

with a guerilla warfare. They also became unpopular among both the Sri Lankan Tamils and larger population as well due to presence of a foreign army. The new PM Premadasa also asked Indian Army to leave, making situation more difficult for India and as a result India withdrew her forces gradually.

Rajiv Gandhi also tried to give a new lease of life to NAM by giving it a new purpose of nuclear disarmament. He also gave go ahead of to Modernization of armed forces which led to extensive spending on defense. However, it was also the time of unraveling of defense scandals like Bofors deal scandal, HDW Submarine scandal etc. Bofors scandal was snowballed so much that Giani Zail Singh was tempted to suspend Rajiv Gandhi on dual grounds of corruption and not able to keep inform president of important developments.

On social front as well, Rajiv Gandhi failed a crucial test in **Shah Bano Case, 1987** in which Supreme Court provided maintenance to an old divorcee Muslim woman. Initially government welcomed the decision, but later buckled under the pressure from the orthodox Muslim groups who called it an interference in their personal law and as a result Rajiv Gandhi made a U-turn and brought a legislation which overturned Supreme Court decision. The case first estranged Muslims when decision came, and later Hindus when government failed to show some nerve in direction of uniform civil code. Economy registered growth on one hand, was also marred by high deficit and debt.

POST RAJIV GANDHI & TILL NOW

V P Singh who had been a close ally of Rajiv in Congress at that time had launched crusades against corruption, but after differences with Rajiv was expelled from Congress. He now launched vigorous anti-corruption campaigns to expose Congress. He formed a coalition of Congress dissidents, BJP and other parties in form of 'National Front' which came to power in 1989 elections with V P Singh as PM and Devi Lal as deputy PM and a lot of sulking leaders like Chander Shekhar, Ajit Singh (son of Charan Singh) etc. It was a rag-tag coalition and couldn't take many effective decisions. Situation in Kashmir deteriorated at that time and Advani announced Rath Yatra at the same time. Another political move was implementation of Mandal commission in August 1990 which was appointed by Janata Government and reservation was allowed for OBC. It led to widespread dismay and protests from parties as well by public as unlike in case of SCs and STs, there were no conclusive proof of backwardness of OBCs. CPM instead advocated economic criteria. Many forward castes also formed caste associations with a renewed vigour and caste identities came to fore once again. It was a socially divisive decision which pitted one caste against the other on the name of social justice and unfurled an unending race to bottom for reservation. No empirical examination was done to judge the efficacy of reservation policy in existence since 40 years. Consideration of reservation as only strategy of social justice prevented other strategies of social justice. However, SC stayed implementation of the decision. When Advani's Rath Yatra reached Bihar, he was arrested and communal sentiments flared up and BJP threatened to pull support on this issue.

Some MPs withdrew from Janata Party which was part of National Front and formed