

# janata

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**Goodbye Bhai: The Struggle  
Will Continue**  
Prem Singh

**Hopeless Implementation  
of Right to Education  
Act in UP**  
Sandeep Pandey

**It's Modi's BJP!**  
Kuldip Nayar

**Yes, That's What Israel Is!**  
Jawaharlal Jasthi

**Indo-Pak Amity:  
Necessary Compulsion for  
the Survival of Both**  
Pratap Reddy

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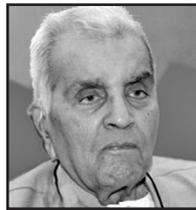
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## Justice Rajindar Sachar 1923-2018: Our Finest Has Gone

Qurban Ali



V e t a r a n Socialist leader noted jurist and champion of human rights Justice (retired) Rajinder Sachar passed away in Delhi on 20th April 2018. He was 94. A distinguished advocate for the protection of human rights, and poor, Justice Sachar was a former Chief Justice of Delhi and Sikkim High Courts. He vociferously promoted the cause of human rights and was also head of People's Union of Civil Liberty (PUCL). He authored many reports on Kashmir.

Paying emotional tribute on the sad demise of late Justice Rajindar Sachar, senior journalist Seema Mustafa wrote "One of our finest has gone. Justice Rajinder Sachar has left us, fairly suddenly without too much notice except that delivered by age. A mentor, a friend, a man whose doors were always open he will be sorely missed. He did not really care--unlike Delhi's famous---whether he was invited to speak or not, if he supported the cause he was there in the audience, listening attentively. For many of us he was the person

we turned to when the times seemed very bleak and dark, just to hear Justice Sachar tell us that it will get better. The wisdom of experience and age gave his voice authority, and lifted spirits when little else would".

Rajindar Sachar was born on 22nd December 1923 at Lahore in undivided India. His father Lala Bhim Sen Sachar was a well-known Congress leader and later become Chief Minister of Punjab. He educated at D.A.V. High School in Lahore, then went on to Government College Lahore and Law College, Lahore. During his students days he was attached to National movement and joined Congress Socialist Party. After the partition of the country he came to Delhi and joined Socialist party.

In May 1949, the Socialist Party under Rammanohar Lohia's leadership held a demonstration in front of the Nepal embassy in New Delhi to protest against the autocratic and repressive regime of the Rana government in the Himalayan kingdom. There was violence and the police used teargas shells to disperse the mob.

Lohia was arrested for violating Section 144 CRPC. Young Rajinder

Sachar was also arrested with Lohia and remained in jail for a month and a half. According to Sachar sahib "It was during that imprisonment that Nehru and Indira sent a basket of mangoes to Lohia. Sardar Patel was very angry and wrote to Nehru expressing his annoyance over sending mangoes to a person who had violated the law. Nehru in his quiet way told him that politics and personal relationships should not be mixed up". It was a first movement and arrest in free India where Socialist offered civil disobedience".

On 22 April 1952 Rajinder Sachar enrolled as an advocate at Simla. On 8 December 1960 he became an advocate in the Supreme Court of India, engaging in a wide variety of cases concerning civil, criminal and revenue issues. But at the same time he was actively associated with the Socialist Party led by Lohia. In 1963 a breakaway group of legislators left the Congress party and formed the independent "Prajantra Party". Sachar helped this group prepare memoranda levelling charges of corruption and mal-administration against Pratap Singh Kairon, Chief Minister of Punjab. Justice Sudhi Ranjan Das was appointed to look into the charges, and in June 1964 found Kairon guilty on eight counts.

On 12 February 1970 Rajinder Sachar was appointed Additional Judge of the Delhi High Court for a two-year term, and on 12 February 1972 he was reappointed for another two years. On 5 July 1972 he was appointed a permanent Judge of the High Court. He was acting chief justice of the Sikkim High court from 16 May 1975 until 10 May 1976, when he was made a judge in the Rajasthan High Court. The transfer from Sikkim to Rajasthan

was made without Sachar's consent during the Emergency (June 1975 – March 1977) when elections and civil liberties were suspended. Sachar was one of the judges that refused to follow the bidding of the Emergency establishment, and who were transferred as a form of punishment. After the restoral of democracy, on 9 July 1977 he was transferred back to the Delhi High Court.

In June 1977 Justice Sachar was appointed by the government to chair a committee that reviewed the Companies Act and the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, submitting an encyclopaedic report on the subject in August 1978. Sachar's committee recommended a major overhaul of the corporate reporting system, and particularly of the approach to reporting on social impacts. In May 1984 Rajinder Sachar reviewed the Industrial Disputes Act, including the backlog of cases. His report was scathing. He said "A more horrendous and despairing situation can hardly be imagined... the load at present in the various Labour Courts and Industrial Tribunals is so disproportionate to what can conceivably be borne ... that the arrears can only go on increasing if the present state of affairs is not improved... It is harsh and unjust to both the employers and employees if the cases continue to remain undecided for years".

In November 1984, Justice Sachar issued notice to the police on a writ petition filed by Public Union for Democratic Rights on the basis of evidence collected from 1984 Sikh riot victims, asking FIRs to be registered against leaders named in affidavits of victims. However, in the next hearing the case was removed from the Court

of Mr. Sachar and brought before two other Judges, who impressed petitioners to withdraw their petition in the national interest, which they declined, then dismissed the petition.

As an Indian lawyer and a former Chief Justice of the Delhi High Court Sachar sahib was a member of United Nations Sub-Commission on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights. He has served as a counsel for the People's Union for Civil Liberties. He chaired the Sachar Committee, constituted by the Government of India, which submitted a report on the social, economic and educational status of Muslims in India.

Rajinder Sachar was one of the authors of a report issued on 22 April 1990 on behalf of the People's Union for Civil Liberties and others entitled "Report on Kashmir Situation". In January 1992 Sachar was one of the signatories to an appeal to all Punjabis asking them to ensure that the forthcoming elections were free and were seen to be free. They asked the people to ensure there was no violence, coercion or unfair practices that would prevent the people from electing the government of their choice. Rajinder Sachar was appointed to a high-level Advisory Committee chaired by Chief Justice Aziz Mushabber Ahmadi to review the Protection of Human Rights Act, 1993 and determine whether structural changes and amendments were needed. The committee prepared a draft amendment Bill incorporating its recommendations. These included changes to the membership of the National Human Rights Commission, changes to procedures to reduce delays in following up recommendations and a broadening of the commission's scope. The recommendations were

submitted the Home Affairs ministry on 7 March 2000.

In April 2003, as counsel for the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL), Sachar argued before the Supreme Court of India that the Prevention of Terrorist Activities Act (POTA) should be quashed since it violated fundamental rights. On 24 November 2002 the police arrested twenty six people in the Dharmapuri district of Tamil Nadu, and on 10 January 2003 they were placed under POTA by the government on the grounds that they were members of the Radical Youth League of the Communist Party of India (Marxist–Leninist). On 26 August 2004, still being held without trial, the detainees began a hunger strike. Sachar led a team of human rights activists who visited them in jail on 15 September 2004 and persuaded them to end the hunger strike. POTA was repealed on 10 November 2004. However, all the POTA provisions were incorporated in the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. In October 2009 Sachar called for abolition of these laws.

He said "Terrorism is there, I admit, but in the name of terror probe, many innocent people are taken into custody without registering a charge and are being detained for long period".

Rajinder Sachar, who had formerly been a United Nations special rapporteur on the Right to Adequate Housing, headed a mission that investigated housing rights in Kenya for the Housing and Land Rights Committee of the Habitat International Coalition. In its report issued in March 2000 the mission found that the Kenyan government had failed to meet its international obligations regarding protection of its citizens' housing rights. The

report described misallocation of public land, evictions and land-grabbing by corrupt politicians and bureaucrats.

In March 2005 Justice Rajinder Sachar was appointed to a committee to study the condition of the Muslim community in India and to prepare a comprehensive report on their social, economic and educational status. On 17 November 2006 he presented the report, entitled "Report on Social, Economic and Educational Status of the Muslim Community of India", to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. The report showed the growing social and economic insecurity that had been imposed on Muslims since independence sixty years earlier. It found that the Muslim population, estimated at over 138 million in 2001, were under-represented in the civil service, police, military and in politics. Muslims were more likely to be poor, illiterate, unhealthy and to have trouble with the law than other Indians. Muslims were accused of being against the Indian state, of being terrorists, and politicians who tried to help them risked being accused of "appeasing" them.

The Sachar Committee recommendations aimed to promote inclusion of the diverse communities in India and their equal treatment. It emphasised initiatives that were general rather than specific to any one community. It was a landmark in the debate on the Muslim question in India. The speed of implementation would naturally depend on political factors including the extent of backlash from Hindutva groups. The Sachar Committee Report recommended setting up an institutional structure for an Equal Opportunity Commission.

In March 2003 Sachar was a signatory to a statement that

condemned the US-led invasion of Iraq, calling it "unprovoked, unjustified and violative of international law and the United Nations Charter". Other signatories included Shanti Bhushan, Pavani Parameswara Rao, Rajeev Dhavan, Kapil Sibal and Prashant Bhushan.

He was a Judge who set an example. That after retirement Judges did not need to go into holes, and in fact were required to play a major role in keeping India on the Constitutional track. He spoke fearlessly, boldly, did not look for favours from the establishment regardless of who was in power, and as a result rubbed all the wrong way saying when we used to laugh, "well I am with the people and that's all that matters."

One does not really know where to begin, or for that matter end this tribute. Does one remember him for the Sachar report on the status of the Muslim community in India that created a storm as it was an honest and starkly revealing document; or for his stand on civil liberties for all; or for his criticism of established political parties; or for his love for the Indian Constitution that was always so visible; or for his gentle enquiries when he knew an individual was troubled; or for his willingness to walk the extra mile at any time of the day or night to help a person in need or for a cause; or for his consistency in advocating peace in South Asia; or for his fearlessness in taking on the communalists; or for his strong support for gender equality and justice.

By the end Justice Sachar was visibly frail, a little bent with age, and clearly with many off days that he made sure none of us really knew about. This would not prevent him from attending meetings, signing

statements and organising fact finding reports till his last days.

One never heard him complain about his health. One never heard even a note of pessimism in his voice. One never heard him talk about his ailments or his problems. He was always there for everyone else, for India and her people. In these years one did, however, hear some pessimism in his voice. A 'what will happen to our country' tone, with worries that he would share occasionally. Excerpts from an article he wrote for The Citizen in December 2017:

Justice Sachar's admiration for Ram Manohar Lohia spanned his life, never diminishing. But he never allowed that to come in his way of relationships with those who were perhaps, very critical of his mentor. As he said, "your view is yours, mine is mine." And would then tell us stories about the differences between Jawaharlal Nehru and Lohia that never came in the way of mutual respect.

There are not many left now who say it like you did Justice Sachar, without mincing words, or looking over your shoulder, or bothering how the chattering classes would react. You looked for no favours, no positions, no awards. Respect Sir, Always!!!

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# Goodbye Bhai: The Struggle Will Continue

**Prem Singh**

His full name was Bhalchandra Bhai Vaidya but people used to call him Bhai Vaidya. I always addressed him as 'Bhai'. In our village, it was an accepted norm to call a father 'Bhai' and a majority of people followed this practice. I came in personal contact with Bhalchandra Bhai Vaidya after my father passed away, therefore I never really missed that close connection one feels with one's father. Before the re-launching of the Socialist Party, he used to call me Professor, but I would always call him 'Bhai'. An invisible thread of the almost familial relationship that developed between us from the very first meeting continued ever since.

Bhai was the founding President of Socialist Party (India). I worked with him as general secretary and spokesperson of the party. While he was working in the Socialist Party for the last seven years, he considered everything suggested by me in the policy matters of the party very seriously and had an endearing sense of respect which he displayed clearly. He would give brief hints when was asked about his opinion about policy decisions, resolutions, memorandums, even press notes/releases of the party. Whether it was a government decision or a national-international incident or event, in order to send a statement of the party, he, as president of the party, used to send an SMS every time through his mobile phone from Poona, giving some directions and suggestions regarding it.

I remember that when I took a stand against the so called India Against Corruption (IAC) and the

Aam Aadmi Party, on the basis of socialist ideology, Bhai always said that the party was firmly behind me. There was no deviation from any member of the Socialist Party despite the deceptive headiness provoked and organised by those vested interests in defense of neo-liberalism. This unequivocal support could only happen solely due to Bhai's personality, understanding and ideological perseverance.

He died on 2 April 2018 from pancreatic cancer, shortly after he was admitted to Poona Hospital on March 26, barely three weeks after his ailment was first detected. I learnt about his illness only after he was admitted to the hospital. His son, Dr. Abhijit Vaidya, told me on phone that operation or chemotherapy at his age were not suitable. He also told that Bhai was insisting on going back home from the hospital. But this was not to be and he took his last breath in the clinical confines of the hospital. Several comrades from Poona and Maharashtra visited him there. The news of Bhai's death was a sudden blow for the comrades outside Maharashtra.

I reached Poona on 3rd April to bid a last good-bye to Bhai. His mortal body was kept for a last glimpse at Sane Guruji Smarak, the headquarters of the Rashtra Seva Dal (RSD). There was a continuous flow of people from the morning till late afternoon to pay their last salute. There were a large number of women among them. Sainiks and Sainikayen of the RSD kept working the whole day with promptness to help and facilitate the visitors.

At 4 pm, the officers of the police administration came and wrapped the body of Bhai in the national flag. On reaching the crematorium, a police band played in his respect and he was also given a gun salute. This state honor was given to him due to his position as a former State Home Minister of Maharashtra (1978-1980) and former Mayor of Poona (1974-75). After that, his body was taken to the electric crematorium.

I was surprised that thousands of people participated in the last journey of a leader who was away from the corridors of power for the past three decades, who fought anonymously in remote towns and villages against governments bringing in neo-imperialist slavery to the nation. People thronged the funeral journey to the cremation ground, a distance of about two and a half kilometers. Among the crowds that surged to bid their last farewell and respects, the activists of the Socialist Party (SPI) and Socialist Yuvjan Sabha (SYS) forcefully raised revolutionary slogans like 'Bhai Vaidya amar rahe' (Bhai Vaidya will remain immortal), 'Bhai tere sapano ko ham manzil tak pahunchayenge' (Bhai we will take your dreams to their destination), 'Lokshahi samajwad – zindabad zindabad' (democratic socialism – long live long live), 'Bhai Vaidya ko lal salaam' (red salute to Bhai Vaidya), and 'ladenge jeetenge' (will fight will win).

Most of the people present in the procession were not activists but from the general civil society. It was evident they were influenced by the rare personality of Bhai that was an amalgam and wonderful combination of love, service and compassion. Almost all the newspapers of Marathi and English

published reports on his demise. One newspaper wrote that his honesty was actually the stuff of legends. I found that like Kishan ji, Bhai had no sense of bitterness or malice towards anyone. Medieval saints have described 'sahajta' (innateness) as a rare quality that can be attained only by a rigorous practice of austerities. Bhai had attained this innate spiritual nature through great perseverance in life.

He participated in the Quit India movement of 1942. When some people were acting as informers of the imperialists, then, at the young age of 14, Bhai was participating in the decisive battle of the Independence Movement. Gandhi gave the call for British to 'Quit India', but it was led by young socialist leaders. It is natural that in 1946, at the age of 18, Bhai became a member of the Congress Socialist Party (CSP). In 1948, he joined the Socialist Party, through which he continued his long political struggle that prominently includes the Goa Liberation struggle (1955–1961) and the JP Movement (1974–77). During the Emergency, he remained in jail from 1975 to 1977 under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA). He played an important role in the Rashtra Seva Dal and became its president in 2001. Bhai's wish was that the Rashtra Sewa Dal should take the responsibility of cadre building for the Socialist Party so that the youth could be saved from the grip of communal politics.

Bhai was an MA in Sociology and Political Science. He was a multi-dimensional and studious person. However, he was essentially a political person. Born out of the womb of socialist movement, Bhai, along with Gandhi, was deeply influenced by the thoughts of Jyotiba

Phule and B.R. Ambedkar. At the global level he had done a thorough study of the ideologies/systems of capitalism and communism. He used to keep himself updated with articles and books published on various subjects.

In my opinion, the political innings of Bhai that started after 1991 is most important. This year, against Constitutional values and provisions, the Congress imposed New Economic Policies on the country. At that time, senior BJP leader Atal Bihari Vajpayee had said that the Congress had now taken over the work of his party (BJP). This illegitimate decision was to breed disastrous consequences for the society and nation building.

It is true that instead of giving a political fight to the neo-imperialist attack, most socialists made power the goal of politics. In doing so, they not only destroyed the socialist movement but also defamed it.

At the same time, the fact also remains that several other socialists also put up a comprehensive and decisive ideological challenge to neo-imperialism. Socialist leaders / thinkers such as Kishan Patnaik, Sachchidand Sinha, Vinodprasad Singh, Surendra Mohan, Bhai Vaidya, Justice Rajindar Sachar, Pannalal Surana, Dr. G.G. Parikh and Sunil have endeavoured to create a small but new political stream as a genuine alternative to neo-imperialism. It is also notable that in mainstream politics, socialist leader Chandrashekhar had constantly opposed the New Economic Policies from the very beginning.

Bhai became the general secretary of Samajwadi Jan Parishad (SJP), formed in 1995. When the Socialist Party was reinstated in 2011, he became its first president. At that

time his age was eighty plus. He did not want to take this responsibility. But on the insistence of Justice Sachar and young socialists, he agreed to be the president. Despite his advanced age, he fulfilled that responsibility admirably.

After 1991, Bhai's life was spent in constant struggle against neo-imperialism. He fought a long struggle against privatisation of education. It is not that other leaders or political organisations are not active in opposing neo-imperialism. But they are either confused with the concept of development or they accept capitalism, the conjoined twin of imperialism, as the only path of development. Bhai clearly stated in the Socialist Party's policy statement and in his several comments that actually communists are not ready to leave the idea and model of capitalist development. They consider industrialisation as the yardstick of development. Bhai used to consider democratic socialist ideology as an alternative to capitalism. He had a firm conviction in the imminent defeat of capitalism. From this ground of faith, he continued to inspire Socialist Party workers. That inspiration is alive even after his death.

Goodbye Bhai! May you rest in peace. We pledge to continue the struggle for equality and freedom against neo-imperialist designs.

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## Hopeless Implementation of Right to Education Act in UP

**Sandeep Pandey**

It is now the fourth year since the government of Uttar Pradesh started taking Right to Education Act 2009 seriously. Section 12(1) (c) of this Act is the most attractive feature from the point of view of parents from disadvantaged groups and weaker sections as they can get their children admitted to even the most expensive schools for free education from Classes I to VIII. In UP, 3,135 children were admitted in the academic year 2015-16, 17,136 in 2016-17 and 27,662 in the year which just got over. However, there are some schools like the City Montessori School, Navyug Raidance, City International, St. Mary's Intermediate College and Lucknow Model Public School in Lucknow, Virendra Swaroop and Chintal Public School in Kanpur, and Blue Bird School and Nehru Children's Junior High School in Aligarh which are making a mockery of the Act by not admitting any children in spite of orders from Basic Shiksha Adhikari or even the District Magistrate.

As no action is being taken against these errant schools, they've been emboldened to form associations which are publicly challenging the RTE Act itself in courts, and are also holding rallies demanding that it be scrapped. The excuse being given is that the compensation amount of Rs 450 per child per month is too low and arbitrary, and even that is not being reimbursed in time. They abhor the government's interference in their

functioning in what is a largely unregulated system.

The private schools stand on morally very weak ground. Their fees structures are not rational either. Most of them would not be able to justify the exorbitant fees which the parents have to pay. In addition, a number of schools have found other ways of making money, for example, by making certain books, dresses, etc. Compulsory, to be bought from either the school itself or from chosen shops intimated by the school. Private education is a flourishing business with assured returns.

This year is the second year of the online application process in UP. Out of 82,388, only 20,427 schools, which is less than 25%, are mapped, implying parents can't even choose more than 75% schools when filling their children's forms online. The second round of application process is over and only last round remains. Surprisingly, some schools which admitted children last year, like R.D. Memorial Intermediate College and Siddharth Global School in Lucknow are missing from the options available on the website. The various branches of the biggest school of Varanasi, Sunbeam, are not listed in any of the Wards here. Some of the Wards in Varanasi are not mentioned at all on the website which means parents cannot get the benefit of section 12(1)(c) there. It is inexplicable how the UP government is even accepting applications without complete mapping of all

schools. Trying to rush through the admission process without the necessary preparation is reflected in the fact that only 48 out of 75 districts of UP came out with their first lottery list. Verifications of all 2597 forms were not complete in Varanasi when the first lottery was held. What is the point of this half-hearted effort?

There are problems with quality of mapping too. When Ruby Bano, resident of Raja Bazar in Chowk area of Lucknow filed an application for her son Saiyyed Altamash Ali's admission, she was allotted a school—Fatima Girls' Junior High School—shown on the RTE website in her Ward, but it turned out that this school was in Mahanagar Ward, nowhere in the 'neighbourhood' of her home, a requirement of the Act. It is physically impossible for her to send her little son so far away with another baby in her lap.

There is also a question mark on the lottery process itself. When the Act says that at least 25% children have to be admitted under section 12(1)(c), why should there be a cap in any school on the number of admissions? Only if the number of applicants exceeds the intake capacity of the school may the children be admitted other nearest available options. Such a situation has not arisen yet.

Some of the students who got admission in earlier years are not sailing smoothly. Ansh Kumar, admitted two years ago in Universal Montessori School and Girls' Intermediate College in Lucknow, has been failed in Kindergarten. Last year he got 31.93% marks in Nursery but was passed, as he stood fifth in class. This time he got 17.77% marks and has been expelled from the school, even though Section 16

of the RTE Act forbids holding back or expelling children. In 2016-17, his parents had to pay Rs 250–350 thrice in the name of examination fee, whereas the Act is named as Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education. Physical punishment is prohibited under Section 17 of the Act, but a teacher beat Ansh Kumar one day. On another day, when Ansh Kumar relieved himself in the class room, his mother was called from home to clear his latrine. Question is whether the school would have called the mother of a fee paying child to come and do such a thing? It is clearly a case of discrimination and humiliation for the family merely because they are poor, in addition to mental harassment for the child which is also prohibited under section 17.

Shakti Bal Vidyalaya in Gadhi Kanaura is run by a lawyer Anil Singh, even though lawyers are forbidden from undertaking any other commercial activity. The lawyer manager has charged thousands of rupees from parents to get the date of birth, caste, income certificates made which are supporting documents required to fill the application form for admission under section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act. He is also demanding sums ranging from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,500 for making the marksheets of last year available. The manager also says that parents should share a part of the Rs 5,000 which they are getting from the government for buying books and uniform for their children.

Blooming Flower Junior High School is similarly demanding Rs 200 each for making available the marksheets of two children of Mohammed Ashique, Muskan and Rehan, who are in classes KG and I respectively. After a demonstration

outside the school, it is now not insisting on the payment, but is not releasing the marksheet either.

Although not admitted under section 12(1)(c), three students Manish, Sanjay and Kamal, all belonging to Valmiki community, who were studying in a parallel stream by the name of 'Navsrijan' of the prestigious Seth M.R. Jaipuria School of Lucknow, were expelled after being enrolled there for close to 7 years, as the school thinks they cannot cope with English medium and must move to a Hindi medium school. This violates the provision of the Act forbidding expulsion from school before class VIII. It would not be out of place to mention that the Sanskrit loving Bhartiya Janata Party government has decided to create 5,000 English medium schools in the State, justifying it on the basis of demand for such schools.

Lord Meher School admitted Shivanshu and Shubham Sharma under section 12(1)(c) of the RTE Act last year, but has discontinued their education from this year, again violating section 16 of the Act.

In the face of violations of such serious nature, one would have expected the officials, government or the courts to intervene but unfortunately no action is being taken. The officials make an excuse that there is no punitive clause in the RTE Act. Combined with the tyrannical behaviour and assault of private schools, the Act has virtually been held to ransom with no authority willing to own it.

*(Note: With inputs from RTE activists Mahesh in Kanpur, Aman Agarwal in Aligarh and Praveen Srivastava, Shraddha Mishra, Saleem Khan and Ravindra in Lucknow.)*

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# It's Modi's BJP!

**Kuldip Nayar**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now well in control of the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). He has installed his close lieutenant Amit Shah as the party president. However, people's memory is short. The founding president of the BJP was Atal Behari Vajpayee who subsequently occupied the office of Prime Minister to lead the NDA government, a coalition of several parties.

The miracle of Congress demise took place under the leadership of Jayaprakash Narain, a Gandhian socialist. There was such a strong anti-Congress movement that all non-Congress parties, including the Jana Sangh, came together on one platform. The old Jana Sangh members were very particular about maintaining their links with the RSS. This meant that the Hindutva ideology would remain to define the party's agenda.

JP's clothes of secularism did not fit the pro-Hindu Jana Sangh. Despite that, JP admitted it into the opposition coalition fighting the authoritarian rule of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. JP was conscious that the Jana Sangh was a political arm of the RSS. But he had been given an undertaking that the two would part company.

When the Janata Party came into being, JP insisted on the Jana Sangh members, who occupied key positions in the Janata Party and government, severing links with the RSS. JP knew how they had created an atmosphere where a Hindu would assassinate Mahatma

Gandhi. Nathuram Godse touched Gandhi's feet and shot the Mahatma point blank. It became clear later that there was a well prepared plan. The RSS was banned. The organisation's chief M.S. Golwalkar was arrested. He was released after a year or so on the assurance that the RSS would not enter into electoral politics. It is another matter that they hid the fact that they are the guiding force of first the Jana Sangh and today the BJP. It is the RSS that selects the BJP candidates for both the State Assembly elections as well as the Lok Sabha.

The undertaking given by the Jana Sangh regarding severing its links with the RSS was a ruse to join the Janata Party. JP's reminders to Jana Sangh leaders to make good on their promise had no effect. How could they do so, when the Jana Sangh itself was an RSS creation, with the avowed aim of creating a Hindu Rashtra? Initially, the Jana Sangh members tried to explain to JP that the RSS wasn't what it was made out to be. When it came to the crunch, they refused point-blank to break ties with the RSS. JP felt cheated. But by then he was too sick to go back to the people to expose the Jana Sangh. He did make it public that his trust had been violated but he was helpless because of ill-health.

When the Janata Party raised the question of membership issue, the Jana Sangh members preferred to walk out. But by now, the Jana Sangh, now metamorphosed as the BJP, had acquired considerable

credibility, something that the Jana Sangh had not managed for several decades after Gandhi's assassination.

The two-year stay in the Janata Party and the portfolios they held in the central ministry helped the BJP immensely. It sought and got control of important portfolios like information and broadcasting. It also gave it the credibility to rapidly gain new members and saffronise them.

The BJP also adopted at that time a positive stance which confused the Hindu intelligentsia. Atal Behari Vajpayee was at helm of affairs, and he did a balancing act and rode two horses at the same time. Simultaneously, issues like Ayodhya-cum-Babri Masjid dispute and other factors, also enabled the BJP to gain considerable following and led to the BJP winning 181 Lok Sabha seats in 1998, against its usual single digit tally, in a 545-member house. After that, even JP's close followers found alibis to join hands with the BJP in the NDA so as to stay in the driving seat.

The BJP was now desperate to widen its base. Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani minimised the differences between the political BJP and the totalitarian RSS. He had done everything to "unify" the Hindus, the most dangerous being the rath yatra to Ayodhya that he led across northern India, dividing Hindus and Muslims who had lived together for centuries. Advani was so satisfied with the result that he equated the rath yatra with Gandhi's Dandi Salt march.

## Yes, That's What Israel Is!

**Jawaharlal Jasthi**

Prime Minister Modi is underlining all the time that he is bigger than the party. Even after four years' of rule, it is not clear in which direction he is taking the country. Granted that his diluted form of Hindutva is spreading in the country, but this process has stopped at the Vindhyas. The southern states do not seem to give the impression of full participants.

And once again, the introduction of Hindi is creating the same problem, as it did during the last days of Jawaharlal Nehru. Then his successor, Lal Bahadur Shastri, assured the nation on the floor of the house that the switch over to Hindi would take place only when the non-Hindi speaking states were ready for it. It is up to Modi to see how he is able to reconcile the two different trends. Only time will tell if he can to do so.

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It's high time for India to understand and acknowledge what Israel is. They don't have a law which they can be forced to follow. They follow their own law in their own way. Those who recognise Israel are not supposed to recognise that there is some country called Palestine. No, there is nothing called Palestine. All the area west of Jordan River and spreading up to the Mediterranean Sea belongs to them. After all, it has been given to them by no less an authority than God himself. How can anybody question it? Moreover, it is under their control for over a half century—de facto or de jure does not make any difference. It is their law that runs throughout that area.

On 12 April, 2018 roared a headline, "Israel detains Indian delegation on way to Palestine, deports back to India." Their visas were cancelled they were told to go back. Mohammed Salim, a Member of Parliament, was one of the delegates. He had diplomatic status. After verifying the same, he was allowed to enter the Palestine area subject to the condition that he shall not go to Ramallah and attend the conference. He declined the offer.

Over the past more than a decade, India has embraced Israel as a bosom friend, knowing fully well what it is. First the UPA and now the NDA government feel that Israel can be a reliable ally that can help in boosting our defences. Israel is supposed to be efficient as it has survived

the 'terrorist' attacks of displaced and disabled Palestinians. It is an open fact that Israel could not have survived but for the unconditional support extended by the sole super power, the United States of America. Once you want the friendship of the Israelis, they declare their conditions. You need their help in defence, but they will not allow you to restrict the relationship to defence alone. It has to be extended to trade and commerce. They are in need of markets for their innumerable products. They are facing resistance from democratic countries because of the BDS movement—boycott, divest and sanction. Iraq, the country devastated by America, has become the market for Israeli products. India has also been offered help in improving its agriculture and industry, and India has not been able to refuse it even though what they offer is not in any way superior to what India already has. Even in defence, they have used as a bait some equipment that India needs and along with it pressurised India to buy other defence equipment too. India initially fell for it—on Israeli, that were detrimental to indigenous development. But later, India scrapped the agreement. Don't expect Israel to forget or forgive this. Israel craves for diplomatic recognition from other countries as many countries refuse relations because of their policies. Even then, they insist that any relationship shall be on their own terms.

The life of Palestinians in the

West Bank is completely controlled by Israel—through their army. That is, West Bank is factually under military rule of an alien country. This is continuing for over half a century. Only the people who have experienced life under military rule, that too a hostile force, can understand what this means. They control the visitors in and out of this entire area. Even the movement of people living inside this area is subject to strict control of Israel forces. It is in this situation that the Government of India sent a delegation to attend a conference organised by the Palestine Liberation Organisation at Ramallah, within the West Bank. The topic of the conference was: Jerusalem: The Eternal Capital of Palestine. But Palestine is not yet liberated. With Israel not willing to define the boundaries of their country, Palestinians do not know what area they can call as their own. They do not know when will get a State of their own and, in what shape. Being suffocated under the military rule of Israel, they try to claim Jerusalem as their 'eternal' capital. Naturally, it irritates Israel.

Having established diplomatic and trade relations with Israel, India is also trying to step on the Palestine boat and also claims to be a supporter of Palestinian aspirations which are quite contradictory to those of Israel. It sent a team of delegates to attend the conference in Ramallah. The Israel army refused them entry into the West Bank. The delegation insisted that they have a right to enter as they have visas. The army took hold of their passports and stated that their visas were cancelled by a committee of the army. After all,

the area is under their control. The question is, who issued the visas? If they are issued by the Israel embassy in India, how can their army cancel it? If the visas are issued by the Palestinian authorities, how are they valid as they do not have their own country? The State of Palestine is not yet formed. Even the UNO has given only an observer status to the Palestinian Authority. The Israeli army did not allow the Indian delegates to enter the West Bank, and after waiting for four hours they were forced to return to Jordan and come back to India.

Meanwhile, the Indian Ministry of External Affairs pleaded with the Government of Israel, but it was of no use. India pointed out that one of the delegates is a Member of Parliament and has a diplomatic status. Israel agreed to allow that one delegate to enter, without any restrictions. He was allowed to attend the conference. He had come with his family and all were allowed. Thus, one member attended the conference as a delegate from India. That is the respect India has got as an ally of Israel with diplomatic and trade relations. Obviously, India expected Israel would be courteous enough to allow the delegates. But it failed to realise how sensitive is the matter of control over West Bank, and more particularly Jerusalem, for Israel. On the question of control over the West Bank, Israel did not care even for the suggestions of America, despite the fact that America stands by them in every crisis. Yes, that is Israel, and it is like no other country.

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# Indo-Pak Amity: Necessary Compulsion for the Survival of Both

**Pratap Reddy**

Before entering into a discussion on the subject of Indo-Pak amity, it is necessary to take a brief look at the history of India before its partition.

The development of India before partition is the history of advent of various races, religions and civilisations into India, such as, Aryans, Kushans, Huns, etc. All of them intermixed with the local people who were called 'Dravidians' and lived together with them, as it is revealed by archaeological researches of Harappa, Mohenjodaro, Taxashila, etc.

While there is no historical or chronological data of the birth and growth of Hindu religion except mythological beliefs, people of various other religions that originated in Asia, such as, Christians, Zoroastrians and Jews, also came to India and started mixing with the local people. All these factors had contributed to the growth of India as a civilisation with a unique blend of various cultures and religions.

Going into details of the growth of this syncretic Indian civilisation is beyond the scope of this short article. However, it is an accepted truth that India was very prosperous and a great centre of trade. Enticed by the manufacturing growth of India and opportunities of trade, various expeditions from the West to India took place. Earlier, the Western powers came to India by land route which necessitated wars with the countries that lay in between. To avoid such conflicts and war and

some Western powers attempted to explore the sea route for trade with India. The first attempt to find a sea route was made by Columbus; in his search for a sea route to India, in 1492 he reached a new world that had so far been unknown to the rest of the world, a region that is now known as the Americas. Some years later, the Portuguese navigator, Vasco da Gama, sailing via the southernmost part of Africa, landed in India in 1498, followed a century later by the Dutch.

In order to compete with the Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch traders, the English traders formed a Trading Company under the name of 'East India Company' on 31 December 1599 and obtained the Charter from the then British Monarch, Elizabeth I, on 1 January 1600. After obtaining the Charter, the English traders, under the leadership of Sir Thomas More, landed in Surat, India. In 1602 Sir Thomas More obtained his first audience with the Mughal Emperor Jahangir. Thereafter, East India Company began to expand its trade with different towns in India, such as Madras (Chennai), Calcutta and Bombay. The decline of the Mughal Empire created a great opportunity for East India Company to not only expand its trade adventures but also develop itself into a political power by winning diwani rights in Bengal, Awadh, etc.

After the decline of Mughal power, there emerged several chieftains calling themselves as

Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, Nizams, etc. These chieftains were spread all over the country. Taking advantage of the rivalry of local chieftains among themselves, the East India Company became a powerful political entity, capturing the whole of India by mid-nineteenth century. Its massive plunder eventually led to the first war of independence against British in 1857.

On account of rivalries of local chieftains, the first war of independence was unsuccessful, following which the British parliament enacted the first Government of India Act, 1858, by which the British imperialists took over direct control of India, assisted by local chieftains, who named themselves as Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, etc.

These treacherous acts of British imperialists brought an awakening among Indians led by Raja Rammohan Roy, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee and several others. The Indian National Congress was established in 1885 to get some concessions and reforms in the British imperialistic rule. This awakening among Indians brought Mahatma Gandhi into the freedom struggle in 1915. He had gained some experience of fighting British imperialistic rule in South Africa. Mahatma Gandhi realised that the only way of fighting the British imperialistic force was by awakening the ordinary people of India who had been suffering from the atrocities of British Empire

and their local stooges—the Rajas, Maharajas, Nawabs, etc. Mahatma Gandhi's first campaign began in Champaran in 1917, and gradually spread all over the country as a non-violent movement, one of whose slogans was non-cooperation with the British Government and resisting and rebelling against the laws of British Empire.

The mass movement that Gandhi successfully built up started shaking up the British imperialistic force. It was a movement that was historically unknown in any part of the world. The British government realised that the only way of weakening this mass movement was to divide Indians on the basis of religion. So, they invented the 'Two-Nation Theory' and made efforts to divide Hindus and Muslims, and ultimately became successful in dividing this land into two countries, India and Pakistan.

We request our readers to pardon us for encumbering them with these historical facts about the

development of India. The main aim behind this effort is to equip all of you with the past history of India and give an idea about what were the factors that led to the partition of India into two nations, India and Pakistan. The fact is that the division of our country under the Two-Nation theory was a British imperialistic invention, this theory was entirely their creation and not of any Indian, including Mohammad Ali Jinnah. Even after this successful action of the British Empire in dividing this country, nobody can deny that these two nations (now three—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh) have the same civilisation, race, heritage, etc.

Without going into further details of the division of India into three nations, all these three nations must realise that they are the divisions and parts of ONLY ONE NATION with a common heritage and common civilisation.

I appeal to the people of these three nations, India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, to recognise who are

their common enemies who are keeping them still divided and not allowing them to unite, if not as one nation, then as one amity of nations of this sub-continent. The common enemies of these three nations are poverty, ignorance and Western imperialistic forces like Britain and America. If these three nations, along with Nepal, Bhutan, Maldives, Sri Lanka and Afganistan, come together, they will work as a BULWARK against the Western imperialistic forces. It is, therefore, necessary that these three nations come together and develop closer trade relations, while maintaining their political and territorial sovereignty, by building up a Common Economic Zone like the European Union. This will enable them to keep Western imperialistic forces at bay and make this region one of the most prosperous in the world, as it was three centuries ago.

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## The Year Climate Change Began to Spin Out of Control

James Temple

For decades, scientists have warned that climate change would make extreme events like droughts, floods, hurricanes and wildfires more frequent, more devastating, or both. In 2017, we got an up-close look at the raw ferocity of such an altered world as high-category hurricanes battered the East and Gulf coasts, and wind-whipped fires scorched the West.

We're also seeing with greater clarity how these dangers are interlinked, building upon one

another towards perilous climate tipping points. And yet for all the growing risks, and the decades we've had to confront them, we have yet to address the problem in a meaningful way.

In fact, despite all our climate policies, global accords, solar advances, wind farms, hybrid cars and Teslas, greenhouse-gas emissions are still moving in the wrong direction. And as long as we're emitting any at all, we're only making the problem worse.

Here are the five most worrisome climate developments we saw in 2017.

### Emissions are rising again

After three relatively flat years, greenhouse gas emissions from fossil fuels and industry picked up again in 2017, rising an estimated 2 percent, according to the Global Carbon Project. The shift was driven by rising carbon pollution in China and India, which more than offset a slight decline in the United States.

The news punctured tentative hopes that the recent flattening was solidifying into a trend. Among other things, it means that our collective climate efforts haven't even prevented greenhouse gas levels from increasing, at a point when we need to be radically cutting them. Keeping temperatures from rising beyond a dangerous 2°C will require slashing emissions as much as 70 percent by midcentury, according to the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

At more than 400 parts per million, we're already well beyond dangerous levels of carbon dioxide concentrations in the atmosphere, as climbing temperatures, melting ice caps and extreme weather events have made clear.

In early November, the World Meteorological Organisation declared that 2017 was likely to end up as "one of the three warmest years on record," and the warmest one altogether that wasn't influenced by an El Niño event. That also makes the global average temperature during 2013–2017 the hottest five-year average recorded.

Carbon dioxide can remain in the atmosphere for thousands of years and takes about a decade to reach its maximum warming effect. In other words, even with all the changes we've already seen, we have yet to experience the full impact of the carbon we spewed in 2008 and every year since. Each additional ton we emit going forward only increases the dangers of climate change, multiplying the economic, environmental and human toll.

### **Worst-case scenarios look increasingly likely**

The most alarming projections for global warming this century

also seem to be the most reliable, according to a December study in *Nature* that compared climate models against what's already happening in the atmosphere.

The paper concluded that worldwide temperatures could rise nearly 5°C by the end of the century, 15 percent higher than the previous central estimate under the "business as usual" emissions scenario outlined by the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

The authors collected more than a decade's worth of "top of atmosphere" satellite observations, measuring factors such as how much infrared radiation is escaping from Earth and how much sunlight clouds and snow reflect away. In turn, they compared that data with the results of earlier climate models to determine which ones most closely forecast what the satellites actually saw. It turned out to be the ones that predicted the most warming.

That suggests the risks of climate change are greater than feared, and that we'll have to cut emissions even deeper to prevent dangerous levels of warming.

### **Hyperactive hurricanes**

Hurricane Harvey crossed the shorelines of southern Texas on August 25, marking the first major hurricane to make landfall in the United States in a dozen years. The storm hovered over the coast for days, dumping more than 60 inches of rain in some areas, killing more than 80 people and displacing thousands.

Irma and Maria added to the toll of destruction, making the hyperactive 2017 Atlantic hurricane season the most expensive ever, racking up more than \$200 billion in damages.

Several recent studies concluded that shifting climate conditions significantly increased the odds of an extreme event such as Harvey. Among other climatic factors, warmer air holds more moisture, and higher sea levels raise the height of storm surges, both of which can increase the destructive power of storms.

A study published in *Environmental Research Letters* in December concluded that global warming made an event like Harvey around three times more likely. Meanwhile, a report in *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* by Kerry Emanuel, a prominent hurricane researcher and professor of atmospheric science at MIT, found that events of similar magnitude will become far more likely as the climate warms further.

"We see probabilities of Harvey-type rainfalls going up by factors of 10 by the late 20th century and early 21st" under a "business as usual" greenhouse emissions trajectory, he says.

### **The melting Arctic**

In December, NOAA released an unsettling Arctic report card declaring that the North Pole had reached a "new normal," with no sign of returning to a "reliably frozen region." Rising temperatures have locked in a long-term trend of shrinking glaciers, receding sea ice, and warming permafrost.

Between October 2016 and September 2017, the area above the 60th parallel north experienced the second-warmest air temperature anomaly since 1900. In March, satellites recorded the lowest sea-ice winter maximum on record.

Melting glaciers and sea ice are particularly worrisome trends

because they trigger critical secondary effects, notably including increasing rates of sea-level rise.

This development also sets up dangerous climate feedback loops as reflective white snow and ice turn into heat-absorbing dark-blue water. It means the Arctic will send less heat back into space, which leads to more warming, more melting and still more sea-level rise.

“We see a major increase in temperatures in the high latitudes, in the area and coasts around the Arctic Ocean, so it seems like this process has already started,” says Vladimir Romanovsky, a professor of geophysics at the Permafrost Laboratory at the University of Alaska, Fairbanks.

He says another cause for concern is that permafrost is warming, approaching thawing temperatures in parts of the Alaskan interior. The problem there is that permafrost traps massive amounts of greenhouse gases beneath the surface. As it melts, those gases are released, forming a separate self-reinforcing cycle.

In early December, Lawrence Livermore National Lab researchers highlighted yet another potential effect of declining Arctic sea ice, concluding it may have played a crucial role in California’s extended drought this decade and could exacerbate future ones. Finally, though it seems counter-intuitive, the warming Arctic could also amplify cold spells, much like the winter storm now enveloping the East Coast.

### Massive wildfires

The West was engulfed in flames this year, as millions of acres burned across California, Montana, Oregon and elsewhere, adding up to the most

expensive fire season on record.

California alone battled blazes that covered more than a million acres, according to data from the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection. The Thomas Fire near Santa Barbara ripped across 280,000 acres, making it the state’s largest wildfire ever. The wine country fires in Northern California were even more destructive, burning down nearly 9,000 structures and killing 44 people.

Climate change doesn’t “cause” wildfires, which can be ignited by campfires, lightning strikes, downed power lines or arson. Other human actions, including decades of fire suppression, have also increased the risk and magnitude of these fires. But global warming does seem to be making the events worse.

Human-influenced climate change has doubled the area affected by forest fires during the last 30 years across the American West, scorching an additional 16,000 square miles, according to a 2016 study in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

Higher temperatures suck moisture out of soil, trees and plants, turning forests into tinderboxes. In California, the added heat has been compounded by the prolonged drought from 2012 to 2016, which dried out vast swaths of wilderness and opened the door to a devastating beetle bark infestation. The twin forces have killed some 129 million trees across nearly nine million acres, building up a massive amount of fuel and significantly raising wildfire risks, according to the state fire department.

As both the highest-cost fire year and the highest-cost hurricane year, 2017 was very likely “the most expensive weather year ever,”

according to a convincing case in the Atlantic.

“Both the wildfires and the unprecedented Atlantic hurricane season are similarly profound and troubling,” wrote Michael Mann, director of the Penn State Earth System Science Center, in an e-mail to MIT Technology Review. “I see them as twin climate change–exacerbated weather phenomena.”

The added danger of wildfires is that they can convert forests from sponges to sources of carbon dioxide, forming yet another climate feedback cycle. In fact, California’s forests emitted more carbon than they absorbed between 2001 and 2010, and two-thirds of the loss was attributable to wildfires, according to a 2015 study by researchers at the National Park Service and the University of California, Berkeley.

Reading through this list, it becomes increasingly clear how the links between distant events lock into self-reinforcing loops: rising emissions, higher temperatures, shrinking sea ice, additional warming, extended droughts, bigger wildfires, and still higher emissions. That means it will become increasingly difficult to pull out of this spiral, making it increasingly urgent that we begin serious efforts to do so soon.

Courtesy: MIT Technology Review

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# Why Ankit Saxena's Murder Has Been Easily Forgotten

Tani S. Bhargava

A Hindu father appealed to keep the peace in West Delhi, in the wake of the killing of his only child, a 23-year-old son at the hands of the family of his Muslim beloved.

Astonishing that it was made in the heat of the moment, not in the cool of hindsight. Heartening that this sane voice came from the urban sprawl of janata flats in Raghuraj Nagar.

Increasing instances of inter-caste and inter-faith relationships go hand in hand with hardened caste and religious identities. Then what is out of sync? Has anything changed since the runaway marriages of Anees and Sumitra or Jayanti and Javed in the 1960s?

Yash Pal and Kamlesh Saxena's home is a single 12x15 sq ft space with aquamarine walls, barely room enough for a largish double bed covered with a threadbare bedspread of red and white squares. The word love is printed in every white square. A plank on the wall serves as a shelf for some small brown bottles of medicine, two plastic boxes with strips of capsules, a makeshift temple with attendant tinsel and a few decaying marigolds. A ramshackle cooler stands on guard over a tired top-load washing machine leaning, as if for support, on an aging 100 litre fridge.

Yash Pal, a retired water pump technician, of medium built with a kindly demeanour, stood up from the sole chair to welcome us, but his wife Kamlesh looked too weak and distraught to move from the bed or bother with such niceties.

Suffering from a chronic heart condition, Yashpal said that his wife suffered from the after-effects of a recent hysterectomy. "Ankit was a flourishing photographer. He supported our surgeries, even bought an air conditioner for this room. We have lost the sole breadwinner of the family.

"Now we only have the support of our Muslim neighbours. We eat together every evening, often from shared thalis, six to eight people on this bed. For how long? I cannot say. My *zameer* did not allow me to harbour or spread animosity against a community. These are not my *sanskar*."

A 2x3 inch colour photograph of Ankit, with a garland of plastic flowers, smiled down at us, the stud in his ear glinting.

Kamlesh sat vacant-eyed, wooden-faced and immobile throughout our visit, only to break down once when one of us touched her slight frame to ask whether she was unwell or desperately unhappy. She just wiped her tears silently.

"Some of my own people have accused me of smiling even when my only son is gone. I ask them if you will believe my grief only if I weep incessantly?" said Yash Pal as if to appeal to his wife.

Senior leaders of the Aam Aadmi Party and the local BJP MLA came with promises and went away never to be heard of or seen again. Why has the issue died as suddenly as Ankit himself?

Because Yashpal refused to

allow the murder to be politicised?

Because he is too simple-minded?

Because he is too secular? Nobody knows.

Some citizens are running a crowdfunding campaign to support Ankit's parents. A trust committed to communal harmony has pledged a monthly stipend. This is their only hope.

On our way out, Yashpal requested Ankit's childhood buddies, three strapping, silent young men, to escort us to the memorial constructed for their friend. Sukhmeet, Devanshu, and eerily a strange look alike, Ankit, walked us to the corner of the street where their friend was slaughtered. No one knows why the tulsi plant in a modestly tiled planter wilts in the March heat. A few A4 photocopies, flapping in the diffident breeze, demand 'Justice for Ankit'.

A memorial to the tragic end of the love between Ankit and Shehzadi. It's a memorial to an extraordinary son and an exceptional family.

As for me, a journey that began with the merciless killing of Safdar Hashmi by a pack of political hoodlums brings me today, nearly 30 years on, to the cold-blooded murder of Ankit Saxena by a bunch of executioners who could tear apart the social fabric of my city.

A grim reminder of the ugly reality of India. Cry, the beloved country.

Courtesy: dailyO



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