



# Ambedkar Times Weekly

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## Making Sense of Poona Pact in Current Time

Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief:

Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba (Newspapers)

**Babasaheb** Dr. B. R. Ambedkar devoted his entire life for the emancipation and empowerment of the Scheduled Castes of India who for centuries were compelled to live degraded lives. He tried different ways for this noble cause before finally setting the goal of annihilation of caste. First, he tried to improve upon the situations through reforms within Hinduism. But soon realized that reforms within Hinduism will not work because caste lies at the centre of Hinduism and without caste the latter would come down like a house of cards, which would not be acceptable to its protagonists at all. Annihilation of caste at the first instance requires doing away with the Hindu Sastras (sacred scriptures/law books), which Hinduism would never agree to comply with. Thus the other way and rather the only way open to seek casteless social order was to say good bye to Hinduism and construct a new society under a different religion for the Ex-Untouchables. Dr. Ambedkar finally left Hinduism and established a new socio-religious order popularly known as Navayan-Buddhism (Buddha and His Dhamma) where no one is subjected to any social discrimination based on accretive and primordial notions of caste and creed. In between, Dr. Ambedkar battled many struggles for the betterment of living conditions of the Scheduled Castes. Poona Pact was one of such major struggles.

It was through this historic Pact that Dr. Ambedkar got voice for his people in the provincial legislative structures in the form of certain fixed number of seats. That was 1932. A lot has changed now in 2021. State in India is fast withdrawing from its responsibilities towards the people. It firmly believes that market can save them from all the hardships they face. In other words neo-liberalism is being projected as Messiah of the Scheduled Castes. In such a changed scenario downtrodden has to rethink rather critically about the nature of struggle that they have to wage for the acquisition and protection of their rights. Quite interestingly, there is also fast emerging a viewpoint from within the academic circles of the Scheduled Castes which says that neo-liberal market economy offers lots of opportunities to the former untouchables who no-longer face any social exclusion in the aftermath of 1991 Globalizing India. This view-point also talks about SCs billionaires and their own chambers of commerce. What it forgets is that in the free market economy only those are welcome who have the capital to invest. And the capital in India used to be the prerogative of the upper castes only. Lower castes were deliberately kept out of reach of the capital by all possible means under the garb of a discriminatory and hegemonic religious social order. What about the millions of lower castes who do not have requisite capital to enter into the so-called non-discriminatory market economy in India. Would they be not discriminated in this new economic order? Neo-liberalism is no more different from capitalism. We must not forget that the two main enemies of the lower castes are, as cautioned by Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Capitalism and Brahmanism. Both of them are once again busy in fashioning new permutations and calculations to keep their hold intact. Thus to face the realities of current situation in contemporary India, the teachings of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar are of utmost value as they have been ever.

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## Bhagat Singh: A martyr who dreamt of egalitarian India

His essay Achoot Da Sawaal placed humanity way above religious identity

Enclosed within the 1929 edition of the Kirti Magazine issue was one of Bhagat Singh's iconic essay Achoot Da Sawaal or 'Question of Untouchability', penned by a 16-year-old him.

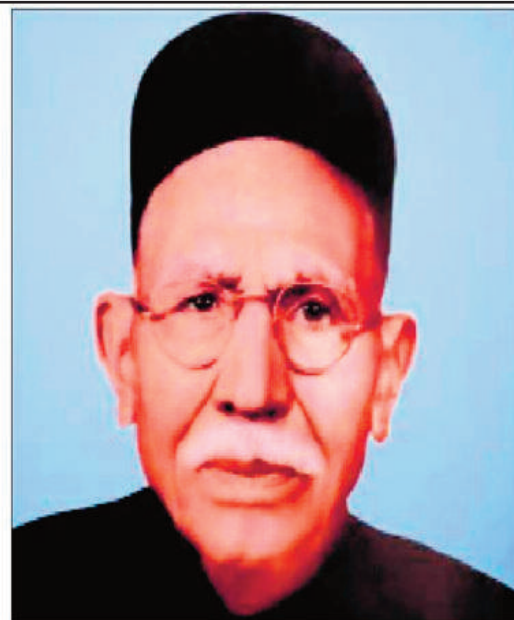
**I**t was a scathing critique on the age-old discrimination meted out to the oppressed and a vigorous exhortation to Dalits to arise! "So called untouchables, the real sustainers of life, awake and reflect over your past," he mentioned.

Bhagat Singh's call for Dalit consciousness and simultaneous exhortation against fundamentalism rings true even in the present times. Achoot Da Sawaal also bears an important reference to the Ad Dharam Movement of Punjab, led by Doaba-based ideologue and Dalit pioneer

**Aparna Banerji**

**Expert speak**

Prof (Dr.) Ronki Ram, Political Science professor at Panjab University and an expert on Dalits, said, "As far as equality and the social justice are concerned, Bhagat Singh was very clear that caste and religion were two categories which were responsible for the rift in the society. Bhagat Singh had his own unique understanding of the Dalit cause. He was very supportive of the Ad Dharam movement and believed that such movements were necessary because they fight against



**"The upper castes should also realise that their own status in life cannot change for the better as long as they persist in considering these people as inferiors, calling them menials, and keeping them under their heels. It is argued, they are unclean. The harsh truth is that they are poor; remove their poverty and they shall be clean. Don't we find that the poor even among the upper castes are no less unclean?"**

— Bhagat Singh, Achoot Da Sawaal, Kirti magazine, 1929

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, born in Hoshiarpur. With the help of Seth Kishan Das (a wealthy merchant of Boota Mandi) the headquarters of the Ad Dharam Mandal were established at Jalandhar.

In 'Achoot Da Sawaal' Bhagat Singh wrote... "When they (untouchables) discovered that the Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs were raking profits due to them (untouchables), they gave a thought to reorganising on their own. No one is certain whether they are doing so as a result of official prompting or at their own but once this line of thinking takes roots, this trend will be fully backed up by official quarters. "Ad Dharam Mandal" and the like are the end result of this trend...The answer is quite obvious; above all, it needs to be settled for good, that all humans are equal without distinctions of birth or vocation."

Scholars today say Bhagat Singh's constant exhortations on Dalits along with the Ad Dharam Movement have had a major impact on the Dalit consciousness in the state, the references to these however, are only found in academic circles and scholarly works while no prominent reminders are found in the mainstream political discourse.

hugely to the Dalit and progressive consciousness in Punjab." He adds, "When the question of the real leader of the oppressed classes arose, Mangu Ram wrote many telegrams to London, proclaiming Dr BR Ambedkar as their leader. He said our leader was Ambedkar, not Gandhi."

Chiranji Lal Kangniwal, eminent historian and Independence movement scholar, said, "Babu Mangu Ram started the Ad Dharam Mandal in Punjab highlighting the demands of Dalits. The movement started two years before Bhagat Singh's Achoot Da Sawaal was penned. In 1927, Katherine Mayo has also just released her book 'Mother India' which was a strong critique on oppression against Dalits. All these factors shaped the times in which Bhagat Singh lived."

Noted Bhagat Singh scholar Professor Chaman Lal said, "Bhagat Singh's Achoot Da Sawaal has come again into focus in the past three decades. It has had a major impact in shaping Dalit consciousness. However, all radical thoughts are being diluted by the establishment. And in the present times, caste has become a major socio-political factor."

Courtesy: Tribune News Service, Jalandhar, September 27, 2021

the caste oppression. The Ad Dharam Movement stressed that empowerment of the oppressed castes was only possible if they got due share in the local structures of power. It asked for shares in the agricultural land, in education, in government structures at par with others. Ad Dharam Movement and Bhagat Singh's thinking have both contributed

# How can the world protect itself from droughts and floods?

According to a report released on August 22, 2022 by "The Joint Research Centre, European Commission's Science and Knowledge Service", two-thirds of the European continent has been experiencing the worst drought in the last 500 years due to extreme temperature and persistence heatwaves this year. This drought is so severe that the water levels of many European rivers like Loire, Rhine, Danube, Po receded to a very low level. At some places, the Loire River in France has receded so low that it can be crossed on foot.

The water level of Italy's Po river has dropped by 85 per cent. The source of England's famous Thames river has slipped 5 miles downstream from its historic source. Along with Europe, China, the United States of

temperature, the average night temperature is also increasing. This year (2022) almost all the countries of the world have witnessed that the summer season has come early in March, vanishing in the spring season. This rise in temperature is also affecting the Antarctic and Arctic. In the month of March, an increase of 40 degree Celsius in the average temperature has been recorded at the Concordia Research Station in the Arctic and an increase of 30 degree Celsius has also been recorded at the Svalbard Research Station in the Arctic. Due to less rain in winter, summer came earlier and as a result, heat waves also are preponed. The long hot summer season has on one hand increased the incidents of forest fires and on the other hand, increased use of air conditioners which has led to the re-

these countries may suffer from starvation.

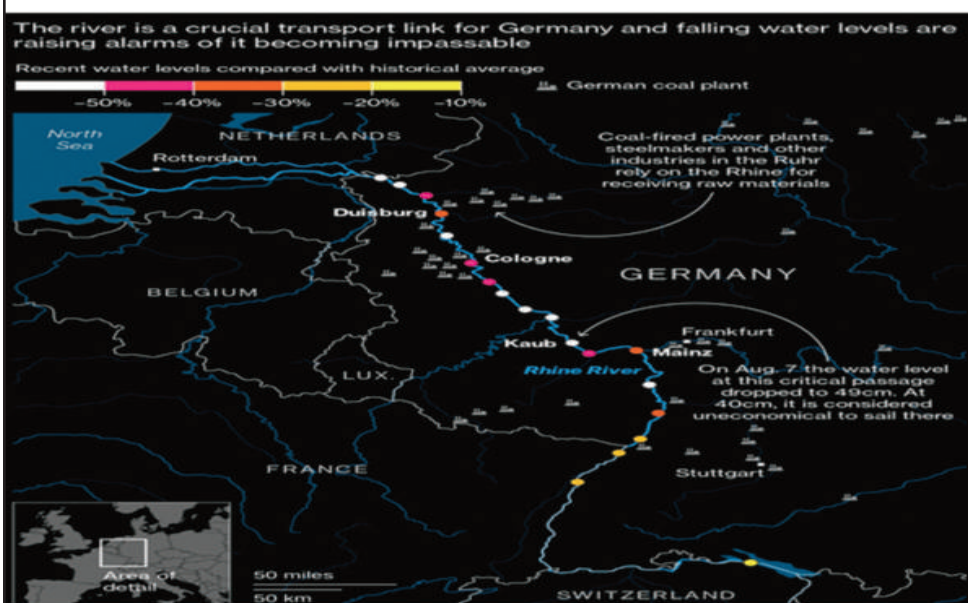
Actually, earth is a functional unit that is driven by two types of components, biotic and abiotic. If there is a change in any one element of these components, then its effect automatically falls on the other elements, forming a vicious cycle. So, due to an increase in the average temperature of the earth, the functioning of the earth has been disturbed. The average temperature of the earth has now increased by 1.1 degree Celsius compared to the Pre-Industrial Revolution Period temperature. In 2014, the fifth report of the Intergovernmental Panel of Climate Change (IPCC) clearly revealed that an increase in the average temperature of the earth will increase the number and frequency of droughts,

Rivers are part of the rich heritage of any country. If a river dries up, the precious heritage of that region is also lost. All the civilizations of the world had been born on the banks of rivers because rivers provide easy access to water for crop irrigation, fertile soil, and pleasant weather as well as drinking water. Rivers add to the beauty of the land by endowing it with various landscapes. Fast-flowing rivers in mountainous regions have also cut mountains into V-shaped valleys,



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### Rhine River in 2022



Sources: German federal waterways and Shipping Administration; German Federal Institute of Hydrology; and Europe Beyond Coal

### Yangtze River of China, 2022

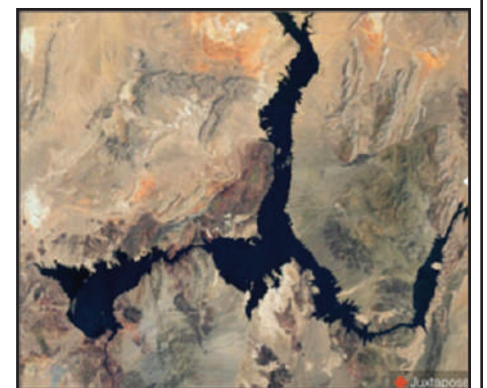


Source: Zhong Guilin, Getty Images

### Lake Mead 2022



### Lake Mead 2020



Source: Grist, 9 August 2022

America, some countries of Africa are also under the grip of terrible drought these days.

The water level of China's longest river Yangtze, has dropped to 50 per cent below its average level, and China's largest freshwater lake, Poyang, is also drying up. Only one-fourth of its capacity is left in Poyang lake. The livelihood of the country's 450 million people depends on China's Yangtze river. One-third of its crops receive/get water for irrigation and many industrial units receive water and electricity from multipurpose projects built on the Yangtze river. Due to lack of water in the river, the hydropower projects have been unable to generate the required amount of electricity. As a result, electricity and water supply have been limited in some areas. In order to reduce the consumption of electricity, the Chinese government has had to turn off decorative lighting in the city of Shanghai.

As a result of an increase in the average temperature of the earth due to human activities, there is severe drought and decrease in the water level of rivers and lakes in different countries around the world. Due to rising temperature, summers are getting longer and hotter while winters are getting shorter. Along with the increase in the average day

lease of huge amounts of greenhouse gases into the environment. The rise in temperature affected all the water bodies and their water has been evaporating rapidly.

According to a NASA report dated August 22, 2022, the water level of the Colorado river in the western region of the United States of America has dropped to 34 per cent of its average capacity, and the water level of the two major lakes, Mead and Powell, have dropped to 28 and 26 per cent, respectively.

Usually in colder countries' rivers and lakes are filled with water due to melting of snow in summer. But this year they are drying up as a result of extremely high temperature. According to a research study published on February 14, 2022 in a Nature, climate journal, the western region of the United States of America has been experiencing the worst drought of the 1200 years period for the past two decades. Not only the countries of China, the United States of America, and Europe have been affected by drought recently, but some African countries are experiencing drought. According to a United Nations report dated August 19, 2022, the East African countries of Kenya, Ethiopia, and Somalia are experiencing drought for the fourth year in a row, with which 22 million people in

floods, extremely heavy rain and snowfall events in a short duration, heat and cold waves, and natural disasters like cyclones and tsunamis. As a result of the serious warnings and alarming revelations of this report, countries around the world had drawn up plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions under the 'Paris Climate Agreement' in 2015, but they have yet to seriously implement them. All the countries of the world are being affected by natural calamities on a daily basis.

Decreasing water levels in rivers/lakes is the result of climate change as well as rampant human tampering with rivers/lakes. Humans have built numerous dams on rivers to meet their needs like irrigation of crops, drinking water, and hydroelectricity. A lot of river water is stored in the lakes created behind these dams. As a result, some rivers flow through the plains with very little water.

ox bow lakes in plains, and deltas in coastal regions.

Rivers give us water. If rivers are drying up, many countries will face scarcity of drinking water. Upto 30 to 40 per cent of Italy's rice production depends on the Po river, and China's 450 million population depends on the Yangtze river for agriculture. Receding of water levels in the rivers will result in decreased production of crops, which will also be reflected in reduction of food grains and as a result, people will become victims of starvation. Loire, Rhine, Danube and some other European rivers are making an important contribution to the European economy. The trade of European countries is being badly affected due to a significant decrease in the water level of these rivers. According to Eurostat data, the European rivers carry more than one hundred thousand tons of goods

(Contd. on next page)

# How can the world protect itself from droughts and floods?

(Continue from page 2)

every year. Rivers contribute about 80 billion US dollars annually to Europe's economy. Water is an invaluable gift of nature which is the second basic necessity of all living beings after air. Water is a life-giving natural resource, life cannot survive without water. If tomorrow water is gone, it will take all the organisms with it. This year, higher-than-average temperature and water shortages have led to early grape harvesting in France. Many people are under an illusion that water is an inexhaustible resource, but this year's drought has clearly shown that it is not. Natural resources can be stored, not created.

It is a pity that in the blind race of economic development, most of the countries of the world have not only forgotten to take care of natural resources, but at the same time, they are also blindly depleting natural resources. As a result, due to an increase in the average temperature of the earth, countries previously with colder temperature are in the grip of heat waves even by mid-September. Europe's economy is being badly affected due to extreme hot temperature and droughts. Due to the shortage of drinking water in France, the French government has to ration water. The French government has banned the washing of cars, filling of swimming pools, golf courses, domestic and public lawns, and instructed shopkeepers to keep doors closed when air-conditioners are working. The California state, in the United state of America, is under the grip of drought and heat waves these days. On the other hand, this year floods have caused heavy destruction in Pakistan, Indonesia, China, South

Korea, and 17 countries of West and Central Africa.

A research study by Swain and his colleagues has predicted a 25 to 100 per cent increase in drought and rainfall events in the western parts of the United States of America over the next century. Such a strange phenomenon is not only happening in the western parts of the United State of America. According to a report released in 2020 by the Council on Energy, Environment and Water (India), a very strange phenomenon has emerged in 40 per cent of Indian districts. The traditionally flood-prone districts have seen an increase in drought events, while on the other hand there also has been an increase in the incidents of floods in the drought-affected districts.

In order to control the increasing incidents of natural disasters due to an increase in temperature, all the countries around the world need to take joint efforts. The third installment of the sixth IPCC report released in April 2022 has revealed a very disturbing fact that the emission of greenhouse gases in the environment is still increasing rapidly and all the countries around the world are facing unexpected disasters. In order to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, each country must first make radical changes in the means of transportation and energy sources. Energy should be generated from renewable sources like wind and sun instead of coal, oil, gas, and diesel.

To reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the developed countries today are pushing electric vehicles to replace diesel and petrol vehicles which raises many questions in some important aspects. The first aspect

is that from which source electricity (energy) will be generated to run the vehicles. If this source is coal again, greenhouse gas emissions will increase instead of decreasing. The other aspect is that due to the growing population, the number of vehicles is also increasing day by day which will require wider roads and more parking spaces. As a result, we will cut more trees from the earth which will further reduce the area under forests.

So, we should promote car-free infrastructure and a public transport system. Apart from this, there is a rapid increase in air traffic. The richest 1 per cent of the world's population is responsible for 50 per cent of emission from airplanes. Private jets emit more than 33 million tons of greenhouse gases. They emit 5-14 per cent more pollutants per passenger than commercial planes and 50 times more than trains. The number of unnecessary air journeys should be restricted. Schiphol airport in the Netherlands is planning to limit the number of flights from next year.

Every country should increase the area under forests to 33 per cent. While selecting the trees, local shady trees should be planted. The American city of Miami is planning to cut down the palm trees and to plant oak, elm, and ash trees. Native shady trees should be planted instead of ornamental trees along roadsides. Planting shady trees would reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and it would also be helpful to control the rising temperature.

Rainwater should be collected in low lying places in each and every region/area to prevent natural calamities like droughts and floods. Earlier,

our ancestors used to build villages or towns on high elevations and the rain water automatically flowed from the high elevations and got deposited in the nearby low places which recharged the ground water and also met the daily needs of the people. Now in many countries, the excess rain water accumulates in the low places below the bridges, where the administration of that area should dig wells and drain them so that the underground water can be recharged. Old lakes, ponds, and other water bodies should be revived. Efforts should also be made to harvest rainwater from every house and building. Dams should be constructed on the rivers according to their capacity so that the rivers do not dry up and people do not face drought-like conditions.

Everyday we hear about new climate disasters all around the world, some places are suffering from droughts and floods all at once, others have forest fires, storms to name a few.

We don't have much time left to avoid natural disasters. Each year more lives are impacted, facing the brunt of such often yet new and odd occurring climate disasters. We also don't have the necessary means to deal with such frequent disasters. To survive and avoid such calamities and to secure our lives and the future of our children, we need to carefully plan our efforts at national and international levels. We also need to hold our actions accountable, analyze the impact of changes made and make changes if needed. We need to tackle these issues with gravity and urgency, any time wasted will cost us a lot.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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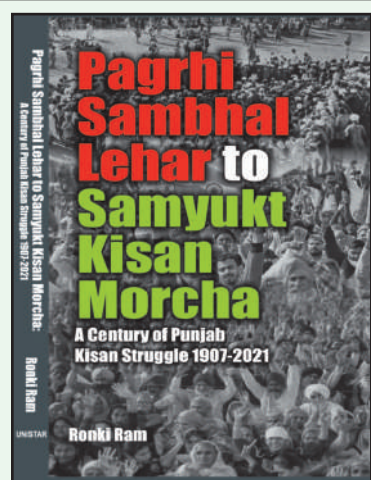
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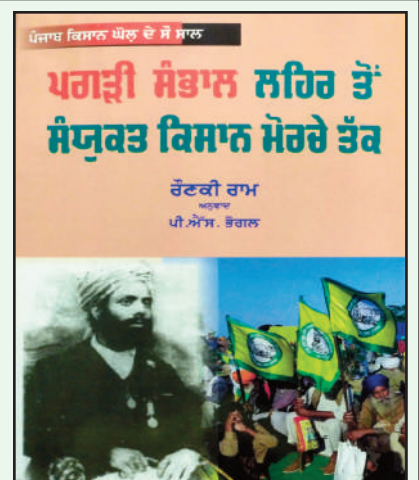
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# Polarization – Political Vs Ethnic

The largest democracy of the world – India that is Bharat is, it seems, finding itself on cross roads. It has come a long way since independence 75 years ago. The constitution of India, it is for certain, has stood the test of time – personality cult in the early years in PM Jawaharlal Nehru's time, abrasions like emergency in 1975 made by PM Indira Gandhi, opposition unity of motley crowd in 1977 under Jai Prakash Narayan and change of guard, sudden elimination of PM Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi in violence, Mandal-Kamandal slugfest, demolition of Babri Masjid and construction of Ram Janambhoomi Mandir, Wars with China in 1962 and with Pakistan in 1965,

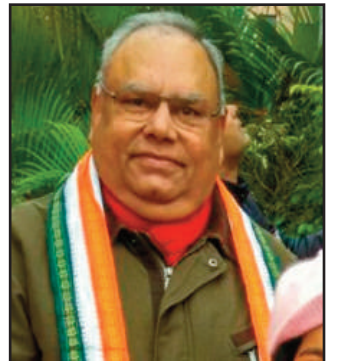
political – democracy and added, "Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever. This eventuality we must all resolutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of

slide, the danger of the second possibility becoming actuality is much greater."

Barring early years of our independence when the political system tried to evolve some sort of polarization of political forces and players on the basis of ideology and rightly so – Congress Party and his allies as the Centre - Jan Sangha, Hindu Maha Sabha, Swatantra Party etc. as the Right of Centre and Socialists and Left parties as the Left of the Centre. Even Babasaheb Ambedkar wanted to launch a Pan-India party as a viable opposition to all powerful Congress but that was not to be as he passed away in 1956. We lost the way, in the process, and could not

our forefathers – religious polarization, ethnic strife, majoritarianism, minority syndrome, intolerance, dictatorial approaches and such other negative phenomenon which negated the lofty ideals of 'Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity' so nicely enshrined in our constitution.

With this background, let us proceed further. Congress Party lost



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1971, 1999 (Kargil), demonetization, fight with Covid pandemic were some of the challenging situations but we remained on track as a vibrant democratic nation. Thanks to the constitution. India has arrived, no doubt. We are on the way to realize and redeem our pledge of 'Tryst with Destiny'. The warnings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar to ward off dangers to our newly earned independence which he sounded in his last speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949 still ring bells which we must listen if want to reach our destination – a Vikshit Bharat. I am reminded of a poetic assertion of Allama Iqbal to get alerted to respond to the ground realities and the challenges ahead:-

Chupa Kar Asteen Mein Bijliyan Rakhi Hain Gardoon Ne

Anadil Bagh Ke Ghafil Na Baihen Ashiyon Mein

(The sky has kept thunderbolts concealed up its sleeve

Garden's nightingales should not slumber in their nests)

Generally, the constitution has kept us as a nation on the march. Of late, it has been observed that some superfluous tendencies have crept in which tended to upset the social and political fabric of the country. These uncalled for tendencies, ethnic and religious polarization and dictatorial behavior, not only negate the basic and fundamentals of the constitution but also hit the moral and humanistic aspects of the society. It seems that we have started placing our personal and narrow agenda above the national interest. It will be fool-hardy not to revisit Babasaheb Ambedkar and learn. On November 25, 1949, he spoke of the need to give up the grammar of anarchy, to avoid hero-worship, and to work towards a social – not just a po-



our blood."

We subscribed to parliamentary form of government in which the Executive powers are vested in President with his Council of Ministers headed by Prime Minister as first among equals. But in practice, the things have tended to go the other way, powers concentrating with the PM - Jawaharlal Nehru-Indira Gandhi-Narander Modi, which has led to 'personality cult', a sure way to dictatorship which is an anti-thesis to democracy. Yet another gem from the visionary leader, Dr. Ambedkar is as relevant today as it was before. He said, "This democratic system India lost. Will she lose it a second time? I do not know. But it is quite possible in a country like India – where democracy from its long disuse must be regarded as something quite new – there is danger of democracy giving place to dictatorship. It is quite possible for this new born democracy to retain its form but give place to dictatorship in fact. If there is a land-

get, unfortunately, polarization of political forces, the first requisite of a democracy. Political parties increasingly became a 'motley crowd' of vested and sectarian interests bereft of any ideology. Aya Ram Gya Ram syndrome over took the system. Parties like BSP, Samajwadi Party, RJD, JDU, Samta Party, Lok Dal, NCP, TMC, AAP and many more cropped up with limited influence in various states and regions with no distinct and alternate agenda. Moreover, over the years, regional parties like SAD, DMK, AIMMK, Shiv Sena, BJD among others increasingly became vocal and strong in their respective states. With these developments, political polarization on the basis of ideology got further hit which was not good for the health of democratic polity. Political morality which is the most important unwritten ingredient for the success of democracy got diluted. All this resulted in uncalled for situation in a secular and democratic edifice of the country as visualized by

its steam and got pulled down from the podium, beginning 2014. NCP, TMC etc. broke away from the Congress and formed splinter groups, Samajwadis got divided into various groups like SP, RJD, JDU etc., BSP, Kanshi Ram's outfit to reckon with, lost its way under the weight of its own self-centered leadership, the left and communists, it seems have lost their relevance in the changed national and international scene. BJP exploited this divisive scenario with their exclusive agenda of ethnic polarization with 'Hindutava and Nationalism' as under-current of their liberal face. Hindu-Muslim divide helped them in furtherance of their vested design of 'divide and rule'. The same mantra was deployed to 'divide and fragment' dalit vote banks and bring them to naught. As of now in 2022 and in the run up to elections in 2024, the polity and society is totally divided and fragmented and opposition has been successfully marginalized. It is a challenging scenario with no light at the end of the tunnel.

What is the way out to save the country, diverse and multi-racial and multi-cultural, and its political democracy so laboriously built and nurtured in 75 years of freedom. What should we do to save ourselves from entering the phase of 'Grammar of Anarchy' as warned by the chief architect of our constitution, Babasaheb Ambedkar? I venture to undertake here an off the cuff analysis not as an expert but as a concerned citizen of India that is Bharat. I start from the premise that the Hindu society, the majority community, will remain divided and fragmented on the basis of Manuwadi thinking and the caste system as followed and practiced, consciously or otherwise, by the BJP

(Contd. on next page)

# Polarization – Political Vs Ethnic

(Continue from page 4)

and its mentors in the RSS and its affiliates like VHP and Bajrang Dal etc. It suits their political agenda to polarize the Hindu society. The second premise is that the chasm between the majority Hindus and minority Muslims, Christians and Sikhs would get widened in the coming years. The third one is dalits would get 'Educated, Organized and Agitated' to demand their due share and space in the political and economic structures of the country as ordained by their icons Babasaheb Ambedkar and Babu Kanshi Ram.

With this, I see no political polarization on the basis of ideology and agenda which is ideally needed for the success of democracy. Given the ground reality, there would be a new paradigm – polarization of political forces not on the desired basis but otherwise on socio-cultural and ethnic basis, in the coming years. Will it be for the good or otherwise, it is difficult to say as of now? I will share here what the emerging situation dictates, to my mind.

All said and done, there would be or should be three major political formations – i) Centre –

United Progressive Alliance (UPA) led by Congress Party with likeminded outfits like NCP, TMC, AAP, Socialists (representing OBCs of upper crust (landowners), ii) National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by BJP with Socialists (representing OBCs of upper crust (landowners) and other Hindu nationalists as Right of the Centre and iii) Third Front - comprising of Socialists, Communists, BSP, Outfits representing minorities (Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, Buddhists, OBCs (landless/Ati-shudras) and dalits who do not profess to be Hindus as Left of the Centre. I have, it may be observed, bifurcated OBCs into the Upper crust and landless Ati-Shudras as the 'Bahujan' concept of Babu Kanshi Ram and Samajwadis have almost failed.

In the villages, OBCs of Upper crust category are equally castiest and target dalits and poor OBCs like Manuwadis. The fourth pillar of the political spectrum would be the regional parties like Shiv Sena, BJD, SAD, DMK, AIDMK, NCP, PDP and other splinter groups in various states. They will remain and cannot be wished away. Political polarization is much needed requisite for the

functioning of our political democracy but not on the basis of religion and ethnicity. But it could not happen. The divisive and fissiparous tendencies, getting strength from the on-going Hindu-Muslim, Hindu-Christian, Sikh-Hindu, Sikh-Christian religious slugfest, would remain for a long time to come, given the current scenario purposely and willfully designed and created by the vested interests to carry forward their political agenda over and above the national interests. That is why, I have taken the liberty of suggesting a functional and pragmatic political approach which may seem a utopia to many but there is no way out, to my mind.

With the suggested political polarization, the likely government formation would be – i) UPA with the Third Front and some of the regional outfits or ii) NDA with the Third Front or iii) Third Front either with UPA or NDA with some of the regional parties.

We the people of India must think and act, sooner the better. The apprehensions expressed by Babasaheb Ambedkar, a visionary leader ring in my ears and I get frightened. He said, "On 26th January 1950, India

will be an independent country. What would happen to her independence? Will she maintain her independence or will she lose it again? This is the first thought that comes to my mind. It is not that India was never an independent country. The point is that she once lost the independence she had. Will she lose it a second time? It is this thought which makes me most anxious for the future. What perturbs me greatly is the fact that not only India has once before lost her independence, but she lost it by the infidelity and treachery of some of her own people."

Watan Ki Fikar Kar Nadan! Musibat  
Ane Wali Hai

Teri Barbadiyon Ke Mashware Hain  
Asmanon Mein

(Think of the homeland, O ignorant  
one! Hard times are coming  
Conspiracies for your destruction  
are afoot in the heavens)

Na Samjho Ge To Mit Jao Ge Ae  
Hindustanon Walo !

Tumhari Dastan Tak Bhi Na Ho Gi  
Dastan Mein

(You will be annihilated if you  
do not understand, O people of India!  
Even your tales will disappear  
from the world's chronicles)



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# DEBATE OVER IMAGE OF BHAGAT SINGH USED IN DELHI AND PUNJAB GOVT. ADS



Chaman Lal, honorary adviser to the Bhagat Singh Archives, says the painting has little physical resemblance to the freedom fighter, former minister M.S. Gill demurs  
The four known photographs of Bhagat Singh. Pictures courtesy: Chaman Lal

Archivist Chaman Lal, honorary adviser to the Bhagat Singh Archives and Resource Centre here, has ruled the use of an “unreal painting” of the freedom fighter to mark his 114th birth anniversary on Tuesday.

However, former Union minister and chief election commissioner M.S. Gill insisted that the use of the turbaned image was ideal to celebrate Singh’s legacy as the more recognised photo of the freedom fighter wearing a hat was merely a disguise to evade arrest.

There are four known photographs of Singh, who was born in West Punjab’s Banga village in 1907 — him as an 11-year-old, as a 17-year-old in a turban at Lahore’s National College, in custody at Lahore railway police station in 1927 where he is seen with his hair tied in a bun, and in trimmed hair and wearing a hat. The last picture had been clicked at the studio of photographer Sham Lal in 1929 before Singh hurled a bomb at the Central Legislative Assembly.

However, the Punjab and Delhi state governments have in advertisements commemorating Singh’s birth anniversary used a painting of him wearing a yellow turban. Lal said the painting had little physical resemblance to Singh. Several other versions, including one in which Singh brandishes a revolver, are widely used. “Till the 70s, the photo with the hat was the most popular. With the rise of identity politics in the 70s, the yellow turbaned image was popularised as an assertion of his Jat Sikh identity — something which Bhagat Singh himself never stressed on,”

Lal said.

“In fact, being from a Congress family, he and his kin wore white turbans and khadi clothes, which was the trademark of those in the national movement at the time. I don’t know why the Congress betrays its own legacy with its leaders now wearing the yellow turban in his memory,” the archivist added.

The Bhagat Singh Archives and Resource Centre, which functions under the Delhi government, circulated a booklet among officials on Monday with three of the original photos. However, both the Punjab and the Delhi governments brought out ads on Tuesday with the portrait of Singh in a yellow turban.

Assembly elections are due in Punjab next year and Delhi’s ruling Aam Aadmi Party has been promoting the yellow turban worn in the style of the painting with its MP Bhagwant Mann always sporting it in Parliament. The AAP is a key player in Punjab, ruled by the Congress.

London-based Punjabi author Amarjit Chandan, also a scholar on Bhagat Singh iconography, said Congress chief minister Giani Zail Singh had unveiled a statue of the freedom fighter wearing the hat in Khatkar Kalan — Singh’s ancestral village — in 1973. A bronze turbaned statue now stands at the spot, a change Chandan attributed to Gill who was principal secretary to Akali chief minister Parkash Singh Badal from 1978 to 80.

Gill said he had no recollection of the 1973 statue or replacing it. He objected to Youth Congress banners on Tuesday with the hat photo.

“Bhagat Singh is a hat that fits all heads, from the Far Left to the Far Right. His ties to the Arya Samaj and work as a revolutionary are claimed by the Right wing, his Marxist writings by the Left, and his Sikh family heritage by the Sikh parties. An RSS man or a Khalistani may simply ignore Bhagat Singh’s Why I am an Atheist (written in Lahore Central Jail before his execution in 1931),” Chandan said.

He added: “The turban controversy is absurd. All males in the Punjab — Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs — wore turbans before Partition.” Gill, who later became a Congress MP, was instrumental in establishing a museum in Khatkar Kalan in 1981 and acquiring archival material on the freedom fighter for the Punjab government as an IAS officer.

He said he installed the first turbaned bronze statue of Singh at Ludhiana’s Bhandari Bridge in 1979.

“All hell broke loose in Punjab after the statue was unveiled. The Arya Samaj-controlled press started screaming, ‘how can a bloody IAS officer play politics?’ Of course, I was playing politics.... ‘Ab Bhagat Singh kopagdibaandhdiya, jiskodumhaiutaarkedekho (I have draped Bhagat Singh in a turban, let anyone who dares remove it),’ is what I said,” Gill said. He added: “Arya Samajis projected him as a hat-wearing Bollywood-ishgunda. He was from a Jat Sikh Sandhu family that wore turbans. He is seen in photos with long hair and a turban. The hat was a disguise. Netaji (Subhas Chandra) Bose escaped to Kabul in the guise of a Pathan. Is he honoured as a Pathan?” Gill was also instrumental in

canvassing support and ensuring the installation of Singh’s statue in Parliament in 2008.

“It was mostly Sikhs who were sent to the Cellular Jail and mostly Sikhs who were hanged for the freedom struggle. I asked (then Lok Sabha Speaker) Somnath Chatterjee, how is it that no Sikh has a statue here?”

The freedom fighter’s family complained that the turbaned statue, created by master sculptor Ram V. Sutar, at Parliament resembled a middle-aged man whereas Singh was hanged when he was just 23.

Lal pointed out that contemporary images of other Punjabi freedom fighters Udham Singh and Kartar Singh Sarabha also don’t often resemble them as they are shown with beards. However, their photographs show them clean-shaven.

Singh’s nephew and academic Jagmohan Singh chairs the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Centenary Foundation in Khatkar Kalan which recently installed statues of Bhagat Singh, Shivaram Rajguru and Sukhdev Thapar, who were executed for killing police officer John Saunders in 1928. “These statues celebrate the centenary year of the Naujawan Bharat Sabha, which was Bhagat Singh’s youth movement during which time he wore a turban. Those using either the hat image or the turbaned one must explain why they do so. Bhagat Singh was clear that his movement was to rise above divisions of caste and religion and bring about equality in society,” Jagmohan Singh said.

Courtesy: The Telegraph online  
Wednesday, 29 September 2021

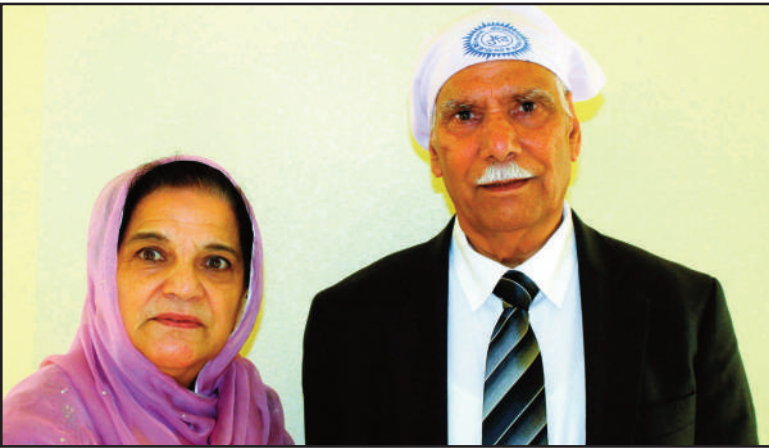
# Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg (CA)

## Akhand Path Sewa from September 23rd, 2022 (Friday) to September 25th, 2022 (Sunday)

With the blessings of Akalpurkh, the devoted family of Shri Gurnam Singh Rattu and Bibi Satya Mati Rattu, son of late Shri Gulzara Singh Rattu and late Bibi Shayami Rattu, will perform three days AKHAND PATH Sewa at Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg (CA), as per details mentioned below.

Recitation of Path begins at 10:30 A.M on September 23rd, 2022(Friday) and ends with Bhog ceremony at 10:30 A.M on September 25th, 2022 (Sunday). Prasad and Langar Sewa will be performed by the dedicated family for all the three days.

The family is dedicating this Sewa to express



their humble thanks to Akalpurkh for health, happiness, peace and prosperity of the family.

The host family is requesting the entire Sangat to join them in their prayers and embellish the occasion with their gracious presence. Renowned Kirtani Jatha from San Jose will also grace the occasion with their God-gifted talents.

**"NANAK NAAM CHARDI KALA,  
TERE BHANE SARBAT KA BHALA"**

## Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg (CA) New Committee # 2022-2023



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## 30th Anniversary

Shri Guru Ravidass Temple Rio Linda (Sacramento)  
Management Committee humbly requests  
All Saadh Sangat to please join us for  
the 30th Grand Anniversary Celebration of  
**Shri Guru Ravidass Temple Rio Linda (Sacramento)**

Arambh Sri Akhand Paath Sahib: Friday, September 23rd, 2022 at 11AM  
Saturday, September 24th, 2022 - Kirtan Diwan at 6PM  
Bhog Sri Akhand Paath Sahib: Sunday, September 25th, 2022 at 10AM  
Continued by Mahaan Kirtan Diwan with following Jatha's



*Bhai Manjit Singh &  
Bhai Amarjit Singh Phillaur Wale*



*Bhai Jaspal Singh Sarang  
Jalandhar Wale*



*Bhai Gurdeep Singh Ji  
Jalandhar Wale*



*Bhai Manohar Singh Ji  
Una Sahib Wale*

*Sewa: Sh. John Banga, Sh. Avtar Jassal & All Sadhsangat Jio  
Sri Nishan Sahib Sewa: Saturday, September 24th, 2022 at 3PM  
Sewa by: Sh. Harbans Singh Ralh, Bibi Manjit Kaur Ralh  
Sh. Gurdeep Sepla, Bibi Mohindo Sepla  
and All SadhSangat Jio*

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