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The extradition crisis India faces

When criminals commit heinous crimes or massive financial frauds in India and flee abroad, the damage they leave behind is not limited to their victims but it also shakes the foundations of the justice system itself. These absconders not only escape legal consequences but often mock the very machinery meant to bring them to justice, exploiting legal loopholes, diplomatic red tape and international indifference.

The recent arrest of fugitive jeweller Mehul Choksi in Belgium has once again spotlighted the glaring inefficiencies in India's extradition efforts. Just days earlier, the United States handed over Tahawwur Rana, accused in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, a rare success that underscores how rare and difficult such victories truly are.

Yet the names Nirav Modi, Vijay Mallya, and Lalit Modi continue to haunt Indian law enforcement. Each represents a saga of financial betrayal running into thousands of crores, and each has evaded Indian custody by retreating to the sanctuaries of nations with which India has long-standing but toothless extradition treaties.

The Nirav Modi case, in particular, illustrates the frustrating dance of diplomacy and delay. Despite a British

Extradition depends not just on bilateral treaties but on the political will and legal systems of host countries. If a fugitive is wanted in India but faces no criminal charges in the host country, the process becomes tangled in court battles. Local laws, humanitarian arguments, and even geopolitical relationships come into play. In Europe, decisions often require the green light from the European Court of Human Rights, which scrutinizes everything. From the quality of the prison cell awaiting the accused to the risk of custodial torture

court approving his extradition four years ago and dismissing his appeals, he remains out of reach. The irony is hard to miss: the rights of a financial fugitive seem to hold more weight than the rights of a nation defrauded.

Meanwhile, Choksi has spent the last seven years enjoying the protection of foreign soil, even flouting a Red Corner Notice. In 2021, when he attempted to flee from Antigua to Cuba, he was arrested in Dominica, only to sidestep extradition by claiming Antiguan citizenship and playing legal chess with local courts. Now, arrested in Belgium at India's request, Choksi is again pulling legal levers; this time citing age, illness, and even marriage to a Belgian woman as reasons to block his return.

The reality is stark: despite extradition treaties with more than 50 countries, India has struggled to bring back even a handful of fugitives. The process is so slow and complex that in the 26 years following its 1992 agreement with the UK, India secured the extradition of just one individual; Sameerbhaj Patel, accused in the 2002 Gujarat riots.

For one, extradition depends not just on bilateral treaties but on the political will and legal systems of host countries. If a fugitive is wanted in India but faces no criminal charges in the host country, the process becomes tangled in court battles. Local laws, humanitarian arguments, and even geopolitical relationships come into play. In Europe, decisions often require the green light from the European Court of Human Rights, which scrutinises everything. From the quality of the prison cell awaiting the accused to the risk of custodial torture.

This scrutiny may seem fair in isolation, but it creates fertile ground for manipulation. Fugitives often employ high-priced lawyers to delay, deflect, and derail proceedings, buying years, if not decades, of freedom.

Moreover, Britain has increasingly earned a reputation as a safe haven for white-collar criminals. Despite being bound by WTO rules and long-standing international agreements, its courts rarely approve extraditions to India. Economic crimes in an interconnected world should logically concern all nations, as their ripple effects cross borders. Yet, extradition remains mired in the inertia of national interests and bureaucratic caution.

India has raised this issue at global platforms like the G20, pushing for stronger, faster mechanisms to return economic offenders. These are not just India's problems. Any country could find itself the victim tomorrow. But until a coordinated global effort emerges, these criminals will continue to thrive in loopholes and technicalities.

What India needs now is a reinvigorated diplomatic push backed by legal reforms and international cooperation. There should be no comfort zone for fugitives, no corner of the globe where they can feel untouchable. Sovereignty must not be so easily outmaneuvered, and justice must not be so easily delayed.

The long arm of the law must not stop at the border. It must extend with resolve, reach with clarity, and grasp with unyielding force. Only then can faith in justice be truly restored.

comment



PETER FERNANDES

Holy Thursday is one of the most important days in the Christian liturgical calendar, marking the beginning of the Easter Triduum. It commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples



Who wants to tie a towel? The contemporary society is driven by the culture of glamour and accolades. Everyone is rushing and pushing to achieve greatness and amass wealth at all costs. Parents push their children at a very young age to achieve greatness, perhaps not realising that they are robbing their children's childhood by getting them on a rat race. Standing first in class is all that matters. The corporate world is viciously promoting a culture of successes and triumphalism, and true leadership is lost in corrupt politicians. In a dire situation, the secular world looks at religion for guidance, but ironically, religious leaders are more confused today than ever before. We often hear from the religious leaders, "We have to change with time to be relevant for the changing times." Divine teachings are timeless and objective. During the holy week, the Catholic Church remembers and celebrates the core teachings of its master Jesus Christ, which are timeless. Holy Thursday is one of the most important days in the Christian liturgical calendar, marking the beginning of the Easter Triduum. It commemorates the Last Supper of Jesus Christ with his disciples. One of the lesser-known, yet deeply significant traditions associated with Holy Thursday is the act of tying a towel, often symbolising humility, service, and Christ's loving sacrifice. This ritual, particularly observed in some Christian communities, is a powerful reminder of Jesus' example of servitude and his call for believers to humble themselves in service to others. It is said a man who wants to lead the orchestra must turn his back on the crowd.

Therefore, the words of Jesus resonate today more than ever before: "Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant. In no uncertain terms, Jesus' teachings turn the world upside down; it transforms culture, not being part of the secular culture.

Political leaders are elected by people to serve and work for the common good. Servant leadership is a leadership philosophy built on the belief that the most effective leaders strive to serve others, rather

than accrue power or take control. In India, where a great percentage of people are poor, it presents a wonderful opportunity for servant leadership. Therefore, in a country like India, when millions are living under the poverty line and millions of others are homeless and malnourished, how can a leader afford to wear a coat worth over ten lakhs, have a private plane worth lakhs of crores and wear the most expensive accessories? Most of our political leaders are corrupt and self-serving. However, in an unprecedented gesture, while elevating his Swachh Bharat pitch to his new height, PM Modi in 2019 washed the feet of five sanitary workers, including two women - hailing them as karma yogis - and then wiped them dry with a towel to express his gratitude for their service and lauded their role in maintaining cleanliness in Kumb Mela Campus.

Tying a towel is not a one-time service but a lifetime. And it should not be difficult, because this is a land of Rishis. Although the PM says, "I am a poor man; I will just pick up my bag and leave ...hum toh Fakir aadmi hai jhola utha ke chal padenge," it is just an eye wash to deceive the gullible people, and he has successfully done this for X number of years. If India only had servant leadership, the whole world would envy this nation because India has all the natural and human resources to make this a great nation. However, due to the prevalent caste system, servant leadership is not natural to this nation. Therefore, tying a towel is out of the question. It is not surprising that Jesus and his teachings, "I am among you as one who serves", are rejected in India. The persecution of Christians has increased exponentially in recent times for that very reason.

The towel represents both a literal and figurative act of service. By tying it around oneself, individuals symbolically prepare themselves to serve and love others, just as Jesus did. For contemporary society, to tie a towel amounts to condescension, and it is frowned upon by the culture of triumphalism. However, a woman named Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu, of Albanian descent, truly tied the towel and served the poorest of the poor people on the streets of Calcutta. Her commitment to serve the needy and wash them to give a decent existence was a marvel. The towel, a humble everyday object, carries profound meaning in this context. When tied around the waist, it becomes a symbol of the servant-leader model that Christ taught. It reminds the faithful

of the importance of humility, showing that leadership in Christ's Kingdom is not about dominance or status but about serving others with love and compassion. More than in a secular world, servant leadership is desired in the religious world. The religious leaders are trying to catch up with the changing times and, in the process, have forgotten about tying the towel. Mother Teresa of Calcutta remains a shining example for all to emulate, especially for the religious leaders in India.

The world is in need of liberation from injustice, oppression, deception, and falsehood. The path to liberation is to embrace truth in humility and serve truth with justice and honour. Sadly, contemporary society has incorporated pride and arrogance as its hallmark, which leads to oppression, deception, falsehood and injustice. It is a trap that enslaves the humanity of its own making, glossed with triumph and honour. Jesus embraced the path of humility and service to others to set humans free: "Know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." Therefore, Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be great among you must be your servant." Consequently, what does it mean to 'tie a towel'? St Peter gives a profound insight for humankind to embrace a model for the betterment of society: "Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others." The father of the nation, Gandhi, clad himself with a simple "dhoti" (a towel) to associate with the poor and the marginalised people of this nation and served the nation with simplicity and humility. Hence, people are called to engage in acts of service—whether through physical acts of charity, helping those in need, or simply offering kindness and compassion to others. "Humble service" means serving others with modesty, without seeking recognition or pride, and prioritising the needs of others over one's own. It emphasises a selfless and compassionate approach to helping others, often seen as a core Christian value. Therefore, it reminds the faithful of the importance of humility, showing that Christian leadership is not about dominance or status but about serving others with love and compassion. The contemporary society should learn an important lesson to bring a paradigm shift in society: that true greatness comes not from being served but from serving others in love and humility. Therefore, don't be shy to 'tie a towel'.

(The author is a Priest based at Pilar, Goa)

Tie a towel

people's edit

A NEW HIGH IN DEHUMANISATION

SUJIT DE

A new form of bullying has emerged in schools, starting from the primary level. Students from rich families show off their money power to taunt and segregate the economically backward ones.

They make fun of their classmates, who bring simple food in their tiffin boxes, or bring ordinary pencil boxes or colour pencils, or who do not go to a foreign country like them for holidays.

The principal of a school in Kolkata said that earlier bullying was a more common phenomenon in middle school, but now it started right from class I. She actually compared the present phenomenon with the recent past. Bullying was there in middle school during our school days, but this kind of class oriented bantering and segregation were generally absent. Whereas kids aged even 4-5 years are now displaying a high level of class intolerance.

There is no wonder in it, as schools cannot be quarantined from the whole society and system, both of which are plagued with class obsessions and hatred, along with rising inequality.

The 2025 Blume Ventures' Indus Valley Report says India's main 'consuming class' is 10% of the population, the rest have no income to spend, and while people from the bottom 90% are unable to join the top segment, the wealthiest class is growing even wealthier. But the drum beating about the trillion dollar economy completely veiled the alarming rise in inequality, just like the wall which was erected in Ahmedabad kept the slum area out of sight during the visit of Donald Trump.

Researcher David Livingston observes that when people dehumanise others, they think of them as having the essence of an animal lower than the human on the hierarchy. But now it seems that people began dehumanising others by lowering them below animals.

Avni, a man-eater tigress, is said to have killed 13 humans from 2016 to 2018 at the Pandharkawanda - Relgaon forest of Yavatmal district in Maharashtra. Avni could not have been caught alive despite serious efforts and had to be killed in November 2018. After its death, it got much more public sympathy than what its victims got after their deaths. Even a contempt petition was filed in court against Maharashtra officials for rewarding people who had killed Avni.

Animals have access to those poor people who work in the fields to produce crops so that all of us can eat, who graze cows so that all of us can drink milk. But these people are being regarded as unnecessary as weeds.

A callous attitude to safeguard the lives of labourers has become the new normal. In spite of snowfall and avalanche alerts since February 24 this year, labourers working on a stretch of the road to Badrinath Dham had not been evacuated in time and as a result, eight of them were killed when avalanche hit the area after four days on February 28.

The media gave little space to the failed rescue operation to save the eight workers who got trapped after a portion of the Srisailem Left Bank Canal tunnel in Telangana collapsed on February 22 this year. Whereas reports on the Indian Premier League (IPL) Twenty20 cricket matches have been covered in a way as though it is a question of someone's life and death.

A few days ago, a worker died in Kolkata after he fell from a scaffolding. Such tragic accidents have become a routine affair because workers are forced to work without adequate safety equipment. As a result, deaths after falling from scaffolding or while cleaning a tank or in a tunnel happen frequently in India.

But these news published in brief evokes little public sympathy. The bitter truth is whether a victim's plight will evoke public sympathy or not depends on the victim's class and caste.

of major police reforms. But the recommendations of these committees have not seen the light of the day.

K G Vilop, Chorao

HC order worries some Goan MLAs

The landmark High Court order which is actually forcing the Goa Government administration has more than the one major implication!

Surely the inhabitants of the illegal vote-bank settlements are worried but the other major worry is for specific long running politicians and quite a few others have been misusing these vote banks, to enjoy absolute power in Goa.

It's not a surprise these politicians have the most serious criminal/corruption cases, but their political clout stemming from these illegally set up vote banks on government or community land, helps them stay above their law!

Hopefully this landmark High Court order can help with the major cleansing of politics and provide better governance; with the reduction/elimination of political clout of these specific politicians, who are seriously manipulating the actual Goan democratic choices via illegally setup vote banks!

Arwin Mesquita, Colva

letterstotheeditor

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All letters must contain correct postal address and telephone number. Letters are liable to be edited for brevity.



Novel ways of hiding drugs

In the largest drug seizure in the state's history, the Crime Branch on Tuesday reportedly arrested three individuals in possession of 4.32 kgs. of cocaine valued at Rs. 43.20 crore. This bust comes just weeks after the Crime Branch dismantled a hydroponic cannabis racket worth 11.67 crore. It must be said that the amount of drugs being confiscated is increasing with every seizure. Goa is slowly but surely becoming a vital conduit for drug trade. However the worst part is that the contraband was camouflaged in coffee, chocolate and wafer packets and was meant to be sold locally in Goa. According to the police, the sophisticated packaging and method of concealment suggest possible international links.

This modus operandi could lead to drugs being available near educational institutions including schools and colleges which could go undetected. Chocolates and wafer packets are easily available at shops and kiosks near educational institutions. It must be said that the earlier young people start using drugs, the greater their chances of continuing to use them and become addicted later in life. Taking drugs when young can contribute to the development of adult health problems,

such as heart disease, high blood pressure, and sleep disorders. Young people who persistently abuse substances often experience an array of problems, including academic difficulties, health-related problems, including mental health, poor relationships, and involvement with the juvenile justice system. The state government should accept that drug abuse around educational institutions is a grave problem and take necessary steps to dismantle the drug channel.

Adelmo Fernandes, Vasco

A fractured land

If 11 years after assuming the post of PM, all Modi can talk about is Mussalman and puncturewalls then it is obvious that there is no cure for a bigoted mind. The media has been instructed to downplay or bury anything that shows BJP/India in poor light now that Narendra Modi is the PM.

The moment he stops being the PM, this same partisan media and Sanghis will be writing about how India has regressed by at least a hundred years but they will not talk about Modi's failure in contributing towards

India being left behind.

While the world is busy breaking internet speed records, inventing Deep Seek, Large Language Learning Model AI, manufacturing trains that have the capability to run at 600 km/hr, churning out 3D printed skyscrapers and human organs, brainwashed people are busy in a civil war targeting the minorities and digging masjids to find non-existent mandirs below. @ 800 crores people i.e. 60% of India's population is subsisting on 5 kg of free rations monthly, this is an issue of great shame but his acolytes shout from the rooftops at every given opportunity that it is a matter of great pride for India that Modi is handing out dole (referred to as 'food security') to a majority of Indians.

The ruling dispensation doesn't realize that 80% of Indians are really suffering under Modi's rule, they are so besotted with his inflammatory religious rhetoric that they can not see beyond their nose. My heart bleeds for India.

Vinay Dwivedi, Benaulum

Manpower shortage in Goa Police force

The Goa Police Department is

facing a shortage of personnel across different ranks compared to the sanctioned strength impacting the operational capacity of the force. Though the breakdown of law and order and inadequate policing is partly also a result of lack of training, resources and other factors, shortage of constabulary and police officers also account for it.

It is primarily the responsibility of the state government administration to recruit more women police personnel including improvement of gender balance. The Centre has issued advisories to the states for increasing number of women in the police forces. And to strengthen welfare measures for women police personnel and ensure their safety and a conducive work environment such as provision of housing, medical and rest room facilities for women police personnel in Police Stations to attract women to join the Police Force. Police forces must undergo modernisation and become a professional force for adapting to the evolving needs of society. Till now, six committees, including the National Police Commission, have been set up by the government. These committees made recommendations in favour