

When you go into court you are putting your fate into the hands of twelve people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty
Norm Crosby

Trump in the Iran shop

President Donald Trump has done it again – annulling concluded deals, abandoning allies and upsetting the world economic order. He has unilaterally withdrawn the United States from the multilateral pact with Iran under which Iran agreed to stop its nuclear arms building programme. The United States apart, the signatory nations to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action included France, Britain, Germany, Russia, China and the European Union. As he did in the case of the world climate agreement – walking out of it unilaterally – Trump has walked out of the nuclear agreement with Iran, leaving his European allies fretting and fuming. The Western allies are in no mood to break the agreement and have clearly said so. If they stick to their decision, the US under Trump will only isolate itself further in the comity of nations. In the process, it will also prove itself an untrustworthy ally who can never be relied upon. It is too early to say whether Trump's decision will harm the United States more than Iran.

The re-imposition of sanctions on Iran will have an immediate adverse impact on India. India is the world's third biggest oil importer and Iran happens to be the third biggest oil supplier to India. India is already committed to almost doubling its crude import from Iran during the current fiscal from last year's 2,05,000 barrels per day to 3,96,000 barrels per day. The economic sanction re-imposed by Trump creates uncertainties on Indo-Iranian oil trade. Crude prices are already rising in the world market. A likely further increase in global crude price will further erode the value of the rupee and lead to domestic price rise of petrol and diesel. Trump's decision will force India to re-think about its policy of forging closer relationship with Washington.

President Trump's decision has not gone down well within his country either. While the Republican has supported him, the Democrats have strongly criticized him. Former President Barack Obama has adversely commented on "the consistent flouting of agreements that our country is party to" and pointed out the consequent "eroding of America's credibility", besides putting the US "at odds with the world's major Powers." This last may lead to a realignment of forces in the international arena with China and the European Powers forging a new alliance independent of the US. France, Russia and Germany have already reacted strongly to Trump's decision and reiterated their commitment to the nuclear treaty with Iran. How India adjusts itself to the changing world scenario remains to be seen.

Intellectual Right striving to find its feet

REFLEX ACTION

Aditya Aamir

The hunt for the 'real core Hindu' is on. Somebody 'right' asked the other day: 'Will the real Hindu please stand up?' So far nobody has stood up. Resident Indian National Congress leader in Pakistan Mani Shankar Aiyar is not 'real core Hindu'. He told his Pakistani constituency that 69% of India did not vote for 'Hindu nationalist party' BJP. Aiyar's main point was the 69% who did not vote Modi were a "fractionized" lot.

The 'real core Hindu' is different from 'hardcore Hindu'. He is supposed to have certain standard traits. He should be hollering for a Uniform Civil Code; he should be a nationalist to the core; he should be against the Right to Education Act because the RTE is spelling death to 'Hindu schools'; he should insist on the return of Kashmiri pandits to the Valley and demand that article 370 be scrapped; he should rewrite history books, cull them of left-fluff, and hark back to the Vedic Age but not compromise on science. So, are the 'real core Hindu' among the 31% who did vote for Modi? Mani Shankar Aiyar, who endorsed Jinnah, is not 'real core Hindu'. In fact, the Congress Party, which tolerates Aiyar, doesn't have any 'real core Hindu' in its top echelons. UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi is definitely not. Ditto former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, former defence minister AK Antony, leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, 10 Janpath fixture Ahmed Patel...

Leader of opposition in Lok Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge? He is Dalit and, therefore, separated from 'real core Hindu'. Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot? No idea, except that Pilot has marriage relations with Kashmir's Abdullah family and that cannot make him a 'real core Hindu'. In short they do not fit the 'real core Hindu' bill. The likes of Yogi Adityanath and Sakshi Maharaj or Uma Bharati are different. Their saffron attire gives them away. So do their public pronouncements. Modi and Shah had to transport Adityanath to Karnataka to blurt Rahul's temple-run

and Siddaramaiah's calf love for the cow. The fact remains that the majority of BJP Members of Parliament, including Arun Jaitley, are not 'real core Hindu'. They would stumble on the temple steps if they went that way.

What about the 31% who voted Modi, are they 'real core Hindu'? Count out the Aghori and the Naga babas, the naked and near naked, those who hang around in the Kumbh Mela and at Varanasi's ghats, they don't carry voter 'id-cards'. That leaves the Hindu devotees thronging temples and baying for a Ram Temple in Ayodhya, an amorphous mass who during their working hours go to 9-5 jobs, tend shops, selling everything from the sari to rice and dal, paan and pakoda. These are the ones who stayed home on voting day and the BJP lost Phulpur and Gorakhpur. There are supposed to be 'real core Hindu' all over India and when the BJP won 21 states, the map of India was painted saffron. Events in Bihar and West Bengal in recent months have brought a degree of clarity to the identity of the 'hardcore Hindu', essentially people who go in procession through Muslim mohallas brandishing 'Hindu weapons' and shouting 'Hindu' slogans. So, are the hardcore Hindu 'real core Hindu'? The hardcore Hindu is a violent animal, his agenda is saffronize India, which just happens to be a big country, geographically and in population. How many of the Hindu in this population fit the 'hardcore Hindu' bill? The ordinary Hindu is hardly hardcore Hindu. He sits on the cement-culvert on an evening, feet hanging inches above the dirty water flowing, wondering, wondering... Tuesdays he might go to the temple. Sundays he will swat flies or watch television

at home. Region-wise, south India is not 'hardcore Hindu', not with people not averse to eating beef and mingling with the Muslim on Onam and other such singular days, not with idli and dosa and sambar-vada. Northeast India is, despite the BJP making inroads into it, not 'hardcore Hindu'. It is another matter that the south and northeast are where scattered 'hardcore Hindu' have gravitated in droves on motorized modern-day chariots, to win BJP 'India'.

The fact of the matter is the 'hardcore Hindu' is heard and seen on television and spotted at places where they ought not to be – communally-sensitive Muslim ghettos, shouting their lungs out, sometimes sent packing with wounds to lick, and grudge to nurse. It is also the hardcore Hindu who cast a jaundiced eye on Valentine's Day and New Year Eve. And, like it's happening in Haryana these days, not tolerate the faithful tumbling out of mosques to pray on the streets. The 'hardcore Hindu' is a minority. He is Shiv Sena, Bajrang Dal, Hindu Yuva Vahini and Hindu Sena in Karnataka among other 'Hindu fringe outfits' operating elsewhere in India. Maybe, he is also the one going about killing atheists. But these are individuals and minority groups with no mass following and when they range out on streets they attract only rubber necks for whom such spectacles are exercise for the neck and grist for the mill. The whole effort to identify the 'real core Hindu' is part of an exercise to build an intellectual right platform vis a vis the intellectual left platform, set apart the 'real core Hindu' from the fanatic 'hardcore Hindu fringe', which is hurting the entire Hindu fold, giving Hindus a bad name and no legs to stand on for the Hindu intellectual right. The intellectual right is the new kid on the block with issues that are reasonable to raise and fight for. Horribly outnumbered, scarred by acts of Hindu bigots, it is the intellectual right which is asking, "Will the real Hindu stand up, please?" So far it has met with only silence. (IPA)



Specially abled children of Umeed Vidyalayan school participating at various activities at a Summer Adventure Camp organised by Indian Air Force at Hindan airbase in Ghazalabad on Tuesday

Complex history of partition misused

Eighty years after Mohammed Ali Jinnah's portrait was put up in Aligarh Muslim University, the BJP's electoral compulsions in Karnataka have made the saffron apparatchiki call for its removal. The delayed reaction is typical of the Hindutva camp. Its devotion for Lord Ram, for instance, came to the fore only in the late 1980s although the RSS was formed in 1925 and the Jan Sangh in 1951. It was only in 1989, however, that the BJP's national executive endorsed the VHP's decision taken four years earlier to "liberate" Ramjanmabhoomi where the Babri masjid then stood. As for Jinnah, the BJP's ambivalence was demonstrated when L K Advani praised the founder of Pakistan for his "secularism" in view of Jinnah's celebrated speech at the first meeting of Pakistan's constituent assembly on August 11, 1947, where the Quaid-e-Azam said, "you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques" etc.

However, the eulogy cost Advani dear for, according to Submanian Swamy, the BJP lost in 2009 because the party cadres would not support Advani as the prime ministerial candidate. In the same year, another senior BJP leader of the time, Jaswant Singh, was expelled from the party for writing in his book, Jinnah: India, Partition, Independence – that Jawaharlal Nehru was responsible for the Partition and that Jinnah had been demonised in India. These views even within a party which reviles Jinnah underline the complexity of one of the most traumatic events in Indian history. The complexity is evident in the argument by a section of historians that Jinnah had used the demand for Pakistan as a bargaining chip and was never really serious about the division. As David Page has written in his introduction to Prelude to Pakistan, "As late as mid-1947, Jinnah was still investing in shares and property in India and... he even had a plan to retire to Bombay after being Governor-General of Pakistan. He left his house and furniture there and in 1947 saw nothing illogical in the thought. It is the killings and riots... which set the seal on the new divided subcontinent and left Jinnah with a great sense of bitterness and betrayal." How deep his remorse was can be gauged from the passage

in Alex von Tunzelmann's today for harbouring terrorists. Even as the RSS and the BJP hold Jinnah responsible for Partition, it is worth remembering that he was not the only proponent of the two-nation theory. Presiding over the 1937 session of the Hindu Mahasabha, V D Savarkar spoke of the centuries of antagonism between Hindus and Muslims and said that "India cannot be assumed today to be a... homogeneous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations... the Hindus and the Muslims". According to M S Golwalkar of the RSS, the Hindus "had allowed themselves to be duped into believing... our old and bitter enemies (Muslims) to be our friends". That these beliefs of Savarkar and Golwalkar still guide the BJP is evident from the party's MP, Vinay Katiyar's advice to Muslims to go to

Pakistan or Bangladesh since they have no right to stay in India. However, the animus against the "old and bitter enemies" of the Hindus assumes a sharper intensity at election time, especially when the BJP is unsure of its prospects. At such times, the party looks for opportunities to raise the communal temperature in an effort which it believes, will make the Hindus vote for it. So, no matter how long an issue has lain forgotten, the saffron lobby revives it with its customary gusto. The Jinnah portrait is one of them. The BJP's advantage is that in raising such "emotive" issues, it can ride roughshod over the nuances of history, presenting the people involved in the intense politicking of an earlier period in the contrasting colours of black and white. While transposing these protagonists and antagonists of the past to the present times, the BJP places their supporters and opponents in the mutually exclusive categories of nationalists and anti-nationalists to score a political point. In the process, the history of the period is blurred. (IPA)

FOCUS

Amulya Ganguli

Conventional Crossword

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10					11	
12						13	
14	15						
16	17					18	19
20	21	22					
23						24	25
26						27	
28						29	

ACROSS
1 Pretended
5 Object of worship
10 Copies
11 Metal-bearing rock
12 Separates
13 Bundle of notes
14 Used up
16 Scoundrel
18 In abundance
21 Is concerned
23 Financial burden
24 Pollute
26 Lyric poem
27 Decorative plant
28 Mexican dollar
29 Scottish dance

DOWN
2 Injures
3 Fitting
4 Errand
6 Inland county
7 Public speaker
8 As ahead
9 Gradings implement
15 Pasty composition
17 Gallery of shops
19 Sheeplike
20 Connaught
22 Tools
23 Spinning toy
25 Part of the verb 'to be'

SUDOKU: 2194

	1	5			6		7	4
					3	9		
	9	1						6
5	1				8		7	
		6	3	7				
6	7					3		9
8					5	6		
		6	8					
1	9		3				7	8

Yesterday's Solution 2193

8	4	6	2	5	7	9	3	1
3	5	2	4	1	9	6	8	7
1	9	7	8	6	3	4	5	2
4	2	1	7	3	5	8	9	6
9	3	8	1	4	6	2	7	5
7	6	5	9	2	8	1	4	3
6	7	4	5	9	1	3	2	8
5	1	9	3	8	2	7	6	4
2	8	3	6	7	4	5	1	9

Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 2102

P	O	I	S	E	S	F	A	D
E	R	M	O	L	A	R		
S	C	E	N	E	S	R	E	P
T	N	E	R	O				
L	I	C	Y	S	E	E	P	
L	A	C	K	S	I	N		
E				S	T	A	G	W
O	R	B		H	O	M	A	G
Y	O	K	E	L	F	E	C	S
H	E	X		D	E	F	E	C

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