

Western media blitzkrieg against India's Prime Minister Modi

theaustraliatoday.com.au/western-media-blitzkrieg-against-indias-prime-minister-modi

April 28, 2024

OPINION



Image: India's Prime Minister at an election rally in Uttar Pradesh (Source: X)

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28 April 2024 12:22 PM

BY Contributing Author
By Jagdish Batra

Election time is the opportune occasion for the West to lecture India about what democracy means or how secularism is practised or elections conducted. In the process, spokespersons of various governments, think tanks, media houses, self-styled experts, et al get over-busy nit-picking and making mountains of the molehill to somehow prove what they wish to be true. Currently, one finds Western media propaganda reports bashing India, pouring in like the barrage of hail hitting the windowpanes during a hailstorm.

Sweden-based V-Dem Institute's Democracy Report observes "electoral autocracy" in India, as if the Congress era elite dynasty is still ruling the country! UK-based *The Financial Times* believes it is the craze for making economic progress even if you lose out on democracy. In the same vein, a "research paper" released by the British think tank Chatham House rues the "downward trajectory of Indian democracy" and "democratic backsliding" by India even though in the same breath, it admits that the country is now better governed. *The Times* of UK has noted Prime Minister Modi's popularity based on "spectacular growth, new technology and welfare policies." One should be thankful to these institutions for admitting progress and seeing the writing on the wall (not the writing that Congress's Jairam Ramesh is talking about!) that Prime Minister Modi will come back to power.

Nevertheless, *The Times* must fault Modi anyway, and so his reference to "infiltrators" is interpreted as Muslims in general, rather than the ones who are entering illegally from Bangladesh and Myanmar. *The New York Times* too does the same when it refers to the "brazenness of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vilification of India's largest minority group." If it is not the hidden anti-Modi prejudice, then it is the total ignorance of the background of the illegal influx creating problems for India – something that they could have easily matched with the influx of illegal refugees from Arab and African countries trying to reach the European shores or the Mexicans trying to scale the wall on the American border, for which, they are being starved in refugee camps or deported back to home countries or even planned to be sent to Rwanda. How limited is the knowledge of the Western columnists is seen from the other New York-based newspaper *Bloomberg*, whose oped article refers to the north as poverty-ridden and the south as a progressive and successful part of the country. Such perceptions are then used to form postulates of north-south divide and dished out to gullible Indians in the academic and political arenas.

Modi is also accused of being intolerant of opposition parties and using the Enforcement Directorate to harass them. *The Times* of UK, in its "leading article", proffers as a proof the incarceration of certain political leaders, glossing over the fact that the ED is mandated to deal with financial criminals, but all actions are subject to judicial review in India. The western media forgets that India has a powerful judiciary with an enviable track record of independent decision-making. Many instances of overturning of government's decisions are available, the latest being the electoral bonds issue. So, an aggrieved party can always approach the courts. But the myopic western media won't cite the court orders imprisoning or assigning judicial custody to erring politicians on the basis of sufficient evidence against them. If such politicians are innocent, then surely Donald Trump facing a number of court cases in the US is also innocent and is maliciously sought to be put behind bars by the ruling Democrats! It also must be noted that the appointment of judges of the apex court is controlled more by the executive branch in the US than in India.

The western press goes a step further to do a mischievous crystal-gazing. The Chatham House paper cautions the voters that if the Modi government comes to power the third time, its enactment of UCC will “continue to raise concerns in the West about India’s democratic and secular credentials.” It does not stand to reason that the uniform civil code, which treats all communities and sub-cultures alike in cases like matrimony, inheritance, etc., should be faulted by the people whose own countries have such laws. America, the model of modern democracy upheld by the West, is itself governed by uniform civil code, while countries like France, Germany and Ireland have elements of such uniformity regardless of distinctions of faith. The think tank paper also notes that “an erosion of India’s democratic credentials would have implications of how the country is perceived globally” as if what the media in the UK and USA think is true of the entire world. Such megalomania is born of the colonial times. After all, the India page of *The Times* begins with a reminder to the readers that India is a former British colony!

The democratic society all over the world values freedom, but allowing unlimited freedom is a utopian ideal. India had the taste of unlimited freedom allowed to protesting farmers when chaos prevailed for thirteen months on the Delhi borders in 2020-21. Compare it to what happened in Canada when, in late 2021, truckers went on a strike and jammed the highway to America. A month was enough for the Canadian government to come cracking down on the protesters. The western media which supported the mayhem in India validating the toolkit theory, did not support the Canadian truckers in the same manner. The moral of the story is that it is easier to preach than to practice. The media and the doubting Thomases in the corridors of power in the West have to understand that India of today is more confident than ever and does not require certification from the duplicitous agents of the deep state.

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