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Cover Picture : The illustration made by Jarnail Singh represents the Pakistani flag scarred by 68 blood spots which symbolize the total number of people who died in the Samjhauta Express bombings of 2007. The attack was targeted at Pakistani rail passengers aboard the ill fated train. Among the dead were several Indians, but most victims were Pakistani Muslims. The investigation of the case has established that Pakistani nationals were the main target of the attack that was planned and executed by Hindutva extremists.

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RADICAL
DESI

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor."

~ Desmond Tutu

Commemorating 100 years of the heroic death of Sohan Lal Pathak

This month marks the centenary of the execution of a South Asian political activist who died for freedom and social justice. Sohan Lal Pathak was one of the leading members of the Ghadar Party, a revolutionary group that was established by Indian immigrants in the US to liberate their homeland from British occupation through armed rebellion.

A native of Patti village in Punjab, Pathak was born in 1883 in British India. He belonged to a Brahmin Hindu family that lived in penury because of which his father could not afford to pay for his education. However, Pathak worked hard to win scholarships to support himself. He lost his mother when he needed her most, as a result of which he had to quit his studies, and joined the Irrigation Department. He later trained to be a teacher at the National Training School in Lahore where leaders of the freedom movement were very active. It is here that he came in contact with some of them and his life took a different turn. By this time he became a school teacher and began dividing his time between the liberation movement and his job. But the school headmaster was not impressed and advised him to stay away from political activities. After this he resigned and completely dedicated his life to the freedom struggle.

He joined *Bande Mataram*, a patriotic newspaper published by Lala Har Dayal, who was instrumental in forming the Ghadar Party in later years. Another big shock came into his life when he lost his wife and a small child, after which he moved to Siam in 1910 to continue his political activism. Around this time, Har Dayal moved to the US. Two years later, Pathak also went to San Francisco. The South Asian immigrants had started coming to the US to earn better livelihoods, while others came there to pursue higher studies. Being people of colour, they frequently faced racial discrimination. The British consulates never came to their rescue in an event of racial violence; although they were British subjects. They realized that the root cause of their sufferings abroad was foreign occupation of their motherland and started getting organized to liberate their country. Under these circumstances, the Ghadar Party was launched in Oregon in 1913. Both Har Dayal and Pathak were among the leaders of the group that fought against racism in North America and denounced British rule in India. For these two men who were already immersed in the national movement it was not unusual to become part of the radical group. While a majority of the Ghadar Party members were Sikhs, who largely belonged to the peasant class and had migrated for economic reasons, the party remained secular in character and wanted to establish an egalitarian society in post-British India. Therefore, it shouldn't surprise anyone that non-Sikhs like Har Dayal and Pathak were leading Ghadars.

It is believed that Pathak also lived in Vancouver where he participated in the struggle for the passengers of Komagata Maru. The Japanese vessel carrying over 300 Indian passengers was forced to return by the Canadian authorities under a discriminatory immigration law in 1914. Pathak was among the activists who fought against the attempts to forcibly return the ship.

In 1914, when Britain got locked into conflict with Germany, the Ghadar activists decided to return to India to wage war against the British Empire. They thought this was the right time to strike. Their strategy was to encourage Indian soldiers working for the Empire to quit and join for an armed revolt. Also, they believed that Germany would help them to defeat their common enemy.

The attempted Ghadar rebellion failed, partly because of the plan was leaked by the British spies in the party, and partly because the masses weren't ready for revolution. Apart from that, many Ghadarites were arrested after landing in India.

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Pathak was assigned the task to go to via Siam to Burma, which was part of India back then, and work in that region. Since he was familiar with that part of the world, he tirelessly worked to outreach Indian soldiers deployed in Burma, and incited them to revolt. He was so daring that he openly confronted the soldiers. Subsequently, he was arrested in December 1915 and hanged to death in Mandalay on February 10, 1916.

Though Pathak is physically dead, his legacy is still alive. While the occupation of Palestine and other parts of the world by imperialist forces continues, his ideology will remain relevant. The racism that troubled all the Ghadar activists continues to prevail in the US and Canada, both against the Indigenous peoples and people of colour. The growing rhetoric against immigrants, particularly Muslims, points out that the struggle for social equality has not ended.

In Pathak's own home country, caste-based discrimination and the increasing threat of Hindu fundamentalism under the current right-wing Hindu nationalist government goes against the secular spirit of the Ghadar heroes.

Lastly, it's a shame that there are continuous attempts to appropriate Ghadar history by the Sikh fundamentalists in Canada and the US. That the Sikhs were a majority in the Ghadar party does not mean that it was a Sikh movement for a theocratic state. The presence of men like Pathak in the Ghadar Party proves it was highly secular and any effort to portray it as a Sikh movement is fundamentally wrong. It has become necessary for all the secular forces to amplify the stories of men like Pathak to stop this blatant distortion of our history.

A real tribute to Pathak would be to keep his legacy alive through struggle and activism, and to defeat the designs to appropriate Ghadar history by reactionary forces.

-Editors

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Unworthy Victims

Those who suffered the wrath of Hindutva extremism in one of the worst terror attacks remain unknown to the world

Sixty-eight deaths in bomb explosions on a moving train connecting two countries was not a small incident. Neither in terms of the number of people who died, nor in terms of international ramifications which such an incident could have on the relations of two neighbouring countries. Yet, even after a decade has passed, the story remains unknown to the world where terrorism is seen as one of the major global threats in the post 9/11 environment.

On the night of February 18, 2007, improvised Explosive Devices

(IED) exploded aboard the Samjhauta Rail Express, killing 68 people. Most bodies were charred beyond recognition as parts of the train caught fire due to explosions. The dead included at least 16 children.

The ill-fated train connected India and Pakistan, the neighbouring nations that went to wars in 1965 and 1971. The two countries used to be one before 1947, the year that brought division on religious lines, separating Muslim Pakistan from Hindu-dominated India. Thanks to several contentious territorial issues, relations between the two countries have never been cordial. Hostility and

suspicion continue to prevail on both sides, each armed with a nuclear arsenal. Low scale proxy wars continue in the region, where intelligence agencies on either side of the border keep propping subversive elements of the rival nation to spread violence and terrorism. Bombings in India are frequently blamed on Pakistan, and likewise terror attacks in Pakistan are blamed on the Indian intelligence.

When the tragedy struck, the Samjhauta express was carrying mostly Pakistani passengers on a return journey after meeting with relatives in India. Not surprisingly, 42

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of those who died were Pak nationals.

The issue remained in the news for some time, but as years passed it went down in recent history as just another terror attack. The western nations, including the U.S. which is known as a traditional ally of Pakistan against India, have not seen this as a case worth exposing the perpetrators, who were terrorists of a "different" kind. After all, they were neither against the U.S., nor did they believe in Islam.

Train of peace

Samjhauta means compromise. Indeed the train was given this name under an agreement to build people-to-people relations. The rail service was started in 1976 under an international agreement so that families separated by the 1947 partition could connect with each other. But this rail service has never been smooth during a crisis. Service was affected in the 1980s, when the border state of Punjab witnessed armed insurgency by Sikh separatists who got some support from Pakistan, and again in 2001 following a terrorist attack on the Indian parliament that was blamed on Pakistan by the Indian government. However, the Samjhauta rail service was running smoothly in 2007, when the terrorists targeted it through suitcase bombs.

The blast occurred near Panipat, India when the train was heading back to Pakistan. This came at a time when Indian and Pakistani leaders were about to meet to continue dialogue. While religious and political hawks on both sides have continued to spew venom against each other for years, the moderates have always insisted that such attacks are meant by the fundamentalists to derail any peace

process. For years, Muslim extremists, either based in Pakistan or their sympathisers in India, have been seen as the ones opposed to peace and dialogue. Bomb blasts occurring both in India and Pakistan have mostly been blamed on Islamic terrorists. Therefore, when the Samjhauta Rail was targeted, the Indian intelligence quickly blamed Pakistan-based terrorists. In fact, some Muslims were held as suspects during the initial investigation. Those who have been overwhelmed by the September 11, 2001 terror attack in New York readily consumed the news reports indicating the involvement of Muslim extremists.

Not even the wider intellectual class, which has always talked peace, thought for the simple reason that since most victims of the Samjhauta attack were Pakistani Muslims, one could conclude that the attack might be the handiwork of forces other than Islamic extremists. It was conveniently overlooked that like the Taliban in Pakistan, Hindutva extremists in India were also opposed to peace and dialogue. Many Hindutva groups have been trying to block efforts to boost trade and cultural ties with Pakistan. They too have organized protests against Samjhauta rail, bus and naval services between the two countries. But people never considered that Hindu extremists were also capable of bombing a train. Maybe they were convinced by the big media, which has fed them stereotypes of Islam as a religion that promotes violence and terrorism.

Hindutva terror

Contrary to the belief that Hindutva terrorism is a new phenomenon, the result of ongoing

terror attacks on Hindus by Muslim extremists, this problem has been there ever since India gained independence from British occupation in 1947. The leaders of Hindutva – an ideology that supports Hindu theocracy – always wanted to establish a powerful Hindu state in South Asia. The roots of this ideology, which recognized Islam and Christianity as foreign religions, can be traced to the period when Britain ruled India.

The founders of Hindu nationalism never saw the British as their real enemies. The Muslims and Christians were always seen as the bigger threat. They openly branded the elders of Muslim population in India as outsiders, who they claim came as invaders to spread Jihad or Islamic holy war in South Asia. They continue to allege that these Islamic invaders demolished temples and forcibly converted Hindus into Muslims after occupying India with the sword. Christianity, they claim, was brought by European colonialists, eventually growing by converting poor and gullible Hindus through missionaries.

With the purpose to establish a Hindu nation, they started getting organized, using violent means to terrorise their detractors, including secularist freedom fighters who wanted to establish a pluralist and egalitarian society in post-British India. The Hindu nationalist movement expanded under different names, such as Hindu Mahasabha and Rashtriya Swayamsewk Sangh (RSS). These organizations had no inclination towards a freedom movement mainly comprised of secular forces. They largely remained indifferent to the national movement, attempting to gain political power with some

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help from the British.

When British finally quit India in 1947, the popular leadership of the country chose to remain a secular democracy. But following a sustained campaign by the Muslim League, Pakistan was born as an Islamic republic, to the frustration of the Hindutva ideologues. Since then, they have been desperate to transform India into an official Hindu state. These groups resorted to large scale violence against Muslims, to drive them out to the fledgling Muslim nation. The Muslim League goons also slaughtered Hindus on their side of the border, resulting in a large scale exodus of the non-Muslim population to India.

Mahatma Gandhi, the leader of the passive resistance movement against British rule, became the target of Hindutva terrorists for denouncing violence against Muslims. Although Gandhi was a devout Hindu, he was opposed to religious sectarianism. As a believer in a united India, he tried his best to prevent partition, and was open to the idea of giving the Muslim League a chance to lead the country. Angered by his policies, Hindutva extremists made a number of attempts on his life. They finally succeeded in assassinating him on January 30, 1948, the first high profile terrorist act of Hindutva forces. Following the incident, the RSS was banned after being accused of involvement in terrorist methods. It is a separate matter that the Indian government later revoked the ban and gave the RSS space to grow. There have been temporary bans on the outfit on some other occasions, but it has increased its strength to an extent where its political wing, the Bhartiya Janta Party

(BJP), ascended to power with a brute majority in the 2014 general election.

In the post-independence years, they continued to indulge in violence against religious minorities. Rioting and arson have been their common weapons. The militarization of Hindu youth through volunteer camps, both in cities and villages, has been another dimension of their movement. Many a time, the explanation for such camps was the increased threat of Islamic terrorism originating from Pakistan. Hindutva leaders insist that their community has a right to self-defence in the face of "Islamic terrorism sponsored by Pakistani agencies to destabilize India". Pakistan-sponsored extremist elements had been active in the border states of Kashmir and Punjab where separatists targeted Hindus. Kashmir is a Muslim-dominated state, whereas Punjab is a Sikh-dominated province. In both states, demands for independence led to armed insurgencies in the 1980s. But separatists from the two minority communities have always maintained that they are victims of structural violence in a system that functions under pressure of the Hindutva ideology that dominates the state apparatus under the garb of secularism. The Hindu right has always been hostile to minority demands for autonomy and self-determination. They consistently portray such demands as "anti-national" and "seditious," while at the same time vocally denouncing secularism and the special rights to the minorities enshrined in the Indian constitution. It is a common practice among Hindutva supporters to present Pakistan in a negative light and to question the patriotism of Indian Muslims, whose "real place"

they believe is Pakistan.

In order to polarize Hindus, the Hindutva groups started revivalist campaigns and sought the "liberation" of ancient Hindu temples supposedly demolished by Islamic rulers in the past. This culminated in the demolition of an ancient mosque in Ayodhya in 1992. The RSS claims that the site where the mosque stood was the birthplace of the revered Hindu god, Lord Rama. According to them, Babar, a Muslim king, had demolished the temple that once stood there, and replaced it with a mosque to humiliate Hindus. They gave a call to rebuild the Rama temple at the disputed site, and as a result Hindu mobs in the presence of leaders of the BJP and RSS destroyed the mosque. Notably, this happened when the so-called secular Congress was in power in New Delhi, with P.V. Narasimha Rao as Prime Minister. Significantly, Rao was the Home Minister when Congress sponsored the anti-Sikh pogrom that broke out in 1984 after the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards. The Ayodhya incident led to massive Hindu-Muslim violence in India, and bombings in Mumbai killing many innocent people. The Islamic terrorists were blamed for the serial blasts.

In 2002, an anti-Muslim pogrom broke out in Gujarat, following the death of over 50 people in the burning of a train bringing Hindu pilgrims from the disputed site of Ayodhya. The BJP government in Gujarat claimed the train was torched by fundamentalist extremists who had support from Pakistan, although one commission of enquiry found that it was an accident. Following the incident,

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innocent Muslims were targeted by goons led by BJP leaders. In a way, the Ayodhya episode that vitiated the communal atmosphere of India can be described as one of the root causes behind ongoing terrorist attacks and the anti-Muslim massacre of Gujarat.

The Gujarat violence was so intense that its then-Chief Minister Narendra Modi was banished internationally. He was denied visas by western governments for allowing brutal violence and religious intolerance against Muslims. Now the Prime Minister of India, Modi still remains controversial. He is frequently greeted by angry protesters for the happenings of 2002 whenever he visits abroad. It should not come as a surprise that the demand for building a Rama temple in Ayodhya has again picked up, as expectations of the Hindutva forces have grown under his government.

Will the BJP finally succeed in delivering its poll promise to make a temple at the disputed site? Only time would tell, but the terror of Hindutva has certainly increased since Modi came to power with a brute majority in the Indian parliament.

All through these years, violence in the name of Jihad also continued in different parts of India. Both Islamic and Hindutva extremists left no stone unturned to complement each other one way or the other. Both sides keep blaming each other for starting the violence. Yet what is striking is that most of the bombings were seen as handiwork of the Muslim extremists. The scope of investigations rarely enlarges to see other possibilities, either on account of prevailing prejudices against minority terrorism, or a lack of political will to deal with

terrorism of those in majority. Some think that compared to Pan Islamic terrorism, which has existed for many years, this is a new phenomenon which has taken a long time to enter into the consciousness of security agencies. They argue that using bomb blasts was a deliberate technique to avoid the international criticism which followed the blatant violence against Muslims in Gujarat. The number of such incidents registered a growth after 2002; killing Muslims without leaving any evidence was seen as the safest way to instil fear in the minority community. Those involved in these bombings disguised themselves as Muslims, so that Muslims became suspects even in the killings of their own compatriots. In this way, the Muslims became the victims of state violence. Widespread prejudices against Muslims in the security apparatus made the task of the perpetrators much easier.

Unfolding of mystery behind Samjhauta episode

The Samjhauta blast, like other terror attacks, was almost instantly blamed on Islamic extremist groups based in Pakistan, even though the targets were mainly Pakistani nationals. Media reports speculated on the involvement of Jihadi groups and attributed their stories to intelligence sources. At least one prominent Indian daily, quoting intelligence sources, reported that the "remarkable finesse with which the attack on the train was carried out points fingers at highly professional terror groups, among which Lashkar-e-Toiba tops the list."

Some Muslims were also rounded up as suspects for questioning. Among them were two Pakistani nationals travelling on

the train. One Indian Muslim was detained in Rajasthan and sent for questioning. But the footprints of Hindutva terrorism in the crime soon began showing their signs.

The police department of Haryana, where the Samjhauta blast took place, formed an investigation team which followed some leads that took them to another province: Madhya Pradesh (MP), then ruled by the BJP. Soon the police were able to trace the source of the suitcases used by the conspirators. They were procured from the MP city of Indore. But as the Haryana police were expected to make a major breakthrough, the investigation abruptly stopped due to lack of cooperation from the MP government.

The real conspiracy was unearthed only after the Anti Terrorism Squad (ATS) of the Maharashtra state police was able to lay hands on startling evidence of Hindutva terrorists active within its jurisdiction. This came when the ATS Maharashtra was investigating a bomb blast that left four people dead and close to 100 injured in a crowded area of Muslim-dominated Malegaon city. Malegaon was previously targeted in 2006, when four powerful explosions left 31 people dead and injured more than 300. Three of the explosions took place inside or near a mosque. At that time, the authorities had arrested and charged Muslim suspects. But the latest attack was investigated by the late Hemant Karkare, the ATF chief known for his impartiality. The police were able to trace the real culprits, who happened to be ultra-Hindu nationalists. Among those arrested were a serving army officer, Lt. Col. Prasad Purohit, who co-founded Abhinav Bharat, a group that wants to establish a Hindu nation.

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Incidentally, the President of the outfit, Himani Savarkar, is the daughter-in-law of the brother of V.D. Savarkar, a prominent Hindutva ideologue who was charged in Gandhi's assassination but later acquitted. Himani is also the niece of Nathuram Godse, who was convicted and executed for Gandhi's murder.

As one thing leads to another, the interrogation pointed out that the Samjhauta explosives might have been provided by Purohit. Things became clearer as the investigation advanced and was later taken over by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in 2010. It is pertinent to mention that the NIA also took over the Malegaon blast cases and other related investigations, including the May 2007 bomb blast inside the Mecca mosque in Hyderabad that left nine people dead. After all these cases were handed over to one central agency, the authorities were able to piece together the larger conspiracy of Hindutva terrorism.

According to NIA documents in possession of RDNB, the Muslims arrested for the Malegaon blasts of 2006 stated that they were made to confess under duress, while those actually involved in the crime were part of the Hindutva terror network that wanted to avenge Jihadi terrorism by committing terrorist acts on Muslim places of worship and other places densely populated by Muslims. The NIA charge sheet says that one of those arrested made calls to media houses from a public phone in New Delhi to claim responsibility on behalf of "Dharmasena" (a religious army of Hindus), but did not get any response.

An NIA charge sheet in the Mecca mosque blast of 2007 alleges that the Hindutva extremists were

angered by a spate of terrorist attacks committed by Jihadi terrorists with "cross-border support" on Hindu temples and Hindus in India. The conspiracy to commit similar acts against Muslims was hatched among these individuals between 2005 and 2007, the document claims. Interestingly, they also conspired to prepare false identification documents like Driving Licence and identity Cards of Muslims, for the purpose of purchasing SIM cards to be used in designing of IEDs.

The NIA's task was made easier when one of the ideologues of the whole network, Swamy Aseemanand, decided to make a confession out of remorse. Arrested in November 2010, he was once active in Gujarat, where he lived as a fanatical ascetic who converted Christians to Hinduism. He can be seen in the company of Narendra Modi in a picture of a public event. In December 2010, he confessed his involvement in some of these blasts before a Magistrate in Delhi. Subsequently, he was charge sheeted in the Samjhauta case in 2011.

The NIA charge sheet against him reveals that he was upset with the Jihadi terror attacks on Hindu temples and developed vengeance against the Muslim community. He had reportedly announced that "we will avenge bombings with bombings". He gave money to a person named Sunil Joshi, who further organized different acts of terrorism, including the Samjhauta blast. Aseemanand had reportedly suggested that "Malegaon which has 86% Muslim population may be chosen first for bomb blast." Joshi was mysteriously murdered in December 2007. The investigators found his personal diary, in which he

had listed Aseemanand's phone number as an emergency contact.

Inconvenient truth

The investigation against Hindutva terror however has never been smooth. Officers like Karkare came under attack from BJP leaders, who accused him of maligning Hindus. Prime Minister Modi can be seen and heard attacking those who arrested Hindutva terrorists. In an old public speech posted on social media. In November 2008, when the city of Mumbai came under terrorist attack, Karkare was killed fighting the attackers. The Indian government maintains that the assailants came to Mumbai from Pakistan by boat and took the city hostage. More than 100 people were killed in the incident. Those who believe in conspiracy theories suggest that Karkare might have been finished off by Hindutva supporters taking advantage of the chaos. Modi, who was the Chief Minister of Gujarat back then, visited his home and offered a cash reward to his family which was rejected by Karkare's widow.

The NIA also felt a lot of pressure from the high ups to go slow on the Samjhauta blast investigation. The first indication of pressure came when the ATS Maharashtra retracted reports that RDX was used in the blast. This was in contrast to the Superintendent of Police (Railways) who had stated that RDX was used in the crime, attributing this claim to the findings of a forensic report. Obviously, anything pointing at the enemies within had potential to damage the reputation of India in the eyes of the international community. This not only contradicted the initial Indian reaction against Pakistan, but also weakened its case against a hostile neighbour

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which it has accused for years of sponsoring terrorism on its soil.

In 2015, the former public prosecutor of NIA, Rohini Salian, threw a bombshell by disclosing that she has been asked to go soft on the Malegaon case. Her disclosure came after the BJP came to power, but media reports from 2010 suggest a similar scenario when the Congress-led coalition was in power. Thus, the Hindu nationalist BJP and the secularist Congress appear to be on the same page when it comes to the question of "national interest".

If the list of banned terror groups on the NIA website is any indication, there is a complete lack of will to challenge Hindutva extremism. The list of 36 banned terror groups includes Sikh and Muslim extremist organizations, and Maoist insurgents, but not a single Hindutva outfit. Not even Abhinav Bharat, whose name is associated with the blasts being probed by NIA. That Purohit was a serving army officer when arrested also reflects on the mindset of those in security agencies.

Pakistan, on the other hand, is keeping its pressure. Whenever India raises the issue of cross-border terrorism, Pakistani officials do not shy away from bringing up Samjhauta. In August last year, when NIA announced that it would not object if bail is granted to Aseemanand, the Pakistani government summoned India's Deputy High Commissioner to lodge its protest.

The fate of the Samjhauta case hangs in the balance and it remains to be seen whether those charged are punished. But speculations are rife among social justice activists of a possible miscarriage of justice under a right-wing Hindu nationalist government.

Silence of the lambs

Terror attacks across the world, particularly in western countries, have left permanent scars on the public memory. From the 9/11 imagery of the World Trade Center getting hit by airplanes, to the Facebook users placing French flags behind their profile pictures following the November 2015 terror attack in Paris, responses to such tragedies have been huge and long lasting. The most common thread behind these attacks was is not only the people left dead, but the blame on Islamic terrorists. Samjhauta hardly falls into that category. The victims did not belong to western nations, nor did the assailants believe in the Islam which raises an alarm in western democracies.

The memory of 68 people who died for being Muslims and Pakistanis faded pretty quickly. For India, where the incident happened, the story has become a source of embarrassment. That's why the Indian establishment only sell the stories of terror attacks such as the one that occurred in Mumbai in 2008, to make a strong case against Pakistan. Why highlight something that brings shame? And nobody from the west will ever question a democracy like India, which in their eyes for purely pragmatic reasons has emerged as a strong economy worth doing business with. Why would they bother about the perpetrators of a terror attack on Pakistani Muslims in India?

As things stand, the current situation of the families of the victims of the Samjhauta episode remains unknown. Repeated attempts to reach them in Pakistan over the phone have failed. No philanthropist or political figure has been of any help to find their contacts. Not a

single vocal group speaks on their behalf to the world. This shows how their story is now almost completely buried. Pakistan is also occupied with its own problems. Accused of propping up Jihadi extremism on its soil against the Soviets during the Cold War era, it has now become a victim of terrorism itself. Every now and then blast in Pakistan leaves scores of civilians and soldiers dead. But the Samjhauta story seems to have become lost even in Pakistan which is going through a crisis. At best Pakistan can rattle a cage if those charged for bombings are acquitted, or if India points its fingers again for another terror attack within its borders.

Under these circumstances, the case of those who died at the hands of Hindutva terrorists can be best understood in the words of Noam Chomsky: "A propaganda system will consistently portray people abused in enemy states as worthy victims, whereas those treated with equal or great severity by its own government or clients will be unworthy." Clearly, western governments and their client in the current Indian state now being run by the Hindutva brigade, have no interest in a case of terrorism that will open a can of worms. Nobody wants that in an era of Islamophobia, as country after country seeks allies to fight against Jihad. Until Hindutva terrorism enters the consciousness of the big powers, the Samjhauta story will remain hidden.

-RDNB

Opinion

World needs to wake up to accept the reality of Hindutva terror

It was sometime before the November 26, 2008 terror attack in the Indian financial capital of Mumbai that I suggested to Mike Roberts, then the Editor of *South Asian Post* for which I used to write, that we needed to do a cover story on the emerging threat of Hindutva terrorism. But the Mumbai attack not only left over 100 people dead, it also killed the story I wished to do.

The Mumbai attack was blamed on Pakistan-based Islamic extremists, who came by boat and used the sea route to reach their destination. The attackers took the city hostage, and fierce fighting ended with heavy casualties. Obviously, it was a big story both in terms of death toll and also being an attack on the financial capital of the so-called world's largest democracy. The fact that it happened against the backdrop of 9/11 gave the tragedy a short name of 26/11. Since those blamed for the attack shared the religion of the alleged conspirators of 9/11, the western democracies rallied behind India in its fight against Jihadi terrorism. India complains that it has been a victim of Islamic terrorism for years. After the 9/11 tragedy, the world started paying a little more attention to terrorism in India and therefore the Mumbai terror attack was widely condemned. Among the

nations that denounced the attack in strong words was Canada. A year later, when then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper made a first official visit to India he toured the places that came under 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai. I had an opportunity to cover Harper's tour and accompanied the team of journalists that followed his visit to these locations.

The whole incident obscured the sensational stories of Hindutva terrorism in India that started appearing during the months leading up to the Mumbai attack. The Anti Terrorism Squad of Maharashtra Police Department, under whose jurisdiction Mumbai falls, had smashed a network of Hindutva terrorism some time ago. For the record, Hindutva does not represent Hinduism or the Hindu religion. It is an ideology of those who believe in Hindu theocracy and wish to establish a Hindu nation.

Most bombings in India were conveniently blamed on Islamic terrorists, but the Maharashtra police had made a major breakthrough, arresting Hindu extremists who targeted Muslim areas and their mosques by using explosives. They were mainly doing it to avenge bomb attacks on their temples by the Islamic terrorists. Initially, the attacks on Muslim targets were also blamed on Islamic extremists, as a result of which Muslim men were unfairly arrested and thrown into jails.

This whole new discovery had created ripples in Indian politics. Particularly, the Hindu nationalists Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) reacted strongly and began accusing the Chief of the Anti Terrorism Squad, Hemant Karkare, of maligning their community. This was despite the fact that Karkare himself was a Hindu and was only doing his duty with impartiality. After all, a police officer has to look into all possible theories behind any incident to unravel the truth. It is a separate matter that the Indian police have often come under criticism for biased and prejudiced investigations from the minority communities. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was the Chief Minister of Gujarat at that time, also came to the defence of the arrested Hindu activists. Ironically, Karkare

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died fighting during the Mumbai terror attack, following which Modi offered a monetary reward to his family, which was rejected by his wife Kavita Karkare. Kavita, who passed away due to a brain hemorrhage in 2014, had been under intense pressure due to the controversies over the arrests of Hindutva terrorists and her husband's untimely death. I remember having called her for an interview a number of times. Last time we spoke she only said, let's wait for now, as she was under a lot of stress.

When the stories of Hindutva terrorism began emerging in the Indian press, I suggested to Mike, let's do a cover story on this. I wanted people in Canada to understand that terrorism knows no boundaries, and that no single community, particularly Muslims who came under a microscope following 9/11, can be blamed for this menace. Good and bad people are everywhere. No community can be described as good or bad for the misdeeds of some. While we were still in the middle of taking a decision, the Mumbai attack rocked the world. My suggestion was rejected, and Mike wanted me to cover 26/11 rather than Hindutva terrorism. He thought it would be odd to focus on Hindu extremists in the light of what happened in Mumbai. Though he was right from a purely journalistic perspective, the media's overall reaction to the Mumbai attack diverted attention towards Jihadi extremism that was seen as a global threat. After all, Hindutva terrorism did not pose any threat to the western democracies.

This is not to suggest that Mike

is biased. In fact, he is a fine journalist who respects humanists and secularists, and gave me a lot of opportunity to write fearlessly against Hindu and Sikh fundamentalists. I wrote an obituary on Karkare that was published by the *South Asian Post* and once did a cover story on opposition to Modi in Canada. The idea of sharing this story is that Hindutva terrorism is not being seen as a potential threat to the world. One reason is that the world is largely blinded by Islamophobia, which also influences the Indian state. Their own National Investigation Agency (NIA) has not included any Hindutva outfit on its list of banned terror groups, although the NIA is presently looking into incidents of terrorism committed by Hindu extremists. Among those listed as terror groups by NIA on its website are Islamic and Sikh extremist outfits, besides Maoist insurgents, but no mention of any Hindutva organization. If there is no acceptance of the threat by the country that faces it directly, how can one expect others to recognize it, especially when the others are enamoured by India's growing market and the idea of friendly ties with the Indian establishment?

To deal with this challenge, first this threat has to be recognized as real, not something rare or

isolated. Some argue that it is a new phenomenon. Others say that the Hindu extremists were only retaliating against attacks on their community by Islamic extremists. But we must not forget that the Hindu extremists assassinated Mahatma Gandhi way back in 1948. The leader of the passive resistance movement against the British occupation was murdered for standing up against assaults on Muslims when the country was divided on religious lines, separating Islamic Pakistan from India. Since then, the Hindu extremists have been actively involved in violence. Use of bombs can be a new phenomenon, but Hindutva terrorism has always been there with a clear mandate to turn India into a Hindu theocracy. The lack of political will by the Indian leadership to deal with extremists of the dominant religious group has allowed their growth over the years. Under the current Hindu nationalist BJP government, they are getting more legitimacy. Not only the Indian state, but the world at large should take this challenge seriously. A terrorist is a terrorist. It does not matter what faith he or she belongs to. Rather than being selective in our approach towards terrorism on account of faith or political and economical interests, we have to stand up against it, in whichever form it exists.

Gurpreet Singh is the founder of Radical Desi. He is a newscaster and talk show host at Spice Radio in Burnaby and freelances for Georgia Straight, People's Voice and Hindustan Times.

An unusual New Year get together

On January 1, when most Canadians were busy welcoming New Year and holding celebrations, South Asian activists got together to denounce ongoing state violence in India.

At the Progressive Cultural Center in Surrey, cutting across their ideological differences, various progressive groups came together to speak against the arrest of a disabled Delhi University Professor.

G.N. Saibaba is 90 percent disabled below the waist. The wheelchair-bound professor has been sent back to jail after his bail was cancelled in spite of his poor health. He was earlier arrested in 2014 after being branded as a Maoist supporter. However, he got bail on health grounds in 2015, and was under treatment at a Delhi hospital.

Saibaba is a prominent social justice activist who has raised his voice against systemic violence against oppressed groups, including so-called untouchables and indigenous peoples. The Maoist insurgents are active in the Indigenous communities in about 200 districts of India. These areas have rich mineral resources that corporations and the state authorities want to usurp. The Adivasis in these areas feel that they are being evicted for the sake of corporate houses, and many see Maoists as allies for protection from state repression. Saibaba has been highlighting these issues,

because of which his supporters believe that he has been thrown into jail to silence his voice.

A huge outcry followed his arrest in 2014. Protest rallies were also held in Vancouver by the South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy and East Indian Defence Committee. The leaders of the two groups came together again to condemn the re-arrest of Saibaba at the January 1 public meeting.

Speakers were unanimous in their demand for the immediate release of Saibaba.

Another issue that dominated the meeting was the contempt of court charges against famous Indian author Arundhati Roy, who

had written a powerful piece on Saibaba for *Outlook* magazine. Roy had argued that the Indian legal justice system was biased against Saibaba, as those involved in the worst criminal acts, including the anti-Muslim pogrom of 2002, have been granted bails.

The anti-Muslim massacre broke out in Gujarat in 2002 after a train carrying Hindu pilgrims was burnt, leaving over 50 people dead. The Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party government in Gujarat had blamed Muslim extremists for torching the train. As a result anti-Muslim violence rocked Gujarat state. The current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Chief Minister of Gujarat at that time. Human rights groups allege that he and his party were complicit in the crime.

The speakers at the New Year meeting also condemned charges against Roy, describing it as an attack on free expression. They resolved to continue their campaign until time Saibaba is free and charges against Roy are revoked.

Among the speakers were Harbhajan Cheema, Parminder Swaich, Lakhbir Khun Khun and Chinmoy Banerjee. Others who spoke on the occasion included, representatives of Fraser Valley Peace Council, Indian Rationalist Society and Mamta Foundation. One of the speakers was former BC Human Rights Commissioner Harinder Mahal.

-RDNB

The TRC final report - some thoughts

The final report of Justice Murray Sinclair's historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission has been delivered. This is one of those documents which will help shape the future of this country for years to come - but it also reflects many difficult years of struggle by the most oppressed peoples within the Canadian state. Those who analyse the TRC report mainly in terms of the shifting views of the Canadian elite have the picture upside down. Their mistake is easy to understand, since it arises in part from the symmetry of political history in Canada. PM Justin Trudeau's father is widely revered for some of his important changes to this country's outdated inequality laws, and for his welcome to immigrants and US war resisters. But Trudeau Sr. was also among those who refused to accept the equality of all nations within Canada, especially the indigenous peoples. His son has taken the opposite tack, making it appear that the ruling class in Canada has suddenly gained a much deeper degree of wisdom.

But this change from father to son is almost an accidental scenario. Those who have truly shown wisdom are the oppressed peoples themselves, over nearly half of a millennium as their lands were seized by colonial forces. The

indigenous peoples within (not "of") Canada have never ceased to defend their traditional territories, languages, cultures, and ways of life, despite enormous pressures to surrender and be assimilated. Over the decades since Trudeau Sr.'s infamous White Paper proposed the final assimilation of aboriginal peoples, this struggle has had an enormous impact. Think of the contributions of indigenous activists such as Buffy Ste. Marie, Maria Campbell, the Oka defenders, the Caledonia land reclaimers, the Idle No More founders, the Grassy Narrows blockaders, the Manitoba Metis, Chief Theresa Spence, Grand Chief Stewart Phillip, Cindy Blackstock - the names go on and on and on, including Assembly of First Nations chiefs, many of whom have helped to change this country in their own way, despite the often justified criticisms from their own peoples

The organizers of the annual Vancouver march to remember the 1200-plus murdered and missing indigenous women and girls are certainly among those who have made such contributions. Organized by indigenous women for over 20 years in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver, this event is often the largest single grassroots action in the city, drawing as many as five to ten thousand people.

Certainly the annual march did much to raise public awareness of this crucial issue, and to finally compel governments and police to begin taking action. The upcoming federal inquiry into the MMIW was one of the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, sparked largely by this annual event, which now takes place in many communities across Canada. Anyone who wants to take part in this deeply moving event is welcome - it begins at 12 noon on February 14 each year (this time on a Sunday), starting from the Carnegie Centre at Main and Hastings.

These are the grassroots and elected leaders who have truly helped change Canada since the White Paper era. These are the activists who helped push the previous federal government out of office, setting the stage for a new era in which the TRC report will become a measure of true progress towards reconciliation, not just another volume gathering dust on the shelves. Over the coming year, we look forward to reporting and analysing this progress. Truly, we have the indigenous people themselves to thank for this development!.

Kimball Cariou is the Editor of People's Voice, a social justice activist, and a member of the Radical Desi Editorial Team.

It's time for a national public inquiry into Gustafsen Lake episode

This year marks the 20-year anniversary of the Gustafsen crisis, an important standoff in the ongoing context of colonialism that is seared in the minds of entire generations of Indigenous peoples and Canadians. Under federal Liberal Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and former NDP Premier Ujjal Dosanjh, Canada's largest paramilitary operation was carried out on the sacred Sundance lands at Ts'Peten in 1995.

This past month, elder Secwepemc elder William Jones Ignace, also known as Wolverine, wrote a letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Attorney General Jody Wilson calling for a national inquiry into the standoff. Wolverine is a farmer, grandfather and is a long time defender of the inherent jurisdiction of Indigenous peoples to steward our traditional homelands.

Background to the Gustafsen Crisis

In 1995, after a long history of peaceful attempts to have Secwepemc sovereignty respected, Indigenous people from the Secwepemc nation and their supporters took a stand on sacred Sundance lands at Ts'Peten, aka Gustafsen Lake. The incident began after a local white rancher, Lyle James began demanding that the sacred

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Secwepemc Sundance Camp leave land to which he claimed ownership. Approximately 24 Sundancers set up camp to defend Ts'Peten.

Beginning in August 1995, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) surrounded the Ts'Peten Defenders. Over the next month police, politicians, and media escalated the situation to make the siege the most expensive and largest domestic military operation in Canada's history: armoured personnel carriers, .50 calibre machine guns, land mines, and an astonishing 77,000 rounds of ammunition were directed at the land defenders.

Land defenders were arrested and forced to endure one of the longest criminal trials in Canadian history. During this time, startling testimony by police was revealed. This included open admissions of a "smear and disinformation campaign" and a police note by Chief Superintendent Johnston: "There are 6 hardliners in the camp WHO WILL REQUIRE KILLING." Despite this admission of state targeting and repression, thirteen of the Ts'Peten Defenders received jail sentences.

Wolverine received the longest sentence; he was sentenced to eight years in prison. During the trial and ever since, Wolverine cited the Royal

Proclamation Act of 1763, which states that until an Indian territory has been purchased by the Crown, non-Indians cannot legally occupy land, never mind subject Indians to the jurisdiction of the Crown.

Current Relevance With Indigenous Land Rights

Since the inception of Canada, settler-colonialism has sought to forcibly displace Indigenous peoples from their territories, destroy self-determination within Indigenous governance, and assimilate Indigenous cultures and traditions. Most recently, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has painstakingly recounted how Canada clearly participated in "cultural genocide" and how this is ongoing in the present-day.

One of the areas the Truth and Reconciliation Commission highlights in the issue of land rights, stating that Canada needs to implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples and that all levels of government and industry need to "commit to meaningful consultation, building respectful relationships, and obtaining the free, prior, and informed consent of Indigenous peoples before proceeding with economic development projects."

As Crystal Lameman,

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communications manager for the Beaver Lake Cree Nation in Alberta who are fighting tar sands development on their lands, says "There can be no true reconciliation until the fight for land and resources is resolved. Until then, we will never have true reconciliation or a relationship with Canada based on peace, friendship and sharing as outlined in the treaties." The Beaver Lake Cree nation is taking the government to court for no less than 17,000 treaty violations. They are arguing that tar sands projects are violating their inherent and constitutionally protected treaty rights to hunt, fish and trap.

Like Crystal's community, other Indigenous communities living around the tar sands in Alberta are also facing slow industrial genocide through soaring cancer rates and poisoned food systems. In the case of the Lubicon Cree, over 1,400 square kilometres of leases have been granted for tar sands development on Lubicon lands and almost 70 per cent of Lubicon territory has been leased for future development.

The Athabasca Chipewyan First Nation (ACFN) is also right in the heart of this mega industrial project. The ACFN recently announced that they plan to oppose all future tar sands projects proposed within their traditional homelands and have launched a legal challenge against notorious oil giant Shell.

Here in B.C, the most well-known tar sands pipeline is the \$5.5-billion Enbridge Northern Gateway

pipeline. This pipeline would cross 1,000 rivers and streams through the territories of 65 First Nations from Alberta to Kitamat, B.C., enabling a 30 per cent increase in tar sands production. Emboldened by the Supreme Court of Canada's Tsilhqot'in decision, the Haisla Nation, Gitxaala Nation, Council of the Haida Nation, Gitga'at Nation, Heiltsuk Tribal Council, Kitasoo/Xaixais Nation, NadlehWhut'en First Nation and Nak'azdli First Nation have all announced constitutional legal challenges to Harper's recent approval of the pipeline. Twenty municipal governments and the Union of BC Municipalities also oppose the project.

And closer to home, Kinder Morgan's \$5.4-billion Trans Mountain proposal consists of a pipeline carrying over a million barrels of tar sands crude every day from Alberta to Vancouver, B.C. and a tanker proposal that brings more supertankers into the Burrard Inlet. Over 70 per cent of Burnaby residents are opposed to Kinder Morgan's expansion, and the Tsleil-Waututh Nation as well as the City of Burnaby are challenging the National Energy Board's decision to allow Kinder Morgan to operate in Burnaby Mountain.

Though lesser known, the \$12-billion Energy East pipeline is the largest oil pipeline project in North America. Energy East is a 4,500-km pipeline proposal by TransCanada to transport 1.1 million barrels of tar sands crude daily across 960 waterways from southern Alberta to

New Brunswick. Geared for export, two oil export terminals off the St. Lawrence River and Atlantic Ocean are also being proposed as part of the project. According to a Pembina Institute report, the amount of greenhouse gas emissions that would be generated is equivalent to 7 million cars.

Says Ellen Gabriel of Kanehsatàke, who was the spokesperson of the Mohawk community during the Oka crisis and now a vocal opponent of the Energy East pipeline, "In the absence of our free prior and informed consent, it would be illegal for the National Energy Board to grant TransCanada an application for Energy East."

In addition to pipelines, mining companies are destroying Indigenous lands and ways of life. Premier Christy Clark has announced the plan to build 17 new and expanded mines by 2015, all on unceded Indigenous lands. In 2010, the International Human Rights Clinic at Harvard Law School found that in B.C, "First Nations bear an unfair burden at every point in the mining process," including the burden of a lack of consultation and detrimental environmental, health and spiritual consequences. Since the B.C. Liberals took office in 2001, mine inspections have reduced by nearly half while environmental orders have decreased by over 90 per cent. Furthermore, there is no requirement in B.C. that mining companies have emergency response plans including insurance for such spills.

Conclusion

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Colonialism is not a thing of the past. According to Mi'kmaq lawyer and scholar Pamela Palmater, "The failure of Canada to share the lands and resources as promised in the treaties has placed First Nations at the bottom of all socio-economic indicators -- health, lifespan, education levels and employment opportunities. While Indigenous lands and resources are used to subsidize the wealth and prosperity of Canada as a state and the high-quality programs and services enjoyed by Canadians, First Nations have been subjected to purposeful, chronic underfunding of all their basic human services like water, sanitation, housing, and education."

Decolonization of settler-colonialism on these lands requires a commitment to fighting colonization, and a resurgence and recentering of Indigenous worldviews of another way of living and protecting the land. The obligation for decolonization rests on all of us. Indigenous MichiSaagiigNishnaabeg scholar Leanne Betasamosake Simpson urges non-Natives to seriously take on the struggle against colonialism. "We don't have to uphold this system any longer. We can collectively make different choices," she writes.

For twenty years, the Ts'Peten Defenders have been calling for a national public inquiry. From Gustafsen to Kanesatake and Elsipogtog, state violence has been unleashed on Indigenous peoples asserting their inherent and

constitutional rights to protect their lands. One of the primary calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada is an explicit repudiation of concepts such as the Doctrine of Discovery and terra nullius that justify ongoing European and Crown sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples. Reconciliation also requires us to act on the specific demands for justice and restitution from Indigenous peoples. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau says, "It is time for a renewed, nation-to-nation relationship with First

Nations peoples." A nation-to-nation relationship and genuine reconciliation requires accounting for past violences. The time for this national public inquiry into Gustafsen Lake has come.

Harsha Walia is a social justice activist who is associated with No One is Illegal. She has also authored a famous book, "Undoing Border Imperialism" and is very articulate on issues like racism and colonialism. She is part of the editorial team of Radical Desi.

TRC recommendations for newcomers to Canada commendable

At least two recommendations made by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada to educate newcomers about Indigenous history are praiseworthy.

The TRC was established to look into the racist Indian Residential School system that was introduced by the colonial powers in Canada to assimilate Indigenous peoples. Under this brutal system, Indigenous kids were plucked from their communities by force and sent to schools far from their homes. Once there, these children were forced to give up their languages, Indigenous names and spiritual beliefs. The idea was to eliminate Indigenous culture and impose European ways of life. Their culture was seen as pagan, and Indigenous peoples were often referred to as savages. These children were also subjected to physical violence in the name of punishment for defiance, while others suffered sexual abuse. The impact of this cultural genocide had far reaching affects. Many died due to malnutrition and poor living conditions, while those who survived went through trauma that further impacted their families in the form of substance abuse and domestic violence.

Among the TRC's total 94 recommendations, two are focussed on educating immigrants. The first: "We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the national Aboriginal organizations, to revise the information kit for newcomers to Canada and its citizenship test to reflect a more inclusive history of the diverse Aboriginal peoples of Canada, including information about the Treaties and the history of residential schools."

The second is equally important: "We call upon the Government of Canada to replace the Oath of Citizenship with the following: I swear (or affirm) that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Queen of Canada, Her Heirs and Successors, and that I will faithfully observe the laws of Canada including Treaties with Indigenous Peoples, and fulfill my duties as a Canadian citizen."

Although these two recommendations are not sufficient, they will go long way in breaking the stereotypes about Indigenous peoples among new immigrants, who often get influenced by prevailing mainstream prejudices against the First Nations. It is therefore necessary to educate them right at the time of acquiring citizenship about the history of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

It's a shame that while South Asians share a history of colonialism and racism with the indigenous peoples, many of the new immigrants and citizens of South Asian heritage remain indifferent and insensitive toward Indigenous communities. Aboriginal peoples are seen in a negative light and frequently attacked by some South Asian media commentators as supposedly being on welfare and "good for nothing". At least after reading something about the dark history of residential schools, they can understand why many indigenous peoples are forced to live in poverty.

But this is just a beginning. More needs to be done to create bridges between the newcomers and Indigenous peoples to ensure that that these communities stand together against systemic racism.

-RDNB

From rags to riches

Welcome back :-D. So here is another dose of motivation, inspiration and "yes I can do it" attitude. Another 'Feel Good Factor' edition.

Well, life is all about mixed kinds of situations, moods and circumstances. Ups and downs, happiness and sadness, good and bad are the true friends of life, always around it :-p;-)

As I mentioned in my first article, I really want to spread smiles and happiness and motivate people to do something good in life. Here is my another effort ;

"The poor man is not he who is without a cent but he who is without a dream" - Harry Kemp

"Loser - Becomes negative, loses hope and stops trying. -

Winner - Stays positive, never loses hope and keeps trying till last breath" - Gaurav Shah

"Surinder Kumar is the owner of a tea shop, and he sells tea inside the court complex of the sub-divisional magistrate in Jalandhar. Had a dream to give a better life to his family, for which he kept going and worked hard. Today, he is a very

proud father because his daughter will soon take the position of a Judge in the very same court.

A resident of Nakodar town of Punjab, Surinder has worked as a tea seller all his life. His 23-year-old daughter, Shruti, passed the Punjab Civil Services (Judicial) Examination in the first attempt. After finishing her training at the judicial academy for a year, she is now set to serve as a judge. She completed her graduation from Guru Nanak Dev University, and went on to study law from Punjab University.

The locals felicitated Shruti for this achievement. Like many fathers, Surinder Kumar also knew that his daughter would achieve something remarkable in her life, but he had never thought that she would get such a respectable position at the same place where he had been selling tea for many years now.

So let's stay positive and create a positive aura around us. Stay away from bad/negative energies.

Always do good or at least never do bad :-)

Help others as much as we can.

And now let me show you another face of success.

Pranav Dhanawade: The Indian boy who scored a record 1,009 runs.

"The successful warrior is the average man with the LASER FOCUS" - Bruce Lee

And this boy has got it. Being from a poor background with lots of problems every day and not much facilities, it's hard to achieve something great, but not impossible, and here is the living example.

Pranav Dhanawade, son of an auto-rickshaw driver, had just scored more than 1,000 runs in a single innings to set a new world record in school cricket. An army of reporters had descended to find out more about the young cricketer, who *The Guardian* called "the first cricketer to navigate the nervous 990s".

"I wanted to score big runs. I remember my coach telling me that no one will take me in the Mumbai team if I score these hundreds and two-hundreds"

The teenager was crisp and brief while facing the excited media after his enervating innings.

Dhanawade's life has changed overnight after he smashed a mind-

boggling 1,009 not out for his Smt KC Gandhi School in an inter-school game for the HT Bhandari Cup, an under-16 tournament.

1009: Runs scored

327: Balls faced

308.56: Strike rate

129: Fours

59: Sixes

396: Minutes played

Dhanawade grabbed attention when he scored 652 runs, breaking the 117-year-old record for the most runs scored in an innings held by AEJ

Collins, who smashed an unbeaten 628 in a club match in England in 1899.

Son of an autorickshaw driver, Dhanawade has been playing cricket since he was aged five. He has been coached by Mobin Sheikh.

Prashant Dhanawade, the proud father told media how difficult it was to manage the expenses of cricket kit but he managed with the help of the coach Mobin Sheikh who gave free coaching to Pranav.

Well so here's the stories of achievement of kids who are poor

and didn't had any good facilities but with focus, hard work and some good encouraging people around they did it.

Let's all of us do it... Achieve and help others do it too... Let's make this world a better place. Spread love and smiles. :-)

To listen to Gaurav Shah's good story every morning Monday thru Friday, tune in Spice Radio 1200 AM Band at 8:45 am. Also listen to his entertainment program Spicy Chah With Shah from 10-12 pm on the same frequency.

Guard your self-respect

guard your self-respect o' farmer
your crops are being destroyed by insects, you suffer for being ill clad
famines have taken heavy toll, your dependents are made to weep in anguish
rich and influential set themselves up as your leaders
they are setting traps to exploit you
India is your temple and you are its worshipper
how long will you remain under the spell of lethargy
prepare yourself for a fight to death
you may have to face repression
love your country as Ranjha loved Heer
tread cautiously, courageous one
your motherland wants you to shed thoughts of cowardice
be united and give a threatening challenge
join hands and put up a brave front
o' farmer guard your self-respect.

This poem was originally written in Punjabi by Banke Dayal around 1907. It became the anthem of the peasant movement launched by Ajit Singh, an Indian revolutionary who fought against British occupation of India. Translated by Parduman Singh, it has been reproduced here in recognition of the birth anniversary of Ajit Singh that falls on February 23.

