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*Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah*

ॐ सर्वे भवन्तु सुखिनः ॐ

May Everybody Be Happy

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## NEWS LETTER

Vol.7 Jul - Sep 2006

Dear Friends,

It is highly regretted that terrorist activities are continuing unabated in India, as elsewhere. The series of bomb blasts on Tuesday, 11 July in Mumbai suburban trains is the latest in the series, causing death of at least 200 innocent men, women and children and injuring over 600 people returning after work.

There have been almost constant terrorist attacks in Jammu and Kashmir. Only a few days ago the militants hurled grenades at the city's Bus Stand killing at least 8 tourists and injuring over 30 people. This included attacks on Hindu pilgrims. Earlier in March there was a series of bomb blasts in the ancient holy city of Varanasi, killing at least 20 people. Bombs were planted near the famous Hindu Temples.

We strongly condemn these cowardly acts of violence against innocent people.

The authorities it seems are ineffective in stopping this constant loss of human life. The current environment worldwide is full of hatred, mutual mistrust and violence. The authorities talking of bringing the culprits to justice seems to have served no purpose. Taking revenge is not the solution. Violence begets violence. The world leaders need to find a peaceful solution to these problems. Lets hope and pray that good sense will prevail and we shall see an end to this dreadful series of violence.

There have been other very disturbing developments against our faith. Hindu temples are being demolished in Pakistan and Malaysia, Hindu human rights are being violated in a number of countries in South Asia, religious conversions are taking place in India, and Nepal, the only Hindu Nation in the world has been converted to a secular nation. We have published these reports in this issue. There is an urgent need for all Hindus

belonging to all the different denominations of Hinduism to stand united shoulder to shoulder to fight this attack on the peaceful followers of this most ancient and peaceful religion in the world.

I seek your cooperation. Let's all unite together.

Kind regards,

Dr. A. Balasubramaniam  
Chairman

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### Deepavali 2006

We have started to plan and organise the annual Deepavali celebrations. The Deepavali Fair this year again shall be held at the Sydney Olympic Park Athletic Centre on Sunday the 8<sup>th</sup> October 2006 and the function in Canberra will be on Monday, the 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006. Please make a note of these dates in your diaries and we hope to see you in big numbers. Further details about the function are available on our website: [www.hinducouncil.com.au](http://www.hinducouncil.com.au).

### Inter-faith Activities

The Hindu Council representatives have taken part in a number of inter-faith meetings in the last quarter.

### Israel's 58<sup>th</sup> Independence Day Celebration

Dr Anand Lalchandani represented the Hindu Council in this celebration where Hon. Morris Iemma, the Premier of NSW was the chief guest.

### Community Harmony Reference Group, Ryde

Mr Vijai Singhal attended the Multi-Faith Sub-Committee meeting on 25 May 2006 at the Argyle Centre, Ryde NSW. This Group The Group is planning to organise the International Day of Tolerance on 16 November 2006.

### **Respect and Responsibility Forum**

The NSW Minister of Education and training, the Hon. Carmel Tebbutt MP had organised a full day Forum to promote the values of respect and responsibility amongst the school students in NSW. The presentations involved students, teachers, parents and community members from various government and non-government schools. Mr Vijai Singhal represented the Hindu Council.

### **Equality before the Law Bench Book launch**

The Judicial Commission of New South Wales has compiled a book, entitled "Equality before the Law Bench" to afford equality to all the different ethnic and social groups in Australia. The book was launched by the Hon. Bob Debus MP, Attorney General of NSW. Mr Vijai Singhal represented the Hindu Council on that occasion.

### **Hindu Women's Council of Australia**

The inaugural meeting of the Hindu Women's Council of Australia (HWCA), a subsidiary of the Hindu Council of Australia was held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2006. Rev. Pravrajika Ajayaprana Mataji, who had been representing the Hindus on the Australian Women's Coalition, a Government of Australia's initiative, felt that the Hindu Council of Australia should rightfully take over this responsibility.

The group has met a couple of times and have elected the following members as office bearers:

President	Mrs Devi Bala
Vice President	Mrs saroj Arora
Secretary	Mrs Anita Bachan Sharma
Treasurer	Mrs Kanta Lamba
Executive Member	Mrs Pushpa Anand
Executive Member	Mrs Madhu Singhal

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### **Pope Interferes in India's Internal Affairs**

VISHVA HINDU PARISHAD (VHP)

International President, Shri Ashok Singhal has strongly objected to the Pope's interference in the religious matters of India. Shri Singhal said: "the right to uphold ancestral faith" should be a 'Fundamental Right' for inter-religious harmony because if everybody accepts right to uphold ancestral faith, nobody would convert people of other faiths. There won't be inter-religious conflict.

When the Pope expressed the right to convert as a fundamental right and objected to the Rajasthan Anti-conversion Law, he insulted the Indian apex Court - the Supreme Court of India - that gave a historical judgment in 1977 on the

subject. A Constitutional Bench of the Supreme Court of India gave a judgment that as per Article 25 of the Constitution of India, NOBODY HAD THE "RIGHT TO CONVERT". So, "conversion" is since an anti-Constitutional activity and it is the duty of a State to enact a law to stop conversion, an anti-Constitutional activity.

The Vatican is a sovereign State. Can anybody else propagate and convert a Christian in the Vatican? If the Pope cannot allow the conversion of a Christian in the Vatican, how can he expect conversion of Hindus in India?

The Pope must appreciate that both Christians and Hindus are facing the same historical threat of Jihad, i.e., global terrorism that is evident from the destruction of the Kashi, Ayodhya, Mathura, Somnath temples in India, the crusades under the Pope to defend Christianity in Europe, and now the 9/11 attacks on the WTC (World Trade Center), the London Metros and Madrid &c, and daily fatal attacks on Hindus in Jammu & Kashmir in India.

The Vishva Hindu Parishad appealed to the Pope that, "it would be better that instead of fighting each other, LET US FIGHT AGAINST JIHAD, and the Pope should declare that the Church would not convert a single Hindu."

- Released by VHP, New Delhi, India.  
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### **MF Hussain found guilty by the Court**

A local Meerut court prima facie found artist MF Hussain guilty of tampering with the feelings of the Hindu community and asked police to register a case against him. The order came on a petition filed by Prem Pal Singh of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad on March 20 alleging that the artist had portrayed Hindu gods and goddesses in an "objectionable" manner in his paintings.

Singh's counsel Ramkumar Sharma told reporters that the court had found Hussain guilty under various sections of IPC in the case filed in the court of Additional Chief Judicial Magistrate AK Pathak. He said that according to these sections, Hussain had been found guilty of "making objectionable paintings to hurt the feeling of a community and of disturbing communal harmony".

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### **Hinduism under threat**

There are forces working against the most peaceful religion in the world. There have been very disturbing developments in the

recent past. Hindu temples are being demolished in Pakistan and Malaysia, bomb blasts occurring in the holy city of Varanasi; and Nepal, the only Hindu Nation in the world has now become a secular nation.

### **Only Hindu Temple in Pakistan, Demolished**

The Hindu American Foundation (HAF) bemoaned the destruction of the last Hindu temple in Lahore, Pakistan. At the time of the partition of India in 1947 Lahore was known as one of the centres of culture and cosmopolitanism. Soon thereafter its great artists, musicians, and its Hindu and Sikh populations either moved voluntarily out of that city or were driven out by the fundamentalist Muslim forces that have shaped the country since then. "The last stroke in making Lahore totally Muslim is the demolition of the only remaining Hindu temple in the city," said Ramesh Rao, member of the HAF Executive Council.

### **Appeal to UN Over Threat to Hindu Temples in Malaysia**

NEW DELHI, INDIA, June 11, 2006: Hindu groups in Malaysia have complained that the Government is demolishing temples and have appealed to Indian rights groups and the UN to help protect their heritage. According to the Hindu groups, the latest instance was that of a 107-year-old place of worship that was razed last month in the capital, Kuala Lumpur. The demolition has triggered angry reactions from Hindus in the Muslim-dominated country. "At least one temple is being demolished by the authorities every three weeks in an unlawful and indiscriminate fashion, at the federal, state and local levels," said P. W. Moorthy, chairman of Hindu Rights Action Force, a coalition of about 50 groups.

### **Multiple Bomb Blasts in Varanasi**

March 8, 2006: A deathly silence descended on this holy city as temple bells fell silent and people rushed home after a series of bomb blasts on Tuesday evening left at least 20 people dead and more than a hundred injured, many of whom are battling for their lives. Seven bombs were later defused, including four that had been planted near the famous *Kashi Vishwanath* Temple. The deadliest attack was on the famous *Sankat Mochan* temple where thousands of devotees had assembled to pay obeisance to Lord Hanuman around 6.15 pm.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, Chidanand Muni and other saints from Rishikesh strongly condemned the serial blasts in Varanasi while urging people to keep

calm. Sri Sri Ravi Shankar also expressed dismay at the way the political parties are playing with the security of the people. "Today, Hindus feel completely unsafe in India. Terrorists are attacking especially the Hindu community. First it was Diwali, and now it is on the eve of Holi."

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### **Report on Human Rights of Hindus in South Asia**

The summary of the report released by the Hindu American Foundation is given below:

The human rights of Hindu citizens are consistently violated in five regions where Hindus constitute a minority: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, Pakistan, and the Indian state of Jammu & Kashmir.

#### **Highlights**

- Hindus, one billion strong, are the third largest religious group in the world.
- Hinduism is one of the oldest surviving religions and its origins can be traced back to at least the third millennium BCE.
- Hindus are liberal in their beliefs about the myriad means of worship and prayer available to human beings to seek spiritual enlightenment.
- Even in their homeland, Hindus have been targets of attack by aggressive proselytising followers of other religions.

#### **Afghanistan**

Hindus have an ancient history in Afghanistan with ties going back to the Vedic age (anywhere between 7000 BCE and 1000 BCE). Today, Hindus do not send their children to public schools due to fear of persecution or ridicule. Governments of several nations where Afghan Hindus live in exile are exerting pressure on the refugees to return to Afghanistan despite the continued violence toward them and their persecution.

#### **Recommendations**

The United States government should pressure the German government to desist from involuntary deportation of Hindus from Germany to Afghanistan. India should decrease the application fee for naturalization to its original rate of 2,100 rupees (US\$49), particularly for Afghan Hindu refugees.

#### **Bangladesh**

In 1947, Hindus constituted nearly 30% of Bangladesh's population. By 1991, 20 million Hindus were "missing" from Bangladesh. Today, they are less than 10% of the

population. Hindus of Bangladesh continue to be victims of the low intensity war waged by Islamic fundamentalists. This low intensity violence includes daily acts of murder, rape, kidnappings, temple destruction, and physical intimidation. Human rights activists and journalists are continuously harassed and abused in Bangladesh.

#### **Recommendations**

Bangladesh Govt should ensure immediate cessation of attacks against Hindus and protect Hindus' human rights. The government should repeal the anti-minority and racist laws such as the vested property legislation. The government should set up a Human Rights Commission and/or a Minorities Commission to monitor the human rights situation and to provide redress to minority grievances. The United States government should demand accountability from the Bangladesh Government, and all aid to Bangladesh should be contingent on the improvement of the human rights situation.

#### **Fiji**

In Fiji, Hindus constitute approximately 38% of the Christian majority population and have lived in Fiji for over 200 years. Fijian Hindus continue to face a barrage of anti-Hindu speeches and criticism. The Methodist Church of Fiji repeatedly calls for the creation of a Christian State and has endorsed forceful conversions of Hindus during a previous coup d'état against a Hindu leader in 1987. Many Fijian Methodist leaders today perpetuate hate and intolerance against Hindus on the island.

#### **Recommendations**

Fiji should stop granting preferential treatment to members of the Christian community. Fiji should repeal the "Truth and Reconciliation" (TRC) Bill and successfully prosecute and punish the criminals of the 2000 coup.

#### **Pakistan**

In 1947, Hindus were approximately 25% of the population of Pakistan. Now Hindus constitute less than 1.6% of the population. Pakistan officially discriminates against non-Muslims through a variety of laws and strictures, and Hindus are targets of kidnappings, rape, and intimidation. On March 24, 2005, Pakistan restored the discriminatory practice of mandating the mention of religious identity of individuals in all new passports. An alarming trend in Pakistan is that of Muslims kidnapping Hindu girls, forcing their stay in madrassas or religious schools, and then coercing their conversion to Islam. Hindus continue to be targeted in Balochistan, and

more than 5,000 Hindus have been forced to flee.

#### **Recommendations**

Pakistan should remove all blasphemy laws. Those imprisoned under blasphemy laws should get their day in court within a period of two weeks. Long imprisonments without court appraisal constitute human rights abuse. Pakistan should reverse the March 24, 2005 decision to mandate religious identification in passports. Pakistan should set up a Human Rights Commission and/or a National Minorities Commission to monitor the human rights condition and to enable minorities to enjoy the rights provided to the majority population. The United States should demand that Pakistan stop aiding all groups who seek to resolve the Kashmir dispute through violent means. Any aid to Pakistan should be contingent on Pakistan's acceptance of a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

#### **Indian State of Jammu & Kashmir**

Jammu and Kashmir is a state in India that has been claimed by Pakistan since 1947. The Maharaja of Kashmir ceded his kingdom to India in 1947 when Pakistan invaded Kashmir in order to conquer the kingdom. Pakistan occupies about one-third of the region, and India governs about two-thirds. India and Pakistan have fought major wars over Kashmir. Since the mid to late 1980s, Islamist terrorists from Pakistan and Afghanistan have targeted Kashmir in a jihadi insurgency that continues today with several massacres of Hindu citizens of the state. The 300,000 Kashmiri Hindus are refugees in their own country, sheltered in temporary camps near New Delhi, Jammu and elsewhere.

#### **Recommendations**

Kashmiri Hindus should be allowed to return to their homes, and their human rights and lives must be protected by the Indian central government and the Jammu and Kashmir state government without interference from Pakistani terrorists.

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"It is imperative that we pray and offer solace and help to each other. But if you and I are having a single thought of violence or hatred against anyone in the world at this moment, we are contributing to the wounding of the world."

*Deepak Chopra*

"Religion and religion alone is the life of India, and when that goes, India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of *Kubera's* wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children."

*Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902)*