

BJP and Press

Sir: The ringside view by Mr Prabhu Chawla (May9) criticizing the BJP's attack on the press made good reading. This no doubt that the press is the most powerful media in a democratic set-up. It can build or break the image of a person, particularly a political leader, and of parties through powerful writing. The removal of Mr. Rajiv Gandhi from power on the Bofors issue is a good example of how the press was able to tarnish the image of a political leader. The installation of Mr. V.P. Singh as the Prime Minister after the 1989 election & a severe drubbing of the Congress(I) were ensured by the press. The BJP's amazing gains in the election (1989) was also due to the anti-Congress(I) feelings developed among the people on the Bofors issue by the press .

Mr.Chawla has said that it was only due to the greater space given to the BJP in newspapers between 1988 & 1991 that the BJP was able to broaden its base. The press may have been a supporting factor to the growth of the BJP in this period. But it was not because of the press alone that the BJP could get more popularity and more seats in Parliament. After V.P. Singh came to power with BJP support, the press and the people alike watched the role of the BJP closely. The disciplined cadres, the efficient and impressive top leadership, the progressive steps taken by the party-all these made the BJP the center of attraction. This naturally made the newspapers carry more news about BJP. Mr Chawla's statement about the BJP in this regard is totally incorrect. Mr.Chawla has also said that the BJP government in the states are same as the Congress(I) governments before. He has said that there are intra-party struggles, jockeying for power & factionalism within the party. But nowhere has he mentioned that the BJP governments are corrupt. This is in fact a major achievement. Corruption was an integral part of all the Congress(I) governments in the four states mentioned. The BJP is making slow progress in bringing a new sort of government to the people. Mr.Chawla's threat that anyone criticizing and attacking the press is doomed to fall, is totally uncalled-for.

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