

# GHULAM NABI AZAD

26<sup>th</sup> August, 2022

Hon'ble Congress President,

I joined the Indian National Congress in Jammu & Kashmir in mid 1970's when it was still a taboo to be associated with the party given it's chequered history in the state from 8<sup>th</sup> August 1953 onwards – the arrest of Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah being the nadir of it's political myopia.

Notwithstanding all this, Inspired from my student days by the ideals of Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Jawaharlal Lal Nehru, Sardar Patel, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, Subhash Chandra Bose and other leading lights of our freedom struggle. Subsequently at the personal insistence of Late Sh Sanjay Gandhi I agreed to shoulder the responsibility of the Presidentship of the Jammu & Kashmir Youth Congress in 1975-76. I was already serving the Indian National Congress as a Block General Secretary from 1973-1975 after completing my post graduation from Kashmir University.

During the period from 1977 onwards as General Secretary of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC) led by Late Shri Sanjay Gandhi we went from jail to jail along with thousands of Youth Congress leaders and workers. My longest period in Tihar jail was from 20<sup>th</sup> December, 1978 to end of January 1979, for leading a protest rally against the arrest of Mrs. Indira Gandhi from Jama Masjid Delhi to Parliament House. We opposed the Janata Party dispensation and paved the way for the revival and rejuvenation of the party founded by Late Mrs Indira Gandhi in the January of 1978. Within three years as a consequence of that heroic struggle the Indian National Congress stormed back into power in 1980.

After the tragic death of youth icon, I took over as the National President of IYC in 1980. As President, I had the privilege of inducting your husband Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi into the Indian Youth Congress as a Member of the National Council on the first death anniversary of Late Shri Sanjay Gandhi on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 1981. Subsequently Late Shri Rajiv Gandhi took over the leadership of the IYC in a Special Session of IYC held in Bangalore on 29<sup>th</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> December of that year (1981) again under my Presidentship.

I have had the honor of serving as a Union Minister in Late Smt. Indira Gandhi's, Late Sh Rajiv Gandhi's, Late Sh. PV Narasimha Rao's and Dr Manmohan Singh's government's respectively from 1982 till 2014.

I have also had the opportunity of serving as a General Secretary in the AICC with every President of the Indian National Congress since the mid 1980's.

-1-

# GHULAM NABI AZAD

-2-

I was a Member of the Congress Parliamentary Board headed by your late husband and then Congress President Sh. Rajiv Gandhi till his tragic assassination in May 1991 and later with Sh PV Narasimha Rao till the latter decided not to reconstitute the Congress Parliamentary Board in October 1992.

I have also been a Member of the Congress Working Committee continuously for nearly four decades both in an elected and a nominated capacity. I have been the AICC General Secretary Incharge of every state and Union Territory of the country at one point of time or the other over the last thirty-five years. I am happy to state that INC won 90% of the states that I was in charge from time to time.

I am recounting all these years of selfless service just to underscore my life long association with this great institution that I also served recently as the Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha for 7 years. I have spent every working moment of my adult life in the service of the Indian National Congress at the cost of my health and family.

While undoubtedly as the President of the Indian National Congress you played a sterling role in the formation of both the UPA -1 and UPA-2 government's. However, one of the major reasons for this success was that as President you heeded the wise counsel of senior leaders, besides trusting their judgement and delegating powers to them.

However unfortunately after the entry of Shri Rahul Gandhi into politics and particularly after January, 2013 when he was appointed as Vice President by you, the entire Consultative mechanism which existed earlier was demolished by him.

All senior and experienced leaders were sidelined and new coterie of inexperienced sycophants started running the affairs of the Party.

One of the most glaring examples of this immaturity was the tearing up of a government ordinance in the full glare of the media by Shri Rahul Gandhi. The said ordinance was incubated in the Congress Core Group and subsequently unanimously approved by the Union Cabinet presided over by the Prime Minister of India and duly approved even by the President of India. This 'childish' behavior completely subverted the authority of the Prime Minister and Government of India. This one single action more than anything else contributed significantly to the defeat of the UPA Government in 2014 that was at the receiving end of a campaign of calumny and insinuation from a combination of the forces of the right wing and certain unscrupulous corporate interests.

# GHULAM NABI AZAD

-3-

You may recall that after you took over as the Congress President after dethroning Shri Sita Ram Kesri, the Congress leadership had met for a brainstorming in Panchmari in October of 1998. Subsequently there was another such session in Simla in 2003 and then again in Jaipur in January 2013. I had the privilege of chairing the working group on Organisational Affairs on all these three occasions.

However regrettably none of the recommendations of these retreats were ever properly implemented. Infact in January of 2013 at Jaipur, I had proposed with the assistance of others members of the Committee a detailed action plan to revitalize the party in the run up to the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. That action plan duly approved by the CWC.

These recommendation's were supposed to be implemented in a time bound manner before 2014 Lok Sabha elections. Unfortunately, these recommendation's are lying in the storeroom of the AICC for the past 9 years. In spite of my repeated reminders in person both to you and the then Vice President Shri Rahul Gandhi from 2013 onwards to implement these recommendation's. However, no effort was made to even examine them seriously.

Under your stewardship since 2014 and subsequently that of Shri Rahul Gandhi, the INC has lost two Lok Sabha elections in a humiliating manner. It has lost 39 out of the 49 assembly elections held between 2014 – 2022. The Party only won four state elections and was able to get into a coalition situation in six instances. Unfortunately, today, the INC is ruling in only two states and is a very marginal coalition partner in two other states.

Since the 2019 elections the situation in the party has only worsened. After Sh. Rahul Gandhi stepped down in a 'huff' and not before insulting all the senior Party functionaries who have given their lives to the party in a meeting of the extended Working Committee, you took over as interim President. A position that you have continue to hold even today for the past three years.

Worse still the 'remote control model' that demolished the institutional integrity of the UPA government now got applied to the Indian National Congress. While you are just a nominal figurehead all the important decisions were being taken by Shri Rahul Gandhi or rather worse his security guard's and PA's.

# GHULAM NABI AZAD

-4-

In the August of 2020 when I and 22 other senior colleagues including former Union Ministers and Chief Ministers wrote to you to flag the abysmal drift in the Party the 'coterie' chose to unleash its sycophants on us and got us attacked, vilified and humiliated in the most crude manner possible.

In fact on the directions of the coterie that runs the AICC today my mock funeral procession was taken out in Jammu. Those who committed this indiscipline were feted in Delhi by the General Secretaries of the AICC and Shri Rahul Gandhi personally.

Subsequently the same coterie unleashed its goondas to physically attack the residence of a former Ministerial Colleague Sh. Kapil Sibal who incidentally was defending you and your kin in the courts of Law for your alleged attacks of omission and commission.

The only crime committed by the 23 senior leaders who wrote that letter out of concern for the Party is that they pointed out both the reasons for the weaknesses in the Party and the remedies thereof. Unfortunately, instead of taking those views on board in a constructive and cooperative manner we were abused, humiliated, insulted and vilified in an specially summoned meeting of the extended CWC meeting.

Unfortunately, the situation in the Congress party has reached such a point of no return that now 'proxies' are being propped up to take over the leadership of the Party. This experiment is doomed to fail because the Party has been so comprehensively destroyed that situation has become irretrievable. Moreover, the 'chosen one' would be nothing more than a puppet on a string.

Unfortunately, at the National level we have conceded the political space available to us to the BJP and state level space to regional parties. This all happened because the leadership in the past 08 years has tried to foist a non-serious individual at the helm of the Party.

The entire organizational election process is a farce and a sham. At no place anywhere in the country have elections been held at any level of the organisation. Handpicked lieutenants of the AICC has been coerced to sign on lists prepared by the coterie that runs the AICC siting in 24 Akbar Road. At no place in a booth, block, district or state was an electoral roll published, nominations invited, scrutinized, polling booths set up and elections held. The AICC leadership is squarely responsible for perpetrating a giant fraud on the party to perpetuate its hold on the ruins of what once was a national movement that fought for and attained the Independence of India. Does the Indian National Congress deserve this in the 75<sup>th</sup> year of India's independence is a question that the AICC leadership must ask itself.

# GHULAM NABI AZAD

-5-

You are aware that I had an extremely close personal relationship with your family from Late Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Late Shri Sanjay Gandhi onwards including with your Late husband. In that spirit I also have great personal regard for your individual trials and tribulations which would always continue.

Some of my other colleagues and I will now persevere to perpetuate the ideals for which we have dedicated our entire adult lives outside the formal fold of the Indian National Congress.

For all the reasons mentioned above especially that the Indian National Congress has lost both the will and the ability under the tutelage of the Coterie that runs the AICC to fight for what is right for India. In fact, before starting Bharath Jodo Yatra the leadership should have undertaken a Congress Jodo excersize across the country. It is therefore with great regret and an extremely leaden heart that I have decided to sever my half a century old association with the Indian National Congress and hereby resign from all my positions including the primary membership of the Indian National Congress.

With Regards.

Your sincerely,



(Gulam Nabi Azad)

**Smt. Sonia Gandhi,**  
Hon'ble Congress President,  
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