



SAT, AUG 14, 2021 | UPDATED 09:50 AM IST



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INDIA

When shall we stand united?

August 12, 2021, 9:20 PM IST / Jagdish Batra in Cultural Inputs, India, TOI

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Jagdish Batra

Dr Jagdish Batra is a senior academic, currently working as Professor of English at O.P. Jindal Global

The recent victories at the Tokyo Olympics by our sportspersons brought some happy moments of pride in being Indian. Another happy reminder comes a few days from now when we as a nation shall celebrate the 75 th anniversary of the day India became free after a long dark night of foreign rule. Juxtaposed with the victories in

WRITE FOR TOI BLOGS

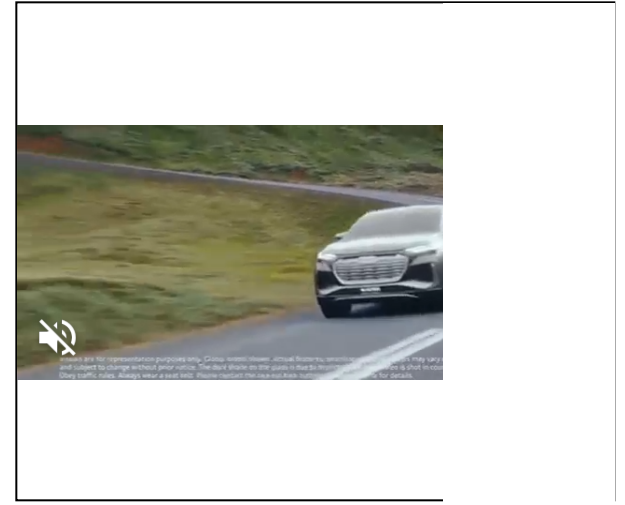
University, India. He has nearly four decades of teaching and research e
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sports were the bloody clashes between the police personnel of Assam and Mizoram which brought to the fore the parochial regional sentiments and make us think of why we lack the kind of unity as a nation that we see in many successful nations of the world.

A nation is not a monolith. As against a dictatorial state, a democratic polity provides full scope for the expression of varied points of view. In any such nation, one could find many grounds of being proud citizens as also of being ashamed of the nasty things happening there. The point is one has to have a sense of values which come from the culture and of which the Constitution is supposed to be the repository. The basic condition for the play of this value system is the desire for peaceful co-existence and dialogue.

A glance at the threat from external forces throws up a very challenging scenario. Coming together of Pakistan and China alongside the rise of the Taliban in Afghanistan can mean manifold aggravation of the threat perception. The Covid epidemic has already put a spanner in the wheel of development on the economic front. China's ambitious projects in enveloping a number of

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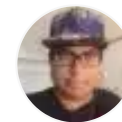


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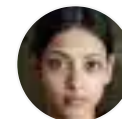
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client states through its B&R scheme, besides its space station and communication technology are meant to pose even greater challenges in future. The only consolation is that the Chinese dictator Xi Jinping's attempts to terrorize the world have alarmed many and India is in good league of China-weary nations. And yet the danger cannot be underestimated.

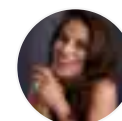
The utmost danger is from the divisive forces at work within the country – the “Jaichands” — of whom there has been a long tradition. The lack of unity among Indians was responsible for a thousand years of slavery. The native kings and chieftains could not come together to take on invaders from Mongolia, Afghanistan and Central Asia, and the English merchants could succeed in capturing our country through the ‘Divide and Rule’ principle. Unfortunately, our own our politicians too have adopted this dictum to mislead the people so that their own interests are best served while appearing to serve them. In this sordid power game, national interest takes the back seat. The situation is further aggravated by our armchair philosophers and intellectuals who want freedom without any restriction even if

**SA Aiyar**

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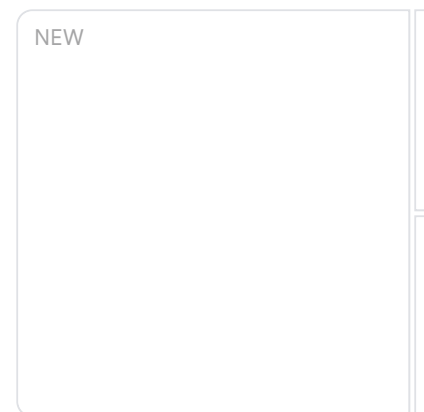
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Straight Talk

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TOP EDITORIALS

it helps the enemies. There are any number of divisive forces working in the name of caste, community, language, religion, to undermine the unity and sovereignty of the country and the inimical foreign countries are only too glad to lend a helping hand.

The big question is when shall we stand united if not now? Besides, how to sow the seeds of unity despite our good-for-nothing politicians? Nobody would deny that the lesson of patriotism and unity taught at an early stage goes a long way to mold one's mind. At the school level, there is sufficient grounding given to children in this direction, but as they grow into adolescents and get fed on the silly feeds of political class, their school-level sanskars get shattered. The societal discourse created by entertainment media further erodes the mindset acquired at the earlier stage.

For the youth, in a large number of countries in the world, an important part is played by compulsory military training for a limited period. Compulsory military service not only helps the morale of the nation but also imbues the youth with sterling qualities like discipline,

commitment, hard work, etc. The special point of interest in the context of our country is also the lack of appreciation of work of our brave armymen that lets our so-called leaders refer to them in derogatory terms. Young people unaware of the sacrifices made to achieve freedom for the country can easily raise slogans to break India. And yet considering the huge costs involved and the lack of infrastructure to enroll a gigantic number of youth makes the proposition for India unrealistic. We have programs like NCC and NSS at the college level to instill patriotic fervor in youth that can be further consolidated.

What is required is support from the society through the creation of positive discourse. A large number of NGOs and social service organizations did a wonderful humanitarian task during the past 15 months helping victims of Corona, across the length and breadth of the country without any biases. They are still doing it. In addition to that we need many more organizations that devote themselves to building up patriotic fervor. Public events celebrating national icons, cultural festivals, and other occasions transcending

parochial appeal should be the order of the day. Without getting into political harangue, even individuals and small groups can take it upon themselves to enlighten people all around about the importance of staying united. On this 75th Independence Day, it seems all the more crucial for us all Indians to come together and pledge our commitment to upholding national interests and let the self-serving politicians beware of this new unifying revolution.



TOP COMMENT



Ashok
1 day ago

Parliament, as India steps into the 75th anniversary of Independence, should be the ultimate symbol of national unity.

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