

**TO AMERICA IN POMP**

In its appearance, the ‘Howdy, Modi!’ event in Houston was a big success. It made for a magnificent spectacle and a visual treat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was in his element and his address delivered to the rapturous applause of the audience was an exercise in grandstanding. However, only by looking at India through rose-coloured spectacles can we agree with Mr. Modi’s assertion that “everything is fine in India”. Seeing impoverishment, joblessness, farmer distress, mob lynchings, jailing of dissenters and the like and speaking about them are nowadays left to ‘anti-nationals’ and ‘urban Naxals’. One thing that Mr. Trump and Mr. Modi — leaders of predominantly Christian and Hindu nations — share and makes them look similar is their conscious dissociation from Islam. Their allusion to ‘extremist Islamist groups’ as the common enemy and threats from them was not lost on anyone. Mr. Modi opined that Article 370 “benefitted separatists and terrorists”. But he did not explain as to why its dilution by a two-thirds majority in the Parliament was followed by repressive measures and restrictions in the Valley. We couldn’t agree more with Modi when he said, “Diversity is the strength of our democracy.” To add to what he said, it is the defining feature of our democracy.

Let us ask an honest question: What was achieved through this cleverly choreographed extravaganza? Two world leaders who are supposed to be the representatives of the two largest democracies met with much fanfare and pomp. In fact, neither Mr. Modi nor Mr. Trump today actually symbolise what the real India or the real U.S. is meant to be; they represent a grossly distorted view of their countries. True, they are both elected leaders; but that does not add credibility to their authoritarianism. Mr. Trump represents the deep-rooted bigotry of white supremacy while Mr. Modi represents extreme polarisation based on the ideology of Hindutva. Thinking citizens of both the countries will pause before jumping on the populist bandwagon of such glamour and glitter.

In tune with popular Telugu proverb Inta gelichi rachcha geluvu (which means, “First win at home before conquering the world”), Mr. Modi needs to address first the nation’s burning issues such as economic slowdown, falling GDP and rupee and increasing unemployment, farmer suicides, bad loans in banks and so on. Let us see how celebrations and speeches in the U.S. bring investments to India to resolve its issues.

<b><u>Words</u></b>	<b><u>Kind</u></b>	<b><u>Meaning</u></b>
Magnificent	Adj.	Splendid, spectacular, impressive, striking, glorious awesome, resplendent, sumptuous
spectacle	Noun	Sight, vision, display, view, scene, prospect
Rapturous	Adj.	Ecstatic, joyful, elated, euphoric, enraptured blissful, exultant, over the moon
Applause	Noun	Clapping, cheering, acclamation, curtain calls

Accord	Verb	Agree, tally, correspond, concur, equate
Assertion	Noun	Declaration, proclamation, pronouncement
Impoverishment	Noun	Impecuniousness, misery, deprivation, privation Insolvency
Distress	Noun	Anguish, suffering, pain, agony, affliction
Lynching	Noun	Execute, kill illegally, hang, mow down make away with
Dissenters	Noun	Dissident, dissentient, objector, rebel, apostate Insurgent
Pre-dominant	Adj.	Controlling, dominant, ascendant, superior pre-eminent
Dither	Verb	Hesitate, falter, waver, teeter, vacillate, oscillate
Conscious	Noun	Aware, awake, compos mentis, alive to, hip to, ware of
Dissociation	Noun	Separation, disconnection, alienation
Allusion	Noun	Reference, mention, comment on, implication, Insinuation
Extremist	Noun	Fanatic, radical, zealot, hardliner
Threat	Noun	Menace, danger, peril, jeopardy, intimidation
Opine	Verb	Suggest, summit, advance, venture, propose
Dilution	Noun	Clarification, filtration, purification, refine
Repressive	Adj.	Oppressive, authoritarian, despotic, coercive harsh, iron fisted
Restriction	Noun	Limitation, conditioning, constraint, restraint
Diversity	Noun	Variety, miscellany, assortment, mixture
Choreograph	Verb	Plan and control on event / operation
Extravaganza	Noun	Spectacular, display, spectacle, exhibition
Fanfare	Noun	Fuss, commotion, stir, show, ostentation pageantry
Pomp	Noun	Ceremony, solemnity, ritual, spectacle, splendour
Distort	Verb	Misrepresent, pervert, twist, deform, contort
Bigotry	Noun	Prejudice, bias, partiality, partisanship, sectarianism unfairness, discrimination
Polarisation	Noun	Co-ordination, harmonization, integration, Incorporation

Denizens	Noun	Inhabitants, resident, townsman
Glamour	Noun	Allure, attraction, fascination, enchantment
Glitter	Verb	Shine, sparkle, twinkle, glimmer, blink
Bandwagon	Noun	Appearance, configuration, convention
Bound	Verb	Jump, leap, spring, hurdle, hop, vault

### DYNASTIC POLITICS

Union Home Minister and BJP president Amit Shah has appealed to voters to choose between nationalistic parties, such as his party and family-oriented parties, such as the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party, in the Maharashtra Assembly election (Front page, “Choose Nationalistic parties, says Amit Shah,” Sept. 23). In Maharashtra, the BJP’s principal ally is the Shiv Sena which is a family-oriented party. Will Mr. Shah tell the voters there not to vote for Shiv Sena candidates in the forthcoming Assembly election? Does he remember that in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal, another family-oriented party, is his outfit’s alliance partner?

Mr. Modi recently said “Let’s build a new paradise in Kashmir.” But what’s happening in Kashmir is the exact opposite. The Army has an iron grip over the people. The Internet is the lifeblood of administration and economy worldwide. By shutting it down, the whole of Kashmir has been isolated. With the IT industry, a strength of India, not being able to function in the Valley, I wonder what paradise Mr. Modi talks about. Unemployment is at a record high in the whole of the nation. Will it magically fall in Kashmir after the abrogation of its special status? If the IT companies in the valley are closed, the number of unemployed youth is only going to grow. It is being repeatedly demonstrated that the government’s act of unilaterally changing the status of the erstwhile State was not a pragmatic move (“Kashmir Valley’s IT hub gasps as Net shutdown continues,” Sept. 23).

<b><u>Words</u></b>	<b><u>Kind</u></b>	<b><u>Meaning</u></b>
Appeal	Verb	Ask, urgently / earnestly, plead, beg, sue
Ally	Verb	Combine, merge, amalgamate, knit, join
Outfit	Noun	Costume, suit, uniform, ensemble, clothing, regalia
Alliance	Noun	Association, union, league, treaty, entente concordat, bloc, confederation
Choose	Verb	Pick out, select, opt for, plump for, decide on
Credibility	Noun	Trustworthiness, reliability, dependability Integrity, kudos, eminence
Enhance	Verb	Boost, ameliorate, augment, proliferate, snowball
Paradise	Noun	The heavens, the welkins, the firmament

Transpire	Verb	Happen, come about, bring, about
Grip	Noun	Grasp, hold, clutch, clasp, clench, hand grip
Isolate	Verb	Separate, set apart, segregate, detach, cut off cocoon, keep apart, quarantine
Nonplus	Verb	Surprise, wonder, astonish, astound
Abrogation	Noun	Repudiation, revocation, repeal, rescinding overruling, annulment
re-iterate	Verb	Repeat, re-capitulate, iterate
Demonstrate	Verb	Reveal, bespeak, indicate, signify, signal
Unilaterally	Adv.	Something done by one person / group / country
Erstwhile	Adj.	Former, onetime, previous, foregoing
Pragmatic	Adj.	Practical, matter of fact, empirical, down to earth Expedient, hardnosed
Gasp	Verb	Pant, puff, blow, wheeze, breathe, heavily
Fare	Noun	Ticket price, passenger, food, victuals
Fare	Verb	Manage, get on, get along, get by, make do
Dis-interested	Adj.	Self less, altruistic
Dis-service	Noun	Unkindness
Blasphemy	Noun	Negative, remarks, regarding, other's religion
Pretext	Noun	False, excuse
Espionage	Noun	The act of spying / eavesdropping
Trying	Adj.	Irritating, annoying, curmudgeonly, exasperated incensed, disgruntled, nettled, embittered, jaundiced