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Layoffs in big companies: Urgent need to plan for skill enhancement in tech industry as AI revolution leads to job loss fears

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Sudden layoffs in tech and other major companies is an issue that needs urgent focus, especially, as big companies and tech groups are ruthlessly going for job cuts. The layoffs affect society in a big way and mass retrenchment in leading companies, has a serious impact on the job market as well as entire economy.

Besides, there is a ripple effect and it is a major cause of concern for youth who are ready to enter job market, as well as those in 30s and 40s, but fearing that the company may suddenly sack them or shut a unit, at will, with little scope to get a new job because of the fast changes in the IT sector as well as economic transformation and the arrival of artificial intelligence (AI).

In India, the IT industry employs millions of people, directly and indirectly. Over the last quarter century, this industry led to allied job creation too.

Once a large number of engineers were hired but this figure fell down dramatically after 2020-2021. Most of the top companies have seen a reduction in work force in the last three years.

Recruitments from campuses have also gone down. After Covid, there was already economic uncertainty. Globally too, a large section of work force was affected as layoffs continued in US. The trend of hiring and layoffs in top companies like Google, Meta, Amazon are often, unfortunately, followed in other companies, sectors and regions too.

However, the fear of AI has already gripped the software industry. In India, surveys have found that a majority of tech workers, fear job losses as lot of work is being delegated or automated.

Now, there is need to focus on job creation and to ensure that the

skills must be upgraded so that job losses are minimum. Otherwise, it can damage the industry and overall economy.

It is not that AI is just going to take away jobs. It will also bring jobs but reskilling and upgrading self to meet demands of market, are required.

Countries that will be slow or fail to adapt fast, would be affected the most.

IT industry has brought boom in economy and due to it, there is spending in diverse fields--from housing to consumer goods,

which pumps money in market. But, the possibility of AI replacing large number of tech employees, would be damaging.

India is a dominant player in the world in software but other countries are also coming up, fast. Employability of graduates and techies is also a major issue. AI brings opportunities but it is unclear if it will outweigh the risks. Time will tell how AI revolution will affect the industry.

Apart from Vietnam, Philippines, Poland, certain other nations are also emerging in the field.

The apprehensions that AI may lead to job losses, has gripped software engineers and this is the time to create proper strategy and plan for the transformation in the tech industry, the world over, & in India.



Reflections: A Muslim's struggle for belonging in my own country



By Noor Mahvish

Every morning, we're taught to say, 'Good morning', with a smile a ritual that carries the promise of hope, a fresh start, and a shared humanity. In classrooms, homes, and villages across India, this greeting is a small act of unity, a nod to the idea that we all begin the day together. But for me, a Muslim woman among India's 200 million Muslims, mornings are no longer about hope.

They begin with the weight of yesterday's news: another hate crime, another home demolished, another life lost to a mob's fury. Before I even step outside, I'm reminded that my identity my name, my faith, my existence is a battleground in the country I call home. For as long as I can remember, being a Muslim in India has meant carrying a quiet weight an identity that invites scrutiny, suspicion, and, too often, hostility. In the land I call home, where my ancestors prayed, built, and dreamed, Muslims have always navigated a world that questions our place. But over the past 10–12 years, this targeting has transformed into something far more sinister. Hate crimes against Muslims are no longer just acts of violence; they are spectacles glorified, praised, and recorded for the world to see. As a Muslim woman, I wake each morning to this reality, my heart heavy with headlines of lynchings, demolitions, and arrests, each one a reminder that my faith, my name, my existence, is a target in the country I love.

The ritual of saying "Good morning" feels hollow now, a childhood lesson drowned out by the noise of hate. As a Muslim in India, I walk through life carrying a fragile identity, one that is both a source of pride and a mark of vulnerability. On crowded buses, in the

quiet classrooms, or in the bustling streets of cities, I am acutely aware of how my presence is perceived.

To be a Muslim in India today is to live under a fractured lens, where the image of who we are is distorted by suspicion, fear, and a growing tide of hostility.

This is the land of my ancestors, where their prayers echo in mosques, their poetry lingers in Urdu couplets, and their contributions shape the nation's culture.

Yet, it feels less like home and more like a place where my belonging is constantly questioned.

The Paradox of Home

Ours is land of contradictions. Its Constitution promises equality, its ancient ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam the world is one family speaks of unity.

But for its Muslim population, one of the largest in the world, that promise feels like a fading dream. We are not outsiders. Our roots are deep in this soil, woven into its history through art, architecture, music, and sacrifice.

From the domes of the Taj Mahal to the qawwalis of Nizamuddin, from the freedom fighters who bled for independence to the everyday citizens building this nation, Muslims are inseparable from India's story.

Yet, we are forced to prove our loyalty, to justify our existence, to navigate a society that increasingly sees us as threats. The pain is collective.

When a Muslim is attacked for their name, their attire, or a baseless rumor, the wound cuts through us all.

The grief is shared, but the silence that follows—from the leaders, institutions, and sometimes

even neighbors is deafening. To be a Muslim in India is to carry this burden while living an ordinary life: going to work, raising children, praying, dreaming all under the shadow of fear.

Climate of Hate

To be a Muslim in India is to carry a legacy of violence hate crimes that span decades, now more frequent, more glorified, and brazenly recorded by the perpetrators themselves. What once simmered on the margins has moved to the mainstream, with lynchings, demolitions, and public assaults often met with silence—or even celebration.

The 2015 lynching of Mohammad Akhlaq marked a chilling shift, where a rumor about beef became a death sentence. Since then, violence has intensified: Junaid Khan was stabbed on a train for being a "mulla," Pehlu Khan was killed for transporting cows, and Tabrez Ansari was tortured and forced to chant Hindu slogans before he died—his murderers filmed the act. These are not isolated crimes; they are performances of dominance.

In recent years, state complicity has deepened. The 2020 Delhi riots, "bulldozer justice" demolitions, and the 2024 hate speech surge all point to a system that enables and emboldens anti-Muslim hate. Even intellectual dissent is criminalized, as seen in the arrest of Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad. In every case, the message is clear: Muslim identity itself is grounds for suspicion, humiliation, or violence.

The arrest of Professor Ali Khan Mahmudabad while calling for equal outrage against the victims of mob lynchings and illegal demolitions crimes that disproportionately target the Muslims.

His words were measured, urging unity and justice, yet they were twisted into accusations of sedition and communal disharmony. Arrested from his Delhi home without proper legal process, he faced judicial custody before being granted interim bail. His case sent a message: even intellectual dissent from a Muslim is dangerous, a threat to be silenced.

Days later, in Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh, another horror unfolded. Muslim men were dragged from a police vehicle and brutally beaten by a mob of vigilantes. Videos of the assault, widely shared online, showed the men bloodied and helpless, with police officers standing by as silent spectators.

The Aligarh incident, like so many others, revealed a grim truth: law enforcement often enables, rather than prevents, such attacks?

These are not isolated events. In early 2024, the demolition of a madrasa and mosque in Haldwani, Uttarakhand, sparked clashes that left six dead and hundreds injured. In Karnataka, a mosque secretary was hacked to death in May 2025, leading to protests and resignations from Muslim leaders.

Two years earlier, in July 2023, a railway constable gunned down three Muslim passengers and a Hindu colleague on a train, reportedly targeting them for their faith. In Meerut, a student was beaten for wearing a skullcap, a simple religious symbol turned into a provocation. These incidents form a pattern, a tapestry of hate woven into the fabric of daily life. [Noor Mahvish is a lawyer]

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Leader who balances party politics along with community leadership, leads from the front

The lawmaker from Bhopal doesn't restrict himself to a city or constituency but speaks for the citizens in Bhopal and beyond i.e. across the State. Arif Masood has been fearlessly voicing concerns of the community.

By Shams Ur Rehman Alavi

Few politicians are so outspoken and always ready to raise voice on critical issues. The lawmaker who represents Bhopal Central Assembly constituency, has been in active politics for decades and has always been at the fore front. Arif Masood, who has been a commanding leader in Central India, is unique in the sense that he has been at the centre of political activity in the region.

Not just his constituency, he has intervened in issues across the state and has taken bold stand when few dared to speak. It is no exaggeration that the leader who had a commanding presence even in 1990s, as a young party leader, he punched much above his weight and held major demonstrations, leading agitations and always spoke his mind.

Perhaps, just because he is accessible and for long on the receiving end of Hindi press, his contribution is often ignored. Reality is that Masood cut his teeth in politics quite early, and learnt the art of impactful politics when he started his politics journey as a supporter of the veteran leader and former minister late Rasool Ahmad Siddiqui.

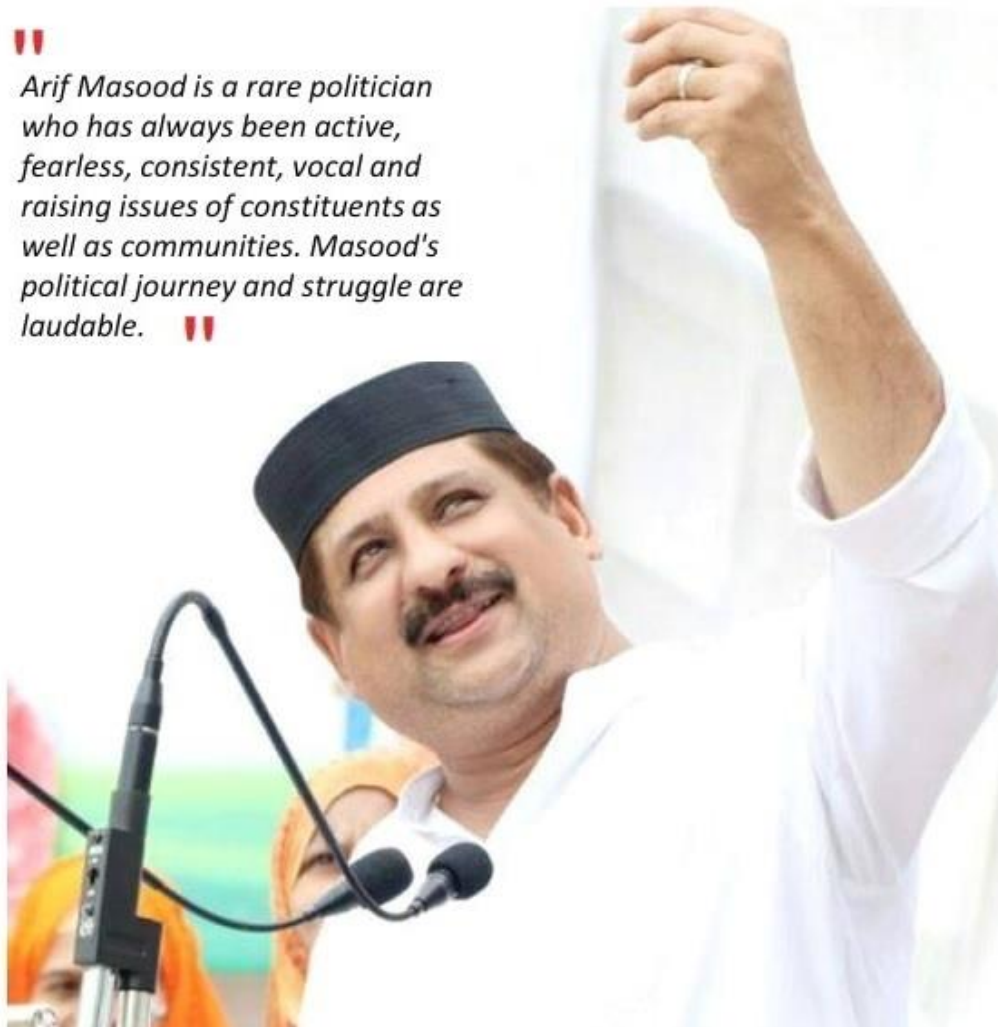
There was no looking back. Over the years, he emerged as a leader who was not afraid to take on the 'system'. Controversies followed him.

But despite the presence of another seasoned politician Arif Aqueel in Bhopal, Masood emerged as a fighter.

Arif Masood is a rare politician who has always been active, fearless, consistent, vocal and raising issues of constituents as well as communities. Masood's political journey and struggle

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Arif Masood is a rare politician who has always been active, fearless, consistent, vocal and raising issues of constituents as well as communities. Masood's political journey and struggle are laudable. ”



are laudable.

Interestingly, he never got into the sycophantic party culture and his attitude often irked senior leaders. Masood didn't bother & often caused discomfort to senior leaders due to his confrontational politics. The delimitation exercise had turned Bhopal into a city with abnormally big urban constituency and hence he didn't get chance early. But even when he was not MLA, Masood had a clout that was much beyond a lawmaker's influence. In MP, he spoke on issues when other leaders would remain silent or

avoid speaking for fear of losing party or voters' support.

This, in a way, his uniqueness that he could cross the line and speak as a leader of Muslim community, too, unlike other minority leaders who remain mum or even need an okay from top before issuing a statement. Masood always played by his rules. On issues pertaining to Muslim community, he confronted own party leaders too. When Congress was in power, he raised issue of lynchings in MP. He was openly expressing his views during Kamal Nath regime. In a state that has two Muslim

MLAs in the house of 230,

Masood showed his strength on ground long before he was an Assembly member and even after repeated victories, he has his non-political platforms to raise issues that can't be touched from within party ecosystem.

He speaks and intervenes in issues or injustice in other, faraway constituencies too. He has set up educational institutions and also suffered due to his firm stance on many issues. In a state that once had strong and active Muslim politicians, he is now a lone warrior. [shams.alavi@gmail.com]



The Weight of Scrutiny And A Life of Vigilance

For a Muslim woman, it is even more tough, as it is a dual battle for dignity

Amid the hate speeches, lynching incidents, communal rhetoric, the regular incidents of discrimination, it is a daily challenge—to exist in a state of constant alertness.

Each day, we wake to news of another attack, another home razed, another life lost. We step outside wondering if our name, our clothing, or our prayers will mark us as targets.

This is not freedom it is a psychological burden, a life of vigilance that erodes peace and dignity. For Muslim youth, the toll is visible: anxiety and depression are rising, fueled by a society that questions their place. Parents now teach their children not just faith but caution: avoid certain streets, hide religious symbols, stay silent in the face of provocation. Mosques are watched, neighborhoods are labeled “trouble spots,” and homes are raided on flimsy suspicions.

The public sphere amplifies this scrutiny. Social media is flooded with videos of Muslims elders, youth, even children being interrogated and humiliated. I recently saw a clip that broke my heart: a journalist cornered a group of Muslim boys, barely 10 or 12 years old, bombarding them with questions about Pakistan and Palestine. As the children spoke of their dreams wanting to be engineers a man in the background sneered, “suicidal Bombers” This is not journalism; it is harassment, a deliberate attempt to shame and alienate. In schools, Muslim students face punishment not for misbehavior but for their identity, beaten by teachers or ostracized by peers. From classrooms to public spaces, the message is clear: Muslims must justify their existence, prove their loyalty, and apologize for who they are.

Hate crimes against Muslims are not just acts of violence they are spectacles, often recorded and shared to spread fear. The Aligarh assault was filmed, the videos circulated not with shame but with pride, a tool to assert dominance and



dehumanize. These acts are part of a larger project to erode Muslim citizenship, to paint us as outsiders in our own land. The cameras are not neutral; they are weapons, amplifying a narrative that glorifies our suffering.

What's worse is the culture that rewards such acts. Perpetrators are not shunned they are celebrated, their videos shared as trophies. Political leaders rarely condemn these crimes unequivocally, and when they do, their words are hollow, unmatched by action. Law enforcement, as seen in Aligarh, often stands by, complicit in its inaction. Policies in states like Uttar Pradesh, requiring restaurant workers to display their names, enable economic boycotts of Muslims, turning everyday livelihoods into battlegrounds. Hate speech has surged, with Muslims as the primary targets, fueled by a climate where prejudice is normalized and impunity is assured.

As a Muslim woman, I carry a double burden: the weight of my faith and the scrutiny of my gender. My identity is both a source of strength and a point of vulnerability. I walk through life aware of every glance, every whisper, every judgment. Muslim women have always been at the heart of India's story leading protests at Shaheen Bagh, fighting for justice in courtrooms, serving as doctors and teachers, and contributing as citizens in every sphere. Yet, our journey is never equal. We

are visible, yet vulnerable; proud, yet precarious.

The state claims to protect Muslim women, citing laws on Triple Talaq or Waqf reform as victories. But these are not about empowerment they are about control, using our lives as political props while silencing our voices. Muslim men are criminalized under the guise of protecting us, yet we are denied the agency to speak for ourselves, to define our needs, to claim our place.

Our spaces mosques, madrasas, homes are targeted. Our attire hijabs, burqa is politicised.

Our protests, like those against the Waqf Amendment Bill in 2025, are met with threats of fines and legal action, turning peaceful dissent into a crime.

To be a Muslim woman is to fight on two fronts: against external hate and internal patriarchy. It is to resist narratives that reduce us to symbols, to demand a future where our faith and freedom coexist. We don't seek any permission to exist as we claim our right to belong, here unapologetically.

There are those who see our pain the secular majority, the liberals, the allies. They write articles, share posts, express sorrow. But sympathy is not justice. It does not stop bulldozers from razing homes, mobs from taking lives, or laws from silencing voices. It does not challenge the systems that enable hate, from biased policing to silent leaders. The arrest of Professor

Mahmudabad, a scholar punished for speaking truth, is a stark reminder: even constructive criticism from a Muslim is seen as a threat, a voice to be stifled. The silent majority's empathy, while kind, falls short.

It does not protect us in the streets, in our homes, or in our hearts. We need more than words we need action, accountability, and a nation that upholds its promise of equality. It is to wake to news that wounds and sleep in a silence that suffocates. It is to walk with courage, knowing your faith, your name, your existence might make you a target.

Yet, we endure. We resist. We contribute. We are not just numbers in headlines—we are citizens, builders of this nation, keepers of its dreams.

Our struggle is not for pity but for justice: for safety, dignity, and a voice that is heard. We do not want a country that tolerates us we want one that embraces us, that walks with us toward a shared future.

In the land I call home, I dream of a morning where “Good morning” is not just a greeting but a truth a promise of hope, equality, and belonging.

Until that day, we carry on, rooted in this soil, unapologetic in our faith, and unwavering in our claim: we are India, and we are here to stay.

[The author Noor Mahvish is a human rights activist and a lawyer. She practices in the Allahabad High Court]