

# frontier

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## *Resurrecting Khalistan*

**I**N A TIT FOR TAT MOVE NEW DELHI HAS EXPELLED A SENIOR Canadian diplomat hours after Ottawa expelled a top Indian official as tensions between the two countries escalate over the killing of Khalistani leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar earlier this year. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in his parliament that India was connected to Nijjar's assassination in British Columbia State in June. The Government of India, however, dismissed the allegation by the Canadian government as baseless and asked Canada instead to crack down on anti-India separatist groups like Khalistanis operating in its territory. The row actually centres on the Sikh separatist movement, commonly known as the Khalistani movement. If Canada could prove allegations, killing would violate international law. But so far Trudeau's "credible allegations" are without any "credible evidence". India has for years accused Canada of harbouring 'extremist' supporters of the so-called Khalistan movement.

Nijjar was reportedly organising an unofficial referendum for an independent Sikh nation at the time of his death. He was initially associated with the Babbar Khalsa International [BKI] militant outfit. New Delhi has listed BKI as a "terrorist organisation" and says it is funded by Pakistan's Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) agency. At one stage Nijjar became the chief of Khalistan Tiger Force [KTF]. He was also the head of Guru Nanak Sikh Gurduara in Surrey. He held that position at the time of his death. A person with many colours!

The separatist movement started as an armed campaign in the late 1980s among Sikhs demanding a separate homeland. The violent movement lasted more than a decade. It was brutally suppressed by India's security forces. Thousands of people, innocent people, were killed including prominent Sikh leaders. Many innocent people died in cross-fire as it happens in every armed confrontation.

In 1984, Indian armed forces stormed the Golden Temple, Sikhism's holiest shrine, in Amritsar to flush out militants who had taken refuge in the temple complex. The operation killed about 400 people, according to official figures but unofficial observers say thousands were killed. The dead included Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, whom the authorities in New Delhi accused of leading the armed rebellion. Bhindranwale was originally propped up by the then Congress government at the Centre to curb the influence of Akali Dal in Punjab Politics but ultimately it backfired.

Hundreds of Punjab youths were killed in police operations in those days. They died in fake encounters as many of the deaths were later proved in courts to have been staged. As the ghost of Khalistan returns Indian security establishment has started a massive witch-hunt in Punjab, creating an atmosphere of terror among ordinary citizens.

India has been asking countries such as Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom and Pakistan to take legal action against Sikh separatists for quite some time. Only last year Paramjit Singh Panjwar, head of Khalistan Commando Force, was shot dead in Pakistan. India seems more concerned about Canada where Sikhs make up nearly 2 percent of the country's population. They form a vote bank that can hardly be ignored. For Trudeau Sikh voters matter, particularly for his

party---New Democratic Party. Trudeau even tried to condemn Nijjar killing at the G-20 summit without success as the Uncle Sam was against antagonising India. In truth Trudeau's comments supporting the farmers' agitation and the arrest of Amrit Pal Singh is a fall-out of domestic political compulsion. Incidentally the Modi government tried to discredit Sikh participants in the historic farmers' agitation by calling them Khalistanis but the propaganda didn't click.

Meanwhile, the Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said Punjabis in Canada were in a state of panic due to India's deteriorating diplomatic relations with Canada. The suspension of Visa services for travel from Canada to India has affected thousands of Punjabis, including students.

For all practical purposes the

Khalistani militancy is dead. There is no active insurgency in Punjab today though the idea of Khalistan still has some backers in the state, as well as in the sizable Sikh diaspora beyond India. Vandalising an Indian consulate in London doesn't mean insurgency is advancing. Or desecrating a Hindu temple in Australia is enough to give leverage to Hindu Right to spread their politics of hate. By such actions they are just alienating themselves from masses even in Punjab while allowing Hindutva forces to make polarisation on religious and communal lines easier. If anything their actions suggest that the movement has lost its direction. For the ruling establishment in India the renewed Khalistani phobia will give them a spacious excuse to silence voice of dissent, particularly in Punjab. □□□

[Contributed]

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## COMMENT

### Integration of Hyderabad

17TH SEPTEMBER IS BEING observed as 'Hyderabad Liberation Day'. On this day in 1948, Hyderabad was freed from the clutches of the Nizam and merged into India.

Even before the country got independence on 15 August 1947, the Nizam was trying to make Hyderabad an independent country. Nizam Mir Osman Ali Khan issued a decree on 3 June 1947 declaring Hyderabad an independent country.

When talks were going on to merge Hyderabad with India, Nizam of Hyderabad Mir Osman Ali Khan had rejected the request for merger with India. He was assured by Razakar leader Qasim Rizvi that if India takes any kind of military action to annex Hyderabad, then Razakars under his leadership will fight the Indian Army.

To intimidate the Indian leadership, the cruel Razakars and Nizam's soldiers under the leadership of Qasim started oppressing the Hindus of the state. Not only this, Qasim Rizvi threatened that if India tried to take any military action against it, it would get nothing except the bones and ashes of 1.40 crore Hindus. VP Menon has mentioned this in his book 'The Integration of States'.

The Indian Army started Operation Polo on 13 September 1948 and annexed Hyderabad to India on 17 September. In the five-day action, 1373 Razakars and 807 soldiers of the Hyderabad state were killed. At the same time, 66 soldiers of the Indian Army also attained martyrdom.

In the end the Nizam and the Razakars, an organisation of fundamentalist Muslims, surrendered. Af-

ter this Rizvi was arrested and put in jail and Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen was banned. After being kept in jail for almost a decade, Qasim Rizvi was released on the condition that he would go to Pakistan within 48 hours. Rizvi was given asylum by Pakistan.

Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar had expressed his clear views regarding the Hyderabad Liberation Movement. He had said that the people living under the tyrannical rule of the Nizam started a big movement against the Nizam. Many heroes sacrificed their lives in this. Apart from Dr Ambedkar, the Scheduled Caste Federation also openly opposed the Nizam.

The first rally by Dr Ambedkar against the Nizam was organised on 30 December 1938 at Makranpur in Kannada district. In the same rally in Aurangabad, Bhausahab More had given the slogan of 'Jai Bhim' before Dr Ambedkar. This rally played a big role in the Hyderabad liberation movement.

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In fact, the Nizam had crossed the limits of oppression of Dalits. The Nizam's rule had become infamous for its atrocities against Hindus and people began to rebel against his rule. Due to this the Nizam got many leaders of the Scheduled Caste Federation murdered. In protest against this, Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar also came in support of the Dalit leaders.

Baba Saheb was hurt by the atrocities on Dalits and their conversion. The condition of Dalits was even worse in Marathwada, which came under the rule of the Nizam. Dalits were discriminated against on

a large scale and were also deprived of education.

This is the same Marathwada whose liberation was opposed by the leaders of Asaduddin Owaisi's party AIMIM. AIMIM MPs were also absent from the tricolour hoisting programme on Marathwada Liberation Day. This is the same AIMIM, which is related to the Razakars' MIM and Owaisi's ancestors were associated with it. In this way, those who hate Dalits from within are talking about 'Jai Bhim Jai Meem' for the sake of politics. □□□

[Contributed]

## NOTICE

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## NOTE

### RTI—Is Transparency Decreasing?

*Bharat Dogra writes:*

INDIA HAS A STRONG RIGHT to Information (RTI) law that has been considered a model law by many countries. Despite this, in recent times, there have been several complaints that RTI applications are leading to rather evasive replies that are not very helpful leading to more need for appeals to get proper information. Unfortunately, however, even after appeals the proper information is frequently not becoming available in time, one reason being that the arrangement for timely responding to appeals has been weakened at many places. While the situation may not be the same in all the states, an overall decline in the ability to get timely and proper information has been noticed widely.

This is very unfortunate, for at one time India had appeared to be emerging as a leader in RTI-driven transparency. While the situation at the turn of the century was that RTI laws were being enacted or seriously considered in several countries, two factors added to the strength of the RTI scene in India. One was of

course the relatively stronger law that emerged here after a lot of efforts and fiddling with much weaker versions of this law. Secondly, a remarkable part of the situation in India was that the entire movement here had emerged from a strong grassroots struggle of workers and peasants in Rajasthan for information relating to their daily survival needs. They were asking for information relating to drought relief or rural employment work, for payment of legal minimum wages for such work or for the delivery of subsidised food ration to the poor which was of critical importance for keeping away hunger from their huts. This movement initiated by the MKSS (Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan or Organisation for the Empowerment of Workers and Peasants) was soon joined by several other organisations and movements in India and dharnas or sit-ins were organised in several parts of Rajasthan to demand RTI. It was only after several protests and much delay that the Rajasthan government accepted the idea of right to

information in the right spirit. Meanwhile efforts emerged in other states like Maharashtra too to demand RTI.

Senior activists from the Rajasthan movement such as Aruna Roy harnessed the strength of their grassroots movement to create a national campaign committee for people's right to information. This had very senior journalists like Kuldip Nayar, Ajit Bhattacharjee and Prabhush Joshi, highly respected activists like Aruna Roy, Nikhil Dey and K G Kannabiran and those with rich administrative and academic experience like Harsh Mander and Shekhar Singh.

Thus a national campaign called NCPRI combining grassroots efforts with efforts to reach governments as well as influential people in civil society, academia and media took shape. This first led to some state level laws and finally to a RTI law for the entire country (2005).

This law started being used very extensively within a short time, hence testifying to the need for such a law. RTI almost became a household word among significant sections of the population and people started looking forward to using it in the context of several problems they faced, leading to interesting results.

The government was also called upon by the legislation to suo motto make available a lot of its information, leading to the entire system becoming much more transparent than before. All this certainly contributed to the betterment of democracy in India.

However more recently some of these gains have been eroded. The entire system created by the RTI law depends to a significant extent on the functioning of the central and state Information Commissions. Unfortunately these have been weakened and understaffed so that their

ability to ensure proper implementation of RTI has declined. An amendment in 2019 of the RTI law increased union government's control over information commissioners. Then the Digital Personal Protection Act enacted this year has made it more difficult to get some information needed for social audits as well as some information relating to powerful and influential persons.

Several rules which are made regarding the implementation of RTI laws have also been such as to make it more difficult to use the RTI law in various ways.

The overall trend towards lesser transparency is also evident in less than enthusiastic suo motto disclosure of information. When efforts at higher levels to pursue steps in the direction of greater transparency are missing, the overall system also tends to fall into the same pattern of lesser rather than higher transparency.

The present writer was the first Convener of the National Campaign for People's Right to Information and has contributed several articles, booklets, primers and books on RTI.

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## A JOINT STATEMENT

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### Ignoring Alarm Bells

**D**OMINATING NEWS cycles in Canada is that Prime Minister Trudeau has accused the government of India of involvement in killing of Canadian Sikh leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar near Vancouver last June and Canada has expelled India's intelligence chief in Ottawa in retaliation.

Prime Minister Trudeau said "The involvement of any foreign government in the murder of a Canadian citizen on Canadian soil is an unacceptable violation of our sovereignty."

A former adviser to the Prime Minister has said India has joined "the group of nations that assassinate political opponents" abroad, akin to the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi in Turkey in 2018.

Meanwhile over the past year, diasporic South Asian and other civil society organisations that have been sounding alarm bells and calling on the Trudeau government and the opposition to pay heed to the dangerous build-up of support for the Hindu ethno-nationalism of the current government of India on Canadian soil. But these alerts have gone unheeded.

Last November, Chandra Arya, a member of the Liberal caucus hoisted a flag on Parliament Hill, a politically charged symbol that is associated with a far-right Hindu paramilitary organisation the RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh) closely connected with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), the Hindu nationalist political party of Indian Prime Minister Modi. Seventeen civil society organisations wrote to Prime Minister Trudeau and the leaders of the opposition expressing deep concern about this. The letters went unanswered.

In August, there was a demonstration in Ottawa, in solidarity against Hindutva fascism in India and Canada. The demonstrators went to the Prime Minister's office and symbolically delivered a letter signed by 80 civil society organisations, including many from the Indian diaspora in Canada. The letter called for Canada to issue a categorical public condemnation of the systematic discrimination, genocide incitement, harassment, and violence faced by religious minorities and other oppressed groups in India, including Muslims, Chris-

tians, Dalits, Adivasi Indigenous peoples, and Sikhs, as well as Kashmiris. The protest demonstrated that the concerns for rights and equality extend beyond borders, serving as a reminder that collective action remains essential in safeguarding these values. Also that Canadian trade and investment agreements with India are contingent upon respecting human rights and protecting vulnerable communities. And that Indian politicians who have publicly called for ethnic cleansing and incited genocidal violence against India's minority population be barred from entering Canada under Section 35 of the Immigration and Refugee Protection Act. The letter also called for identifying and investigating organisations, particularly those operating as charitable organisations in Canada that are fronts for Hindu right-wing organisations. Any organisations found to be promoting hate speech, discrimination, or violence should be immediately banned and their charitable status revoked. As well, conducting a thorough investigation into the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of India and its agencies interfering in Canadian politics and institutions, as reported by Canada's national security adviser. This includes monitoring their influence in Canadian institutions

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and online platforms, and taking appropriate legal measures to counter their divisive and discriminatory agenda.

This letter also went unanswered.

The influence of Hindu nationalism also suppresses political, artistic, and academic expression. Last year, Toronto-based filmmaker Leena Manimekalai received thousands of threatening messages, death and rape threats, and was called Hinduphobic for screening her film "Kaali." The same MP Chandra Arya also weighed in citing hurt Hindu sentiment. The Indian High Commission in Canada got involved, issuing a press release reprimanding those who screened Ms. Manimekalai's film. All this exposes the Hindu supremacist nature of the current government of India. They have been harassing academics and artists.

Individuals supporting the Indian government's Hindu nationalism have

created a petition to the House of Commons calling for Canada to recognise something called 'Hinduphobia'. They seek to push an agenda to persecute, hound, delegitimise and silence those who call out the Indian government for its well-documented human rights violations and violence against minorities.

Canadian parliamentarians must not legitimise the politics of hate that is masquerading as victimhood. They must finally acknowledge what is under their noses.

Canada must stand with the oppressed peoples of India including Muslims, Dalits, Christians, Sikhs, Kashmiris, and others. We urge the Canadian government to take concrete actions: a) publicly condemning the state-backed violence and persecution of those resisting Hindu supremacy and holding the Indian state accountable; b) stand up for

the rights of religious minorities and oppressed communities in India; c) banning organisations in Canada that are affiliated to and funding the RSS, and their promotion of hate; d) ensuring Canadian trade agreements with India are contingent upon respecting human rights and protecting vulnerable communities; e) taking concrete steps in Canada and globally to stop transnational state surveillance and vigilantism. □□□

Canadians for  
Indian Democracy (CID)  
CERAS (Centre sur l'Asie du Sud)  
Hindus for Human Rights Canada  
India Civil Watch International  
Justice for All Canada  
Punjabi Literary and Cultural  
Association Winnipeg  
SADAN—South Asian Dalit  
Adivasi Network—Canada  
South Asian Diaspora Action  
Collective (SADAC)

19 September, 2023

## AN UNDESIRABLE IDEA

# One Nation, One Election

*Ajit Ranade*

THE GOVERNMENT OF India has set up a high-level committee (HLC) to examine and make recommendations on holding simultaneous elections across the country, for national and state legislatures and also village, town and city councils. The committee is chaired by former President Ram Nath Kovind. The terms of reference of the HLC say that it is expected to examine requisite amendments to the Constitution; recommend a possible solution to problems like a hung house, defections, or no-confidence motions; suggest safeguards to ensure continuity of the cycle of one-election only logistics of EVMs etc., and the use of a single electoral roll for all elections. Obviously, this is a very ambitious agenda for the HLC.

Popularly known as one-nation one-election (ONOE), this was in the 2014 Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) manifesto. During 2015 and 2016, it was the subject matter of a Parliamentary Standing Committee, a communication between the Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister and the Election Commission of India (ECI), and a Union Law Ministry report sent to the ECI. In 2017, then President Pranab Mukherjee made a mention of ONOE in his address on the eve of Republic Day. Later that year, Niti Aayog published a discussion paper on this topic. In 2018, President Kovind, in his address to the joint sitting of the two houses of parliament, indicated the desirability of holding simultaneous elections. ONOE has thus

been around in discussions for at least nine years now. The formation of the HLC is a significant step toward its implementation.

The rationale for ONOE is that it will reduce the excessive spending on elections since people seem to be always in election mode. It will remove roadblocks to development caused by the model code of conduct which is in force during elections. And it will reduce largescale deployment of security forces for prolonged periods of time during elections. Each one of these rationales can be questioned.

For instance, if there is excess spending on elections, who is doing it? The government's own spending is not even 0.1% of its total budget, both at the central and state levels. This is as per accounts submitted by the ECI and State Election Commissions. The "excessive" expenditure is actually what is spent by candidates and political parties. This,

too, is not confirmed in official documents. As per accounts submitted to the ECI, on an average, the official spending by candidates is not even 50% of the permissible ceiling. The candidates are, at least officially, underspending, not overspending.

So, this means that much of the spending is via black money. Prime Minister Modi himself has said that electoral reforms are necessary to get rid of black money. But neither the candidates nor the parties have ever complained or seem to be bothered about excessive spending. If that were so, then a major step forward to get rid of black money would have been to legislate complete transparency on the source and use of funds by political parties. But parties have repeatedly resisted being subjected to the Right to Information Act. The introduction of electoral bonds by the Modi government has actually made political funding even more opaque since the source and destination of these funds can no longer be connected by the voter.

Secondly, it is also not clear whether the imposition of the model code of conduct seriously hinders developmental work by incumbent governments.

If the prime motivation is reducing the evil influence of money

power, then several electoral reforms and funding transparency laws can be introduced, without going toward ONOE.

Be that as it may, here some hurdles in going toward ONOE.

Firstly, it will require amendments to at least five Articles of the Constitution. These are Articles 83, 85, 172, 174 and 356. This will need two-thirds majority in both houses of parliament.

Secondly, even if the amendments go through, their validity is likely to be challenged in the Supreme Court. This is because these amendments affect the federal character of the Constitution. Under federalism, the constituent units, i.e., the states, have autonomy in governance on the subjects specified in the State List. And therefore, the election of legislative assemblies and the state governments are autonomous functions. The Union government cannot interfere, unless there is proclamation of Emergency as specified in the Constitution. The federal character of the Constitution is part of the basic structure of the Constitution, which cannot be amended as per the landmark 1973 judgement of the Supreme Court. One can do so only by writing a new Constitution, which needs a new Constituent Assembly. This is thus an enterprise with implications which go far beyond elections.

Thirdly, implementing ONOE will require much more paraphernalia for the conduct of elections, of which the security forces and arrangements would be paramount. Even for one large state like Uttar Pradesh, elections had to be conducted in seven phases spread over two months, mainly to ensure law and order and prevent violence. Imagine conducting national, state and local elections at one go. The requirement of security forces, election observers, returning officers and other resources,

as also EVMs, would completely overwhelm the current capacity. What if even one accident or sabotage happens which would vitiate the entire process? And 'ringfencing' elections from such incidents will bring constitutional difficulties. The precision and synchronisation effort required are formidable, and unless capacity is substantially enhanced, this is going to be a hurdle.

Fourthly, how does one deal with governments falling in the middle of the term? And what about premature dissolution before the completion of a full term? This is a democratic prerogative that cannot be denied. Of the 17 Lok Sabhas, eight were prematurely dissolved. Will President's rule be the only remedy to the mid-term fall of a government or dissolving of a legislature? That would be even more detrimental to democratic norms and aspirations of the people. This was indeed a view expressed by former President Pranab Mukherjee, after demitting office, in a speech in 2018.

Fifth, it is not clear that excessive spending will come down, which is the stated prime motive behind ONOE. Since more than 90% of spending on elections is black money from unaccounted sources, it needs to be tackled differently. And it won't simply go away with ONOE. Strong reforms have been proposed by Law Commissions, the Election Commission, and citizens' groups for over two decades. But not much has been done by lawmakers to reduce black money in elections. ONOE is not likely to make a dent, and that is its very purpose. □□□

*(The writer is a noted economist)  
(Syndicate: The Billion Press)  
[The Deccan Herald]*

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## MORE ON MANIPUR

## Meitis are Fighting for Lost Identity

*Notan Kar*

**T**HE NORTHEASTERN STATE of Manipur has been under fire for the past few months. According to the statement of the police administration, many people have been killed and more than 1000 injured in the conflict between two groups till now. Clashes are reported to spread over at least 8 districts in the state. The video footage showed the women were being brutally tortured and killed. More than 60,000 affected people have been rescued but a large number of people in 8 districts are still waiting for relief. Net services have been shut down in the entire state. Now the question arises why did the violence suddenly spread over in Manipur?

The current violence started on April 19, 2023 when the High Court directed the state government to provide Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Meitei community of Manipur. The Kurmi community in West Bengal has recently been agitating for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status but various Scheduled Tribe organisations have opposed it, albeit the situation didn't reach to the point of riot. The ruling of the High Court raised tensions between the majority Meitei community and the Kuki and Naga tribal people of the State.

For one thing before the annexation of Manipur to India in 1949, Meitei community was recognised as a scheduled tribe there. Later they lost that status. On May 3, 2023, 'All Tribal Students Union of Manipur held a large protest rally against ST status for Meiteis.

After that rally, clashes spread over Imphal valley and hilly areas.

In the Imphal valley, the homes and properties of the tribal people were attacked and a large number of people from both communities were killed in and around hilly areas. Meitei community [or Manipuri] people are the original inhabitants of Manipur especially in Imphal valley. Later the Nagas came and started living in the hilly areas of Manipur. But most of the Kukis came from Burma or Myanmar much later during the British period. The Meitei community constitutes 53 percent of the state's population but lives in only 10 percent of the state's areas particularly in and around the Imphal valley. On the other hand, tribal communities mainly Naga, Mizo and Kuki who constitute around 40 percent of the total population inhabit 90 percent of the state particularly in hilly areas. The Meitei communities are mainly Hindu but there are some Vaishnav and Muslim communities. The ethnic groups who live in the forest are mostly Christian. Manipur was annexed to India on 21 September, 1949. At that time most of the common people of the state were not in favour of this annexation. Historically, the people of Meitei ethnicity fought the most in Manipur against the expansionist aggression of the Indian state.

The Thangjam Manorama incident and the recent protest of Irom Sharmila Chanu are fresh in memory of all. In 1980, the Government of India declared the Manipur state as a disturbed area and promulgated the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA).

At present, the BJP-led coalition is running the state government and

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unfortunately during this regime the rate of social injustice, unemployment has increased enormously. Ever since coming to power, the RSS-BJP people have been busy at whispering campaign that there is a conspiracy to turn Manipur into a Christian state led by Missionaries and it's an immediate need of the hour to have unity of the Hindu Meiteis in order to defeat the Christian plan. In the unquenchable desire of BJP to win the Manipur elections, they had colluded with various militant outfits in the state, especially the Kuki militants. After assuming office in the state, the saffron brigade started sowing seeds of discord to destroy the social harmony between the Meitei and the tribal communities.

Opium is cultivated along with other crops in the hilly tribal areas of the state. Militant groups and ruling party leaders control the business. They buy it from poor cultivators and smuggle those into Myanmar, a neighbouring country with the help of BSF. Kukis have been demanding a separate state since 1960s. Since 2010, they have raised their loud voices to this demand. Even, if not possible a separate state, they want to merge with

Mizoram at least the hilly areas of Manipur.

In the midst of continuing tensions, Meitei are demanding an Assam like citizenship census in Manipur. Muslims were worried about NRC in Assam and Christians in Manipur have been bearing the same concern. Recently, the Central BJP government amended the Forest Rights Act to allow corporates and non-tribals to purchase land and property in tribal dominated areas. Meanwhile, the Manipur Government published the 'Manipur Mineral Policy' in their official Gazette on January 5, 2022. It is stated in the Gazette that as an objective that the source and number of mineral resources of the state will be searched out and for this purpose private-public partnership will be encouraged. There is a deep secret behind it. The objective is especially for corporates to get entry easily to exploit forest and mineral resources.

Already the Centre has allotted 66,652 acres of land in Manipur for cultivation of cooking oil seeds under its 'palm oil production mission'. For this, the state has been allocated 11 thousand crore rupees and most of it went

to Ramdev's 'Patanjali' and Adani's company. They have virtually monopolised business in cooking oil market in India. These lands are mostly in tribal areas. The displacement of Kukis from those lands is considered to be another reason for the current communal flare-up. 81 percent of land is covered with hills and forests in Manipur. Recently, the BJP government in Manipur started evicting tribals from the forest areas. The Churches were demolished. As a result, resentment began spreading among the tribals. On the other hand, government supporters especially those having a base in the Meitei community also took out processions in and around the capital Imphal demanding for ST Status, NRC etc. and from here the inter-community conflict started in Manipur. Today, innocent people are dying and being harassed in Manipur. Given the present charged situation the common people, democratic people, progressive people of Manipur should come forward and find out a peaceful solution among communities and the reactionary forces who depend on divide and rule policy must be isolated from the masses. □□□

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#### WHAT IS IN THE NAME?

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## BJP Is Echoing Jinnah

*Ram Puniyani*

**C**OINCIDENTALLY AFTER the opposition parties came together to form INDIA (Indian National Democratic Inclusive Alliance), the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party [BJP] is desisting from the use of word India in official communications and its parent organisations RSS has issued a fatwa that only word Bharat should be used for the country. While inviting the representative's participants of G20, the President issued the invitation in

the name of 'Rashtrapati of Bharat'. Since then BJP is on the track of avoiding the use of the word India in all its pronouncements, saying this word smacks of colonial legacy since this word was given to the country by British colonial rulers. Mr Hemant Biswa Sarma of BJP said that word India is part of the colonial legacy and should be removed.

RSS chief and other functionaries have intensified this message. Speaking at a function at Guwahati

Mr Bhagwat, stated "We must stop using the word India and start using Bharat. At times we use India to make those who speak English understand. This comes as the flow however we must stop using this." There are attempts to show as if India and Bharat represent different streams of culture and parts of the country. Sometimes these worthies have also been seeing the country in two contrasting components like earlier statement of Bhagwat that 'Rape takes place in India not in Bharat'. As per his totally false notion, Bhagwat claimed that rapes and gang rapes are restricted to 'urban India' with its Western cul-



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ture and that such 'things' do not happen in rural India, where traditional values hold sway. The debate has been propped up again in the context of very pertinent and effective use of the word INDIA for its coalition by opposition parties.

As such the sources of the name of India are multifarious. As civilizations are not static and things change with time and situation, even the names of continents, kingdoms and countries have transformed. One may recall many sources of the two major names of the country. One is Bharat, which is rooted in the holy sources. In some sources one finds other names like Jambudweep. This is found in the edicts of Ashoka also. Jambudweep stands for the Southern of the four continents around Meru, the centre of these land masses. This is ratified by the Cosmological understanding also. This Jambudweep (After the Jamun (berry) tree,) includes Maldives, Nepal, Bangla Desh and Pakistan. Similarly Aryavarta is also used for the Ganga basin where the Aryans primarily settled after arrival here.

Reference to Bharat is mostly after the Bharat tribe and the Great King Bharat. In Rig-Veda (18th Hymn, seventh book) there is a mention of Dasrajan's (Ten Kings) battle against King Sudasa, the king from Bharat tribe. Mahabharata mentions Bharat Chakrvarty (winning emperor) of Bharat dynasty as the ancestor of Kauravas and Pandavas. Vishnu purana mentions Bharat Vansham, Bharat's empire which includes today's Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran among others. In Jain literature Bharat Chakravarty is the eldest son of first Jain Tirthankar (Founder).

The other series names are generally around the river Sindhu. Avesta mentions it as Haptahindu. Similarly Vedas at places mention it as Saptasindhu. Achaeminid (Persian)

sources mention it as Hindush. Even before this; 4th Century BCE, Megasthenese called it India, which transitioned into Greek called it Indike. This was the source of India in times to come. Those saying that it is a colonial legacy are unaware of the complex history of the genesis of the term India and have political motives now in refusing to use the Constitution's nomenclature 'India that is Bharat'.

Human civilisations are not static. Rather static civilisations cannot prosper and flourish. This was seen by those who were struggling against the Colonial Forces. That's how Surendranath Bannerjee used the term, 'India: Nation in the Making', Gandhi began his paper "Young India", Ambedkar formed his 'Indian Labour Party' and later laid the foundation of 'Republican Party of India'. Use of the word India is not a colonial legacy in any way, the word was there much before the British East India Company came here for trade and plunder. This word also was used by anti-colonial movements. This is how the country was known in the World.

On the pretext of colonial legacy and Western influence, those wanting to stop usage of this word are deeply opposed also to the values of the transition towards democratic values of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. Interestingly till a while ago the same forces used the word, India in abundant measure. Campaigns like 'Made in India', 'Skill India', and 'My Clean India' being few among them. In earlier election rallies also Modi did talk of 'Vote for India' times and over again.

'India that is Bharat' was a beautiful elaboration of continuity and change. While it retains the glorious aspects of traditions, it opens its arms to the changes which are in tune with times and which lay the foundation for Modern times in India.

Those formulating the Indian Constitution had no allergy to the word Bharat. It was heartily accepted as the country's soul. They did not think of a binary but conceptualised the reality of the country in modern times. This is very well reflected in the acceptance of the Anthem 'Jan Gan Man' by Gurdev Rabindrnath Tagore, which mentions, Bharat Bhagya Vidhata (controller of India's destiny). In continuation with this Rajiv Gandhi, while dreaming of India of 21st Century, also gave the slogan of 'Mera Bharat Mahan' (My Great India, Bharat).

India is also how the World has been recognising Indians. Interestingly the first person to oppose the use of India was Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Four weeks after people got Independence he wrote to the Governor General of India; Lord Mountbatten, objecting to usage of India for the country. "It is a pity that for some mysterious reason Hindustan have adopted the word 'India' which is certainly misleading and is intended to create confusion." As per him India was the joint entity and after partition it ceased to exist. Can one say the present opponents of usage of word India are toeing Jinnah's line on this matter?

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## BAJRANG DAL

## Assam CM Contradicts RSS Archives

*Shamsul Islam*

**A** LEADING RSS CADRE who happens to be the chief minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma true to his training at the RSS 'boudhik shivirs' (ideological training camps) resorted to a Hindutva trade-mark lie that "The Bajrang Dal is not associated in any way with the Bharatiya Janata Party or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh."

[RSS, BJP don't even have a distant connection with Bajrang Dal: Himanta on outfit providing arms training in Assam, *The Indian Express*, Delhi, September 12, 2023. Link: <https://indianexpress.com/article/india/rss-bjp-bajrang-dal-himanta-biswa-sarma-8935343/>]

This lie was spoken not while addressing some Hindutva zealots or election meeting but in a meeting of Assam Assembly. He was responding to an adjournment motion on arms training during a Bajrang Dal camp in the state earlier in 2023. Let us compare this claim of Himanta with the documents in the RSS archives. The central publication house of the RSS, the Suruchi Prakashan, published a book in Hindi, *Param Vaibhav Ke Path Par* (The Road to Great Supreme Glory) penned by a senior RSS ideologue, Sadanand Damodar Sapre in 1997 giving details of more than 40 organisations created by the RSS for different tasks. The BJP as a political organisation figures prominently in it, clubbed with the ABVP, Hindu Jagaran Manch, Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Bajrang Dal, Durga Vahini, Swadeshi Jagaran Manch and Sanskar Bharti. The preface of the book itself declared that,

"Without the knowledge of the

different kinds of activities of the Sawyamsevaks (the volunteers of the RSS) the introduction of the RSS is incomplete. Keeping this in mind it has been attempted in this book to produce the brief information about the diverse activities of the Sawyamsevaks. This book covers the organizational status till 1996... We believe that this book will prove to be of use for those who want to understand the RSS with the Sawyamsevaks."

[Sapre, Sadanand D., *Param Vaibhav Ke Path Per*, Suruchi (RSS central publication house), Delhi, 1997, p. 7.]

This book described in detail the process of creation of VHP, Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini by RSS in pages 20-24. According to it, "under the guidance and prompting of worshippable Guruji (MS Golwalkar, the then Supremo of RSS)" VHP was founded in a meeting of Hindu saints held at Sandipani Ashram in Bombay (now Mumbai) on August 29, 1964. While discussing the activities of VHP as an appendage of RSS, Sadanand Sapre made it clear that Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini were founded in order to organize Hindu youth both males and females. According to the description till 1996 Bajrang Dal and Durga Vahini had 2700 and 1100 units respectively spread over whole of the country.

The above publication of the RSS shows how the organisation is run in a clandestine manner. It runs like a well-organised mafia through its subsidiaries and satellites. There has always been a conscious attempt to create confusion about its different fronts which provide RSS

with the opportunity to dissociate with any of these as per its convenience. For instance it used Hindu Jagaran Manch (HJM) for attacking Christians in late 1990s and when public opinion, media and Parliament seemed to turn against it, RSS denied any relation with HJM. Recently, when nefarious designs of Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Bajrang Dal and Dharam Sansad were exposed before the Nation, RSS announced that these were independent organisations.

It will be interesting to know that many of these organisations have been organised in a clandestine manner, a characteristic of a Fascist set-up. For instance while giving the details of Hindu Jagaran Manch (HJM), the book says,

"From the point of view of Hindu awakening this kind of forums (HJM) at present are active in 17 states with different names like 'Hindu Manch' in Delhi, 'Hindu Munani' in Tamilnadu, 'Hinduekjut' in Maharashtra. These are forums, not associations or organisations, that's why it is not required to have membership, registration and elections."

It is clear that these work as mafia to avoid scrutiny by law and government. Such an organizational mode provides an opportunity to RSS to disown any individual or organisation.

RSS indulges in conspiracies too. It can be known by the following disclosure in *Param Vaibhav Ke Path Par* about a case in Delhi immediately after Partition:

"Swayamsevaks had posed to have adopted Musalman religion in order to gain the confidence of Delhi Muslim League for knowing their conspiracies."

[Sapre, Sadanand D, *Param Vaibhav Ke Path Per* (Hindi), Suruchi, Delhi, 1997, p. 86.]

What these swayamsevaks, im-

personating as Muslims, on the eve of Independence were doing was made clear by none other than Dr Rajendra Prasad who later became first President of the Indian Republic. In a letter to the first Home Minister of India, Sardar Patel, on 14 March 1948, Prasad wrote:

"I am told that RSS people have a plan of creating trouble. They have got a number of men dressed as Muslims and looking like Muslims who are to create trouble with the Hindus by attacking them and thus inciting the Hindus. Similarly there

will be some Hindus among them who will attack Muslims and thus incite Muslims. The result of this kind of trouble amongst the Hindus and Muslims will be to create a conflagration."

[Rajendra Prasad to Sardar Patel (March 14, 1948) cited in Neerja Singh (ed.), *Nehru-Patel: Agreement Within Difference—Select Documents & Correspondences 1933-1950*, NBT, Delhi, p. 43.]

These facts about anti-national and anti-constitution organisations created by RSS need to be shared

with all those individuals and organisations which are faithful to a democratic-secular Indian polity. With such nefarious appendages of RSS who needs any foreign enemy to undo India or Bharat. □□□

[Link for some of S. Islam's writings in English, Hindi, Urdu, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali, Punjabi, Gujarati and video interviews/debates: <http://du-in.academia.edu/ShamsulIslam>, Facebook: <https://facebook.com/shamsul.islam.332>, Twitter: @shamsforjustice, <http://shamsforpeace.blogspot.com> Email: [notoinjustice@gmail.com](mailto:notoinjustice@gmail.com)]

#### 'AN INSIDER'S STORY'

## 'Khalistan is a Business'

**Archana Masih**  
**Nikhil Lakshman**

*R I Singh, former chief of Punjab and district magistrate of Amritsar during Operation Blue Star has written Turmoil in Punjab: Before and After Blue Star, An Insider's Story, a fascinating account of the genesis of the Punjab conflict, the rise of Sikh radicalism and the elimination of militancy. Archana Masih and Nikhil Lakshman of Rediff.com recently spoke with him. Excerpts:*

- Q.** As a former chief secretary of Punjab, what is it about episode Amritpal that strikes you as most bizarre?
- A.** Delayed action is not a prudent management of law and order. I can appreciate the restraint exercised by the Punjab police at that particular spot in Ajnala as a tactic because Amritpal brought the Guru Granth Sahib and played to human sentiment. But he had travelled almost 60-70 kilometres and should have been intercepted and arrested on that route.
- Q.** There's speculation that he has been propped up by certain agencies?
- A.** It has been often mentioned that he might have been propped up, but I have no knowledge or information. He was a clean shaven taxi driver in Dubai who suddenly appeared from nowhere. There are stories that he went to Georgia also for a while, so anybody could have trained and

- brought him. Only time will tell.
- Q.** There are many disclosures in my book that were not known earlier and are eye openers because various forces were playing all kinds of roles [in the run-up to Blue Star].
- A.** For example, the Congress published a six-seven volume history of the Indian National Congress on its 125th anniversary with a forward by Sonia Gandhi. It includes articles by various people where they acknowledge that they propped up Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. They did not create Bhindranwale because he was already head of a seminary. But the situation suited both. However, their objectives were different. The limited objective of the Congress was to capture political power; while Bhindranwale's objective was to capture the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee [the organisation responsible for the management

of gurdwaras]. What the Congress could not do as a secular party, it outsourced to others.

These disclosures have come now and the information about who is behind Amritpal will also be known in time, but to speculate may not be very wise.

You can analyse three possibilities: ISI, Sikh organisations based abroad like Sikhs for Justice, any of the political parties or some other factors.

- Q.** How has he been able to establish such a following?
- A.** The following is because of the level of unemployment and the tradition and history of struggle in Sikhism. The Sikh community has to be tackled with tact. For example, the Sikh empire was defeated by the British in two battles during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's time. The same Sikh army, within a few decades, went all over the world fighting for the British. How did it happen? The British were able to handle them with psychological tact. In fact, there are many British historians who have gone on record, and I have quoted one of them. A governor said that if you confront the Sikhs, they will retaliate. If you win them over, they will join you. Coming back to today's context,

this is a world of polarisation and polarisation pays—earlier, it paid a political party; today it may pay some other political party.

**Q.** He has not been arrested though there is a manhunt for him. So, where do you see this leading?

**A.** The simple answer to your question would be that if he's not traced and arrested now, there could possibly be some involvement somewhere and he will be arrested closer to the election.

If some force within the country has got him, then probably that sponsorship was premature and it has matured a little too early to give results. If that is so, then his arrest may happen six-seven months from hence.

**Q.** Did the vacuum created by the eclipse of the Congress and Akali Dal result in the emergence of Amritpal?

**A.** There is a vacuum of moderate leadership. In Punjab, both the Akali Dal and BJP were moderate forces. Whenever they have allied together since 1966 onwards, Punjab has progressed and been peaceful.

The population is more or less evenly balanced. Sikhs were 62%, but in absence of the 2021 Census, my guess estimate is that Sikhs must be 53%-54%. Their birth rate has come down to 1.6% and the replacement rate is 2%; added to that is their exodus abroad.

Many people are migrating to Punjab from other parts of India. In various towns and cities of the state, lower level jobs are being done by non-Punjabis—for example, textile factories etc. Hence, there is a balancing out of the population in terms of Sikhs and non-Sikhs.

There was also a spurt in the preaching of Christianity; some pastors suddenly popped up proclaiming medical cures which were viewed as a threat by the radicals. This may have prompted

them to be more aggressive in adopting these tactics.

Punjabi society cannot be tackled from the point of view of the personal interest of particular parties. The liquidation of the moderate leadership—of course, they have themselves to blame because it was their own conduct that alienated and created the vacuum that brought AAP to power.

If AAP does well and can fill in the space of the moderates, and provide economic development to the state, then maybe things may improve.

But one doesn't know, because as of today, the focus of AAP is limited to freebies. It may get them votes, but it may not solve the problems of Punjab.

**Q.** How big an issue is Khalistan?

**A.** Khalistan is a non-issue created by the media. Firstly, Bhindranwale never openly asked for Khalistan. His first statement to Mrs Gandhi was that if you want to give it to me, I will not say no. The second statement, made just before Blue Star, was that if the Indian Army attacks the Golden Temple, then the foundation of Khalistan will be laid.

These are the only two statements attributable to him.

The panthic community declared the formation of Khalistan from the Golden Temple in April 1986. It was an ISI sponsored move, but subsequently the militant movement split into 17-18 smaller groups.

I have also mentioned in my book that (then Pakistan president and military dictator) Zia-ul-Haq went into a rage when he saw the map of Khalistan prepared by some of the [Sikh] militant organisations.

No Sikh organisation will ever have a Khalistan without including the birthplace of Guru Nanak in [Nankana Sahib in Pakistan] and Lahore, the historical capital of the Sikhs.

Pakistan's aim was not the creation of Khalistan, but to create havoc in India and to bring the Hindus and Sikhs into conflict. The objective was to create a situation where Sikhs from other parts of India migrated to Punjab and Hindus moved out of the state.

The Sikh and Hindu communities are bound by an umbilical cord, so the tactic employed was to start dividing friends by small steps. It started around 1981 by throwing bidis into gurdwaras or the tail of cows in temples.

On many occasions, the two communities came out on the street against these moves. Then they slowly upgraded to jalsas and marches to divide people -- this is what Pakistan was doing. Post Operation Blue Star, the anti-Sikh riots and Mrs Gandhi's murder, a survey was conducted in Punjab by Delhi University. According to the survey only 5% of the Sikh population in Punjab was sympathetic to the cause of Khalistan and this group largely comprised youngsters and educated, unemployed, youth.

Today also, Khalistanis can be divided into three categories: Firstly, hardcore ideological people. They are microscopic, not even 1%.

Secondly, those who consider Khalistan as a business. I've given you the example of Simranjit Singh Mann who is a member of the Lok Sabha and supports Khalistan. He openly says he gives letters on his letterhead in exchange for money.

The third category that has built the narrative of Khalistan are those who gain from polarisation. The media played it up as if Amritpal set up an alternate government in Punjab! It suits certain segments of the media as well as certain political forces.

But the common people of Punjab hardly talk of Khalistan.

[Source: Rediff.com]

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**GADDAFI, CHAVEZ, CASTRO**


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## Three Unforgettable UNGA Moments

**By Al Jazeera Staff**

*[As we go to press the 78th session of U N General Assembly is coming to close. Since its first session in 1946, the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) has served as a platform for world leaders and diplomats to spell out their countries' priorities and offer assessments of the problems and needs of humanity.*

*UNGA meetings, particularly the general debate, have brought sworn enemies to the same building and allowed some of the United States' most hostile adversaries to visit New York, where the UN headquarters are located.]*

### **Gaddafi against Superpowers**

**A**FTER MORE THAN FOUR decades in power, the late Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi made it to the UN podium in 2009. And it was a debut to remember.

Gaddafi delivered a scathing speech against world powers that lasted nearly 100 minutes.

The eccentric authoritarian leader—who would be overthrown and subsequently killed in a NATO-backed uprising two years later—decried the veto powers of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council.

“Veto power should be annulled,” Gaddafi said. “The Security Council did not provide us with security but with terror and sanctions.”

He read aloud sections of the UN Charter to highlight what he said were the shortcomings of the international body and its failure to apply the rules.

Gaddafi also called for an investigation into the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, questioning why the UN Charter’s provisions against aggression were held in sacred status when Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990 but “thrown in the bin” when the country itself was invaded.

“The invasion of Iraq—without justification, in violation of the Charter—occurs by superpowers on the Security Council,” he said.

Regardless of the speech’s content, it will be most remembered for

its length. UNGA speakers are allocated 15-minute slots—a limit Gaddafi blew past with fiery abandon.

### **Hugo Chavez—and Bush ‘The Devil’**

Amid a growing confrontation between Caracas and Washington in 2006, Venezuela’s President Hugo Chavez called then-US President George W Bush “the devil” from the UN stage.

“Yesterday, the devil came here—right here. And it smells of sulphur still today,” Chavez told the UNGA.

He went on to deliver a blistering attack on Bush’s policies, citing a US-backed Israeli military operation in Lebanon that killed more than 1,000 people and destroyed large parts of the country’s civilian infrastructure weeks earlier.

“The government of the United States doesn’t want peace. It wants to exploit its system of exploitation, of pillage, of hegemony through war,” Chavez said.

“It wants peace. But what’s happening in Iraq? What happened in Lebanon? In Palestine? What’s happening? What’s happened over the last 100 years in Latin America and in the world? And now threatening Venezuela—new threats against Venezuela, against Iran?”

Years later, Chavez—who died in 2013—said that his “devil” comment was not scripted and that he did smell sulphur that day.

### **Fidel Castro’s Fiery Speech**

Gaddafi’s speech—as long as it was—

did not come close to breaking the record for the longest speech at the UNGA.

Cuban leader Fidel Castro spoke for four and a half hours at a UNGA session in 1960. One year after the Cuban Revolution brought him to power, Castro—who would become public enemy number one in the US—delivered a lengthy critique of global inequality.

“The National General Assembly of the Cuban people condemns large-scale landowning as a source of poverty for the peasant and a backward and inhuman system of agricultural production,” Castro said, according to a transcript of the speech published by the University of Texas at Austin.

“It condemns starvation wages and the iniquitous exploitation of human work by illegitimate and privileged interests,” Castro continued. “It condemns illiteracy, the lack of teachers, of schools, doctors and hospitals, the lack of old-age security in the countries of America.”

He also denounced the “exploitation of women” as well as “military oligarchies, which keep our peoples in poverty, prevent their democratic development and the full exercise of their sovereignty”.

He went on for 269 minutes, according to UN records. One year after that speech, the US tried but failed to overthrow Castro in the Bay of Pigs invasion. □□□

*[Source: Al Jazeera]*

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## FIGHT FOR FOREST

## Stifling Niyamgiri Voice

NSS

ON 5TH AUGUST, 2023 two youth activists, namely, Krushna Sikaka (village Patangpadar) and Bari Sikaka (village Lakhpadar) of Niyamgiri Surakhya Samiti (NSS) had been to Lanjigarhhaat of Kalahandi district. Their purpose was to meet villagers and to inform them about the celebration of the World Indigenous Day on 9th August. While they were busy doing this, some plainclothes police personnel suddenly arrived on the spot in a Bolero and forcibly abducted them at about 9 AM.

As soon as the news reached from villagers who were present with them, the IICs of Lanjigarh and Kalyansinghpur police stations as well as the SPs of both Raygada and Kalahandi districts were contacted by NSS. All officials denied either arrest or abduction by the police. The police authority kept on denying it even though the news was being reported in the mass media.

On the morning of 6th August, the NSS held a protest demonstration before the Kalyansinghpur PS alleging abduction of their members by the police. They also wanted police to disclose their whereabouts. They submitted a memorandum demanding the release of their two abducted members. Instead of giving any satisfactory answer, the police official mocked at them saying, "are we disari (adivasi astrolo-

ger) that we can predict their whereabouts?" As the villagers were returning home from the demonstration, the police tried to whisk away DrenjuKrisika, a prominent leader of the NSS. This seems to be an attempt to provoke the villagers and create a situation leading to further intensification of police repression. The united resistance of the villagers there prevented the police from taking away Drenju Krisika.

That same day on 6th August, the police lodged an FIR against nine people including Lada Sikaka and Drenju Krisika, prominent leaders of NSS; Lingaraj Azad, the Advisor of NSS; British Kumar of Khandualamali Surakhya Samiti; and poet Lenin Kumar who has been in solidarity with the movement. They have been charged under various sections of UAPA and that of IPC. The news of the FIR reached NSS and all others on 8th August.

UAPA, an act purported to be used against secessionist forces and those harmful to the integrity and sovereignty of the state have been foisted on the leaders and activists of a mass movement. This is unlawful, undemocratic and unconstitutional. This is yet another attempt by the police to stifle the voices of local people especially that of Dongria Kondh community of Niyamgiri, who under the banner of NSS have been resisting Vedanta and other companies' attempts to mine bauxite from Niyamgiri since two decades. It may also be seen as part of a conspiracy by the state government and Vedanta Company to undermine the historic judgment of the Supreme Court which had

upheld the rights of Gram Sabha. In the current session of the Parliament, the Central Government with the support of BJD government of the state has passed the Forest Conservation (Amendment) Act, 2023 to facilitate the surrender of forest and forest land to the hands of corporates by snatching away the rights of Gram Sabha. Needless to say, all these false cases and repression on the people of Niyamgiri are part of the same agenda to take over people's natural resources for the corporates.

Meanwhile, a writ of habeas corpus was filed in the High Court to produce Krushna Sikaka and Bari Sikaka. As a result, while police released Bari Sikaka and made him reach his village, Krushna Sikaka was shown to be arrested under the charge of a rape case filed way back in 2018 and sent to jail. This raises many questions. How has the police not been able to find him in the last five years during which Krushna Sikaka has been openly participating in meetings and discussions and also representing his organisation in various platforms? Obviously, the arrest seems to be a deliberate police action to take into custody a leading member of the NSS.

Most importantly, to protest peacefully is a constitutional right of the people in a democratic polity. The peaceful protest held in front of the police station can in no way, even from the point of view of law, be called secessionist or harmful to the integrity and sovereignty of the state. Hence, to foist UAPA on the leaders, activists and supporters of the movement is a deliberate ploy to muffle the voices of the people and to open up the road for Vedanta's mining. It may also be mentioned here that Lingaraj Azad was not even present at the site of the protest. □□□

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## LETTERS

**World Deaf Day**

World Deaf Day is observed on the last Sunday of September. Some hearing impaired people have done exceptionally well in life. The symphonies of Ludwig van Beethoven, who turned deaf and paintings of Indian painter and sculptor, Satish Gujral, brother of the former PM I K Gujral who designed the Belgium embassy in New Delhi, which is considered to be one of the finest pieces of architecture of the 20th century shows one can overcome such physical challenges with strong will. He was honoured with the Padma Vibhushan.

**T S Karthik, Chennai, TN  
Genocide in Sudan**

Sudan is sliding into the jaws of genocide. Over 27 towns have been massacred in recent weeks. Thousands were slaughtered as death went door to door: families murdered, bodies rotting outside, and mass graves appearing on satellite imagery. Now there's evidence of child soldiers being used, and killed.

It's already being called a genocide. But as journalists are hunted down or blocked from the country, mass atrocities are hidden from the news, and the world does almost nothing.

Over 300,000 people died in the Darfur genocide 20 years ago.

Avaaz has identified a "sleeping network" of Sudanese journalists, ready to report from the frontlines. They can drag hidden horrors into the light—but first they need funding to operate in the war zone.

**Avaaz****INDIA vs Bharat**

How does it sound if you play a cricket match with team names like Tamil XI vs Tamilnadu XI, Mumbai vs Marathi or Punjab vs Punjabi? It hurts the sentiments of people, it

pierces an arrow in the hearts of people who are the lifeline of the place. It is the People -the common man who makes the country. The ongoing political battle INDIA vs Bharat is like denigrating the soul of a nation.

**TS Karthik, Chennai, TN  
Government and  
the Polluters**

Quite apart from GHG emissions, mining operations—specifically of coal, iron ore, bauxite—are being allowed to devastate so many of India's remaining prime forests, and underground aquifers, and displace 1000s of communities, especially Adivasis. India's remaining wild areas are being divided between those 'sacrificed' for industry and over 500 national parks and sanctuaries, and Adivasis are evicted from both. Police violence on behalf of mining companies is a daily occurrence.

India is the third largest GHG emitter, and yet the environmental regulations are severely weakened by the Government on behalf of its pet companies. This is the story of the oil and mining sectors, how Vedanta—a UK registered Indian Co- had their way in changing rules and regulations. Notably, it was for this group that the police killed 12 people protesting their polluting plant in Tutucorin, TN, in 2018.

Since an independent media is nearly absent in the country, it is investigative groups like OCCRP doing such works on behalf of the country.

Read the story here:

Inside Indian Energy and Mining Giant Vedanta's Campaign to Weaken Key Environmental Regulations. It was the same OCCRP that brought out the illegal deals of another massive polluter, Adani Co, recently, supplementing the revela-

**NOTICE****AUTUMN NUMBER 2023**

Autumn Number will be out in the 2nd week of October. This year our contributors include—

Marcello Musto, Vijay Singh, Asok Chattopadhyay, Arup Baisaya, Harsh Thakor, Anup Sinha, Sushil Khanna, I Satya Sundaram, Amit Bhattacharya, Sumanta Banerjee, Shamsul Islam, Nityananda Ghosh, Himanshu Roy, Ashok Nag, Ritaiyoti Bandyopadhyay, Farooque Chowdhury, Alope Mukherjee, Arup Sen, Sukanta Sarkar, Vinod Mubayi, Manas Bakshi, AC, Ranganayakamma, I Mallikarjuna Sharma, Pranjali Bandhu, Chaman Lal, Atanu Chakraborty, Kobad Ghandy, Abhijit Guha, Bernard D'Mello, Sagar Dhara, T Vijayendra, Aurobindo Ghose....

tions made by the short seller Hindenburg earlier. Adani had his way in mining coal in the WH site of Great Barrier Reef, Australia.

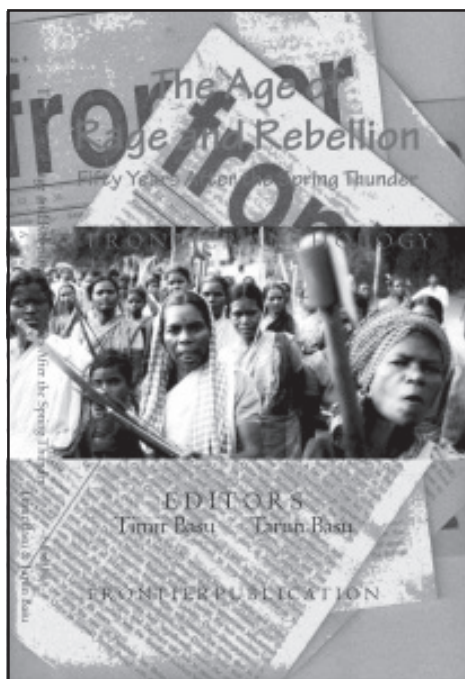
**Faizi S****Ghoda Library**

PM Modi praised the Ghoda Library -a revolutionary idea started by Nainital resident Shubham Badhani, a librarian by training where he takes Ponies laden with books for children to remote hills of uttarakhand where there are no roads or libraries. Taking inspiration from army where animals help humans in inhospitable terrains, the idea of using these voiceless species to start a reading revolution is great! Today's reader is tomorrow's leader!.

**TS Karthik, Chennai, TN****Frontier is available at****SARBODAYA BOOK STALL  
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