



Portfolios of Hate

Hate speech profiles of key BJP candidates
(2024 India elections)



UKIMC
UK Indian Muslim Council

About

The United Kingdom Indian Muslim Council (UK-IMC) seeks to effectively address the threats posed by forces of hate and divisiveness to social cohesion, multicultural ethos and ensure that the voice of Indian Muslims in the UK is heard.

UK-IMC seeks to engage civil society and interfaith groups, government bodies and law enforcement agencies in an ongoing meaningful dialogue and advocacy to effectively address threats from fringe elements as well as the established extremist ideologies including Hindutva, who seek to promote fear, hate, Islamophobia, divisiveness, and ferment social discord within our societies. This will be critical to safeguard our social cohesion and challenge narratives that seek to divide us and foster disharmony.

Editorial Team

Muhammed Nihad P V
Habibullah Muntasar
Abdullah Kottappalli

“Portfolios of Hate” – 2024 is produced by The United Kingdom Indian Muslim Council.

All rights reserved. No portion of this report may be reproduced in any form without the permission of The United Kingdom Indian Muslim Council, except as permitted by the UK copyright law.

For inquiries email: info@ukimc.org
Website: <https://www.ukimc.org/>

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Our research team compiled the hate speech profiles of 36 BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) candidates, picked from the list of contestants announced by the Hindu far-right party for the upcoming Indian general elections. The report contains a non-exhaustive list of 70 randomly curated instances of hate speech recorded by national media houses, spread across different regions.

- Of the 70 incidents involving the selected 36 personalities -from both the tenures of the BJP-led NDA government (2014-2019 and 2019-2024)- 23 incidents took place during the first Modi regime whereas the second NDA regime saw an increase to 47 cases.
 - The increase shows how the re-ascendance of Hindutva to parliamentary power had conferred the politicians with more impunity to spread Islamophobia, Xenophobia, and other forms of targeted hate.
 - The data reveals a repeated trend of rise in hate-inducing rhetoric during election campaigns.
 - Amid the anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protests the hate peddling was focused on both destroying the credibility of Muslim protesters and triggering violence against them.
 - In most cases, the verbal and symbolic violence of the leaders was successfully converted into physical violence by followers on the ground.
 - Hindu religious festivals and mythological references are invoked in order to shape the 'collective conscience' against Muslims and other religious minorities including Christians.
 - In non-BJP ruling states, hate drives are often run with the subtext of 'Muslim appeasement', an Islamophobic trope.
 - Though the primary focus of the report is on Islamophobia and anti-Muslim hatred, the hate speech incidents included in the document fall into the following broader categories:
1. Islamophobic misinformation campaigns and public calls for direct violence and genocide of Muslims
 2. Targeted campaigns for violence and social boycotts against religious minorities including both Muslims and Christians as they are portrayed as an 'external threat' to the 'native Hindu' population and its culture.
 3. Speech reflecting a patriarchal and misogynist attitude towards women.
 4. Anti-immigrant hate speech to cultivate fear and crystallise collective hate based on disinformation campaigns.
 5. Hate and disinformation campaigns against farmers and other depressed sections protesting the authoritarian laws.



Table of Contents

Introduction -	05
Portfolios of Hate -	07
Afterword -	53

INTRODUCTION

For any society or nation to thrive, order and peace are indispensable constituents. In a multifarious and diverse country like India which can be understood as a confluence of nations a sanitised public sphere is sine qua non for its democratic existence. On the other hand, the various technologies of divisiveness and control are the essential tools of authoritarian and technocratic governance. Hate speech in that scenario is bound up with the system of discrimination and oppression which characterizes different forms of racism including Islamophobia and Xenophobia pervading the society up to the upper echelons of the political structure.

According to the United Nations definition, “any kind of communication in speech, writing or behaviour, that attacks or uses pejorative or discriminatory language with reference to a person or a group on the basis of who they are, in other words, based on their religion, ethnicity, nationality, race, colour, descent, gender or other identity factor,” can be termed as hate speech.

Notwithstanding the distinct nature of India, we have applied the definition above in our enquiry. What forced us to choose BJP alone, the current ruling party fostered by the Hindu nationalist RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), is the alarming revelation brought out by some of the recent studies.

India Hate Lab (IHL) documented 668 hate speech events targeting Muslims in 2023. While 255 of the events were recorded in the first half of 2023, the number rose to 413 in the second half of the year, a 62% increase. Notably, 498 (75%) of the events took place in BJP-ruling states, union territories (administered by the BJP-led Union government), and the National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi (police and public order comes under the purview of the BJP-led Union government).

Another report released by the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) states the highest number of hate speech cases, 22 in total, have been filed against MPs of the BJP. In contrast, two cases of hate speech are present against MPs of the Indian National Congress (INC).

Over the past years, various governments and independent bodies have warned us regarding the growing majoritarianism in India and the bleak situation of the religious and caste minorities under its BJP-led right-wing government. It has often been noted that most of the cases of violence are rarely haphazard but almost always are predicated by instances of hate speech and instigation. These speeches are usually delivered against the backdrop of national or provincial elections, often at a rally or in a religious gathering. The causal relation between them and the violence that follows has been noted by various analysts, and with the 2024 general election coming up many fear the recurrence of the same. More worrying is the fact that most of the offenders held legislative posts, occupying seats in the parliament up to the position of prime minister, as in well known, whose political ascendancy was realised through his role in the 2002 anti-Muslim pogroms. The list of candidates released by the BJP for Lok Sabha [Lower House] seats is fraught with the same contradictions. On one hand, the party made a point by not giving tickets to the firebrand speakers who became notorious for spearheading Islamophobic campaigns and anti-Muslim violence (some of them prosecuted by courts while others left untouched), but on the other it did field candidates who have been serial offenders over the years. The premier of the Uttar Pradesh government, Yogi Adityanath, went as far as withdrawing the cases against the ministers and ruling party legislators, allegedly, including even himself.

In this report, we seek to gather the instances of hate speech which has affected the religious minorities and other depressed sections of the society, with a particular focus on Muslims. The data presented here, far from being exhaustive, is indicative of the wider structure of violence that stem from the leadership of the current right-wing government. It is worth mentioning here that despite the traction that these high-profile ministers get, the lion's share of hate speech is contributed by local politicians and religious leaders. Since the elected representatives of the Parliament are the beneficiaries of the vote banks produced by politics of hate, it is imperative to lay bare their involvement and hold them accountable. Not only do they provide patronage to hate campaigns of leaders belonging to the lower tiers and to inland religious leaders, being very upfront about their bigotry, they often disseminate hate from the dias itself.

From threatening the minorities with exclusion from government policies to harassing them with the promise of revocation of citizenship they have practically been engaged in intimidation of all stripes. Every so often it includes inciting violence against the targetted community [in many cases police or paramilitary side with the perpetrators of the anti-Muslim violence, which has been documented in many independent reports]; dog-whistling and feeding into Islamophobic tropes (the idea that Muslims are engaged in population bomb, engineering demographic change, terrorism et al), flaring up the fan of perceived "historical injustice" at the hands of "Muslim invaders"; equating Muslims with Pakistan (the perceived arch-enemy of Hindutva body politic); popularising tags like "Bangladeshi"/"Rohingyan" (the dangerous immigrant), Khalistani (funders of protesting farmers) and vocalising the slogans of political supremacy, or advocating straight up violence against communities. The report is not necessarily an in-depth analysis of the hate speech phenomenon but it does provide a window into the Hindutva hate machine through the profiles of potential lawmakers we have collected here. It has been named "Portfolios of Hate" to emphasise how pivotal is the production of hate for the careers of Hindu far-right politicians.



NARENDRA MODI

Lok Sabha Constituency: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh.

Prime Minister of India (2015- incumbent). He was Chief Minister of Gujarat over 15 years before his prime ministership. A massive anti-Muslim pogrom took place while he was the CM of the State.

March, 2002 / Apart from his speeches being a major source of incitement in triggering the 2002 [anti-Muslim pogrom](#) in Gujarat, he went on to justify the massacre.



“Godhra mein jo parson hua, jahan par chalees mahilaon aur bacchon ko zinda jala diya, is mein desh mein aur videsh mein sadma pahunchna swabhavik tha. Godhra ke is ilake ke logon ki criminal tendencies rahi hain. In logon ne pabele mahila teachers ka khoon kiya. Aur ab yeh jaghanya apraadh kiya hai jiski pratikria ho rahi hai.” (It is natural that what happened in Godhra day before yesterday, where forty women and children were burnt alive, has shocked the country and the world. The people in that part of Godhra have had criminal tendencies. Earlier, these people had murdered women teachers. And now they have done this terrible crime for which a reaction is going on).

Congress MP Ehsan Jafri—who was lynched by a Sangh Parivar-led mob at his residence in Chamanpura, Ahmedabad on 28 February—had fired at the mob in order to try and disperse them. Modi said that Jafri’s ‘action’ of firing had infuriated the mob and that the massacre which followed was [a ‘reaction’](#).

“Kriya pratikriya ki chain chal rahi hai. Hum chahate hain ki na kriya ho aur na pratikriya.” (What is happening is a chain of action and reaction. What I want is that there should be no action and no reaction).

More than 3000 Muslims were killed in the large-scale Hindutva violence that erupted in Gujarat following the train burning incident near Godhra railway station in February 2002.



September, 2008 / While addressing a gathering in Gujarat, Modi had said, *“There is a university in Delhi called [Jamia Millia Islamia](#). It has publicly announced that it will foot the legal fee of terrorists involved in the act. Go drown yourself. This Jamia Millia is being run on government money and it is daring to spend money on lawyers to get terrorists out of jail... Those who cry over ‘Godhra’ must find some time to look at Jamia.”*

December, 2019 / Speaking at a Bharatiya Janata Party rally in Dumka, Jharkhand, Modi said that those who were protesting against controversial Citizenship Act could be recognised by their [clothes](#).



“Yeh Congresswale aur uske saathi... halla macha rahe hain, toofaan khara kar rahe hain. Aur unki baat chalti nahin hai to aag janee phaila rahe hain. Jo aag laga rahe hain, TV pe unke jo drishya aa rahe hain, yeh aag lagaane vaale kaun hain, woh unke kapdon se hi pata chal jaata hai (The Congress and its allies are making a noise, creating a storm. And if that doesn’t work, they are spreading a fire... From the visuals on TV, those setting the fire can be identified by their clothes),” Modi said.

April, 2024 / Hindutva social media handles initiated a hate campaign against people posting pictures or videos of them consuming non-vegetarian food during the period of ‘Chaitra Navratri’, a Hindu occasion which fell between April 9 and April 17.

[Modi joined the campaign](#) adding that consuming meat during the month of Sawan is equal to ‘disrespecting’ Hindu sentiments.



“Who do you want to mock? Eating non veg during the days of Navratri, by showing the video and hurting the sentiments of the people, who are you trying to impress by playing this game?” Modi said, while speaking at a public rally in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir.

He attributed the mentality behind the act to Muslim Mughal rulers, who in the Hindutva copy book of Islamophobic tropes, are symbols of oppression and anti-Hindu hate.



“The law does not stop anyone from eating anything but the intentions of these people are something else. When the Mughals attacked here, they were not satisfied until they demolished the temples. So just like the Mughals, they want to tease the people of the country by showing the video in the month of Sawan.”



AMIT SHAH
Constituency: Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat.

Currently serving as Home minister and Union minister of corporation. Former BJP national president.



April, 2014 / Shamli is one of the four districts of western Uttar Pradesh swept by brute violence in September 2013 that left over 60 dead (more than 90% Muslims). The death toll presented in court by rights activists are much higher. The violence had also contained the characteristic revenge rapes of young Muslim women and girls and widespread displacement from which the local community still reels. Amit Shah had then said ‘Apmaan ka badla toh lena padega’ (revenge against the dishonour must be taken). The occasion was a meeting with Jat leaders, critical to winning the polls and the location was 40 km from Muzaffarnagar town. In a controversial speech, in the presence of BJP legislator Suresh Rana, who was accused of instigating the pogroms, Shah said: *“This election is about voting out the government that protects and gives compensation to those who killed Jats,”* Shah had said. *“It is about badla (revenge) and protecting izzat (honour).”*



April, 2016 / Amit Shah had given a [clean chit](#) to controversial Hindu Guru Baba Ramdev over his expressly uttered fantasies to ‘chop off heads of any and all, especially those in the much-loved skull caps, who refuse to utter Bharat Mata Ki jai.’

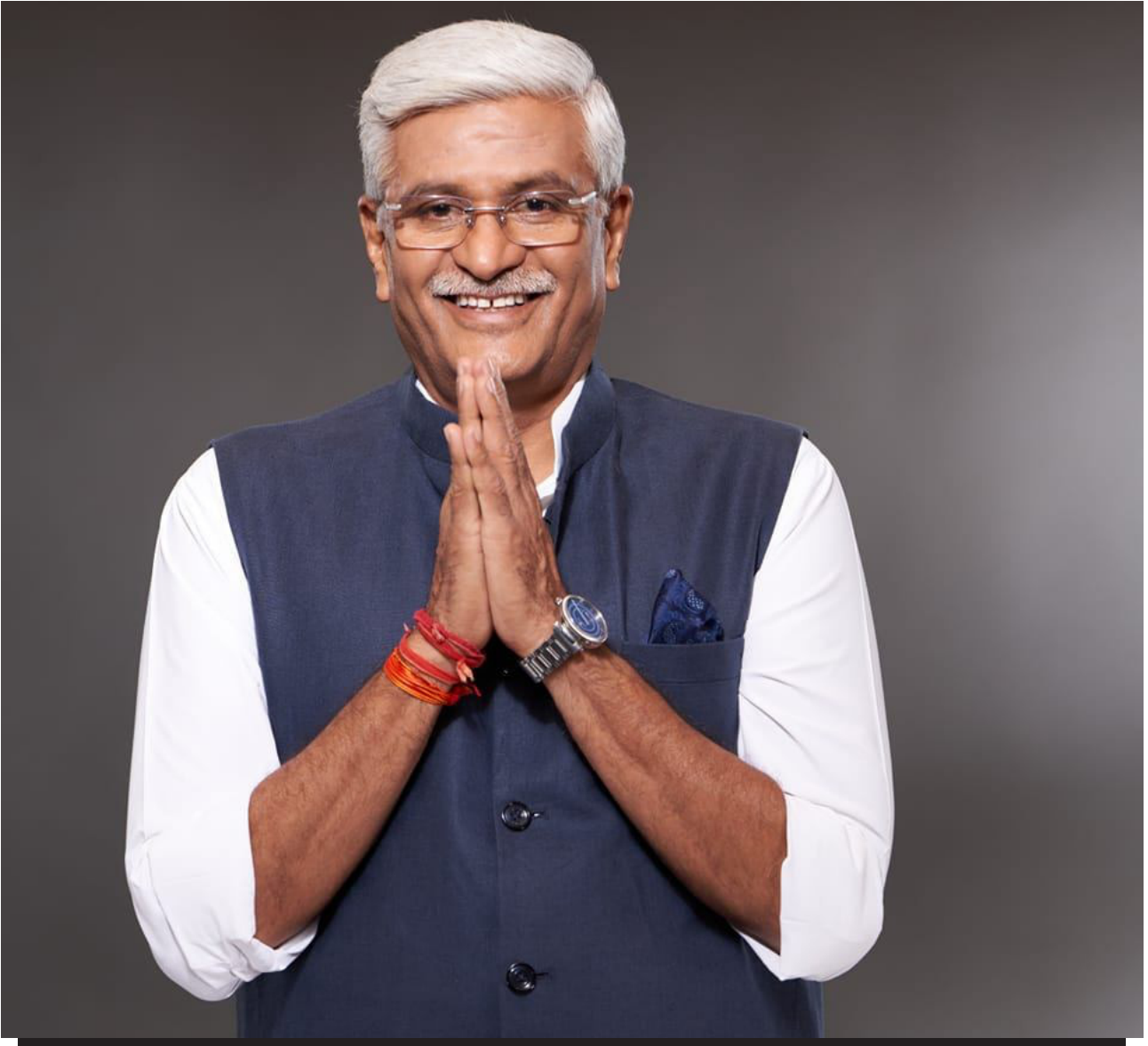
September, 2018 / Especially hinting at Muslim migrants from Bangladesh and Rohingya, Amit Shah said millions of “illegal infiltrators” have entered the country like [“termites”](#) and should be “uprooted”.



“Should they be thrown out or not? Millions of infiltrators have entered our country and are eating the country like termites. Should we not uproot them?” local media reported Shah as saying at a public meeting in capital New Delhi.

December, 2023 / While speaking at the Viksit Bharat Sankalp Yatra in Gujarat’s Sanand, he lauded the “In 2002, there were riots and thereafter Modi saheb taught a lesson to not repeat the act. Have there been riots thereafter? The rioters were taught such a lesson in 2002 that to date no one dares to cause riots in Gujarat,” Shah said.

Shah made similar remarks back in November 2022, stating that ‘anti-social elements’ backed by Congress were ‘taught a lesson’ in 2002, and as a result, they ceased such activities. He had also said that the Bharatiya Janata Party established ‘permanent peace’ in the state after the 2002 massacre of Muslims in Gujarat.



GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT

Constituency: Jodhpur, Rajasthan

Currently serving as Union minister of Jal Shakthi.



April, 2023 / He used analogy of mythological figure Ravana to demonize Asok Gehlot, Chief Minister of Rajasthan. He said *“If you want to end (the rule of) Ashok Gehlot, this [Ravan](#) of politics in Rajasthan, raise your hands and resolve to establish Ram Rajya in the state”*.

September, 2023 / When Tamil Nadu Youth Welfare Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin spoke critically against caste-ridden Hindu Dharma, Shekhawat warned *“We will pull out tongue, gouge eyes of anyone who speaks against [Sanatan Dharma](#).”*

September, 2023 / [Complaint registered](#) against Shekhawat for spreading rumours against Muslims that they have pelted stones on Ram Navami processions in Sirohi, destroyed properties of Hindus with petrol bombs and looted Hindu owned shops in the locality.

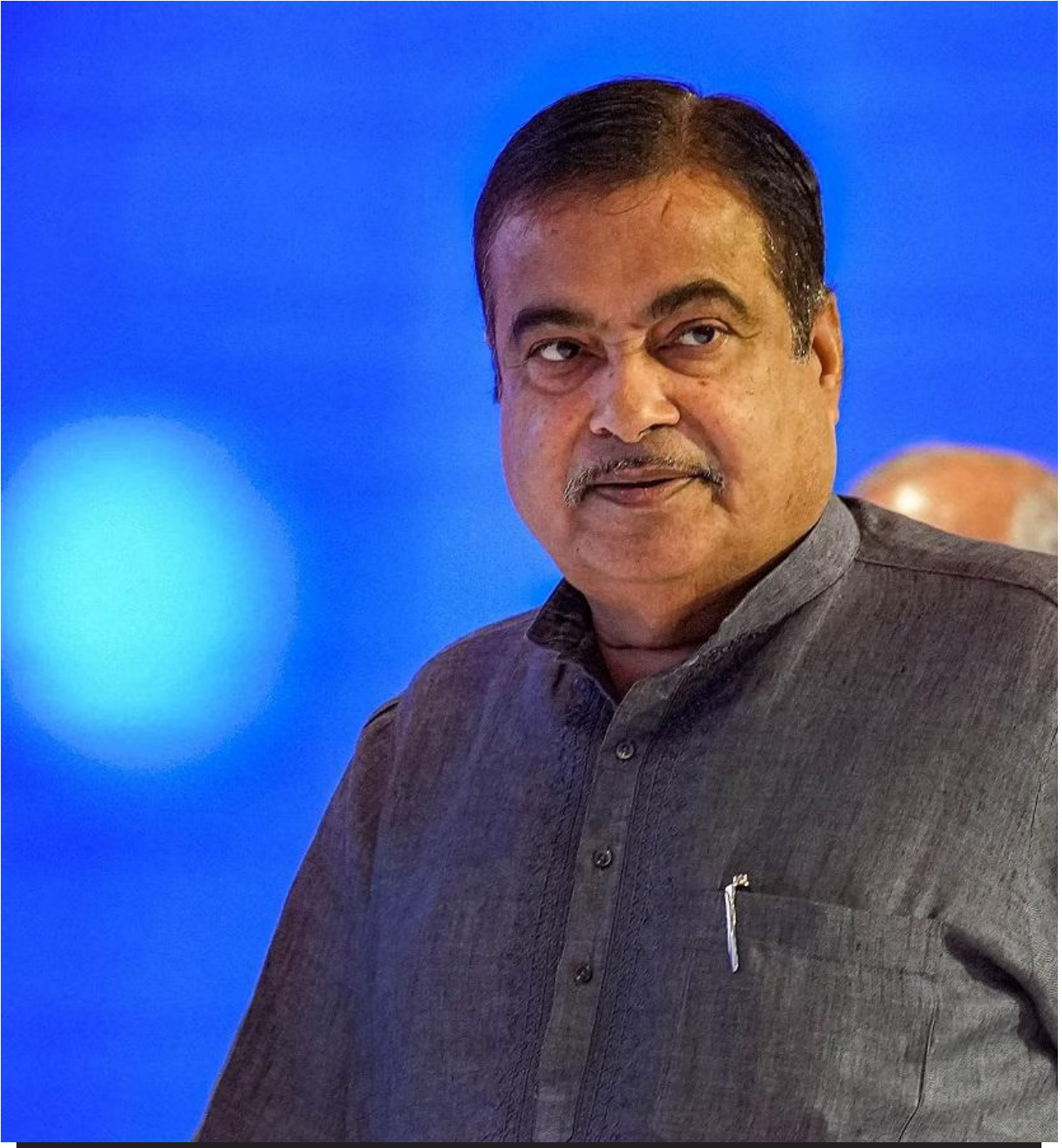


JP NADDA
 Constituency: Bilaspur, Bihar

Current National President of BJP.



November, 2023 / While referring to the BRS' (ruling party of Telangana then) promise of a reservation hike for the Muslim community. He attempted to create an unwanted fear by saying "Chief Minister KCR is appeasing one section with 4 per cent reservation and now they are promising to make it 12 per cent. We will remove the religious-based reservations and extend them to those who deserve it."



NITIN GADKARI

Constituency: Nagpur, Maharashtra.

Current Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways.



September, 2022 / On first day of the three-day conclave of Bharat Raksha Manch, the inaugural session was attended by Nitin Gadkari, the BRM vice president Ranjeet Sangale asked Muslims to give up their religion, as if indicating that this was the only way for them to live peacefully. “We ask all Indian Muslims that if you want—since your roots are Hindu, your blood is Hindu, your DNA is Hindu, if you want to do *ghar wapsi*, you accept Hindu religion with all sincerity again, we welcome you with open hands. Let this message go throughout the country”.



KIREN RIJIJU

Constituency: Arunachal West, Arunachal Pradesh

Cabinet Minister of Earth Sciences and Food Processing Industries. He served as the Minister of State for Home Affairs from 2014 to 2019, Minister of State for Minority Affairs from 2019 to 2021, Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Sports and Youth Affairs from 2019 to 2021 and the Law minister from 2021 to 2023



February, 2017 / In order to consolidate Hindu votes through fear of numbers He tweeted that the “*Hindu population is reducing in India because Hindus never convert people.*”

August, 2018 / During a question hour in the Parliament, [Rijiju said](#) that the People from the Rohingya community living in India have been involved in illegal activities.

“The Rohingya are illegal immigrants and do not enjoy the status of refugees. We know this, and the Rohingya are linked with wrong and illegal activities.”

He had earlier made the false claim bolstering anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim hatred that “*There are about 20 million illegal immigrants from Bangladesh in India.*”



KANGANA RANAUT

Constituency: Mandi, Himachal Pradesh

Indian Actress known for her support of right-wing politics.



October, 2020 / A Mumbai court [ordered an inquiry against](#) actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel for allegedly posting derogatory tweets against Muslims.

February, 2021 / "...No one is talking about it because they are not farmers, they are terrorists who are trying to divide India..." Kangana made the [remark](#) while responding to a tweet by the international pop star Rihanna who became the first global name to voice her support to the farmers' protest.

May, 2021 / "We need [super gundai](#) (hooliganism in Hindi) to kill gundai... Modi ji please show your Virat roop from the early 2000s," she posted, an apparent reference to 2002 Gujarat pogroms that took place when Modi was the state chief minister.

November, 2021 / The Bollywood actor took to Instagram to share a picture of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, saying that she "crushed [Khalistanis](#) like mosquitoes" even at the "cost of her life". In the post, Ranaut praised the former PM for what she called "decisive action".



SHOBHA KARANDLAJE

Constituency: Bangalore North, Karnataka.

Currently serving as the Minister of State for Agriculture, Farmers' Welfare and Food Processing Industries.



October, 2022 / Karandlaje defended Karnataka state government's decision to ban the hijab which she said had [freed](#) girls of Muslim community.

"Muslim girls don the hijab out of fear of the men, who are exerting pressure on them. The girls should pursue higher education, and secure good employment."

March, 2024 / During a protest addressing a bomb blast in Bengaluru, Karandlaje stated, ["People from Tamil Nadu come here, get trained and plant bombs here. They placed a bomb in the cafe."](#)



TEJASWI SURYA

Constituency: Bangalore South, Karnataka

He is the president of Bharatiya Janara Yuva Morcha, Youth wing of BJP.



March, 2015 / Quoting a 2015 interview published in Swarajya magazine (a right-wing mouthpiece), Surya tweeted, “95 percent [Arab women](#) never had orgasms in the last few hundred years”.

May, 2021 / Tejasvi Surya landed [in a row](#) after a video surfaced on social media showing the MP suggesting that 17 Muslim volunteers of the BBMP’s (Bruhat Bengaluru Nahanagara Palike) south zone unit may be responsible for the lack of beds in the hospitals in the city during COVID crisis.

June, 2022 / Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) MP Tejasvi Surya, during his Australian tour to take part in a series of events, including the Australia India Youth Dialogue (AIYD), told an audience in Parramatta on Monday that the history of Islam is “*written largely with bloodshed and [violence](#).*”

*Portfolios of **Hate***



ANIL ANTONY

Constituency: Pathanamthitta, Kerala

Son of Senior Congress leader AK Antony. National Secretary and National Spokesperson of Bharatiya Janata Party.



October, 2023 / He was [booked](#) for Islamophobic statements made on social media regarding a blast took place near Kochi and an unrelated event organised by an Muslim group in Malappuram district in which a Hamas leader addressed the audience virtually. He blamed Muslims for the attack.



RAJEEV CHANDRASHEKHAR

Constituency: Trivandrum, Kerala.

He is a Minister in the Electronics and Information Technology of India.



October, 2023 / After reports of the bomb blasts at a religious gathering of Jehovah's Witnesses in Kalamassery near Kochi came out, Chandrasekhar posted on social media platform X [blaming Muslims](#) for the attack.

“Dirty shameless appeasement politics by a discredited CM (and HM) @pinarayivijayan besieged by corruption charges.

Sitting in Delhi and protesting against Israel , when in Kerala open calls by Terrorist Hamas for Jihad is causing attacks and bomb blasts on innocent Christians.”



ANNAMALAI

Constituency: Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Tamil Nadu State President.



January, 2014 / Tamil Nadu BJP chief Annamalai was booked for [promoting religious enmity](#) after altercation with Christian youth.

October, 2022 / Annamalai attempted to portray a Christian missionary NGO, which the BJP leader claimed was funded internationally, as a calculated effort to [destroy Hindu culture](#).

He asserted that a “Christian missionary NGO” was the first to petition the Supreme Court for a ban on firecrackers during Hindu festivities in the country.

May, 2023 / A case has been registered against Annamalai after he said the DMK’s (ruling party of Tamil Nadu state) treatment towards North Indians was responsible for the spread of the [fake news](#) that migrant workers were attacked in the state. He is known for spreading Hindutva propaganda in the state against Dravidian political parties.

*Portfolios of **Hate***



K SURENDRAN

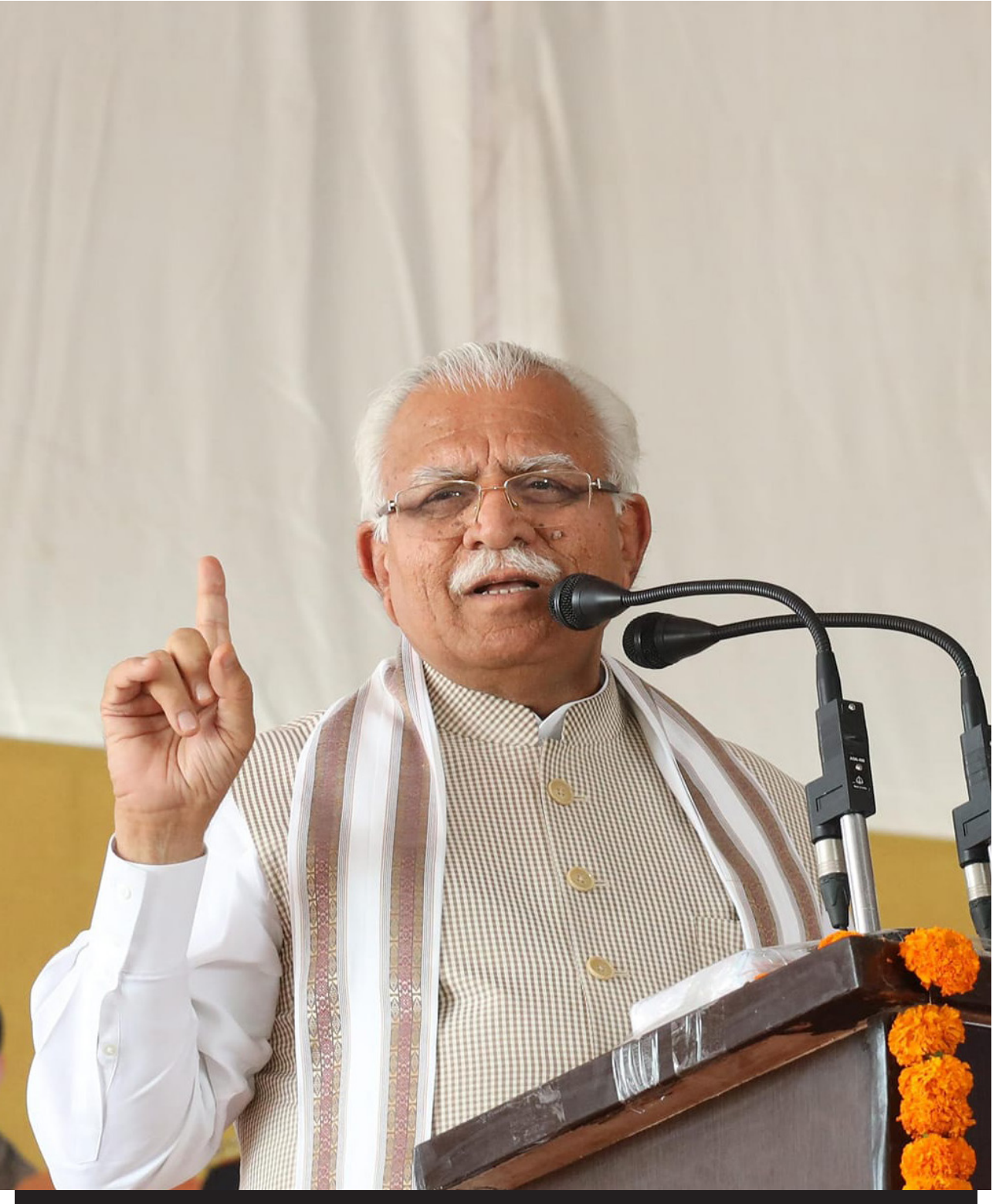
Constituency: Wayanad, Kerala

State President of BJP, Kerala.



March, 2023 / Kerala BJP president K Surendran [was booked](#) for making sexist remarks against women CPI(M) leaders.

March, 2024 / Kerala BJP chief K Surendran sparked a controversy by calling state Congress leader K Muraleedharan a [“Shikandhi”](#), which is often used as a transphobic slur.



MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR

Constituency - Karnal, Haryana

Senior BJP leader and former RSS volunteer. He served as the Chief Minister of Haryana from 26 October 2014 till his resignation on 12 March 2024.

November, 2018 / During his election campaign, Khattar had blamed women for India's rising number of rapes.



“If a girl is dressed decently, a boy will not look at her in the wrong way,” Khattar had said. When asked whether young people should have freedom of choice, he replied, “If you want freedom, why don't they just roam around naked? Freedom has to be limited. These short clothes are western influences. Our country's tradition asks girls to dress decently.”

Khattar also expressed support for Khap panchayats– unofficial casteist village bodies that promote honour killings and caste-based atrocities in some parts of North India.

“Khaps maintain the tradition of a girl and boy being brother and sister. They are just making sure that a girl and boy do not see each other in the wrong way. These rulings help prevent rapes too.”

Khattar's words reflect not only on his personal outlook, but also on his party's attitude. He has not been condemned by his party officials for any of his misogynist [remarks](#).

August, 2019 / Right after the abrogation of Article 370 which grants special status to Kashmir, at a state-level function in Fatehabad celebrating the success of the Union government's flagship “Beti Bachao Beti Padhao” (save girlchild educate girlchild) program, Khattar made the following [derogatory statement](#) on Kashmiri women:



“Earlier Haryana was infamous for female infanticide, but after the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Abhiyan, the sex ratio has gone up from 850 to 933 girls per 1,000 boys. Our minister O.P. Dhankad had said that we'll need to bring daughters-in-law from Bihar. Now some people are saying Kashmir has been opened, we can bring girls from Kashmir also. Jokes apart, if [sex] ratio is fine, then there will be balance in society.”

Several other BJP leaders and Hindutva voices passed similar comments with a sexual undertone and objectifying Kashmiri women in the context of the scrapping of Article 370 of the constitution. [Huffpost](#) had then reported about videos surfacing on the app TikTok by Hindu men saying they would now “get girls” from Kashmir.

October, 2021 / Khattar openly called for [violence](#) against [farmers protesting](#) the controversial farm laws passed by the Union government during a party convention.



“Pick up sticks and fight those furious farmers. We will see everything. If you stay in jail for two-four months, you will become a big leader”

December, 2021 / In a meeting with Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority, on a day when right-wing outfits were out in numbers to heckle Muslims attending namaz congregations at multiple sites, Khattar said,



“Ye namaz padhne ki prathayein jo khule mein hui hai, ye katayi bhi sahan nahi ki jayegi.” (the practice of offering namaz in the open will not be tolerated at any cost)

August, 2023 / Hindutva outfits Bajrang Dal and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad unleashed violence on July 31, 2023, in Nuh district during the Brij Mandal Jalabhishek Yatra.

The [violence](#) soon spread beyond Nuh, with Gurugram, in particular, witnessing widespread arson and mob attacks on Muslim homes and shops. Six persons – including two home guards, an imam at a mosque and a Bajrang Dal member – died.

While [responding](#) to the incidents, Khattar said that the government “can’t protect everyone”. He found it more important to talk about encouraging Muslim youth to participate in cow protection rather than saving lives. According to him, the lack of concern among Muslims for cow protection was the major threat to social harmony.



“In the Nuh district cow protection is a big issue. We will be deploying an enforcement bureau for security purposes, and 100 more personnel will be deployed to avert such flare-ups in future. There are Muslims who speak in support of cow protection. I would encourage Muslim youths -- through a scheme -- to come forward for cow protection as it would ensure social harmony.”



SAKSHI MAHARAJ

Constituency: Unnao, Uttar Pradesh

Senior BJP leader and a popular religious figure.
He won the Unnao Lok Sabha seat for two consecutive times earlier, in 2014 and 2019.

He also won general elections in 1991 from Mathura, 1996 and 1998 from Farrukhabad. He was also a member of Rajya Sabha from 2000 to 2006, before being suspended for corruption.

*Portfolios of **Hate***

September, 2014 / Addressing an event in Kannauj, he [alleged](#) that madrasas across the country are imparting “education of terror” and “love jihad”.



“Education of terrorism is being given in madrasas. They are making them terrorists and jihadis. It is not in national interest... Muslim youth in madrasas are being motivated for love jihad with offers of cash rewards — Rs 11 lakh for an affair with a Sikh girl, Rs 10 lakh for a Hindu girl and Rs 7 lakh for a Jain girl.”

He claimed some of his men had converted to Islam and taken admission in these madrasas. He alleged that some Muslims had also informed him about such activities by the madrasas.

“I will demand that they should be removed as MPs. How can they be a member of the Indian Parliament when they do not hold regard for our national anthem?”

He added while referring to Muslim MPs.

October, 2015 / On 28 September 2015, a Hindu mob attacked the home of 52-year-old Mohammed Akhlaq, killing him, for suspicion of slaughtering a cow. [Maharaj defended](#) the [lynching](#) of Akhlaq [saying](#):



“If someone insults our mother, we would rather die than tolerate it... for us, it is Bharat mata, our biological mother and gau mata. I want to ask (UP Minister and SP leader) Mohd Azam Khan and those who favour eating beef as to how would they feel if someone they revere as their mother is cut... we are ready to kill or get killed if a terrorist attacks Bharat Mata, it is the same with biological mother and gau mata.”

January, 2017 / Maharaj claimed that Muslims are responsible for India’s population rise and asked Hindus to produce more children to protect the country from a ‘split’.



“Every Hindu woman must produce at least 4 children to “protect” the religion.” “If the population is growing alarmingly, if the problems are rising, let me tell you that the Hindus are not responsible for it... The people responsible are those who talk of having four wives and 40 children. If Hindu population decreases, the country will split.”

November, 2017 / Several Hindu groups opposed the Sanjay Leela Bhansali film ‘Padmaavat’ ahead of its release, alleging the film to be against the Hindu sentiments. [Reacting](#) to the controversy surrounding the film, in a derogatory manner, the BJP lawmaker challenged Bhansali to make a film on prophet Muhammad.



“I condemn this and urge Bhansali to make a film on Prophet Mohammad which will let him know about his stature.”

November, 2018 / While addressing a pre-election public rally in Uttar Pradesh’s Unnao, Maharaj [said](#):



“Rajneeti mein jab aaya to pehla mera statement tha Mathura mein, Ayodhya Mathura Kashi ko chhodo Dilli ki Jama Masjid todo, agar seedhion mein murtiyaan na nikle to mujhe faansi pe latka dena.”

“The first statement I made in Mathura after entering politics was: let Ayodhya, Mathura and Kashi be and demolish Delhi’s Jama Masjid. If you don’t find Hindu idols beneath its staircase, you are welcome to hang me.”

April, 2022 / Violence erupted in northwest Delhi’s [Jahangirpuri](#) after a Shobha Yatra organised to mark Hanuman Jayanti Saturday entered a Muslim locality and participants in the yatra vandalised a mosque. Responding to the clashes followed by the violent rally organised by Bajrang Dal and Vishwa Hindu Parishad(VHP), Maharaj asked Hindus to be prepared with arms to deal with Muslims.



“If this crowd comes suddenly in your street-neighbourhood or your house, then do you have some remedy to save yourself [from them]?” Maharaj asked in the Facebook post. If not then make some arrangement because the police will not come to save you. When these people [the mob] will return after doing jihad, the police will come to beat their sticks and after a few days the matter will end after going to an investigation committee. For these guests, every house should have one or two boxes of cold drinks and some arrows.”

“This message is not for one state but for the whole country,” Maharaj added. “Jai Shri Ram.”



DILIP GOSH

Constituency - Bardhaman Durgapur, West Bengal

Incumbent Member of Parliament representing the Medinipur constituency in Lok Sabha.
Began his political career as an RSS volunteer.

Served as one of the national vice presidents of BJP from 2021 to 2023, and as the 9th president of the West Bengal unit of the party.

*Portfolios of **Hate***

May, 2016 / Dilip Ghosh called the women students of [Jadavpur University](#) “shameless” and alleged they “intentionally threw themselves on others” after ABVP (student organisation affiliated to RSS) workers were booked for allegedly molesting students during a commotion over screening of a film inside the campus.



“Those who fear so much for their modesty, why did they go there? This is shamelessness. Making such allegations (of molestation) is very cheap. These girls don’t deserve to be supported. They intentionally threw themselves on others and are now blaming others.”

January, 2020

1. Dilip Ghosh [spoke hatefully](#) against anti-CAA (Citizenship Amendment Act) protesters at an event organised by the Kolkata Press Club. [He asked](#) why protestors staging an agitation at Shaheen Bagh against the CAA “were not dying”.



“What surprises me is that people were dying after standing in line for two to three hours. But now women and children are sitting in temperatures as low as 4-5 degrees Celsius but nobody is dying! What nectar did they have? I am astonished! What is their incentive (for protesting)?”

2. In another instance, at a public meeting in West Bengal’s Nadia district, speaking about anti-CAA protests, [he lauded](#) UP and Assam state governments led by BJP for carrying out a brutal crackdown on protesters.

“Who do they think the public property that they are destroying belongs to? Their father? Public property belongs to the taxpayers. You (Mamata) do not say anything because they are your voters. In Assam and Uttar Pradesh, our government has shot these people like dogs.”

3. He [declared](#) in public that the government is committed to implementing the proposed nationwide NRC and will send back 1 crore Bangladeshi Muslims living in the state illegally, adding fuel to his anti-Muslim and anti-Muslim rhetoric.

“1 crore are in West Bengal & 1 crore have spread across the country. We will not allow any Bangladeshi Muslim to stay here. If their names are in voters’ list then it will be removed,”

4. Addressing a series of rallies in the North 24 Parganas district, [Ghosh said](#) that those opposing the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) are anti-Bengalis and against the idea of India.

He said “*lungi-clad Robingyas*” were setting railway stations and other public properties on fire and “*such incidents of arson caused a loss of Rs 500-600 crore*”.

This is not the first time Gosh had used the ‘*Bangladeshi*’ tag to spread hatred against Muslims in West Bengal. In September 2016, he went for a seven-day trip to the US, to [deliver a lecture](#) at an event organised by US based Hindu groups, where he spoke about the “oppression of the Hindus in West Bengal” and “infiltration of Muslims from Bangladesh”.

December, 2020 / Speaking at a public event of Hindu Jagran Manch in West Bengal's Paschim Medinipur, [he said](#):



“Lord Ram had taken arms at a very young age. To protect the dignity of our mothers and sisters, the Hindu youths need to be united. If need be, they should take up weapons.”

Ghosh added that they should seek **“revenge”** first before they invoked the law, **“Take the revenge first then go to the police station,”** he announced.

April, 2021 / On April 10, 2021, when the fourth phase polling of the Assembly elections was going on, the paramilitary forces opened fire at a polling booth in Jorapatki, Sitalkuchi constituency.

Four youths; Maniruzzaman Mian (28), Hamidul Mian (31), Samiul Haque (21) and Nur Alam Mian (20), died of bullet injuries.

Ghosh, while speaking at a public meeting at Baranagar in North 24 Parganas district, praised the firing and warned that there will be similar incidents.



“From where have the ‘dustu chele’ (bad boys) come? The ones who received bullets in Cooch Behar’s Sitalkuchi yesterday. These bad boys will not remain in Bengal. This is only the beginning. Those who think that the CISF carry guns just for show are mistaken. If anyone takes law into his own hands, he will receive a befitting reply. Central forces will be deployed in booths and no one will be allowed to threaten them. If things go out of hand, there will be more Sitalkuchi-like incidents in many places. So, beware.”

March, 2023 / Clashes broke out over [Ram Navami](#) processions at Shibpur area in Howrah district and Dalkhola in Uttar Dinajpur district of West Bengal on March 30, 2023, as the participants in the rallies chanted hateful slogans and vandalised mosques and Muslim properties.



The next day, Ghosh fanned the flames of hatred by [posting](#) on (earlier) Twitter a photo of Ram Navami processions in Bangladesh and wrote, *“Surprisingly there was no attack on Hindus (in Bangladesh). It is clear from this that the Hindus of Paschim Banga are in more danger than the Hindus of Bangladesh!”*



SUKANTA MAJUMDAR
Constituency: Balurghat, West Bengal

Currently, he is the State President of BJP in West Bengal.
He won the Balurghat Lok Sabha in 2019 elections.

September, 2021 / A day after being appointed as state president, Majumdar, the Bengal unit's youngest chief, alleged that many Hindu supporters of the BJP were killed by members of a minority community during post-poll violence. Though he did not name the community, he was referring to the Muslims.

Making his intent more visible, he accused the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) of imposing a *'Taliban-like regime'* in the state.

Throughout his political record as the state's BJP president, we could find instances where he used hateful references to 'Bangladesh' and 'Pakistan' as synonymous to Muslims in the state, to portray the ruling TMC (All India Trinamool Congress) as driven by the minority community. They help in consolidating and weaponising 'Bengali-Hindu' sentiments against minorities.

April, 2023

1. After being stopped by the police from entering violence-hit Shibpur area in Howrah district, followed by Ram Navami processions, Majumdar [alleged](#) that West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee prefers people of one religion.

While speaking to media, he said:

"We will inform to Governor that we were not allowed to enter, whereas other ministers were allowed to enter despite the imposition of Section 144. Law and Order in West Bengal have been completely collapsed. West Bengal CM not for all but only one for people of one religion."



2. Amid the Ram Navami violence, Majumdar [tweeted two videos](#), in one of which one can see fire engulfing something in the distance and smoke billowing out. While others watch the fire from a rooftop, a woman can be heard saying, *"Chachaji mandir me aag laga di, jaldi upar aao,"* (Uncle, they have set fire to the temple, rush upstairs). The caption of the video, written in Bengali, can be roughly translated as *"You must be ready for the kicks if you are milking a cow."*

An [on-ground investigation](#) carried out by 'alt news' from the spot of the Ram Navami violence at Shibpur, Howrah, revealed that no fire caused any damage to the temple as seen in the viral video. After talking to the locals on the spot and the temple authorities, it was found that the smoke was caused by various articles set on fire near the temple by those who came with the rally and/or people carrying saffron flags. Videos shot by activists on the ground also confirm the same.

The video was shared on social media suggesting that a temple had been set on fire by Muslims on the day of Ram Navami, without any verification. Nevertheless, a fake narrative based on a misleading video shared through Majumdar's tweet provoked his followers.



According to the alt news report, the 'news' of a temple being set afire enraged people and they wrote things like, *"This is the beginning of riots. I can't see any provocation."*, *"Jihadis are poisonous for the society"*, *"Rabid DOGS. Bloody animals in the guise of Humans. A blot on civilized society."*, *"That's why NRC is needed in India..."* etc, while venting their anger at Muslims.



VD SHARMA

Constituency: Khajuraho, Madhya Pradesh

Currently, he is the State President of BJP in MP.
He won the Khajuraho Lok Sabha seat in 2019 elections

May, 2023 / On May 31, the Madhya Pradesh government suspended the recognition of a private school in Damoh following allegations that non-Muslim female students were forced to wear hijab. Though the collector and police had initially cleared the school of allegations, the BJP-led state government insisted on a probe.



Meanwhile, VD Sharma alleged that the school administration *“wanted to establish a jihadi empire”*.

As the hate campaign was continued in full swing, the school got derecognised on 2 June as investigation commenced over allegations of religious conversion and enforcing of hijab on school students. Subsequently, it had to face demolition threat from the local administration citing lack of permission to construct some new structures. On June 11, the authorities arrived with the bulldozer again with massive police force in riot gear and began demolishing parts of the first floor of the school.



KAILASH CHOUDHARY

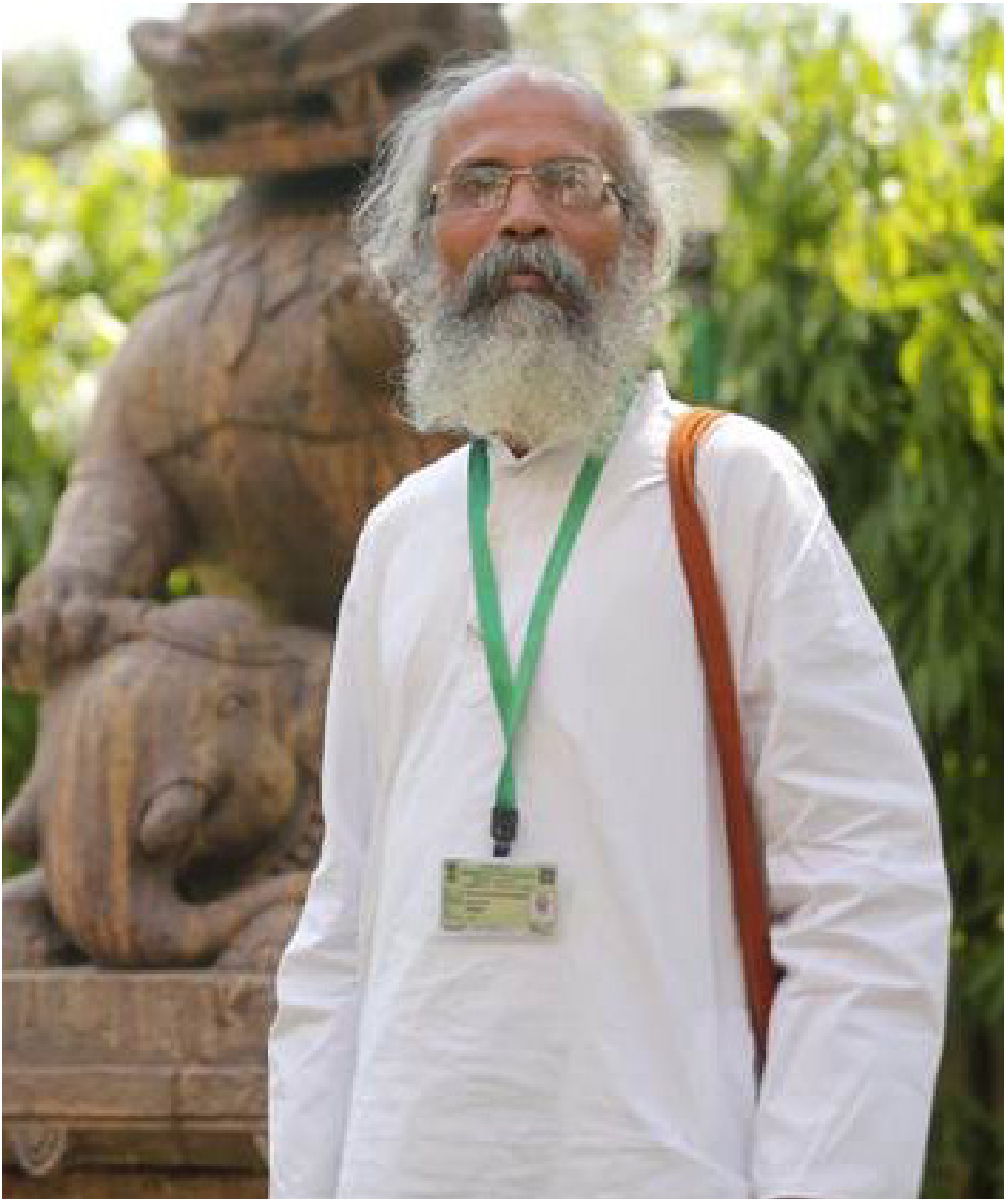
Constituency: Barmer, Rajasthan

Minister of State for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare.
He won the Barmer Lok Sabha seat in 2019 elections.

October, 2023 / In a farmers' convention organized by the BJP, Union Minister Kailash Choudhary, MoS (Agriculture), [claimed](#) it is compulsory for those residing in India to say 'Bharat Mata ki Jai', stating, "If you want to live in India, you have to say 'Bharat Mata ki Jai.'"



"That's why I would like to say, if there is any such person who does not say 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' and does not have faith in Hindustan and Bharat and keeps faith in 'Pakistan Zindabad,' he should go to Pakistan. There is no need here."



PRATAP CHANDRA SARANGI

Constituency: Balasore, Odisha

Minister of State for Animal Husbandry, Dairying and Fisheries and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises. National Executive member of BJP.

He won the Balasore Lok Sabha seat in 2019 elections.

*Portfolios of **Hate***

June, 2019 / During his motion of thanks speech after winning the Lok Sabha elections, Sarangi asked if those who do not say [“Vande Mataram”](#) have a right to live in the country.



“Do those who do not accept Vande Mataram have a right to live in the country?,” he asked. “The country will never accept tukde-tukde gang [an entity that is purportedly working to break India into pieces]. The country is with the prime minister.”

His comments were meant to intimidate senior Samajwadi Party (SP) MP from Uttar Pradesh, Shafiqur Rahman Barq, as he refused to say “Vande Mataram” during his oath-taking ceremony.

December, 2020



“Be it farmers or leaders, nobody is above law. The farmers are being instigated by some people. Some anti-national forces are behind the ongoing farmers’ protest. The protests have no basis.”

This was [Sarangi’s response](#) to the farmers’ protest proposed farm laws. His statement added fuel to the Hindutva propaganda that the farmers’ protests were funded by separatists and ‘Khalistanis’.

Previously the state convener of the Bajrang Dal in Odisha, Sarangi is known for his pro-Hindutva stance. Sarangi has been arrested in the past on charges that included rioting, arson and assault after the Odisha Assembly was attacked by right wing groups, including the Bajrang Dal, in 2002.

Sarangi was the Odisha Bajrang Dal chief when Australian missionary Graham Staines and his two young sons were burnt alive by Right-wing extremists in 1999.



MANEKA GANDHI

Constituency: Sultanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Union Minister of Women & Child Development in first Modi government.

She won the Pilibhit Lok Sabha seat on a BJP ticket in 2004 and 2014.

In 2009 she was elected from Aonla constituency.

She won Sultanpur seat in 2019.



April, 2019 / During one of the election campaigning events in Sultanpur, Maneka Gandhi [threatened](#) Muslim voters:

“Vote for me or don’t come to me for any work after elections,” Gandhi said.

In the video circulated online, she begins by telling the voters gathered that she is sure of winning her seat.

“Main jeet rahi hun logon ke pyar se. Lekin agar meri jeet Musalmanon ke bina hui to mujhe bahot achha nahi lagega, kyunki phir dil khatta ho jata hai”

(I am winning with the love of people. But, if my victory is without the Muslims then I will not like it, because after on my heart may get hardened),” said Gandhi.

June, 2020 / While responding to an elephant death that took place in the Mannarkkad forest division of Palakkad district on May 27, Gandhi had tweeted against Malappuram and [described](#) it as the most violent district in the country.

Her [allegations](#) were laced with communal overtones against people in the Muslim-majority Malappuram district in Kerala.

Her tweet read: “Malappuram is known for its intense criminal activity, especially with regard to animals. No action has ever been taken against a single poacher or wildlife killer; so, they keep doing it. I can only suggest that you call/email and ask for action.”



“Action should be taken against everyone who is suspected in Malappuram. These are repeat offenders. Whether it is children being sold in orphanages, as we have found, it is Malappuram. Whether it is people being killed, look at the crime rate in Malappuram. What is being done in Malappuram? Nothing. Look at the communal conflict there. Highest in Malappuram. We take so much action against other districts, why is no action being taken against Malappuram. Rahul Gandhi is from the area, why is he not taking action?” she told media.

It was not the first time Maneka Gandhi had been accused of targeting Muslims in the name of protecting animals.

In the past, Maneka Gandhi’s NGO ‘People For Animals’ has conducted unauthorised **“raids”** [targeting cattle traders](#), mostly Muslims.

She portrayed Muslims as murderers by saying, **“Money from slaughter trade goes into killing us”**

In 2017 she wrote a post saying “Muslims get a free pass to slaughter goats on Bakrid”.



SADHVI NIRANJAN JYOTI

Constituency: Fatehpur, Uttar Pradesh

Hindu monk and BJP leader. She was appointed the Minister of State for Food Processing Industries in 2014. In 2019, she was appointed Minister of state in the Ministry of Rural Development in the second Modi cabinet.



December, 2014 / Sadhvi Niranjana Jyoti, sworn in as a minister of state, used an [expletive](#) at a public meeting as she said, “People of Delhi have to decide if they want a government of Ramzaadon (followers of Ram) or a government of those who are Haramzaadon (illegitimate children/bastards).”

The statement was widely received in bad taste and understood as a strident attack on the legitimacy of India’s Muslim and Christian minorities.

She later said her statement was “for those who don’t believe in Ram and in unified India.” The minister said, “In this country, whether it is Christians or Muslims, all are sons of Ram. Those who don’t accept it don’t believe in the country.”



RAVI KISHAN

Constituency: Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh

Actor turned politician

He won Gorakhpur Lok Sabha seat in 2019 elections.

December, 2019 / Ravi Kishan stated in public that India is a “Hindu Rashtra” since there are some 100 crore Hindus in the country. He was defending the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill, which was cleared by the cabinet for tabling in parliament in December 2019.



“The population of Hindus is 100 crores. So obviously India is a Hindu Rashtra (nation). If there can be Muslim and Christian countries, why can't be a Hindu country?” he questioned.



ALOK SHARMA

Constituency: North Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Former mayor of Bhopal.

August, 2023



During a party workers convention, in a segment captured on video, he is seen addressing Muslims rhetorically: *“if you don’t want to vote for the BJP, then don’t. But, I request you to not go for voting at all in that case.”*

*Portfolios of **Hate***



SANJEEV BALYAN

Constituency: Muzaffarnagar, Uttar Pradesh

Minister of State for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Dairying and MP Elect from Muzaffarnagar since 2014. Balyan's political career was launched in the wake of deadly Muzaffarnagar pogroms; he was one of those booked for inciting the anti-Muslim violence.



January, 2016 / Balyan misused a love affair between a Jat girl and a Muslim boy to polarise the communities. A consensual video shot by the couple started being sold to people.

Under Balyan's command, BJP leaders repeatedly claimed it to be rape and demanded that the Muslim boy be arrested, creating an environment of communal tension which led to many Muslims leaving their houses in fear of violence.

September, 2023 / Balyan, who was then a union minister, attended the religious ceremony associated with the death anniversary of two Hindu boys whose murder, along with a Muslim boy, triggered the 2013 pogroms. This was deemed as a gesture in favour of the anti-Muslim violence.



GIRIRAJ SINGH

Constituency: Begusarai, Bihar

Minister of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department and Lok Sabha MP from Begusarai.



April, 2014 / Singh, a senior BJP leader, at the time of 2014 general elections said that those who are [opposed](#) to Narendra Modi should move to Pakistan.

March, 2018 / When Sarfaraz Alam, a Muslim candidate from a prominent provincial party [RJD], won bypoll elections he opined that the district is set to become [a terrorism hub](#).

May, 2019 / While out on bail in a poll violation case, criticising an onscreen depiction of a provincial caste icon he rhetorically [asked](#) if anyone dares to make a film on Prophet Muhammad.



LOCKET CHATTERJI

Constituency: Hooghly, West Bengal

Former actress and MP in the Lok Sabha from Hooghly; General Secretary of BJP Bengal and former state president of BJP Mahila Morcha, the women's wing of the BJP in West Bengal.



May 2020 / Chatterji was [booked](#) under various IPC sections for inciting women to arm themselves against police and opposition party workers.

May 2022 / In an [interview](#) given to Hindutva tabloid OpIndia, using “Bangladeshi” dog-whistle which is usually used to justify violence against Indian Bengali Muslims she accused the ruling party of West Bengal of bringing in “settlers” from Bangladesh for demography engineering purposes. In the wake of communal clashes in Bengali districts in 2023 she attacked the provincial ruling party saying under their governance Bengal is [turning out like Pakistan](#).



NITYANAND RAI

Constituency: Ujiarpur, Bihar

Minister of State for Home Affairs; MP Elect from Ujiarpur since 2014.



August, 2017 / Earlier in August, Rai stoked [controversy](#) saying that “*sound of Bharat Mata Ki Jai [Long Live Mother India; a religious expression used by Hindutva to assert political supremacy and harass religious minorities] should replace azaan from mosques and church bells.*”

November, 2017 / In 2017 while he was BJP Bihar’s chief, Rai [threatened](#) to break and chop off any “fingers raised against PM Modi”.

January, 2024 / Earlier this year Rai attacked Bihar Education Minister on a remark dismissive of newly opened Ram Mandir [built on the site of now demolished Babri Masjid] [saying](#) “*it looks like they will hang pictures of [16th century Mughal emperor] Babar and Afzal Guru [a Kashmiri hanged by Indian government in 2013 on dubious charges of terrorism “to satisfy the collective conscience of society” as the apex court put it in its judgement] and worship them.*”



RANJIT CHAUTALA

Constituency: Hisar, Haryana

Coming from a prominent political family in Haryana he has served various ministerial positions.



February, 2020 / When the 2020 pogrom against Muslims happened in Delhi at a time when the US Premier Donald Trump was in the capital, lawmaker Chautala was asked to weigh in and in a dismissive tone he [commented](#) that *“riots keep happening [dange hote rehte hain]...it’s a part of life.”*



RAM SHANKAR KATHERIA

Constituency: Etawah, Uttar Pradesh

Former Chairman of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and former Minister of State in HRD Ministry; represented Agra constituency in 2014 Lok Sabha Election.



Shankar who has been BJP's leading Dalit face in UP since 2014 general elections is also an academic who at a time taught Hindi at a university, but later was found to hold a [fake](#) graduation degree.

February, 2016 / During the communal tensions in the countryside of Agra in 2016 he [instigated](#) the local Hindus to take up arms against Muslims who are "traitors" and "demons". He asked Muslims to prepare for a "[final battle](#)" and asked his audience to "behead ten heads for one head".



SATYAPAL SINGH BAGHEL

Constituency: Agra, Uttar Pradesh

Union Minister of State for law and justice in the Union Cabinet; MP Elect from Agra.



May, 2023 / In a speech given at the publicity wing of RSS-Delhi Baghel spoke to the audience, *“tolerant Muslims can be counted on fingers”* and they wear this mask to get vice-president and governor posts. Implicating the connection between Muslims of today to the “invaders” of the past, he also lambasted the Delhi sultanate rulers as “looters” and explained that rulers like Akbar [who is understood to be paradigmatically tolerant ruler within nationalist historiography] also wore this mask of tolerance to rule Hindu majority.



ANUPRIYA PATEL

Constituency: Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh

Minister of State for commerce and industry of India; has represented Mirzapur in the Lok Sabha since 2014.



June, 2016 / In 2016 when she was appointed a minister of state two [tweets](#) of hers surfaced from a month before where she's accusing the ruling government in Uttar Pradesh of appeasing Muslims with money: *“crores of rupees have been sacrificed on Akhlaq [the muslim man lynched on suspicion of eating beef].”* She also wrote that if it were not for the traitors 100 crores [Hindu population in India] wouldn't have gotten scared of *“20 crores mullahs”*; a popular dog-whistle against Muslims as they are perceived as the vote bank for centrist parties by Hindutva. She later denied running that twitter account but independent analysts contested this claim by pointing out various discrepancies.



BHARTENDRA KUMAR SINGH

Constituency: Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh

MLA for two terms under BJP; MP [2014-2019] from Bijnor.



In 2018, BJP led state government started the process of [withdrawing](#) cases involving BJP politicians in connection with the 2013 Muzaffarnagar pogroms. Singh was one of the MPs who was accused of giving inflammatory speeches during the mahapanchayats which led to the anti-Muslim violence.



SATISH GAUTAM

Constituency: Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh

MP from Aligarh since 2014.



May, 2018 / A year before he found himself in a controversy, which established him as a Hindutva poster boy in that area, where he demanded the decades old portrait of M. A. Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, be removed from its students union hall, essentially painting the institution as a mini-Pakistan and exploiting it for Hindutva votes.

January, 2019 / Gautam asked the central government to change the name of Aligarh Muslim University, a prominent public university established under minority provisions, because *“Muslim word feels hard to speak and Hindu is soft”*.

AFTERWORD

Some of the major Hindutva firebrands and hate peddlers among the sitting MPs- including Pragya Thakur from Madhya Pradesh, Parvesh Sahib Singh Verma, and Ramesh Bidhuri from Delhi, Anurag Thakur from Himachal Pradesh, Anatkumar Hegde, Prathap Simha and Nalin Kumar Kateel from Karnataka- were removed from the list of candidates by BJP.

Pragya Thakur was the prime accused in the conspiracy behind a terror attack which killed six persons and injured 100 when an explosive device strapped to a two-wheeler went off near a mosque in north Maharashtra's Malegaon on September 29, 2008. She continues to issue statements provoking violence against Muslims.

Anurag Thakur, a Union minister, was heard shouting "desh ke gaddaron ko" and the crowd responded with "goli maaro saalon ko" during a public meeting in January, 2020. The slogan meant "shoot the traitors", with an expletive used for "traitors" being a reference to the Muslims protesting against the discriminatory Citizenship Amendment Act.

Parvesh Verma, known for his speeches calling for boycott and genocide of Muslims, announced before an audience that the "lakhs of protestors" who had gathered at Delhi's Shaheen Bagh would enter their homes to "rape their sisters and daughters and kill them". He was one among the major exponents of anti-Muslim hatred during the period of country-wide anti-CAA agitations. The campaign led by Verma and others climaxed in the North East Delhi anti-Muslim pogrom in February, 2020, in which 53 died and hundreds were injured.

Ramesh Bidhuri, a habitual Islamophobe, was last heard throwing slurs at Muslim MP Danish Ali inside the parliament.

"Yeh ugrawaadi , yeh aantankwaadi hai, ugrawaadi hai, yeh aantankwaadi hai, "Mullah aantankwadi, bhara... katwa... Baahar phenko iss mulle ko,"

"He is an extremist, he is a terrorist, a circumcised mullah, a pimp... throw this mullah out."

Anatkumar Hegde was one of the earliest poster boys of Hindutva in Karnataka, known for his fiery speeches, often targeting Muslims. In January, 2024, ahead of the inauguration of the 'Ram Temple', built in place of Babri Masjid razed to ground by the foot soldiers of Hindutva in 1992, Hegde called for demolishing several mosques across Uttar Kannada and Mandya.

Perhaps, the Hindu nationalist BJP has decided to deny them seats to do away with the controversies they would invite. But it is important to note that this is not in any sense a shift from their usual politics of hate. Moreover, the move can be observed as a replacement tactic to oil the 'hate machinery' without falling prone to any procedural damages.

According to an IndiaSpend analysis of self-disclosed crime records of candidates in 2016, those with hate-speech cases against them were three times more successful in elections compared to those without a criminal record. While the BJP is the largest beneficiary of electoral gains produced by anti-Muslim racism, it is illogical to deem the removal of a group of candidates as a change in the party's attitude.

The state assembly election campaigns in 2021, 2022 and 2023 were witness to the uncontrolled spike of hate speech in political discourse. Assam BJP Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma travelled to the poll-bound states and delivered a series of speeches last year. From declaring India a Hindu nation to calling for the genocide of Muslims and the demolition of mosques, he left no stone unturned in polarising voters along the lines of communal hatred. Sarma and several other leaders known for their track records of hate speech continue to remain the star campaigners of the Hindutva camp for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections as well.

The significant rise of hate crimes committed against Muslims with seeming impunity – many of them in states where the Bharatiya Janata Party is in power – is deeply worrying. According to the Delhi-based United Christian Forum (UCF), there have been 525 attacks against Christians in India just in the first eight months of 2023. All these testify to the fact that the Hindu far-right has been effectively normalising all sorts of violence fuelled by hate.

In conclusion, we undoubtedly acknowledge the possibility and potential of further escalation in hate crimes. The 2024 elections will also set the ground and space for a political discourse based on Islamophobia and other forms of hatred. But, at least to begin with, civil society groups must empower citizens with effective counter-hate and anti-misinformation mechanisms. The first step would be to name the offenders and offences in public, by holding them accountable through people-led networks and information campaigns.



Portfolios of Hate

Hate speech profiles of key BJP candidates
(2024 India elections)



UKIMC
UK Indian Muslim Council