

THE TERRORIST TAG

India needs tough laws to combat terror, but the proposed amendments could be misused

The idea of designating an individual as a terrorist, as the latest amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act propose to do, may appear innocuous. However, designating an individual as a terrorist raises serious constitutional questions and has the potential for misuse. The practice of designating individuals under anti-terrorism laws, prevalent in several countries, is seen as being necessary because banned groups tend to change their names and continue to operate. However, there is no set procedure for designating an individual a terrorist. Parliament must consider whether an individual can be called a 'terrorist' prior to conviction in a court of law. The absence of a judicial determination may render the provision vulnerable to invalidation. There ought to be a distinction between an individual and an organisation, as the former enjoys the right to life and liberty. The likely adverse consequences of a terrorist tag may be worse for individuals than for organisations. Further, individuals may be subjected to arrest and detention; even after obtaining bail from the courts, they may have their travel and movements restricted, besides carrying the taint. This makes it vital that individuals have a faster means of redress than groups. Unfortunately, there is no change in the process of getting an entity removed from the list. Just as any organisation getting the tag, individuals, too, will have to apply to the Centre to get their names removed.

A wrongful designation will cause irreparable damage to a person's reputation, career and livelihood. Union Home Minister Amit Shah's warning that his government would not spare terrorists or their sympathisers, and his reference to 'urban Maoists', are portentous about the possibility of misuse. It has been argued by some members in Parliament that the Bill contains anti-federal features. The provision to empower the head of the National Investigation Agency to approve the forfeiture of property of those involved in terrorism cases obviously overrides a function of the State government. At present, the approval has to be given by the State police head. Also, there will be a section allowing NIA Inspectors to investigate terrorism cases, as against a Deputy Superintendent of Police or an Assistant Commissioner. This significantly enhances the scope for misuse. The 2004 amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, made it a comprehensive anti-terror law that provided for punishing acts of terrorism, as well as for designating groups as 'terrorist organisations'. Parliament further amended it in 2008 and 2013 to strengthen the legal framework to combat terror. While none will question the need for stringent laws that show 'zero tolerance' towards terrorism, the government should be mindful of its obligations to preserve fundamental rights while enacting legislation on the subject.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Combat		Battle, oppose, conflict, strive against
Amendment		Revision, alteration, change, modification, adaptation
Innocuous		Harmless, safe, non-injurious, innocent
Potential		Possible
Prevalent		Widespread, Frequent, common
Ban		Embargo, outlaw, prohibit, proscribe, forbid
Tend		Incline, lean, swing, veer, gravitate
Prior		Earlier, previous, preceding, foregoing
Conviction		Belief, opinion, view, thought, persuading
Render		Give, provide, supply, furnish, contribute
Vulnerable		Susceptible, prone, given, inclined
Distinction		Difference, contrast, dissimilarity, dissimilitude
Consequence		Results, upshots, repercussions, outcome, aftermath
Detention		Custody, imprisonment, confinement, incarceration
Taint		Trace, touch, suggestion, hint, tinge, tincture
Redress		Rectify, correct, amend remedy, repair
Entity		Organization, institution, establishment
Irreparable		Irreversible, un-rectifiable, irrevocable'
Portentous		Ominous, warning, premonitory
Forfeiture		Confiscation, sequestration, loss, denial
Override		Cancel, disallow, set aside
Enhance		Boost, surge, snowfall, proliferate
Comprehensive		Extensive, inclusive, complete
Stringent		Strict, exacting, draconian

BORIS DAYS

Britain's new PM should abjure his dangerous brinkmanship in seeing Brexit through

Boris Johnson, Britain's new Prime Minister, has achieved one of his life's ambitions. His defiant speech at Downing Street on Wednesday, pledging a "no ifs, no buts" exit from the European Union before October 31, is clear indication that he will pursue a hard Brexit. "Doubters, doomsters and gloomsters," would be defeated, he declared in characteristic style. Several ministers from the previous government, who have either resigned or have been dropped, are all presumably among them. Conversely, the induction of several eurosceptics, most notably Jacob Rees-Mogg from the

European Research Group, leaves no doubt that the Johnson team is nothing if not a Brexit cabinet. The other is Dominic Raab who, during the Conservative leadership race, advocated proroguing Parliament to ensure MPs did not stop a no-deal exit. Mr. Johnson’s rhetoric is reminiscent of Theresa May’s uncompromising early stance that no deal was better than a bad deal. While she was forced to back down from several unrealistic positions, Mr. Johnson’s place in Downing Street is far more precarious than her’s. His majority in the House of Commons could drop to just two seats if, as the polls forecast, the Tories lose the by-election in August. This arithmetic is crucial in what is a sharply polarised Parliament now. Party hardliners have threatened to vote out the government if the exit deadline was breached for a third time. With Brussels ruling out a renegotiation of the withdrawal agreement, the chances of leaving on October 31 seem remote.

Mr. Johnson has for too long painted the other 27 nations in the bloc as hostile adversaries that have undermined Britain’s sovereignty. He has paid scant regard to mounting evidence, most recently from the International Monetary Fund, of the crippling economic impact of Britain leaving the union. Mr. Johnson has even dismissed the risks to the integrity of the Good Friday agreement between the U.K. and Ireland, in the absence of the prevailing soft borders connecting Dublin and Belfast. But as Prime Minister he can ill-afford to indulge the populist instincts of the narrow nationalists among the Conservatives. Instead, he must reckon with the real and grave consequences for the nation and even his party, of abruptly walking out on London’s closest partners. The contradictions of that approach were laid bare this week in London’s bid to coordinate with Brussels to protect European commercial shipping in West Asia. Clearly, London’s interests lie in redoubling efforts to resurrect the multilateral order that U.S. President Donald Trump seems so keen to undo. The special relationship between the principal trans-Atlantic partners is nothing if it did not encompass a more universal vision. Mr. Johnson must abjure his dangerous brinkmanship. That would be in Britain’s interest.

<u>Words</u>	<u>Kind</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Abjure		Renounce, relinquish, reject, forgo, disavow, abandon
Defiant		Intransigent, resistant, obstinate, truculent
Pledge		Promise, undertaking, vow, commitment, oath
Ifs and buts		No restrictions and excuses
Pursue		Follow, chase, go after, run after
Euroseptics		A politician who thinks that their country should not be a part of European Union.
Conservative		Traditional, orthodox, conventional, conformist

Prorogue	Adjourn, withdraw, retire
Rhetoric	Oratory, eloquence, expression, delivery, diction
Reminiscent	Similar to, akin to, analogous to, comparable with
Stance	Posture, body position, pose, attitude, bearing
Back down	Give in, surrender, yield, submit, concede
Precarious	Dangerous, harmful, deleterious, perilous
Polarise	Restrict, divide
Hardliner	Political group who adheres to a set of ideas
Threat	Menace, warning, ultimatum
Breach	Contravention, violation, breaking, infringement
Bloc	Alliance, association, coalition, federation
Cripple	Disable, paralyse, immobilize, debilitate
Scant	Little, minimal, hardly any, limited, meagre
Abrupt	Sudden, immediate, instantaneous, summary
Resurrect	Revive, get over, engender
Encompass	Surround, enclose, ring, encircle, circumscribe