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# ORGANISER

Vol. 74, No. 30 New Delhi

January 15, 2023, Magh Krishna 8,  
Yugabd 5124

**EXCLUSIVE  
INTERVIEW**

**“RETAINING THE CORE ESSENCE &  
DIRECTION OF SANGH DURING THE  
FAVOURABLE TIMES IS THE BIGGEST TEST”**

**- DR MOHAN BHAGWAT, SARSANGHCHALAK, RSS**

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## Stop Preaching Hindus!

**APROPOS** the editorial “Disastrous Celebrations of Christmas-New Year” and cover stories of *Organiser*, January 8. The pro-Western environmental activists and organisations like People for Ethical Treatment of Animals have been unfairly critical of Hindu festivals. They want followers of Sanatan Dharma not to consume traditional mithai on the false ground that it contains extra calories. Mithai has been consumed by Indians for centuries and that too without any adverse effects. Similarly, the West doesn't want Hindus to burst crackers during



their auspicious Deepawali on the ground that this festival pollutes the environment. Double standards of Westerners is quite apparent. They are tight-lipped about the fact that surplus food

gets dumped and gets accumulated as landfill, during Christmas revelry and New year celebrations. Food waste, when it rots in a landfill, produces methane gas, which quickly heats up the planet. All this shows that Christians and anti-Hindu forces have joined hands together to dictate terms to self-respecting Hindus, who don't interfere with sentiments of other faiths like mixing alcohol in cakes or barbarically slaughtering innocent animals by Muslims during Id. Christian revelries encourage hooligans or alcoholics to indulge in eve teasing and attacking women. These acts were never associated with the Bharatiya festivals. However, the West is slowly but dangerously influencing our youth which is succumbing to the temptation of aping Western customs without realising the mindset of anti-Sanatan Dharma forces.

**MANJEET SINGH**, Chandigarh

## Dragon On The Backfoot

**IN** reference to the story ‘CCP Lies, Embarrassment For ‘Woke Biradari’, *Organiser*, January 8. This story has shown how Communist leaders of China like Deng Xiaoping and the present incumbent have been feeding their people a web of lies and propaganda. However, the surge of COVID-19 has for the first time put China on the back foot. It can no longer continue to fool its people anymore. The pandemic was used by China to inflict misery on its neighbours, particularly India. However, this Frankenstein Monster has made lives miserable for its own people. China needs to introspect and live with the world in harmony. But Xi Jinping believes

that China is above international laws. This can be seen from his recent statement that he will impose countermeasures on India and other countries if Covid testing requirements are imposed on its citizens.

**SUMIT TANDON**, Lajpat Nagar

## Rein In Muslim Rioters

**APROPOS** ‘From FIFA To Santa: Violence is the Norm’, *Organiser*, January 8. The well-researched story points out the fact that French Police have not been able to check Islamists, who are increasingly getting bold and even unreasonable by unleashing mindless violence whenever a Muslim nation defeats one of European countries. This could be seen during the recently concluded Football



World Cup. This pattern proves beyond doubt that law enforcement agencies of European nations including France have so far faltered in understanding the reason behind the violence and failed to check Islamists. Islamisation of France highlights that Muslims, who have been allowed to stay like French citizens in their adopted country, are an ungrateful lot. Rather than being thankful to the generosity of their new homeland, they are nonchalant towards the security concerns of French citizens.

**RAVI MEHRA**, Chandni Chowk

## 'Secular' Compulsions of Glorifying Aurangzeb

Leader of the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and nephew of Sharad Pawar, Ajit Pawar, courted controversy in an official meeting by forcefully arguing that Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was *Swarajya Rakshak* (Protector of Self-rule) and not *Dharmaveer* (one who sacrificed his life for religion). Historically it is a known fact that Sambhaji Maharaj, after treacherous imprisonment by Aurangzeb, sacrificed his life without compromising both self-rule and religious ethos. Whatever Ajit Pawar thinks cannot change this historical fact. If this was not enough, Jitendra Awhad, another trusted lieutenant of Sharad Pawar, gave a certificate to the Mughal king Aurangzeb, whose tenure is probably the bloodiest period in history, by saying he was cruel but not a Hindu hater. In Maharashtra politics, this was a strange positioning by the NCP, the party that claims the legacy of Shivaji Maharaj, at least on caste lines. Political controversy apart, the fundamental issue is the inspiration behind Aurangzeb's cruelty and Sambhaji Maharaj's sacrifice for the protection of self-rule.

Aurangzeb was a fundamentalist follower of Islam, and the basis of his cruelty was his hatred for all kinds of 'infidels', non-believers of Islam. His faith was more important to him than anything else. Unfortunately, his faith was blind and based on hatred for Kafirs. He did not spare even his brother or Shia Muslims for deviating from his version of Islam. Young children of Guru Govind Singh Ji were buried alive in the wall for refusing to change their religion. In the case of Sambhaji Maharaj, as the court records of Aurangzeb says, "the Emperor's devotion to Islam ordered that Sambhaji Maharaj should be made to wear a wooden cap (a sign of a criminal) and as he enters the camp, there should be drum beating and trumpets pealing so that Muslims might be heartened and infidels (Hindus) will be disheartened". Sambhaji Maharaj was hacked to death limb by limb as he was considered an infidel.

Aurangzeb gave preference to Muslims in his court, imposed the Ziziya tax on Hindus – besides levying additional charges on trading and pilgrimage and pardoned criminals if they were ready to accept Islam. So the basis of Aurangzeb's cruelty was his faith, in turn, hatred towards infidels, including Hindus.

On the other hand, Sambhaji Maharaj's commitment was for the Hindavi *Swarajya* – not just self-rule but the righteous rule based on protecting the good and punishment for the evil. Despite having the option of compromising and converting, he accepted the torturous death. In the Bharatiya context, this is the *Dharma* – hence, the title *Dharmaveer* to the Maratha king.

Despite knowing these facts very well, 'secular' historians and politicians always try to white-wash the real inspiration of Islamist rulers like Aurangzeb. Owaisi brothers showing reverence to Aurangzeb and intellectuals or politicians giving certificates of benevolence to him are part of the same process. They will have to deal with many inconvenient issues if they accept these facts. Most Muslims in Bharat are the first and the biggest victims of these fanatic rulers. Their ancestors had to face the forced religious conversion of bigots like Aurangzeb. Such awakened Muslims may continue to practice Islam, but they will not connect themselves with the likes of Babur and Aurangzeb. Their icons will change to the likes of Ashfaqulla and APJ Abdul Kalam. Many of them may try to search for their roots and proudly put common motherland, culture and ancestry before personal faith. Naturally, such awakened Muslims will not act as a 'minority' vote bank for the secularists. This selfish political compulsion is the only reason for certifying Aurangzeb and denigrating the sacrifice of Sambhaji Maharaj.



The Lord Cherisher of the Faith learnt that in the provinces of Tatta, Multan and especially at Benares,

the Brahman misbelievers used to teach their false books in their established schools and that admirers

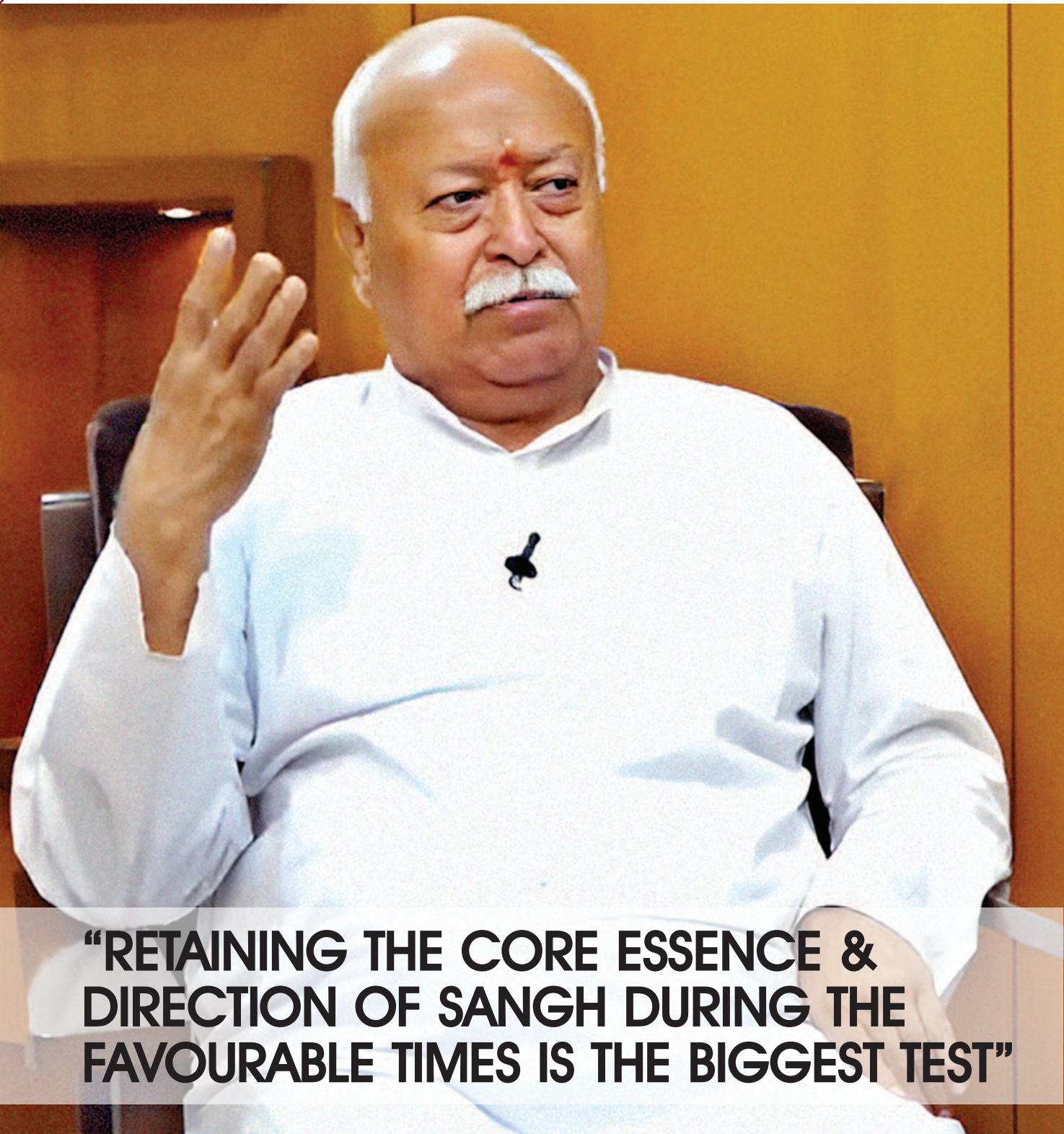
and students, both Hindu and Muslim, used to come from great distances to these misguided men in

order to acquire this vile learning. His Majesty, eager to establish Islam, issued orders to the governors of

all the provinces to demolish the schools and temples of the infidels and with the utmost urgency put down the teaching and the public practice of the religion of these misbelievers."

— *Maasir-i-Alamgiri*,  
by

Saqi Mustad Khan, edited  
by Jadu Nath Sarkar, Royal  
Asiatic Society of Bengal,  
1947, pp. 194-95



**“RETAINING THE CORE ESSENCE & DIRECTION OF SANGH DURING THE FAVOURABLE TIMES IS THE BIGGEST TEST”**

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is marching towards the centenary year. There has been a growing curiosity about what is plan of RSS for this special accomplishment. From political influence to participation of women, many issues are often raised to counter the Sangh. On participation of youth, role of technology, perspective on LGBT, economy and environment, people expect Sangh to speak and give a direction. **RSS Sarsanghchalak Dr Mohan Bhagwat** candidly addressed all these issues and much more in an exclusive conversation with **Hitesh Shankar, Editor, Panchjanya** and **Prafulla Ketkar, Editor, Organiser** at the Nagpur headquarters. Excerpts:

- **This much anticipated dialogue that the Panchjanya and the Organiser routinely conduct—one that our readers and viewers eagerly await—suffered a two-year’ interruption because of COVID-19. However, during these intervening years, we have moved closer to the centenary of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. For any organisation, completing the hundred-year journey is a stiff challenge. One tends to deviate from the path or the journey ends. As the Sangh marched towards this major milestone, when did it face its biggest challenge? And what was it? We wish to know and understand.**

Challenge is a too lofty word. Yes, it has been a journey through an uneven and difficult road. You have to face many unexpected turns on it. There were hurdles and roadblocks too. But we had a mission at hand, which we had to see through; this was all we focused on. Not losing our direction and our core essence, even as we went through all that ordeal—this was our greatest challenge.

As we were met with opposition—often quite loud—we had to face it calmly and prevail. However, we were sure that we must not become adversaries of our detractors. Because that would have resulted in more opposition; it would have meant untiring firefighting. We could not afford to let that happen. Sometimes, circumstances force you to change the direction. However, on such occasions, instead of changing the course of our journey, we should simply explore new routes to the destination. We may take an unplanned turn, but never lose sight of our direction. Only then these new routes and turns will fetch desired rewards. Otherwise, a change of route could result in a change of direction. This realisation was our guiding beacon throughout our journey. We knew the road was laden with thorns; we had anticipated all these.

When I look at the present, those days of contempt and opposition are over. Today, we get boundless love and affection from society. Time is conducive for our thought too.

In fact, the contemporary global scenario is also nudging humanity in that direction. Willy-nilly, people have started thinking like us, and this feeling will only get stronger with time. Because of this, our path has become somewhat easy. This, too, is a challenge.

The thorns we encountered earlier on the road have changed their character. In the past, we had to brave the thorns of opposition and contempt. Those we could avoid. And at times we have avoided them too. But the newfound acceptance has brought us resources, convenience and abundance. Our social esteem has soared. The society has reposed its faith in us; expectations are high. It feels that we will make a difference. Under these circumstances, our popularity and resources have become thorns which we must brave. For example, even though we do not want to go to media on many issues, we cannot avoid doing so any longer. This may be counterproductive. They might wonder why we are hiding in the shadows. We have to face the media. When we step out, press will write about us; print our photos too. But we must not crave for publicity. If today we have means and resources, they should be seen as no more than instruments essential for our work; we should control them, they should not control us. We should not be accustomed to them. Our old habits of facing hardships must never die. Times are favourable, but that should not lead to vanity.

A favourable climate brings along popularity—something we are very fond of. When a crowd comes to greet you at the railway station, it feels good. But we must stay watchful of the factors that lead to such feelings. At the same time, in order to understand the feelings we must remain watchful of, we will have to go through those very experiences. Our challenge is to have this realisation and stay alert all the time. We are working tirelessly.

Our mission is moving forth, as we are working for the real and truthful thought. Eventually, everyone comes around to embracing the truth. This reality is the foundation on which we shall shape our future, and the future of this



(From right) Dr Mohan Bhagwat ji, Sarsanghchalak, RSS, in conversation with Hitesh Shankar, Editor, Panchjanya and Prafulla Ketkar, Editor, Organiser at RSS headquarters, Mahal in Nagpur

country too. We are not worried about it. But we have to ensure that we do not deviate as we complete our journey and keep our *swatva* (essence) intact throughout the distance. So, from the point of view of these objectives, the present phase—when our circumstances are the most favourable—seems the most difficult. We must wade past this phase. This is our challenge.

■ **There was a time when Sangh's thought process and its style of working followed the logic of 'organisation for organisation's sake.' Now, as you have been saying, Sangh needs to work for social transformation and humanity at large. What changes do you see in Sangh's style of working and its thoughts?**

There is no change; I see it as progression. When a bud grows into a flower, not all petals blossom together; some of the petals bloom early. Our organisation remains the same; our methods remain the same. We still organise for the sake of organisation. Otherwise we will get complacent and say that given the work we already doing, even if we do not conduct *shakha*, there will be people with us.

You see, we mobilise talent in our society at large. Many people join us by birth due to their family. And yet we continue to hold our *shakha*. This increases our workload. But the question remains: what purpose does organising society serve? Why do we want to remain healthy? We want

health because then all our worked become healthy too. We retire, when we get old. Even if there is no work at hand, we wish to remain healthy. During our childhood, we are not burdened with the responsibility of supporting a family—there is little work to do—yet we wish to stay healthy. And of course while we are working, health is a priority. Organise for the sake of organisation—this principle is our polestar.

But for social service, we have *swayamsevak* to bring about social transformation, we have *swayamsevak* to change the system, we have *swayamsevak* for an entire spectrum of works. Sangh will only organise and do nothing else. *Swayamsevak* will not leave any field untouched. We have been saying this and today we can see manifestation of the same. This is progression. Back then also people used to say we organise only for the organisation's sake. And we agreed because we have nothing to hide.

■ **Let me now come to that question about the Sangh which piques everyone's curiosity. There's been a tendency to view Sangh from the political prism; the media is always eager to know Sangh's view on political events. How do you see Sangh's relationship with politics?**

For various reasons, in our society, political prism is a favourite perspective. So not only Sangh activities, everything else also is viewed from the political perspective. Generally, we remain unmindful to the good or bad



happenings in other walks of social life. Everything is politics centric. However, right from its inception, Sangh has consciously kept itself away from day to day politics. The politics of votes, the politics of elections, the politics of humiliating one-another— Sangh has no relation with any of these.

But, there are other dimensions of politics that affect our national policies, national interest and Hindu interest. The Sangh has been always concerned about whether the overall political direction is conducive to these issues or not; right from the days of Doctor Ji (Dr K B Hedgewar, founder of RSS). If politics takes a wrong turn and because of that our social awakening is adversely impacted, we are concerned. We have always been vocal about national policy; and whatever strength we have, accordingly we try to mobilise it to drive it in the right direction. We do openly and without any hesitation. We have never been secretive about it. This is true of the present time as well. We are not concerned with day to day politics, but we are definitely linked to *rashtra neeti*—the national policy. We have our opinion about the same. Today, as we have gained adequate strength (through organisational network), we try to utilise it in the national interest and we will certainly do so.

The only difference is, earlier, our Swayamsevaks were not in positions of political power. This is the only addition in the present situation. But people forget that it is the Swayamsevaks who have reached certain political

positions through a political party. Sangh continues to organise the society for the organisation's sake. However, whatever Swayamsevaks do in politics, Sangh is held accountable for the same. Even if we are not implicated directly by others, there is certainly some accountability; as ultimately, it is in the Sangh where Swayamsevaks are trained. Therefore, we are forced to think – what should be our relationship, which things we should pursue (in the national interests) with due diligence.

For instance, there was a conference of traders to present the activities of Sangh. At the end, there was a Q&A session. They were fine with the Sangh's work but had questions about Income Tax, GST and ease of doing business. They asked everything concerning the Government, trade and commerce. And every time, I kept telling that this is not our work. I repeatedly argued that the policy is one side of this; the other side is the mindset (of making and implementing the policies). But, they will naturally raise those questions. We have to go to the extent of reassuring them that will convey your issues to the concerned people.

The only point is about political developments, if people are expecting something, if they are facing any difficulty—that is conveyed to us then it can be brought to the notice of concerned people, if they are Swayamsevaks. Even when Swayamsevaks were not there in power positions, there were people who used to pay heed to the advice of others.



WE HAVE TO ENSURE THAT WE DO NOT DEVIATE AS WE COMPLETE OUR JOURNEY AND KEEP OUR SWATVA (ESSENCE) INTACT THROUGHOUT THE DISTANCE. SO, FROM THE POINT OF VIEW OF THESE OBJECTIVES, THE PRESENT PHASE—WHEN OUR CIRCUMSTANCES ARE THE MOST FAVOURABLE—SEEMS THE MOST DIFFICULT. WE MUST WADE PAST THIS PHASE. THIS IS OUR CHALLENGE

There will be such people in the future too. We will keep approaching them with people's concerns. Pranab Da was Finance Minister in the Congress government. He was also looking after Nepal affairs. We used to take our concerns to him. And he would listen to us too. That is all we do. Otherwise, we have no business in other spheres of active politics.

■ **Over the past few years, Hindu society has become more vocal about Hindu faith, beliefs, values, ideals and even symbols. At times, it even appears to become aggressive. On the other hand, on many occasions, people on social media wonder whether the Sangh has abandoned its earlier aggressive stance. Whether it has softened? How do you see this change? Is it because of the transformation the Sangh has undergone or Sangh has strategically changed its role due to changes in the society at large?**

You see, Hindu society has been at war for over 1,000 years – this fight has been going on against foreign aggressions, foreign influences and foreign conspiracies. Sangh has offered its support to this cause, so have others. There are many who have spoken about it. And it is because of all these that the Hindu society has awakened. It is but natural for those at war to be aggressive. As said (in *Bhagwatgeeta*), '*yudhyasva vigata-jvarah*' - "Become free from desire and selfishness, and with your mental grief departed, fight!" It is not possible for everyone to follow this maxim. However, there are people who took on the task of social awakening through Sangh. This tradition of social awakening is quite old — it started on the day when Alexander, the first invader, arrived at our frontiers.

You may say that all those who undertook the task of social awakening—in the great tradition of Chanakya—have cautioned the Hindu society against yet another war. Unfortunately, we have not been thoroughly alerted to this impending reality. This war is not against an enemy without, but against an enemy within. So there is a war to defend Hindu society, Hindu *Dharma* and Hindu culture. Foreign invaders are no longer there, but foreign influences and foreign conspiracies have continued. Since this is a war, people are likely to get over zealous. Although this is not desirable, yet provocative statements will be uttered.

But at the same time, there are some internal issues concerning us. Shri Ram symbolises our pride. His temple must be built. There was a movement for it. Those in the movement exclaimed 'Jai Shree Ram'. Such slogans obviously meant to energise. Shri Ram strung together all *jati* and sects. But even today, people in our country are getting whipped so much as mounting another's wagon. Should this not change? Everyone, who has carried forward that tradition of awakening, has talked about this. Hindu society has hailed the sloganeering but not this message of self-purification. Hindu society has not fully awakened to this reality; it should happen. We keep talking about war, war, war (against someone) but what about us? If war is there, what is our status? In a war we have to think and understand the enemy. We also have to decide what to do and when.

If you see, after the Mughal aggression, the last experiment was that of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Since then, there has been continuation and imitation of his strategy. What was Shivaji Maharaj's policy? He was aware of the enemy but also conscious about self. He knew when to fight and when to avoid it. After his coronation, Shivaji

Maharaj extended a hand of friendship to the neighbouring Muslim dynasties. He went to Golkonda and established friendly relations with Qutub Shah with the condition that at least two of his Ministers should be Hindus and atrocities against Hindus should stop. Qutub Shah had to accept the same. It is different story that this was changed after the demise of Shivaji Maharaj, as the fundamentalists among the Qutubshahi killed the Hindu ministers. But, Shivaji Maharaj tried this, as he knew very well that noble things advocated from the position of strength can become acceptable.

The other thing is, if the Hindu society understands itself, it will also find solutions to the problems that assail it. Staunch Christians say they will convert the entire world to the Christian faith. Those who do not fall in line will either live at their mercy or perish. Staunch Muslims, followers of the Abrahamic ideology, believers, non-believers, communists, practitioners of black capitalism — all of them believe that others must accept their path as it is the only true path. And if you refuse to do so, you will have to choose between surviving on our mercy and death. We will destroy you. But what is the Hindu worldview? Does a Hindu ever say that everyone should endorse his faith? This is not how we think. We want to present an example for others to see. We want to have a dialogue with everyone. Those who wish to improve will follow our example. If they do not, we do not intend to harm them. But we must be watchful that they are not able to harm us. We have gained enough strength in these battles. They cannot harm us anymore. No one has the audacity to disturb our political independence. It is now certain that Hindus will stay in this country; they would not seek refuge elsewhere. Now, they are quite alert.

We must also capitalise on this opportunity to resolve our internal conflicts and offer solutions to others. Today, when we are in a position of strength, so we must do that. If not today, in the next fifty years will have to provide this. And to ensure that we are able to accomplish this in five decades, we will have to start right away. China's present position of prominence was planned in 1948. They have been following that blueprint ever since. When we have acquired sufficient strength, we should be clear about priorities for the future. Staying perpetually into fighting mode will do us no good. In the national life, it does not happen this way. To think that those who fight can accomplish everything is also a mistake. Garibaldi led the war, but at once fighting stopped, he wanted others to lead. At the end when they had to choose a monarch, Garibaldi refused the mantle and said it should go to someone else. Of the three leaders who rose to prominence during Italy's

rise, it was Garibaldi who led on the battlefield. However, at the end, he distanced himself saying this is not my job. Likewise, we too should change our discourse and language according to the circumstance. The direction remains the same. Hindustan is a Hindu *rashtra*. This prosperous and powerful Hindu society—Hindu *Rashtra* - Bharat—will reach to the pinnacle of its glory and provide leadership to the world. If at all, there are shortcomings in achieving this goal, then how to overcome them? If needed, we will fight by choice. We should not change our strategy because others have challenged us. We fight a battle according to our own plan. This is how the Hindu society should think.

- **People say Sangh is a cultural organisation. You have argued that if one has to undertake a long journey, one must set one's priorities right; and draw a roadmap. Since Sangh is seen as a cultural body it must respond to contemporary discourses such as technology, environment and gender. Where does the Sangh find itself vis-a-vis these issues?**

So far, the West dominated the world. Therefore, they were leading in many things. They provided leadership, set discourses, invented solutions and told everyone to follow them. The entire world, including us, followed them. But what is the situation now? That leadership has failed us. And having conceded their failures and reflected on them, where have they come to? Say on the question of environment. The world is coming around to Indian thought, the Hindu view.

Similarly, look at the question of gender and women. Slogans of women's emancipation, women's empowerment etc. have been raised for long. Having progressed through five phases, women of the West are now returning to the questions of gender-interdependence and the need of family life. In other words, they are converging around Hindu viewpoint. Likewise, there has been a raging debate on the question of technology-free technology or technology with ethics, unrestricted technology or technology with human attitude. Just imagining technology is not everything. All these technological innovations keep coming, the world keeps moving ahead. The questions of gender and environment, by contrast, are *Sanatan* (eternal). But only those who understands life in totality can answer these questions. Bharat understands life in its totality. It also accommodates those fragments engendered by Western thoughts which picture individual as separate from family. Bharat knows

that the West sees the things with a fragmented approach, and it also knows how to unite them.

Today, the general discourse is changing and inching closer to Indian views. We have been championing Indian discourse long before its global acceptance. Inspired by Tagore, Gandhi ji, Vivekanand, Dayanand Saraswati—we marched ahead taking along their thoughts. There are many strands on similar lines in the modern Western thought also. We should study them too. Sangh does not say anything different. As far as technology is concerned, it must serve mankind. For example, now we have artificial intelligence. But people are wary that if it becomes unrestricted, a day will come when machines will rule over us. Sangh does not have a different opinion on this issue. Hindu (thought) traditions have already reflected on these questions.

Every now and then, a minor question crops up, which is blown out of proportion by the media, because the so-called neo-left finds it pioneering. Like LGBT/ Transgender issue. But these are not new issues; they have always been there. These people also have a right to live. Without much hullabaloo, we have found a way, with a humane approach, to provide them social acceptance, bearing in mind they are also human beings having inalienable right to live. We have a transgender community; we did not see it as a problem. They have a sect and their own deities. Today, they have their own Mahamandaleshwar too. During Kumbh, they are accorded a special place. They are part of our everyday life. When a child is born, they come to sing at our homes. Even though they have a separate community space, they are also a part of the mainstream. We have never waxed eloquent about this arrangement; we have never turned it into a subject of global debate.

The problem of LGBT is a similar one. Jarasandh had two generals—Hans and Dimbhaka. When Krishna fanned the rumour that Dimbhaka has died, Hans committed suicide. That is how Krishna got rid of those two generals. Come to think of it: what does the story suggest? This is the same thing. The two generals were in that sort of a relationship. It is not that these people have never existed in our country. People with such proclivities have always been there; for as long as humans have existed. Since I am a doctor of animals, I know that such traits are found in animals too. This is biological, a mode of life. We want them to have their own private space and to feel that they, too, are a part of the society. This is such a simple issue. We will have to promote this view because all other ways of resolving it will be futile. Therefore, on such matters, the Sangh relies on the wisdom of our traditions.

- **Today's youth is repeatedly confused by these issues, especially those in the age group of 18 to 24. They wish to understand Bharat's and Hindutva's perspective on these matters. At the same time, because of the prevalent discourse around these issues, they get baffled. Sangh has a style of working, a set of fundamental thought. In order to connect the youth with Sangh's style of working, are you trying to develop a new approach to these questions—the ones that bother the young generation?**

There are many experiments to connect, attract and induct. We do not plan these activities centrally, because they are best done locally. Whether such confusions are there in Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai. local units will have to address these issues. May be in a college of Chandrapur (in the interior parts of Vidarbha in Maharashtra), that would not be required. Whether the student is from *jila parishad* school or from an English medium school, it has to be factored in. Therefore, we give complete freedom to the local units to devise strategies and experiments as per the local needs. For example, during the recently concluded event in Nagpur to mark seventy-five years of Independence, we conducted many discussions with small groups of society. The event started with a *nriyanatika*—a dance drama—followed by a number of youth-centric activities and finally, a *baudhik* (intellectual discourse). While Sangh's old-timers may question the very first part of the programme, we must understand this is how youth-outreach experiments are conducted these days. So we do what is necessary without diluting our core concerns. As a result, bright young men are joining Sangh. Every year, close to two lakh youth connect with Sangh through the join RSS initiative (online requests received through the RSS website). This is a huge number comprising educated, English-speaking youth. They are the once who face all these questions. Almost the same numbers go through various training programmes of the Sangh. It means despite various perceptions, youth are attracted towards the Sangh work.

- **There is another important question that crops up repeatedly—on the relationship between Sangh and women. Based on the reference to Santosh Yadav in the recent Vijayadashami address, I would say that Rashtriya Sevika Samiti is an important platform for women. How do you see the role of women in Sangh activities? Is it increasing now?**

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**FOR SOCIAL SERVICE, WE HAVE SWAYAMSEVAK; TO BRING ABOUT SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION, WE HAVE SWAYAMSEVAK; TO CHANGE THE SYSTEM, WE HAVE SWAYAMSEVAK; WE HAVE SWAYAMSEVAK FOR AN ENTIRE SPECTRUM OF WORKS. SANGH WILL ONLY ORGANISE AND DO NOTHING ELSE. SWAYAMSEVAK WILL NOT LEAVE ANY FIELD UNTOUCHED. WE HAVE BEEN SAYING THIS AND TODAY WE CAN SEE MANIFESTATION OF THE SAME**  
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Of course, the role is increasing. Earlier, we did not have *parivar sammelans*. It's not that we were against the idea, but the circumstances were different. Today, we conduct *Kutumb Prabhodhan*, which is a separate activity. We keep telling members of our *karyakarini* (executive) members that they must go together for family outing—at least once every year. When we insist on *karyakarta* and their families – this include women members. We already have *gat padhhati* (a group of swayamsevaks led by a person) in Sangh where Swayamsevaks have connected till the kitchen of their group members. This was a medium to take Sangh to home; to those members who do not directly attend the *shakha*.

Intellectual discourses are also organised for the Swayamsevaks and their families. While all this is true, our routine programme of character-building goes on, as per the arrangement with the Samiti (the women's organisation). The Samiti works among women, Sangh works among men. Whenever they feel that this arrangement should change, we will definitely do it. But now, especially after COVID-19, when for nearly two years *shakhas* were conducted at home, women are likely to be more active. They are demanding greater roles. Several women are making use of their learnings from *shakha* to start their own programmes. They are participating in Sangh activities and inviting many others to it. For example, today, I went to a home for lunch. The lady of the house must have seen the *shakha* during the COVID-19 period when it was conducted from home. Taking inspiration from the same, she completed her Yoga training and joined a few formal courses too. Now she runs an online programme and people from all across the world join her. So now she has an activity to take care of. Just as the Swayamsevaks

contribute, the swayamsevikas contribute too. There has been an increase in the number of such inspired women who are joining us.

Now we have started telling our *karyakartas* that before taking any firm steps in his direction, if such women come to us, we should not tell them to go to the Samiti. Because as of today, the Samiti does not have that much of strength, (in terms of *Shakhas* and Swayamsevaika). They will also expect to involve these women in some activities till the time they become more independent ; to make local arrangements to engage these enthusiastic women. Because they're inspired; because they wish to know the Sangh whose Swayamsevaks are known to do much good work; because they too want to do something constructive. For them, Sangh champions noble values which they wish to impart to their children, they want to understand us first hand. We will have to find a way to accommodate them. We must think about it. During the days of Dr Sahab, the situation was not conducive enough to think about it, but today we can think about it. However, there are women, workers of Samiti, who are already working among women and in consultaion with them, we will work out something.

■ **Do we see these changes because of the new dimension of *Parivar Prabhodhan* (Enlightening of Family) activity?**

No. *Parivar Prabhodhan* is an activity that has been going on for long Ideas related to Sangh are not broached there. Family traditions, national traditions, traditions of one's clan, one's ancestors, and responsibilities towards home, towards family, towards society, how to make a healthy and happy family life — these, are some of the issues that are taken up. Even though swayamsevaks are



**SANGH WILL ONLY ORGANISE AND DO NOTHING ELSE. SWAYAMSEVAK WILL NOT LEAVE ANY FIELD UNTOUCHED. WE HAVE BEEN SAYING THIS AND TODAY WE CAN SEE MANIFESTATION OF THE SAME. THIS IS PROGRESSION. BACK THEN ALSO PEOPLE USED TO SAY WE ORGANISE ONLY FOR THE ORGANISATION SAKE. AND WE AGREED BECAUSE WE'VE NOTHING TO HIDE**

present in these meetings, it is not a platform to further Sangh's objectives. It is doing well and developing independently.

As for the participation of women, it has gone up because of COVID-19. Besides, it is also an impact of growing credibility of the Sangh in the society. In many of our programmes, particularly those with businesspersons, women were invited and they do participate on our invitation. Thereafter, they get associated with us; they join projects our Swayamsevaks are carrying out. There are some places where school and college going girls also attend Shakhnas. Today, we do not tell them 'this is not for you.' We encourage them to form their own separate group and simply observe a minimal distance during *prarthna*. Or recite the Samiti *prarthna*. We are doing such things. But, how to formalise this, we still have to think. We certainly have to and we will do it soon.

- **In the context of large-scale social changes, you spoke of biotechnology and artificial intelligence. The progress of information technology, too, is impacting our society and its systems in a major way. If we look at the Western context, the a lot of things appear poised for a change. In the days to come, the question of data consumption will become a key issue. Is there a debate in the Sangh regarding these future challenges? About the impact of all this on the society, as to some extent the question is also linked to economy and employment opportunities? And if I may add, a segment of the society has indeed prospered because of technology. But there are those who have been isolated. They feel**

**that they cannot match the speed of technology. Even though they can read and write, from the point of view of technology, they appear illiterate. Their utility is fast depleting. Technology has become a new divisive line in the society. How do you look at this problem?**

Technology is a useful element for life and its judicious use can be greatly beneficial. But it is not sufficient in itself. The way technology is flourishing today, it is creating segregated pockets within the society—distancing society from things that matter, isolating individuals. What is the impact of this process? Well, he feels sad and tries to rebound. But once he rebounds, he has no fail-safe to fall back on. What happens thereafter? In our country, we have traditional fail-safe mechanism. Even if he is broken, separated and distant, he has a family; whenever he comes back, he will have a place to rest. It is a new fad and people may get attracted to it, especially those who are disconnected from the roots and do not think very deep or long-term. As our great tradition of philosophical profundity has weakened, such a person will blindly follow the Western trends. We may get trapped into the vicious cycle of shooting incidents as is often reported in the Western countries. But if it becomes excessive, we will get rid of this. This is for sure. We will try to find an alternative and we will get one. We have to give that option to the world also. Technology is a source of convenience. We cannot let it be our master. We will have to change our concepts of happiness, if they're based solely on technology. As you mentioned, there are people who feel left out because of technology. Those who cannot use computer are described as 'computer illiterates'; they are looked down upon by others.

Once, a Sangh office bearer was returning from a meeting. He was flanked by an Odia gentleman on one side, and a young boy on another. Both these individuals had meals included with their tickets. But just as the Sangh official was thought of buying peanuts or some snack, one of his co-passengers offered him his drink and urged him to have it. He told our *Karyakarta* that he lives in Dubai and spends three months at a stretch working in sea. Thereafter, he rests for a month, regains his health and returns to work. He earns Rs eighty thousand a month, survives on Rs ten thousand, and thrice a year, and sends Rs two lakh ten thousand to his home—a total of six lakh, thirty thousand per year. During the conversation that followed, he is noting, not even literate.

But our official countered his despondency saying that Bhagwan's has given him plenty; by calling himself a loser, he is abusing Bhagwan's grace. 'Here in Bharat you have a loving family that nourishes you back to health. Your earnings are much higher than what labourers get here. But most importantly, your humanity is alive; you gave away your drink to a stranger.' It was then that he realised how precious his assets were; he promised that he will not pity himself again. You see, to bring about such a change in mentality, one does not need technology, literacy or erudition. All these things are of doing. As the saying goes, what good is a tall date tree, if it cannot shade a wearied traveller; its fruits are unreachable. We have forgotten how to differentiate between meaning of life and success in life. This has been already a part of our culture. The day we become mindful of this fact, we will find answer to all these questions — not just for ourselves, but for the rest of the world too. And we will have to do this at all cost, since this road takes us to nowhere but in the dark bottomless well.

- **The period of COVID-19 has affected not just individuals and families but the entire global scenario. People started talking about a new world order. In the days to come, given all the upheavals and changes, where do you see Bharat? What role will Bharat have in this new world? What role will Sangh have in that Bharat?**

True Bharat has emerged in this entire upheaval. Perhaps, if it was not for the pandemic, we would not have emerged as a bright spot. We are what we are, and we are advancing in the right direction. It is not that we were not the same earlier, but the world could not see us clearly. Its vision was clouded, which got cleared after the COVID-19 crisis. People saw that Bharat has solutions. This led to an entirely new way of looking at us. India quickly made vaccine, and

instead of stockpiling it, distributed it among other countries. There have been such occasions in the past, too, when Bharat helped other countries without bothering about cost benefit of it. For example, India helped Sri Lanka, and today it is helping Ukraine.

This is the true essence of Bharat, which now people see and recognise. Bharat's presence in the global order is reassuring. That is why people the world over are appreciating us; Russia appreciates us, so does America. These nations with larger economies, larger armies—basically those who do not need to adulate us—they, too, are lavishing praise on Bharat. It is all for a simple reason: they see great qualities in India and realise that India is destined to rise.

But what is this quality? Quality stands for India's roots, not the magic of modern science. It's not just a question of how enterprising our business leaders are; they have always been experts at their profession. But it is the question for authenticity that appeals to others, especially the younger generation. Why is Sangh able to connect with the youth? The answer is, we have honesty and the young generation gets drawn to those who sincerely appeal for patriotism and service. When a country like Bharat tries to help others, people see authenticity and sincerity in its endeavours. Bharat's actions are not driven by selfishness. We have intelligence; we have strength. People of Bharat are not second to anyone. Bharat is awakening with this realisation and there is a desire to be victorious.

And this works to the advantage of the world too. The world wants Bharat to pave the new road, Bharat only we can do so. But to take Bharat on this road to progress, every Indian must understand *Svatva* (selfhood) of our country, and to have an urge to live and die for the same. Sangh's role is to create this environment and to raise a group of dedicated workers who will create this kind of environment. This will lead to change—a permanent change—which in turn will take care of all the remaining issues. Sangh's role strengthens Bharat's role and Bharat's role in turn strengthened the world.

- **During this period, you too repeatedly referred to the phrase 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat.' However from the pharmaceutical sector to small industries what challenges do you see in the global supply chain? Lots of people have lost their livelihood and smaller industries are struggling to rebound. Moreover, after the Ukraine war, there are problems related to economy, currency exchange and bank rates. Under the circumstances, how realis-**

**tic is the vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat?'**

The idea of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' can very well be materialised. One's development takes place according to one's *svatva*—on the basis of one's soul. You cannot put hybrid colours into it. You may train an elephant to play football, but it will not be considered as progress. People may even buy tickets to watch the spectacle, but still, it is not elephant's development. The progress of a lion does not lie in eating peacefully alongside a goat; this will turn the lion into a farce. A lion can only progress in the jungle. Therefore, when we speak of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat,' we must reflect on these aspects too.

To be Aatmanirbhar does not simply imply that India can manufacture everything, do everything. So far, the global economic trends have followed the corporate logic; everything is centralised. Bharat's economic logic suggests that if we have decentralised production, we will produce in abundance. It further stipulates that to sell the production, do not promote consumerism. If there is a restrained consumption, the prices will go down. Because commerce is the very basis of life in the Western countries, they are votaries of price rise; for which consumerism is necessary, which again is based on individualism. In this vicious cycle all these things follow each other.

This philosophy of consumerism leads to problems that may cause great devastation. Therefore, being Aatmanirbhar does not mean winning this global race. To be Atmanirbhar implies offering a new paradigm of trade and progress that assures material comforts, security, guarantees future life and also ensures a feeling of peace and contentment. We will have to construct a new edifice, new systems that are in harmony with our *Atma*. We need to think about ourselves by completely decolonising our minds. Then, we can determine what all aspects of scientific progress we must include in our vision. If due to ignorance we were following certain wrong practices, we should get rid of them. We will have to build a new way, taking in our stride whatever is the best in the world. However, the new road will be built on the foundation of our own values. Our vision has been, *sarve bhawantu sukhinah* or may all be happy and content and not of survival of the fittest or 'greatest good for the greatest number.' Happiness of all! If we thrive, so must the universe; this is what we profess. Therefore, after 2000 years of experimentation, the world is seeking a model, a path that will harmonise all things. We can find that path only through realising our own *Armta*, the selfhood. Being Aatmanirbhar implies relying on one's *Atma*. It is not about being victorious in the global competition.

- **There is another problem our society is confronted with. The Sangh has raised it, underscored it. This is the question of population policy and population imbalance—by all means, a complex question. How would we develop a consensus on the issue, given that attempts are being made to link it with the question of Hindus and Muslims?**

First of all, Hindus must understand this. Hindus are in majority. For them, there is a sense of belongingness about the country. Upliftment of Hindus will ensure well-being of all in the country. Therefore, Hindus should realise this first.

Population is an asset, but it can be a heavy burden too. As I had mentioned in that speech, it is essential that we frame a thoughtful, long-term population policy. And the same should be equally implemented by everyone. But this cannot be done forcefully; people must be educated.

Population imbalance is a practical problem. Wherever imbalance has taken place our country has got divided. This has been the global trend and this has happened because of the aggressive nature of people and civilisations. Only the Hindu society stands apart, showing no aggression whatsoever. In the interest of pacifism, non-violence, democracy, secularism etc., preservation of those who are not aggressive is essential. We have seen the catastrophic results in Timor, Sudan, Pakistan. On this issue, we must put an end to politicking and appeasement. In a completely non-partisan manner—without any bias either for the Hindus or any other community—we need to ask objectively what led to the creation of Pakistan?

From the earliest point in recorded history, Bharat has been *akhanda*, undivided. Islam's devastating invasion ended after centuries. How come the country got suddenly divided later? I see only one reason - हिंदू भाव को जब-जब भूले आई विपद महान , भाई टूटे ... धरती खोई ... मिटे धर्म संस्थान (whenever we have forgotten the core Hindu sense, we have faced with great calamity, brothers got separated, land is lost and religious institutions were ruined).

I am not trying to speak against anyone, but the truth is Bharat had never witnessed a massacre of this scale. If we think of the Kalinga war, it was a localised affair and ceased soon afterwards. We had to face all this because we had forgotten all about Hindu *bhaav* (the essence of being Hindu). When we speak of Hindu *bhaav*, it does not create any obstacle in Islamic way of worship.

Hindu is our identity, our nationality, our civilisational trait—a trait that considers everyone as ours; that takes everyone along. We never say, mine is only true and your's is false. You are right at your place, I am right at mine; why

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**EVEN WHEN SWAYAMSEVAKS WERE NOT THERE IN POWERFUL POSITIONS, THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO USED TO PAY HEED TO THE ADVICE OF OTHERS. THERE WILL BE SUCH PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE TOO. PRANAB DA WAS FINANCE MINISTER IN THE CONGRESS GOVERNMENT. HE WAS ALSO LOOKING AFTER NEPAL AFFAIRS. WE USED TO TAKE OUR CONCERNS TO HIM. AND HE WOULD LISTEN TO US TOO**  
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to fight, let us move together – this is *Hindutva*. As long as adherent of this value stay in majority, Bharat remains united. This united Bharat, in turn, provides unity and strength to the entire world. It is not just about Bharat but concerning the welfare of humanity at large. Imagine for a moment the consequences if the Hindu society was to disappear. Other races will start a war for supremacy. This is inevitable. Then what is the guarantee (to save us from this volatile possibility), it is the presence of Hindus.

The simple truth is this—Hindusthan should remain Hindusthan. There is no harm to the Muslims living today in Bharat. If they wish to stick to their faith, they can. If they want to return to the faith of their ancestors, they may. It is entirely their choice. There is no such stubbornness among Hindus. Islam has nothing to fear. But the same time, Muslims must abandon their boisterous rhetoric of supremacy. We are of an exalted race; we once ruled over this land, and shall rule it again; only our path is right, rest everyone is wrong; we are different, therefore we will continue to be so; we cannot live together—they must abandon this narrative. In fact, all those who live here—whether a Hindu or a communist—must give up this logic.

Hence, population imbalance is an important question and we will have to think about it. Even as I am saying this, I am aware that there will be voices of disagreements and accusations. But when the same people occupy administrative positions, they too will do exactly the same thing. If you look the Governmental activities of independent Bharat, right from the early day till now, all those in power, regardless of their faith, worry about this. Those in power and those who want the best for Bharat take up this problem and do whatever is necessary in the

matter. So we are clearly reiterating what is well known to all.

We do not want to oppose anyone. And it is not only about the question of birthrate. Conversions and illegal immigrations are the main reasons behind the imbalance. Preventing this restores balance, we have seen this too. Therefore, the population policy should ensure this balance. There may be minor imbalance due to birthrate or other issues, that also will have to be factored in.

- **At this juncture, the question of human rights of the Hindus is also getting attention. Hindu society, the world over, has become assertive. In places like America, Hindu temples and trusts are proposing resolutions of Hindu issues. On the one hand, it is alleged in academic conferences on Hindutva that because of the Sangh, Hindu society at large has become aggressive. On the other hand, we have the example of Birmingham and Leicester where Hindus are being targeted in the name of Sangh. Is the Sangh trying to do something to counter this perception? Is there any thinking about human rights of the Hindus and Hinduphobia, at the global level?**

There are many who are speaking up for the Hindus. We do not plan to start a forum of our own to take up these issues. Our plan is to give strength to the existing ones. Since the Hindu society is awakening, we will have to go through this phase of firefighting as well. Only those whose selfish interests are imperiled by our ascendancy are raising a commotion and attacking at the same time. But now Hindus are awakening and will counter it appropriately.



**MUSLIMS MUST ABANDON THE BOISTEROUS RHETORIC OF SUPREMACY. WE ARE OF AN EXALTED RACE; WE ONCE RULED OVER THIS LAND, AND SHALL RULE IT AGAIN; ONLY OUR PATH IS RIGHT, REST EVERYONE IS WRONG; WE ARE DIFFERENT, THEREFORE WE'LL CONTINUE TO BE SO; WE CANNOT LIVE TOGETHER—THEY MUST ABANDON THIS NARRATIVE. IN FACT, ALL THOSE WHO LIVE HERE—WHETHER A HINDU OR A COMMUNIST—MUST GIVE UP THIS LOGIC**

However, it is certain that whichever road the Hindus opt for, it will be of taking everyone along. As far as countering aggression on the Hindu society is concerned—all those who counter this will have complete backing of the global Hindu society. The Sangh will see to it that such a situation continues and grow over the period of time.

As far as perception goes, we will have to do something about it. This perception issue is within Bharat also, not just at the global level. We are already working on this. We have increased our media interactions, started few outreach initiatives; now the issue is of extending these. To ensure that in due course of time they deliver the desired results, we will have to act at the right time, with the right strategy. That we will do this is certain; it is just a matter of time.

- **In 2025, Sangh will complete its hundred years. The whole world will follow this development with keen curiosity. We wish to know whether Sangh has planned something special for it, in terms of activities? Also, will there be a new pledge or a new dimension added to it?**

You see, there have been different phases of Sangh's work. This is only the natural progression, which the world perceives as special. Till 1940, when Doctor Sahab was around, after much experimentation, we could finalise the technique and methods for organising the Hindu society. Then Doctor Sahab left. Following that methodology, Sangh's projects quickly reached different parts of Bharat; first till the district level, and then beyond it. All this happened during Shri Guruji's period. The Swayamsevaks trained during the period started working in diverse fields. They were guided by the maxim—Sangh will not do anything, Swayamsevak will not spare

anything. During Balasaheb's time, this approach gathered much speed and force. Sangh became much more society-oriented and started shouldering social responsibilities. As a result we see some progress in the political sphere. This we have witnessed during the term of Rajju Bhaiya and Sudarshan ji.

Today Sangh and the society share a virtuous, strong and emotional bond. The natural order of things suggests Sangh has to be all pervasive. To make this happen, Sangh will work for the kind of transformation and coordination the Hindu society must have. Both our Swayamsevaks and righteous members of the society should do this. They must work together and take our nation to the pinnacle of glory. So, by the time we complete hundred years, we should have the necessary infrastructure of *shakhas* and Swayamsevaks, make arrangements for their deployment. And we should have the capacity to organise more swayamsevaks to fulfill the needs of these works. So that, after completing the hundred years, Swayamsevaks are in a position to carry on the work of constructing a structure on this foundation. Sangh will continue the work of character-building. By the time we reach hundred, we will have to take Sangh everywhere and forge links with all the segments of the society, so that people have better examples to follow; so that they do not give over importance to Bollywood, media and politics. Realising their duties, society should stand with the noble forces. The noble power should work in a harmonious complementary relationship in the the national interest. And whatever strength, expanse and workforce is needed for it, we will have to organise it by 2025. And based on how much of this we manage to accomplish, we will move ahead. ■



Dr Mohan Bhagwat, Sarsanghchalak and Dattatreya Hosabale, Sarkaryawah, RSS in Akhil Bharatiya Samanvay Baithak at Raipur, Chhattisgarh to discuss various social issues, including religious conversions and expanding the reach of the Hindutva organisation and its affiliates. Around 240 office bearers of 36 outfits inspired by or linked to the RSS, including the BJP, the Vishva Hindu Parishad, the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad, took part in the closed-door coordination meeting held from September 9 to 11, 2022

## WHERE COORDINATION IS THE CRUX

**MANY PEOPLE ASK HOW RSS COORDINATES WITH ITS DIFFERENT ORGANISATION? THE FACT IS THAT RSS DOESN'T JUST BUILD IQ, IT BUILDS EQ AND SQ – EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT AND SOCIAL QUOTIENT. THUS, NONE OF ITS ALLIED ORGANISATIONS SPLIT**

### OPINION



**RATAN SHARDA**

Author and Columnist

**A** small organisation that began in an open ground with around 14-15 teenage boys brought together by a former revolutionary and political leader has blossomed today into a giant banyan tree with so many branches and roots that it is difficult to distinguish between the main trunk and various branches that have struck roots on their own and many that have grown independently under its benign shadow.

It reminds me of the legendary giant banyan tree in Kolkata described thus in a *Times of India* report – “Estimated to be more than 250 years old, the Great Banyan is occupies an area of 4.67 acres! [...] We all know how banyan trees extend their aerial roots, and they spread and cover a very large area. But is it possible without the main trunk? Looks like it is. The Great Banyan lost its original trunk to disease after being struck by two massive cyclones, and so in 1925, its

original trunk had to be removed in order to stop the spread of the disease. That didn't stop the tree from growing, and grew it did! A total of 3772 aerial roots to be precise!”

### FROM SHAKHA TO MASS ORGANISATION

This is the closest one can get to understand the vast expanse of RSS through its various allied organisations working in almost every field of social and national life. There are 36 national level organisations inspired by RSS philosophy – beginning with Rashtra Sevika Samiti (RSS of women in 1932), Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP in 1948), followed by Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram (in 1951) to Bharatiya Janata Party (1951), Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (1955) and Vishva Hindu Parishad (1964) – all mass based giant organisations to the youngest Saksham (2008 - working with the divyang or differently abled people) working in a



Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh



Swadeshi Jagran Manch



Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad



Saksham

## THERE ARE SMALLER SPECIALISED ORGANISATIONS THAT HAVE CHANGED THE DIRECTION OF INDIAN HISTORY, LIKE ITIHAS SANKALAN SAMITI ESTABLISHED BY RENOWNED ARCHAEOLOGIST HARIBHAU WAKANKAR BY DISCOVERING EVIDENCES THAT DEMOLISHED THE ARYAN INVASION OR MIGRATION THEORY

niche area; people inspired by RSS philosophy are working to the best of their abilities with full dedication.

Those who have a little idea about these mass organisations know that many of them have more membership than even RSS. Scholars like Nalin Mehta tell us that BJP (with 18 crore members) has many times more members than RSS and RSS can no more influence BJP or dictate BJP the way it could earlier. Others in different social sphere are number one organisations in their respective fields. In 2008 VHP claimed to have 68 lakh members, ABVP has 45 lakh student members. BMS has a membership of nearly 1 crore with 5000 unions under its flag. There are smaller specialised organisations that have changed the direction of Indian history, like Itihas Sankalan Samiti established by renowned archaeologist Haribhau Wakankar by discovering evidences that demolished the Aryan Invasion or Migration Theory. Then there is Sewa Bharati, an apex body co-ordinating work of social service with over 150 thousand social service projects. Ekal Vidyalaya (single teacher, any time schools in remote areas) has crossed a figure of 1 lakh schools, replicated by many other organisations independently.

In such a scenario, how does the trunk that fed the

original sap to these huge branches keep track of its expanse and keep nurturing them with the vital spirit of philosophy without which they may be cut off from the huge family some day even as they survive on their roots that they have struck.

## SPIRIT OF EXTENDED FAMILY

This is the question that many inquisitive people ask. It is a question that has baffled many social scientists. They have tried to find answers in their western organisational models. The answer, however, lies in the Bharatiya roots of this organisation. It is a unique organisation in terms of management and organisational structure though it looks like a typical pyramid like structure if one looks at it superficially. You can see the hierarchy from the local units of an RSS shakha at the base, you see a mandal (a local geographical group of a few shakhas, tehsil, district, state, region and finally an elected Pratinidhi Sabha and a national executive presided over by the Sarsanghchalak. Similarly, you see such organisational structures in all its allied organisations. What is the difference between other organisations and RSS then? What helps it work harmoniously for nearly 100 years within and without, with its allied organisation?

Answer lies in a pithy observation made by the fourth Sarsanghchalak, Prof Rajendra Singh aka Rajju bhaiyya. He noted that RSS is a family organisation, not a cultural or social organisation etc. With family comes, affection, taking care of each other, mutual bonding, readiness to sacrifice for others in the family and readiness to listen to each other and respecting the elders' views and ability of the senior members to take along other members of the extended family – *samyukta parivar*.

Consensus building is not a much valued quality in today's organisations. Fierce competition, influencing decisions with lobbying and pushing your ideas with majority vote, to win at any cost are the major attributes in other organisations – commercial, social and political. In our nation, where we enjoy multiplicity of views and respect every view, where we love to argue endlessly, ending up with misuse of this respect for multiplicity and creating more fault lines; RSS has perfected the art of consensus building. It is easier to achieve this consensus because the relations between its members are built selflessly and like a family. The warmth of relations doesn't allow any argument or discussion to go beyond a point of no return. It delays the decisions, but it also helps take everyone along.

Now, extend this logic to the larger 'parivar' of RSS

inspired or allied organisations. Since, all of them are generally started by an RSS swayamsevak or aligned organisations, he or she carry with them this skill of consensus building and also relationship building. As I note elsewhere in my writings, RSS doesn't just build IQ, it builds EQ and SQ – Emotional quotient and social quotient. Thus, none of its allied organisations split. A few members may have walked out, some returning subsequently, but none tried to break their organisations.

As RSS ecosystem grew over years, a need was felt to have some kind of co-ordination, so different organisations knew what their sister organisations were doing in their own field. Therefore, periodic 'samanvay baithaks' or co-ordination meetings began taking place. It helped them appreciate each other's work and also empathise with their area of work. This understanding of each other's work and conditions in which they worked, helped avoid any clash that might develop when they come from fields that may be considered as antagonist to each other. For example, a Laghu Udyog Bharati member may have some problem with a Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh trade union in his factory. Or a Swadeshi Jagaran Manch or Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh may not like some policies of BJP. And we see them criticising BJP or opposing a policy. But there are occasions when both sides meet in a 'samanvay baithak' and understand each other and try to work out some consensus or hold their ideas till a solution is found. Here, the role of the RSS is only that of a facilitator; it does not guide or push its views on others.

How does RSS control its urge to dictate terms to its allied organisations? It is the spirit of autonomy. It is a misunderstanding that RSS does micro-tunes its organisations. Its role is only to share its views on various issues and it is upto the other organisation whether to accept it or not. Yes, there is a strong moral pressure when the Sarsanghchalak or Sarkaryavaah make a point. This is the reason that the top leadership thinks multiple times before it shares its views with the other organisations. Generally, the leadership responds when the other organisation reaches out for a solution or advice.

## AUTONOMOUS, STILL CONNECTED

The spirit of autonomy is kept alive by treating organisations as equals. In early days, it was RSS that was the providing necessary human resources and even pracharakas for a particular work. At that time too, it would urge the organisation to create its own cadre. Slowly, most of the organisations have been able to have their own workers/karyakartas and own working style



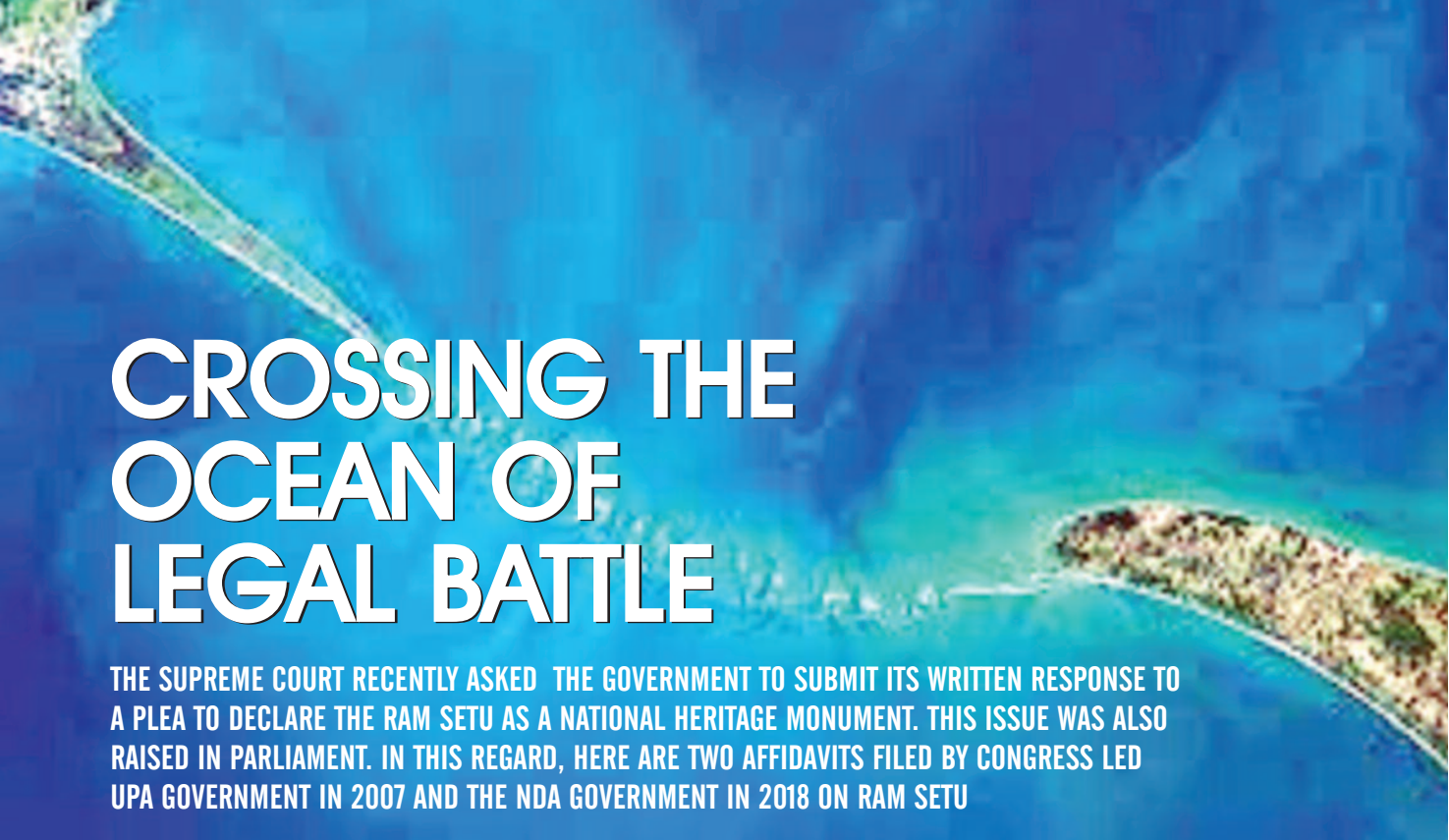
Volunteers of the Rashtriya Sevika Samiti, the women's wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), take part in Path Sanchalan

depending on the field they are in. Thus, RSS may have been the provider of seed capital, but it does not hold equity beyond that. Understanding this, the RSS seniors try to give advice but not force it, respecting an organisations own compulsions and area of expertise.

I have been reading about Communist party these days for my new project. I find that this spirit of giving autonomy to the others in the organisation, creating consensus with serious efforts and nurturing the spirit of affection of a family is missing there. It is a structure that holds people in certain hierarchy for organisation purpose, nothing more. So, is it in most of the organisations.

We recall the construction of Vivekanand Rock Memorial, struggle against Emergency for restoration of democracy, Ram Mandir movement, campaign for 'shat pratishat matadaan' (100 per cent voting) conducted by the larger 'Sangh Parivar' in a coordinated manner in 2014 and its enormous impact on the society of all these activities. As time passes, the direction of RSS founder Dr KB Hedgewar that RSS should not be an organisation within the society, but an organisation of the society is coming to fruition. Even without formally attending RSS Shakha many are imbibing or following Sangh way of thinking and functioning - that is the biggest success. There are more Sanghis who have never been to Shakha than Shakha trained swayamsevaks, that is the success of coordination - the RSS Way. The evolution of RSS from an organisation to a movement is the result of this co-ordination or samanvay managed by RSS since years.

Fortunately for RSS, and unfortunately for other organisations, no one has studied or researched RSS with this view point. Their gaze on RSS has always been to find fault. For RSS, samanvay or harmonious co-ordination within and with organisations allied with it is a serious business, and that is the secret of the harmonious existence of this large Hindu Undivided Family. ■



# CROSSING THE OCEAN OF LEGAL BATTLE

THE SUPREME COURT RECENTLY ASKED THE GOVERNMENT TO SUBMIT ITS WRITTEN RESPONSE TO A PLEA TO DECLARE THE RAM SETU AS A NATIONAL HERITAGE MONUMENT. THIS ISSUE WAS ALSO RAISED IN PARLIAMENT. IN THIS REGARD, HERE ARE TWO AFFIDAVITS FILED BY CONGRESS LED UPA GOVERNMENT IN 2007 AND THE NDA GOVERNMENT IN 2018 ON RAM SETU

■ **SIVAKUMAR. K FROM KERALA**

**D**uring the tenure of UPA I, the Congress party demonstrated its anti-Hindu stance through its affidavit to the Supreme Court regarding the Ram Setu case. The UPA government informed the Supreme Court using that affidavit that there was no historical evidence supporting Lord Ram's existence or that of any of the other characters in the *Ramayana*.

In the affidavit filed by UPA I before the Supreme Court in 2007, it was brazenly stated that the Ram Setu was the outcome of naturally occurring formations "caused by tidal action and sedimentation". Based on the premise of corraling theory which would indicate that the Ram Setu was not a manmade structure, Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) submitted before the Apex Court that Ram Setu could not be considered a historical or archaeological monument and for the same reason unworthy to be declared as a protected monument.

This Freudian slip of the UPA Government had to face public wrath throughout India and the Government had to withdraw the affidavit. Reportedly, there were at least three clauses in the affidavit that the Ministry of Culture suggested be removed; only two of these clauses were removed. In one of the clauses that remained unremoved, it was alleged that the *Ramayana* was not historically accurate, a claim that soon came under fire.

Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in its affidavit filed

on behalf of the UPA Government has stated as quoted below ;

"The petitioner while seeking relief have primarily relied upon the contents of the *Valmiki Ramayana*, the *Ram Charit Manas* by Tulsidas and mythological texts, which formed an important part of ancient Indian literature, but which cannot be said to be historical records to incontrovertibly prove the existence of the characters or the occurrence of the event, depicted therein." Whereas it is submitted that the ASI is aware of and duly respects the deep religious import bestowed upon these texts by the Hindu community across the globe, it is also submitted that the study of human history, which is the primary object of the ASI, like other sciences and fields of study, must be carried out in a scientific manner using available technological aids, and its findings must be based on tangible material evidence." In terms of the *Ramayana*, the statement asserted that there was no "historical record" that could unquestionably prove the character's existence or the events described in it.

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), while claiming that the study of human history being the primary object of the ASI, be carried out in a scientific manner, vehemently argued through the affidavit that "the *Ramcharitmanas* by Tulsidas, the *Valmiki Ramayana*, and other mythological texts, which admittedly form an ancient part of Indian

literature, cannot be claimed to be historical records that prove incontrovertibly the characters and events depicted therein existed or occurred.”

Apart from the blatant denial of historicity of the *Ramayana*, a closer look at the affidavit filed by the UPA Government would reveal that through the affidavit strenuous efforts have been made to relegate Lord Ram's stature to that of 'a character' only. Further, the sacred texts of Valmiki *Ramayana* and the *Ramacharitmanas* by Tulsidas were deliberately labelled on par with 'other mythological texts forming important part of ancient Indian literature'.

Despite the anti-Hindu bravado of the UPA Government, it received a mortal blow from the honourable Supreme Court in 2019 disputed Babri structure case, wherein the honorable Apex Court declared in its 1045-page judgement beyond any shadow of doubt that "Religious scriptures, which are main source of Hinduism are the foundation on which faith of Hindus is concretised. The epic *Valmiki Ramayana* is the main source of knowledge of Lord Ram and his deeds..." The bench further said that the epic *Valmiki's Ramayana*, whose composition dated back to the period Before Christ (BC), was the main source of knowledge of Lord Ram and his deeds. The bench also noted that a witness has referred to *Tulsidas Ramcharitmanas* as another religious scripture to prove that the disputed site was the birthplace of Lord Ram.

As we know, 2014 was a watershed moment for Indian democracy and it was end of the road for the corrupt and the seekers of Bhagwan Ram's Engineering degree. Inevitably, the NDA Government took a fair decision on the Ram Setu issue based deep respect for Indian heritage and Hindu culture. The Modi Government faithfully fulfilled its 2014 election manifesto promises through a new affidavit affirming Hindutva values. The NDA Government in 2018 informed the Supreme Court that, in the "interest of the nation," it will not harm the mythical Ram Setu for its Sethusamudram Ship Channel project. The Union Ministry of Shipping, in its affidavit, told a bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra that the Public interest Litigation filed by BJP leader Subramanian Swamy against the Sethusamudram project can now be disposed off by taking note of its stand That the government of India intends to explore an alternative to the earlier alignment of Sethusamudram Ship Channel project without affecting/damaging the Ram Setu in the Interest of the nation," the affidavit filed by the ministry stated.

It was also clearly stated that dredging Rama Setu, situated between the southern coast of Tamil Nadu and Sri

## THE NDA GOVERNMENT IN 2018 INFORMED THE SUPREME COURT THAT, IN THE "INTEREST OF THE NATION," IT WILL NOT HARM THE MYTHICAL RAM SETU FOR ITS SETHUSAMUDRAM SHIP CHANNEL PROJECT

Lanka, will have socio-economic disadvantages and it would not be in the interest of the nation and hence the Government did not want to implement the said alignment. "Ram Setu is a part of our cultural heritage and also of strategic importance due to its vast thorium deposits. These facts will be taken into consideration while taking any decision on 'Sethusamudram Channel' Project," the affidavit stated.

It is pertinent to mention that this affidavit filed by the NDA Government. assumes utmost relevance in the backdrop of a research-based programme in the *Discovery Science* channel which corroborated that the Ram Setu is man-made structure and not the outcome of naturally occurring formations "caused by tidal action and sedimentation" as vehemently argued by the UPA Government. In furtherance of the question as to whether Ram Setu can be historically and scientifically established, such research-based investigations are a welcome step. The central advisory board on archaeology, which functions under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has approved a proposal for an underwater exploration project. The study will be conducted by the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) and National Institute of Oceanography (NIO), Goa. It will focus on the process behind Ram Setu's formation and also whether there are any submerged habitations around the structure.

It may also be noted that another vital aspect of the issue before the Supreme Court is to determine whether the belief about Ram Sethu is genuinely or conscientiously held over a period of time by Hindus so as to fall within the purview of the freedom of religion guaranteed by Article 25 of the Constitution of India and whether the destruction of Ram Sethu for the Sethusamudram project would violate such a right of Hindus to worship at Ram Sethu. The legal battle goes on. However, no one can lose sight of the fact that the honourable Supreme Court could settle the disputed Babri Masjid case in a historic verdict wherein the honourable court backed the construction of a Ram temple by a government trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya considering "religious scriptures, which are main source of Hinduism as the foundation on which faith of Hindus is concretised and the epic Valmiki's Ramayana, as the main source of knowledge of Lord Ram and his deeds". ■



Sambhaji Maharaj

# PROBLEMATISING DHARMAVEER?

**GREATNESS OF CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJI MAHARAJ CANNOT BE MALIGNED. HE FOUGHT FOR THE PROTECTION OF DHARMA TILL HIS DEATH. WHEN AURANGZEB FORCED CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJI TO ACCEPT ISLAM OR FACE DEATH, HE REJECTED HIS THREAT BLATANTLY AND CHOSE DEATH OVER CONVERSION**

“Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was a Swarajya Rakshak (protector of own kingdom) and not a Dharmveer (warrior of faith). He never championed the cause of faith,” was the allegation cursed by former Deputy Chief Minister of Maharashtra, present Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Assembly and the Nationalist Congress Party leader Ajit Pawar in the legislature’s session on the champion of defender of Hindu religion - Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj. Since the sledging made in the House enjoins a special immunity to the member, he cannot be prosecuted legally for this blasphemous abuses. Nonetheless, that didn't stop the admirers of valourous valiant warrior and second Chhatrapati of the Hindavi Swarajya, Sambhaji Maharaj from expressing their anguish, resentment and bewilderment. The statement attracted ire from all quarters, surprisingly even from Ajit Pawar's uncle and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar as the latter had emerged as a hardcore Hindu-hater in the recent times.

Maharashtra to give Islamic twists and turns to the Maratha history. An organisation named Sambhaji Brigade has earned infamy for vandalising institutes and polluting the social fabric in the state spearheads the misinformation campaign with its mercenary writers. It is one of the fronts of a hydra-headed network polluting the intellectual air of the state. Names of Shrimant Kokate and Amol Mitkari are synonymous with scandalising and libelling old lores, especially pertaining to Peshwa era and related to Brahmins. Ajit Pawar's blatant lies were mere speckles in the storm called distorted history. Everyone in Maharashtra is well aware that rowdy elements of this kind are supported and mentored by Sharad Pawar. It was with his sheltering that the perversity called Sambhaji Brigade was created and spread.

As far as the Hindavi Swarajya is concerned, the name itself reveals that it was an empire of Hindus and this name was christened and acronymed by none other than Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj himself. The five Islamic rulers of the time, including Aurangzeb, wanted to trample the Hindu Empire of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj but neither could dare do so. On the contrary, Aurangzeb had to die empty-handed in Maharashtra

## ANALYSIS



**DEVIDAS DESHPANDE**

Senior Journalist, Pune

Ajit Pawar is neither a history scholar nor a researcher. In fact, just being a politician and constitutional office holder, he hardly possesses any authority when it comes to history. It is notable that a vast army of misinformants are active on ground in

Neither you nor we have given the title of Dharmaveer to Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj and it is not a recent one. He is known as Dharmaveer for centuries due to his unstinted sacrifices. Therefore, Ajit Pawar should have a sense while speaking



—Eknath Shinde,  
Chief Minister, Maharashtra

Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj protected the Hindu dharma. He was mandated and pressured to convert to Islam but he defied it. He sacrificed himself after a long torture for own country, own land and own dharma. He was literally butchered into pieces but he didn't abandon the language of nation and dharma. Therefore, however Ajit Pawar and people with his ideology try to malign (history), Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj was the protector of the empire as well as protector of faith



— Devendra Fadnavis,  
Deputy Chief Minister, Maharashtra

even after spending 27 years in military campaign against Hindavi Swarajya. However, the Sambhaji Brigade, under the patronage of Sharad Pawar started spewing venom and the poisonous lies that both the Chhatrapati's were non-Hindu emperors. To carry forward these false propaganda, fake and frivolous claims of Muslim soldiers in Shivaji's army, Muslims bodyguards in his service and Chhatrapati Shivaji building a mosque were cast repeatedly with ever inflating numbers. In one of such misconceptions, Sharad Pawar himself usurped in Pune that neither Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj nor Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj fought against Muslim rulers, rather supported, helped and whole heartedly cooperated for expending muslim kingdom. Of course, their plan was to put one caste against another caste in Hindu fold and appease their masters.

There is another angle to this controversy. Unlike Sharad Pawar, Ajit Pawar is not seen close to Sambhaji Brigade or that ilk and seldom dwells much on history. Besides, it is an open secret in Maharashtra politics that the uncle-nephew duo are not on same page any more. Their bickerings are blatantly in the open and it spilled over in the first week of Legislative Assembly's winter session.

It is widely said that Sharad Pawar, in the recent session of legislature where the said controversy arose, gave an earful to his nephew for becoming 'too cosy' to the ruling side in which Devendra Fadnavis is a key element. The senior Pawar was unhappy with junior one for 'not being aggressive and forward looking enough'. So much so that

Ajit Pawar, when asked in this context, he angrily snapped back at reporters, "Should I now wrestle with Fadnavis in the Assembly to please you? Didn't Sharad Pawar enjoy cordiality with CMs and ministers when he was the leader of opposition in Assembly? "That is why Ajit Pawar, after being cornered by his uncle, he was forced to toe his uncle's line and his uncle, in his typical style, claimed exactly obverse of what Ajit had said. Even Kokate, a protege of Sharad Pawar, distanced himself from Ajit Pawar's statement indicating the fissures in NCP.

## CHHATRAPATI SAMBHAJI'S SCHOLARLY WORK

Notwithstanding all this controversy, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj stands tall as a luminary among the protectors of Hindu faith. A great Sanskrit scholar himself, orchestrated and authored- *Budhbhushan*, a seminal work on politics and spirituality. A Shaloka in his works reads,

Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj established Hindavi Swarajya and Chhatrapati



Sambhaji Maharaj protected it. Hence, to call him defender of Swarajya is not wrong, but nobody can deny that he also protected the Hindu faith. Therefore, he was a protector of Swarajya as well as Hindu faith

— Chhatrapati Sambhaji Bhosale of Kolhapur (Descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji).

जिवितम्-मृतकं मन्ये देहानाम् धर्मवर्जितं ।  
मृतो धर्मेन संयुक्त दीर्घ जीवी भविष्यति ॥

This means, a person who lives without dharma is dead even when being alive, and a person who dies for dharma lives forever, is cherished for good. In a way, he predicted his own destiny through this verse. Chhatrapati Sambhaji was an ardent and staunch Hindu devotee. He referred to his father as 'Mlenchakshayadikshit'(ordained with killing Mlenchas) because the latter established the Hindu Empire for them protection of Hindus. Like Chhatrapati Shivaji, Sambhaji Maharaj also brought back the converted Hindus in their faith and hanged the culprits in cow slaughter cases. A letter that he sent to the Rajput King Ram Singh exhorted the latter to re-establish Deva-Dharma. He got an inscription made, proclaiming that 'now this has become a Hindu kingdom'.

As the history unfolded, Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj fought for the protection of Hindu faith till his death. When Aurangzeb coerced Chhatrapati Sambhaji to accept Islam or face death, he rejected his threat blatantly and chose death over conversion. After hearing that refutation, Aurangzeb killed Chhatrapati Sambhaji after torturing him brutally for 40 days consistently as ordained in the Quranic verses. Chhatrapati Sambhaji didn't abandon Hindu faith to turn out to be a Muslim even after suffering the cruellest death every second. It was this bravery and valour shown



Thousands of people paid tribute at the memorial of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj at Vadhu Budruk village on the occasion of 'Balidan Smaran Din', the death anniversary of the Maratha king. Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj, the son of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, was killed by Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb in 1689

by him that prompted the historians, balladeers and public to proclaim him as Dharmveer. It is not a title bestowed by any king or government but an affectionate admiration by society and the community towards this braveheart and resounding soul. Because of his infinite sacrifices, society christened him Dharmaveer.

No wonder, various Hindu organisations and academicians have come forward to condemn Ajit Pawar's accusations. As expected, BJP, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Bajrang Dal were at the forefront in targeting and rebutting Ajit Pawar. However, Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena, which swore by 'Hardcore Hindutva' for over three decades since late Balasaheb Thackeray's time, chose to stay silent. This was hardly any surprising since the Shiv Sena under Uddhav has been all but Islamised and no trace of its former avatar of a Hinduist party is visible. It chooses not to recall giant sacrifices, valour, the Hinduism, Hindutva, the bravery and work of Chhatrapati Shivaji and Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj to protect Hindus and Sanatanis. All this in just two years is over when Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena joined hands with NCP and Congress. Precisely, this is the reason of a faction in Shiv Sena under Eknath Shinde, staunch loyalist to the original Hindu cause espoused by Balasaheb Thackeray, broke away from the Uddhav.

Perhaps Uddhav Thackeray is satiated that it is better to remain silent and immune to this controversy irrespective of the damage caused by his alliance partners to the glorious history of Marathas. It may be, there is an underlying fear brewing that if he dares oppose, the alliance will break and he will be pushed to a political abyss from an oblivion that he is currently in. ■



# RECLAIMING THE LEGACY OF FREEDOM STRUGGLE

**'STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL SELFHOOD: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE' BY J NANDAKUMAR ENABLES READERS TO UNDERSTAND THE INDIAN NATIONAL MOVEMENT WHICH WAS STEEPED IN WITH THE SPIRIT OF SWA**

■ **DR NEERJA A GUPTA,**

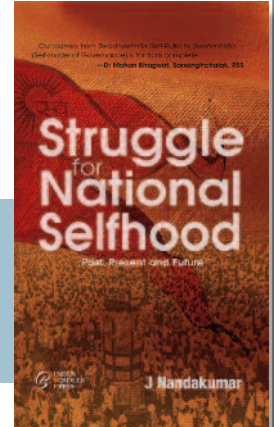
VICE CHANCELLOR, SANCHI UNIVERSITY OF BUDDHIST-INDIC STUDIES

**J** Nandakumar's book *Struggle for National Selfhood: Past, Present and Future*, newly released in Amrit Kaal of Bharat's Swadheenta, precisely maps the psyche of a nation, infused with the impulse to restore freedom. The social thinker J Nandakumar senses and culminates the National Movement of Bharat in eighteen chapters to highlight the spirit of "Swa" and its journey across the freedom movement in historic politico-socio-cultural perspectives. Throughout, he maintains the exposition how "Swa" has been the spark behind this fight for freedom. Largely eclipsed details have been showcased, delineated and enunciated systematically and comprehensively as also orchestrated to create a mosaic of events. While general understanding of History limits to political acts, the author has encompassed the activities traversing across Bharat, horizontally as well as vertically. The collated grasp of circumstances presents and glances through a synchronised texture in the entire span of assertions for freedom.

The book has a pragmatically written Introduction by Dr Mohan Bhagwat, Sarsanghchalak of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. The Introduction sets up brilliantly the ethos to vocalise the contemporary society's major issues and hitherto underlying currents, which are tagged majorly into the past. Social, political, economic, and pandemic hit environments are considered to set up the tone of the book. The Introduction surprises the context and extends into the needs and imperatives of such writings.

The differently served history, that essentially axed the spirit of "Swa" to lower down the national

**Title: *Struggle for National Selfhood: Past, Present and Future*, Author: J Nandakumar, Publisher: Indus Scrolls Press, Pp 364, ₹ 1200.00**



**THE BOOK HAS A PRAGMATICALLY WRITTEN INTRODUCTION BY DR MOHAN BHAGWAT, SARSANGHCHALAK OF THE RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH. THE INTRODUCTION SETS UP BRILLIANTLY THE ETHOS TO VOCALISE THE MAJOR ISSUES OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY, WHICH ARE TAGGED MAJORLY INTO THE PAST**

consciousness of a strong society is very well brought forth while exhibiting the larger realities in the book. Many events, people, terminologies, policies and possibilities are enamoured and mounted with selected precepts. To quote from the book:

"As we have entered the Amrit Kaal of our Independence, it is time to take stock of our journey so far, our triumphs, failures, commissions, and omissions. A judicious and impassionate analysis will reveal that somewhere along the time we lost our way - our core ideals which drew on our Swatva that inspired Veer Balidanis and patriots take a plunge into the national movement for freedom and sacrifice their lives" (p. 167).

The book is a must-read one stop destination as a compendium of historical accounts in a country with multifold realities. Through this book it shall be easy to comprehend the entire Indian National Movement which was steeped with the spirit of "Swa" as its real backdrop. ■



# ‘WE WILL NOT ALLOW ANY PART OF BHARAT TO BECOME DAR-UL-ISLAM’

— **ALOK KUMAR**

**THE VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD (VHP) PASSED A RESOLUTION AGAINST RELIGIOUS RADICALISM AND DEMANDED A STRINGENT LAW TO BAN ILLEGAL CONVERSIONS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNIFORM CIVIL CODE**

“A comprehensive policy has to be made at the global level to deal with the toxic effects of religious dogmatism. This narrow-mindedness and exclusivism has to be neutralised at the intellectual, social and political levels. Violence, looting, rape and murders are used as weapons by a large section of Islam in the name of Jihad. Now this will not work. We will not allow any part of Bharat to become Dar-ul-Islam. VHP, Bajrang Dal, Durga Vahini along with revered saints and thinkers of the society have been fighting it steadfastly. We will speed up this work,” said the International Working President of Vishva Hindu Parishad, Advocate Shri Alok Kumar, while addressing a Press Conference on January 1, 2023, to

throw light on the International meeting of Vishva Hindu Parishad, which was organised in Indore, Madhya Pradesh from December 30, 2022 to January 1, 2023.

The 3-day meeting of the Central Board of Trustees and the Governing Council of Vishva Hindu Parishad concluded with the resolution of “Jahan Hindu wahan hum – We are where Hindus are.”

## **RESPECT FOR HINDU DHARMA**

Shri Alok Kumar said, “We have direct work in 30 countries of the world, out of which representatives of Karyakartas from 24 countries had come for the International coordination meeting in Mumbai for 3 days at the end of December-2022. Respect for Hindu Dharma by virtue of



(R to L) Sri Alok Kumar, International Working President, Vishva Hindu Parishad, Dr Ravindra Narain Singh, President, VHP and Vijay Shankar Tiwari, National Spokesperson, while addressing the Press Conference of VHP, which was organised in Indore, Madhya Pradesh

its respect for Mother Nature and Life is increasing all over the world; now we will promote this positive development and connect people with Hindu values of integral humanism. Vishva Hindu Parishad will work with this goal to solve the problems of Hindus wherever they are and for the cause of a united, organised, well-refined, graceful and dignified Hindu society.”

## 60 YEARS JOURNEY

“In the year 2024, the VHP organisation is completing 60 years of its life and work. In the meeting, as a resolution, an action plan has been made to make students Sanskaar Vaan (well-cultivated/refined) and Shraddhavan (reverent) all over the world through Bal Sanskar Shalas, competitions of Dharmic education, spreading of holistic, altruistic and syncretic Hindu values” he added

## RESOLUTION ON "RELIGIOUS DOGMATISM"

Shri Alok Kumar said, “An important resolution passed in the meeting on "Religious Dogmatism – Its Ill-Effects and Solution", made it clear that the declarations by some traditions that "Only my religion is right, others have to accept and live it and if they do not accept it, then I have the divine command to eliminate them!" are unacceptable

to humanity as those who insist on this "heavenly command" to destroy have actually destroyed many ancient civilisations of the world! The resolution reads: “Unfortunately, despite the toxic experiences of many centuries, religious radicalism and dogmatism of the desert traditions remains a challenge for the whole world even today. These radicals are also responsible for the terrorist attacks happening here and there in the world every day.”

“The series of inhuman atrocities on non-Muslim women through ‘Love Jihad’ and also the Jihadi activism of the ‘Sar Tann Se Judaa Gang’ (beheading gang) are the ghastly faces of this religious radicalism....”

## MISSIONARY AGENDA

“A large section of Christian missionaries are engaged in the agenda of engineering social enmity, fostering terror, and converting people through the tactics of force, fraud and allurements. It was also urged in the resolution that Religious radicalism would prove to be a suicidal path for the Christian and the Muslim communities instead of their development. They should replace their “radical leadership” by sensible and rational leadership who stand for development and harmonious co-existence,” Shri Alok Kumar further added.

Notably, VHP’s Trust Board appealed to all sections of the society not to patronise such anti-national tendencies, not to destroy the future for the sake of immediate gains. It asked people to play their role in dispiriting religious dogmatism and separatist leadership and cheering open-minded leadership that takes the society towards harmony and development.

## CONTROL MADRASAS AND MISSIONARY SCHOOLS

The Board of Trustees appealed to the Central and the State Governments to control the madrasas and missionary schools that teach exclusivism, extremism and separatism and make arrangements for development and harmony-oriented education. VHP also demanded that the central Government should enact stringent laws to prevent illegal conversions and religious dogmatism. Along with this, a demand was also made to pass and implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in the entire country.

“Hindu society has long been a victim of religious dogmatism of the desert traditions, but it has proved formidable to those challenges. VHP will organise a mass awareness campaign in this regard to create eternal vigilance and expose the conspiracies of the dogmatic leadership,” Shri Alok Kumar informed.

— Organiser Bureau

# “POLYGAMY IS ANATHEMA TO WOMEN’S DIGNITY”



On December 12, 2022, Supreme Court of India issued notices to the Central Government and Law Commission of India on a public interest litigation (PIL) filed by Bharatiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA), requesting abolition on practices of polygamy and other Islamic practices like Mut’ah marriages, Misyar marriages and Nikah-halala as they violate Fundamental Rights of the Muslim women in India under Articles 14, 15, 21 and 25 of the Constitution. BMMA, an organisation working for equal rights for Muslim women in India, on December 21, 2022 released a report ‘Status of women in polygamous marriages and need for legal protection’ in Mumbai, Maharashtra. In the background of the survey and PIL, **BMMA Co-founder Zakia Soman** spoke exclusively to **Organiser Special Correspondent, Nishant Kumar Azad**. Excerpts:

■ **What was the idea behind the survey?**

We have been demanding a codified Muslim family law for many years. After abolition of triple talaq, we are particularly focused on child marriages and polygamy as they lead to lifelong injustice to women. We wanted to highlight the condition of women in polygamous marriages, their emotional trauma, economic hardships and social loss of face etc. Women have expressed these feelings in the survey.

■ **The survey was conducted in 2017. What is the reason behind the delay to bring it into the public domain?**

The survey was conducted in 2017 and the report was ready by end of 2018. We wanted to release it along with a PIL in the Supreme Court against polygamy. The PIL took some time to prepare since finding pro bono lawyers etc, took time. By the time we were about to file, COVID-19 arrived. This led to a gap of almost 3 years. Finally, the PIL was admitted and on December 12, 2022 the Supreme Court (SC) issued notice to the Centre in our PIL.

■ **The Muslim Personal law board is against the Supreme Court idea of banning polygamy. It has opposed the petition in the SC.**

Muslim Personal Law Board is at the heart of the problem. It is futile to expect any solutions from them. Even in triple talaq cases, women began approaching courts after utter failure of the board and those affiliated to them. They insist on maintaining patriarchal status quo and come in the way of women’s rights becoming reality. They can continue to oppose but I am confident the SC will come to the women’s help & reject their pleas.

In 1997, the Apex Court refused to interfere

with the practice of polygamy saying the matter was a policy decision and the court should not interfere. But in November 2022, the court agreed to form a constitution bench to conduct proceedings on pleas related polygamy and 'Nikah Halala'.

■ **Are you optimistic that the Apex Court's decision will be in your favour?**

We are extremely hopeful that we will get justice. The SC will see the injustice inherent in the system. Our petition argues that Islam permitted polygamy in a certain context and at a time long ago, but it never encouraged polygamy. Also, Islam doesn't permit polygamy in today's context where there is no war, no widows & orphans in need of help. Plus, in the modern age, widows can be helped through education & economic empowerment.

■ **Your organisation has played a key role in legally banning instant triple talaq, so do you think that this survey will pave the way to end polygamy?**

Yes, it is high time polygamy is made illegal. The idea of a man having multiple wives is anathema to women's human rights, dignity and equality.

**In 1997, the Supreme Court refused to interfere with the practice of polygamy saying the matter was a policy decision and the court should not interfere. But in November 2022, the court agreed to form a constitution bench to conduct proceedings on pleas related polygamy and 'Nikah Halala'**

■ **Do you see any possibility of educated moderate Muslims extending support in your survey?**

There are many Muslims who support the rights of women. They must begin speaking out more vocally to support the campaign.

■ **What is your action plan now?**

Besides pursuing the PIL, we will write to women's commissions, minorities commission and progressive MPs, who support gender equality. We will also continue to educate the public about the need to abolish such unjust practices. ■

**THE STUDY CONDUCTED ACROSS 11 STATES IN INDIA, SURVEYED THE STATUS OF WIVES WHOSE HUSBANDS ARE IN POLYGAMOUS MARRIAGES. THE REPORT HIGHLIGHTED THAT AN OVERWHELMING NUMBER OF WOMEN SAID THAT THEY FELT A SENSE OF BETRAYAL, LOSS OF DIGNITY AND LOSS OF SELF-RESPECT WHEN THEIR HUSBANDS MARRIED OTHER WOMEN**

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

- Polygamous marriage causes tremendous emotional trauma to the woman apart from economic and other hardships. It affects the woman's sense of self respect, self-esteem and dignity as a human being
- Most wives in polygamous unions have low education and income status. 77 per cent first wives are dropouts below SSC, 43 per cent do not have an income. Further, a large proportion of women in such arrangements – about 52 per cent - have an income below Rs 10,000. This indicates that women in these marriages are deprived of economic independence
- In 49 per cent of the cases where the woman happens to be in a polygamous union, the parents have selected the spouse. This shows the relatively little autonomy that women have within this institution and makes a mockery of the Quranic provision of consent. It also highlights that assumptions about free, autonomous choice of spouses in polygamy is not true
- An overwhelming number of women said they felt a sense of betrayal, loss of dignity and loss of self-respect when the husband remarried despite her being the wife
- The survey highlights severe mental health issues that plague the women
- 50 per cent of the women said that they were depressed most of the time. They also reported other symptoms of depression such as lack of adequate sleep (43 per cent), frequent aches and pains (33 per cent), not feeling good about themselves (33 per cent), and even a tendency to self-harm (43 per cent)
- An overwhelming number of women (84 per cent) felt that polygamy should be outlawed. A large number of them (73 per cent) even said that the husband who takes a second wife should be punished



# MITIGATING THE MENACE

**GOVERNMENT'S WAR AGAINST DRUG MENACE, SPEARHEADED BY PRIME MINISTER MODI AND HOME MINISTER AMIT SHAH, IS GUIDED BY THE STRATEGY OF INTER-GOVERNMENTAL COORDINATION, INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AND AGGRESSIVE SUEVILLANCE ACROSS THE BORDER STATES. THIS HAS YIELDED RESULTS, SHATTERING THE VERY SPINE OF NARCO-TERRORISM AND INSURGENCY IN SEVERAL NORTH EASTERN STATES**

■ **DIBYA KAMAL BORDOLOI**

**‘D**rugs-free India,' a determination in this Amrit Kaal by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to make our country free from drug menace needs to be applauded. To move forward this determination of a drugs free nation, Home Minister Amit Shah devised India's strategy to destroy and uproot the drugs network in order to secure the younger generation and launched a scathing attack on the finance of narcotic terrorism.

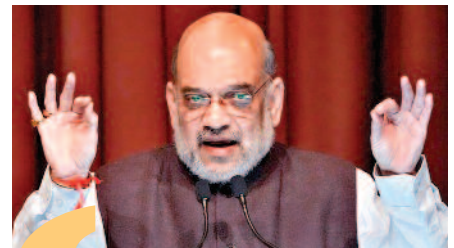
The Ministry of Home Affairs adopted a three-pronged strategy of zero-tolerance policy against drugs. This includes strengthening the institutional structure, empowerment and coordination of all NARCO agencies and extensive awareness campaigns.

Under the guidance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, there has been emphasis on strengthening and accountability of the system. The Ministry of Home Affairs has made continuous efforts for institutional restructuring and strengthening of legal provisions for narcotics control and elimination. For better coordination and synergy, a four-tier NCORD mechanism was strengthened in 2019 with NCB as nodal agency. Indian Navy, Coast Guard,

Drugs Controller general, National Maritime Security Coordinator, NTRO, Port Trust, Coastal Police and State Police have been included in this coordination mechanism for smooth functioning of war against drugs.

## COUNTERING DRUGS AND TERRORISM

In the recently concluded Interpol General Assembly, Shri Amit Shah raised the issue of links between narcotics and terrorism. He proposed real time information sharing amongst all the anti-narco agencies of the world. At the No Money for Terror (NMFT) conference, he highlighted the importance of international cooperation on cracking down on narco-terror finance focusing on the strategy of trace, target and termination. India has so far signed numerous MoUs with different countries on real time information collaboration and security corporation.



**Our Government has a zero-tolerance policy towards the issue of drugs. Those countries promoting terrorism in our country are using the profits from drugs for the same. The presence of this dirty money also gradually hollows our economy”**

— Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Parliament



Massive countrywide crackdown on narcotics networks has led to the seizure of thousands of crores of drugs in recent times. With the help of the agencies, Modi Government is doing everything to end the drug menace



Seized Drugs (in Lakh Kilogram)	
2006- 2013 (UPA Regime)	2014-2022 (NDA Regime)
22 Lakh 45 Thousand KG	62 Lakh 60 Thousand KG
Worth Rs 33,000 Cr	Worth Rs 97,000 Cr

Money earned through drugs have been routed for terror funding across the world. Evidence has emerged in many drug-related investigations in India that drugs money has been pumped to finance terror organisations in many parts of the country, including Jammu & Kashmir. Many extremist organisations in the North East were also financed by drug syndicates until the recent past. The alarming truth is that, barring a few, most of the extremist organisations of North East are directly or indirectly involved in drug trade in the region. The narcotic menace is a borderless problem, so it is necessary to have a better conducive environment and cooperation among all drugs law enforcement agencies and intelligence agencies with a purpose of corporation, coordination and collaboration. To make the performance of the Government effective, as reiterated by the PM and Home Minister, emphasis on inter-departmental coordination has been stressed and enforced. Security agencies like NIA, BSF, Assam Rifles, and Indian Coast Guard have been empowered under the NDPS Act. The Home Minister directed all States to form a dedicated Anti Narcotic Task Force (ANTF) headed by an ADG or IGP level

officer. So far 35 States and UTs have dedicated ANTF. Special campaign launched to prevent smuggling of drugs by sea routes. As 60 to 70 percent of drugs are smuggled mainly through the sea route the Indian Navy, Coast Guard and Port authorities were made active participants in the anchor mechanism. As a result after 2014, the drugs seized have increased by almost 185 per cent and more and more cases are registered against drugs dealers and traders. The value of the seized drugs, during 2014 to 2022 is Rs 97, 000 crores against 33,000 crores during 2006 to 2013. This shows how seriously the current Government is running the war against drugs in India with zero tolerance against drugs approach. More than 523234 numbers of drug traders and peddlers were arrested across the country during 2014-2022, as against 162908 arrests made during 2006-2013. This is a 220 per cent increase.

### ZERO TOLERANCE AGAINST DRUGS

North East was once a safe route of drug trafficking to other parts of India. Huge quantities of drugs and contrabands coming from the India-Myanmar border were safely transported to different parts of India. Thousands of youth in States like Manipur, Nagaland, and Assam were victims of drug menace. But after 2014 the war against drugs in the region was given a new pace by the Central Government. Home Minister Amit Shah initiated zero tolerance against drugs policy in the region and the war against drugs 2.0 underway in the North East since 2019. He chaired several Chief Minister-level meetings in NE to mobilise the operation against drugs. As a result, the region is benefiting from the collective approach to combat the drugs racket. In the last one and a half years in Assam alone, drugs worth Rs1050 crores were seized by the police and security agencies. More than 7,000 drug traders and peddlers were arrested in Assam alone. All the routes through which drugs were smuggled to Assam and other parts of India were almost sealed by the security agencies.

Drugs are seized in small or large quantities across Assam on a daily basis. States like Manipur are also doing tremendous work in the war against drugs. So far drugs valued at Rs 4,040 crore have been seized by the security agencies in numerous anti-drugs operations. 2,536 drug mafias and peddlers were arrested in connection with drug menace in the State. Over 1,930 cases registered in the past few years and commendable progress have been achieved by the police in the investigations of these cases. Chief Minister N Biren Singh said that various communities and Civil Society Organisations have been "very supportive" in the ongoing war against drugs and the

## MANIPUR GOVERNMENT INTENSIFIES 'WAR ON DRUGS'

■ **W RORRKYCHAND SINGH, IMPHAL**

**Amidst** reports of continuing illegal drug trafficking in the State, the Manipur Government has escalated its ongoing 'war on drugs' campaign with a decision to use chemicals to destroy poppy plantations and bring a permanent solution to the drug menace. The decision to destroy all poppy plantation fields using drone technology was taken during a meeting held at the Cabinet Hall of the Chief Minister's Secretariat on the ongoing War on Drugs 2.0 on December 29. The Government is also working on making Manipur a zero poppy cultivation State by providing financial and technical assistance to farmers in alternative farming and enhancing their income in the hill districts where the flowering plant is illegally cultivated on a large scale. "We are joining forces to strengthen the war on drugs campaign and leaving no stone unturned to root out this menace from the state. I urge the state's people to cooperate and further extend support to the campaign with utmost seriousness and commitment. We must protect our youths from drugs and leave a better future for the coming generations," informed Chief Minister N Biren Singh. Since November 3, 2018, the Government has been destroying poppy plantation fields and arresting illegal cultivators and drug traffickers. Senapati district police have destroyed 567 acres of poppy plantation



fields in 2019-2022, 390 acres in 2022-2021 and 330 acres in 2021-2022. Of the notified 20 villages under the Senapati district, 19 have stopped planting poppies and shifted to vegetables this year. The remaining portion of the district's poppy cultivation area, measuring (60 acres) at Chalaha Hill Range, was destroyed recently. The community has achieved the target of Zero Poppy Cultivation. The Kamjong Police also has the same success story of dealing with drugs and destroying the illegal poppy plantation. The district police have destroyed 239.8 acres of criminal poppy plantation fields. In another district, the war on drugs intensifies with the mass destruction of illegal poppy plantations. A poppy plantation of around 25 acres was destroyed on December 29 by a joint team of State Police, AR, NAB, Forest and District Administration at Selsi Village, Kangpokpi district. Notably, the arrest of Paojamang Haokip (56), the Village Chief of Monglham village, will send a strong message to other village chiefs of tribal areas who secretly allow the plantation of the illegal flowering plant. The Government has also installed the Fourier-transform infrared spectroscopy machines, which can identify unwanted narcotics substances and detect the quality of different drugs at Manipur Forensic Science Laboratory.

government has also set up an Anti-Narcotics Task Force to intensify the operations.

### A NEW STRATEGY

As Amit Shah termed it as Death triangle, the notorious Golden Triangle represents the region coinciding with the rural mountains of Myanmar, Laos, and Thailand. It is Southeast Asia's main opium-producing region and one of the oldest narcotics supply routes to Europe and North America. With a 1643 km long border with Myanmar, India has been at risk for the longest time, even before the emergence of the Golden Crescent. States of Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Mizoram, and Nagaland share their border with Myanmar. Drugs including opium, heroin, methamphetamine and many more are smuggled from

Myanmar into the North East region. Also, drugs illicitly cultivated in India travel through the same route for trade. Drugs produced in the 'Golden Triangle' enter India through Mizoram, Manipur, and Nagaland from Bhamo, Lashio, and Mandalay in Myanmar. The route bifurcates and one channel moves Northwards through Moreh in Manipur while other moves southwards to enter Champai in Mizoram. Moreh (Manipur), Champai (Mizoram), Dimapur (Nagaland), and Guwahati (Assam) have become the nucleus of drug trafficking industry in India's northeast. But after the intensifying war against drugs rackets by the Central Government, drug smuggling to the region has been curbed to a large extent in recent years. Most importantly finance to the insurgency groups of North East from drugs money has been reduced by a large extent. ■

# IMMIGRATION, BHINDRANWALE AND CONVERSION

THE AUTHOR SHARES HIS EXPERIENCE DURING HIS RECENT VISIT TO PUNJAB UNDER THE AMBIT OF Bhai KANHAIYA SVASTHYA SEVA YATRA ORGANISED BY THE NORTH ZONE TEAM OF NATIONAL MEDICOS ORGANISATION. HE EXPLORES THE BORDER STATE THREADBARE, UNLIKE A TOURIST, TO GAIN A FIRST-HAND EXPERIENCE INTO THE REALITIES OF HEALTHCARE AT THE GROUND LEVEL

■ **DR DEV DESAI**

When the prospect of joining a medical camp in the districts of Punjab adjoining the India-Pakistan border, under the ambit of the inaugural Bhai Kanhaiya Svasthya Seva Yatra (BKSSY) organised by the North Zone team of National Medicos Organisation (NMO) came up, I took up the offer as an opportunity to explore the state threadbare in a different way than as a mere tourist on the one hand and to gain a first-hand peek into the realities of healthcare at the ground level outside the ivory tower of a tertiary care institution on the other. After considering the various means of reaching Amritsar, I gathered the courage to drive down the 250-odd kilometres from Chandigarh, a distance longer than any I had driven across.

I am glad that I took up the challenge to drive by myself as not only were the broad and smooth roads a delight to drive on, they also gave a major confidence boost to the driver in me. The FasTag system has virtually eliminated the congestion at the Toll Plazas, and apart from a few spots where flyover bridge construction was ongoing, the roads were pretty much in good shape.

They say, 'advertising reflects the mores of society, but it does not influence them.' If this is true, one would not be wrong to say that the number one issue which rules the minds and hearts of Punjab today is immigration, immigration and immigration. Most billboards along the way from Chandigarh to Amritsar advertised either IELTS



A roadside hoarding guiding Punjabis to immigrate to US/UK

trainers or visa consultants who claimed to get visas to countries as far apart as Canada in the north-west to Australia in the south-east.

A close second were advertisements by so-called prophets and pastors inviting people to 'Christ Satsang' and special Christmas celebrations, going on to highlight the extent to which these activities have penetrated the state of Punjab (about which we shall talk later in this article). The health camps by themselves were a very different experience in health care than what we are used to in tertiary care hospitals. The instructions from the organisers (NMO North Zone) were clear—make do with whatever medications are available in the kits provided and no prescribing other medications or ordering investigations. For someone whose primary work as a resident is drawing samples almost daily for a myriad of work-ups, this was a culture shock at its max.

The bigger shock, as the team leader, was the person whom everyone from the local organisers to medical students who were a part of our team looked up to for instructions ranging from the time at which the camp was to be set up, the nitty gritty of setting it up to diagnostic dilemmas and queries regarding what medications to prescribe.

This was in sharp contrast to my day-to-day work as a junior resident, where I rushed to the senior residents or consultants for any and every sort of doubt I might have.



Sikhs at Church



Bhindranwale's supporters at a gathering

For the instructed to become the instructor was quite a change and initially surely a bit overwhelming. By the final day, though, things went a bit more smoothly since our machinery was well-oiled, and I must thank the medical students who were part of my team for being excellent and receptive team members. The kit put together by the NMO Punjab the team was comprehensive and meticulously prepared, and the efforts put in by the organisers shone through.

The other stark difference between working in the field and a tertiary care referral centre is that most patients have simple problems in the former. The largest chunk is that of the elderly with chronic disorders like diabetes, reflux, hypertension and ageing-related illnesses like osteoarthritis, followed by children with allergic concerns, anaemia, failure to thrive and respiratory infections. Wherever we could, we tried to provide medicines for the relevant problems, but what we definitely gave to one and all was a patient ear, empathy and counselling regarding simple home remedies, lifestyle changes, further follow-ups etc., and more often than not, these measures made a more significant impact than medications alone.

The going became smoother as we started to understand the local language and dialect better, for example after the first day itself, we came to know that 'daaru' in these parts also means 'drops' to put in eyes or ears and not the other meaning most of us are familiar with.

A huge shout out to the local organising team from Sarhadi Lok Seva Samiti and backroom management by NMO North Zone which ensured that the camps in three different villages went through extremely smoothly with minimal glitches. Everywhere we went, the elders of the village accorded us a gracious welcome and the camp was often set up in the premises of the village Gurudwara, whose public address system was used to inform and invite villagers to the health camp.

The famous Punjabi hospitality came to the fore, and in every village, we were offered repeated rounds of tea over and above hygienic, nutritious and tasty meals. The local organising team of Sarhadi Lokseva Samiti did their best to ensure that we were comfortable. When we were setting up camp on a chilly Sunday morning, I heard some peculiar song playing from a nearby house. It sounded like a bhajan of some sort, but the lyrics felt a bit out of place. Led by my curiosity, I ended up going towards the source of the sound to listen clearly, and what I heard intrigued me. It was a bhajan all right, but dedicated to Jesus and Jehovah. Similarly, what also struck my mind was to see many children with English-sounding names like Samson, David, Angel and whatnot.

I finally ended up asking some of the parents whether they understood what these names mean, and most replied in the negative. So I asked them who chose the names in the first place, and the answer usually was 'pastor ji ne

# RURAL PUNJAB



Bhai Kanhaiya Svasthya Seva Yatra organised by the North Zone team of National Medicos Organisation in Punjab

## A CLOSE SECOND WERE ADVERTISEMENTS BY SO-CALLED PROPHETS AND PASTORS INVITING PEOPLE TO 'CHRIST SATSANG' AND SPECIAL CHRISTMAS CELEBRATIONS, GOING ON TO HIGHLIGHT THE EXTENT TO WHICH THESE ACTIVITIES HAVE PENETRATED THE STATE OF PUNJAB

rakhiya si' (the pastor has kept it). If one needed any further evidence of the extent to which the Churches of various denominations have spread in rural Punjab, here it was. Incidentally, our team had set up camp in Gurdaspur District, which possibly has the highest proportion of Christians in Punjab. The other observation was the lasting popularity of Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale.

The location where we had set up camp on day 1 had just above our head a large poster featuring Bhindranwale on one side and Deep Sidhu on the other, going on to show how the recent agitation against the farm laws had potentially given a new lease of life to the weakened Khalistani movement. It was indeed a bit uncomfortable to be sitting under the gaze of someone who, for much of India outside Punjab, was a dreaded extremist. We also heard accounts from another team that had gone to Tarn Taran about how some elements there told them that the day Khalistan is a reality, Tarn Taran would be its hub. On the other hand, one must also note that the average Punjabi Hindu and Sikh lives are extremely intertwined, with many a Sikh visible in temples and an equal number, if not more, of Hindus regularly visiting Gurudwaras and playing

Sukhmani Sahib at home.

The evenings were spent exploring the nearby places—courtesy our wonderful local team. We got to see the Indian outpost at Kartarpur Sahib from where Pakistan was a stone's throw away. What one of the local organising team members said stirred us all deeply- 'I will not pay \$20 to Pakistan for visiting the shrine across the border, I will rather wait for the day this border no longer exists and there is Bharat on both sides to visit. The border did not exist before 1947 and it need not necessarily exist in the future.' All hail Akhand Bharat!

We also got to know that Akbar has crowned Emperor at Kalanaur in Gurdaspur, and the platform where the coronation took place exists till date. One saddening part was to see the numerous scribbling and engravings defacing this historical site, even though it is supposed to be an ASI-protected monument. We also got the opportunity to visit many local temples and shrines. Coming back to Amritsar, the thing which struck me the most in the closing ceremony was how deeply the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) understands the reality of various parts of Bharat and how hard it works to assimilate with each and every sphere in the national interest. Two senior functionaries from the RSS addressed the entire team, one at the inauguration of the BKSSY and one at its conclusion and to uphold the local sentiments, both spoke exclusively in fluent Punjabi, even though as an organisation, the Sangh usually functions in Hindi.

That Sangh has among its numerous affiliates, one like the Sarhadi Lok Seva Samiti, exclusively focused on border areas was another heartening thing to know. The Sangh is truly unparalleled when it comes to working towards promoting Bharatiya interests. Amritsar as a city also seemed better organised than I had expected it to be. There is a BRTS system which covers major roads and many flyovers. The older city, which my visit to the famous Kesar Dhaba took me to, is a bit congested. The food at Kesar was average at best and to me the hype surrounding that place did not make sense. On the other hand, Kanha Sweets lived up to its reputation with scrumptious chole-bhature and gajar halwa, while the chai at Giani Chaiwallah was pretty decent too. I took back with me aam papad and urad papad, both delicious. Driving back from Amritsar to Chandigarh was another good ride. All in all, this one of its kind experience made me more confident on multiple levels, as a driver, a doctor and a leader. I am greatly indebted to the National Medicos Organisation for this opportunity and look forward to more such exciting experiences in the future for service to the nation. ■



**Dr UJWALA CHAKRADEO**

Vice Chancellor  
SNDT Women's University

## WHERE BHAKTI MEETS VIBRANCY

IT IS BELIEVED THAT BHAGWAN SHIVA ASSUMED THE FORM OF SUNDARESWARAR (THE HANDSOME GOD) AND MARRIED PARVATI (MEENAKSHI) AT THE SITE WHERE THE ARULMIGU MEENAKSHI SUNDARASHWARAR TEMPLE IS CURRENTLY LOCATED

**S**hiv Bhakti in Bharat seems to be eternal; one of the oldest temples dedicated to Bhagwan Shiva is that of Meenakshi. There are two *Garbhagriha* (*sanc-tum sanctorum*) to the temple. It is believed that Bhagwan Shiva assumed the form of Sundareswarar (the handsome God) and married Parvati (Meenakshi) at the site where the temple is currently located. However, the original temple was destroyed and it was rebuilt and renovated many times. The original garbhagriha was protected and as a contribution or donation the rulers added a part to it and thus concentric enclosures were created. Thus, making the temple as one of the largest complexes spread over almost 14 acres of land.

The enclosing compound wall has large decorated entrance gates called *Gopurams*. *Gopuram* is the iconic feature of the Dravidian Style of

temple architecture. The temple has a total of 14 towering gateways more than fifteen stories tall, the tallest one rises to approximately 170 feet.

Each *Gopuram* is covered with many sculptures of Gods, Goddesses, and demons. There is typicality and an order in placing these sculptures on Gopuram. All these sculptures are painted in vibrant colours. These are repainted every 12 years. The height of these gopurams are in ascending order from inner to outer concentric enclosure.

Vibrancy of colours in these gopurams and also in the interiors of the Mandapas probably depicts the reflection of the vibrant natural atmosphere of the region due to bright sunlight. To be colourful is the choice of the masses in entire India, particularly so in Southern parts of India. ■





**Immortal Bond:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi with his mother Heeraben at her residence in Gujarat

# A FRUITFUL LIFE EMBODYING BHARATIYA MOTHERHOOD

ENDLESS TRIBUTES WERE PAID TO THE DEPARTED SOUL, A STALWART WHO LED A 100 FULL YEARS OF IMPECCABLE LIFE, CONTINUING THE DIVINE MATERNAL LEGACY OF OUR CIVILISATION. SHE WAS AN ASCETIC IN THE TRUE SENSE AND FABRICATED HER SON'S IDEAL ALTRUISTIC PERSONALITY. MAY THIS HOLY PROGENY OF BHARATIYA MOTHERHOOD BECOME ETERNAL

■ **MANCHAL MAHESH, BENGALURU**

**P** rime Minister Narendra Modi's mother, Heeraben Modi (100) passed away peacefully in her sleep recently, after living a virtuous life of 100 worthwhile years, filled with penance, sacrifice and noble values of Bharat. She was simple and humble, despite being omnipotent. A unique confluence of firmness, discipline and affection, she lived a prototypical valuable life, embodying all the ideals. If a

nation is built by individuals, it is the mother who builds those capable individuals. In our culture, a mother is not a mere institution of accouchement, but a divine sculpting base of an individual. The number of great personalities this civilisation would have seen be negligible, if it had the paucity of great mothers like Chaneshwari, Aryaamba, Jeeja Bai, Bhuvaneshwari

# TRIBUTE/HEERABEN MODI

Devi and many more. Hiraben too joins this matriarchal lineage. Narendra Modi's exemplary life is a reflection of his mother's life. Similarly, Heeraba's life reflects the essence of Bharatiya motherhood, which has nurtured our civilisation for millennials.

PM Modi always reminisces his mother's life of fairness, simplicity, honesty, benevolence and self-respect. Despite poverty, traumatic childhood and losing her parents at an early age, she lived a righteous life, working continually and helping others. She inculcated her poise, patience and endurance into her children too. She remained humble even when her son became Chief Minister or Prime Minister. She neither participated in any of the official Government events nor availed any of the State benefits—something which relatives of politicians need to learn. She preached the principles of *samatva rajdharma* to her son, asking him to commit his life for the welfare of the poor.

PM often recalls her discipline in matters pertaining to finance and her ability to manage the expenses of her family with her minute earnings from household work. As any mother, she admonished her son not to waste the sacred public funds and to use them to the fullest extent for public welfare.

Probably this is reflected in PM's famous statement 'Na Khaunga, Na Khane Dunga.' Apparently, it was her concern about the respiratory problems that women experienced due to the poisonous combustive fumes produced by firewood that inspired the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (gas supply scheme for the poor at subsidised rates). Her heartiness and compassion towards the rag pickers and *safai karmacharis* inspired the PM to announce the schemes that made their lives dignified. Her zeal and efforts for cleanliness at home and locality, inculcating the same habits in her children too, is humbly remembered by the PM. Because of this, the provisional idea of 'Swacch Bharat' sprouted in young Modi.

When Modi decided to devote his entire life to the country renouncing his family, she wished him victory with tears in her eyes. A humble mother, she was exhilarated to know that Modi, who was away from his homeland, working as Pracharak at different places, would stay closer to her when he returned to Gujarat as the Chief Minister.

Modi always reminisced about his mother, who lived a contented life even in extreme poverty, in a leaky mud house, sewing torn clothes of the children. She preached to her children to live a life of simplicity-equality-tolerance and thrift regardless of poverty, wealth and power. Many of Modi's irrigation projects in the state of Gujarat, which was once arid, were influenced by his mother's act of reusing



In Happier Times: PM Narendra Modi with his mother Heeraben in the lap of nature

**DESPITE POVERTY, A TRAUMATIC CHILDHOOD AND LOSING HER PARENTS AT AN EARLY AGE, SHE LIVED A RIGHTEOUS LIFE, WORKING CONTINUALLY, HELPING OTHERS. SHE INCULCATED HER POISE, PATIENCE AND ENDURANCE INTO HER CHILDREN TOO. SHE REMAINED HUMBLE EVEN WHEN HER SON BECAME CHIEF MINISTER OR PRIME MINISTER**

the water leaked from their house's attic, a common scenario in any Bharatiya household. It is mindset, not mind, that plays a pivotal role in such acts. While she encouraged young Modi's enthusiastic thoughts and adventures, like any mother, she also taught him the importance of self-restraint. Modi remembers that her mastery of home remedies, during his childhood days saved the health of his family which couldn't afford expensive medical treatment.

She encouraged her son Modi to read aloud *Ramayana*, *Geeta* and other *Dharmagranthas*. Heeraben, who could not read or write, acquired spiritual knowledge through this auditory effort. She cultivated her son's habit of working continually for 18 hours or more every day, and his personality of self-reliance.

Endless tributes poured in to the departed soul—a stalwart who led a hundred full years of impeccable life, continuing the divine maternal legacy of our civilisation. She was an ascetic in the true sense and shaped her son's ideal altruistic personality. May this holy progeny of Bharatiya Motherhood become eternal. Is it even remotely possible to build the Vishwaguru Bharat without such great mothers? ■

# WALKING GOD STOPS HIS WALK ABRUPTLY

**SRI SIDDHESHWAR SWAMIJI OF THE REVERED JNANA YOGASHRAM IN VIJAYAPURA, KARNATAKA POPULARLY REFERRED TO AS A WALKING GOD, WAS KNOWN FOR HIS SCHOLARLY DISCOURSES AND POWERFUL ORATORY**

■ **MANOHAR YADAVATTI**

**T**he seer's resolve to take samadhi has been against the desperate wishes and prayers of his thousands of disciples, followers and well-wishers.

## DRIPS DURING REST

Irrespective of the popular sentiments, it looks like Swamiji had made up his mind to give up the physical form as he had stopped taking food and liquids for more than 10-12 days. Although the 'walking God' was keen on fulfilling his last wish, people at the helm of affairs were against it; he was forcibly injected nutrients by drips while he rested.

## REFORMER

Maruti More recalled how the region around Katral village in Karnataka and neighbouring Maharashtra started to prosper following the frequent visits of Sri Siddheshwar Swamiji to his Ashram. Interestingly, Maruti More's farms are spread across both Karnataka and Maharashtra. He says- "The hitherto barren lands with rain-fed crops and less yield transformed into well irrigated rich fertile fields fetching high income with sugarcane, grapes and many a horticultural crop; all thanks to the able guidance of Sri Siddheshwar Swamiji".

## REFUSING RENOVATION

Basavaraj Kadkol, a Bengaluru-based-Architect known for his passionate multi-crore residential projects all over the State had his own reminiscences' with Sri Siddheshwar Swamiji- "The Mutt authorities wanted to renovate the premises of the small simple room Shri



Sri Siddheshwar Swamiji

Siddeshwara Swamiji used to stay whenever in Vijayapura Jnana Yogashram. So they suggested I seek his permission as they themselves had failed in doing so. One of them introduced me to the seer and I proposed doing some minor changes in the room. But Shri Sideshwara Swamiji politely refused any changes in his living room. He plainly told me to go ahead with whatever assignments suggested barring his room".

## A SUCCESSFUL CONSULTANT

Shivayogi R. Byakod is an Agriculture Post Graduate

Respectful Salutations to the holy memory of Sri Siddeshwar Swamiji of Gnana Yogashram, Vijayapura, whose mortal journey ended today. The people worshiped Pujiyashri as the walking God. RSS pays humble homage to the holy memory of the Saint of Jnana Yogashram who was the embodiment of knowledge, sewa, love and compassion

— **Dattatreya Hosabale,**  
Sarakaryavah, RSS  
— **V Nagaraj,**  
Kshetriya Sanghachalak,  
Dakshin Madhya Kshetra, RSS

Paramapujya Sri Siddheshwara Swami Ji will be remembered for his outstanding service to society. He worked tirelessly for the betterment of others and was also respected for his scholarly zeal. In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with his countless devotees. Om Shanti

— **Narendra Modi,**  
Prime Minister

numbers, known for pin drop silence and promptly timed, never ever mistimed. Common people were spellbound by his command over Puranas, Vedas, and Upanishads. His masterpiece: Vachana Nirvachana". He concludes- "In fact, there are thousands of people inspired by his simplicity, nobility, words of wisdom, inspiration etc. A truly great scholar and an intellectual in the real sense".

## SELFLESS

Maruti More recalls-"Once Shri Siddeshwara Swamiji had been on a tour abroad for spiritual lectures along with Shri Suttur Deshikendra Swamiji. Impressed by his addresses the audiences were on a donation spree and the total amount in this form went up to Rs 102 crores! Yet, on the way back he refused to even touch the amount. Those in the Mutt Management felt upset at such a stance. They tried to reason with the Swamiji that the money could have been utilized for building educational institutions to benefit society at large. But Swamiji was upset at the money-making ploys to such an extent that he left the Ashram and camped in Salotgi village for months giving religious lectures."

A simple man with a great vision: Shri Siddeshwara Swamiji was never satisfied with mere preaching. He led by example. Unlike other Swamis; he only wore a white shirt and lungi, while his shirt had no pockets. He never aspired for money and popularity, and humbly refused the Padma Shree. One can hope that the people who benefited from his lectures would emulate his example. ■

originally from Vijayapura district headquarters. He came down to Ranna Belagali village near Mahalingapur town of Mudhol Taluk in Bagalkot district to do farming. He drilled around 22 bore wells, but failed to get water. It was at such a juncture that Sri Swamiji was having a discourse in Mahalingapur. Once the lecture got over, Shivayogi R.Byakod accompanied his friends and met the seer, who casually inquired about what they were doing? When he narrated his plight, Shri Siddeshwara Swamiji inquired why in spite of his academic background in agriculture he was wasting his talent. He asked Bayakod to take up a consultation as an alternative to help farmers in the region. Such a suggestion became a turning point in the life of Shivayogi R.Byakod. Initially, he was hesitant and had his own genuine doubts about whether the counselling profession would be of any help to him. With such thoughts in mind, he started the Sneha Krushi Agri Clinic and Agri Service Center at Mahalingapur.

## PRO-FARMERS

Shivayogi R.Byakod recalls-"His admiration and love towards farming and farmers was very appealing in most of his discourses which used to be attended in large

## COLUMN

# REVOLUTIONARY WHOSE ASHES ALSO INSPIRED



**DR ANKITA KUMAR**

Independent Researcher

**KANAILAL DUTTA, A DOUGHTY REVOLUTIONARY, WAS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE 1905 STRUGGLE AGAINST BENGAL'S PARTITION. HE GAVE HIS LIFE FOR THE CAUSE OF MOTHERLAND BY KILLING REVOLUTIONARY-TURNED-APPROVER**

**K**anailal Datta (1888-1908), son of Chunilal Datta, was born in Chandan Nagar in the Hooghly district of West Bengal. He took the Hooghly Mohsin College's BA examination in 1908; the college was connected to the University of Calcutta.

In his early college years, Kanailal met Professor Charu Chandra Roy, who encouraged him to join the revolutionary cause during the agitations against the Partition of Bengal. Kanailal Dutta, a member of the Chandannagar group, was at the forefront of the 1905 struggle against Bengal's partition. Additionally, he forged a strong bond with the Srishchandra Ghosh-led Gondolpara revolutionary group. He relocated to Kolkata in 1908 and joined the revolutionary organisation Jugantar there.

On May 2, 1908, the police raided Bengal and detained a number of revolutionaries just two days after the Muzaffarpur bombing attempt on April 30, 1908, which was intended to assassinate Kingsford. Charges of waging a war against the Government were brought against 33 revolutionaries. One of these individuals, Kanailal Dutta, was likewise held at Alipore Jail after being taken into custody on May 2, 1908, when the police conducted a search at 32 Murari Pukur Road in Kolkata. They found a bomb-factory there, along with a cache of weapons, tonnes of ammunition, bombs, detonators, and other equipments. They seized publications related to the Revolution as well. More people were being detained, and the raids were taking



Kanailal Datta (1888-1908)

place all over Bengal and Bihar. Numerous people were detained, including Aurobindo Ghosh, Barindra Kumar Ghose, Ullaskar Dutt and Indu Bhusan Roy. One prisoner, Narendranath Goswami turned pro-British during this period and began giving the police the names of several people, which led to additional arrests.

Kanailal and forty other nationalist fighters were held in Alipore Jail in Kolkata for trial. The majority of these persons were connected to Sri Aurobindo Ghosh's Bengali newspaper *Yugantar*, which served as a major forum for nationalists, and the nationalist group Anushilan Samiti. Barindra Ghosh, the younger sibling of Sri Aurobindo and a crucial nationalist figure, was also detained. Lives of Sri Aurobindo and a dozen other nationalist fighters were put at risk due to of Goswami's disclosures to the British authorities. Thus started the historic State trial, known as 'Alipore Bomb Case'. All the nationalist fighters who had been detained, including Sri Aurobindo, had been accused of waging a war against the British Emperor. Goswami lived in Srirampur, a neighbourhood close to Chandernagore. He was aware of all the revolutionaries' plans. As soon as he entered the witness stand, he began naming several of his former co-workers as suspects. In an attempt to blow off the governor's train at the Chandernagore station in 1908, the names of Barin Ghosh, Shanti Ghosh, and Ullaskar Dutta were mentioned. He also revealed the names of Charu Chandra Roy, the head of the Chandernagore revolutionary outfit, and Aurobindo Ghosh and Subodh Chandra Mullick, who were linked to revolutionary activities on June 24. Both Satyendranath and Kanailal met the approver in the jail infirmary under the guise of giving Gossain additional revelatory comments. Narendranath Goswami was shot by both of them within one of the hospital's wards, but he was able to flee to the gates. In one of the most courageous and daring acts of revolutionary freedom movements in the history of the entire British Empire, Kanailal hunted him down and shot him in the chest with a handgun that was smuggled into the prison. Under Barin Ghosh's direction, the detainees awaiting trial devised a scheme to escape from the Alipur Central Jail and eliminate Goswami.

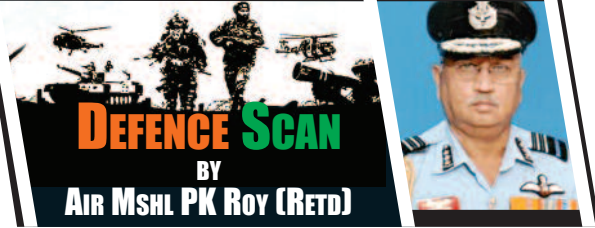
In order to defend the convicts, BC Roy, a barrister at law, provided assistance with men and weapons. Shudhangshu Rai snuck one revolver into the jail on Sunday, August 23. The following day, Barin instructed

**WE MIGHT NEVER HAVE WITNESSED SRI AUROBINDO LEAVING THE BRITISH PRISONS IF IT WEREN'T FOR KANAILAL'S BOLD DEED. BENGAL SAW A LOT OF CELEBRATION FOLLOWING THE ASSASSINATION NEWS OF NARENDRANATH GOSWAMI**

him to hand it to Satyendranath with the request that he kill Goswami. Satyendranath was then a patient at the jail hospital. He declined. On Sunday, August 30, Barin received a second revolver via Shrish. It was a more compact one. Kanailal accepted it and was then checked into the jail hospital. When received, the revolvers were loaded. Stage was already set. Goswami passed away on August 31, 1908, in a correctional hospital. He was killed due to Kanailal's shooting. We might never have witnessed Sri Aurobindo leaving the British prisons if it weren't for Kanailal's bold deed. Bengal saw a lot of celebration following the assassination news of Naren Gosai. Sweets were handed out by Surendranath Banerjee in the Bengalee newspaper's office. In the streets, there was dancing. Even children celebrated the murtis of Kanailal and Satyendranath.

The murder of Narendranath Goswami, a revolutionary-turned-approver, was one of the most daring acts in revolutionary history. He was assassinated by Kanailal in jail. The High Court passed judgement on the case on October 21 and sentenced Kanailal to death. Kanailal decided not to challenge the order in court. Kanailal's explanation of his motive for killing Naren in his statement before the District Magistrate was touchingly straightforward and brief: "I wish to state that I did kill him. I don't want to explain why I killed him in any way. But wait, I want to explain. It was as a result of his country-traiting behaviour. A big rush was seen among the thousands of people in the audience to take a small bit of the ashes from the fire of Kanailal on the glorious day when his mortal remains merged into the holy flames of the funeral pyre at Kalighat."

High-ranking British police official FC Daley had made the following statement in this regard: "The substance that was sold in the name of Kanailal Dutta's ashes was apparently fifty times the true amount of the ashes found at the cremation!" ■



**DEFENCE SCAN**  
BY  
**AIR MSHL PK ROY (RETD)**

## RAKSHA MANTRI DEDICATES TO THE NATION 28 BORDER ROADS ORGANISATION INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS



On January 3, 2023, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh dedicated to the nation 28 infrastructure projects of Border Roads Organisation (BRO), worth Rs 724 crore, during an event organised at Siyom Bridge on Along-Yinkiong Road in Arunachal Pradesh. The projects comprise 22 bridges, including Siyom bridge; three roads and three other projects in seven border States/Union Territories of Northern and North-Eastern regions. Eight of these projects are in Ladakh; five in Arunachal Pradesh; four in Jammu & Kashmir; three each in Sikkim, Punjab and Uttarakhand and two in Rajasthan. In addition, three telemedicine nodes - two in Ladakh and one in Mizoram – were inaugurated.

Shri Rajnath Singh, in his address, described the projects as a testament to the concerted efforts of the Government and the BRO towards the development of border areas in order to enhance the operational preparedness of the Armed Forces and ensure socio-economic development of the far-flung regions. He asserted that it is the top priority of the Government, led by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, to connect the border areas and ensure the development of its residents. He emphasised that “The aim is to build a strong and self-reliant ‘New India’ to effectively deal with future challenges which may arise due to the constantly-evolving global scenario... We do not believe in war, but if it is forced upon us, we will fight. We are ensuring that the Nation is protected from all threats. Our Armed Forces are ready and it is heartening to see that the BRO is walking shoulder-to-shoulder with them.”



## DRDO CELEBRATES ITS 65TH FOUNDATION DAY

FLORAL tributes were paid at the bust of former President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam at DRDO Headquarters in New Delhi to mark the 65th Foundation Day of the Organisation, which is celebrated on January 1, every year. The event, organised to mark the day, also included release of two books comprising articles on defence technologies, a dictionary on scientific and technical terminology, stores manual and guidelines (SMG-2023), third anniversary issue of bimonthly bulletin In Sight and DRDO Technology Foresight. In his address to the DRDO fraternity on the occasion, the DRDO Chairman Dr Samir V Kamat congratulated them for achieving several milestones in 2022, urging them to focus on developing the defence R&D ecosystem in the country and strive to realise Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi’s vision of ‘Aatmanirbhar Bharat’.

## ‘TAPAS’ MALE UAV USER TRIAL STAGE



INDIA’S Tactical Advanced Platform for Aerial Surveillance (TAPAS) Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) UAV, earlier called Rustom-II and Developed by DRDO’s Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE), entered user trials stage in Q4 2022. It achieved the interim endurance target of 18 hours. Further, against the interim target of 28,000 feet altitude, the UAV had achieved 27,350 feet with a Medium Range Electro Optic MREO payload. TAPAS can fly with Line of Sight and SATCOM links The UAV is also capable of being armed.

(Curtsey <https://www.indiandefensenews.in/>)

## FIRST INDIAN ARMY WOMAN OFFICER DEPLOYED AT SIACHEN

INDIAN Army has deployed Captain Shiva Chouhan at a post in Siachen Glacier, the world's highest battlefield. In his message, Raksha Mantri Shri Rajnath Singh said "Excellent news! I am extremely happy to see more women joining the Armed Forces and take every challenge in stride." It is pertinent to mention that in the past, women officers of Indian Army have been posted up to the Base Camp of Siachen but not on the glacier.



## IAF AIRCRAFT CARRYOUT LANDING AT EMERGENCY LANDING FACILITY ON NH-16 AT BAPATLA DISTRICT

ON December 29, 2022, IAF fighter and transport aircraft carried out practice flying including circuit, approach and overshoot on the newly constructed Emergency Landing Facility on NH-16 at Bapatla district in Andhra Pradesh.



## RFP FOR PROCUREMENT OF ADDITIONAL K-9 VAJRA HOWITZERS

REPORTS indicate that MoD has issued Request for Proposal for procurement of 100 additional K-9 Vajra howitzers manufactured by Larsen & Toubro (L&T). 'Hanwha Defence', a South Korean defence company, had earlier transferred the technology to L&T. The last of the earlier contracted 100th gun was delivered to the Army by L&T in February 2021. It may be recalled that K-9 Vajra was bought for use in deserts, but the standoff with China prompted the Indian Army to deploy them in the mountains with certain modifications where it performed exceptionally.



## MISLEADING ARTICLE

ON Indian Army has clarified that "NO Army official has been arrested" as mentioned in an article in the Jaipur edition of *The Times of India*, December 31, 2022. It also requested Tol to ensure due editorial diligence to prevent such grave errors in future.



## INS SUMITRA CARRIES OUT PORT CALL IN EGYPT

As a part of Operation Safed Sagar, INS Sumitra carried out port call in Egypt from December 31, 2022 to January 2, 2023 and held joint exercises with Egyptian Navy. Southern Fleet Commander of Egyptian Navy, Rear Admiral Aymen Adel Abbas visited INS Sumitra to interact with Indian Navy officers.



## CHIEF OF THE ARMY STAFF VISITS TROOPS IN KUPWARA

ON New Year 2023, General Manoj Pande, Chief of the Army Staff visited troops deployed at various locations in High Altitude Area along the Line of Control in Kupwara Sector. During the visit he interacted with the troops and extended New Year wishes to all ranks and their families. ■





**GB REDDY**

Hyderabad-based Columnist and Strategic Analyst

# NUCLEAR ENERGY: A GAME CHANGER

**TECHNOLOGY IS TURNING OUT TO BE A CRITICAL FACTOR IN GEOPOLITICS OF NEW WORLD ORDER. TO UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF "WHERE DOES INDIA STAND IN THE TECHNOLOGY RACE", A HOLISTIC REVIEW IN A SERIES OF ARTICLES HAS BEEN ATTEMPTED SO THAT THE "MEDIA DEBATES" WITH SCIENTISTS, TECHNOLOGISTS AND STRATEGIC EXPERTS PROVIDE A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE OF INDIA'S RANKING IN VARIOUS FIELDS. HERE IS THE FIFTH COLUMN IN THE SERIES FOCUSING ON NUCLEAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES**

**T**he key macro level issues pertaining to the "Nuclear Energy Technologies", as part of the electricity generating agencies, have been restricted to policy and decision-making levels to determine end objectives in pragmatic manner for the scientists and technologists to implement.

### CLIMATE CRISIS AND NET ZERO COMMITMENT

India's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) under the Paris Agreement for the Period 2021- 2030 include a commitment to reduce the emissions intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35% by 2030 from 2005 level; a resolve to achieve about 40 per cent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030 with the help of transfer of technology and low cost international finance. We currently visualise a 450 GW renewable and 500 GW non-fossil capacity by 2030, both of which needs review.

### LONG TERM GOAL

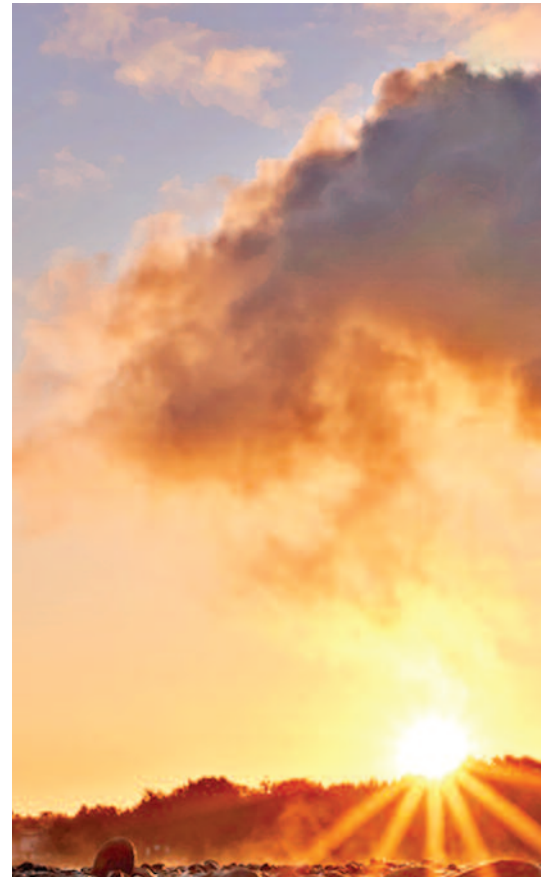
"24x7 power supply without interruption" is India's long term goal. Four factors must be taken into account while

determining the end objectives to include: economic super power rise (7-8 per cent annual GDP increase); population growth to 1.85 billion; at least 3-4 times increase of per capita consumption/demand (to reach world average of 3260 MWe); and climate change constraints.

As per the IEAs Energy Outlook 2021 released recently, India's energy consumption is expected to nearly double as GDP expands to an estimated \$8.6 trillion by 2040 under its current national policy scenario. In particular, reducing fossil fuel consumption to 30 per cent. Thus, the imperative for pragmatic analysis to identify and define end objectives for each field. Perhaps, the end objective of total installed capacity to be achieved by 2047 by conservative estimates be 600-700 GWe by 2030, and 1200 GWe by 2050, and by optimistic estimates to reach 1500 GWe by 2050.

### PERTAINING TO NUCLEAR ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

Nuclear power is the use of nuclear reactions - fission, fusion and decay. Presently, electricity from nuclear power is produced by nuclear fission of uranium and plutonium.





The latest UN-backed climate science shows the world should nearly halve emissions over this decade to have any chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century

## GROWTH OF ELECTRICITY INSTALLED CAPACITY

In December 1947, installed capacity of electricity was only 508 MWe. The growth story of installed capacity (in Megawatts) includes: 1961 - 1917 MWe; 1971 - 16271 MWe; 1981 - 33316 MWe; 1991-74699 MWe; 2001 - 101630 MWe; and, 2011 - 185496 MWe. As on August 31, 2022, the total installed capacity of 407.797 GW to include: Total Fossil Fuel-236.086 GW (57.9 per cent) with Coal producing 204.079 MWs (50.0 per cent), Lignite producing 6.620 MWs (1.6 per cent), Gas producing 24,824 MWs (6.1 per cent, and Diesel producing - 562 MWs (0.1).

And, Non-Fossil Fuel RES (Incl. Hydro and Nuclear) total installed capacity of 171.71 GW includes: Hydro producing 46,850 MWs (11.5 per cent), Wind producing 41.666 MWs (10.2 per cent), Solar producing 60,814 MWs (14.9 per cent), BM Power/Cogen producing 10,206 MWs (2.5 per cent), Waste to Energy producing 495 MWs (0.1 per cent), and Small Hydro Power producing 4,899 MWs (1.2 per cent). Nuclear installed capacity is 6,780 MWs (1.7 per cent). Today, few analysts claim that India has moved from power deficit to power surplus nation with total generating capacity at 1,386 bn kWh, which is 122 per cent of own usage, that is total consumption of 1,137.00 bn kWh. Now, India is exporting power to Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar.

Fusion is the process of combining two nuclei to create energy. It has the ability to provide power around the clock. Nuclear decay processes are used in niche applications such as radioisotope thermoelectric generators in some space probes such as Voyager 2. Over 12 advanced reactor designs are under development. Research of nuclear fusion power is in an advanced stage. Also, there is research to combine fusion and fission processes to generate hybrid nuclear power.

## CLASSIFICATION OF NUCLEAR REACTORS

Nuclear reactors are classified by type of nuclear reaction like fission, fusion or by moderator fuel like Graphite-moderated (GCR), heavy water, light water, light-element-moderated, liquid element moderated and Organic moderated and also by gas -Advanced Gas-cooled Reactor (AGR), or, by coolant like Pressurised water reactor (PWR) or Pressurised heavy water reactors (PHWR), Boiling water reactor (BWR), Supercritical water reactor (SCWR), Reduced moderation water reactor [RMWR], sodium cooled pool type LMFBRs, Gas cooled reactors and Molten-Salt reactors (MSR).

Also, nuclear reactors are classified by Generations -

Generation I (GEN I) developed in 1950-60s, GEN II reactors developed in 1965-1996, GEN III 1996-2016 or III+ developed in 2017-2021, and GEN IV research and development started after 2000 - Gas-cooled fast reactor, Lead-cooled fast reactor, Molten-salt reactor, Sodium-cooled fast reactor, Supercritical water reactor and Very-high-temperature reactor with the primary goals being to improve nuclear safety, improve proliferation resistance, minimize waste and natural resource utilisation, and to decrease the cost to build and run such plants. Furthermore, theoretically possible GEN V and V+ have been identified for research and development.

## GLOBAL TRENDS AND GEN IV FORUM

In 1954, there were "Zero" nuclear reactors. By the end of 2021, there were 437 operational nuclear reactors in 32 out of 195 countries worldwide with a combined capacity of 396 GW providing about 10 per cent of the world's electricity. There are also 53 nuclear power reactors under construction and 98

# TECH RACE-V

reactors planned, with a combined capacity of 60 GW and 103 GW, respectively. The US has the largest fleet of nuclear reactors. The US and the UK generate roughly 20 per cent of their electricity from nuclear energy and in France, it's 70 per cent. Most reactors under construction are GEN III reactors.

The world is now at a nuclear crossroads. Nuclear energy scares people. However, the scale of the climate crisis is encouraging Governments to give the nuclear industry another look. The latest UN-backed climate science shows the world should nearly halve emissions over this decade to have any chance of limiting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius by the end of the century. For net "Zero" emissions, nuclear power generation should more than double between 2020 and 2050.

## HISTORY OF INDIA'S NUCLEAR ENERGY

In 1950, Homi Jehangir Bhabha formulated a "three-stage nuclear power programme" through the use of uranium and thorium reserves found in the monazite sands of coastal regions of South India. India has only around 1–2 per cent of the global uranium reserves, but has about 25 per cent of the world's known thorium reserves. As per estimates, the country could produce 500 GWe for at least four centuries using just the country's economically extractable thorium reserves. Thus, the focus on nuclear power generation through fast breeder reactors and thorium fuelled reactors based on the three-stage nuclear power programme featuring the use of a thorium fuel cycle (uranium-233 bred from thorium as fission fuel) in the third stage, as it has large thorium reserves but little uranium:

- **Stage 1:** PHWRs using indigenous uranium which efficiently produces not only energy but also fissile plutonium. It is also proposed to take up a programme of addition of LWR units in the first stage based on imported technology.
- **Stage 2:** FBRs reprocessing the spent nuclear fuel and using the recovered plutonium.
- **Stage 3:** Fast Breeder Reactors (FBR) Based on the Th-233U cycle. 233U is obtained by irradiation of thorium in PHWRs.

On August 4, 1954, the Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) was created. In August 1956, "Apsara", the first research reactor in Asia became operational in the Trombay campus of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre which was shut down in 2009. Subsequently, five more reactors namely CIRUS (40 MWt), Zerlina, Purnima, Kamini and Dhruva (100 MWt) reactors were built for specific research programmes. In 1971, Indira Gandhi Centre for Atomic

Research (IGCAR) at Kalpakkam was set up with the main objective of conducting a broad-based multidisciplinary programme of scientific research and advanced engineering, directed towards the development of sodium cooled FBR technology.

In October 2010, India drew up a plan to reach a nuclear power capacity of 63 GW in 2032. Now, the proposed Nuclear Power Plant planned in Haripur has been shifted to Kavali in Andhra Pradesh. Interestingly, the Nuclear Power Plant planned at Kovvada in Andhra Pradesh has been shifted from Mithi Virdi in Gujarat. The revised date of commissioning of the Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor (PFBR), which is a 500 MWe fast breeder nuclear reactor presently constructed at Kalpakkam in October 2022, is yet to be announced.

## FUTURE PROGRAMMES

Long term forecasts are always full of uncertainties. Lead-times for developing new technologies are very long. Therefore, foresight in identifying areas and initiating R&D in those directions is very critical. 500 MWe FBRs, based on the successful Kalpakkam PFBR, have the potential to ensure that generation by the middle of the present century is about 25 per cent of the total electricity generation. This path would enable us to limit the primary energy import to about 30 per cent.

In India, a road map for future technologies is envisioned to include: Advanced Heavy Water Reactor (AHWR), which is planned at BARC to gain useful experience in using thorium-based fuels, and to expedite the transition to thorium-based systems. To sum up, the road map ahead at the policy decision making should consider the following:

- Holistically review of current plans to determine plan objectives taking into consideration the needs of raising India as economic power, population growth trends, three-fold per capita consumption, and "Climate Crisis" commitments.
- Cooperation and collaboration between Ministries of Power, RES, Nuclear and Energy to formulate future plans for 2030, and 2050 to meet the Climate commitments.
- The Judiciary must stop accepting PLIs from anti-nuclear civil activists.
- Stop illegal sand mining along the coasts of South India and their exports to other countries. Otherwise, sooner than later, there will be no "monazite sands bearing Thorium reserves" left. Unit Type Capacity (MWe) ■

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