

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST



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Founder  
M.N. ROY

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Face saving act by the government in face of worldwide criticism.

According to reports, Parivar members were sent to file an FIR (on fake charges of forcible conversion) and that was taken in by the MHA as adverse reports to cancel FCRA. Shamed by the Indian Chief Ministers who came up to help the Mission by state contributions, the MHA retraced its step.

**Dr. Ramesh Awasthi**, Chairperson, Indian Renaissance Institute, (IRI)



**MHA restores FCRA licence of Missionaries of Charity, can receive foreign funding again.**

**623**



**Canada Prime Minister crosses road with his twisted ankle, without security. Why does Indian the leader feel so insecure in spite of so much security force around him?**

— **Dr. Ramesh Awasthi, Chairperson, Indian Renaissance Institute (IRI)**

**German Chancellor Markel used to go and buy provisions for her home, without any security.**

**Why Indian PM needs security that directly costs thousands of crores every year, what to talk of indirect costs. Yet he feels so threatened that he exclaims he came back alive from within the country.**

— **A.K. Bhatia**

# THE RADICAL HUMANIST

Vol. 85 Number 11, February 2022

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Devoted to the development of the Renaissance Movement and to the promotion of human rights, scientific temper, rational thinking and a humanist view of life.

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# **SAVE DEMOCRACY, SAVE CONSTITUTION**

PRESENT STATE ELECTIONS: 2022

UP, UTTARAKHAND, PUNJAB, GOA & MANIPUR

**20.01.2022**

We choose our governments to make our lives better and happier. To achieve this goal we have constitution based on democratic values which envisages an active role for the state in securing for Indian citizens entitlements and rights set out in it. Duty of the state is to protect the natural resources and other assets of the country. In the chapter on the Directive Principles of State Policy, the Constitution enjoins upon the state to promote the welfare of the people, strive to minimize inequalities in different forms, secure for its citizens the right of an adequate means of livelihood, consider the raising of the level of nutrition, the improvement of public health as its primary duty, promote the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the society, and ensure that the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as to subserve the common good. BJP was voted at the Centre as well as in some states as it had proclaimed that it will devote its energies for 'VIKAS' (development) of the people without any discrimination. But instead it has been pursuing the poisonous policy for polarizing the people on communal lines while its economic policy, as seen in the three farm laws which it had to repeal, is designed to subserve the interests of the big corporations. This policy is having disastrous consequences for the incomes, livelihood and welfare of the poor sections of the population, and on the exercise of their rights under the Constitution.

A lockdown was declared suddenly by the Prime Minister Modi in March 2020 without any warning and without giving any time to the millions of poor migrant workers who were

made to flee from the cities, walked miles and miles with their children in order to seek refuge in their villages. Thousands starved and became jobless in no time while many died on the way.

The Covid-19 pandemic exposed the chinks in the health care system. Scenes of hospitals running out of beds, and people searching desperately for life-saving oxygen or critical medical supplies for their loved ones have hogged international headlines. Hundreds of dead bodies were found floating in the rivers in UP during the Covid-19 crisis. Government machinery was absent and people were left to their own fate.

The BJP government seems to be unconcerned with the rising unemployment. Joblessness rate was 7.9% in December 2021 while urban unemployment rising to 9.3 percent. Thousands of educated youth have degrees but the same are of no use as there are no jobs. And if they agitate for jobs, they are lathi-charged as seen recently in UP.

The educational system is sought to be privatized and it has led to the mushrooming of English-medium, high-fee-charging, private schools in which the quality of education does not do any credit to the nation. The poor parents' desire to send their children to these schools has driven them to bankruptcy and indebtedness thus crippling them economically.

The BJP government is following the policy of privatization of public sector undertakings including banks and railways with great speed. We can visualize the grave consequences of this for the employees as well as the general public. The bank and railway employees have already started their protest under the banner

‘STOP PRIVATIZATION’.

Indian Constitution guarantees certain fundamental rights, including right to life, equality, free speech, and Directive Principles of State policy enjoins upon the governments to devote its policies towards welfare of the people, to ensure employment, education and health. But many BJPs leaders and various outfits of the Sangh Parivar openly speak and proclaim that their goal is to replace the Indian constitution and turn India into a ‘Hindu Rashtra’. Those who speak in protest are labeled as anti-national and charged with sedition or UAPA. In a recent speech former Supreme Court Justice Rohinton Fali Nariman said that young persons, students,

stand-up comedians, and alike are being booked for freely criticizing the government of the day under sedition laws which are really colonial in nature and have no place under the Indian Constitution. On the other hand, Justice Nariman added, we find great reluctance among the authorities to book people who are giving hate speeches actually calling for genocide of an entire people. Therefore if we wish to save our constitution and democracy, if we wish to save our freedoms, it is necessary to defeat BJP in all the ensuing elections so that upcoming governments are urged to pursue those welfare policies which our constitution mandates states to follow.

**SR Hiremath**

President

**N.D.Pancholi**

General Secretary

**Anil Sinha**

Secretary

Ram Sharan, T.S. Ahuja, Arun Maji, Manimala, Sheoraj Singh, Amit Srivastav, Vertika Mani

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**CITIZENS FOR DEMOCRACY** 

## **PDF copy of Volume IV of the ‘Collected Works of M.N. Roy’ and ‘A Journey of an Individual from Marxism to the Radical Humanism’ by Mahi Pal Singh also released**

*We are happy to release PDF copy of Volume IV of the Collected Works of M.N. Roy which is in great demand but is out of print. This volume will be placed at the website: [www.lohiatoday.com](http://www.lohiatoday.com)*

*Other volumes of the Collected Works of M.N. Roy will also be released in the next few months for the benefit of students, researchers and readers.*

*Another collection of articles written by Mahi Pal Singh between 2000 and 2021, which traces the social and political history of the country for that period and also the journey of an individual from Marxism to Radical Humanist is also being released by the Indian Renaissance Institute on 26th January 2022 and this collection will also be placed at [WWW.lohiatoday.com](http://WWW.lohiatoday.com)*

## **Articles and Features :**

***An eye-opener for the Prime Minister and his party colleagues:***

### ***IIT KANPUR ALUMINOUS LETTER TO PM***

Respected **Shri Narendra Modi ji**,

On 28th Of December, I heard your speech delivered at the 54th Convocation of IIT Kanpur with much expectation and interest, mainly because I had graduated from IIT Kanpur 46 years ago. Your well-delivered speech brought back a flood of memories of those carefree student days well spent at IIT Kanpur.

I am so proud to have had the opportunity to study at this great institute. We learned science and technology under the guidance of possibly the best teachers in the country. I was completely transformed by this intellectually challenging and life-building experience. We were all thankful for the previous 25 years that our country had dedicated itself to building institutions of higher learning and research in the field of science and technology. My education in IIT Kanpur gave me a solid scientific and technological foundation and helped me to build a 43-year strong manufacturing career and make a contribution to make our country self-reliant.

However, I was taken aback to hear in your speech that nothing had happened in the first 25 years after independence. No efforts were made our country to become self-reliant. I am sure the young graduating students must have believed what you said about the nascent 25 years of our country. I think this seems to be an error on the part of the speechwriters. I would be highly obliged if you could hand over this letter to them so that they will include the following in your next speech.

Just after independence expeditious efforts were made to make our country stand on its own feet. Here are some stellar examples of

the solid foundation laid down by visionary leaders.

1. The constitution of our country was debated, drafted, and promulgated on 26th November 1949.
2. 1st free and fair national election was conducted, a whopping 60% population used their franchise to constitute the 1st Lok Sabha in 1952.
3. Construction of Bhakhara Nangal was started in 1948 and completed in 1964. The irrigation provided by this dam was the backbone of the green revolution which made our country to have surplus food grains. Food Corporation of India was established on 10th January 1964.
4. Five IITs (one each in every region of the country) were started starting from 1950 till 1964. Many primary schools, Kendriya Vidyalayas, and vocational training institutes (ITI) were set up to provide basic and vocational education.
5. Three IIMs were started in the first 25 years for providing post-graduate training in Business administration.
6. Many national prestigious laboratories for fundamental scientific research were started during the infancy of the republic. Like NCL, IISC, Central Salt and Marine Chemical Research Institute Jamnagar, PRL,
7. Atomic research was started with the establishment of the Atomic Energy Commission, Bhabha Atomic research center. Thus we became self-reliant in Atomic energy.

( To be Contd....on Page - 13)

**Fact-finding report:**

## Lakhimpur Kheri: Fact Finding Team Says Police's Role 'Reprehensible', Criticises Govt Response

*The report, formulated after speaking to eyewitnesses, locals and farmers' families and going through the videos in the public domain, raises many questions about the official narrative surrounding the incident, the role of the UP police and more.*



**The site of the violence at Lakhimpur Kheri. Photo: PTI**

**New Delhi:** An 11-member fact-finding team consisting of representatives from various civil society organisations said that it has uncovered a "series of lies and misinformation" that was perpetrated by the state and police administration prior to the peaceful black flag protest, during the protest and after the brutal incident. It also called the role of the police 'reprehensible'.

The team recently published a report of their investigation into the October 3 violence at Lakhimpur Kheri.

Three vehicles ploughed through a crowd of protesting farmers during the incident, killing four farmers and a journalist. As the vehicles fled, two BJP workers and a driver of one of the vehicles was killed, in apparent retaliatory violence.

The team consisted of individuals from organisations such as the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), the Association For Democratic Rights (AFDR) Punjab and the like which visited the area from October 28-30. There, they spoke to eyewitnesses, locals of the area, farmers' families and consulted the videos of the incident circulating in the domain to

formulate the report.

The full list of members of this fact-finding team and their affiliations is appended at the end of the article.

### Timeline of the events

**September 20, 2021:** Farmers' unions organised a mahapanchayat in UP Sitapur. Attended by 25,000-30,000 farmers, it was the largest such gathering seen in the region until then and Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait addressed the gathering. The report notes that the gathering did not go down well with the political powers and thus chooses to begin its timeline from this date.

**September 25, 2021:** At a gathering of BJP workers, Union minister of state for home Ajay Kumar Mishra 'Teni' makes the infamous speech where he says, "Meet me, it will only take two minutes to discipline you.." A video of the speech subsequently went viral on social media.

UP coordinator of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) Tejinder Singh Virk took particular objection to Teni's words and called for a protest to be held against him and UP deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya

when the latter came to visit the region on October 3. The protest was meant to be a peaceful, 'black flag' protest at Tikunia.

**October 2:** The protest site is fixed near a helipad where the deputy CM is expected to land the next day. The UP police cordoned off the adjoining Tikunia bypass road in light of the arrangements.

Later in the day, an amended notification regarding the deputy CM's visit is circulated in Lucknow which states that he would no longer be flying via helicopter to Lakhimpur from Lucknow but rather, will be making the journey by car. This information, however, is not conveyed to the farmers.

**October 3:** Since the Tikunia bypass was blocked, the farmers made their way to the protest site by foot, leaving their vehicles some 500 m down the narrow road.

At 9:30 am, the farmers begin broadcasting the protest on Facebook Live and a heavy police presence can be seen in the area.

At around 1:15 pm, the farmers, led by Virk began moving towards the helipad, waving their black flag peacefully, the report notes. A makeshift stage is created out of a tractor trolley.

Around this time, a group of police officers approach the farm leaders to negotiate some solutions to the situation since the farmers say that they are not leaving the site. The farmers and the police arrive at three solutions:

1. The helicopter will not land at the helipad. Ajay Mishra has invited the deputy CM and other guests to a *dangal* (wrestling event) and they would travel there by car and avoid the route on which the protesting farmers were present.
2. The farmers would not leave the protest site to march to the dangal venue or any other place. All 3,000 farmers agreed to remain within the 500 m stretch of road.
3. The protest and the dangal will end at separate times so as to avoid any clash between the two parties.

While all these terms were discussed, the police never mentioned the prior change in the deputy CM's travel plans to the farmers.

At 3 pm, after news comes in that the minister's event has ended and all the dignitaries have left, the farmers decide to wind up their protest and "leisurely" make their way back to their vehicles. The report notes that 200-odd police officers are present at the scene.

It is at this point that the three-vehicle convoy comes speeding down the road, which was thought to be blocked. The three cars were a Thar SUV, a Fortuner and a Scorpio.

The cars plough through the protestors on the road. The first individual to be run over was 62-year-old farmer Nachhattar Singh who later succumbed to his injuries.

Collating eyewitness accounts and videos of the incident, the report notes that the Thar SUV was the first to plough into the protestors, after which it attempted to speed away but was blocked by a private bus emerging at the end of the road. The car thus swerved off the narrow road in an attempt to avoid collision with individuals still beneath its wheels, the report says.

The Fortuner was following close behind and to avoid crashing with the Thar, it too swerved and ploughed into more protests.

The Scorpio, according to eyewitnesses, slowed down before the crowd and was allowed to pass, moving slowly around the bus.



**A vehicle torched after violence erupted in Lakhimpur Kheri.** Photo: PTI

At the time, the report notes that gunshots could be heard and two unidentified men were seen fleeing from the Thar, their way cleared by the police. Eyewitness accounts detailed in the report say that as the vehicles were overturned to free the individuals trapped beneath them, they caught fire.

The three members who were part of the convoy were, according to the report, recorded on camera by the farmers as saying that they had been handed over to the police alive.

“The police force took no immediate action to either prevent the incident, catch the perpetrators or help the victims in getting medical aid,” the report reads.

Those killed in the incident were farmers Nachhattar Singh (62), Daljit Singh (42), Gurvinder Singh (18) Lovepreet Singh (20), journalist Raman Kashyap, BJP workers Shyam Sundar Nishad and Shubham Mishra, Ashish Mishra’s driver Hari Om Mishra

At around 5 pm, borders of Lakhimpur Kheri and Lucknow were sealed, a complete internet shutdown was imposed (which wasn’t lifted until October 8) and Section 144 was imposed in the region.

Later, around 8 pm, the SKM called for nationwide protests outside the offices of district magistrates and an inquiry into the incident to be conducted by Supreme Court justices and not the UP police. They also called for action against Ajay Mishra and his son Ashish.

That night, Ajay Mishra gave an interview in which he accused the farmers of lynching the BJP workers, throwing stones at the convoy and torching the vehicles. He went on to say that his son Ashish was at the dangal from 11 am and could not have possibly been at the protest site.

Ashish Mishra gave a telephonic interview to ABP News the same night in which he echoed his father’s claims that he was at the dangal. He, however, acknowledged that one of the cars in the convoy did indeed belong to him and that

the car, along with the driver Hari Om Mishra, had been sent to the area to pick up some unspecified important persons.

**October 4:** Protests against the atrocities at Lakhimpur Kheri begin across nine districts of the state: Banda, Chitrakoot, Mahoba, Hamirpur, Fatehpur, Jalaun, Lalitpur, Shahjahanpur, Pilibhit and Gorakhpur.

At the same time, an increased presence of police officers and Shastra Seema Bal (SSB) members was observed in the region.

Ajay Mishra held a press conference that day in which he reiterated the narrative that it was the BJP workers who were lynched, calling the farmers “anti-national” and “anti-social” elements. He, again, mentioned that his son was at the dangal the whole time and said, “I will resign from my post if a single proof emerges against my son being on the spot where the incident took place (sic).”

Several political and farm leaders who attempted to visit the region were stopped or detained. The list included Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and her delegation, Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel, Punjab deputy chief minister Sukhjinder S. Randhawa, Haryana BKU chief Gurnam Singh Chaduni, former UP chief minister Akhilesh Yadav and more.

#### **Ashish Mishra’s arrest and thereafter**

Despite being named in the FIR filed the day of the incident, Ashish Mishra was only arrested on October 9 along with two others, Ashish Pandey and Luvkush. During his interrogation, the report claims that Ashish was unable to explain several aspects of the incident.

Witnesses at the dangal say he was not present at the event from 2-4 pm, the location from his phone put him closer to the protest site than he claimed and even the description of the driver provided by him was not accurate, according to the report.

On October 18, the Crime Branch arrested Sumit Jaiswal, Nandan Singh Bisht, Satya

Prakash Tripathi and Shishupal. A licensed revolver was reportedly retrieved from Prakash and subsequently, the *Hindustan Times* reported that a rifle, a repeater gun and a pistol were recovered from Ashish Mishra, Ankit Das and Latif.

During the investigation of the fact-finding team, witnesses they spoke to (who had also submitted statements to the police) claimed that Ashish Mishra was in the Thar SUV that trampled the farmers, with some witnesses even saying that he was driving the car.

A separate witness claimed that Ashish Mishra was one of the men who fled the SUV and was protected by the police as he tried to escape, firing rounds from his weapon to ward off any farmer who tried to catch him.

In light of all these claims, the report says, “The role of the police must be thoroughly investigated around the entry and escape of the criminals from the scene of the crime.”

“The police must be held to account for permitting possession of legal weapons by those who have a criminal history,” the report further read.

Lakhimpur Fact Finding Report by The Wire on Scribd

### Complicity of the police

The report squarely puts a significant portion of the blame on the police. Seeing as the protest was organised chiefly to send a message to the deputy CM, the police’s decision to withhold the information about his change in travel plans on two separate occasions – when the order was initially circulated and again when the police were negotiating terms with the farm leaders on the day of the incident – comes into question.

Further, the role of the police in opening up the blocked, 500 m road leading up to the protest site remains unclear. It could not be ascertained when the blocked road was reopened which eventually allowed the three speeding vehicles to mow down the protestors.

The report also questions how the brutal

incident could take place in the presence of 200-odd police officers. Videos and eyewitness testimonies are cited to show that the police made no attempts to prevent the violence. In fact, witnesses present on the scene told the investigating team that when the two men fled the Thar SUV, the police actually formed a human barrier to facilitate their escape.

The police were also chastised for not providing any medical assistance to the injured protestors. Farmers and local journalists present at the scene helped take injured people to the ill-equipped Primary Care Centre near the site.

The role of the police becomes more dubious when the question of the slain BJP workers is brought up. The report notes that the BJP workers who were eventually declared to have been killed in the incident were handed over to the police alive.

This fact was even corroborated by Ajay Mishra later in the month. The minister alleged that BJP worker Shyam Sundar Nishad was alive in an ambulance and was dragged out of it and killed. “The guilty cops will not be spared and the government will conduct a probe against them,” he had said.

This fact, coupled with the fact that driver Hari Om Mishra, who was killed and subsequently named as an accused in the FIR, causes the writers of the report to suspect a larger plot to exonerate Ashish from more grave charges.

The report calls the role of the police “reprehensible” and notes that “the role of police must be thoroughly investigated around the entry and escape of the criminals from the scene of the crime.”

The report also pulls up the police for its failure to provide medical aid to the injured protestors, noting that “crowd control protocol mandates that the police have arrangements to provide first aid and training to efficiently transport injured for medical treatment.”

With regards to the police’s failure to inform

the farmers of the change in the deputy CM's travel plans, the report says that this move allowed tensions to develop further in the region. Coupled with the status of the narrow, 500 m road and the ease with which the speeding vehicles were able to plough through the protestors, the report says, "The precision with which this happened points to pre-planning."

#### Questioning the official narrative

The report accuses the administration of spinning a false narrative of "loopholes and trail of misleading information". The portrayal of the farmers as "anti-national" elements even before the incident took and the subsequent attempts from both Ajay Mishra and his son Ashish to paint the incident as the "lynching of BJP workers" rather than violence committed against peaceful protesters are seen in the report as being a crafted narrative.

Moreover, the administration's decision to impose Section 144 and block politicians, journalists and protestors from entering the area are described in the report as being not only "violation(s) of people's rights" but also a "dubious act".

"The arbitrary use of Section 144 and stopping the movement of people, farm leaders, press and representatives of political parties from reaching out to families work to the advantage of the culprits. This practice must be challenged and the arbitrary restrictions on assembly and movement must stop," the report says.

The report further reads, "The practice of internet shutdown which the present regime is using with impunity must be called out. It works to silence the victims and allows the perpetrators to build their narrative in the public. This practice must be challenged."

#### Why was Ashish's car at the protest site?

Both Ashish and Ajay Mishra claimed that, while they were at the wrestling event, the former's car was sent to the helipad to retrieve "important people" and bring them to the same event. Ajay Mishra even categorically stated that it was the deputy CM who was being picked up.

However, the aforementioned order regarding the change in the deputy CM's travel plans was dated October 2; the deputy CM did not intend to fly to Lakhimpur.

These contradictory claims, coupled with the fact that eyewitnesses have claimed that they saw Ashish fleeing from one of the cars that ran over the protestors, causes the fact-finding team to categorically demand that this discrepancy be investigated further.



**Indian Youth Congress members demand the immediate arrest of Ashish Mishra, accused in the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, near Amit Shah's residence in New Delhi, October 9, 2021.**

Photo: PTI/Kamal Singh

#### Ajay Mishra's history

A section of the report is devoted to delving into the alleged sizeable criminal history of the Union minister. The list of allegations includes

the murder of a political opponent in 2000 and the Allahabad high court's subsequent failure to prosecute him; smuggling activities across the Nepal border; various instances of rioting, assault and criminal intimidation, the abduction of a Sikh man and subsequently parading him around naked in a village; illegal smuggling of sandalwood and foodgrains, all of which have been met with impunity considering his massive political clout in the region.

In light of this political power, the report notes that there is a large possibility that any investigation surrounding Ajay Mishra could be "tampered, manipulated in his favour and subverted to his and his party's advantage." As such, the report calls for the removal of the minister from his position in order to ensure an impartial investigation into his actions.

The fact-finding team's report calls many facets of the Lakhimpur Kheri incident into question; the official narrative and attempts to protect Ashish Mishra from prosecution; the failure of the police to thwart the violence, provide medical aid to the injured and their supposed complicity in the entire incident; the government's use of suppressive tactics like the imposition of Section 144 and internet shutdowns and many more issues that require further investigation.

### **Demands**

The team demanded an impartial probe and strict action against the guilty, which is only possible if the minister is removed from his position. It highlighted some aspects:

1. Ajay Mishra Teni's past and the unconditional power he enjoys in the current regime creates very fertile ground for the investigation to be tempered, manipulated in his favour and subverted to his and his party's advantage.
2. For a fair investigation to happen, Ajay Mishra Teni must be divested of his ministerial position and the 120 CrPC complaint against him must be pursued.
3. The impunity of the state must be challenged through due process for which it is important that a free and impartial inquiry happens. To make it happen, Ajay Mishra must be removed from his position.
4. Those responsible for perpetuating an atmosphere of fear through their public and private actions must be identified and punished as per law.
5. The role of police must be thoroughly investigated around the entry and escape of the criminals from the scene of the crime.
6. The police must be held to account for permitting possession of legal weapons by those who have a criminal history.
7. The official investigation should bring under enquiry the factors that led to this gory incident and must identify the actors responsible so that such crimes are not repeated in the future. This entails investigating the use of communal politics by the political elite; the role of hate speech; political intimidation and, the consequences of not divesting of their power of the those who can influence the inquiry.
8. The practice of internet shutdown which the present regime is using with impunity must be called out. It works to silence the victims and allows the perpetrators to build their narrative in the public. This practice must be challenged.
9. The arbitrary use of Section 144 and stopping the movement of people, press and political actors needs immediate scrutiny from the executive and the judiciary. This practice must be challenged and the arbitrary restrictions on assembly and movement must stop.
10. Immediate steps must be initiated to address the shortcomings in the poor state infrastructure and health services that cost lives.

11. The state must protect all witnesses and allow them to depose and live lives without fear. It must protect the witnesses from pressure and intimidation from the powerful.
12. The truth about Shyam Sundar Nishad and other BJP workers' death must be probed impartially so that the guilty don't go scot-free and the incident is not blamed on the dead to save the powerful accused.

The 11 individuals who made up the fact-finding team are:

- Jagmohan Singh, general secretary, Association For Democratic Rights, (AFDR) Punjab
- Narbhinder, AFDR, Punjab

- N.K. Jeet, AFDR, Punjab
- Pritpal Singh, AFDR, Punjab
- Seema Azad, People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL)
- Gopal Sundarajan, Committee for Protection of Democratic Rights (CPRD), Tamil Nadu
- Manu Akavoor, CPRD, Tamil Nadu
- Sukhdev Hundal, AFDR, Haryana
- Mohammed Faisal, Krantikari Lok Adhikar Sangathan, Uttar Pradesh
- Kamlesh Parivartankami, Chhatra Sangathan, Uttar Pradesh
- Navsharan Singh, Writer and activist, Delhi

Courtesy **The Wire**, 7 January, 2022. 

**Contd. from page - (6)**

## **IIT KANPUR ALUMINOUS LETTER TO PM**

8. Crucial research laboratories like DRDO, ARDE, ARDL, etc were started with a vision to make our country self-reliant in defense.
9. Many companies and organisations of strategic importance were started like HAL, BEL, CEL, BHEL, Hindustan antibiotics limited, ONGC ITI, and many more were established in the first 25 years of independence.
10. Indian space research program was launched and ISRO was established. This has paid rich dividends TO OUR COUNTRY. We are now not only Aatmanibhar in all our space missions but also provide this service to other nations.
11. Many large steel plants were dedicated to the nation in the 1st 25 years.
12. Indian Council for Medical Research was established in 1948. Many research institutes were set up under ICMR in various areas of health and

medicine were setup all across the country during the 1st 25 years. AIIMS Delhi was set up in 1956. The then health minister Rajakumari Amrut Kaur donated her 100-acre land to set up this.

Sir the list would go on and on. Our democracy invested its energy, blood, sweat, and toil in the first 25 years to lay the foundation of this country which we are so proud of. All this was done in spite of poverty, great natural disasters, epidemics, and four wars with our neighbors. Hats off to the vision of our freedom fighters and leaders of the nascent country. All these institutes instilled, nurtured, and kindled scientific temper in the youngsters of independent India. I agree with you a 100% that work of building the country is not over as yet. We all need to rededicate ourselves with full enthusiasm and vigor.

Wishing you a very happy and prosperous new year.

With warm regards,  
**Mukund Vishnu Mavalankar** 

# Punish hate-mongers: Dharm Sansad, Bulli Bai police probes must have demonstrable effects on communal bullies

Uttarakhand's SIT mandated to investigate the hate speech-ridden Dharm Sansad at Haridwar and parallel probes by Mumbai and Delhi police into cyber harassment of Muslim women through an app called 'Bulli Bai' are qualified reasons for optimism. But these are just the first steps. Remember that an obnoxious app called 'Sulli Deals' featured on the same GitHub platform last year. The Delhi police probe went nowhere. Such policing failures clearly emboldened Bulli Bai creators. Delhi police should be hugely embarrassed, and those behind the app must be unmasked and arrested with chargesheets filed promptly; speedy trial should follow.

In the Dharm Sansad case, the local police registered an FIR only after Muslims lodged complaints. But hate speech offences can and should lead to *suo motu* investigations. A number of Indian Penal Code sections exist to deal with those who threaten violence on other communities and harass women. But only if there is intent to investigate and prosecute these law-breakers will these laws serve their purpose as a deterrent.

Ignoring violent anti-minority statements and actions by terming them as products of fringe movements is just a dodge. So-called fringe groups can do a lot of damage, and

sometimes they are not that much on the fringe. Mob actions in the name of the majority religion have been on the rise – from preventing namaz in Gurgaon to attacks on churches around the country to violence against traders from minority communities. None of these has seen quick, firm police response. Neither have we heard condemnation from governing politicians. And the result is that such mobs get the sense that the law doesn't apply to them. India's police agencies are so heavily under the thumb of their political masters that only government signals, severe judicial strictures or, once in a while, a storm of public criticism can force cops to act in such cases.

Now that police forces in three states have initiated probes, there's a chance finally that a larger message can be sent to hate-mongers and internet's communal bullies. Missing this chance will not only further embolden real world and virtual world mobs, it will also do more damage to India's reputation, which has taken a lot of recent knocks as far as safety and treatment of minorities are concerned. For India to become one of those countries where majoritarianism becomes an above-the-law brute force will be a real tragedy.

Courtesy **TOI Editorial**, January 3, 2022 

## The Radical Humanist on Website

'The Radical Humanist' is now available at <http://www.lohiatoday.com/> on Periodicals page, thanks to Manohar Ravela who administers the site on Ram Manohar Lohia, the great socialist leader of India.

– Mahi Pal Singh

# Spewing hate & calling for genocide

Dr. Madabhushi Sridhar

*And if this is called Dharma Sansad, there is no other Adharma one can imagine. State's silence or tacit response, police officer laughing along with accused, which appeared in another viral video also add to the 'hate' the state does not want to prevent or punish.*

Our Constitution in the Article 19(1)(a) guaranteed that all citizens of India shall have freedom of speech and expression. This right is not absolute. There are restrictions on this in the Article 19(2), which says that nothing prevents the State from making any law in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India, to protect public order, prevent incitement to an offence etc.

Several penal Sections of IPC have been created to prevent and punish misuse of the fundamental right of freedom of speech even when a person expresses a conflicting viewpoint. Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) deals with the offence of promoting disharmony, enmity or feelings of hatred between different groups on the grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony. The offence is a cognizable offence and the punishment for the same may extend to three years, or with fine, or with both. However, the punishment of the offence committed in a place of worship is enhanced up to five years and fine.

## Section 153B of IPC

Section 153B of the IPC safeguards the interests of "class of persons" and above all the "national integration" by providing punishment against imputations and assertions prejudicial to national integration.

## Section 295A of IPC

Section 295A of the IPC is a variant of 'blasphemy law.' It allows punishing of any deliberate and malicious acts that are intended to insult the region or religious beliefs of certain

class of citizens. The offence under Section 295A is cognizable and a nonbailable and non-compoundable offence. The police are authorised to arrest a person charged under Section 295A with a warrant.

## Section 505 of IPC

Section 505 of the IPC is aimed to check and punish the spreading of false and mischievous news intended to upset the public tranquillity. The offence shall be punishable with imprisonment which may extend to three years or with fine, or with both.

**Until the pressure was built up in media and civil society all over, the Uttarakhand Police did not wake up to register a case against the hate speeches made during a three-day Dharma Sansad (religious parliament) from December 17 to 19 in Haridwar.**

Year 2021 ended with this hate speech and, to say the least, a call for genocide. Whom they want to kill and who has to do that is immaterial. They are asking some human beings to kill other human beings. Hate in speech is a dangerous provocation and a serious abuse of freedom of speech.

And if this is called Dharma Sansad, there is no other Adharma one can imagine.

**Very interestingly, the main accused in this case is Wasim Rizvi who converted into Hindu and became Jitendra Narayan Tyagi, who is giving a call for killing Muslims.**

The video of this hate is spreading like viral virus omicron, perhaps worse than Covid-19.

*State's silence or tacit response, police*

*officer laughing along with accused, which appeared in another viral video also add to the 'hate' the state does not want to prevent or punish.*

Formally, Uttarakhand Director General of Police (DGP) Ashok Kumar said that incidents of 'hate speech' will not be tolerated in the state.

**The police are using the name of Rizvi while informing the people that a hate speech is booked.** A case under Section 153A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered against Rizvi, the former chairman of the UP Shia Waqf Board who had recently converted to Hinduism was among the hundreds of attendees at the conclave.

Dharma Sansad so called was held at Ved Niketan Dham in Haridwar, organised by Yati Narasimhan and Giri of the Juna Akhada, who is already under police scanner for making hate speeches and inciting violence against Muslims. Suresh Chavhanke, the editor of Sudarshan News, which has been called out for its report on 'UPSC Jihad,' were among those on the stage wherefrom provocative speeches were made.

One speaker was wanting to kill former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh just as Godse killed Mahatma Gandhi, giving a call to Hindus to buy arms and be ready to kill and get killed, etc.

Videos from the conclave that were posted online invoked shock and condemnation, with **many comparing it to the Nazis in Germany in the 1930s.**

Once he was RSS Pracharak, then he became an ascetic. He is Prabodhanand Giri, who runs an organisation called Hindu Raksha Sena in Haridwar. He asked Hindus to emulate what was done in Myanmar, referring to the violence against Rohingya Muslims. He called it safai abhiyan ("cleanliness drive"), apparently implying ethnic cleansing.

**Prabodhanand Giri associates himself with the Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, whose picture is featured on**

his Facebook page. Speaking to the NDTV News the following day, he said that he stood by what he said, and asserted that he was not afraid of the police.

Sadhvi Annapurna, earlier known as Pooja Shakun Pandey, who heads the Niranjani Akhara and is a general secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, gave an open call to kill the people of a community. **"If 100 of us are ready to kill two million of them, then we will win and make India a Hindu nation,"** she said, asking Hindus to be ready to kill and go to jail. Talking to a news channel, she said that she was not afraid of the police.

Another speaker called Swami Anandswaroop, who heads the Sambhavi Dhaam, warned people against celebrating Christmas in Haridwar. He also asked for Muslim vendors to be excluded from it. **He said that the decision of the Dharm Sansad was the "word of God" and the government would have to listen to it. Otherwise, they would wage a war like the one in 1857, referring to the Indian Rebellion of 1857 against the British Indian Government.**

It is reported that around the same time as the Haridwar meet, a gathering of Hindu Yuva Vahini, ***an organisation founded by Yogi Adityanath,*** met in Delhi to take an oath. Raising their hands, the hundreds of members chanted, "We make a resolution until our last breath: **We will make India a Hindu nation, and keep it a Hindu-only nation. We will fight and die if required, we will kill as well.**"

Importantly, the oath was administered by none other than Suresh Chavhanke, the editor-in-chief of the right-wing news channel, Sudarshan News, who was involved in hate speech over TV controversy last year. ***He then tweeted a video of the oath to his half a million followers. One of the bail conditions generally is that one should not repeat the offence.***

( To be Contd....on Page - 20)

# ***Middle Class Hindus Need To Speak Up Even As Fringe Elements Call The Shots***

**P. S. Sahni & Shobha Aggarwal**

Presently India is fast galloping towards a fascist Hindu state. The Muslim, Sikh, Christian minorities as also the Tribals and Dalits in India are facing threats to their very existence and don't feel safe anymore.

The dilemma in which middle class Hindus find themselves today is no different from the predicament faced by the same class of Sikhs during the height of militancy in Punjab in 1980s when demand for a theocratic state pushed aside urge for a genuine Federal setup. The Sikh professionals, retired and serving army personnel, religious/spiritual leaders, politicians and other opinion makers were afraid to take a public stance on the issue. True, there were exceptions and some of them paid with their lives. The Sikh community as a whole got labelled as 'Khalistanis' by the corporate press leading to its alienation. In a few instances Hindus were selectively targeted by the militants in Punjab. It resulted in simmering anger in the majority community all over India. This got capitalized by the political class to consolidate

majority community votes. Rajiv Gandhi government got elected with over 400 seats in parliament. The Sikhs paid a heavy price by way of Operation Blue Star and genocide of Sikhs in 1984 – a term used by the Delhi High Court in its judgement sentencing senior Indian National Congress leader, Sajjan Kumar to life imprisonment.

Indeed there is a lesson to be learnt from the silence of the opinion makers amongst the Sikh community in 1980s. Even though the vast majority of Hindus are peace loving and tolerant; but their failure to take a stance on the process of converting India into a theocratic state needs to be reversed. The opinion makers amongst the majority community will have to stick their necks out. Also, its high time ordinary members of this community muse over the adage:

"Is Chuppi Ko Todo" (Break this silence).

**P.S. Sahni & Shobha Aggarwal** are concerned citizens of India.

Email: pilwatchgroup@gmail.com

Courtesy Countercurrents, 03/01/2022 

## **Articles/Reports for The Radical Humanist**

Dear Friends,

Please mail your articles/reports for publication in the RH to:- **theradicalhumanist@gmail.com** or **mahipalsinghrh@gmail.com** or post them to:- **Mahi Pal Singh, Raghav Vihar Phase-3, Prem Nagar, Dehradun, 248007 (Uttarakhand)**

Please send your digital passport size photograph and your brief resume if it is being sent for the first time to the RH.

A note whether it has also been published elsewhere or is being sent exclusively for the RH should also be attached with it.

**- Mahi Pal Singh, Editor, The Radical Humanist**

# ‘The prime minister’s silence is very troubling’

Shobha Warrier

*‘A climate of impunity is created when the fascistic hate-mongers reckon they can get away with anything because ‘this is our regime’ and this is going to be a ‘Hindu Rashtra’.’*

As the Uttar Pradesh assembly elections near, hate speeches using extreme offensive language against Muslims have increased.

Christmas celebrations in many parts of India were disrupted, and Christians were attacked.

In an exclusive interview to **Rediff.com**’s **Shobha Warrier**, **N Ram**, the well known journalist and former editor of *The Hindu*, discusses what is happening in the country.

The first of a multi-part interview:

**The voices of hate, which started when the Narendra Modi government came to power in 2014, have become more brazen.**

**Were you shocked by the intensity of hate in the speeches at the Haridwar event?**

It is clear that after the horrors of Partition, and the communal frenzy that was unleashed in large parts of India in which a large number of people lost their lives, and other atrocities were committed, this is the worst chapter in India’s history as far as communal division, communal hate and communal violence is concerned.

What is happening is orchestrated, deliberate and targeted, and the people who commit these atrocities seem to enjoy immunity from prosecution under the law, to a large extent.

Take, for example, what happened in Haridwar. It is a case of **people calling for genocide** and it was recorded on video.

*The Hindu* reported that according to the state director general of police, the provisions of using UAPA against them would be legally examined!

We see them using UAPA at the drop of a hat against individuals belonging to the minority

community, or those who strongly oppose the communal policies of the government. But not against these vigilante squads.

**UAPA was slapped on journalist Sidhique Kappan who was on his way to report the gang rape in Hathras.**

**In the case of what happened at Haridwar, there was evidence to show what they spoke, yet it is being examined.... How disturbing is this?**

This only shows they can do it with impunity.

Let me read the tweet by (Admiral) Arun Prakash, the former chief of the naval staff.

‘Why is this not being stopped? With our Jawans facing enemies on 2 fronts, do we want a communal blood-bath, domestic turmoil and international disgrace? Is it difficult to understand that anything which damages national cohesion & unity endangers India’s national security?’

The report that came in *The Hindu* says a group of 76 Supreme Court lawyers have sent a letter to the Chief Justice of India urging him to take *suo moto* cognisance of the two separate events; organised by the Hindu Yuva Vahini in Delhi and also the one in Haridwar where open calls were made for the genocide of Muslims in order to achieve ethnic cleansing.

The letter is also signed by Anjana Prakash, former judge of the Patna high court, and respected advocates like Prashant Bhushan, Dushyant Dave, etc.

They pointed out that those were not just hate speeches, but an open call for the murder of an entire community.

They also say that these are great threats not only to the unity and integrity of the country, but also to the lives of millions of Muslims.

It is clear that the scale of this should not be underestimated.

This is not just hate speech, but fascistic conduct.

This is fascistic because they call for genocide against Muslims.

You can imagine what will happen if these words are heeded.

So it calls for strong action because this is what terrorism is about.



**On one side, the prime minister talks about working for all sections of society, and on the other side we see calls for genocide, against which he never utters a word.**

Yes, we expect the prime minister, the home minister and also the President of India to condemn such incidents.

Their silence speaks for itself and says a lot about what kind of government India has at present.

The President of India is the Constitutional head of the State of India and we have precedents of Presidents speaking out on matters like this.

For example, K R Narayanan spoke out on certain issues when he was President. When he expressed moral outrage, nobody really objected to that.

Presidents do not easily come out and give their opinions, but on issues like calls for genocide, they can and they should.

#### **What about the prime minister?**

The prime minister has remained largely silent on violations of law and atrocities against minorities.

The prime minister's silence in this case is very troubling.

What you can say is, this is definitely orchestrated, this is planned.

And a climate of impunity is created when the fascistic hate-mongers reckon that they can get away with anything because 'this is our regime' and this is going to be a 'Hindu Rashtra'.

**Are we really moving towards the kind of Hindu Rashtra these**

**people are professing about?**

I don't think it is achievable, first because the majority of Hindus will be opposed to it.

Communal majoritarianism may have powerful appeal for a while, but people are not going to be taken in all the time.

Surely the overwhelming majority of Hindus, even those who have voted for the BJP, are not going to endorse this.

Earlier, we could say the fringe groups were doing this. Now, the fringe is moving closer and closer to the centre. But I will not say they can occupy a central place. And that is what the fascistic movements are about.

These are clearly fascistic activities.

I am using the word 'fascistic' very carefully, and not saying 'fascism' has arrived.

**From the way the BJP is winning seats, does it not show that a large section of**

### **Hindus agree with their narrative that the Hindus are being threatened by Muslims and Christians?**

I think we cannot afford to underestimate the powerful pull of these appeals to communal majoritarianism.

Yes, those who are gullible and those who have a communal mindset might agree with them.

But not the majority, because the BJP doesn't get even 40% of the votes in a Lok Sabha election.

The Congress used to score consistently

above that when it was the dominant party in the system.

In 2014, the BJP got just over 30% of the vote, and a little more in 2019.

It got quite a lot of votes thanks to its alliances in several states.

And not all allies of the BJP would agree with the flagrantly communal narrative that is in progress now.

Yes, we should not underestimate the fascistic calls to incite people, and the efforts to divide people for votes.

Courtesy [Rediff.com](#), January 05, 2022. 

**Contd. from page - (6)**

## **Spewing hate & calling for genocide**

Admiral Arun Prakash, the former Chief of Naval Staff, described it as a clear threat to India's national security; former Army chief General Ved Prakash Malik agreed and urged urgent action. Trinamool Congress spokesperson Saket Gokhale lodged a police complaint; Indian National Congress spokesperson Shama Mohammed has also filed a similar complaint.

In response to criticism against the Haridwar hate speech, the BJP leaders or their supporters shared a clipped video of Muslim leader Asaduddin Owaisi to allege that he called for a genocide of Hindus.

### **76 Advocates represent to CJI**

Seventy-six advocates of the Supreme Court have submitted a representation to the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, asking the Supreme Court to take suo motu cognisance of the calls for "ethnic cleansing" at two recent religious events in Delhi and Haridwar. This letter was signed eminent lawyers including Dushyant Dave, Prashant Bhushan and Vrinda Grover, Salman Khurshid and former Patna High Court judge Anjana Prakash. They named a list of people.

The advocates apprehended that in the absence of police action, "**Urgent judicial intervention is required to prevent such events that seem to have become the order of the day**".

The letter also says: "The aforementioned events and the speeches delivered during the same are *not mere hate speeches but amount to an open call for murder of an entire community.....pose a grave threat not just to the unity and integrity of our country but also endanger the lives of millions of Muslim citizens*".

The leaders should condemn these illegal speeches. Even if they are silent, it will unnecessarily encourage the hate.

**Dr. Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu** was a Professor at Nalsar University of Law in Hyderabad, former Central Information Commissioner and presently is Dean & Professor, School of Law, Mahindra University, Hyderabad. Email:professorsridhar@gmail.com.

Courtesy: [Hans News Service](#), 3 Jan, 2022. 

# End attack on Christians, Satheesan tells PM

Special Correspondent

Thiruvananthapuram:

## *No arrests so far on December 11 attacks at Kolar, Belagavi*

Leader of the Opposition V.D. Satheesan has drawn the attention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the “recent wave of attacks by right-wing outfits against minority groups in the country.”

In an open letter on Sunday expressing concern at the turn of events, Mr. Satheesan said: “It is disturbing to see the right-wing groups with allegiance to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) have recently carried out horrific attacks against Christians in several States, including Karnataka and Gujarat. These occurrences are in stark violation of the right to life and religious freedom guaranteed by our Constitution.”

On December 11, a mob attacked Christians at Kolar in Karnataka and set their religious books on fire. The same day at Belagavi, an armed man pursued a priest menacingly. There have been no arrests in both incidents. The police appeared to be hand in glove with the perpetrators. Karnataka’s resolve to curb the grave human rights violations was in question.

The People’s Union For Civil Liberties (PUCL) had counted 39 attacks against the Christian community in Karnataka in 2021. There is a palpable sense of fear among Christians. The situation has forced them to shut down their places of worship and desist from gathering for Sunday prayers.

The State seemed complicit in attacks on prayer gatherings. The police had served notices on scores of churches to stop prayer meetings. In many cases, the police arrested pastors and believers instead of those who perpetrated the attacks.

The State’s failure to protect the

fundamental rights of Christians had pushed them to the edge of mainstream society. They were finding it an uphill task to access education, shelter, and get about their livelihood or even protect their dignity.

Karnataka Chief Minister’s decision to bring legislation on forcible religious conversion had aggravated the “volatile situation” in the State. The proposed law was patently anti-minority and could be used to harass and intimidate them.

Far-right groups had targeted Christians in Madhya Pradesh (30 instances) and Uttar Pradesh (22). In Gujarat, the State had used the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Act, 2003, to prosecute the Missionaries of Charity.

The police had accused the charity founded by Mother Teresa of hurting religious sentiments and using a shelter home at Vadodara to convert young girls to Christianity. At Jhansi in Uttar Pradesh, the police arrested travelling nuns from a train after a mob accused them of converting Hindus.

The attacks were a blatant violation of the constitutional freedom to profess and practice a religion of one’s choice.

International forums had expressed concern about the persecution of minorities. In 2020, the U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF), a global watchdog, demoted India to “Countries of particular concern” in its annual report. Mr. Satheesan sought the Prime Minister’s urgent intervention to halt the targeting of minorities.

Courtesy **The Hindu**, 26 December, 2021. 

# BJP-RSS hounding Missionaries of Charity, drying up ocean of love filled by Mother Teresa

*The Modi govt's Christmas present to MoC by refusing to renew registration is in contrast with brazen amendment of FCRA in 2016 to save the BJP from penal action.*

On 25 December 2021, the Narendra Modi government's Ministry of Home Affairs gave a Christmas present to the Mother House of the Missionaries of Charity and its sisters by refusing to renew their registration under the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, 2010. The ministry said that the organisation's application was rejected because "while considering the MoC's renewal application, some adverse inputs were noticed."

At the time of her beatification in 2003, the Missionaries of Charity (MoC) in Kolkata circulated this poignant quote from Mother (now Saint) Teresa: "We ourselves feel that what we are doing is just a drop in the ocean but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop." It was not an ordinary drop, but a drop of love, the very elixir of life! My family and I had the rare opportunity to experience this 'drop of love' in Chandigarh once.

My association with the MoC commenced towards the end of 1975 when Mother Teresa visited the "City Beautiful" at my invitation. Beneath the veneer of physical beauty, Chandigarh and its neighbouring areas had their share of the wretched, the poor, the unwanted, the abandoned, the leprosy patients, and the dying destitute. We wanted a healing hand to take care of these "lesser children of God."

We thought that Mother Teresa and her Missionaries of Charity were best suited for the purpose since they "served the poorest of the poor, irrespective of all castes and creed, nationality, race or place – giving the individual person whole-hearted and free service." To them, the "poorest of the poor are the hungry,

## M.G. Devasahayam

the thirsty, the naked, the homeless, the ignorant, the captives, the crippled, the lepers, the unloved, the alcoholics, the dying and the sick destitute, the abandoned, the outcastes, all those who are a burden to human society, who have lost all hope and faith in life." Fulfilling these purposes, 'Shanti-Dan' came up at Chandigarh in 1977 and since then has been rendering yeomen service.

All over India, the MoC has over 240 homes for orphans, the destitute and AIDS patients. The worldly possessions of the sisters who run these homes include: three saris, two or three cotton habits, a girdle, a pair of sandals, a crucifix, a rosary, some cutlery, a cloth napkin, a canvas bag, and a prayer book. These sisters must adhere to the vows of chastity, poverty, obedience, and of giving "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor." Their motto is taken from the Bible: "Whatsoever you do to the least of my brethren you did it to me." (Mathew, 25:35-40).

## Duplicitous on FCRA

In the event of the Modi government's refusal to renew, the MoC's registration expires on 31 December and after that the bank accounts under FCRA cannot be operated. There was no clarity as to what the 'adverse inputs' that the government claimed it had noticed were.

This sordid development follows a spate of attacks on Christians around Christmas. Hindutva extremists disrupted Christmas celebrations in two schools in Gurugram (Haryana) and in Pandavapura (Karnataka)

on Saturday. A day later, a statue of Jesus Christ at the Holy Redeemer Church in Haryana's Ambala was vandalised by a Hindu mob. Karnataka also enacted a draconian anti-conversion law.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee tweeted that the Union government had frozen all bank accounts of Mother Teresa's MoC in India. But Sister M Prema, Superior General of the MoC, issued this clarification: "... There is no freeze order by the MHA on any of our bank accounts. We have been informed that our FCRA renewal has not been approved. As a measure to ensure there is no lapse, we have asked our centres not to operate any of the FC [foreign currency] accounts until the matter is resolved."

Semantics apart, the MHA's refusal to renew the FCRA registration would disable the MoC from utilising the funds and result in effectively ceasing all their services and activities. This *ipso facto* would amount to freezing of bank accounts as stated by Mamata Banerjee.

Father Dominic Gomes, Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Kolkata, described the Centre's move as "a cruel Christmas gift to the poorest of the poor." He was emphatic when he said: "This latest attack on the Christian Community and their social outreach is even more a dastardly attack on the poorest of India's poor, who the MoC congregation serves."

Contrast this with the Modi government brazenly amending the FCRA retrospectively in 2016 to save the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from penal action in a matter on which the Supreme Court had passed an order. This amendment excluded the Indian subsidiaries of foreign companies from the definition of a "foreign company", thereby permitting any foreign entity, desirous of funding the political parties in India, to do so by merely setting up a subsidiary in India that could be a shell

company. This opened the floodgates of massive corruption and contributions to opaque electoral bonds that are filling up the coffers of the ruling party.

### **A hate campaign long in the making**

The recent intensive hate campaign could be the trigger for this Christmas present after Prime Minister Modi had embraced Pope Francis at the Vatican. But the targeting of Mother Teresa and her MoC, by the RSS/BJP big guns has been going on for quite some time. At the height of the deeply polarising '*ghar wapsi*' (homecoming) campaign soon after the BJP came to power in 2014, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had this to say about Mother Teresa while inaugurating a *mahila sadan* (women's home) at Bharatpur, Rajasthan: "Her service may have been great but there was an objective behind her social work: she wanted to convert people to Christianity."

Later at Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, then Member of Parliament and current UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath dropped these pearls of wisdom: "Teresa was part of a conspiracy to Christianise India...When people are not able to provide medical aid to their sick or differently-abled children due to poverty, these people (missionaries) provide them facilities. During that period, they brainwash and make them Christians." Given the minuscule population of Christians in India, these utterances are incomprehensible.

The fact is that Mother Teresa and her MoC have been the beacon-lights of Christianity and its core values of love and compassion. It looks as if drying up of these has been long coming.

*M.G. Devasahayam is a retired IAS officer and chairman of People-First. He also served in the Indian Army. Views are personal.*

(Edited by Prashant)

Courtesy **The Print**, 29 December, 2021. 

# ‘They have turned a majority of Hindus to Muslim haters’

Shobha Warrier

*‘A Muslim is lynched somewhere, and you forward the video of the lynching through WhatsApp.’*

*‘So, you participate in that lynching without actually doing it. You endorse it without being a party to it.’*



IMAGE: A protest in New Delhi, December 27, 2021, against the inflammatory and provocative speeches made at the so-called ‘Dharam Sansad’ in Haridwar. Photo ANI

“You may not be a voter of the BJP, but you endorse the act of building a Ram temple because you very much believe in the ideology. Maybe not to that extent. That’s how the BJP and the RSS gain strength,” *Apoorvanand*, professor at the Delhi University and a critic of the Hindutva ideology pursued by the Narendra Damodarda Modi government, tells *Rediff.com*’s *Shobha Warrier*.

The second of a multi-part interview.

It appears hate is the feeling that is ruling the country now, especially on social media. Do you think the majority of Indians have become hate mongers? Or, are we hearing only those voices?

We have seen worldwide that when such forces start gaining ground, it’s their cacophony that fills the atmosphere. And we see the others keep nodding their heads. First, they say, we



**Apoorvanand**

don't belong to them, then they nod their heads. Many of the prejudices you hide in your heart get a voice.

### **Is it awakened?**

Yes, it is awakened. It is like this; you have this prejudice, this hatred inside, and then you see somebody else giving voice to it.

For example, a Muslim is lynched somewhere, and you forward the video of the lynching through WhatsApp or other social media platforms. So, you participate in that lynching without actually doing it. You endorse it without being a party to it.

### **Is it because of this support that the BJP is winning seats?**

I think so. You may not be a voter of the BJP, but you endorse the act of building a Ram temple because you very much believe in the ideology. Maybe not to that extent. That's how the BJP and the RSS gain strength.

### **So, is the way forward what Narendra Modi said at Varanasi; that for every temple built, they would be laying fibre optics under the sea?**

That's the classic representation of fascism; this fascination with technology. Not science.

It is like this; you will get a temple and you will also get mobile data free.

That's the way they lure you; that you will get tradition and also modernity.

Here is Kashi Vishwanath and here is fibre optics.

### **Are you saying this strategy has been used earlier too, and there is nothing new about it?**

Yes, there is nothing new about this. The RSS is a very good student of Mussolini and Hitler. You have to read (*the RSS's second sarsanghchalak, Madhav Sadashiv*) Golwalkar and (*RSS founder Keshav Baliram*) Hegdekar to see their fascination for Hitler and Mussolini.

The RSS had also realised that India was a much more complex and complicated society,

and its social composition was much more varied than that of Germany or Italy.

We have many beliefs within a belief, and there are different kinds of people. So, they knew they had to work very cautiously to build a Hindu identity.

### **Do you think they have succeeded finally?**

I would say, they have succeeded to a significant extent. Because they have managed to turn a majority of the Hindus to Muslim haters.

### **Like many people believe, do you think the Congress was responsible for this because its motto was minority appeasement which made many Hindus angry to move towards this ideology?**

I don't subscribe to this popular view because I don't understand what minority appeasement is.

After the horrendous bloodshed that followed Indian Independence, India had decided that it would remain a secular country. There was a threat of anti-Muslim hatred being carried for a very long time after the Hindus and Sikhs were targeted in the areas in Pakistan. It was a fact that Muslims were attacked not just in Delhi, elsewhere too.

And the leaders of the newly independent India felt it was their duty to protect the minorities in India which again is what civilised societies do.

They assured the minorities that they would live as equals and would maintain their distinct identity. Even when 80% of Indian population was Hindus, they would not be asked to follow the Hindu way of life. This assurance was taken as appeasement.

Let me ask, how many Muslim chief ministers did the Congress have post-Independence?

How many Muslim MPs and how many Muslim MLAs did the party have? So where is the appeasement?

### **Didn't the Congress use Muslims as a vote bank?**

I again, disagree with this idea. Studies have been done from 1952-2019 on the voting pattern, and it has been found that Muslims vote very differently, and they don't vote in a homogenous manner.

Next, the tendency of the Muslim voters is to go with the popular flow. For example, how did they vote in 1967 or 1977?

Had the Congress been their appeaser, why did the Muslims largely support a change in the government?

Muslims also supported V.P. Singh. Take, for

example, how do Muslims vote in Kerala or Tamil Nadu or Assam. It is a very diverse voting pattern

Barring one party, that is the BJP or the Jan Sangh in its earlier avatar, the Muslims have voted for all parties. Their only concern is that the Jan Sangh or the Bharatiya Janata Party should not get strong as the party is an existential threat to them. Now, they have been proven right.

**Feature Presentation: Aslam Hunani/  
Rediff.com**

*Courtesy Rediff.com, 29 December, 2021.* 

## **Sedition Charge Against Hindu Religious Leader After Gandhi, Islam Remarks**

*Kalicharan Maharaj, who praised Mahatma Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse, has been arrested by Raipur Police*

### **Bhopal:**

A Hindu religious leader from Maharashtra who insulted Mahatma Gandhi and praised his assassin, Nathuram Godse, has been arrested by the Chhattisgarh Police from Madhya Pradesh's Khajuraho and charged with sedition.

Kalicharan Maharaj, whose controversial speech at a "dharma sansad" or religious meeting in Chhattisgarh's Raipur led to chief patron Mahant Ramsunder Das disowning the event and walking off stage in anger, was also charged with promoting enmity between communities after former mayor Pramod Dubey filed a police case.

Raipur senior police officer Prashant Agarwal has confirmed that Kalicharan has been arrested.

Kalicharan booked a guest house in Khajuraho but did not stay there, police sources said, adding he instead went to a rented house some 25 km from Khajuraho to dodge the police, who had been looking for him since the day a case was filed against him.

To evade the police from tracking, all his close aides had also switched off their phones, sources said. This morning, a team of 10 policemen finally

### **Anurag Dwary**

tracked him down, arrested him and took him back to Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur.

He will be taken to a court by evening.

Madhya Pradesh Home Minister Narottam Mishra alleged the Chhattisgarh Police violated interstate protocol by arresting Kalicharan from the state without informing local police, and asked the Madhya Pradesh police chief to take up the matter with his Chhattisgarh counterpart.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel rejected the allegations that the police violated any protocol. "Narottam Mishra should tell whether he is happy or sad about the arrest of the person who insulted Mahatma Gandhi. No rules have been violated and the arrest made by the Chhattisgarh Police was as per procedure," Mr Baghel said.

In his speech - clips of which have been widely circulated on social media, Kalicharan Maharaj declares that the aim of Islam is to capture the nation through politics. He also declared "Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi destroyed the country... salutations to Nathuram Godse, who killed him".

*Courtesy NDTV, 30 December 2021.* 

# Falsehood, Hate and Crime the Endangering Culture of India

Dr. Prakash Louis

"Make the lie big. Make it simple. Keep saying it, and eventually they believe it". These words of Adolf Hitler, the fascist leader of Nazi party of Germany seems to be proving true for India by its ruling establishment. Historically speaking, Adolf Hitler was a German leader who joined the Nazi Party which later became the largest elected party in the German Weimar Republic. Adolf Hitler went on to be known as a feared dictator and ruthless leader. Hitler was a great orator who voiced his plans and reached out to the Germans who were influenced by his ideas. He had declared, "I use emotion for the many and reserve reason for the few". He used his oratorial skills to motivate the Germans to indulge in one of the heinous crimes the humanity has ever known.

Historical data bear testimony to this fact that he hated the Jews and held them responsible for Germany's defeat in the First World War. Hitler invaded Eastern Europe in order to make living spaces for the 'authentic Germans'. He formed an aggressive foreign policy that was considered to be the primary cause of the outbreak of World War II in Europe. Hitler was responsible for the largest massacre the world witnessed caused by his military rule and war crimes. Hitler took to falsehood, clever manipulation of facts and figures, undertook false propaganda against the opposition, utilised false promises to court the common and elite Germans to take to violence. He had claimed, "Through clever and constant application of propaganda, people can be made to see paradise as hell, and also the other way round, to consider the most wretched sort of life as paradise". Due to this, Germany has not been the same from then onwards.

Indian polity, economy, society, culture, religion and traditions seem to be also undergoing huge

and massive transition in the last ten years, especially in the last 6 years. An India which could boast of moving steadily from alien rule to self-rule; an India which was progressively strengthening its democratic principles and institutions; an India which was trying to combine tradition and modernity; an India which was making a leap from illiteracy to education and higher education; an India which tried to combine rural reconstruction and national development; an India which opted for a sovereign, secular, socialist, republic and made substantial progress in this line in the last six decades; an India which vouched on *vasudaivakutumbakam*, that is, not only Indians but all human beings are of one family; an India which due to the foresighted and farsighted vision of such statesmen of integrity like Dr. Ambedkar, Gandhiji, Nehru, Vallabhai Patel, Abdul Ghaffar Khan, and Jayaprakash Narayan as well as millions of Indians were emerging as a global heritage of non-violent, swaraj, self-reliant and harmonious India is being torn into pieces by falsehood, hate, and crime today.

Let us take the most recent case of falsehood propagated by the ruling elite of the central government. On 5th January 2022, Mr. Narendra Modi was supposed to have addressed an election rally at Bathinda. But due to weather, he could not land at the site by the helicopter but had to travel by road. Suddenly, his coterie realised that all the chairs are empty, and it would be disgrace for the PM to address an empty rally. His Chanakya's devised a scheme to say that the road was blocked by protestors and hence the PM could not reach, and the Punjab government did not make necessary security arrangements and it is squarely responsible for the breach of security protocol. But the fact of the matter was

that the BJP orchestrated a protest and roadblock to show to the world that Modi could not attend the rally due to the roadblock. Falsehood and lies are used to propagate accusations against the opponents and to save one's skin. The reality was that the farmers had taken out a protest march against Modi and had refused to attend the rally.

The government has been asserting that Indian economy "is doing fine" despite the slump in GDP numbers. The proof Mr. Suresh Angadi, Minister gave was that people are getting married [Outlook. 16/11/2019]. On the same day the Consumption Expenditure Survey released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) revealed the consumer spending in 2017-18 had decreased by 3.7 per cent, for the first time in four decades. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's promise of a \$5 trillion economy seems distant to most of the people, but not to the Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal. When he was asked how India will become a \$5 trillion economy with these GDP numbers, Goyal had a quick answer: people should not indulge in maths.

Talking about the growth rate of India, Arvind Subramanian said his research shows India has changed how it measures growth – and this led to its gross domestic product (GDP) being overstated by about 2.5% annually. But Prime Minister's panel of economic advisers has rejected his conclusions. A. Subramanian declared; the GDP was used to be calculated based on the wholesale prices at which producers received their products. Now, it's calculated based on the market prices paid by consumers. Changing goal post is one of the ways of hoodwinking and lying to the citizens.

When the nation and global community decried and denounced the Modi government for its handling of the migrant labourers as his government is known for it announced a grand 'stimulus package' of Rs. 20 lakh crore or 10% of India's GDP. The Print writing about this in May 2020 exposed the fact that barely a fraction of it is new money being pumped into the

economy. What is made to look like a stimulus is mostly a grand loan *mela*. It also claimed that it is paying 85% of the fare of the migrant labourers while the state governments are paying 15%. This lie also was exposed since in effect, the migrants were being charged the usual fare, and in some places, even more.

The Print went on to argue that the Modi government has made lying an art form. This non-stop obvious lying was described by George Orwell as doublethink: "Every message from the extremely repressive leadership reverses the truth. Officials repeat 'war is peace' and 'freedom is slavery,' for example. The Ministry of Truth spreads lies. The Ministry of Love tortures lovers." People are thus expected to believe as true what is clearly false, and also take at face value mutually contradictory statements.

For the last 2 years, Covid brought life to a standstill to every citizen of this country. The daily wage earners, domestic workers, construction workers, vendors, etc. were and are immensely affected by the pandemic. But it is the migrant labourers who are first of all forced to migrate to eke out a living, who were forced to return home due to a totally unplanned and unprepared government who are devastated and destroyed. It is to this mass of people civil society provided some relief. But with the stringent FCRA rules imposed by the present regime, these NGOs are also destroyed and thus the migrants lost even small relief to survive.

Narendra Modi walked surrounded by his security guards in Varanasi railway station on 14th December 2021 mid-night to show how he is supervising things at night. All the passengers were removed from the station. But he did not bother to make provisions for the returnees' migrants then and did not visit the sheds on the ghats of Ganges where migrant labourers from UP and Bihar are huddling together covering themselves only with plastic sheets at night.

Paraphrasing Christopher Paul and Miriam Matthews concept, 'fire-hosing falsehood' in the

Russian context, we can see something similar is happening in India. According to them, politicians' model for propaganda can be called 'the firehose of falsehood' because of these distinctive features: high numbers of channels and messages; a shameless willingness to disseminate partial truths or outright fictions; entertain, confuse and overwhelm the audience; rapid, continuous, and repetitive propaganda and lacks commitment to consistency. This is what is happening in India at present and due to which a sizeable 'andhabhakts', people and media who subscribe to falsehood are taking the country to ransom.

Hate is another way of politicking in India today. Instead of addressing the pandemic, disasters, malnutrition, starvation and death that is destroying this country, the leaders are busy engaging in hate and hate crimes. Expressing grave concern over this, Anand Neelakantan (Indian Express, 26th April 2020) notes: "Sooner or later, we will conquer corona too. The relentless progress of science will ensure that. However, science will not be able to cure the communal virus that is spreading faster than the corona. Religious bigots keep injecting hate in society. All countries are prone to such bigotry, but in India, much of this hatred stems from the way history is being taught in school." Similarly, Aruna Roy, who led the movement that gave us the right to information, voiced the same concern. We will be able to deal with the corona virus, but we are not sure whether we will be able to eliminate the hate virus from our society.

The controversy of calls for ethnic cleansing and genocide of Muslims at the 'Dharma Sansad' organized at Haridwar in Uttarakhand in December 2021 had not subsided, another virulent hate crime against the Muslim women were unleashed. On 1st of January 2022, as the world was celebrating the New Year with family members, friends and other people, hundreds of Muslim women woke up to deeply objectionable, obnoxious and misogynistic attack on them via

the 'Bulli Bai App'. Photos of hundreds of Muslim women, including prominent journalists, activists and thinkers, were secured and uploaded without their permission on this app and were subsequently 'auctioned'.

This is not the first time when such an outrageous public sale of Muslim women's bodies has taken place openly. In the month of July 2021, a similar App called Sulli Deals app offered photographs of Muslim women as 'deals.' for virtual auctions. The perpetrators even had no fear of legal consequences as they publicly declared their intention to launch an application that facilitates the sale of Muslim women. 'Auctioning' women in this manner is a depraved attempt to commodify them and strip them of any personhood or dignity. This is a blatant violation of the very fundamental right to live with dignity and the right to bodily autonomy protected under Article 21 of our Constitution. The ruling power is engaged in doing away with the constitution itself and their goons are busy violating the rights provided in the constitution.

Hate and hate crime in India is taking the centre stage of politics, society, culture, and religion. The hatred towards the Christians and their institutions are on the open these days in the run up to the elections. But this is not just due to electoral politics, but this is in the deep-seated wounded psyche of some individuals and communities in the country. Mother Theresa and hundreds of her institutions in India have been taking care of thousands of orphans, children thrown into the dustbin, widows, elderly, people with disability, battered women, abused adolescent girls, etc. But the present regime has decided to deny renewal of FCRA and thus put an end to this humanitarian commitment. At Kanpur, the officials sent out orphan babies with others from the centre in the name of the lease not being renewed. Those who know what a herculean task to get any renewal of lease done would know what is at stake here.

( To be Contd....on Page - 36)

# PM Security Breach: ‘Real lapse happened at PMO’

Prasanna D. Zore

**‘The Punjab police was taking the prime minister by road for 100 km for the first time, maybe in the last many years.’**

**‘But the SPG keeps travelling with the prime minister every second-third day outside Delhi.’**

**‘They are better aware of the drill; they understand the PM’s security parameters better than the Punjab police.’**

**‘They could have refused even if the clearance was given by the Punjab police.’**

**Avinash Mohananey**, retired director general of police, Sikkim, and an ex-Intelligence Bureau officer, tells **Prasanna D Zore/Rediff.com** about various aspects related to the alleged lapses related to Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi’s visit to Punjab on January 5.

**From Bhatinda airport to where Prime Minister Modi’s convoy had to halt for 20 minutes on its way to Hussainiwala — what could have gone wrong?**

Nothing went wrong till he reached the flyover, where he remained stuck up for 15-20 minutes. Until that time, the movement of the PM’s car-cade was smooth and fast.

The problem occurred when the Punjab police realised that some protesting farmers have gathered on the road near a village called Pyarana, which was slightly away from this flyover and blocking it.

The Punjab police was persuading the farmers to move away and clear the highway.

**Did these farmers block the road all of a sudden?**

It happened suddenly because in the morning all approach roads to Ferozepur district had been cleared of the protesting farmers and the movement of the traffic was

smooth.

The people who wanted to participate in the rally (which was to be addressed by Modi) were being brought in by the BJP by buses and other vehicles on those roads.

Protesting farmers had moved away from these roads early in the morning before the visit on the condition that they would be given a meeting with the prime minister to raise their demands for the issues that are still pending.

This small group of farmers had gathered on the route were, in fact, on their way to Ferozepur, when they were stopped by the police. So, they squatted on the highway itself.

This was unexpected, but the Punjab police was trying to clear them up for the smooth movement of the PM’s car-cade.

**Couldn’t this have been conveyed to the prime minister’s security detail?**

Yes, SPG (*the Special Protection Group, which protects the prime minister of India*) and Punjab police would obviously be in continuous communication, as they both were part of the same car-cade.

The entire car-cade keeps communicating with each other, so any obstacle on the route would be known to both security agencies at the same time. There were senior Punjab police and SPG officers in the car-cade itself operating in tandem.

Perhaps, the Punjab police was hoping that the farmers would move away from the road, but when it didn’t clear, they had to stop the prime minister’s car-cade on the flyover.

This was a huge mistake to let the prime minister remain inside the stationary car for 15 to 20 minutes — that too on an elevated road with no escape routes.

**Whose decision could it be to let the**

**prime minister's car halt on the flyover?  
The SPG's or that of the Punjab police?**

It must have been a combined decision and the mistake of both the SPG and the Punjab police because at that point in time they were both moving together in the car-cade.

In such situations, the security drill requires that if a PM is stuck, best plan of action would be to cancel the programme and the PM goes back. Or at least, he is taken to a nearby safe house till the road is cleared of protesters.

In the advance security liaison (ASL), safe houses along the route are identified, where the PM can be taken in such exigencies.

The ASL clearly mentions the locations of such safe houses. They could have taken the prime minister temporarily to the nearby safe house and waited for the police to clear the road of the protesting farmers. Thereafter, the car-cade could have moved smoothly.

But holding him stationary for that long was definitely a security nightmare that should have been avoided.

**Who could have made the decision that the PM travel by road to Hussainiwala given that the distance is over 100 km from Bhatinda airport and takes roughly over two hours?**

**Could the Punjab police have had enough time to sanitise the route as the decision was made at the last moment because of bad weather?**

First, road travel is always a part of contingency plan.

Contingency plans are also surveyed in advance before the prime minister's arrival as part of the ASL and certain measures are taken on the contingency route like police deployment along the route and at intersections where traffic could be stopped in case the PM decides to take that route.

This deployment is usually scanty; it doesn't involve barricading of the entire stretch. The deployment is not enough to sanitise the prime

minister's route at a short notice.

Now the question is, who took the decision to move the prime minister by road? It is very difficult to find out exactly who decided the matter because there were people from the Punjab police, the SPG, and the prime minister himself. Only an inquiry can find that out.

**In such situations, do the SPG or the state police decide what happens next or can a VIP in such situations over-ride the decisions of his security officers and proceed with what he wants?**

It depends on the VIP. If he says 'I am moving' then the security officers have no choice but to accept it as a *fait accompli* and make as safe and secure an arrangement as possible in the given circumstances.

Obviously, you can't have anybody dictate to the prime minister what he must or must not do.

The security has to follow the instruction of the VIP and improvise on the situation.

**Is there a precedent to this kind of decision where a prime minister travels by road for almost 100 km, and that too, in a state that borders Pakistan, and in an atmosphere as charged as it is in Punjab after the farmers' agitation against the farm laws?**

I don't remember any such travel on such a long stretch. But there is no hard and fast rule that he can't be taken by road in some exigencies.

Normally, such travel (*by road for such long distances*) is not advisable.

The question, however, is in the first place, should Prime Minister Narendra Modi have travelled to a state to address a public meeting where farmers' anger over the passage of the three farm laws is still simmering and farmer organisations are continuing their agitation demanding minimum support price?

In fact, even before the repeal of the farm laws there have been regular protests across

Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, besides those on the borders of Delhi.

My point is the real administrative lapse happened at the prime minister's office. Why did the PMO make this programme despite knowing what the ground situation is like in Punjab?

They know it is a surcharged atmosphere, the people are angry in the state, their demands remain unfulfilled, and the farmers had given an advanced notice that they will hold protests (*during the PM's visit*).

**Was it then about the prime minister's decision that he wanted to go among the angry farmers and speak about the reasons why he framed the laws and why he repealed the three farm laws?**

Difficult to say who took that decision (*to organise Modi's public address in Ferozepur in such a charged atmosphere*), but it was an absolutely misplaced understanding of the ground situation (*by the PMO*).

**Assuming that the decision that Prime Minister Modi would take the road to reach Hussainiwala in Ferozepur by road was taken at the last moment due to bad weather, how much time would the SPG and Punjab police need to sanitise the route to the venue and ensure that no untoward incident would take place?**

I think, after landing at Bhatinda airport, the prime minister's car-cade left within an hour towards the venue.

Given that Punjab has good roads, it wouldn't have taken much time to travel the distance where his car-cade got stuck. Had there been no protesters, the event could have passed without realising the security lapses that took place.

**Given the suddenness of the decision to travel by road and the security logistics involved in sanitising such a long route, do you think the SPG and Punjab police would have tried to dissuade the prime**

**minister from taking that route given that they had less than an hour to take care of the security logistics along the route after Modi's plane landed at Bhatinda airport?**

Under those circumstances, the best advice would have been to tell the prime minister to not take the road route.

It is possible that both the security agencies might have done that given the ground situation and their preparedness to make security arrangements at such a short notice.

**The Supreme Court has asked the registrar general of the Punjab and Haryana high court to secure the travel records of the prime minister's visit.**

**What will the travel records help ascertain?**

**Can the findings from these travel records help pinpoint the blame and make the responsible security apparatus accountable for the lapse/s?**

This will help secure all the logs of the Punjab police, the SPG, the Indian Air Force, or the PMO.

These will have details of what communication transpired between these agencies, who was talking to whom, and finally, what circumstances led to the decision to travel by road. That is very crucial.

The most important information would be of what exactly happened from the time Prime Minister Modi landed at Bhatinda airport to the time when the decision was taken to travel by road.

I hope that the enquiry will have logs of all communication that was happening between various stakeholders during that period.

**What are the chances that these log details could be tampered with before these are handed over to the registrar general?**

**Could the agency/agencies who know they goofed up with the prime minister's security compromise these travel details**

## **before they are handed over to the registrar general?**

The political slugfest between the central government and that of Punjab already shows that the issue has been highly politicised.

It is likely that both sides would hold the other side responsible for what happened that day and can selectively manipulate or tamper the information.

However, phone call records and logs with the wireless stations can't be tampered with easily. I can say with great conviction that the IAF will not manipulate their records.

**So, does that leave the Punjab police and the PMO which could tamper with travel details to absolve blame or try to create a picture to paint the other party as the villain?**

Nobody can say anything with certainty about such a question.

**In this entire episode, where do you think did the Punjab police and the SPG/PMO failed in their duties?**

There was no threat to the prime minister's life during this entire episode. Nothing of that sort happened, but it surely is a huge security lapse.

It was the Punjab police's responsibility first at Bhatinda when they gave the go ahead to let the prime minister's car-cade travel by road. Such clearances are given by the local police.

If such a clearance was given by the Punjab police, then I think there was some mistake in their understanding of the situation.

**So, the prime minister's car-cade took the road route because it got the clearance from the Punjab police? Without such permission, the SPG wouldn't have started the journey?**

My point though is that even if the Punjab police gave the route clearance the SPG could have overruled it.

The Punjab police was taking the prime minister by road for 100 km for the first time,

maybe in the last many years. But the SPG keeps travelling with the prime minister every second-third day outside Delhi. They are better aware of the drill; they understand the PM's security parameters better than the Punjab police. They could have refused even if the clearance was given by the Punjab police.

**What are the most important learnings for improving the security of India's prime minister and other VVIPs?**

The most important learning is to have professional and competent people with intellectual honesty in charge of as crucial a need as the prime minister's safety and security rather than have people handpicked and chosen by the political dispensation.

There are hundreds of people who fit this bill; hand over such crucial tasks to these people and they will do it with utmost integrity and honesty.

I can say this with utmost conviction again that within the all-India services there are many who have competence, professionalism, and intellectual honesty to take proper decisions for the safety and security of the prime minister.

The saddest thing is that such officers get generally marginalised. Only the lackeys and the sycophants climb the ladder.

You should have such people who would have told the prime minister that there was no way he could be taken by the road given the situation in the state.

**Do you think that Prime Minister Modi misread the situation? Wouldn't the IB have alerted the PMO about such an eventuality?**

I presume the Intelligence Bureau would have given its advice, but I can't say why and how the PMO took the decision to visit the state.

I think the prime minister best knows what actually happened and why such a decision was taken.

Courtesy [Rediff.com](http://Rediff.com), January 13, 2022. 

# Modi in a Traffic Jam, and the Decaying of Our Democracy

Praneet Pathak

*Today the nation feels threatened, our collective security and democracy compromised – or so the media would have you believe, with the prime minister’s cavalcade having to turn back due to protests and the allegations of ‘poor security management’ it has given rise to. But in reality, this incident reveals to us the many facets of a decaying Indian democracy.*

Consider the following five elements.

## 1. Delegitimization of protest, disagreement and dissent

The shock and furore regarding the protest being able to affect the prime minister’s route exposes our diminishing democratic sensibilities. In a democracy, our leaders are supposed to be responsible and accountable to us – and in most other democracies, that includes the leader at the helm, be it the prime minister or president.

However, there has been a normalisation of our prime minister’s inaccessibility. His reaction to being affected very slightly by a mass scale movement as the farmers’ protest is reflection of how the prime minister, with all his pomp and paraphernalia, has become insulated from the man on the street and has no genuine interest and faith in his critics’ point of view. He sees no need to include them in the political discourse.

## 2. Reduction to a security state

The alarm that the event raised – even though there was no attack, no specific threat and no breach of the prime minister’s cordon – stands in stark contrast to how other heads of states have at their most insecure moments as well, much less security. The prime minister melodramatically latching on to this as a life-threatening incident reveals an insecure leader who doesn’t trust his own people and gets scared by any modicum of access.

When a leader only feels secure behind the guns and batons of policemen, the process of reduction to a security state seems complete. The narrative in the media also dominantly engages with the event from the lens of a security lapse.

The discourse in such a security state is driven by an endless insecurity, an obsession with control, a disregard for democratic dissent and elimination of nuances of public issues in favour of a singular focus on the security narrative.

Of course, unauthorised access can create a security problem, but the Modi government has tended to take a far more benign view of such breaches in the past. (Instance 1; Instance 2).

## 3. A servile media that has reduced itself into the regime’s hound dog

The media left no stone unturned to frame the issue as a security lapse, thereby buying into the Union government’s narrative lock, stock and barrel, without examining the state’s rebuttal and without asking the Union about its own role in the alleged lapse. This fits in with the pattern of a significant section of the media having lost all sense of fairness, an extreme bias in favour of the ruling regime, poor fidelity to the facts and truth, and breeding a perpetual sense of insecurity amongst Indians.

## 4. The disregard and weakening of states

In this incident, the state has not been allowed to put out its side of the story. Blanket trust has been laid in the Union’s version, despite it being contested by the Punjab chief minister. This reflects a pattern of the media, courts and society looking at all Union vs state debates uncritically, assuming the truth must always come from the Union. The Union government engages in blatant hostility (like the outright blame game seen today by the Ministry of Home Affairs)

(To be Contd....on Page - 36)

# **Satya Pal Malik's protest to the government: Was it a socialist attitude?**

**Prem Singh**

Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik's stand has not softened even after the government withdrew three controversial agri-laws. Speaking at a social function in Haryana's Charkhi Dadri town on January 2, he said that when he met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the question of farmers' agitation and raised the issue of the death of 500 farmers, the PM's attitude was arrogant. He also said that their meeting ended in an argument. In other words, Malik conveyed the message that he went to the extent of even risking a quarrel with the arrogant Prime Minister on the question of farmers. He further stated that the PM asked him to meet Home Minister Amit Shah who pacified him by saying that the PM has gone mad!

Satya Pal Malik's anti-government attitude on the issue of the farmers agitation has been highly appreciated among the agitating farmers and supporters. If any leader, more so, at the governor level, sitting in power under the ruling BJP government opposes any decision or attitude of the government and dares to question even at the slightest point, then it should be applauded for the courage. Satya Pal Malik has categorically opposed the government's decision to implement agricultural laws and its malicious attitude towards the agitation from the very beginning.

At a time when Modi-Shah-Bhagwat's BJP is keeping a tight watch on the freedom of expression in the country, the condition of democracy within the BJP can be well understood. The situation is such that even the allied parties/leaders of BJP involved in the government do not have the courage to speak against any decision of the government. Shiromani Akali Dal, a constituent of NDA, due to electoral concerns, raised its voice of protest

only when a strong movement against agri-laws arose in Punjab. Then it had to look for a way out of the government and the coalition. A chanting refrain goes on day and night in the mainstream and social media that Narendra Modi is beyond any criticism. In such an environment, Satyapal Malik's persistent antagonistic attitude against the government including Narendra Modi should be appreciated. But with a caveat. He, being a constitutional authority, should have talked about other constitutional authorities such as the PM and the HM in a sober and decent language.

However, while paying him his due, it also needs to be kept in mind that after the Muzaffar Nagar riots, the BJP had made unprecedented electoral gains in western Uttar Pradesh. In reward for that achievement, and to keep it going, the BJP had made a deliberate venture of appeasement of the non-Muslim peasant castes of the region. The appointment of Satya Pal Malik as Governor was also part of the same venture. If the BJP loses its earnings in western Uttar Pradesh in the upcoming assembly elections due to the farmers' agitation, it is likely that it will not tolerate even a day's opposition by Satyapal Malik. However, in such a situation, the path for Satyapal Malik to remain in the corridors of power may remain fairly open. After the defeat of the BJP in western Uttar Pradesh, the SP-RLD could send him to the Rajya Sabha when the opportunity arises. It will be in

A special tendency is seen among socialists. Any socialist leader, involved with the BJP, Congress or any other party's government, sometimes talks about public interest even if it is in a suppressed tone. Then the socialists attribute his behavior to his socialist past and shower him with praise. Satya Pal Malik is also called a former-socialist. His support for the peasant

movement and his anti-government stance is applauded by some socialists by linking it to his past. But that is only one minor part of the story. If anything in Satyapal Malik's protest was actually related to his socialist inheritance, then he would have registered at least some protest against the indiscriminate corporatisation-privatization being carried out by this government. Needless to say, that all the labor and agricultural laws made by this government are in accordance with its policy of corporatization-privatization of every sector. The government has withdrawn the agri-laws under electoral pressure but it has not changed its policy. If the government and its neo-liberal policies continue to remain, then in all probability, the agri-laws will sooner or later be implemented, maybe in another, altered form.

PS: The critical statement of Satyapal Malik about the Prime Minister and the Home Minister

**Contd. from page - (29)**

## **Falsehood, Hate and...**

Long time ago, Ravish Kumar had warned the country to keep a tap on our children and youth and educate them towards responsible use of TV, Mobile and Internet. Also, responsible way of responding to a situation. He had also warned that if this is not done, the nation would pay heavy price. Now this is seen. IIT student burst out saying that he would rape Kohli's one year old daughter since Kohli supported the cricket player who is from a Muslim community when India lost in the T 20 world cup. The citizens are progressively becoming aware of the fact that each one has to take care of himself or herself. Because those who violate the rights and dignity of others are not just those who get protection from the powers and rulers of today but they themselves are power, rulers and dispensers of justice.

**Prakash Louis** is Founder of Indian Christians for Democracy 

on the contentious issue of agri-laws placed him on top of the first page of Indian Express of 3 January 2022. The very next day he back tracked from his statement stating that it had been "misconstrued". He lauded the PM and also stated that "Shah did not make any comment on the Prime Minister". This news dragged him to page 5 of the newspaper. By his flip Satyapal Malik himself has replied to those socialists who were praising him for a socialist attitude.

*The author taught Hindi at Delhi University.* 

**Contd. from page - (34)**

## **Modi in a Traffic Jam...**

with states governed by rival parties, and the media apparatus and the judiciary largely sides with the Union.

### **5. Cult of personality subsumes everything else**

All the above vices are in no small part a result of the cult of personality that has been carefully created around our prime minister. We have been bombarded with stories of the man's perfections, his selflessness, his efficiency, his incessant achievements.

The shrinking of our democratic dissent spaces, the thoughtless absorption of 'security scares and the resultant solution of a security state, the creation of a servile media which has either been subdued through threat or lured and co-opted, the disregard and weakening of states in favour of the Union are a direct result of the cult of personality that grips us.

For all these reasons it was not our "strong prime minister" who was threatened, as much as our threatened democracy revealed in all its vulnerability in our reaction to the event.

**Praneet Pathak** studies marketing at IMT and is a keen observer of Indian democracy.

Courtesy The Wire, 07/jan/2022 

# If the Government cannot manage the cow-sheds, it should allow the bovine market to function

Sandeep Pandey

On 28 December villagers from five villages of Hardoi District – Chamka, Gram Sabha Sikandarpur, Fatehpur and Banjara, GS Gherwa, Jeevan Kheda, GS Bharawan and Dulanagar, GS Dulanagar were going to march towards Yogi Adityanath's residence in Lucknow with stray cattle, who have become a source of grief for them, after informing the Sub-Divisional Magistrate in Sandila. The Block Development Officer of Bharawan arranged vehicles to transport 22 animals on 27 December and another 17 on 29 December to Gaushalas or Cow-sheds. As soon as the news spread people in other villages, equally harassed, started gathering the stray cattle. Villagers in Ramnagar, GS Kaudia, collected 50 animals, Banjara, GS Aira Kakemau collected 60-70 animals and GS Bharawan collected about 200 animals and waited for the administration to fetch their cattle too. On 1 January, 2022 hundreds of people from abovementioned villages marched towards Chief Minister's residence. They were intercepted by the SDM and Circle Officer of Sandila on the way and hundreds of cattle were moved from villages to Cow-sheds.

In 2021 six such action programmes were undertaken by villagers in Hardoi, Unnao and Barabanki Districts. The first programme was undertaken in Miyaganj, Unnao on 25 January when villagers started for CM's residence. The SDM and CO of Hasanganj intervened and sent the cattle to a shelter home for animals. On the Republic Day, 26 January, hundreds of villagers with 21 cattle moved from Lalama Mawai GS in Hardoi. Again the SDM and CO arrived and gave in writing that 80 cattle held by nearby three GSs in a temporary enclosure will be moved to cow-sheds within two days. Also, a First Information Report with section of Scheduled

Caste/Tribe Prevention of Atrocities Act was lodged against a Bhartiya Janata Party local office bearer Gyanendra Singh who had attacked the villagers when they were taking the cattle from Lalama Mawai to a cow-shed in Pawayan village on the advice of District Veterinary Officer in previous December. On 13 August people from Aseni GS in Barabanki marched towards CM's residence with stray cattle after informing the officials. The police intervened and arranged for the cattle to be sent to cow-shed. However, it was only a symbolic action with only a few cattle being removed leaving behind the more dangerous ones. So, the villagers of Aseni again decided to take out the cattle parade on 18 August. This time the District Veterinary Officer assured in writing that all cattle would be removed from the village within a week. In Unnao villagers from GS Devgaon gave a notice to the SDM, Safipur that they would march to CM's residence on 22 September with stray cattle. A day before the action, the SDM got approximately 40 cattle removed from the village to cow-shed. Then on 11 October, again in Unnao, people marched with cattle from Kali Mitti to Takia and then to Asiwan the next day for about ten kilometers before the police intervened and arranged for the cattle from two villages Tanda Satan and Majharia to be transported to cow-sheds. However, villagers in other villages were also expecting stray cattle from their respective villages to be removed.

The fact is that villagers all over Uttar Pradesh are fed up of stray cattle. When they decided to enclose their agricultural fields with a bladed wire, which is more dangerous than barbed wire, the government imposed a ban on bladed wire and issued an order to fine the farmers who were putting up such fence. The government instead of finding a solution to the problem of stray cattle

decided to punish the farmers. Stray cattle became a problem after Yogi Adityanath became the CM, when in a number of incidents people accompanying cattle were suspected of taking them to slaughter houses and were fatally mob lynched. Afraid of these Gaurakshaks, who merely indulged in violence in the name of cow protection, the sale and purchase of cows came to a halt. The weekly cow markets were closed.

Yogi Adityanath government started a scheme for cow-sheds in which there is a provision for Rs. 30 per cattle per day for feeding them. However, the number of stray cattle is too large and there are not enough cow-sheds. Neither is there a will to run the cow-sheds properly. The animals are languishing in cow-sheds without proper care and caretakers are sometimes not paid their honoraria for months. In Bihar Lalu Prasad Yadav went to jail in fodder scam. Today there is a massive fodder scam going on in U.P. in which people from top to bottom in the government machinery are involved.

The government should create cow-sheds wherever people have gathered the stray cattle and administration should take care of their feed. Otherwise the Rs. 30 per cattle per day provision should be directly made available to the farmers so that they may not abandon their cattle who have no utility for them. After all the present government has begun various cash transfer

schemes and it can easily transfer cash into farmers' accounts for this purpose too. The Kisan Samman Nidhi of Rs. 6,000 being given to farmers is a pittance compared to the losses they have suffered on account of stray cattle eating up their crops. In fact, this scheme is a disgrace for the farmers. The Panchayats can also take care of the responsibility of stray cattle provided sufficient funds are made available to them. A number of Gram Pradhans complain that they spend out of their pocket to take care of the stray cattle when asked to do so but are subsequently not reimbursed by the officials.

The farmers are demanding that since the government has banned the bladed wires it should compensate the farmers for the crops destroyed by stray cattle. If the government doesn't pay heed to this demand then the farmers are likely to approach the courts.

Ram Snehi Arkvanshi, the farmer who led the recent initiative from Chamka village in Hardoi District to free his village of stray cattle, is of the opinion that if the government cannot run cow-sheds properly and is not willing to compensate the farmers in any way, then it should allow the cow markets to function so that the farmer can be relieved of the problem of stray cattle.

**Sandeep Pandey** is General Secretary of Socialist Party (India). 

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## Space and Time

All the ideas, which are supposed to have pulled down the beautiful structure of classical physics are developments of the simple statement of observed facts: 'All motions are relative'; 'bodies move relatively to one another'; 'the speed of a body is measured in relation to another, which is supposed to be at rest'; 'but there are no bodies at absolute rest'. It is easy to see what an entirely different light is thrown on the concepts of time and space by this new discovery. Movement makes the idea of time conceivable. If movements are relative, time cannot be absolute. On the other hand, time and space are co-related concepts. The revolution in one cannot leave the other unaffected.

Newton himself was aware of the fact that there are no bodies in absolute rest. He actually wrote: "It is possible that, in the remote regions of the fixed stars, or perhaps far beyond them, there may be somebody absolutely at rest, but it is impossible to know, from the position of bodies to one another in our region, whether any of these do keep the same position to that remote body." Then he made the statement that "absolute rest cannot be determined from the position of bodies in our region."

It is clear from this that the dynamic view of the Universe, represented by the Theory of Relativity, would not surprise Newton, if he came back to life today. Because, he would see that since his time, following the trail blazed by himself, science has explored the farthest regions of the heaven, and found no body at absolute rest.

The impossibility of finding some body at absolute rest implies the impossibility to measure absolute velocity. The disappearance of absolute time is logically inevitable.

The Theory of Relativity is based on a conclusion drawn from the negative result of experiments to find a way of measuring the absolute velocity of bodies through space. It explains the negative result. It should be noticed that neither Newton nor Einstein denies the existence of absolute velocity; both find that it is impossible to discover it.

Newton had rejected the Cartesian concept of all-pervading substance. His system was built on the molecular conception of matter. The two simple laws of motion occupy the central place in Newtonian mechanics. The entire system does not know of anything at absolute rest. Thus relativity of motion is inherent in the Newtonian system.

The idea of motion results from the change of distance between two bodies. I consider somebody moving away from me, when the distance between us increases. But the other person also has exactly the same experience as entitles him to conclude that I am moving and he is at rest. Since the idea of motion results from the increase of an intervening distance, and the other person also experiences the distance between us increasing, it will be perfectly legitimate for him to consider himself at rest, and me moving away. Such an assertion made by him cannot be refuted logically.

In the absense of anybody at absolute rest, absolute velocity can never be measured. Motion is always relative; and the concept of

motion being inseparably associated with the idea of distance, distance must also be regarded in the light of relativity. The discovery that motion and distance are always relative called for a revolution in the concept of space and time.

Having revealed the imaginary nature of absolute time and consequently of absolute space, the Theory of Relativity merges space and time into a four dimensional continuum. The novel conception of Space-Time, apparently a combination of two qualitatively different entities, has naturally been very puzzling. It could be understood, however, from two points of view: geometrical and philosophicāl.

They are not welded together arbitrarily, as a mathematical device. They are welded together in nature. To regard them as independent categories, in the sense that either of them can exist by itself, is a mathematical abstraction. Since space and time are always found mixed up together, whenever they enter our experience, to regard them as independent categories is obviously an arbitrary procedure. The question is: how do these apparently distinct categories get so inextricably interwoven? Relativity physics answers the question, thus helping the solution of a problem which puzzled philosophy for ages.

Space and time are not categorical entities nor ultimate realities. They derive their very existence from a common source, which is ontologically antecedent to them both. They are functions of the physical existence. Hence, though apparently so very different, they are always inextricably mixed up, except in abstraction. Fundamentally, they represent the self same physical reality — extention or extendedness of matter, geometrical and chronological, respectivly. Space is the geometrical extention of matter, and time is its chronological extention.

The primitive logic of naive commonsense made location antecedent to existence. Speculative philosophy could never outgrow the primitive logic of its infancy. But the fallacy is obvious.

If things must exist somewhere, space itself must also have a location. Otherwise, it cannot exist. Thus, the idea that existence is dependent on location leads to ‘regresso ad infinitum’. According to the very traditional definition of existence, space does not exist except as extention; but extention logically presupposes something extended. This idea about the structure of space is implicit in Euclidean geometry itself. A line is not the integration of the bits of space separating points, but of the points themselves; and a plane is the sum total of a number of lines. Consequently, space is constructed of points; it is the product of existence. The function of the point is to exist; existence, therefore, is antecedent to space.

The analysis is equally applicable to the concept of time. Duration also is conditional upon existence. The logic is self-evident. A thing must be, in order to become. The idea of time is born of the primitive experience of interval between events, which are changes, in existence. Becoming is a strings of events, constituting the life-history of a thing. Space is being, and time is becoming. While pure being is logically conceivable, becoming always involves being. Thus, time can never exist independently of space. Nature has welded it together with space.

This simple anysis of the commonsense idea of space and time leads directly to the picture of a four-dimentional continuum. Being is three-dimentional. But the world is a process of becoming. Pure being, that is, eventless existence, is an abstraction. Becoming is four-dimentional, because it embraces existence and change — space and time. 

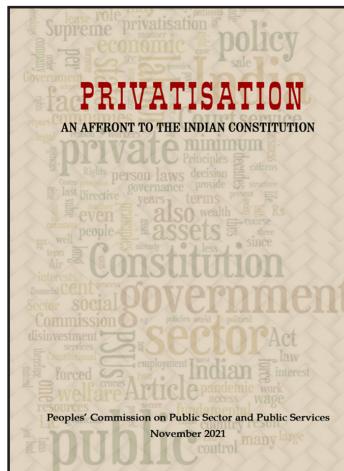
# Privatisation: An Affront to the Indian Constitution

Thomas Isaac & E.A.S. Sarma

Public Sector Enterprises were to shoulder a vital role in economic development of independent India in accordance with the letter and the spirit of the Constitution, especially consistent with the State's mandate stipulated in the Directive Principles.

There was a virtual consensus cutting across not only political but also economic interests in the national movement regarding the need for a vibrant public sector. The leading business houses realised the historical limitations that circumscribed their resource mobilisation capabilities in the post-colonial period. The potential for colonial primitive accumulation and markets that the European capitalists enjoyed in the period of their ascendance was foreclosed. In these circumstances the celebrated Bombay Plan (1944) drawn up by the representatives of business interests underlined the need for vigorous state intervention to promote industrialisation and setting up of public sector units that would establish basic infrastructure and long gestation basic industries that required heavy investment. The document also accepted planning so that the scarce resources are effectively deployed. The state was also to institute an appropriate regulatory framework for an import substitution strategy of development.

The regulation of imports directly flowed from the Swadeshi slogan of the national movement. India's tryst with colonial free trade had been a terrible experience with the economy growing at around one per cent per annum, deindustrialisation, recurring famines and shrinkage of India's share in global production.



Given the abject poverty, illiteracy and ill-health of vast majority of the citizens who were also social victims of the legacy of caste discrimination, pursuit of social and economic justice was enshrined in the Directive Principles of the Constitution of India. These directives of the Constitution form the starting point of the analysis of the Interim Report 1 of the Peoples' Commission on Public Sector and Public Services. The gist of the arguments in this opening initial report of the Peoples' Commission is that the current policy of the Union Government for privatisation of the PSEs is tantamount to negation of the social objectives of the Constitution as stated in the Directive Principles and constitutional guarantees on affirmative action.

How did we come to this impasse? A successful import substitution strategy is predicated on continuous expansion of the domestic market. Among others, the most important was the failure to carry out land reforms and mitigate rural poverty. The attempt to change course to an export-oriented growth strategy in the 1980's to accelerate growth ended in a major foreign exchange crisis. The country was forced to come to terms with Fund-Bank prescriptions and a new free market era of systematic dismantling of the post-independence economic regime was inaugurated in 1991.

India's corporate interests were also fully convinced that the earlier regime had exhausted its potential for them. In fact, the Bombay Plan had not envisaged open ended growth of public sector or planning. As the corporates matured and gained experience, the public sector was to

be eventually transferred to them or in other words privatised. In the changed global scenario, being part of the new international division of labour was inevitable and whatever loss of domestic market or opportunity was to be more than made good by the potential of primitive accumulation through privatisation of the public sector and monetisation of public assets.

The Indian developmental state has also meanwhile undergone profound transformation into a neoliberal state, a direct handmaiden of corporates and finance capital. Under the cover of Covid Pandemic, the unfinished neoliberal agenda in the financial sector, labour laws, privatisation and corporatisation of agriculture were also pushed through. Such has been the confidence that the laws were enacted mostly through the ordinance route by-passing Parliament and when finally placed in the Parliament, approved in hurried voice votes.

The year long struggle of the farmers protesting the three farm laws was a rude shock to the neoliberal state with most farmers rejecting their agenda. The labour laws are also in limbo. But the NDA government seems to be determined to push ahead with its privatisation agenda. One important reason is that it requires “non-debt-creating” receipts to fill the revenue gap in the budget which is getting out of hand because of tax concession to the corporates, capitalisation needs of the banks to make up for the NPAs of the corporates and payment for the more recent Production Linked Incentives Scheme. The Interim Report has pointed out that the macro-economic effect of such “non-debt-creating” receipts would be the same as a normal increase in the fiscal deficit if the private sector merely borrows funds from the banking sector. The macro-economic implications of privatisation are a set of issues that we would be taking up in one of the subsequent reports.

Facing a check-mate in the response to its

farm agenda the Indian state is keen to demonstrate to international capital and Indian corporates their full commitment to the reform path. This in fact has been the general tenor of the corporate media after the farm laws fiasco. In this context the privatisation agenda would appear as low hanging fruits that can be easily plucked. For one, the government has succeeded in influencing middle class and public opinion through relentless propaganda that the public sector cannot be efficient and is a drain of government resources. Perhaps the resistance to privatisation has also started to suffer from fatigue. And the government through subterranean and ingenious measures are undermining the functioning of the existing public sector so that sooner or later there would be no alternative to privatisation. Such is the desperation of the government that they are willing to give extensive concessions to make privatisation attractive in the current forbidding macro-economic environment, even sacrificing the revenue objectives.

It is in this context that the Peoples’ Commission on Public Sector and Services which includes eminent academics, jurists, erstwhile administrators, trade unionists and social activists has been constituted. It is remarkable that the members of the Commission within a month of its constitution have through online consultations among themselves drawn up Interim Report 1, focusing more on the Constitutional aspects of the privatisation drive. We intend to have in-depth consultations with all stakeholders and other eminent people and produce several sectoral reports before coming out with a final report. This procedure has been adopted because of the urgent need for an informed public debate on privatisation and mobilising support for the resistance to such disastrous moves.

**Thomas Isaac & E.A.S. Sarma are**  
Co-Chairs, Peoples’ Commission on Public  
Sector and Public Services 

## Children on Tamil Talent Show Mock Modi, Irate BJP Wants Zee to Take it Down



The two child contestants on Zee Tamil's 'Junior Super Stars Season 4' had performed a skit mocking the Prime Minister by making oblique references to the government's failed demonetisation attempt, disinvestment and Modi's sartorial extravagance.

The BJP in Tamil Nadu has questioned a recently-aired episode of reality television show 'Junior Super Stars Season 4', broadcast on Zee Tamil, alleging that two child contestants performed a skit that was meant to mock Prime Minister Narendra Modi. In a letter to Zee Tamil, C.T.R. Nirmal Kumar, state president of the IT and social media cell of BJP in Tamil Nadu, has written to the channel asking it to take the programme off air, alleging that "obnoxious" comments were made against the prime minister.

This is not the first time that the BJP or other right wing group members have become upset with programmes by school children. In January, 2021, when the country was debating the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), a play was staged at Shaheen Primary and High School in the Bidar district of Karnataka criticising the CAA. Based on a right wing activist's complaint, a case of sedition was filed against the school and parents of children who took part in the play. The students were questioned multiple times and the head teacher of the school's primary section, along with the mother of a child who took part in the play, were arrested. The school management had to face sedition charges for allowing the play to be conducted.

— Azeefa Fathima, The Wire

These kids in the skit do not use the words 'prime minister' or Modi even once.. Yet the BJP/RSS in Tamil Nadu went ballistic and complained to the I & B Ministry which promptly sent a Notice and gag order to the TV channel...What a sense of profound guilt? Indeed a New India!!

— M.G. Devasahayam

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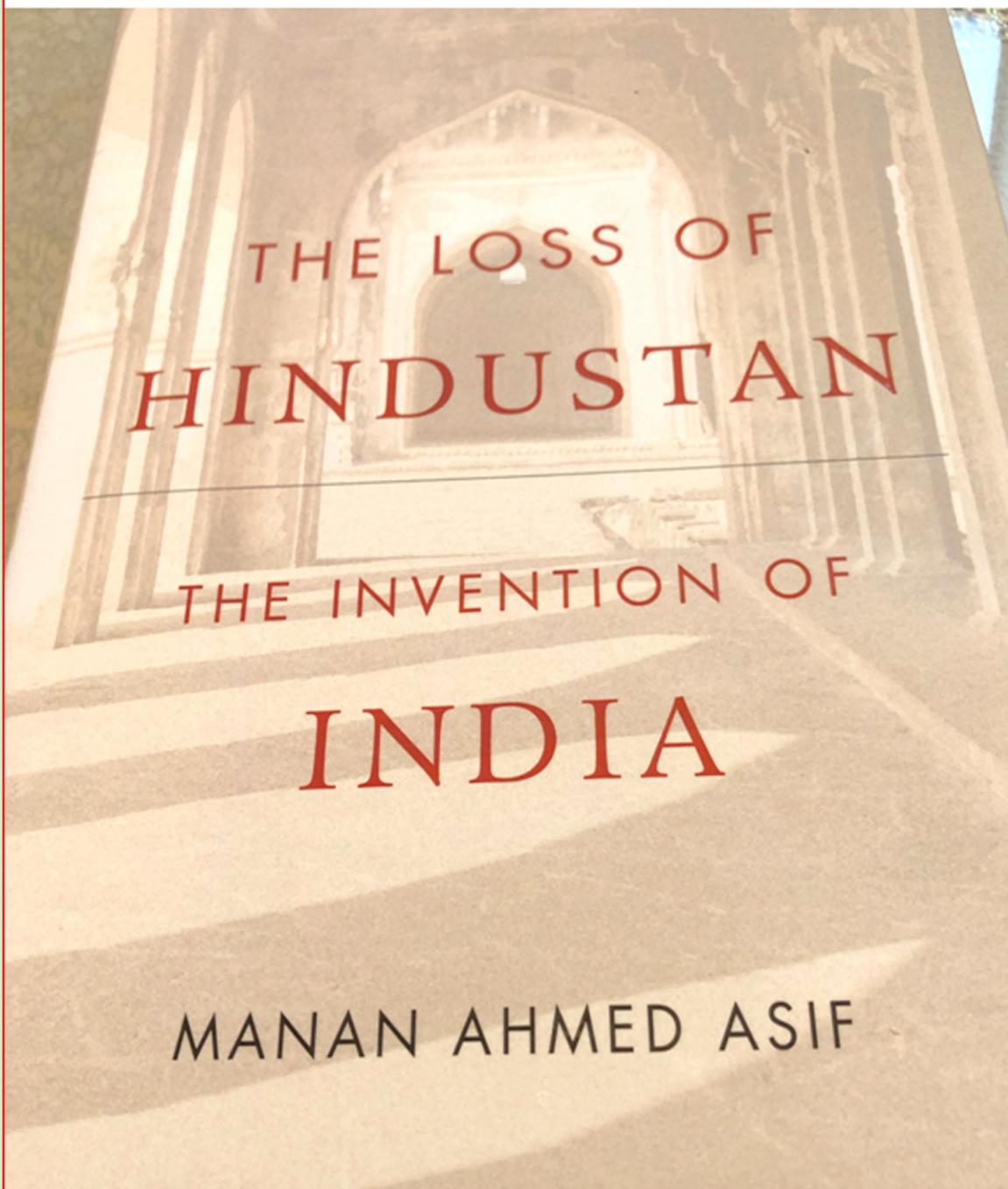
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