

MESSAGE OF OPERATION SINDOOR

A two-part docuserial of the Discovery on India’s Operation Sindoor against Pakistan have bared many unknown facts of this historic operation. It becomes clear that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a clear vision on punishing those behind the Pahalgam terrorist strike in which 26 Indians were killed on the basis of religion. He also gave the operation its name and that was something which weighed heavily on those involved in the operation. Pahalgam Massacre of Hindus men (one Muslim also killed while he tried to stop the terrorists) has a deep meaning as it came soon after Pakistan’s army chief Asif Munir spoke about how Muslims (Read Pakistan) are different from Hindus (Read India) in every sense. PM Modi was clear that India has to go after the perpetrators of Pahalgam terror strike. The armed forces had been waiting for the signal for the same from the top echelons. Having been given a clear go ahead, there was no looking back. The chiefs of Military explain that every followed in war like precision – terrorist infrastructure in POJK and deep inside Pakistan’s Punjab. When everything went as per the plan, there was no time to rejoice. The forces had anticipated the Pakistani reaction and launched a counter on the Line of control. The difference between the Indian and Pakistan was start. India hit the terror infrastructure and Pakistan hit temples and Gurudwaras in Poonch and Jammu. The messaging was so clear and loud that Pakistan would have to think thousands time before carrying out another terrorist (proxy) attacks in India, As NSA Ajit Doval said, the operation was meant to send a clear message to Pakistan’s army that if they don’t control terrorism and keep enabling terrorists wanted in India for previous strikes, India will not sit quiet any more.

JYOTI MALHOTRA

IN the past few weeks, women have returned to the front and centre of the national conversation, about what they should say, how much and when they should shut up. Above all, when a woman says No, both softly and more loudly, why is it that men don’t stop to listen?

There’s enough said about patriarchy, over the ages, but it was a slogan, or a story, that captured the complexity of the word during the recent Cockroach Janta Party protest at Jantar Mantar, naturally on Instagram : Don’t be afraid of inviting your mothers to the protest, says a young woman, or be afraid that she will cry when she is hit by tear gas, because patriarchy has already dried up all her tears.

In one succinct sentence, packed with humour, this woman protester forced us all to look at ourselves once again. Why do we treat women the way we do inside our homes, as well as outside, as if they had no voice and no ability to exercise that voice? GeographicReference

We have seen the video of a policeman ramming his lathi into the back of a young woman who participated in the July 20 CJP protest to Parliament, as well as a male IPS officer slapping a woman protester. We have, by now, heard the interviews of young women, including in The Tribune, of how they’ve been subject to a barrage of abuse in the wake of their participation in the protest, most of it sexual. We’ve heard how the identities of several women were made public without their permission — the word, “doxxing,” has entered our lexicon, a word that hails from the hacker culture of the West in the early 1990s, and literally means “dropping” or sharing a document, abbreviated to doc/dox — and how these women were hounded, harassed and threatened because insecure men, total strangers, believed they needed to be put in their place.

We cannot but fail to remember at a

The freedom to say No



time like this the awful gangrape of Nirbhaya in 2012 — her name was Jyoti, and we can name her now because she’s dead — when women came out on the streets of Delhi and braved the lathicharge and water cannons of the Delhi Police in protest. About ten days ago, we read the grateful words of thanks of the mother of the survivor in the 2013 Tarun Tejpal case — when the Goa Bench of the Bombay High Court, starring a woman judge, reversed the Goa trial court’s 2021 judgment, also delivered by a woman judge, who acquitted him of raping the survivor in question in a lift — and wondered what a mother must go through when her daughter’s pleas go unheard, when her daughter says, No, and the man in front of her refuses to hear.

You don’t need a feminist to tell you why the language of abuse predominantly revolves around the abuse of women, especially sisters and mothers, or why sexual abuse, harassment, molestation and rape are weapons of violence. All this is as old as the hills.

What never fails to surprise you is that the control persists, in the 21st century.

As India fastforwards towards Viksit Bharat and becoming a regional player, the need to control women’s bodies and minds by people in positions of power seems to get even stronger. The men are shouting louder. Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the former BJP MP and former Wrestling Federation chief, has just been acquitted by a lower court of the charge of sexual harassment by several women wrestlers — he spoke to journalists after his acquittal and laughed in the face of a brave young female NDTV journalist who persisted with asking him tough questions. GeographicReference

And so women are resorting, increasingly, to the one weapon they know cannot fail them. That’s why you see posters of Ambedkar in every protest, in Jantar Mantar and in Ranchi. Not Gandhi, or Nehru or even Subhas Chandra Bose — they are there, yes, but not as many as Ambedkar.

Only Ambedkar, a Dalit, who overcame his given circumstances to lead the writing of the Constitution, understood why it was essential to give all women and men, irrespective of caste and creed, the right to

equality and justice. He understood the violence that can be perpetrated in the name of caste — remember that caste follows you through life and persists even after your death, in your children and beyond, and that the only time a woman can change caste is when she marries a man of another caste. Ambedkar understood that freedom meant not just freedom from the British Raj and the promise of a new country, but also the enforceable Right to Life under Article 21; that the Constitution was duty-bound to uphold the freedom of choice of every citizen and the spectrum of it. That this included the freedom to say No.

What angers people most, whether a controlling parent or partner or stranger, that the person on the other side is exercising this freedom to say No. That No means No.

I am my choices, said Jean-Paul Sartre, back in 1943 in Being and Nothingness, arguing that the idea of both freedom and responsibility inheres in people. Ambedkar invests Sartre’s words with the weight of the law.

Go forth, women, he must have said, as he put together the Constituent Assembly, go forth and change the world. The Constitution is here to protect you.

That’s what the rollcall of women and men in Jantar Mantar and Ranchi believed as they sought to challenge the status quo, the establishment, the hierarchies of power. Shraddha Singh. Yashaswinee Singh. Neha Bora. (It’s exciting to think of Neha’s several identities, including one in which she swears by the Constitution and another which belongs to a party whose ideology is so Left that it swears by a revolution.) The minor girl who cannot be named, on whom rape and death threats and other sexual abuse was hurled with such vengeance that she and her mother, now very afraid, had to move house, after PM Modi talked about her abuse of him and his mother in a video.

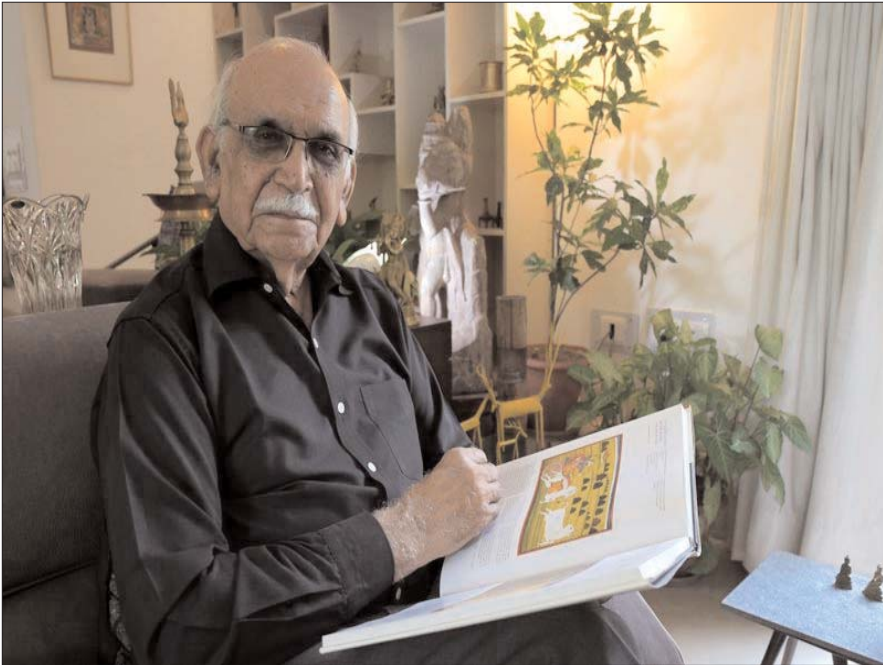
He loved Chandigarh with his art & soul

RAJNISH WATTAS

As we remember Dr BN Goswamy (1933-2023) — Chandigarh’s cultural icon and world-famous art historian — on his 93rd birth anniversary today, memories of his mesmerising lectures come flooding in. His exquisite narratives of miniature paintings and their pan-Indian themes resound in our consciousness.

While his contribution to art history takes centre stage, less is known of his zeal for conserving the City Beautiful’s architectural idiom and the core principles of its urban planning.

I witnessed his passion for saving Chandigarh from hurried, populist changes during our rides together to attend various meetings. A car would first pick me up and then ‘Dr Sahib’ — as he was popularly known. As I would



wait at the gate, he would emerge — always immaculately dressed, with a silk cravat around his neck, come summer or winter — and greet me with a warm handshake. His first comment would be, “Dekho

wait at the gate, he would emerge — always immaculately dressed, with a silk cravat around his neck, come summer or winter — and greet me with a warm handshake. His first comment would be, “Dekho

Architecture Museum to examine the deficiencies he had flagged.

His love for protecting the serenity of the Sukhna Lake was well known. When it was pointed out to him that a garish, flashy board had been installed at the entrance of the lake, he promptly complained to the Governor during a meeting. “Sir, if you do not agree with my opinion, you may drop me from the committee, but this is how we as members feel.” The Governor replied with gentle amusement, “I don’t want to make headlines in tomorrow’s papers for the wrong reasons.”

Sahib had great interest in public art and pushed hard to enhance its presence at the city’s nodal points and public squares. He even managed to persuade the renowned sculptor Anish Kapoor to visit Chandigarh and install a

work. But unfortunately, the project never took off and got buried in sarkari files. BookWalking Tours

His commitment to the City Beautiful’s heritage was so unwavering that in later years, when his health began to fail, he started holding meetings at his house — treating all members to delectable snacks, but unsparing in giving tough assignments to each of them.

At the end of one such meeting, someone asked where the next one would be held. Dr Sahib replied with a smile, “As long as I’m breathing, the meetings will be held here only.”

Both the room and the chair now lie vacant. But his intellectual glow continues to illuminate Chandigarh.

(The writer is former Principal, Chandigarh College of Architecture)

India committed crime of Partition upon itself

Wajahat Habibullah

At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awaken to life and freedom,” thus spoke the designated Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru, on August 14, 1947. But on that day, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, the supposed victor of that freedom movement, was in Calcutta. And the national capital and its surroundings were convulsed in communal mayhem, Indian against Indian.

So, Rajmohan Gandhi, grandson of the Mahatma, writes in a biography of C Rajagopalachari, his maternal grandfather, Rajaji, A Life: ‘The Mahatma was feeling the pain of fratricide, not the thrill of freedom.’ When the so-called liberated India’s first new year dawned in 1948, a Thai visitor complimented Gandhi on India’s independence. But in dolorous response, Gandhi said to him, “Today, Indian fears brother Indian. Is this independence?”

Centuries ago, a Chinese Buddhist

monk traversing this land wrote of it in the early seventh century CE, “People of distant places, with diverse customs, generally designate the land they most admire as India.” India has, indeed, been politically united only for a brief fraction of its timeless history. But is it political unity alone that constitutes what we today identify as a nation? For all its political convolutions India has, in fact, remained as Xuanzang, the Chinese monk I mention, saw it. While describing his holy land as the Five Indias, he perceived “India as a single cultural, sacral and geographical unit”. I contend that my India has in fact so remained throughout its history since at least the time of the Solasa mahajanapadas, the 16 great states of the 6th century BC, a millennium before the venerable monk’s pilgrimage and what he saw India to be. And I would differ from William Dalrymple, from whose book The Golden Road I have quoted Xuanzang; in that this nation survived in continuum because of the infusion of Islam into the brew. This was until it was finally bru-

tally sundered at the stroke of that midnight hour.

Winston Churchill, the last bastion of the lost citadel of what had been an empire on which the sun never set, moaned that India was simply a geographical expression. It should be clear that these were the utterances of a charlatan. India’s nationhood had been demonstrated by India’s 1857 war of independence wherein both India’s principal communities, whether in the Company’s army or in India’s Hindu heartland of Awadh, my home, united in support of a decrepit Muslim emperor. Then again it asserted its hold in the 1920s in the first exclusively Indian anti-colonial mass mobilisation, unmatched until then anywhere in its vast empire, against the British with the Khilafat Movement. Of the Ali brothers who led the movement, the younger, Mohammed Ali had, in 1916 while in jail, been elected President of the Muslim League and then in 1923 President of the Congress. The November 1919 meeting of the Central Khilafat Committee was presided over

by none other than the Mahatma. On this Committee was Maulana Azad, and the movement helped draw Muslims en masse into the Congress for the first time -- rallying against colonial rule across Asia.

Tragically the education imbibed from the Raj — the more Anglicised the education, the deeper the failure to understand ourselves — construed otherwise. This is what has been described as the “colonization of the mind” by Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal, although I doubt if she’d concede that the very theory of two nations constituting India was in itself a consequence of that colonial mindset. Jawaharlal Nehru’s Discovery of India will bear me out. In this a young Englishman, which was what Nehru had become from his Harrovian upbringing, revels in the glories of India, which, he argues manfully, carries a bright future if its components can be molded into a nation. Through this prism the geographical entity, India, was made up of many nations that had been constantly in conflict. Put simply, such a

conclusion completely ignores the huge symbolic message of Tulsidas’ Ramcharitmanas. The Avadhi language of this composition carries the genesis of the Urdu language, which came in the mid-20th century to be divisively identified as the language of Muslims.

More fraught with symbolism is the Taj Mahal. Conceived by an orthodox Sunni Muslim emperor, genetically more Rajput than Turk, for a Shia Muslim Empress, with its architectural flourish, construction material and adornment of gems drawn from the far corners of South Asia by artisans of every ethnic hue, the Taj is a dramatic display of the multidimensional character of India. This was more recently manifested in the modern restoration of the Taj precursor, the Humayun’s tomb in Delhi, executed by another product of such fusion, the Agha Khan Foundation. And so, although to the disinterested eye India’s history screamed otherwise, that although India was indeed a divided society, cloven along lines of

caste and profession, these divided communities were all dependent on each other, together creating what was intrinsically a nation, which today we call India. This accounted for the wealth of India that nurtured Dalrymple’s Golden Road, but also secured the stability of India’s social fabric despite its gross inequalities all well recorded. For example, Dalrymple waxes eloquent on India’s ancient silk industry. Today weavers across north India are Muslim while traders in their vibrant products, were until recently exclusively Hindu — trade being the business of the Hindu Bania community, whilst the artisan across India largely accepted Islam.

Notwithstanding, the bulk of UP Muslims never supported the idea of a separate homeland. The electoral success of the Muslim League in 1937 cannot be cited as support for such a homeland because the electorate were largely the landowning class of Muslim society terrified of the prospect of Congress’ socialism with its avowed land reform.