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Towards full “saffronisation” of
Modi's Bharat

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Abstract:

The G20 summit held in New Delhi brought with it the news that at the initiative of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government and in a parliamentary session scheduled for the purpose, India may be renamed Bharat. Although it may seem a secondary issue, this change carries with it implications that round off the Hindu nationalist policy the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party began to pursue before it came to power in India in 2014. The objective of this policy is to make the country the exclusive homeland of the Hindus, relegating the rest of the ethnic groups and religions present there, especially the Muslims, who number more than 200 million people. This "saffronisation", an expression that comes from the colour representing this Hindu nationalism, has internal implications in the form of violence and government control of the narrative, which in turn could hinder the country's aspirations to be the great power champion of multilateralism in current geopolitics and influence its difficult relationships with China and Pakistan.

Keywords:

India, Bharat, Modi, Nationalism, Hinduism, Islam, Multilateralism

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Hacia la «azafranización» total del Bharat de Modi

Resumen:

La cumbre del G20 celebrada en Nueva Delhi trajo una noticia al margen de la misma como era la posibilidad de que la India pase a denominarse Bharat, a iniciativa del gobierno del primer ministro Narendra Modi y en una sesión parlamentaria programada al efecto. Aunque pudiera parecer un asunto secundario, este cambio esconde unas implicaciones que rematan la política nacionalista hindú que el partido gubernamental Bharatiya Janata inició desde antes de su llegada al poder en la India en 2014. Dicha política tiene el objetivo de hacer de esta la patria exclusiva de los hindúes, en contra del resto de etnias y religiones del país, en especial de la musulmana cifrada en más de 200 millones de personas. Esta «azafranización», por el color que representa a este nacionalismo hindú, tiene implicaciones internas en forma de violencia y el control gubernamental de la narrativa, lo que a su vez puede obstaculizar las aspiraciones del país de ser la gran potencia adalid del multilateralismo en la actual geopolítica e influye en su difícil relación con China y Pakistán.

Palabras clave:

India, Bharat, Modi, Nacionalismo, Hinduismo, Islam, Multilateralismo

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Introduction

Recent months have seen a succession of news stories about India. The country's population exceeds 1.4 billion, making it officially the most populous country on the planet, the economic importance of which is commensurate with its demographic potential, surpassing the UK, the former metropolis, in GDP. India takes part in various international fora, exporting its traditional path of non-alignment and multilateralism as the way forward in today's turbulent geopolitical waters. Its prime minister, Narendra Modi, in power since 2014, is as ready to meet with President Biden and reach bilateral agreements with the US as he is to lead meetings of the BRICS and the G20, without its relationship with Russia being undermined, although there is a certain coolness when it comes to relations with China. The ultimate symbol of this new, real and not emerging power was the successful landing of the Chandrayaan-3 mission on the moon's south pole on 23 August, a project Modi himself described as "a new chapter in the Indian space odyssey that elevates the dreams and ambitions of every Indian"¹.

On 18 September, the Indian Parliament will debate whether to rename the country "Bharat", a Sanskrit word and a Hindu way of referring to it. "India" is the term established to designate the country during the British colonial era of the 19th century. The colour saffron has been chosen as a representation of the majority Hindu population by the extreme nationalist sector and is one of the three stripes of the Indian flag, the Tiranga in Hindi, together with green and white. 'Saffronisation' is the name for the political concept that identifies the country solely with Hindu culture, thereby excluding other minorities, especially Muslims. The processes of "saffronisation" have intensified in India since the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power, triggering the eruption of inter-ethnic and religious violence².

The first indications that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's entourage were likely to propose a name change had come a week earlier, when the invitations sent out by Indian President Droupadi Murmu for a dinner as part of the G20 summit in New Delhi on 8-10 September referred to him as "President of Bharat". On 31 August it was announced that

¹ Pandey, Geeta: "Chandrayaan-3: India's historic moon mission lifts off successfully" (*BBC News*, 14 July 2023). Available in [Chandrayaan-3: India's historic moon mission lifts off successfully - BBC News](https://www.bbc.com/news/health-64111111) (accessed 9/9/2023).

² AHMED, R. Q., TAMOOR, M., SALEEM, M. W., IQBAL BABAR, S.: "Chosen trauma and saffronisation of India" (*International Area Studies Review*, 25(1), 2022, p. 36-49). Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/22338659211047167> (accessed on 8/9/2023).

an extraordinary five-day session of the Indian Parliament would be convened with an unknown agenda, although it was assumed that the debate and eventual approval of the change of the country's name would be the priority issue³.

India had wanted to use the G20 summit to showcase itself as a voice and a power within multilateralism, an intermediary between blocs. For their part, the Chinese and Russian leaders, Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin, did not attend the meeting for different reasons, and in the case of China, the border frictions with India in the Himalayan regions claimed by both countries being one of the main reasons given by President Xi Jinping. Beyond the final communiqué of the summit, India's misgivings about China, also illustrated by the presidential elections in the Maldives where two parties representing Chinese and Indian interests were pitted against each other⁴, were expressed in a joint Indo-US statement strengthening an alliance already highlighted by Modi's visit to Washington at the end of June, which the opposition criticised for opening the door to the establishment of a US military base in the country⁵.

Aside from the invitation alluding to "Bharat" from President Murmu, no less remarkable was that Modi himself was introduced as the representative of Bharat when undertaking his duties at the G20 presidency table and that the summit itself was held in a modern convention centre in New Delhi christened "Bharat Mandapam", a building inaugurated in 2020 likewise by Modi in a direct allusion to a 12th century "proto-parliamentary" institution considered one of the sources of Hindu philosophy and religion⁶. This initiative also shows how the term "Bharat", which has been promoted by the Modi government and his party, is being assimilated to modernity and, above all, to the future of India. Not surprisingly, there was much criticism of the fact that the holding of the summit there had led to the weeks-long eviction of homeless people from around the convention centre,

³ KAUSHIK, Krishn: "Is India changing its name to Bharat? G20 invite controversy explained" (*Reuters*, 6 September 2023). Available at [Is India changing its name to Bharat? G20 invite controversy explained | Reuters](#) (accessed 10/9/2023).

⁴ RASHEED, Zaheena: "Maldives heads to polls amid India-China rivalry, fears for democracy" (*Al Jazeera*, 8 September 2023). Available at [Maldives heads to polls amid India-China rivalry, fears for democracy | Elections News | Al Jazeera](#) (accessed 9/9/2023).

⁵ "Will there be US Military bases on Indian soil? Congress questions Centre on Indo-US joint statement" (*Mint*, 9 September 2023). Available at [Will there be US Military bases on Indian soil? Congress questions centre on Indo-US joint statement | Mint \(livemint.com\)](#) (accessed 9/9/2023).

⁶ BANSAL, Kritika: "PM Modi's Kannada Reference At New Parliament Building's Inauguration Goes Viral In Karnataka | Watch" (*India.com News*, 11 December 2020). Available at [PM Modi \(india.com\)](#) (accessed 10/9/2023).

and to the demolition of some poor houses. Bharat cannot be the image of a poor country, even though poverty remains an unfinished business there⁷.

A Hindu Bharat or a multicultural India?

The controversies around "linguistic nationalism" in India in fact recur cyclically according to the vicissitudes of politics. Since the 1990s, with the Indian National Congress in power, many English names of cities, such as today's Mumbai and Kolkata, have been replaced by Hindu ones, as have public places and centres, now known by unmistakably Hindu names and adorned with Hindu monuments. It must be remembered that it is not only for the BJP that the word "India" has pejorative connotations from the colonial era. Nonetheless, the name "India" at least encompasses the entire population of the country, irrespective of ethnicity and religion, while "Bharat" is confined to the Hindu part and, within that, the more nationalistic element⁸. What exactly is "Bharat" for Modi and his party?

"Bharat Mata" is no triviality. It is the motherland that in the 19th century became the symbol of the national territory of the Hindus, based on their own religious, cultural and linguistic tradition and alien to the dominant political power throughout the subcontinent, be it the Muslim Mughal Empire or the later British *Raj*. One of the foundations of "Bharatvarsha", i.e. the land of Bharat, is the rejection of the other, be it European Christians or especially Muslims, a minority in the country but still representing hundreds of millions of India's population. In this regard, far from the image of concord and pacifism associated with the Hindu religion since Mahatma Gandhi's time, there have been various currents since ancient times based on myths, some of them intransigent and violent. One such example is the very warlike Rama, a legendary figure very much present today in the cultural as opposed to the political ideology of the BJP, and in the National Volunteers Association (RSS), an important nationalist paramilitary organisation founded in 1925 and the origin of the BJP itself, one of whose members assassinated Gandhi in 1948⁹.

⁷ LEKHI, Rishi & NAGPAL, Piyush: "New Delhi spruced up for the G20. The poor say they have been erased from the picture" (*AP News*, 7 September 2023). Available in [New Delhi spruced up for the G20. The poor say they have been wiped out of the picture | AP News](#) (accessed 10/9/2023).

⁸ "For G20 'India' becomes 'Bharat' and controversy erupts" (*Asianews*, 6 September 2023). Available in [INDIA For G20 'India' becomes 'Bharat' and controversy erupts \(asianews.it\)](#) (accessed on 10/9/2023).

⁹ An excellent study of Hindu nationalism, including its sometimes complicated cultural and religious foundations and the history of its rise to the forefront of Indian politics, can be found in BORREGUERO, Eva: "Hindu. Religious Nationalism and Politics in Contemporary India" (Catarata, 2004).

Modi was already known as a prominent BJP leader prior to his rise to power in May 2014. He had been governor of the state of Gujarat since 2001, which was when an escalation of ethnic violence began, led mostly by the most nationalist Hindus and aimed at making the country itself Hindu, manifested in attacks on other ethnic and religious minorities, such as Sikhs, Christians and especially Muslims. The culmination of this violence would be the massacres in Gujarat in 2002 amidst the BJP's passivity, if not complicity, and the concern of the traditional secular Indian parties, such as the then ruling Indian People's Party, led by Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and the historic Indian National Congress, where Manmohan Sing was to be the last incumbent before Modi's BJP won the 2014 elections¹⁰.

To this effect, the BJP's Bharat is first and foremost a rejection of the Muslim, perceived just as much an outsider in his own country as are the British colonisers. However, it must be remembered that Islam - spread across different regions and with its own internal religious currents - has for centuries been part of India's idiosyncrasy, home to some 210 million Muslims, making up 10% of the world's entire Muslim population and 15% of India's, and sharing the same rights and obligations that the constitution grants to all citizens. It is estimated that if the current rate of population growth continues, by 2050 India will already be the country with the largest Muslim population on the planet, overtaking Indonesia¹¹.

Modi and the ruling BJP have been stepping up initiatives against the presence of Muslim culture in the country and, in a more practical sense, passing controversial measures such as the loss of autonomy for the largely Muslim-majority states of Jammu and Kashmir through a presidential decree in August 2019, leading to incidents in Kashmir and the expulsion of two Kashmiri MPs from parliament after they tore up a copy of the constitution. With this, India became 28 states as opposed to 29 and Kashmir, a disputed region with Pakistan, is now an additional province within the union under the authority of a Lieutenant Governor, a position with fewer powers than the previous governor¹². In

¹⁰ FRENCH, Patrick: "India, an intimate biography of 1.2 billion people" (Duomo, 2013), p. 130-171.

¹¹ KRAMER, Stephanie: "Population growth and religious composition" (*Pew Research Center*, 21 September 2021). Available at [Population growth and religious composition in India | Pew Research Center](#) (accessed 10/9/2023).

¹² BAÑOS, Jordi Joan: "Kashmir, a degraded state turned into mere Indian territory" (*La Vanguardia*, 6 August 2019). Available in [Kashmir, a degraded state that has become a mere territory of India \(lavanguardia.com\)](#) (accessed on 10/9/2023).

recent years, amidst ambiguities and silence, and outside the traditional image and policy of multiculturalism in Indian society, Modi and the BJP have taken on the role of champions of extreme Hindu ideological and religious values vis-à-vis Muslims¹³.

It is not uncommon for the Hindi word "Bharat" to appear in certain official Indian documents, including those that are transcribed into English. Both terms appear on current passports, and the Indian Constitution itself, which has been in force since January 1950, uses "Bharat" as the state's official name. While the preamble starts with "We, India...", the first chapter of the first part of the constitution on the union and its territory speaks of "India, which is Bharat, shall be a union of states"¹⁴. Whatever the case, changing India's name to Bharat, which must be at the government's proposal, requires a constitutional amendment which, according to legal procedure, would have to be approved by a two-thirds majority of both houses that make up the Indian parliament, which are dominated by the BJP and its allies.

It is also relevant that the opposition bloc that will contest the April 2024 general elections against Modi and the poll-favoured BJP, comprising over twenty parties including the historic Indian National Congress, was christened last July as INDIA, an acronym for *Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance*, a platform aimed at challenging the BJP for power and advocating an inclusive, secular and liberal politics in representation of the country's diverse sensibilities¹⁵. The opposition has strongly criticised the name change initiative and the date chosen for it, barely two months after the birth of INDIA, not least because of the exclusionary connotations that Bharat may harbour. It is also likely that the Modi government will promote a bill of the nation in which Bharat's citizenship status will be established, while since 1 September a parliamentary committee has overseen the investigation into the viability and legality of the concept in the Indian constitutional and regulatory framework¹⁶.

¹³ YASIR, Sameer: "As Hindu Extremists Call for the Killing of Muslims, India's Leaders Keep Silent" (*The New York Times*, 24 December 2021). Available at [As Hindu Extremists Call for the Killing of Muslims, India's Leaders Keep Silent - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/24/world/asia/india-hindu-extremists.html) (accessed 11/9/2023).

¹⁴ "The Constitution of India". Available at [WIPO Lex](https://www.wipo.int/lex/lexiconsearch.asp) (accessed 11/9/2023).

¹⁵ RAJESH, YP: "Indian opposition parties form 'INDIA' alliance" (*Reuters*, 18 July 2023). Available at [Indian opposition parties form 'INDIA' alliance | Reuters](https://www.reuters.com/world/india/indian-opposition-parties-form-india-alliance-2023-07-18/) (accessed 10/9/2023).

¹⁶ "India to be renamed as 'Bharat'? Government may bring resolution in Parliament's special session" (*The Economic Times*, 7 September 2023). Available at [Stepping into Leadership: Roles That Shape Effective Management \(indiatimes.com\)](https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/india/india-to-be-renamed-as-bharat-govt-may-bring-resolution-in-parliament-special-session/articleshow/98888888.cms) (accessed 11/9/2023).

Ethnic conflict and control of the narrative

Modi's supporters and many BJP leaders defend the idea that the change of the country's name to Bharat is not an exclusionary objective, but a response to the country's traumatic colonial history under the British, which remains a sensitive issue for India today. Over the decades, nomenclatures of public places and monuments that alluded to colonial-era characters or were simply in English have been closed down or removed. Even from the most nationalist quarters, there are demands for the UK to acknowledge and apologise for its actions, while the campaign to impose Hindi over English in administration and public services is intensifying, according to Modi to bring the rural Indian population closer to modernity and free the country from a "servile mentality"¹⁷.

The BJP's own birth in 1980 stems from an extreme Hindu nationalist parent organisation, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS in Hindi), translated as the National Volunteers Association¹⁸, the aim of which is to make India an exclusively Hindu nation without renouncing violence to do so. Already from its ranks had come Mahatma Gandhi's assassin (1948), and it was the RSS that instigated the destruction of the historic 16th century Babri Mosque in the city of Ayodhya in 1992. The march of Hindu radicals was led by historic BJP leader L.K. Advani, triggering widespread riots across the country between Hindus and Muslims resulting in hundreds of deaths. In 2019, with Modi entering his second term, the Supreme Court of India legalised the surrender of the land on which the Hindus were settled for the construction of a temple to Rama, ordering that Muslims be given an alternative site¹⁹.

After serving as governor of Gujarat for more than a decade, during which the aforementioned incidents between Hindus and Muslims took place, claiming the lives of dozens of people, Modi took office in 2014 and attacks against Muslim communities ramped up. Together with the British, the government began to eliminate Islamic place names from the Mughal period and replace them with Hindu ones. In 2015, New Delhi's

¹⁷ BEDI, Rahul: "English language a target as Modi tries to rid India of colonial influences" (*The Irish Times*, 24 October 2022). At [English language a target as Modi tries to rid India of colonial influences - The Irish Times](#) (Accessed 11/9/2023).

¹⁸ GHANDI, Pritti: "Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh: How the world's largest NGO has changed the face of Indian democracy" (DNA, 15 May 2014). Available at [Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh: How the world's largest NGO has changed the face of Indian democracy \(dnaindia.com\)](#) (accessed 11/9/2023).

¹⁹ BAÑOS, Jordi Joan: "India will raise a temple to Rama on the rubble of the Ayodhya mosque" (La Vanguardia, 9 November 2019). Available in [India to build a temple to Rama on the rubble of the Ayodhya mosque \(lavanguardia.com\)](#) (accessed on 9/9/2023).

famous Aurangzeb Avenue, named after a Mughal king, was renamed Dr APJ Abdul Kalam, a decision taken by the BJP-run municipality and justified on the grounds of Aurangzeb's "cruelty", while other colonial-era roads used for public events such as military parades and religious ceremonies were likewise changed²⁰.

Following Modi's re-election in May 2019 and the change of status of the Jammu and Kashmir regions, which had already caused unrest, violence flared up again in December when Muslims and other communities protested against the new Citizenship Amendment Act, which requires that Muslims register for citizenship, whereby they must prove their original residence in the country since 1947 and not be refugees from Pakistan, Bangladesh or Afghanistan, with the danger that tens of thousands of them will not be considered Indian citizens but stateless²¹.

The year 2019 also saw the beginning of a campaign of media control and restriction by the Modi government, justified as a way to end unrest. Since then, these measures have increased in intensity and human rights organisations have reported repeated attacks on the press covering these issues and restrictions on the rights of expression, assembly and freedom of religion²². This situation not only concerns the Muslim community, but the BJP is also modifying the narrative of memory to make it fit with its political project and stripping it of controversial elements, for example by recently modifying school textbooks to suppress key periods in Indian culture, such as the Mughal Empire, and silencing the responsibility of Hindu nationalism in the assassination of Gandhi and in the Gujarat violence of 2002²³. Meanwhile, a BBC documentary that pointed to Modi's responsibility

²⁰ GHOSH, Deepshikha: "Aurangzeb Road Renamed After APJ Abdul Kalam, Arvind Kejriwal Tweets 'Congrats'" (*NDTV*, 28 August 2015). Available at [Aurangzeb Road Renamed After APJ Abdul Kalam, Arvind Kejriwal Tweets 'Congrats' \(ndtv.com\)](https://www.ndtv.com/india-news/aurangzeb-road-renamed-after-apj-abdul-kalam-arvind-kejriwal-tweets-congrats-1.478444) (accessed 11/9/2023).

²¹ "Why India's new "anti-Muslim" citizenship law, which could make tens of thousands stateless, is causing controversy" (*BBC News*, 13 December 2019). Available at [Why India's new "anti-Muslim" citizenship law, which could make tens of thousands stateless, is controversial - BBC News World](https://www.bbc.com/news/world-india-55844444) (accessed 10/9/2023).

²² 'State of Human Rights Report 2022/2023: India' (*Amnesty International*, 2023). Available at [Human Rights in India - Current Situation \(amnesty.org\)](https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/india/2023/01/01/) 'World report 2022: India' (*Human Rights Watch*, 2023). Available at [World Report 2022: India | Human Rights Watch \(hrw.org\)](https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/india) and "India" (*Reporters Without Borders*, 2023), available at [India | RSF](https://www.rsf.org/india) (accessed 11/9/2023).

²³ RAJ, Suhasini: "New Indian Textbooks Purged of Muslim History and Hindu Extremism" (*The New York Times*, 6 April 2023). Available at [Indian Textbooks Purged of Material Modi's Party Finds Objectionable - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/06/india-textbooks-purged-of-muslim-history-and-hindu-extremism.html) (accessed 11/9/2023).

was banned in January 2023, and the network's New Delhi headquarters was shut down on charges of tax fraud²⁴.

Government control of internet access and traditional media used in cases of ethnic riots such as those in Kashmir, and in the censorship of critical opposition voices, will become more legal in the wake of regulations being adopted in other areas. A case in point is the recently passed Personal Digital Data Protection Act. While this means greater information security for the hundreds of millions of Indian web users, it could also facilitate greater mass surveillance by the government, including the capacity to restrict access to any information to protect the "general public interest", which may be a precursor of eventual censorship²⁵.

Conclusions: "Erdoganisation" and foreign policy

In changing its name, India appears to be following in the footsteps of countries like Turkey, which petitioned the international community to change its toponymy to "Türkiye", albeit with little success, even though NATO does use the name in all official communications referring to the country. This initiative of Erdogan's government for Turkey resonates with some of Modi's for India. Both seem to want to determine the pre-eminence of a religious and cultural belief, Muslim in one case and Hindu in the other, as a premise of citizenship in two states which, like Turkey and India, have a history throughout the 20th century of defending a secular parliamentary policy regardless of religious aspects. This, however, could change and, although of opposing sensibilities, Erdogan and Modi seem to have some factors in common and are both backed by political parties with a strong nationalist ideological bias²⁶.

The BJP has long dreamed of the establishment of Akhand Bharat, i.e. a fabricated Greater India encompassing parts of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal,

²⁴ PÉREZ, Rafael: "India: Government censors documentary on Modi; arrests after some screenings" (*France24*, 26 January 2023). Available in [India: Government censors documentary on Modi; arrests after some screenings \(france24.com\)](https://www.france24.com/en/india/20230126-india-government-censors-documentary-on-modi-arrests-after-some-screenings) (accessed on 11/9/2023).

²⁵ "India Passes New Digital Personal Data Protection Bill (DPDPB), Putting Users' Privacy First" (*The Hacker News*, 14 August 2023). Available at [India Passes New Digital Personal Data Protection Bill \(DPDPB\), Putting Users' Privacy First \(thehackernews.com\)](https://thehackernews.com/2023/08/14/india-passes-new-digital-personal-data-protection-bill-dpdpb-putting-users-privacy-first/) (accessed 12/9/2023).

²⁶ RACHMAN, Gideon: "Modi and Erdogan thrive on divisive identity politics" (*Financial Times*, 10 August 2020). Available at [Modi and Erdogan thrive on divisive identity politics | Financial Times \(ft.com\)](https://www.ft.com/content/8d1c1c1c-1c1c-1c1c-1c1c-1c1c1c1c1c1c) (accessed 11/9/2023).

Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Tibet. Today, the northeastern state of Manipur is caught up in another ethnic conflict, this time between Hindus and Christians, which has already seen hundreds of deaths, village burnings and looting. After weeks of inaction, Modi was forced to deploy 15,000 troops, while regional authorities, also from the BJP, are accusing Christians of being illegal immigrants from Myanmar. What is more, as in Kashmir, a news blackout has been imposed, compromising the accurate reporting of what is happening²⁷. Indian initiatives in Southeast Asia and the Pacific as part of the *Look East Policy*, the cornerstone of Modi's new foreign policy since 2014, clash with the image of intransigence generated in the states of the region and put the brakes on ambitious projects such as the planned road connecting the country with Myanmar and Thailand²⁸. The rice shortage in Southeast Asia with the FAO warning of a possible famine, one of the main reasons for which is India's export ban, does nothing to improve this image either²⁹.

And so, while Modi's foreign policy is seeking to make India an inclusive power with a voice of its own, representative of the Global South and its sensitivities and a mediator between antagonistic blocs, at home intransigence and violence is increasing towards Muslims. While this is being presented as temporary unrest or acts of terrorism, its ripples in fact reach wide, since the treatment of the Muslim minority impacts on relations with countries professing Islam, some of which such as Iran, Kuwait, Qatar and the Organisation for Islamic Cooperation, an umbrella body of fifty-seven Muslim states, have at different times condemned the anti-Muslim rhetoric of Modi and the BJP³⁰.

Another problem with Islamic-majority countries is the Indian diaspora communities that easily number 18 million people, the largest by far on the planet³¹. They include groups based for decades in many African and Asian countries, where Hindus are an ethnic and religious minority. As illustrated by the case of the hasty and somewhat chaotic

²⁷ DE POLI, Alessandra: "The roots of violence in Manipur, a layered conflict" (*Asianews*, 4 August 2023). Available in [INDIAN MANDALA The Roots of Violence in Manipur, a Stratified Conflict \(asianews.it\)](https://www.asianews.it/news-en/INDIAN-MANDALA-The-Roots-of-Violence-in-Manipur,-a-Stratified-Conflict-10122023) (accessed 11/9/2023).

²⁸ MILIATE, Brandon J.: "India's Act East Policy and Manipur" (*YaleGlobal Online*, 5 September 2019). Available at [India's Act East Policy and Manipur | YaleGlobal Online](https://www.yaleglobalonline.com/indias-act-east-policy-and-manipur/) (accessed 11/9/2023).

²⁹ DE POLI, Alessandra: "Rice shortage in Asia, FAO: prices have never been so high in the last 15 years" (*Asianews*, 12 September 2023). Available in [ASIA Rice shortage in Asia, FAO: prices have never been so high in the last 15 years \(asianews.it\)](https://www.asianews.it/news-en/ASIA-RICE-shortage-in-Asia,-FAO:-prices-have-never-been-so-high-in-the-last-15-years-10122023) (accessed on 12/9/2023).

³⁰ BLAREL, Nicolas & GANGULY, Sumit: "Modi's Burning Bridge to the Middle East" (*Foreign Affairs*, 30 June 2022). Available at [Modi's Burning Bridge to the Middle East | Foreign Affairs](https://www.foreignaffairs.com/india/modis-burning-bridge-to-the-middle-east) (accessed 11/9/2023).

³¹ MANRIQUE, Luis Esteban G.: "The (global) power of the Indian diaspora" (*Foreign Policy*, 5 September 2023). Available at [The \(Global\) Power of the Indian Diaspora | Foreign Policy \(politicaexterior.com\)](https://www.politicaexterior.com/en/the-global-power-of-the-indian-diaspora/) (accessed 11/9/2023).

evacuation of Indian nationals in the recent crisis in Sudan, a problem of conflict may be further exacerbated if Modi's India is perceived as intransigent towards co-religionists or migrants³².

There are also greater implications regarding the threats to India posed mainly by China and Pakistan, which themselves have excellent relations. Two consequences of the situation of minorities in India can be observed today. The first is troops moving inland, as can currently be seen in Manipur and involving withdrawing a division from the Sino-Indian border, thereby jeopardising India's security and projection. And second, as recently highlighted by analyst Sushant Singh, the intolerance supported by the Modi government over the years conveys an image of a country torn by violence, prone to dangerous instability, and ultimately a power that cannot be left out of global hegemony but cannot be trusted either³³. Meanwhile, the US policy of containment of China in the Indo-Pacific means that there are very few voices in the US itself and among its allies such as the EU that are going to change their relationship. It seems that the implications of moving from India to Bharat and what this may entail will not be an obstacle to the US and the EU working to gain alliance and closeness with the country as part of their goal of containing the Chinese giant, as exemplified by the joint declaration after the G20 summit where the construction of infrastructure was planned and there were even murmurings of a door for the establishment of US military bases in the country³⁴. Internationally, only the UN human rights office described the Citizenship Amendment Act 2019 as discriminatory towards Muslims and warned of the xenophobic drift that could run India aground³⁵.

The five-day special session of the Indian Parliament on 18 September where India's move to Bahrat will be debated and expected to be approved will be held in the newly

³² FERNÁNDEZ APARICIO, Javier: "India in Africa: projection and imperative" (*IEEE Analysis Paper*, 5 July 2023). Available at: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_analisis/2023/DIEEEA56_2023_JAVFER_India.pdf (accessed 11/9/2023).

³³ SINGH, Susan: "Why Modi Can't Make India a Great Power" (*Foreign Affairs*, 4 September 2023). Available at: [Why Modi Can't Make India a Great Power | Foreign Affairs](#) (accessed 9/9/2023).

³⁴ ELLIS-PETERSEN, Hannah: "G20: EU and US back trade corridor linking Europe, the Middle East and India" (*The Guardian*, 9 September 2023). Available at [G20: EU and US back trade corridor linking Europe, the Middle East and India | G20 | The Guardian](#) (accessed 11/9/2023).

³⁵ MAIZLAND, Lindsay: "India's Muslims: An Increasingly Marginalised Population" (*Council of Foreign Relations*, 14 July 2022). Available at [India's Muslims: An Increasingly Marginalised Population | Council on Foreign Relations \(cfr.org\)](#) (accessed 10/9/2023).

built seat, named Jatiya Sansad Bhavan³⁶. There has already been controversy surrounding the construction of the building, such as the project to finish off the roof, which replaced a planned spire with the Ashoka symbol, the official emblem since 1950. It was an act criticised by the opposition, which accused Modi of arrogating to himself a power that did not pertain to him³⁷. The session will also be held in homage to the Amrit Kaal, a Hindu concept first used by Modi in 2021 during the 75th Independence Day celebrations that symbolises a new timeline for improving the living conditions of India's citizens over the next 25 years, thereby narrowing the inequality gap and harnessing technological advances³⁸. This concept comes from Hindu Vedic astrology and alludes to a critical moment considered the best auspicious time to start a new job, but also the riskiest because demons may intervene against you. But who will be demons in the saffron Bharat?

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³⁶ "Government announces Special Session of Parliament from September 18-22" (*The Times of India*, 31 August 2023). Available at [Government announces Special Session of Parliament from September 18-22 | TOI Original - Times of India Videos \(indiatimes.com\)](#) (accessed 11/9/2023).

³⁷ "PM Narendra Modi unveils national emblem, Opposition slams 'show'" (*The Indian Express*, July 12, 2022). Available at [PM Narendra Modi unveils national emblem, Opposition slams 'show' | India News - The Indian Express](#) (accessed 11/9/2023).

³⁸ "'We Have Entered Into Amrit Kaal': What Does It Mean & Where Does It Come From?" (*The Quint*, 1 February 2023). Available at [We Have Entered Into Amrit Kaal': What Does It Mean & Where Does It Originate From? \(thequint.com\)](#) (accessed 11/9/2023).