



## DRK WITH PM SHRI. ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE

### HOMAGE TO AN EXTRAORDINARY LEADER

Bharat Ratna Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a poet, orator and the first non-congress Prime Minister who completed a full term in office is no more.

His tact, diplomacy and achievements presiding over a coalition government of several parties with different ideologies is too well-known to be described here.

He is rightly applauded as 'Ajatshatru' - a person with no enemies. It is a rare distinction in today's politics of rivalry, competition and opportunism.

He made huge contribution to the nation by the Golden Quadrilateral Project, the New Telecom Policy, The Sarva

Siksha Abhiyan and the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

I remember him with admiration and affection, like many millions of people and leaders from differing ideologies and policies.

Today I paid my homage to that great personality, just before the funeral procession began. I also had the opportunity of personally meeting the Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi ji and conveyed my heartfelt condolences. He personally made it possible for me to enter the hall where the great person was lying in-state.

I have a couple of pleasant events to

## Homage to A Great Leader *Par Excellence*

### Hon'ble Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee

*Embodiment of Humility,  
Dignity and Culture*

By

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remember him and to have experienced his efficiency, compassion, kindness, simplicity, humility and sense of fairness and justice.

### Ambassadorship Offered to me by PM Vajpayee

I was about to lay down my office as Director CBI on 31st March 1998. The NDA Government of Shri. Atal Bihari Vajpayee has assumed office as a



few days earlier. On 30th March, Shri. Brajesh Mishra, the all powerful NSA and Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister called me to his office and told me "The Prime Minister Shri. Vajpayee greatly appreciates your contribution to the Nation by successfully investigating the Assassination of Former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, even though he was a congress leader. So in appreciation the Prime Minister has decided to recognize your commendable service by sending you as India's Ambassador to a major country. The file is under process. So please do not commit yourself to any other assignment immediately after your retirement tomorrow".

I did not even ask him to which country I was being sent as Ambassador. I simply thanked him and left. That entire episode is mentioned in my book on Rajiv Gandhi Assassination first published in April 2004 (attached herewith). I am mentioning this to show the sense of fairness and justice and large heartedness of Shri Vajpayee, though neither me nor anyone on my behalf spoke to him for such a recognition.

### PM's Concern for Farmers

Hailing from a farming family from a small village Devarayapuram, near Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu I continued to evince interest in the welfare of farmers – also

being the founder President of the National Agriculturists Awareness Movement (NAAM in Tamil meaning WE).

In one of my visits to my native village in April 2002, I found the cattle being allowed to graze in the tomato field of my ancestral land. When I asked the caretaker



he told me the tomato price in the market is so low that even if the tomatoes are plucked and sold in the market, it will not meet even the cost of the labour of plucking the tomatoes and hence he allowed the cattle at least to eat the crop with fruit.

Having been shocked at the plight of the farmer even when there is a bumper crop, I decided to take up the matter at the highest levels in the government. I also had another subject for consideration of the government about the PETA campaign in USA against the cruelty to animals in India.

On my return to Delhi, I took the courageous step of asking for an appointment with the Prime

Minister. To my great surprise the PMO told me to call on the PM the very next day. The PA told me that the PM was about to leave for his retreat in Uttarakhand that very afternoon and hence I should not take more than five minutes of the PM's time.

Hurriedly I prepared my papers and went for the meeting. Shri Vajpayee graciously received me, made me sit by his side and listened to me. Coffee also came and so also the photographer.

When I mentioned about the plight of the farmers, he asked me what was my suggestion. I suggested creation of storage facilities in the villages to enable the farmers to keep their produce till they get fair price in the market. He agreed with my suggestion.

### Compassion for Animal Welfare

The next subject was about a communication received from Swami Satchidananda from Integral Yoga Institute, USA. Swami wrote to me about the PETA organisation raising the issue of cruelty to animals in India and campaigning for boycott of import of leather goods from India.

For that the PM asked me what can government of India do, when the prevention of cruelty to animals is in the jurisdiction of the State Governments. I told him that if the Prime Minister



could write to all the Chief Ministers to enforce the provisions strictly to prevent cruelty to animals, that fact can be publicized in USA and to that extent the PETA campaign can be countered.

He graciously agreed to do so and also to view the video sent by Swami from USA. He also advised me to meet the Home Minister Shri. Advani. I did meet Shri. Advani, as well as Shri. Murasoli Maran, Minister for Commerce and Industries; the Railway Minister Ms. Mamata Banerjee, and also Ms. Menaka Gandhi to carry the campaign further.

### Interlinking of Rivers

I raised the issue Interlinking of Rivers, a favourite subject of mine as the only way by which the nation could get over the enormous loss of life and property in one part of the country due to devastating floods and at the same time in another part of the country due to drought.

I congratulated the PM for his most successful implementation of Golden Quadrilateral highways project linking the whole country. I requested him that by undertaking the interlinking of rivers, he will earn the gratitude of generations of the people. To that he responded positively and said that project will also be undertaken by his government.

### Most Considerate PM

In spite of his Secretary opening the door a number of times to signal the time for my departure, the meeting went on as the PM listened to everything with great attention, read my written proposals and made more enquiries.

The purpose of my mentioning this episode is to show how considerate he was giving me enormous time listening to me patiently, reading my papers and asking for clarifications and making suggestions.

We have lost our inspiration. We have lost an "Atal Ratna" (prime jewel).... the thoughts, ideals and words of Atal ji will always remain with us and inspire us."

**Shri. Narendra Modi**  
**Prime Minister of India**

You can change friends but not neighbours.

If India is not secular, then India is not India at all.

Empowering the individual means empowering the nation. And empowerment is best served through rapid economic growth with rapid social change and justice.

I would like that no citizen of the state feels alone and helpless. The entire nation is with them.

I dream of an India that is prosperous, strong and caring. An India, that regains a place of honour in the comity of great nations.

**- Bharat Ratna Shri.**  
**Atal Bihari Vajpayee**

**MAY HIS SOUL**  
**REST IN PEACE!**



At the Final Farewell

*Extract from the book\* on Rajiv Gandhi Assassination – Triumph of Truth published in 2004 and released by the Hon'ble President of India Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam.*

A day before my relinquishing charge of the Office of Director, CBI, Shri Brajesh Mishra, the National Security Advisor and Principal Secretary to Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee told me that the Government highly appreciated my dedication and performance in the successful investigation of the assassination of the former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, though he was the Congress leader. He said that in appreciation of that commendable job done, which raised the prestige and security of the Nation, the NDA Government had decided to post me as Ambassador to a major country. He also added that the file, already being processed, is awaiting the formal approval of the Prime Minister. So, he said that I should not commit myself to any other assignment.

I did not even ask him to which country I was being sent as Head of the Mission. I told that I only did my duty to the Nation.

The very next day, before I handed over charge to my successor, I got a call from Chief justice Shri M.N. Venkatachaliah, chairman of the National Human Rights Commission. He invited me for a cup of coffee at his residence. After handing over charge, I went to his official residence. As always, he received me with lot of grace and offered coffee.

He invited me to join the NHRC, as Director-Genera). I also told him about the offer made by Shri Brajesh Mishra, who asked me to await the formal orders posting me as Head of a Mission abroad. Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah told me about the importance of promoting and protecting Human Rights as a noble task, which is far more important and satisfying than becoming an Ambassador. He said that as I have performed all my important positions in the police, respecting Human Rights, I would bring credibility to the task in the NHRC.

I told him that I was not keen on staying on in Delhi, a city of bureaucracy and hierarchy. As he persisted affectionately, I told him that I need some time to consider his suggestion.

I went to the south. The Secretary- General, NHRC kept calling me to say that the Chairman has been asking him to

contact me to obtain my consent to join NHRC. There was also an occasion when Chief Justice J.S. Verma also told me to join NHRC, as Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah was so keen. One day, the Secretary-General called me when I was in Pune and persuaded me to give my consent. I gave my consent respecting the wishes of two eminent Jurists.

A few days later, I got a call from Shri B.P. Singh, the Union Home Secretary, who was also my batchmate. He told me that proposal has been received from NHRC proposing my name to be posted as Director General and the Chairman had already obtained my consent.

He asked me if I had given my consent, particularly as the file proposing to send me as an Ambassador was in the final stage of approval. He suggested to me that I should rather go as Ambassador.

While thanking him for his goodwill and concern, I told him that I had given my consent to join NHRC respecting the wishes of Chief Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, Chairman, NHRC and Chief Justice J.S. Verma, Chief Justice of India. I



With Chief Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah



With Chief Justice J.S. Verma

also told him my presence in Delhi will be useful to the Government, when the appeal in Rajiv Gandhi assassination comes up for hearing in the Supreme Court of India.

Though the Home Secretary still advised me to go as Ambassador, he agreed to further process the proposal sent by NHRC.

When the appeal came up before three senior eminent Judges of the Supreme Court, I was requested by the Government to assist the Government Lawyers. The request was made by the MHA through the Chairman, NHRC, who said I can get involved in the matter, provided the work in the NHRC is not affected.

For the next three months when the appeal was being heard, I had to brief the CBI Officers and the senior Government Lawyers handling the appeal, almost on a day-to-day basis, at the same time attending to my responsibilities in NHRC late in the evenings.

Ultimately, when the verdict came, the Apex Court upheld my investigation and placed on

record their appreciation of the investigation of my team and my leadership in particular by name.

But the court said it is not an act of terrorism, as defined in TADA. That disappointed me and many others.

So, I thought the Government would file a Review Petition in the Supreme Court. But a day before the last date for filing Review Petition, I was told by the Home Secretary, review was not being filed as the CBI, Law Advisor to CBI and the Attorney-General have opined there is no case made out for filing such a Review Petition.

I got in touch with the Attorney-General Shri Soli Sorabjee, who was then in London. I argued with him that the Government should not accept that killing of Rajiv Gandhi was not an act of terrorism, though we are not keen on the quantum / severity of punishments.

The AG was kind enough to ask his office to send me the file. After perusing the file, I called him again at London and spoke to him at length. On being convinced of the strength in my argument, he said he was revising his opinion and accordingly, sent a fax message to me, in the NHRC.

I sent the same message to the Home Minister, Home Secretary and the Director, CBI. On that basis, a hurried Review Petition was prepared and filed in the Supreme Court.

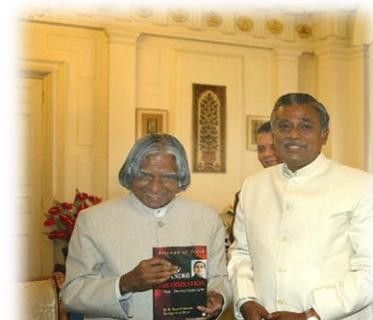
I called on the Home Minister Shri. L.K. Advani and ensured that only the AG appeared in the matter. I spent considerable time with him to discuss the issues involved.

In spite of spirited arguments by the AG, the Review Petition was summarily rejected, without giving any reasons.

My only satisfaction is to ensure on record that the Government of India, while respecting the verdict, has not accepted that the assassination is not an act of terrorism.

At a seminar later convened by Justice Shri Jeevan Reddy, Chairman, Law Commission of India, I had accompanied Chief Justice J.S. Verma, who had by then become the Chairman of NHRC.

Justice Shri Jeevan Reddy insisting on my comments, I said, "if a ruthless and cunning assassination at an election meeting in the most treacherous manner, of a former Prime Minister, for what he did in the interests of the Nation, and in which 17 others, including nine policemen were killed; by the terrorists from abroad; as a consequence, the elections were



With President Dr. Kalam



With Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh

postponed and the entire history of India changed" is not an act of terrorism, what other act will qualify to be termed as terrorism?

So, I said certainly the law has to be amended to leave no ambiguity about what constitutes terrorism.

After assuming the high office of President of India, Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam told me at Rashtrapati Bhawan that I had rendered yeoman service to the Nation's prestige, integrity and sovereignty by successfully investigating and prosecuting the Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case, without yielding to any threat or pressure; my wife suffered heart attack due to the tension; the Nation owes a lot to my selfless and courageous service; and so, he wanted to know what he, as President, can do to me by way of appreciation – appointment as Governor of a state or Ambassador.

I thanked him for his consideration and told him I was only doing my duty to the Nation, and there was no compensation for what I have done as my duty for the nation. I do not have any request to make

for myself. He asked me to consult my wife also.

When I asked my dear wife Kala, she too said that what we deserve is given by the Divine; that I had never asked anyone throughout my service for a personal favour by way of posting to a particular place or job; nothing is worth asking for and getting; and while thanking the President for his thoughtful gesture, we should request him to take care of his health by regular walking in the morning.

Accordingly, I conveyed to Dr. Kalam the same response. I also told him that even if I want something he had to speak to the Prime Minister and I myself could make the request to the Prime Minister, who has respect and appreciation for me. In any case I did not want the President to be obliged to anyone for my sake.

Even later he asked me a couple of times if I had changed my mind.

While we did meet often, I never thought of making any request to him for myself.

Many eminent personalities, including Judges of Supreme Court have been telling me from time to time that when I had made such a singular service to the Nation at enormous risk, the Government should be approached to utilize my services appropriately. I have been telling them that it was I myself, who refuse to lobby for

any position and the Government is not at fault.

It was in 2010, I was conferred with Padma Shri Award. I was at Bangalore in the midst of a meeting, when I was informed that a senior official of the Ministry of Home Affairs from Delhi, wanted to speak to me immediately. When I went out to answer the call, the MHA Officer told me that the President of India was pleased to award Padma Shri to me and my consent was needed to inform the Media about my acceptance.

I responded instinctly that I had not asked for the award; no one asked for my CV / Bio-data; I had not spoken to anybody nor anybody spoke to me on the subject; even the most deserving had to request / lobby for such an award, and I was totally surprised. For that the MHA Officer told me that the Government on their own considered that it was high time



With Hon'ble Shri. Narendra Modi

to recognize my services to the Nation.

When this fact of Padma Shri Award being granted to me came on the TV, many well-wishers called and congratulated me. Shri. Arjit Passayat, a senior eminent Judge of the Supreme Court called me to say:

"Heartiest Congratulations, but you should decline the award as it was too little and too late for the commendable service rendered by you to the Nation."

I responded:

"Thank you for your good wishes and also your sentiments. There are many, who have sacrificed their lives in defending the interests of the Nation. There are many, who have done much greater service. Many of them have gone unrecognized and unnoticed. When a national recognition comes at any stage, and that too without my asking, how can I decline such a honour?"

He appeared to agree with me.

When the Award function took place at Rashtrapati Bhawan, Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh gracefully congratulated me. While thanking him I told him that I was totally surprised that the recognition came when I thought I have been totally forgotten. The Prime Minister responded by telling me, "How can the Nation forget you, when you have done such a great job."

While having tea after the Award ceremony at Rashtrapati

Bhawan, I asked Shri G.K. Pillai, the Home Secretary:

"To my understanding, lot of lobbying goes on even for the most deserving to get the Padma Shri Award. In my case, no one asked for my CV / Bio-data; I did not talk to anybody nor anyone spoke to me on the subject. Then how did the award come to me?"

The Home Secretary said, that everyone in the Padma Awards Committee and the Government thought that it was high time to recognize my services by grant of a Padma Shri Award.

Like the above episodes, there are many more episodes to be shared, but they are not very relevant at this point of time.

*Extracts from the judgement of the Trial Court at Chennai on 28th January, 1998....*

"Shri D.R. Kaarthikeyan, Chief of the Special Investigation Team (Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case), who guided and supervised the investigation, deserves special appreciation for his dedication, hard work, efficiency and sincerity. He and his team of Investigating Officers conducted a thorough investigation in a scientific and systematic way. His unbiased and fair investigation has brought to book the real accused who are involved in this case by committing this heinous crime. He has taken meticulous care to place all necessary material in a

neat and compiled manner for the appreciation of the court.

I appreciate the Chief Investigating Officer, other Investigating Officers and other officials and staff belonging to the CBI, SIT (Rajiv Gandhi Assassination Case) for their efficiency and hard work.

Before parting with the case, I would like to place on record my sincere and grateful appreciation to the learned Public Prosecutor and Special Public Prosecutors and Defence Counsel."

*Extracts from the Judgement of the Supreme Court of India on 5th May, 1999.....*

The Hon'ble Supreme Court of India thought it fit to place on record of its appreciation "for the Special Investigation Team, constituted by Central Bureau of Investigation to investigate the case. Under the stewardship of Shri D R. Kaarthikeyan, the SIT did assiduous work and was able to solve the crime within a short time."

The Apex Court further noted:

**"The investigation was meticulous; whose ends tied to bring out a clear picture of conspiracy and the part played by each of the conspirators."**

\* [Triumph of Truth – The Rajiv Gandhi Assassination–The Investigation, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi: ISBN: 9788120790339](#)