



“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.”

—David Hurley



Ensuring faster justice

Justice delayed is not merely a legal phrase. In India, it is a daily reality for millions of citizens waiting outside courtrooms, sometimes for years and sometimes for generations. A land dispute, a service matter, a criminal appeal or a constitutional question may remain pending for so long that the relief, when it finally comes, loses much of its meaning. In this light, the Union Cabinet's proposal to increase the strength of the Supreme Court from 34 judges to 38 is a welcome and significant step. The government will bring a bill in Parliament for this purpose. Once cleared, it will add four more judges to the country's highest court. The move may appear modest in numbers, but its meaning is larger. India is a vast country with a complex legal system. The Supreme Court is not only a constitutional court. It also hears appeals from across the country. For many citizens, especially those from poor, rural and remote areas, reaching the Supreme Court itself is a long and expensive journey. When their cases remain pending for years, the burden becomes heavier. More judges can help reduce this pressure and allow matters to be heard with greater speed. The importance of this proposal must also be seen in the context of constitutional matters. Questions involving federalism, fundamental rights, elections, reservations, governance and the powers of institutions often reach the Supreme Court. These are not ordinary disputes. They shape the direction of the Republic. Delay in deciding such questions creates uncertainty, not only for individuals but for governments, institutions and society at large. Of course, increasing the number of judges alone will not solve India's problem of judicial delay. The pendency crisis runs deep. It affects the Supreme Court, High Courts and trial courts. It is linked to vacancies, infrastructure, procedures, adjournments and the shortage of judges at several levels. But this does not reduce the importance of the present move. Every serious reform must begin with recognising the size of the problem. Adding strength to the Supreme Court is one such recognition. The last increase in the strength of the Supreme Court was made in 2019. Since then, the pressure on the judiciary has only grown. India's population, litigation, rights awareness and governance disputes have all expanded. A court that must respond to a changing nation also needs adequate capacity. The proposal should now move through Parliament with seriousness and urgency. It should not become another matter of political contest. Speedy justice is not a government issue or an opposition issue. It is a citizen's issue. For the poor petitioner waiting in a distant village, for the undertrial hoping for relief, for the citizen seeking clarity on rights, the court is often the last door. Strengthening that door is necessary. The government's proposal is a step in the right direction. It may not end delay by itself, but it can help the Supreme Court move faster, hear more matters and deliver justice with greater confidence. In a democracy, few reforms are more important than making justice quicker, closer and more meaningful.

India's Economic Strategy

BOOST TO MANUFACTURING?

DHURJATI MUKHERJEE

The spectacular victory of the BJP in the states of West Bengal, Assam, and Puducherry puts on the party the extra burden of reviving the states. With Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, banking on domestic consumption and its sheer absorbing capacity, boosting the economy may work to a limited extent. She requested industry captains to step up and capture the domestic demand currently met by foreign markets. “Business are importing a lot of tools which are intermediary, so there is some more agility which I expect from the Indian industry”.

The recent observations of the finance minister to step up manufacturing to counter imported goods and stop valuable foreign exchange outflow is well-timed. However, considering this fiscal, economists are of the opinion that rural income and consumption and crop yields may decline due to weak rains and possible El Nino impact. There is thus a need to go deep into the problem, for which the government has to be specific and come out with an action plan in clarifying the challenges faced by Indian manufacturers and what could be done to start producing import substitution products in the country.

India's share of global manufacturing has remained stagnant at around 2.8 percent for a decade, which indeed is quite low for a country aspiring to gain developed status while China has occupied a share of 30 percent. Reports indicate that the production linked incentive scheme launched by the government has primarily attracted assembly operations rather than high-value manufacturing. Most of these assembly units are dependent on import of components from China. Thus, increased exports of the country mean increased imports from China. Modi has failed to build the indigenous base in India though some progress has been made.

China appears to have emerged as an integral part of the Indian manufacturing supply chain, exporting close to \$150 billion in FY26, a report published by trade intelligence firm GTRI observed. Even as it accounted for around 16 percent of India's total imports, China's dominance is significantly higher in industrial goods, supplying as much as 30.8 percent of the country's requirements. Four vital sectors such as electronics, machinery, computers and organic chemicals were the largest recipient of Chinese imports. Together they accounted for 66 percent of India's total imports from China valued at around \$82.6 billion. This dependence is less about consumption and more about weak domestic production.

Indian industry relies heavily on Chinese inputs which include electronic parts, EV batteries, solar modules, APIs and speciality chemicals that are hard to replace at scale. As a result, analysts rightly point out that even as India tries to grow exports, its supply chains remain tied to China which is undoubtedly far ahead in technology and efficiency. Chinese hegemony in the Indo-Pacific remains firm as India cannot stand the competition of Beijing. As New Delhi recalibrates its foreign policy to accommodate Beijing's rise, most countries realize that India is no longer an aspiring peer competitor.

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It can be discerned that the lack of manufacturing boost may obviously be related to lack of technological upgradation and ensuring economies of scale, on the one hand, and the inflow of financial support and participation, on the other. The only area of satisfaction is that some foreign tie-ups have been reached in recent times, which could see some advance in manufacturing. With reference to the finance minister's pointer to the private sector to boost manufacturing, it needs to be stated that there are various indigenous items which do not compare with imported ones, both in quality and pricing. The oft-repeated economic

jargon of achieving economies of scale needs to be achieved.

Most analysts are of the opinion that India's competitive power and global influence is fast slipping and has very little assertive power. In evolving our economic strategy, it is necessary to bring about changes in policy making along with technological innovations as well as economic efficiency for India's emergence as a key player in the global arena. What the government plans to do remains to be seen but in this critical scenario, India has to face the challenges with determination.

As regards Indian diplomacy, it needs to be said that the country has rightly maintained contacts with Iran and our leaders have openly stated that the country would purchase oil and gas from whichever source offers the lowest price. India's relation with China has greatly improved and this needs to be maintained for the country is dependent on the latter for vital imports in the electronics, pharma, auto and various other sectors.---INFA

The Silent Force of RSS Behind Bengal's Historic Victory

LALIT GARGG

The historic, remarkable, and charismatic victory of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in the West Bengal Assembly elections owes much to the deep-rooted efforts of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). Undoubtedly, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah played pivotal leadership roles in this success. However, in the face of a formidable challenge from Mamata Banerjee, it was the RSS's sustained groundwork over the years that emerged as the decisive force behind BJP's triumph. Anticipating the political climate shaped by rising tensions and shifting socio-religious dynamics, the RSS had begun preparing for this electoral contest long in advance. It organized over 175,000 small and large meetings across West Bengal. Over the past fifteen years, the organization has significantly expanded its presence, with the number of its branches growing from around 900 to nearly 5,000. Through extensive door-to-door campaigns under the theme “Save Bengal,” RSS volunteers carried out a wide-spread voter awareness initiative. This meticulous micro-level planning laid the foundation for BJP's unprecedented electoral gains and eventual

rise to power.

The election results once again demonstrated that politics is not solely determined by grand rallies, loud slogans, or visible campaigns. Often, the real battle is fought quietly at the grassroots—beyond the reach of cameras and headlines. While the aggressive campaign of the All India Trinamool Congress dominated the public discourse, RSS-affiliated workers executed what may be described as a “silent revolution,” strengthening their grassroots connect with discipline and subtlety. Issues of Bengal's identity, development, and cultural heritage were central to this outreach. Tailored engagement strategies were designed to reach women, youth, intellectuals, farmers, laborers, and marginalized communities. This broad-based social engagement gradually shaped public opinion in favor of change.

The 2026 West Bengal elections marked not merely a political shift but a deeper social, cultural, and ideological transformation. For decades, Bengal's political landscape was dominated first by Leftist ideology and later by the Trinamool Congress. However, the decisive tilt of public mandate toward BJP challenged long-standing assumptions. At the heart of this transformation lay the quiet yet powerful role of the RSS, whose influence, though largely invisible, proved

highly effective. This victory was not the result of short-term electoral tactics but of years of organizational discipline, ideological outreach, and sustained social dialogue. The RSS's expansion in Bengal was never purely politically motivated; rather, it reflected a long-term social vision. Its work unfolded not as a loud campaign but as a gradual, silent societal transformation that steadily influenced public consciousness. By the time elections arrived, a favorable mindset had already taken root.

The strategic vision of RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat also deserves recognition. He viewed Bengal not just as a political unit but as a culturally rich land integral to India's identity. The RSS made conscious efforts to connect with Bengal's cultural ethos, presenting festivals such as Durga Puja, Kali Puja, and Ram Navami as symbols of unity and pride. In doing so, it positioned Hindutva not as an external imposition but as a natural extension of Bengal's own cultural spirit. For a long time, it was believed that Bengali identity and Hindutva were at odds. However, this election challenged that perception. The simultaneous resonance of slogans like “Jai Shri Ram,” “Jai Maa Kali,” and “Jai Maa Durga” conveyed not merely political messaging but a deeper cultural synthesis. This alignment suggested that regional identity and

broader cultural ideology can coexist harmoniously, fostering a renewed sense of awareness among voters—one that transcended development issues to include identity, security, and cultural pride.

The discourse of “existence” and “identity” emerged strongly during the elections, giving a new dimension to political engagement. The BJP and RSS framed the contest not just as a political rivalry but as an ideological struggle centered on dignity and recognition. Allegations of appeasement against the ruling party intensified this narrative, leading to clear polarization among voters. At the grassroots, RSS played a crucial role in shaping and legitimizing this discourse through consistent engagement. Organizationally, the election underscored the importance of a strong ground structure. From booth-level management to coordination among workers, from controlling factionalism to integrating new and old cadres—the RSS's contribution was significant. This was not merely the effort of a political party but the result of a coordinated organizational ecosystem that elevated BJP into a formidable electoral force.

While the popularity of Narendra Modi and the strategic acumen of Amit Shah were critical, the social foundation that enabled their effectiveness was built by the RSS. Hence, this victory repre-

sents not just leadership success at the top but a culmination of collective effort at every level. A noteworthy trend in this election was the shift of Bengal's middle class toward the BJP. Traditionally considered politically aware and intellectually engaged, this segment plays a decisive role in shaping electoral outcomes. Through sustained dialogue and awareness campaigns, the RSS succeeded in building ideological resonance within this class, making it a strong pillar of BJP's support base.

This transformation can also be viewed through the vision of Syama Prasad Mukherjee, whose foundational nationalist ideology now appears to be finding renewed expression in Bengal. Thus, this victory is not merely political but also symbolic of ideological continuity. In conclusion, the 2026 West Bengal election stands as more than an electoral event—it represents a profound socio-cultural and ideological shift. The disciplined, patient, and sustained efforts of the RSS have now manifested in tangible results. This transformation illustrates that when organizational strength, ideological clarity, and decisive leadership converge, they not only influence political outcomes but also reshape the direction of society. The future will reveal whether this change remains confined to political power or evolves into a lasting social renaissance.