

HARBANS MUKHIA SAYS INDIA'S ANCIENT CIVILIZATION REJECTS HATE; POLL RESULTS PROVE IT



The ideology of social peace



a distance from Mr. Advani's rath yatra and the resultant events of December 6. The formation of the first BJP government in 1998 was not due to the Ram Mandir movement but more the result of infighting within the various constituents of the then ruling coalition. But learning a lesson from it and keeping Lord

language that one saw in the speeches of Prime Ministers like Jawaharlal Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Atal Bihari Vajpayee?

Will Mr. Modi, or the BJP as a party, or the RSS learn a lesson from Lord Ram? The people of India have made their preferred choices clear. It is very unlikely to happen. After the Supreme Court of India's famous judgment of 2019 on the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi dispute, which, among other things, had forcefully upheld the view that no temple, much less a Ram temple lay demolished under the debris of the masjid (a view advanced by several professional historians and archaeologists) and that the demolition of the masjid was a criminal act for which the guilty should be tried in a court of law, one still hears echoes of "undoing the injustice of 500 years" doing the rounds. Never mind what the historians and the Supreme Court have said.

In placing constraints on the politics of hatred, which is the hallmark of the Modi government, India's millennia-old civilisation has asserted itself. In doing so, salience is due to the civilisation of our medieval centuries that has given us the legacy of numerous saint-poets, the Bhakti sants, who brought calm to the strained religious divide of rival gods by conceptualising one universal god where their rivalry gets submerged. For, in the midst of considerable bloodshed on the battlefields, between political and denominational factions extending over five and a half centuries, the first genuine communal riot between common people of different faiths — of which we have recorded evidence — happened in 1714, seven years after Aurangzeb's death. Clearly, the ideology of social peace was working.

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In a reaction to the invitation that was extended to the President of the Indian National Congress, Mallikarjun Kharge, to the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Uttar Pradesh Minister Yogendra Upadhyay is reported to have said: "They (the Congress) rejected [the] Ram Mandir invitation. If they do the same this time, then it will show their shallow mentality."

The comparison between the invitation to the consecration ceremony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya on January 22, 2024 and Mr. Modi's oath-taking ceremony on June 9, 2024 shows, if anything, the same mentality that led Mr. Modi to deny, or at least doubt, while on the election trail, his own biological birth, and claim to be of divine origin.

Between an invocation and the election

Media orthodoxy has it that the fixation of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with Lord Ram is still bringing it huge electoral and political dividends, which has convinced the BJP leadership that this indeed is an inviolable truth. Any amount of empirical evidence to the contrary is dismissed as hypothetical at best, and/or false at worst. The ascendancy of the BJP, from a mere two Lok Sabha seats in 1984 to a secular rise to 303 seats in 2019 is proof enough of the link with Lord Ram at its heart. What other proof is required?

The exploitation of Lord Ram for political ambitions was unambiguous in BJP veteran L.K. Advani's famous statement in the middle of the launch of the rath yatra, that he was a political and not a religious leader, i.e., aiming at political, and not religious gains. In the timing of the installation of the statue of Lord Ram and the massive fanfare that accompanied it, followed by

the consecration of the temple in Ayodhya on January 22 this year, it was clear that the proximity of the 2024 general election was the determinant. The link between the election and the invocation of Lord Ram, whatever the occasion, was forever highlighted rather than hidden. Yet, the failure of the link has been loud and clear on several occasions. On December 6, 1992, with the demolition of the Babri Masjid, the BJP's top leadership must have imagined that the path to electoral victory now lay clear and unhindered. Assembly elections held in some of the main States in the Hindi belt, in 1993, led in the opposite direction: the BJP lost in Uttar Pradesh to arch rival of the Samajwadi Party Mulayam Singh Yadav (and Bahujan Samaj Party) and had to wait for a decade to return home. The wave of "liberating Ram Lalla" from the precincts of the masjid was feeble. There were electoral losses in Himachal Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh too. Its government in Rajasthan survived the debacle, though with a considerably reduced majority, as Chief Minister Bhairon Singh Shekhawat had kept

Ram out of politics would have required a rethink of the communal perspective, which is central to the Sangh Parivar. In 2014, there had to be camouflaging of the communal agenda using the more general slogan of vikas (development).

The Ayodhya result

In the 2024 general election, the defeat of the BJP in Ayodhya itself demonstrates the dysfunctional link between electoral politics and the invocation of Lord Ram. It was no ordinary defeat, for the BJP candidate lost by over 50,000 votes. The BJP's Lallu Singh was a veteran, taking on a Dalit rival, Awadhesh Prasad. And this happened after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Sangh Parivar's investment in the construction of the Ram temple and its location in politics.

The 2024 general election result shows that the Indian voter has expressed a repugnance for the politics of hatred, of divide and rule, and the politics of the Prime Minister himself, whose electoral rhetoric this time was indecorous. Where was the grace reflected in person, behaviour and

ANWAR SADAT EXPLAINS WHY THE OPINION OF ITLOS MARKS A MILESTONE IN CLIMATE LITIGATION



A push for more climate action



International climate change litigation reached a milestone on May 21, 2024 when the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) delivered an advisory opinion (the Opinion) sought by the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law (COSIS) concerning the specific obligations of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on climate change mitigation. The COSIS is an association of small island states set up in 2021. The ITLOS advisory opinion generates more attention in the context of the advisory proceedings to be decided by the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the near future on the "Obligations of States in respect of Climate Change".

The ITLOS took a radical step by accepting the request of COSIS with the aim of identifying the obligations of states that are not parties to the COSIS Agreement. That is when the request touches principally upon the obligations of states that are not party to the agreement authorising the request. The Tribunal, in its Opinion, laid down very clearly that under Article 194(1) of the UNCLOS, "the Parties have specific obligations to take all necessary measures to prevent, reduce and control marine pollution from anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions (GHG)".

The Opinion has also removed doubts whether the release of carbon dioxide by man, directly or indirectly, into the marine environment qualifies to be in the category of substance or energy having potential deleterious effects on the marine environment within the meaning of Article 1(1)(4) of the UNCLOS.

The ITLOS clarification on carbon as pollutant bolsters the position taken by the scientific community that the sur-

face ocean absorbs around a quarter of the CO₂ emitted into the atmosphere, at increasingly rapid rates, resulting in the progressive acidification of sea water. Other greenhouse gases (GHGs) do not have this effect. In addition, the sea also absorbs over 90% of the excess heat ("energy") generated by global warming, resulting in higher ocean temperatures and, ultimately, in sea-level rise.

Understanding its legal importance

The principle of prevention or no harm rule which governs state behaviour towards regulation of shared natural resources (between two or more states) so as to avoid transboundary harm of a significant nature in another state has its two main limitations when the rule is sought to be applied to regulate climate crisis: its anchoring in a bilateral frame, and, the principle is not helped due to obstacles relating to attribution of obligation to climate change.

The Opinion, by siding with the principle

for climate change (which is a collective interest as compared to bilateral ones), adds a new chapter. The necessary measures are to be decided in the light of the best available science and the relevant international rules and standards contained in the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Paris Climate Change Agreement 2015, and also 1.5° Celsius rather than 2° C as the global average temperature goal.

The Opinion describes the obligation relating to the taking of necessary measures as due diligence obligation but the standard of it in the eyes of the Opinion is stringent one given the high risks of serious and irreversible harm to the marine environment from such emissions. But the Parties' obligations in terms of taking all necessary measures to reduce anthropogenic GHG emissions within Article 194 (1) are very general in nature. This can be interpreted to mean that neither the release of all pollution (GHGs) must be prevented nor that anthropogenic GHG emissions must cease immediately or even eventually.

Measures that gradually reduce marine pollution by lowering GHG emissions over a period of time would be sufficient. Still, the identification of a general obligation by the ITLOS underlines one thing — that states do not have unfettered discretion in addressing climate change. Mere identification of general obligation will be of symbolic value and is inadequate. Christina Voigt, an expert on environ-

mental law, says as "most states are already implementing some action on climate change mitigation, the crux of the matter is not the existence of an obligation to mitigate climate change, but rather its content, in particular the standard of conduct applicable in relation to this obligation". The example to substantiate this point is the decision of the Netherlands Supreme Court, in Urgenda Foundation vs The Netherlands, where the court held that to comply with a general mitigation obligation inferred from the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) in light of the standard of due care, the Netherlands had to reduce GHG emissions to 25% below 1990 levels by 2020 (as opposed to the government's insufficient existing pledge of 17%).

The court identified this target largely by relying on scientific estimates and the least cost method of achieving the 2° C temperature goal in the Paris Agreement. The Opinion has not been able to identify the methodology concretely that can be used to assess a state's requisite level of mitigation action — as in the Urgenda judgment. Moreover, the necessary measures to be taken, as per the Opinion, are to be subject to the means available to the states and their capabilities, which means that the principle of equity cannot be ignored in deciding the requisite level of mitigation action, if any.

Though advisory opinion lacks legal force, it does not necessarily affect its political pull as authoritative judicial pronouncements.

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Research bodies need dedicated leadership

The recent portfolio allocations for the newly sworn-in Ministers of the 18th Lok Sabha reveal a continuation of roles from the previous regime, with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) retaining major portfolios such as Home and Telecommunications. Meanwhile, coalition allies share the remaining positions. Among the notable appointments is Jitendra Singh, Minister of State with independent charge over the Departments of Space (DoS) and Atomic Energy (DAE), the Ministries of Earth Sciences (MoES), Science and Technology (MST), and Personnel, Public Grievances, and Pensions. Each of these portfolios is substantial. The DoS is navigating the complexities of private sector involvement in national space initiatives and developing human spaceflight missions. The MoES is embarking on seabed exploration for mineral resources and addressing climate adaptation and mitigation. The MST is steering India's top research departments amid global advancements in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, multi-omics, and advanced energy storage solutions. The DAE is pushing forward with nuclear power expansion, aiming to start phase two of its reactor program and commission one facility annually. Given the vast technical scope and societal implications, these portfolios deserve more than a shared Minister of State. These fields also face persistent challenges. Fellowship and grant disbursements for young researchers are notoriously delayed. Facilities for interdisciplinary research remain localized and uncooperative, hindering collaboration. Cutting-edge research is stymied by inconsistent regulations, weak intellectual property rights protection, and limited translational research, often confined to certain sectors. Additionally, India's gross domestic expenditure on research and development as a fraction of GDP has been declining since 2008-09. While increased funding is necessary, it must be accompanied by capacity building to effectively utilize these resources, which has been sporadic at best. India urgently needs dedicated Ministers, ideally of Cabinet rank, for each major research body to address these longstanding issues and ensure their needs are met. This approach is crucial for achieving meaningful progress, particularly under the challenging conditions of a coalition government.

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THE FINANCIAL WORLD

RNI NO. CHAENG/2001/03736
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY SWINDER BAJWA ON BEHALF OF FW MEDIA
PRINTED AT JAGJIT PUBLISHING CO. PVT LTD D-12, INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-1, MOHALI, PUNJAB 160059
PRINTER & PUBLISHER SWINDER BAJWA OWNER* : FW MEDIA
PUBLISHED AT: PLOT NO-F5, IT PARK, CHANDIGARH CHANDIGARH 160101; PHONE: 9888040061
EDITOR* ABDUL WASEY
(*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)

BOOKS: REVIEW

New book decodes Indian polls; offers masterclass on coalitions

When one thinks of coalition politics in India, Eswaran Sridharan's name is often the first to come to mind. His book, *Elections, Parties, and Coalitions in India: Theory and Recent History*, compiles a series of his articles that have profoundly shaped the understanding of Indian politics since 1989.

This collection covers themes such as party system transformation, the rise and fall of political parties, political finance, and various aspects of coalition politics.

Although these articles have been previously published in academic journals and edited volumes, their consolidation in one book makes Sridharan's scholarship more accessible to a broader audience.

Sridharan's work stands out for its blend of theoretical rigor and

empirical analysis, embracing the 'soft-rational choice' tradition. This approach assumes that while human actions are goal-oriented, they are not solely driven by the maximization of individual benefits.

Political parties, therefore, are motivated by more than just election victories; they are also guided by policy preferences, goals, and values.

Sridharan's analysis is deeply rooted in the institutional school of thought, which has enriched the understanding of coalition behavior in India and enhanced comparative political studies.

Most traditional coalition theories derive from political systems that are unitary rather than federal, use proportional representation instead of the first-past-the-post system, and operate in consensual rather than majoritarian parliamentary settings.

Sridharan highlights the limitations of these conventional theories when applied to India's unique political landscape.

Among the key findings of Sridharan's work is the impact of the first-past-the-post system on coalition politics. Unlike proportional representation systems where post-electoral alliances are common, first-past-the-post incentivizes pre-electoral coalitions to avoid vote wastage.

Additionally, a small vote swing in this system can disproportionately affect seat shares, making third-placed parties or candidates pivotal players if they strategize effectively.

Sridharan also explores the federal dimensions of coalition politics in India. He notes that the division of power between multiple levels of government makes state-level power attractive, leading to the



Elections, Parties, and Coalitions in India: Theory and Recent History By Eswaran Sridharan Permanent Black: 372 pages; Rs 1,095.

formation of single-state parties and resulting in two-party or bipolar state-party systems. This dynamic, combined with the country's cultural and linguistic diversity, contributes to a multi-party system at the national level.

One of the book's significant contributions is its analysis of the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) alliance strategy. By forming strategic alliances and leveraging its position in different regions, the BJP was able to expand its geographical footprint and overcome the weaknesses that led to the fall of its government in 1996.

This "bridging alliance" strategy enabled the BJP to increase its numbers, build a support base, and

challenge the Congress party, the other main polity-wide party. As a result, territorial compatibility and alliances have become crucial components of India's coalition politics.

Sridharan's work also sheds light on the formation and survival of minority governments in India. He argues that minority governments can survive in executive-dominated majoritarian systems under certain conditions: ideological division among the opposition, parliamentary rules that favor survival, payoffs collected at different federal levels, and state-level party competition that creates a "lock-in" effect.

Regarding the Congress party's future, Sridharan suggests that it faces significant challenges in recovering its position as an umbrella party. The party must balance growth and equity in response to social and economic transformations. However, positioning itself as a 'pro-poor party' could be self-limiting in a country where a large portion of the electorate identifies as middle class.

Sunny Deol to return with 'Border 2', the sequel to India's most loved war epic

MUMBAI: After rocking the theatres with 'Gadar 2', actor Sunny Deol is all set to return with the sequel to another iconic movie, 'Border'.

On Thursday, the makers of the film announced 'Border 2' with a special video.

The video, which contains only text and no visuals, begins with a voice-over by Sunny Deol, saying, "27 saal pehle, ek fauji ne waada kiya tha ki wo vapas aayega. Usi waade ko poora karne, Hindustan ki mitti ko apna salaam kehne, aa raha hai fir se (27 years ago, a soldier made a promise to return. To keep the promise, and to salute the soil of India, the soldier is coming back).

The video ends with Sonu Nigam singing the song, 'Sandese Aate Hai'.

'Border 2' is written by Nidhi Dutta and produced



by Bhushan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, JP Dutta and Nidhi Dutta.

'Border', which was released in 1997, featured an ensemble cast including Suniel Shetty, Jackie Shroff, Akshaye Khan-

na, Sudesh Berry, and Puneet Issar, alongside a supporting cast including Kulbhushan Kharbanda, Tabu, Raakhee, Pooja Bhatt, and Sharbani Mukherjee. The film showcased the

Battle of Longewala, albeit in a fictional way. It featured music by Anu Malik and lyrics by Javed Akhtar. The film became a watershed moment in India's repertoire of war films.

Diljit Dosanjh on playing a Punjab cop in 'Jatt & Juliet 3'



CHANDIGARH: Punjabi singer and actor Diljit Dosanjh, who was present at the trailer launch of his upcoming film 'Jatt & Juliet 3', opened up about playing a cop in the movie and shared how the attitude and style of Punjab Police is very different, saying he has tried to copy as much as he can.

At the trailer launch, Diljit wore a brown coat, matching trousers, and a white shirt. He was accompanied by his co-star Neeru Bajwa and other

team members.

Talking about his role as a police officer, Diljit said: "The attitude of the Punjab Police is very different from others. Just as the Maharashtra police have their own attitude and style. Similarly, the Punjab Police has an altogether different style. So, we have seen that a lot in our childhood, like you are going on a scooter, you see Punjab Police every day."

"They have a very sweet, witty humour, and style. We cannot copy each and everything, but we tried to copy

as much as we can," said Diljit, who is known for his work in movies like 'Honsla Rakh', and 'Mukhtiar Chadha' among others.

Recalling an incident from the shoot, the 'Arjun Patiala' actor added, "I remember we were in costume and shooting in Canada. I went into a mall to use the washroom, and I met an Indian man who said to me, 'Tussi ethe bhi aa gaye' (You have come here too)."

'Jatt & Juliet 3' is written and directed by Jagdeep Sidhu and produced by Balvinder Singh, Dinesh Auluck, Gunbir Singh Sidhu, Manmord Singh Sidhu, and Diljit Dosanjh.

The film also stars Jasmin Bajwa, Rana Ranbir, BN Sharma, Nasir Chinyoti, Akram Udas, Har-dip Gill, Mohini Toor, and Sukh Pindiala. It is set to be released on June 28.

Masaba Gupta turns co-producer with upcoming reality show rooted in fashion



MUMBAI: Celebrated fashion designer and actress Masaba Gupta is set to don the hat of a producer with her upcoming reality television show. The upcoming yet-to-be-titled show, in which she serves as a co-producer, blends fashion with the emotions surrounding Indian weddings. It will feature glimpses of the unique sense and emotions of wearing the quintessential Masaba silhouettes. The reality show focuses on real people, their candid stories, and the raw emotions that drive the celebration of love and the joy of getting married.

Co-produced with Lucifer Circus, the show promises to strengthen the idea of fashion beyond barriers and revolutionise traditional wear showcased by Masaba. Talking about the new development, Masaba said: "I'm thrilled to bring you captivating stories of marriages, companionship, and everything in between. Join us as we go behind the scenes of one of life's most cherished moments for any Indian — the wedding. Together, we'll showcase the joy, traditions, and heartfelt moments that make these celebrations truly special." The show follows the success of her bridal collection, which paid tribute to the regal heritage of Hyderabad and Patiala. Meanwhile, the latest bridal collection from her label, featuring Kareena Kapoor Khan, serves as a testament to her distinct aesthetics. Each ensemble curated by Masaba stands as a symbol of strength, independence, and empowerment.

SC halts release of Annu Kapoor movie 'Hamare Baarah'

NEWDELHI: The Supreme Court on Thursday halted the screening of the Bollywood movie 'Hamare Baarah' till the petition challenging its release is decided by the Bombay High Court.

Asking the high court to expeditiously decide the plea challenging the certification given by the Central Board of Film Certification (CBFC), a vacation bench of the apex court presided over by Justice Vikram Nath rejected the filmmakers' contention that objectionable parts were taken away from the teaser.

"We saw the teaser this morning. It continues with all those offensive dialogues," added the Bench, also comprising Justice Sandeep Mehta.

In an order passed on June 7, the Bombay High Court lift-



ed the interim stay granted on the release of the film after a panel formed by the CBFC on the court's direction sought an extension of time to give an unfluenced opinion on the film.

Further, a bench of Justices Kamal Khata and Rajesh S.

Patil of the high court noted that the filmmakers have voluntarily agreed to delete certain controversial dialogues.

Last week, the Karnataka government banned the release of the film in the state, stating that it may disturb communal harmony.

Raveena Tandon sends defamation notice to man for 'fake' road rage video

MUMBAI: Actor Raveena Tandon has sent a defamation notice to a man for not removing a video posted by him on social media in connection with an alleged road rage incident.

In the video, which went viral on social media, the man had claimed Tandon's car hit his mother and had accused the actor of assaulting her on being questioned.

The man had also claimed the incident took place when his mother, sister and niece were near the actor's home here.

However, a Mumbai police probe found the actor's car did not dash into anyone.

The defamation notice, sent



through advocate Sana Khan, said the actor has informed the man about the "true and correct facts" as has been revealed from the police investigation.

As per the defamation notice, the man asked the actor to send

a request letter seeking removal of the video from his X account, which was sent on June 5 via email.

"However, you (the man) have denied deleting the post from your handle and more-

over threatened our client to initiate legal action if the said request letter is not withdrawn within 24 hours," the notice said.

In the notice, Tandon said the man had defamed her on social media and news portals through the video "which is admittedly fake news" and is also derogatory. It has been made to defame her in public by causing her mental harassment and agony, the notice further said.

"We are currently taking all necessary legal steps to address this issue and ensure that justice is served and action is taken against him for perpetuating this defamatory campaign," advocate Khan said.



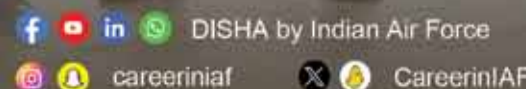
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