the question of accountability of the BBMP assumes great importance.

The BBMP in its budget for 2015-16 indicates that 37% of the revenues are from State and Central grants. Further, between financial years 2011-12 to 2014-15, the BBMP received grants of Rs 452.22 crore from the 13th Finance Commission besides Rs

3659.92 crore from State Government grants and additionally Rs 55.50 crore under JNNURM for Storm water drainage (details in Annexure 2).

While the city suffers from lack of basic amenities, more monies flowing to the BBMP from the State exchequer and enhanced Central devolution of funds will encourage further irregularities with the BBMP spending without any transparency and accountability.

Unless these issues are addressed, devolving enhanced funds to ULBs would be like putting more water in a leaking bucket helping people outside the bucket ie. vested interests rather than those inside the bucket ie. citizens.

### **Recommendations to the Commission for Laying Down Conditions for Devolution of Funds**

Devolution of funds from State to local governments is largely guided by the recommendations of the State Finance Commissions. Thus it is imperative that the 4th SFC lays special emphasis on **Devolution of Funds linked to Implementation of Reform Measures and Enhanced Accountability by ULB's.**

1. Mandating Annual Audit of Finances, Tax Revenues and Expenditures of ULBs, stipulating Ward wise Annual Audit and publishing of Audit Reports within the defined timeframe. In case of BBMP, it must efficiently widen the property tax net by identifying the new areas which have merged with the Palike and due to absence of which details, thousands of crores of tax revenues have been lost.
2. Approval of Multi-year Investment plan becoming statutory, legal and binding on ULBs including the BBMP. The Constitution's 74th amendment mandates cities to create a Metropolitan Planning Committee - a statutory body that is responsible for planning function in a transparent and consultative manner. The SFC should mandate the

implementation of MPC and ULBs should be bound to execute such plans. Citizen engagement should be mandatorily given greater prominence in planning new infrastructure and service delivery level assessments.

3. Ensuring Transparency in all Contracts by ULBs and Disclosure of Contract Terms and Conditions including mandatory disclosure of use of public assets through maintenance of an Assets Register.
4. The SFC should enable an environment of devolution that generates healthy competition between each ward, zone, ULB making them constantly strive towards continual improvement.
5. ULBs must put in place a mechanism to digitise and make available all data (including historical and legacy data), information, and plans on their programs and projects such as water supply and sewerage etc such that citizens are aware of these and can assess improvements.
6. Stipulating ULBs to adopt the National Municipal Accounting Manual or the Karnataka Municipal Accounting and Budget Rules and developing online Municipal Finance Information Systems.
7. A third party verification ie.an audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General, provisioned under Section 14(2) of the C&AG Act, 1971 must be mandated and the Government of Karnataka made responsible to execute such Audit periodically.

I request the Commission to give due consideration to the aspects mentioned above. As a Member of Parliament representing Bengaluru, I would urge the Commission to recognise it owes to citizens ensuring that State Government funding and/or devolution of funds to ULBs are conditional upon the ULBs, administrative machinery and the government addressing the issue of accountability.

I look forward to adequate safeguards incorporated in your recommendations to the Government of Karnataka such that ULBs are compelled to use public funds received as grants in the most judicious manner while maintaining accountability of the highest order.

Finally, I urge you to meet all Members of Parliament from Bangalore and consult them before finalising and submitting your recommendations to the Government of Karnataka.

Yours Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Chinnaswamy Avare,

Chairman,4th Karnataka State Finance Commission'

Khanija Bhavan, Racecourse Road,

Bangalore

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Implementation of NGT Order

1st June, 2016

Respected Chief Minister Avare,

As you may already be aware, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (the "NGT") in a petition moved by the civil society including socially concerned organizations such as Namma Bengaluru Foundation, has issued detailed directions pertaining to constructions around lakes, water bodies and raja kaluves. A copy of NGT's order dated 04.05.2016 in *Forward Foundation & Ors. v. State of Karnataka & Ors.*, (the "Order") is enclosed for your perusal. The NGT has taken cognizance of the extensive environmental degradation caused in and around lakes and water bodies in Bengaluru, by vested interests such as real estate lobbies, in concert with unscrupulous government servants. In the spirit

of upholding the rights of the citizenry to a clean, wholesome and pollution-free environment and planned development, the NGT has issued specific directions regarding buffer zones around water bodies and raja kaluves. The directions of the NGT need to be implemented in letter and spirit such that guaranteed constitutional rights to a clean environment may be safeguarded. Strict implementation of NGT's directions will also ensure that civil society is afforded a chance to enjoy what this city of gardens and lakes truly has to offer.

The NGT, in the interest of protecting the natural heritage of the city of Bengaluru has extended the territorial limits of the buffer zone for constructions around lakes, water bodies and raja kaluves and further declared such buffer zones as 'no construction zones'. The NGT has also directed that issuance of environmental clearances for all future constructions in the city have to mandatorily fulfill the conditions enumerated in the order so that further degradation of the city can be arrested. In addition to the buffer zones, the NGT has mandated that the State shall demarcate wetlands in strict compliance of the Wetlands Rules, 2010 and submit such proposals to the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) in a time-bound manner.

The impunity and bravado demonstrated by vested commercial interests, such as Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd., in encroaching 3.25 acres of lakebed for its SEZ project and issuance of Environment Clearances and Plan Sanctions to the builder, in blatant disregard of law demonstrate collusion between the real estate developer and government servants. It is beyond comprehension how officials in the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority and the KIADB, could issue environmental clearances and plan sanctions for constructions upon a lakebed extending to 3.25 acres. These facts beg a thorough investigation as to how government servants (including but not limited to officers at the SEIAA, KIADB and

BDA) could turn a blind eye to such extensive encroachment of lakebeds.

Given the above, I hereby urge you to –

- 1) Issue unambiguous and definite administrative instructions to the various ministries and departments that are involved in the administration of the city to strictly implement each of the directions contained in the NGT's order. I also urge you to review such implementation regularly, so that vested interests, which are fed solely by financial motives, do not get an opportunity to rob civil society of its valuable rights towards ensuring planned development and clean environment.
- 2) To initiate a detailed inquiry into the matter, identify the government servants, whose actions and omissions are culpable and launch criminal prosecution so that all erring and corrupt government servants and all colluding real estate developers are brought to justice.

Any delay or inaction will constrain the civil society to invoke the jurisdiction of courts and tribunals of competent jurisdiction to further enforce its rights.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah,

Hon'ble Chief Minister,

Government of Karnataka,

Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore

## Letter to the Minister of Environment & Forests on Implementation of NGT Order

1st June, 2016

Shri Prakashji,

As you may already be aware, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (the "NGT") in a petition moved by the civil society including socially concerned organizations such as Namma Bengaluru Foundation, has issued detailed directions pertaining to constructions around lakes, water bodies and raja kaluves. A copy of NGT's order dated 04.05.2016 in Forward Foundation & Ors. v. State of Karnataka & Ors., (the "Order") is enclosed for your perusal. The NGT has taken cognizance of the extensive environmental degradation caused in and around lakes and water bodies in Bengaluru, by vested interests such as real estate lobbies, in concert with unscrupulous government servants. In the spirit

of upholding the rights of the citizenry to a clean, wholesome and pollution-free environment and planned development, the NGT has issued specific directions regarding buffer zones around water bodies and raja kaluves. The directions of the NGT need to be implemented in letter and spirit such that guaranteed constitutional rights to a clean environment may be safeguarded. Strict implementation of NGT's directions will also ensure that civil society is afforded a chance to enjoy what this city of gardens and lakes truly has to offer.

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The impunity and bravado demonstrated by vested commercial interests, such as Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd., in encroaching 3.25 acres of lakebed for its SEZ project and issuance of Environment Clearances and Plan Sanctions to the builder, in blatant disregard of law demonstrate collusion between the real estate developer and government servants. It is beyond comprehension how officials in the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority and the KIADB, could issue environmental clearances and plan sanctions for constructions upon a lakebed extending to 3.25 acres. These facts beg a thorough investigation as to how government servants (including but not limited to officers at the SEIAA, KIADB and

BDA) could turn a blind eye to such extensive encroachment of lakebeds.

Given the above, I hereby urge you to –

- 1) Issue unambiguous and definite administrative instructions to the various ministries and departments that are involved in environmental clearance, planning and urban development to strictly implement each of the directions contained in the NGT's order. I also urge you to review such implementation regularly, so that vested interests, which are fed solely by financial motives, do not get an opportunity to rob civil society of its valuable rights towards ensuring planned development and clean environment.
- 2) To initiate a detailed inquiry into the matter, identify the government servants, both at the Centre and the State, whose actions and omissions are culpable and launch criminal prosecution so that all erring and corrupt government servants and all colluding real estate developers are brought to justice.

Any delay or inaction will constrain the civil society to invoke the jurisdiction of courts and tribunals of competent jurisdiction to further enforce its rights.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Prakash Javadekar,

Minister of State (IC) of Environment, Forests and Climate Change

Government of India, Bungalow No. 6, Kushak Road,

New Delhi - 110011

## Letter to the Bengaluru Development Minister on Implementation of NGT Order

1st June, 2016

Shri K J George,

As you may already be aware, the Hon'ble National Green Tribunal (the "NGT") in a petition moved by the civil society including socially concerned organizations such as Namma Bengaluru Foundation, has issued detailed directions pertaining to constructions around lakes, water bodies and raja kaluves. A copy of NGT's order dated 04.05.2016 in Forward Foundation & Ors. v. State of Karnataka & Ors., (the "Order") is enclosed for your perusal. The NGT has taken cognizance of the extensive environmental degradation caused in and around lakes and water bodies in Bengaluru, by vested interests such as real estate lobbies, in concert with unscrupulous government servants. In the spirit

of upholding the rights of the citizenry to a clean, wholesome and pollution-free environment and planned development, the NGT has issued specific directions regarding buffer zones around water bodies and raja kaluves. The directions of the NGT need to be implemented in letter and spirit such that guaranteed constitutional rights to a clean environment may be safeguarded. Strict implementation of NGT's directions will also ensure that civil society is afforded a chance to enjoy what this city of gardens and lakes truly has to offer.

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The impunity and bravado demonstrated by vested commercial interests, such as Mantri Techzone Pvt. Ltd., in encroaching 3.25 acres of lakebed for its SEZ project and issuance of Environment Clearances and Plan Sanctions to the builder, in blatant disregard of law demonstrate collusion between the real estate developer and government servants. It is beyond comprehension how officials in the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority and the KIADB, could issue environmental clearances and plan sanctions for constructions upon a lakebed extending to 3.25 acres. These facts beg a thorough investigation as to how government servants (including but not limited to officers at the SEIAA, KIADB and

BDA) could turn a blind eye to such extensive encroachment of lakebeds.

Given the above, I hereby urge you to –

- 1) Issue unambiguous and definite administrative instructions to the various ministries and departments that are involved in the administration of the city to strictly implement each of the directions contained in the NGT's order. I also urge you to review such implementation regularly, so that vested interests, which are fed solely by financial motives, do not get an opportunity to rob civil society of its valuable rights towards ensuring planned development and clean environment.
- 2) To initiate a detailed inquiry into the matter, identify the government servants, whose actions and omissions are culpable and launch criminal prosecution so that all erring and corrupt government servants and all colluding real estate developers are brought to justice.

Any delay or inaction will constrain the civil society to invoke the jurisdiction of courts and tribunals of competent jurisdiction to further enforce its rights.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri K J George,

Hon'ble Minister for Bangalore Development and Town Planning

Government of Karnataka,

Vidhana Soudha,

Bangalore.

## Letter to the Chief Minister Opposing Steel Flyover from Basweswara Circle to Hebbal

29th June, 2016

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

I have received several representations and requests from various citizens and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) expressing their concerns over proposed steel flyover from Basaveshwara Circle to Hebbal flyover.

As a citizen of Bengaluru and a Member of Parliament from the city, I write to you on their behalf and mine to express severe disappointment and some anger with the Government's handling of the issue.

I have no hesitation in referring to this project – as purely contractor and politically driven since, the proposed project is

neither citizen-driven nor plan-driven. It is a blatant misuse of public money and illegal, as the proposed project is not placed before the constitutionally set up Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee (BMPC) and there is no public consultation held before preparing Detailed Project Report (DPR). No impact study has been prepared and placed in public domain for scrutiny and transparency, as media reports suggest about 500 fully grown trees will be cut down to facilitate the proposed project.

There are many unanswered questions about this project – the haste, the design and the impact on environment, issues of maintenance, the aesthetics and beauty of our city, why not concrete like our flyovers, its interlinkages with future constructions and elevated corridors that will be required, etc. Its sponsor Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) and its leadership is already embroiled in many other questionable decisions and financial improprieties.

The strong opposition sparked is the evidence of the fact that Bengalureans are willing to assert their right to have a say in the development of their city. Our people and our city and state deserve better than what we are seeing today. They deserve a Government and institutions that work in partnership with citizens, rather than the current situation of conflicts between residents and Government.

The problems Bengaluru is facing, specifically with respect to Transport & Traffic Management is to do with more fundamental issues of planning and institutional performance in terms of delivering public services less to do with structure or size of the city. The traffic crisis and several other issues the city faces like Public health and Dengue, Garbage mismanagement, Water scarcity etc. are glaring symptoms of avoiding planning. I understand the temptation to do away with planning because it gives unfettered administrative and political discretion to launch many projects

with public money without scrutiny or questions. But that I can assure you is no longer the case.

Bengaluru needs a proper statutory long-term plan, including financial plan. BDA is now working on a plan, but the process needs to be made more transparent involving citizens, RWAs & NGOs, and must be placed before the Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee (BMPC) where again it must be discussed openly and approved with public consultation.

If the State Government hopes to uphold the letter and spirit of the 74th Constitution Amendment Act (CAA) and ensure that citizens have their legitimate say in the development of the city, your immediate intervention is required to ensure that the Bengaluru Development Authority (BDA) exercises caution and does not exceed its mandate in this case. This project and all other projects including a medium and long term plan must be developed, placed and discussed before the MPC – the body that is constitutionally empowered to do this.

At a broader level, the cities governance has descended into chaos and crisis management - a fact that is important given that you had promised better Governance. The rampant corruption, lack of transparency, flawed contracting system and vested interests that are driving the city's governance strategy have rightfully, caused the ire of citizens.

I urge you to keep your promise of Good Governance and uphold the constitutionality of the MPC or face opposition to these moves. I further, urge you to have a BMPC approved multi-year plan blue print for the overall development of the City's issues including transportation which can then be executed in a phased manner.

I hope that action in this regard will be initiated promptly failing which I will on behalf of the lakhs of honest, hardworking citizens and their families who want to protect this city – be constrained to approach other forum to ensure that right course is followed.

Sincerely,  
Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bangalore.

CC:

Shri K J George, Hon'ble Minister for Bengaluru Development &  
Town Planning, Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

## Letter to the Chief Minister on Appointment of an Officer for RERA in Karnataka

1st July, 2016

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

**Subject:** Regarding appointment of an Officer as a Regulatory Authority by the State Government of Karnataka for the interim period under the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016.

**Ref:** Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016.

As you are aware the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 has been enacted by the Parliament and the same has received the assent of the Hon'ble President of India on 25th March 2016. Further, the Central Government has vide Notification dated

26th April, 2016 has appointed the 1st day of May 2016 as the date on which most of the provisions of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 have brought into force, including Section 20 of the Real Estate (Regulation and Development) Act, 2016 (in short referred to as “Act”).

The Act has been enacted to establish the Real Estate Regulatory Authority for regulation and promotion of the real estate sector and to protect the interest of the consumers in the real estate sector amongst other objectives.

It is pertinent to note that, in terms of Section 20 of the Act, the State Government of Karnataka is required to establish an Authority to be known as the “Real Estate Regulatory Authority” within a period of one year from 1st May, 2016, to exercise the powers conferred on it and to perform the functions assigned to it under the Act. The third Proviso to the said Section 20 provides as follows:

“until the establishment of a Regulatory Authority under this section, the appropriate Government shall, by order, designate any Regulatory Authority or any officer preferably the Secretary of the department dealing with Housing, as the Regulatory Authority for the purposes under this Act”.

The Act inter-alia aims to bring about much needed reform in the real estate sector i.e., to protect the interest of consumers in the real estate sector and to promote sale of plot, apartment or building in an efficient and transparent manner. In order to implement the same, it is necessary to designate any officer preferably the Secretary of the department dealing with Housing, as the Regulatory Authority for the purposes of the Act. Without such appointment, the provisions of the Act cannot be effectively implemented and enforced in the State of Karnataka. For the betterment of our citizens and in the interest of the consumers of

the real estate sector, it is essential to designate an officer as the Regulatory Authority for the purposes of the Act.

In light of the above and Section 20 of the Act, I urge you to pass an appropriate order to appoint the Principal Secretary to the Department of Housing, Government of Karnataka, as the 'Regulatory Authority' for the purposes of the Act, as soon as possible, to ensure effective implementation of the provisions of the Act in the State of Karnataka. Any delay in such appointment would not only defeat the very essence of the Act but also render the Act toothless, and continue to have consumers suffer at the hands of law breaking real estate companies.

This letter is on behalf of lakhs of real estate consumers under this Act who will get justice in its early implementation.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka

Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore

CC:

Shri K J George, Hon'ble Minister for Bengaluru Development & Town Planning, Vidhana Soudha, Bengaluru

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## Letter to the Chief Minister Regarding Mahadayi River

6th August, 2016

Dear Shri Siddaramaiah Avare,

This has reference to the ongoing Mahadayi river water dispute and the situation affecting the citizens of some districts in North Karnataka.

The recent order by the tribunal to the Government of Karnataka's IA is clearly a set-back to the people. This leads to two broad issues

- a. **Government of Karnataka (GoK) has let down state and people with its bungled Legal strategy**

Questions that need to be asked and answered by your Government's handling of the legal case. The Government and

the Government alone is responsible for managing all aspects of this case and therefore the outcomes of the case. There is enough legal opinion that the GoKs IA was a badly thought out and badly drafted legal petition. That the drinking water requirements of the region was put as the last requirement itself raises serious questions about the Government's negligence on the handling of the legal case. Since the matter is sub-judice, this kind of legal setback also weakens the state's efforts at conciliation or any negotiated settlement.

Cursory reading of the Tribunal order and news reports, it has become increasingly clear that the state government had failed to come up with a sound legal strategy and ended up presenting the case clumsily. The Tribunal pointed out, in embarrassing detail, the State Government's inability to convince 200 tmc ft water is being wasted in the sea. The failure to assert there is sufficient water in three notified places from where the Karnataka government intends to get water. The government's failure is amplified from the Tribunal's instruction to the advocates from Karnataka to study the Potamology (physical science of rivers) before claiming that the Mahadayi's waters are being wasted into the ocean!

The interim order points out no less than a dozen points where the state government failed to present convincing arguments including not providing details of the schemes it proposed, how these schemes were temporary; how it did not secure requisite clearances; and why it did not assess or allude to impact on Mahadayi River but stuck to references on reservoir inflow terminology to underline the scarcity at the dam site and not the river basin itself.

The Tribunal's observations prove government's poor legal strategy and mishandling of the matter. This being the case, it is amusing to see some in your Government attempting to give

the issue political colour and trying to shift the blame of its failings elsewhere.

The inescapable fact remains that state government failed to present a comprehensive and a compelling case in support of the just needs of Karnataka and did not have any legal thought or strategy behind an important matter before the Tribunal. The GoK owes an explanation as to why it chose to ignore its own legal team's advice against filing an interim application as the Tribunal?

### **b. GoK must stop politics and do more to help People**

North Karnataka region suffers from severe droughts and drinking water deficiency is well documented. Therefore, even if for an insensitive Government, the needs of people of North Karnataka to adequate drinking water must be addressed. Even the Supreme Court has referred to drinking water requirements be treated as humanitarian.

But the Government of Karnataka has made no efforts at solving the people's problem with any Interim solution while the case is being heard. There are several ways of helping the people of North Karnataka's where drinking water shortages are being experienced. Eg State can take the initiative in arranging Water Trains like the Maharashtra Government arranged for drought ridden regions of latur etc.

Interim Financial relief should be provided to families and farmers in affected districts immediately. There has been no effort at conserving water in other parts of the state and planning irrigation projects to ensure that suffering of that regions farmers are addressed.

This question has to be asked – why has the Government of Karnataka done nothing, except organize all party meetings and not attempt any real solution to meet needs of the people affected and only play politics with the issue?

With due respect, I submit that handling of water bodies like Lakes in Bengaluru are evidence that your Government has no real strategy or plan for water anywhere in the state – including that there is no real interest or effort in addressing this long standing problems of Drinking water shortages, conservation and irrigation whilst pushing for our states legitimate shares from Mahadayi River.

Our state deserves its fair share of water and must fight legally for it, but that doesn't absolve the government from its solemn responsibility to address people's concerns while the matter is being in the tribunal.

Lastly, It is most unfortunate that police resorted lathi-charge against emotionally charged protestors. I urge the state government to order release of the over 200 arrested of whom 5 are hospitalised; and withdrawal of cases against all those were arrested.

Playing politics with people's sufferings is not what elected government must do. In interest of people of North Karnataka , I urge you to review your legal strategy whilst working immediately resolve the urgent water problems of the region and the people.

You are very truly,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddaramaiah

Hon'ble Chief Minister of Karnataka

Vidhana Soudha, Bangalore

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## Letter to the Chief Minister Regarding BMPC Inadequate Notice

16th December 2016

Dear Shri Siddramaiah avare,

**Sub:** Regarding inadequate notice for the 2nd meeting of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee (BMPC)

**Ref:** Undated letter bearing reference BDA/Commissioner/BMPC/Meeting-2/\_\_\_\_/2016-17, delivered together with the Agenda for the 2nd meeting of the Bengaluru Metropolitan Planning Committee, issued by the Bangalore Development Authority (BDA)

It is with deep sense of disappointment that I am to address this letter to you, to notify the Government of Karnataka's irresponsible

administration of the BMPC. I am in receipt of the undated letter issued by BDA referred above (herein after, the Letter), notifying of the 2nd meeting of the BMPC scheduled to take place at 04.30 pm on December 16, 2016, during the evening hours of December 15, 2016.

At the outset, I am to remind you that the BMPC is a constitutionally recognized body for advising Bengaluru on matters inter alia town planning, socio-economic development initiatives of Bengaluru. I fail to understand BDA's utter lack of responsibility in notifying the subject meeting by giving less than twenty (20) hours of notice preceding the meeting, i.e., in the evening hours of December 15, 2016.

You will be aware that the BMPC consists of members from a wide range of offices in local administration and otherwise, and I wonder how the BMPC will achieve the quorum as required to be achieved as per sub-clause (3) of Rule 5 to the Bangalore Metropolitan Planning Committee Rules, 2013 (the Rules), which stipulates the requirement of a quorum of two third of total members of the BMPC for transacting business at a meeting. Needless to mention, that for an effective and meaningful meeting of a body of critical importance such as the BMPC, sufficient time ought to be afforded to the members to reflect on the agenda set for a given meeting.

Whilst I am unaware if this is the new standard set by BDA in administering the BMPC, and also if other members of the BMPC were provided adequate notice for the subject meeting, I would like to take the occasion to register my stern objection to the manner of administration of the BMPC which enjoys critical recognition under the Constitution of India.

Personally, much that I would have wanted to participate in every meeting of the BMPC and contribute to the same as I did during the first meeting that was held on June 1, 2016, given the ongoing

session of the Parliament and the grossly objectionable notice provided for the instant meeting, I would be unable to participate in the meeting scheduled to take place today (December 16, 2016).

I hereby record my objection to the convening of the 2nd meeting of the BMPC at such short notice and reserve my liberties in law to question the propriety and fairness of the same, should the meeting were to take place today. Alternatively, I strongly urge your offices to consider deferring the meeting to a later date and instruct the BDA to schedule the meeting to a later, after providing a notice for the meeting at least seven (7) days prior to the conduct of such meeting, to ensure maximum participation in the meeting.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

Shri Siddramaiah,  
Hon'ble Chief Minister,  
Government of Karnataka,  
Vidhana Soudha,  
Bengaluru.

Copy:

1. HE Governer of Karnataka Raj Bhavan Road, Bengaluru
2. The Commissioner, BDA, Kumara Park West, Bengaluru

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## Letter to Namma Bengaluru Citizens

24th December 2016

Dear Bengalurean,

This letter is an appeal to you - as citizen and an active supporter of our City, towards starting a new galvanized and united approach to protect our City, Namma Bengaluru.

You and I, are both witnesses to and victims of a situation where the city despite its rapid economic growth continues to become more unliveable making life increasingly difficult for its citizens. At the same time our beautiful city is being destroyed with almost irreversible damage being caused to its environment and heritage. The evidence is all around us — the dying/encroached lakes, the receding water table, garbage mismanagement, public

health issues, poorly funded schools, rampant tax evasion, revenue leakages, Illegal constructions and their regularization. All these ail our city besides the many bureaucrats and politicians who profit, enriching themselves as people continue to suffer and huge projects are announced whilst old projects remain in disrepair and without maintenance.

So, what is the cause of this situation where it seems that people are the lowest priority, when it comes to determining the future development of the city and neighbourhoods?

The single biggest reason is that Citizens are no longer the most important stakeholders in the city. The key stakeholders now seem to be businessmen, politicians and/or bureaucrats connected to these businesses. This means our city is being run more like a real estate or contractors company with plans, projects and resources focussed on needs of this group instead of people of the city, its communities and neighbourhoods which need planned investments. This in turn has allowed vested interests and rampant corruption spread their tentacles unchallenged into every facet of the city's institutions and governance, thus making most politicians and bureaucrats have direct or indirect interests in real estate or contracting. The corruption we see is not just petty corruption but a widespread diversion and loot of public money and resources away from citizens into the pockets of these vested Interests. It is the silent acceptance for last several years by most of our citizens that has in a sense helped this brazen takeover of our city and its resources.

But while we may not be able to change our past, we can certainly do something about the future! And do something we must so that we can leave behind a better city for our children and future generations of Bengalureans.

That is why I write to you in the belief that we are at an inflexion

point as a City. We all saw a big change in the last few months. I rejoiced with you as we together participated in the recent deep awakening of citizens to the rampant destruction of Bengaluru - triggered by a dubious Steel Flyover thrust upon us.

The visible anger and opposition of the people paused this otherwise brazen project mid-step. This unprecedented awakening and coming together of citizens on the Steel Flyover issue can and must become the tipping point in the assertion of Citizens' Right to be involved in defining the future of our city. Through this campaign we saw a silver lining emerge for Bengaluru - the uniting of ideas and efforts of many NGOS, RWAs and Citizens who are fighting to protect our city.

As an elected representative, I have long fought for stronger involvement of citizens in shaping of the City's future and have been at many times disappointed by the lack of unity amongst the many voices who can change the direction of our city's future. As such, I welcome this new energy and effort seen for our common quest to alter the tide in the struggle to regain Bengaluru.

Here, **I will come to the core of my appeal** - NammaBengaluru has a vibrant spirit of volunteerism and there are many NGOs, citizen and resident groups as you, who carry an active spirit of volunteerism and are working hard to develop Bengaluru. But we need to figure out a way to harness all this energy and passion to bring about a real change as we shape the future of our city. For long, governments and administrators along with their business accomplices rely on 'divide and rule' policy to prevent civil society and citizens from coming together on vital issues. It suits them when citizens and organizations contradict each other due to strong commitments to their respective areas of interest. This is precisely the reason that citizens' protests are ignored generally by governments. However, this changed and we saw the change during the united #SteelFlyoverBeda movement.

So while we may all have our views, politics, ideologies and may even differ on specific solutions for our city, it is vital we come together united on few fundamentals regarding the future of our city and relations between the Government, City and its People. If we can agree on these and we must try to - then we can create a fundamental change for our city and its growth, shaping how current and future governments would serve city and people, rather than exploit and plunder it.

I share a few ideas which could be considered as a beginning for this conversation that I hope helps in developing a united approach to permanent involvement of citizens in transforming our Namma Bengaluru. I look forward to hearing your thoughts, suggestions about and support to this Call for Unity.

I wish you, your family and loved ones the best of the holiday season and best wishes for Ugadi.

Sincerely,

Rajeev Chandrasekhar

### **Citizens must Shape the Future of the City**

#### **1. Citizens must be Involved in Shaping the City and Deciding its Future**

**Government/Agencies must consult Citizens on projects/decisions that impact neighbourhoods, wards and City before Approving Plans**

*Public consultations a must. This helps create a Government - Citizen Dialogue which is the best way to transparently arrive at solutions for city.*

- a. Government must ensure all information of project/plan/policy is in Public domain much in advance of consultations
  - b. Public consultation should be conducted for at least 4 weeks or more depending on scale, nature and impact of project/plan
  - c. Public consultation responses and their disclosure by Government should be mandatory
- 2. Comprehensive City Development Plan is a Must - To plan, finance and Stop Adhoc Decisions and Misuse of Government discretion as means of favour and Corruption**

*Statutory Multi-Year Development Plan for Bengaluru region which should cover all aspects of the city's development including sustainability, falling under these categories.*

- a. Zoning (commercial use of residential areas) and Land use
  - b. Transportation and Mobility
  - c. Public Health, Education lakes and Water bodies
  - d. Urban poor
  - e. Environment and Heritage
- 3. Governments/Agencies are responsible - Hold Them Accountable; Citizens have Rights - they should Assert and Fight for These**

*Citizens must become Aware and Alert. Government must serve Citizens and the City and has to be held accountable for all Public Money, Assets and Contracts*

- a. Increase Governance and Citizenship Literacy ie. awareness of various regulatory institutions; their functions and responsibilities towards the City.

- b. Increase awareness of Laws and Citizens' Rights.
- c. Fight for Accountability and Transparency in Government/Regulatory Institutions and Parastatal Agencies; Demand Prosecution of Officers found negligent or corrupt.
- d. Volunteerism by Citizens, NGOs, RWAs who wish to embed themselves into Government as advisors must continue in their spirit of volunteerism and contribution; but this should not dilute the Government's absolute responsibility and capacity building towards the City and its development.

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## Letter to the Lokayukta for Initiating Suo Motu Proceedings Against Public Servants with Respect to Steel Flyover

16th February, 2017

Dear Justice P. Vishwanatha Shetty

Sub: Request for initiating suo motu proceedings under the Karnataka Lokayukta Act, 1984 against culpable and errant public servants, including ministers and bureaucrats, in relation to the corrupt practices pertaining to the proposed Steel Flyover between Basaveshwara Circle and Hebbal.

The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has proposed the construction of a steel flyover of 6.7 km length between Basaveshwara Circle and Hebbal. When the project was proposed in 2014, its cost was estimated at Rs.1,350 Crores. Whilst BDA claims that a contractor has been selected to execute the project

post an international tender process, little information regarding the selection process adopted is available in public domain. Further, mandatory procedures have not been followed and legal thresholds not complied with. Public domain information also point to the fact that the cost of the project has escalated as on date to at least Rs. 1,800 Crores.

BDA and multiple other departments of the State Government have consistently depicted hesitance, in providing information to the public regarding the steel flyover project. The Hon'ble Chief Minister; the Hon'ble Minister for Bengaluru Development; and the BDA have also conducted themselves in a manner so as to ring fence the project from public scrutiny, leading to the adaptation of a non-transparent methodology for implementing the project.

I vociferously opposed the steel flyover project not only for its lack of transparency but also its glaring environmental intrusion. I had urged a complete re-evaluation of the project, in the light of the events that denoted hasty expedition of the implementation of the project, leading to public concern that the project was being used as a tool to generate illegal monetary gratification to benefit errant public servants. My specific letters to the Chief Minister, Shri Siddaramaiah and the Commissioner of BDA Shri Rajkumar Khatri, received no response whatsoever. Copies of my letters are enclosed herewith for your kind perusal.

It was in this backdrop of mounting opposition to the steel flyover project that Namma Bengaluru Foundation and certain other non-governmental organizations, espousing public causes; including the larger civil society, promptly questioned the legality of the steel flyover project before multiple judicial fora. A public interest litigation challenging the legality of the project is pending consideration on the files of the Hon'ble High Court of Karnataka; and a challenge to the project is also pending on the files of the National Green Tribunal, Chennai. In the latter

proceedings, National Green Tribunal has issued an order of stay, restraining BDA and other authorities from proceeding with the implementation of the steel flyover project.

Whilst various judicial fora continue to examine the legality and the environmental intrusion of the project, startling revelations were made on public media on February 12, 2017, which further demonstrates the absolute lack of bona fides and the various corrupt practices surrounding the steel flyover project. This prompts me to invoke the Lokayukta of Karnataka and urge you to initiate suo motu proceedings against the errant public servants under the provisions of the Karnataka Lokayukta Act, 1984.

On February 12, 2017, a former Chief Minister of Karnataka made public disclosures through national and regional media and placed certain information in public domain, which further demonstrated the deep-rooted corruption in connection with the steel flyover project. These disclosures indicate that Congress MLC Shri K. Govindaraju was used as a conduit wherein the contractor, to whom the project was awarded, paid Rs. 150 Crores as illegal gratification to various public servants, including the Chief Minister, current Ministers and bureaucrats. The public disclosures further indicate that approximately Rs. 65 Crores was in turn paid by the politicians in the State, to what is christened as the High Command i.e., the politicians at the helm in New Delhi. The truthfulness and veracity of these disclosures need to be thoroughly inquired into, in the interest of the general public. I have enclosed various media reports that were widely publicised in print and electronic media in this regard, for your perusal.

These alarming disclosures further buttress my consistent stand that the steel flyover project is non-transparent to state the least and has perhaps been envisioned, conceived and used as a tool to illegally gratify bureaucrats and politicians at various levels within and without the State. This certainly deserves a thorough inquiry.

I invite your kind attention to the observations of the Hon'ble Supreme Court in *State of Karnataka v. Selvi J. Jayalithaa & Ors* [Criminal Appeal 300-303/2017], which wholly applies to and amplifies the present state of affairs in Karnataka and in particular to the factors surrounding the steel flyover project.

*“Corruption is a vice of insatiable avarice for self-aggrandizement by the unscrupulous, taking unfair advantage of their power and authority and those in public office also, in breach of the institutional norms, mostly backed by minatory loyalists. Both the corrupt and the corrupter are indictable and answerable to the society and the country as a whole. This is more particularly in re the peoples’ representatives in public life committed by the oath of the office to dedicate oneself to the unqualified welfare of the laity, by faithfully and conscientiously discharging their duties attached thereto in accordance with the Constitution, free from fear or favour or affection or ill-will. A self-serving conduct in defiance of such solemn undertaking in infringement of the community’s confidence reposed in them is therefore a betrayal of the promise of allegiance to the Constitution and a condemnable sacrilege. Not only such a character is an anathema to the preambular promise of justice, liberty, equality, fraternal dignity, unity and integrity of the country, which expectantly ought to animate the life and spirit of every citizen of this country, but also is an unpardonable onslaught on the constitutional religion that forms the bedrock of our democratic polity.”*

The pernicious menace of corruption seems to have engrained itself in the state of affairs in Karnataka. Politicians and bureaucrats continue to indulge in corrupt practices with a sense of bravado. Not only is it antithetical to the rule of law but also demoralizing

to those who are ethical, honest and upright. Corruption seems to have attained militant dominance in our State, which can only be checked by effective Ombudsman.

Every citizen in the State therefore looks to your exalted office as Lokayukta, for ensuring that the corrupt are brought to justice. I, therefore, urge you to initiate suo motu proceedings and inquire into the issues of corruption and corrupt practices associated with the steel flyover project, so as to ensure that the corrupt public servants are prosecuted for various offences under the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988; the Indian Penal Code, 1860; and other applicable laws. Initiation of suo motu proceedings will not only uphold the Majesty of law but will also usher in the rule of law and engrain accountability and transparency in public administration in the State of Karnataka.

Jai Hind!

Yours truly,

Rajeev Chandrashekar

Encl.: As above

Hon'ble Mr. Justice P. Vishwanatha Shetty

Karnataka Lokayukta

MS Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi

Bengaluru 560 001

CC:

1. Hon'ble Shri Justice N. Ananda,  
Karnataka Upa Lokayukta,  
MS Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi  
Bengaluru 560 001
  
2. Hon'ble Shri Justice Subhash B. Adi,  
Karnataka Upa Lokayukta,  
MS Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi  
Bengaluru 560 001
  
3. The Registrar, Karnataka Lokayukta  
MS Building, Dr. Ambedkar Veedhi  
Bengaluru 560 001

## Open Letter to the Chief Minister on Cancelling the Steel Flyover

6th March, 2017

I thank Hon'ble Chief Minister Shri Siddaramaiah for his belated decision to cancel the Steel Flyover - even if it took several citizen protests, months and cases filed in National Green Tribunal (NGT) and the High Court - for him to realize that people really didn't like this strange idea of his government's to solve the city's pressing traffic problems with one Steel Flyover.

But important questions remain about why this project was attempted to be pushed through in a hurry without true public consultation with citizens and a true Environment Impact assessment study for the impact of the felling of hundreds of trees.

The allegations of corruption and Congress MLCs Diary entries still remain unaddressed – further reinforcing the widely-held perception that the reason for this project was not to solve the city’s traffic jams, but other reasons.

If this decision of Chief Minister was to put these kinds of questionable decisions behind and to start afresh and be responsive to what citizens want and do so without allegations of impropriety and corruption, the Chief Minister should do the following

1. Immediately start the process of creating a multi-year plan for our Bengaluru – that creates city-wide solutions for Traffic, Water, Garbage, Public Health, Child and Women Safety, Environment and Lakes, Heritage etc. This plan should be developed by real experts and then discussed openly and transparently with citizens of the City. I urge him to act on this now
2. To address the perception of rampant corruption – I urge him to ensure mandatory disclosure of ALL present and future commercial contracts, tenders and land-use decisions of the Government, Government agencies in Bengaluru starting immediately till Elections 2018 are declared. This kind of disclosures will ensure public scrutiny of all deals to avoid temptation of corruption and money making before Elections
3. BDA ‘s efforts on Revised Master Plan (RMP) 2031 must not be a way to give additional Floor Space Index (FSI) to certain builders and real estate companies. The RMP must go through the mandatory Public Consultation as per the clearly laid out guidelines of Supreme Court. Citizens must be given an opportunity to comment. All citizens’ comments should be documented in a public domain with a reason for accepting or rejecting.

4. The Bangalore Development Authority (BDA) has gained the reputation of being a notoriously corrupt organization. Its whole conduct and decision making during SteelFlyover must be investigated including that of certain people who were transferred out just before project was cancelled. Either Disband or reform the BDA.
5. The current Bengaluru Development & Town Planning Minister seems to be incapable of solving the many problems of Bengaluru including Traffic jams, Dying lakes, Garbage issues, Illegal Construction, Deaths due to Negligence by BBMP, Child and women safety, Corruption, etc. and seems to be extra-ordinarily obsessed with big shiny expensive projects like Flyover only - for reasons best known to him and the Chief Minister. In yesterday's press briefing he seems to have suggested that I be given the job of looking at Bengaluru's traffic problems. This admission that we have a minister who is incapable of doing his job means that as Chief Minister you change him and put a more capable and honest minister who can address the problems of our city and its people.

On the other hand, if the Chief Minister is pressured by circumstances in his party to not be able to change him, then the Government must candidly admit its inability to take care of its responsibility to its citizens and consider resigning to make way for early elections. – Because Bengaluru cannot tolerate for another year, the same apathy and negligence of the last 4 years.

