

The nation has been shamed by the verbal calisthenics that were on display both by the the central government and the Rajasthan government in collusion with Islamic fundamentalists to stop Salman Rushdie from participating in the Jaipur Literary festival. Rushdie has visited India 5-6 times in the last 10 years but never was the kind of ruckus created that was evident this time. It is clear that this has to do with the fact that this time his visit coincides with the upcoming elections in UP. All secular parties need to exploit the Muslim vote bank in this UP elections. To entice the Muslim voters of UP, the reservation card was played first, but when it seemed that it had not brought in the desired dividends, this more imaginative ploy of disallowing Rushdie from participating in the litfest was made with the help of Dar—UI-Islam, Deoband. They were told to issue a fatwa against the visit of Rushdie. The episode that the Muslim society had almost forgotten has now been stoked again so that the Islamic fundamentalism can rear its ugly head once again. **By doing this, not only have they nurtured the terrorist face of Islam but also managed to portray India in the wrong light as a weak nation which cannot ensure the safety of a litterateur and gives in meekly to the terror tactics of fundamentalists.**

First of all, the organisers were intimidated by a false alarm of terrorist strikes. When Rushdie questioned this, the Maharashtra and Rajasthan police conceded that there was no such threat. Now the way the Rajasthan government is unashamedly trying to wipe off the shame of what it has done, it is not only bringing a bad name to the state government but the whole nation is having to bear the brunt of it. The fundamentalists are now feeling encouraged and the Hindu society is feeling conned. At a time like this, the Mumbai police have claimed to have solved the Mumbai blasts. **The way only three people have been held responsible for the blasts, it is difficult to fathom if they have solved the case or are rather trying to hide the culprits. People have already started wondering why Digvijay Singh has not yet fired the name of any Hindu involved in the blast. He would be more into the good books of the Muslims if he blames a Hindu organisation for the blasts.** Both these incidents are intertwined with one another. This proves that the secular parties of the country can go to any extent to win over the Muslim votes.

This incident also brings to the fore the two-tongued nature of the Indian intellectuals. It was these same people who had gone to town crying wolf when the notorious painter M F Hussain who had painted sleazy naked images of Mother India and Hindu goddesses did not come to India, then they had left no stone unturned in criticising the Hindu organisations, this, despite the fact, that no threat to his life was ever made and the Indian government was regularly asking him to come back to India. The Indian government was looking forward to taking back



the cases that Hussain had been facing in the country. **It is true that Husaain had fled the country only because he was scared of the Indian judiciary. Despite, there was no dearth of people shedding crocodile tears for him. But it seems that they have already shed every drop of tears and there is nothing left to shed for Rushdie. Paralysis seems to grip the proponents of 'right to free speech' when it comes to dealing with the Muslim and Christian fundamentalists, we now seem to have an answer to it actually. The illicit nexus of the these so-called intellectuals with the ISI agent Ghulam Nabi Fai is getting exposed. Have they sold their souls to these people to safeguard the interests of these terrorists and fundamentalists only for a few currency notes, one is at a loss to understand.**