

The fiscal deficit actually matters little to both domestic and foreign investors unless it leads to

the voter adversely. This strategy also

The result is the country to protect the bureaucracy and foreign investors

Idea of March

Jayant Bhandari comments on a man well ahead of his times

Several decades after I left India — in 1947 — I am now trying to get back my bearings on the society of my beloved country before I return back to witness some of the most pleasant changes now taking place there. When I left India, it was one of the better-developed countries in Asia — better than Singapore. While I fail to completely understand the virtual absence of India in the world scene, I do understand that it is a big international conspiracy to undermine the superiority of India as a civilisation. From what little contact through the speeches of Indian politicians that I have had, I know that it's now the world's largest producer of wheat, the largest secular democracy, etc. etc. Wonder why the world is not all praise for India — if at all they know much about it, that is? I keep telling them that our share in the world trade is less than one per cent just because we are so self-sufficient that we don't care to export.

Just heard some great things about a revolution Ashok Singhal is bringing about in India. I have heard that he has pledged, and so has his organisation, that he would lay the foundation for a stronger, more confident India on 15 March at Ayodhya. He must be a perfectionist. All the advancements that I know that have taken place in India — the nuclear bomb, the Agni missiles, the satellite launches — for sure make it one of the most developed countries in the world. But then like everywhere, though to a lesser degree, some problems remain.

What Mr Singhal has pledged has no precedent — he has pledged to remove whatever little poverty, accommodation problem India is left with. He has, I have heard, promised to

start the end of the establishment of *Ramrajya*. What a commendable pledge! This is the kind of *jihad* I believe in. As I say, the envious westerners don't like to see India in

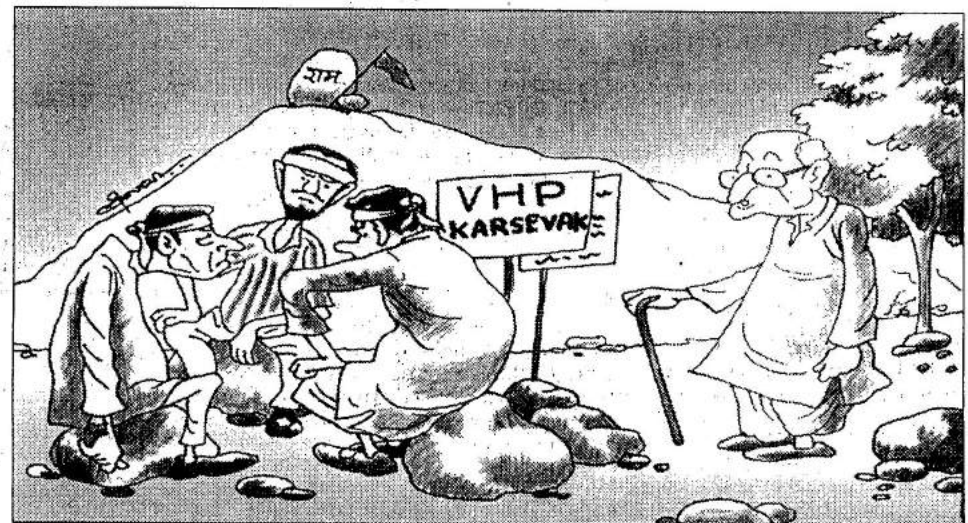
services to India. They will not stop until every Indian has a house, a place of study, a clean well-equipped hospital, a place to work. But the cynical westerners

think that Mr Singhal is a fanatic. They are taking his words too literally. Naive. After all they have no culture of such a massive commitment to selfless community service.

My only complaint is that Mr Singhal had to demolish a mosque to start the first "temple" — I guess what will be a huge place to provide shelter to the poor old widow women. I know India is full of religious places but for sure they could find good empty place to start the new schools, hospitals.

Anyway, I believe that he wanted to send a very strong and firm message that we believe that God lives in the heart of people, and since we already have so many religious places we needed no more. I can relate to his brave step but then it might just antagonise those who are still not as open minded as Mr Singhal is. He is so ahead of the times!

I have promised myself to send a big cheque to the VHP and their committed soldiers by the next post, with all my best wishes. God bless him. I will join him soon, in his revolution, I guess.



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