

**Read Ebook {PDF EPUB} For Reasons of State Delhi Under Emergency by Ajoy Bose**



Book Review- 'For Reasons of State: Delhi Under Emergency' is a handy tool to judge Indian political reality.

For Reasons of State, thus, becomes a handy tool to judge the political reality today, even though ideological differences between Indira Gandhi's and Modi's politics are all too apparent.

In June, the Narendra Modi government—and, very significantly, not the BJP—brought out a spate of ads that condemned the Emergency. The message was clear—June 25, 2018, the Emergency's 43rd anniversary, would be observed as Black Day. The decision was also strategic; the government has been accused of having imposed an 'undeclared Emergency'. Observing Black Day delineates the Emergency's horrors as real. That the government — and not the BJP — should spearhead the Black Day elevates the 1975 Emergency from the realm of politics to government policy. The intended message is that this government is anti-Emergency.

Against such a backdrop, journalist Ajoy Bose and human rights activist John Dayal relaunched their 1977 book, For Reasons of State: Delhi under Emergency. The 2018 print has a foreword by veteran India commentator Mark Tully and a new introduction by the authors. While Tully acknowledges that there is a palpable atmosphere of fear, relating more to a future where the BJP's hold on the national imagination becomes firmer and the path is paved to "alter the Constitution", he emphatically says the present situation is not comparable to the Emergency. The authors, on the other hand, focus on the similarities between then and now.

The environment of fear that Tully talked about, for Bose and Dayal, is where the undeclared Emergency is most felt. The strengthening of certain institutions like the police, the IB, the NIA, that can act as agents of the state, and the concurrent weakening of others that can check the state's exercise of its powers, they say, mirrors what happened in 1975-77. They talk about how many from the thickly populated space of private-sector media—against a lone Doordarshan spouting Goebbelsian propaganda in 1975-77—that should have spoken the truth, instead, have become megaphones for the government.

The book, when it was first published, was a commentary on the censorship of the media during Emergency. The stories it documents at length should have been reported by the media at that time, but they never were. The conditions today may not be the same as then, but the parallels are too many to ignore. For Reasons of State, thus, becomes a handy tool to judge the political reality today, even though ideological differences between Indira Gandhi's and Modi's politics are all too apparent.

Interaction program by IMPAR.

Hyderabad: Indian Muslims for Progress and Reforms (IMPAR) is organizing an interaction program on 22 nd July at 5 p.m.

Details of the program are as follow:

Introduction about Dr. John Dayal.

Dr. John Dayal, activist, writer, researcher, occasional documentary filmmaker, is one of India's foremost voices on human rights, and particularly the situation of religious minorities. He has been the member of several governmental bodies on Rights, and Education, including the National Integration Council. He is former president of All India Catholic Union, founded 1919, president of United Christian Action, Co-founder and Secretary General of the ecumenical All India Christian Council, and Spokesman of the United Forum. Widely published and cited his books include For Reasons of State – Delhi Under the Emergency [1977, republished by Penguin 2018], Shah Commission [1978], both with Ajoy Bose, Gujarat 2002 [2002, Media House], A Matter of Enquiry- Interrogating Indian Secularism [2007 Anamika Publishers, Dismantling India [Ed, with Shabnam Hashmi, Leena Dabru, 2018, Media House], Reconciliation a Journey through a Wounded India [ Ed, with Harsh Mander and Natasha Badhwar, 2019, Westland Books- Amazon], Educating India- A response to Modi Government's Education Policy [Ed, with Sunny Jacob SJ, 2020 Media House]. He is currently researching a book on Liberalism in India for Pippa Books, London, as also on Islamophobia in India.

HT Picks: The week's most interesting reads.

On 25 June 1975, the people of India lost their democratic rights after Indira Gandhi suspended the Constitution and imposed the Emergency.

This is the story of the travails of ordinary folk in the country's capital during the nineteen-month long nightmare by two young city reporters who had a ringside view of events. For Reasons of State exposes the monstrous administrative machinery of the Emergency and the devastation it wreaked, with arbitrary arrests, homes bulldozed at half an hour's notice and, worst of all, the dreaded forced sterilization campaign. Fusing painstaking investigation with literary flavor, the authors bring you the high octane drama of events as they unfolded, ending with the triumph of people against an all-powerful state.

This widely acclaimed book returns after forty-one years with a new thought-provoking introduction by the authors and an insightful foreword by Mark Tully at a time when the lessons of the emergency have fresh, contemporary relevance.\*

247pp, Rs 599; Hachette.

HOW DEMOCRACY ENDS BY DAVID RUNCIMAN.

Democracy has died hundreds of times, all over the world. We think we know what this looks like: chaos descends and the military arrives to restore order, until the people can be trusted to look after their own affairs again – if that day ever comes, which often it doesn't. But perhaps we are focusing on the wrong threats.

In this incisive book, David Runciman – one of the UK's leading political scientists and the host of popular podcast series Talking Politics –

surveys the political landscape of the West, and shows us how to spot the new signs of trouble ahead.

From coups in ancient and modern Greece to nuclear war, environmental catastrophe, and the most heinous crimes, Runciman reveals how changes in our societies – now too affluent, too elderly, too networked – make them unlikely to fall apart as they did in the past. History never repeats itself. Instead, increasingly decaying institutions pose a severe risk to the future of our democracies.

All political systems come to an end. This book addresses the problem with verve and rigour and helps us to think about the previously unthinkable: what will democratic failure mean in the twenty-first century? Might there be something better after democracy?\*

457pp, Rs 699; Panmacmillan.

#### JADOOWALLAHS, JUGGLERS AND JINNS BY JOHN ZUBRZYCKI.

India's association with magic goes back thousands of years – from the seals of Mohenjodaro that depicted sorcerers and yogis, to the jugglers and acrobats that dazzled spectators at the courts of Hindu maharajas and Mughal emperors. Tales were told of ropes being thrown up in the air, strong enough for a boy to climb; of fakirs being buried alive for months and brought back to life; and of sanperas charming deadly cobras with their flutes. In the early nineteenth century, touring Indian magicians mesmerized audiences abroad, prompting generations of Western illusionists to emulate them.

Jadoowallahs, Jugglers and Jinns; A Magical History of India tells the story of how Indian magic descended from the domain of the gods to become part of daily ritual and popular entertainment, and its transformation from the street to the stage culminating with the rise of the great PC Sorcar Sr.

Drawing on ancient religious texts, colonial records, newspaper reports, journals and memoirs of Western and Indian magicians, John Zubrzycki offers us a vibrant narrative on Indian magic from ancient times to the present day.\*

'Do you think we're mad. to create another Pakistan?' How Sanjay Gandhi's Emergency drive terrorised Muslims.

The Turkman Gate demolitions and sterilisations in 1975 were the worst case of excess during the Emergency which had more than its fair share of violations of human rights. Sanjay Gandhi, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's son was the man behind all the decisions but two people took special care in ensuring his orders were executed well: socialite turned sterilisation evangelist Rukshana Sultana and the man who promised a return to the homeland to Kashmiri Pandits, Jagmohan, without being called out on it.

At the prefabricated asbestos-sheet family-planning centre of Dujana House, less than two kilometres from Turkman Gate, sat Begum Ruksana Sultana. The camp had been inaugurated by Krishan Chand that day. Glamorous socialite, boutique owner, and after she met Sanjay Gandhi, the leading social worker of New Delhi, Begum Sultana had become a veritable queen in recent months. She had come to the walled city just a few months back a total stranger but now hardly anyone was ignorant of her name. She had started out urging the women to cast aside their burqas. "See me, I am a Muslim but a modern Muslim. Why should we be afraid to hide our features?" the lovely begum had said.

Begum Ruksana Sultana: Socialite-turned-social worker who worked for Sanjay Gandhi's 'cause'. Photo: India Today Magazine archive.

Though there was not much of a response, the begum had consistently kept coming to Jama Masjid. And if the people there resented her presence, they had also become aware of the power she wielded. She had got together some of the most notorious lumpen elements of the area like Razoo goonda, Zia and Keramatullah. They were her aides now and the terror of the area. There were standing orders at the Jama Masjid police chowki that no cases should be registered against the three. There was hardly a shopkeeper in the area who had not bribed them in order to be left alone. With the setting up of a family-planning camp at Dujana House, the begum had really consolidated her position. True, she had not been able to make many men of the area volunteer themselves for sterilisation, and had to remain content with the police rounding up beggars and tangawalas for her camp. But, after all, it had been only a few days; soon the people of the area would have to recognize her power. Forcibly if need be. The begum had given her word to Sanjayji.

A few people were already aware of the begum's power. Veteran Congressman Mohammed Zulfikar lived right above the family-planning camp, but had not been smiling or saluting her though he passed her almost every day. Zulfikar thought he could get away with it as he was close to the Metropolitan Council Chairman Mir Mustaq Ahmed who, along with the shahi imam, were the two most respected leaders of the area. Mir Mustaq couldn't do much for Zulfikar. Just a few days ago, Zulfikar had been arrested while he was having dinner. It was a good example to others. Lately she had been noticing far more people bowing and smiling at her. As far as Mir Mustaq went, she would take care of him very soon. "We'll see how long he can go on calling me a whore in private gatherings," the begum darkly muttered.

Sanjay Gandhi, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's son was the man behind all the decisions. Photo: India Today Magazine archive.

Begum Sultana sat in the little boudoir she had made for herself next to the family-planning office. Her delicate nose wrinkled at the earthy smell all around, and her make-up was turning limp in the hot atmosphere as she impatiently brushed away the flies buzzing around her. Mehboob Ali had met Ruksana Sultana when she had attended a jalsa next to Turkman Gate in February. She had even promised to build a community centre there within a few months. Mehboob Ali had pinned his hopes on the begum. He had in fact defended her hotly when his friends had called her a r\*ndi. "She is a good Muslim. What if she does not wear a burqa? She understands our problem," Mehboob Ali had argued. "No," said Ruksana Sultana to Arjan Das, "I have not heard of demolition plans in Turkman Gate," when they arrived at the camp. She agreed to come along with them to Turkman Gate and talk to the DDA officials.

It was late afternoon by then. Twenty more houses had turned to rubble by the time they reached Turkman Gate. The begum and Arjan Das called

the DDA officials aside and had a long talk with them. Mehboob Ali who also wanted to hear what they were talking about was told sternly to stay away. "Are you a fool? I am trying to help you people, and you try to make a mess of it," the begum told him. After the huddled conference, the begum came and told Mehboob Ali that she had given instructions for the bulldozers to be called off. True enough, the bulldozers went back and demolition operations were stopped. Hope rose in Mehboob Ali's heart again. "But," said the begum, "this is a very complicated situation. I want a small delegation of you to come to my house this evening to discuss matters. By then I will know the exact position." In the evening, a delegation of seven went to the begum's residence on Jantar Mantar Road. The begum was not available. The delegation was told to wait outside by Razoo goonda and his gang.

For Reasons of State: Delhi Under Emergency; Ajoy Bose and John Dayal; Penguin Viking.

"The begum is very busy but she left a message with me for you," said Razoo. "She told me to tell you that the begum is ready to take up your case only if you immediately set up a family planning camp at Turkman Gate and supply at least 300 cases within this week." Mehboob Ali could not believe his ears. "But how can we set up a family planning camp when our houses are being demolished? Our women and children are sitting out on the road. What sort of bargain does the begum want to drive? How can we possibly give her 300 cases in a week? Tell her we will set up a family planning camp but just give me some time. Already the people are burning with anger. Who would want to get sterilized at this time?" Mehboob Ali pleaded. "Okay, I will give her your reply," Razoo said and went inside. He was back in a minute.

"The begum says that if you don't want to cooperate with her you can go to hell. Jehannum mein jao." "But the begum had promised." Mehboob Ali still tried. "Abbe chal, get out before the begum gets really angry," said Razoo. Mehboob knew better than to argue with Razoo goonda. The delegation left quietly. The same night they decided that the only person who might listen to their problems was Subhadra Joshi, the local MP.

Joshi had won hands down both times she had stood for elections to the Lok Sabha from the area. Not only was she popular, she was also known to be close to the prime minister. Lately, however, she had been rendered almost a nonentity as she had antagonised the authorities with her resistance to the Jama Masjid demolition drive which had started last November. She had also not been kowtowing to Sanjay Gandhi. She had been under a cloud and it was for this reason the people of Turkman Gate had not approached her. But now there was no way out. She at least would give them a patient hearing. Early next morning, a group of people went to Joshi's house. "You should have come to me earlier," she chided them, "but I'll see what I can do." But first they had to get a signed memorandum, stating the number of people staying in Turkman Gate, how long they had been staying there, the number of voters and other miscellaneous information. "Prepare a memorandum and I will see if I can give it to the prime minister."

Jagmohan, the DDA vice-chairman executed Sanjay Gandhi's orders to perfection. Photo: Living Media.

Meanwhile, the bulldozers at Turkman Gate inched their ugly snouts farther and deeper. There were three of them now, working at full speed. The DDA officials had started giving allotment slips for plots in the Trilokpuri and Nand Nagri resettlement colonies to people whose houses still stood. A clear indication that more and more houses would be demolished. There was also a noticeable change in the attitude of the DDA officials. No more sweet words. Now they gave orders. They were brusque with the people who went up to them and asked them on what basis their houses were being demolished so arbitrarily. "We have our orders," was all the DDA officials said. "But we have been staying here for generations. We are no jhuggi dwellers. We have been paying the house tax even," pleaded the residents. "Still if you think that we have to be removed, give us some suitable alternative accommodation. Send us to transit camps on Mata Sundari Road or Minto Road, not to open fields in Nand Nagri and Trilokpuri. How will our women keep purdah? Where will our children study? Tell us how we will earn our bread miles away from our locality? We are not dogs that you can drive us away from our own homes."

The people went to Chowdhry Mohammedin Elaichiwallah, a grand old patriarch of the area. Photographs of him with the prime minister and President lined the walls of his sitting room. But they turned out to be more useless than the junk which Chowdhry Elaichiwallah sold in his factory. "Chowdhry Sa'ab, we have beaten back demolition squads many times before and they had not intended to do even one-tenth of the damage these people have done. Tell us, Chowdhry Sa'ab, shall we sit quietly and watch our homes being destroyed one by one, our women and children pushed out on the streets?" the people demanded. "These are strange times, my brothers, we can't act like we did before. Any sort of resistance, and destruction for all of us is certain," the shrewd old patriarch said and scratched his flowing white beard. Not that he had not already tried to stop the demolition. He had been told to shut up. "Don't complain too much. You are already in disfavour as all old Congress hands are. If you interfere too much now, none of your old associations will save you," he had been told. The old man could not possibly show his hand.

"You are the sweetest rose in our garden . you are our main benefactor, our patraon . your fragrance is all over the land' - a paeon of praise for Rukhsana. And (right) 46-year-old Mohd Bastur, a Jama Masjid labourer, who was forcibly sterilised. Photo: India Today Magazine archive.

Yet he was the leader of his people. After the people had gone away disappointed, Elaichiwallah stared for a long time at the photograph which showed him hugging President Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed. "Only you would be ready to help but, Khuda jane, you too have become powerless," Elaichiwallah said with a deep sigh. The people now feared for the Badi Masjid of Turkman Gate itself. They repeatedly asked the DDA officials whether the masjid property too would be demolished. To this, the officials assured them that it would not be touched. "Nothing is written in our orders that we clear the masjid too," they told the people. The DDA officials were obeying orders by the letter. Don't rush things, slowly increase the tempo. Do it stage by stage, they had been ordered. Early on the morning of April 17, a small band of Youth Congress workers led by Mehboob Ali met the prince himself. Sanjay Gandhi greeted them coldly when he heard what they had to say. They presented him with a memorandum signed by more than 1,000 people of Turkman Gate demanding the end of the demolition drive. The prince was a man of few words. He nodded once and the meeting was over. After they left, the prince tore up the memorandum into neat little shreds. He had little time for the rabble. He had to catch a plane for Simla.

Meanwhile the bulldozers continued their devastation at Turkman Gate. The DDA had already gone back on its promise that the masjid property would not be touched. They were giving out allotment slips to people who had houses on the masjid property. Any sort of protest was answered

with a shout, "Do you want an allotment slip or not, or do you want to lose your allotment plot as well as your house?"

Tension was building up fast at Turkman Gate. The rows of women and children on the road grew longer and longer, and the piles of belongings lying out in the open grew higher. Most of them refused transportation to their new plots — they had heard what sort of places Trilokpuri and Nand Nagri were. Some of the residents who had been sent there had come back and told terrible tales. "Just a swathe of barren land, Chacha," Arif had come back and told his uncle, "and the flying dust. See my red eyes. One couldn't survive a day there, I tell you."

The residents squatted grimly in the open at Turkman Gate, preferring it to the alien land they had been banished to. In the evening, some of the squatters were approached by the DDA officials. "Look, if you want a place other than Trilokpuri or Nand Nagri, we can suggest a way out. Just sign a statement that your houses have been demolished according to your own wishes. We will give you a better alternative place to stay," one of the DDA officials told them. "We sign this statement and then you forget about your promise. What sort of fools do you think us to be? Once we sign this statement, our hands are tied. We can't even complain." The residents had decided not to believe a single word of what the officials told them. "And how about the rest of the residents? What will happen to them?" they asked. "Well," said one of the DDA officials, "if you think that you will be able to save your friends, you are mistaken. We have orders to clear this place right up to Hauz Qazi."

Feroza and her children - victims of the Turkman Gate massacre. Photo: India Today Magazine archive.

Then the officials walked off. Soon after, the residents were surprised to see Jagmohan himself get out of his car. The DDA vice-chairman's visit raised hopes again. First, the officials offer bribes to sign a statement, and then the vice chairman arrives at the spot. There must be some pressure on them to stop the demolition, the residents thought. Jagmohan, however, stayed for only a few minutes. "I believe you have some objections. Send a small delegation of your leaders to me tomorrow and I will talk to them. I can't discuss in the crowd," Jagmohan told the anxious crowd surrounding him. "But all the while the discussion goes on, your bulldozers keep on razing our houses," someone from the crowd complained. Jagmohan allowed himself to smile. "The DDA does not work on Sundays. Tomorrow there won't be any bulldozer," he said. For the first time in five days, the bulldozers did not come to Turkman Gate. Jagmohan had been right. The DDA did not work on Sunday. The residents had got a day's respite. Around 11 am on Sunday, a delegation led by Elaichiwallah went to meet Jagmohan. They waited for a while and were then ushered into the room of the vice chairman. "Tell me briefly, what exactly do you people want? I am terribly busy and can spare you only a few minutes." Jagmohan did not look very amicable.

"We will be brief," said the leader of the delegation and put forward a list of demands: (a) the immediate ceasing of demolition, if possible, (b) the allotment of alternative 45-yard plots in Seelampur Welcome or other suitable transit camps if the Turkman Gate area had to be demolished, and (c) an assurance that the masjid will not be touched. "If you have to remove us, remove us all to some large area where we can carry on our respective jobs and trades. Don't scatter us all over the outskirts of Delhi," the men pleaded. It was at this point that Jagmohan flared up. Recollecting the meeting later, Chowdhry Kaimuddin, who was in the delegation, said, "I do not know what exactly aggravated him. But I think it was because we said that we wanted to be all together. He burst out suddenly, "Do you think we are mad to destroy one Pakistan to create another Pakistan?"

There was a stunned silence as the import of Jagmohan's words sank in. "We will give you plots in Trilokpuri and Khichripur, and you will have to go like the five lakh other people we plan to resettle. This is one time you people will not get any special privileges," Jagmohan continued. "And remember," Jagmohan warned, "if you don't go, and make the foolish mistake of resisting the demolition operations, the consequences will be serious." Jagmohan stared fixedly at Elaichiwallah. The old man lowered his eyes and led the delegation out. War had been declared.

Ajay Bose | The office was in absolute darkness;

On 25 June 1975, the president of India, on the advice of prime minister Indira Gandhi, declared a state of Emergency in the country. For the next 21 months, India was transformed into an authoritarian state where all democratic rights, including the right to free speech, were suspended. Veteran journalist and writer Ajoy Bose was a new reporter with the Patriot, finding his feet in the profession at the time. Bose later co-authored a seminal book on this era, *For Reasons of State: Delhi Under Emergency*. We spoke with him about his experiences and the mood that prevailed in the Capital during those uncertain days. Edited excerpts:

Is it true that when the Emergency was announced, electricity supply to newspaper offices was cut off?

The day before the Emergency was announced, as a young reporter with the Patriot newspaper in Delhi, I had gone to cover a rally in Ramlila Maidan which was being addressed by JP (Jayaprakash Narayan) himself. I got a good story—JP was not upbeat, and was complaining that the Total Revolution (against the Indira Gandhi regime) was not taking off. It was like a statement of defeat. My editor was happy with the story and, being on the crime beat, I was looking forward to having a political story of mine feature on Page 1.

But the next morning, I found no newspapers at my doorstep. I headed to office, where I met a colleague outside and asked him how they had played my story. His face was grim. "Don't talk too much," he said. "There is an Emergency." When I walked in, the office was in absolute darkness. Everyone was looking shattered. Only one person was happy, my eccentric editor, Edatata Narayanan. There were no papers for the next three days. When they came out none published any editorials in protest. Only two papers supported the Emergency, the National Herald, which was the Congress party paper, and the Patriot, which called the Emergency a "great idea".

What was your personal experience of the Emergency?

In Delhi two aspects stood out—Sanjay Gandhi's five-point programme included cleanliness and that became a licence for arbitrary demolition of slums and unauthorized colonies. The other controversial thing was family planning. Sanjay wanted to speed things up and his idea of doing that was to forcibly sterilize people through a scheme of incentives and disincentives. A friend of Sanjay Gandhi, Rukhsana Sultana, set up a family planning centre next to Jama Masjid in Old Delhi. So with the demolition and sterilization camps together, the people of the area went mad. They

resisted the police and the bulldozers, and morning, evening there were riots. We were all camped there and watching all this happen, but couldn't write about it while our notebooks were filling up. We were allowed to carry a sanitized version of the events in the papers but we refused to do that, so (news) agency copies were carried.

My editor, Narayanan, had supported the Emergency, but then fought with V.C. Shukla, the information and broadcasting minister. He then started carrying out a campaign against the Emergency. We would deliberately try and get around censorship rules and write stuff which was not complimentary to government and to Sanjay Gandhi. For my beat, crime, I started attacking the police and managed to get some stories through. Lalit Maken, who was an important Congress leader, threatened to burn the Patriot office down. He came to the office and I met him—he began threatening and abusing us .

How was censorship enforced?

Initially, you actually had to take your copy to the censor and show it to them. They would then ink the offensive stuff out. But the process was too cumbersome and it didn't last too long. The babus had a typically mindless approach and would leave the "damaging" stuff intact while cutting out what was "innocuous". So then the papers were asked to censor themselves and not publish anything "anti-national". All the papers had to comply. The government could do anything, just like in a dictatorship. The courts were completely with them. And the police would never support you.

You had to be very careful about what you wrote. All of us kept our jobs and no newspapers were banned. But as the Emergency wore on, people started writing a few things (that were critical of the government).

Did anyone stand up to the government?

Few newspaper proprietors would dare take the risk of shutting down (so they supported the Emergency). The exceptions were Ramnath Goenka's Indian Express, J.J. Irani's The Statesman, Nikhil Chakravarty's Mainstream and Romesh Thapar's Seminar. Then there was the Motherland, the BJP paper, and, in the last stages of the Emergency, the Patriot.

Which sections of the media actively supported the Emergency?

I won't take any names but there were journalists who took advantage (of the situation) and curried favour with the powers that be. It was disappointing to see senior journalists spy on others. The Press Club became a place where you couldn't talk freely; you had to look over your shoulder.