**Indian Fascism**

**These developments warn of an impending genocide.**

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January 29, 2024

[Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns), [Newspaper](https://www.nation.com.pk/newspaper)

The recent consecration of the Ayodhya temple on the ruins of a historic Mughal-era Mosque is a blatant erasure of Muslim heritage and identity. The temple has been built on grounds where the Babri mosque, named after Mu­ghal emperor Babar, stood for centuries be­fore it was torn down in 1992 by a Hindu mob. The destruction of the 16th-century mosque sparked the most severe religious riots since independence, resulting in the deaths of over 2,000 people, predominant­ly Muslims and forever denting the so-called secular political order India claimed.

Addressing the crowd outside the temple, Nar­endra Modi declared that January 22, 2024, signi­fies more than just a date on the calendar; it marks the beginning of a new era. The era he alludes to is that of Hindutva/saffron terror. The decision to build the Ayodhya temple at this contentious lo­cation, a longstanding source of religious fissures, shows a brazen disregard for the rich Muslim histo­ry associated with the site and further marginalizes the Muslim minority. This development serves as a strategic move for Mr. Modi, effectively kickstarting his campaign for re-election in the upcoming 2024 national polls. The unveiling of the temple is not just that, but it is the launch of Modi’s Hindutva ide­ology where he seeks to relegate Muslims, approx­imately 14% of Indians, to a secondary status and majoritarian violence. In the recent years under the BJP rule, there have been disturbingly common re­ports of terrorizing Indian Muslims as India gradu­ally becomes an electoral autocracy marking a sig­nificant decline in human and civil rights.

[Remittances post over 13% YoY increase](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Jan-2024/remittances-post-over-13-percent-yoy-increase)

Modi’s Hindu nationalist BJP and its affiliates have portrayed the inauguration of the temple as a symbolic liberation from the historical centuries of dominance by Muslim invaders and colonial powers. Just last year, education officials in India purged crucial passages concerning Muslim rule during the Mughal empire from textbooks. The re­cently released textbooks, unveiled in early April 2023, have removed sections that previously cov­ered significant periods of the Mughal empire, the 2002 Gujarat riots—during which hundreds of Muslims lost their lives while current Prime Min­ister Narendra Modi served as the chief minister—and the assassination of Mohandas K. Gandhi, who was targeted by a Hindu extremist. In tandem, city names with Muslim or Mughal origins have been changed while hyper nationalist Bollywood films are being made to stoke unnecessary hate to­wards Pakistan and Muslims. All these deliberate attempts aimed at the erasure of Muslim heritage have been carefully curated to craft a Hindu na­tionalist narrative for the country.

[Weather turns cold after rain in Karachi](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Jan-2024/weather-turns-cold-after-rain-in-karachi)

The rebranding of India into Hindu-first nation under the BJP rule has escalated anti-Muslim hate speech and gave rise to an alarming increase in Hindu lynch mobs that have killed Muslims on mere suspicion of slaughtering or even transport­ing cows, deemed sacred by Hindus. These devel­opments warn of an impending genocide.

Mr. Modi would do well to remember that the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru de­livered his first speech post-independence at the Red Fort, built under Mughal Emperor Shah Jah­an’s rule. While India moves towards a regressive autocracy, these measures represent a crippling embrace of ignorance about one’s own origin.

It is critical that in the upcoming elections sched­uled later this year, the Indian citizenry must stand for social justice, and against the rising right-wing forces of fascism and authoritarianism.