

Caution Needed:

Supreme court decision on the Rohingya's status must protect those fleeing persecution

The Supreme Court's decision to examine the question whether illegal immigrants are entitled

to refugee status needs to be welcomed, but with caution. It is debatable whether the Centre is right in claiming that this has emerged as a substantial question of law in the context of the Rohingya Muslims from Myanmar. For, it is fairly obvious that those escaping persecution in their home country are invariably un-documented. It logically follows that those fleeing conditions of war or conflict will have to be treated as refugees first before their cases can be examined in detail, and deemed fit for deportation as illegal entrants. It will be strange if any court holds that no illegal immigrant is entitled to refugee status. That would amount to a per-verse denial of the very existence of refugees as a class. What the government is perhaps looking for is a decision holding that it can choose the class of illegal immigrants it wishes to treat as refugees; and that it can deny that status to any section it deems a threat to national security or is likely to strain local resources. The court's decision to go into the issue, therefore, offers an opportunity to clarify India's approach to the refugee question, which has generally been favourable to vulnerable entrants, but is stridently hostile to the Rohingya.

India is not a signatory to the UN Convention on the Status of Refugees, 1951, and a Protocol adopted in 1967

on the subject. However, since Independence it has by and large adhered to the larger humanitarian principles underlying these instruments. In this backdrop, it is astonishing that the present regime is determined to de-port the Rohingya, in utter disregard of the danger to their lives in Myanmar, and in violation of the principle of non-refoulement, the norm that prohibits states from forcibly returning refugees to conditions that caused them to flee their homes in the first place. It will be amoral and unjust if this most vulnerable group from Myanmar's Rakhine state, numbering about 40,000 in India now, is denied refugee status. With the Centre tak-ing a stand against treating them as refugees, a positive ruling is needed from the apex court to prevent their forcible deportation. The government's keenness to de-port the Rohingya is rooted in the technicalities of its citizenship law. It defines "illegal immigrant" as any fo-reigner entering India without valid travel documents, or overstays a permitted period of stay. It rules out giv-ing citizenship by registration to such illegal immigrants. The amendments it proposes to the Citizenship Act do not cover Muslim immigrants and are limited to ersecuted Afghan, Bangladeshi and Pakistani minorities. India should work with the world community on the voluntary repatriation of the Rohingya and not besmirch its fine record of humane treatment of refugees by pursuing the deportation option without relent.

Words

Flee
Illegal
Immigrant
refugee
obvious
persecution
Deportation

Kind

Meaning

Run away, take a flight, make off
unlawful, illegitimate
New comer, settler, migrant, non native
displaced person, fugitive, asylum seeker
certain, sure, clear, crystal, evident
oppression, victimization, maltreatment
excile, expel, expatriate, extradition

Entrants	new member, beginner, fresher, novice
Threat	menace, intimidate, frighten
Strain	Overtax, overwork, over extend, over reach
Vulnerable	Endangered, in danger, prone, susceptible
Strident	harsh, raucous, rough, grating, loud
Hostile	inimical, enmity, animosity, forbidding
Signatory	sign an agreement
Convention	custom, usage, practice, tradition
By and large	mostly in general
Adhere	stick, cohere, cling, bond, attach
Humanitarian	compassionate, humane, unselfish, altruistic
Backdrop	situations, circumstances, conditions
Refoulement	forcible return of refugees
Amoral	immoral, degenerate, debauched
Apex	tip, peak, summit, pinnacle, vertex
Norm	convention, standard, criterion
Prohibit	proscribe, forbid
Keeness	eagerness, willingness, readiness
Amendments	revision, change, metamorphosis
Repatriation	return to one's own country
Besmirch	cover, with mud, disgrace, dishonour
Humane	kind, lenient, clement, dis-interested
Pursue	follow, run after, chase, hunt
Relent	Change one's mind, capitulate, become lenient

Grecian Churn :

The verdict in Sunday's Greek elections affords a rare comfort for Europe's centrists, who, arguably with the exception of Spain in April, have of late ceded ground to populist forces. The conservative centre-right New Democracy party of Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis has won 158 out of the 300 seats. The left-wing Syriza party of outgoing premier Alexis Tsipras was left with 86 seats. Critical support for Mr. Tsipras could not be ruled out from MeRA25, the Greek wing of Europe's anti-establishment DiEM25, of ex-finance minister Yanis Varoufakis; it has nine seats. But there is another dimension to this overall sense of political balance and stability in Parliament. Golden Dawn, the anti-Muslim party that ranked third in the last elections, has been convincingly rejected by others, with less than the requisite vote share to enter the legislature. The potential for mischief from hardline nationalist parties was on display only recently. In January, Mr. Tsipras's government narrowly survived a vote of confidence after Independent Greeks, a coalition partner, withdrew support, refusing to back the renaming of the former Yugoslavian state as Northern Macedonia. Given the influx of immigrants and the refugee crisis, the ruling New Democracy and Opposition Syriza party both have a moral responsibility to consolidate the middle ground. Mr. Mitsotakis has assumed charge under relatively benign conditions. Four years ago, Greece was bearing the brunt of an international bailout, biting austerity measures and a collapsing banking system while on the verge of being ejected from Europe's single currency zone. That prospect is way behind, as the general consensus is that the euro is destined to succeed, for failure would be too costly.

Athens last year managed to exit the €86-billion bailout programme, but conditions in 2019 are far from ideal. Economic growth is at a tepid 2% rate as the population continues to be weighed down

by reforms to the once generous pension system and spending cuts to the education and health-care budgets. The roughly 18% unemployment rate is by far the highest in the European Union. Mr. Mitsotakis, the Harvard-educated former banker, is said to be well regarded in the Brussels establishment. The inference is that the economic path of the past four years would not be derailed. The concern for Greeks is over whether Mr. Mitsotakis can navigate what seems a difficult road ahead without overly adding to their woes. Athens's strategic Mediterranean location lends greater heft to the EU's approach on the external policy front. Mr. Mitsotakis must leverage the goodwill he apparently enjoys with Brussels to shape an asylum policy underpinned by enlightened Self interest and humaneness. As Greece makes a fresh start, its leaders should temper the expectations.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Verdict		Judgement, adjudication, decision, finding
Cede		surrender, concede, relinquish
Populist		trying to be popular with ordinary people
Conservative		traditional, orthodox, conventional contrnist
Premier		leading, foremost, chief, principal, head
Requisite		necessary, required, pre-requisite
Potential		possible, likely, perspective, future
Mischief		naughtiness, bad behaviour, misbehaviour
Survive		out live, outlast, sustain, come through
Influx		inundation, rush, stream, flood, incursion
Consolidate		strengthen, secure, stabilize, reinforce
Assume		suppose, presume, take for grnated
Benign		kindly, kind, warm hearted, good natured
Brunt		free, impact, shock, burden, pressure
Bailout		eject, throw, parachute
Auster		stern, severe, strict, harsh
On the verge of		very new, on the brink of, imminent
Consensus		agreement
Tepid		lukewarm, slightly, warm, unenthusiastic, apathetic
Generous		kind, benign, humane, lenient
Inference		deduction, conclusion, reasoning, conjecture
Derail		go out of track
Overly		excessively
Woes		sufferings, agony, afflictions, torments

Heft	burly, heavy, sturdy, bulky
Leverage	grip, hold, purchase, support, anchorage
Apparent	clever, lucid, pellucid, transparent, explicit
Asylum	refuge, sanctuary, shelter, safety, protection
Underpin	support, anchorage, back, advocate, foster, promote
Enlighten	inform, apprise, illuminate, brief
Humaneness	kindness, affection, warmth, gentleness
Temper	mitigate, alleviate, modify, modulate
Do away with	abolish
Do someone/something down	be little, disparage, criticize
Do someone/something in	kill, mowdown, make away with
Do something out	decorate
Do something up	fasten
Do without	forgo, abstain, dispense with
Line(A)	cover
Lined (Adj)	wrinkled
Liner (n)	ship
Lineage(n)	ancestry
Draw the line at	refuse to accept
In line	in a queue , in agreement
In line for	a candidate for
On the line	in danger
Toe the line	obey the rules
Lay it on the line	speak frankly & honestly
Line one's pocket	make money illegally
Line something/someone up	arrange, gauze
Line-up (n)	arrangement , list of players