

Letters to the Editor

10.12.97
- Raj

insane acts

AYODHYA
BABRI & ACTS OF
KILLING

A rash gamble

Sir. — This is the third time the Congress(I) has pulled down a coalition Government and forced an election on the people. The Governments of Charan Singh and Mr. Chandra Shekhar were the other two victims. On the previous two occasions, in the elections that followed, the Congress(I) came back to power with and without a majority. Its hope now is that something similar will happen this time too. For this it seems to rely on the "sympathy wave" of Rajiv Gandhi's assassination that took place more than six years ago. The indictment of the DMK in the interim report of the Jain Commission, which is the ammunition which it is looking for its firing power, offers only a limited scope that go only in Tamil Nadu where the DMK is a force to reckon with. Even here, its own house is hopelessly divided with internecine feuds. Further, the commission's interim report has irked the Tamil population. In other States, the Congress(I) is perceived as guilty of having brought down a coalition that was trying to push the process of economic reforms, gender equality, etc. The Congress(I) action is, therefore, nothing but a rash gamble. History has a knack of not repeating itself also.

A. Kalyanaraman, Chennai

Voting machines

Sir. — In the article, "Electoral reforms"

(The Hindu, Dec. 2), Mr. K. Ganesan has commended the use of electronic voting machines. About 150,000 machines, costing the exchequer Rs. 75 crores in 1990, are lying idle. Whether they can be used for the next elections is a question. Some debate on their use started a decade ago. But it is not sufficient as the main contenders, the politicians, are not convinced. The illiterate voter has to take the help of somebody to understand the numbers and to press the button. This means there is no secrecy for the voter.

A former Chairman of the Electronics Commission has said that, as the EVM is an open loop system, there is no scope for cross-checking. The voter cannot know whether his vote has been correctly added to his candidate. If there is access to the hardware, mischief is possible. So there is suspicion that votes can be manipulated.

Therefore, an appropriate technology suitable for our country, simple and not cumbersome, acceptable and suitable to the illiterate voters should be found out and adopted. Our country is not wanting in intelligence. The Chief Election Commissioner can advertise calling for a suitable machine to be demonstrated, put to debate, from any man or band of men to work, to tackle this intricate subject of conducting elections. I am sure we will have our own technology, better than the EVMs.

K. O. Rajah, Chennai

Sir. — India is a country preaching and practising universal brotherhood wherein people of different religions have been living together for centuries. The disharmony and hatred being struck over the past few years, using explosives to kill innocent people in hundreds, and now in Tamil Nadu, are insane acts and should be condemned by all sections of the people. The outfits and organisations behind these brutal acts should be immediately banned and the culprits caught and severely punished.

The pulling down of the Babri Masjid was wrong. But killing innocent people is no remedy for this. Taking revenge now will be self-destructive. Everyone should realise this.

The Ayodhya imbroglio can be sorted out easily if the true representatives of the people from both sides discuss the issue with an open mind. Any amicable solution arrived at will bring both the people closer, putting an end to the mindless killings. The youth of both the communities should not play into the hands of the fundamentalist elements nor the politicians. Destruction will always bring back more destruction and more misery. We are all children of one God and we are here to help one another and live in harmony. Let better sense prevail with all of us.

N. Harihara Subramanian, Chennai

Key issues ignored

Sir. — It is indeed a sad state of affairs that both at the World Economic Forum and the Indian Economic Summit, there is a lack of serious concern about environmental degradation and