

# AIMPLB should scrap triple talaq: Akhtar

BY OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai, July 2: Renowned poet and lyricist Javed Akhtar criticised Muslim organisations for their reactions to the reported move of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board to scrap the "triple talaq" practice, which empowers Muslims to provide instant divorce to wives.

Mr Akhtar was talking at a press conference in the city on Friday. The conference was also attended by Muslim progressive activist Javed Anand and renowned actor Farooque Sheikh.

Mr Akhtar, president of the Muslims for Secular Democracy, also said that the AIMPLB should not only reject the instant talaq practice, but also introduce a new *nikahnama*, following the lines of one formulated by several Muslim women.

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organisations around a decade back, which will provide increased social security to women. "The board should also pursue the government to amend the existing law that prohibits Muslim women from inheriting agricultural property," he said. Mr Anand, the general secretary of MSD, said that they are supporting the AIMPLB on the talaq issue looking at its progressive nature. However, criticising the board and said, "It maintained its silence for too long. It should have raised its voice much earlier, when women were being oppressed and the Shariat law was being misused by a section of Muslim men for their purposes." He mentioned that the board has no statutory status but since it has been heard by the government over the years, it has become a representative body of the Muslims.

Mr Anand also criticised Muslim organisation like Raza Academy and the All India Jamait Raza-e Mustafa or AIJRM, for their stand on the issue. He said that these organisation, should be reminded that saying 'triple talaq' is not a common practice among Indian Muslims. "According to the Shias, it is unIslamic. Even the prominent Sunni sects, Hanifis, Deobandis and the Ahl-e-Hadees, do not subscribe to this.

The Hanifis, who are the most prominent in India, accept it as logical but think it is being misused. Even the other Sunni sects are fiercely critical of the practice," he said. He added that these organisations are agitated because they feel the board might ban the 'triple talaq' and they will lose the social edge of being men, which they have enjoyed till date.

"We condemn these retrogressive and reactionary Muslim outfits. These organisation are talking on the lines of the Talibans. Their idea of an ideal society is where women will always remain behind veils and never see the outside world. We will continue to reiterate our demand for comprehensive reforms in all existing personal laws so that justice can be ensured to women," he added.

Meanwhile, the Raza Academy said that the process of 'phased divorce' is already in practice. "Nobody can change the Islamic laws. It already exists and it should be practised. However, if someone pronounces talaq thrice in one sitting, it will be treated as the final talaq," they said. Supporting their cause, a section of city ulemas said, "Although the Koran states the talaq should be done in three phases and not in one sitting, even 'triple talaq' is permissible. The board is not introducing something new," they added.

AIJRM national president Maulana Asjad Raza Khan, said, "The Shariat was the essence of the Koran and Sunnat. Any changes will be a dangerous step. The board's contention on the issues of talaq and mehar or alimony will not only affect matrimonial relations, but will also give rise to social evils," they added.

Mr Anand said that no one is aware of the outcome until the working committee meeting of the AIMPLB, scheduled to be held at Kanpur on July 4, is over.