

Editorial

Saturday, April 28, 2018

Emergence of Religion as a Weapon of politics

There was a time when religion was not an issue in Indian Political theatre. After British left leaving its legacy of administration consciousness on the divide and rule policy to gain power was felt among some pseudo intellectual who bore fascist character. Early 1970s was the time when India was making attempts to re-establish itself in the comity of nations through economic advancement. This resurgent India, and that was 80 per cent resurgent Hindu, was not open to insult. Not all of the Hindus of this generation were very devoted, but they were not ready to tolerate attacks on their religion. Psychologically, they had a deep connect with the vast majority of Hindu population who were deeply religious.

How the thesis was affecting other walks of life can be gauged by the decision of a company named Dabur. At the age end of the last century, the company, that popularised Ayurvedic products in the country, started shifting its focus to the non-Ayurvedic segment, ostensibly imagining with modernism Ayurveda will lose its appeal in India and will not help the company spread in foreign lands. Almost two decades later, it is now established that modernity does not entail blind rejection of ancient knowledge. A man who is by no imagination a secular, Baba Ramdev, brought Ayurveda back with a vengeance, and Patanjali recorded phenomenal rise. This is the common man's answer to the senseless secular idea of rejection of our ancient knowledge.

When the situation turned from bad to worse during Rajiv Gandhi's regime, L.K. Advani came up with his antithesis. It was a crude form of *Hindutva* inspired by the thought of revenge and somewhat akin to *jihadism*. It was not something new; it was just going back to the essentials of the Jana Sangh. During the pre-partition days, when the Muslim League came up with 'Direct Action' to solidify the pre-eminence of the political Muslim through bloodbath, a plethora of forces came up to counter it by arousing the political Hindu. Among these forces, the Hindu Mahasabha and RSS dominated in those days. But, when the RSS formed the Jana Sangh, it failed to sway the mind of the Hindus, as back then the Hindus felt they now had their own land where they were secure. The RSS, since its inception, debated within its walls what will get prominence in their ideology: Religion or Nationalism?

Advani replaced the mode-rate Vajpayee as the party President (1986), and made another bold attempt to invoke the political Hindu through religiosity. The common Hindu, particularly of northern India, found a way to vent the pent-up frustration against the political establishment. While the RSS claimed all Indians are culturally 'Hindus', Advani declared that the Ram temple was a 'matter of faith', above the jurisdiction of law.

This '*jihadi*' *Hindutva* lost its vigour as soon as it registered the final victory by razing the mosque (1992). Furthermore, the antithesis was not acceptable to a large section of the political Hindu, for they refused to recognise medievalism as a way of life. So, it had to be pruned of its *jihadi* character, and Atal Behari Vajpayee, who virtually dissociated himself from the '*mandir wohi banayenge*' rant, had to be presented as the 'future PM'. The country accepted this sober RSS man in 1998.

Then came 2002. First, on February 27, in a BJP-ruled State, the Muslims attacked a train and burned down its compartments killing 59 people, including *kar sevaks* returning from Ayodhya. What followed was the Gujarat pogrom in which, according to the official figures, 1044 (Muslims 790, Hindu 254) people died.

It was an example of what Adityanath said later in the context of UP: "If they kill one Hindu, then we will kill a hundred (of them)." And since 2002, Modi remained as the hero of the *Hindutva* force.

The antithesis, now reinforced by a sort of reverse 'direct action', succeeded to sway the people of a swathe of northern and eastern Indian States. However, the limitation of the anti-thesis was also evident. Mandalisation of the polity, triggered off by V.P. Singh's implementation of the Mandal Commission report, divided the Hindu society in a positive way, and gave a boost to the Lohiaite socialists. These socialists succeeded to make a bond of the dominant castes and the Muslims, and that ensured communal amity major Indian states. Elsewhere, in large parts of southern and eastern India, people were not much interested in the crude form of *Hindutva* that was much, much more communal than what falls within religion-based political culture.

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National & International News

Congress slams Fadnavis govt over dip in professional tax haul

Agency
Mumbai, April 28

The Opposition Congress has said a fall in professional tax collection shows the BJP-led government in Maharashtra has failed to address the issue of rising unemployment in the state.

Professional tax collection figure shows employment status in the organised sector and a drop in its accumulation indicates lack of new formal sector jobs, Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) spokesman Sachin Sawant

said. Higher the tax collection, more are the number of permanent employees. During the Devendra Fadnavis government's tenure, professional tax collection has been falling each year, he said yesterday.

This year (2017-18), the Maharashtra government missed the professional tax collection target by Rs 652 crore. It was expected to collect Rs 2,769 crore in the year, but could net only Rs 2,117 crore, Sawant said.

The Fadnavis-led government has

been missing its collection target for the last three years. In contrast, under the Congress-led government, collection surpassed targets in 2013-14 and 2014-15, he said.

It is unfortunate that the tax collection of Rs 2,117 crore in FY18 was less than that clocked in 2013-14 when it stood at Rs 2,146 crore, the Congress leader said.

Sawant said this drop in professional tax collection indicates poor performance of the Fadnavis government as well as the ill-effects of demonetisation on the state's

economy.

"It was clear that demonetisation destroyed the entire unorganised sector but even the organised sector has faced serious problems." He said Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is selling false dreams by organising events like 'Make in Maharashtra', 'Magnetic Maharashtra' and "exaggerating" investment and job creation figures from such programmes.

Like many other sectors under the BJP government, Maharashtra is lagging behind in the industrial segment as well, Sawant said.

Dalmia Bharat Group Edges Out IndiGo in Historic Bid to 'Adopt' Red Fort

Agency
New Delhi, April 28

In a unique initiative, the 77-year-old Dalmia Bharat group has adopted the Red Fort for a period of five years, making it the first corporate house to adopt a historical monument.

The Dalmia Bharat group bagged the contract for Rs 25 crore after beating IndiGo Airlines and the GMR group, a report in *Business Standard* said. The company will now be responsible for maintaining and revamping the 17th century monument built by fifth Mughal emperor Shah Jahan.

The 'Adopt a Heritage' (Apni Dharohar Apni Pehchan Project) scheme was launched by the president on September 17 last year, following which various companies volunteered to adopt the monument. The deal was signed with Dalmia Bharat group early in April, but was made public on Wednesday.

Under the contract, the Dalmia Bharat group will provide drinking water kiosks, street furniture-like benches and shop signage within six months. It will then have to put up upgrade toilets, light up the Red Fort pathways and bollards, tactile maps, restore work and

landscaping, build a 1,000-square-foot visitor facility centre, 3-D projection mapping of the Red Fort's interior and exterior, battery-operated vehicles and charging stations for such vehicles and a thematic cafeteria within a year.

The conglomerate may also charge people visiting the Red Fort after getting clearances from the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Tourism. Any revenue generated through the activities planned will have to be used for the Fort's development and maintenance.

Sundeep Kumar, Executive Director, Dalmia Bharat said in a press release, "We are grateful to the Ministry of Tourism for trusting us and giving us this opportunity. With our dedicated efforts we will endeavour to make Red Fort a world-class monument in terms of amenities and experience. Such initiatives will enhance the tourist experience, resulting in more footfall from both domestic and foreign tourists. With our efforts we will make Indian heritage sites a symbol of pride for all of us." Dalmia Bharat will also introduce other key amenities for the visitors like App based Multi

lingual Audio-Guide, Digital Interactive Kiosk, Digital (LED) screening, free Wi-Fi and cafeteria along with souvenir shop which will help in promoting local art and craftsmanship. Keeping in mind easy accessibility to the differently-abled visitors, there will be construction of ramps & differently-abled friendly toilets.

The heritage monuments taken up for 'adoption' by private groups

include Delhi's Qutub Minar, Jantar Mantar, Purana Qila, Safdarjung's Tomb and Agrasen ki Baoli, Odisha's Sun Temple, Ratnagiri monuments and the Rajarani temple, the ruins of Hampi in Karnataka, the Leh Palace and Stok Kangri in Jammu & Kashmir, Anjanta and Ellora caves in Maharashtra, Mattancherry Place in Kochi, Gangothri Temple and the Gomukh trail in Uttarakhand. The government had last year given letter of intent to seven private companies to adopt the sites.

Palestinian teen dies of wounds from Israel-Gaza border shooting

Agency
Gaza City, April 28

A Palestinian teenager has died of his wounds a day after being shot by Israeli forces in clashes along the Gaza border, the Hamas-controlled territory's health ministry said Saturday. Azzam Owaida, 15, was hit in the head during protests in southern Gaza on Friday, the ministry said. His death brought to four the number of people killed or fatally wounded during a fifth consecutive Friday of protests in which thousands of Gazans have

gathered near the heavily-guarded border. Most protesters were peaceful but some threw stones and burned tyres.

Forty-five Palestinians have been killed by Israeli fire since the start of what organisers have dubbed the Great March of Return on March 30, with more than 1,500 wounded.

No Israelis have been reported hurt. The Israeli army said around 10,000 people had taken part in "riots" along the border Friday, saying troops responded with "riot dispersal means".

The army has accused Hamas, the Islamist group that runs Gaza and has fought three wars with Israel since 2008, of seeking to use the protests as cover to carry out attacks.

The protesters are calling for Palestinians to be allowed back to their historic homelands seized by Israel in 1948.

NIA arrests wanted Maoist from Chaibasa

Agency
Jamshedpur, April 28

A Maoist, allegedly involved in the killing of a former Janata Dal (U) MLA, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) from Chaibasa in West Singhbhum district, the police said.

Acting on an information, a NIA team arrested Sushil rptr Sushil Dangil alias Chris, a member of the surrendered leader Kundan Pahan squad of the outfit, yesterday, they said.

The Maoist is one of the seven accused involved in the gunning down of Ramesh Singh Munda, a JD(U) MLA from Tamar in Ranchi in 2008.

He was taken to Ranchi by the NIA team after he was produced before the local court.

Former Jharkhand minister Gopal Krishna Patar was arrested last year by the NIA for allegedly conniving with the Maoists to get his political rival Munda killed in 2008, they said.

Jharkhand Party candidate Patar defeated Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) chief Shibu Soren in the Tamar bypoll forcing him to step down as chief minister in 2009.

Gaurav Gill guns for sixth title as curtain goes up on the MRF FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship 2018

By: Samikshan Dutta Choudhury
Chennai, April 28,

The curtain went up on a brand new season of the MRF FMSCI Indian National Rally Championship (INRC) on Friday, with the country's top drivers giving a sneak preview of their modified cars and their class during the ceremonial start here at the Grand by GRT Hotels, who hosted the start.

Defending champion Gaurav Gill will be the star attraction in the opening round of the championship, the MRF 40th South India Rally, as he guns for his sixth INRC title. He will be representing Team Mahindra Adventure and will be assisted by his trusted navigator Musa Sherif in his quest. In all, 31 teams from across the country will be seen in action over the weekend.

Gill, who will be taking part in the World Rally Championship (WRC 2 category) this year, will face competition from his team mate, 2 time National Champion, Amitrajit Ghosh, who is also slated to take part in the European Rally Championship (ERC 3 category) this year. 2016 INRC champion Karna Kadur (Arka Motorsports) and last year's INRC 2 and INRC 3 winners Rahul Kanthraj (Arka Motorsports) and Dean Mascarenhas (Falkon Motorsports) will also give a tough fight. The season opener has an interesting entry too in the form of Vicky Chandhok (VW Motorsports), who will be making a

comeback to competitive rallying after nearly 18 years at the ripe age of 61.

The MRF 40th South India Rally, which is being staged at the MMRT in Sriperumbudur, will cover a total distance of close to 300 kilometres, with 100.40 kilometres earmarked for special stages on dirt tracks and another 6.20 kilometres for a super special stage on asphalt.

Gaurav Gill sounded confident ahead of the rally and believes he has a good chance to get off to a winning start. "I am looking forward to the INRC this year and I believe whether it is for the sixth time or the sixtieth time, it's all about winning for the team and focussing on that. So yes, I am confident of the season ahead and hopefully will end with the title," Gill added.

Talking about his much-anticipated entry into the WRC, he said, "Yeah, it is great for me and my team to take part in the WRC 2 and I really thank MRF for this wonderful opportunity. This year it will be more of a data collectio and R&D for us. We are planning to enter five events this year and we are finalising that." Seasoned rallyist Vicky believes that even though he is making a comeback after a long gap, he won't be rusty and will give a tough fight to the others in fray. "Yes, I am returning after a gap of 18 years but I have never been away from driving. I am confident ahead of the first rally and hopefully will give these younger guys a run for their

money," the former national champion said during the press conference.

The MRF FMSCI INRC promoter, RRPm's Director, Mr Arindam Ghosh, said: "The 2018 edition of the INRC promises to be a lot more exciting with all the leading drivers of the country taking part. We will also be hosting one round in Bengal, which is in tune with our efforts to take rallying to different parts of the country."

He added: "We would like to thank all our sponsors, MRF, Mahindra Adventure, Arka Motorsports, Isuzu and York for their active support in helping us promote the championship on such a scale." Six exciting rounds have been lined up for this year, with each of them being held in different locales and on different terrains that will test the skills of the drivers to the hilt.

About RRPm: Ramakrishna Race Performance Management Pvt. Ltd.(RRPM) is a company formed with the sole intention of promoting "Professional Motorsports" in India and provides all kinds of technical assistance and information required to be at par with the National Level.

RRPM was started in 2003 by Mr Arindam Ghosh, an icon in his own rights with over 40 years rallying and organizational experience. RRPm is proud to be a part of the Federation of Motor Sports Clubs of India (FMSCI), which is the apex body of India.