

Topic: The fringe goes 'mainstream'

Yogi Adityanath, the controversial hardliner advocate of Hindutva, took over as the **32nd Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh**. Two Deputy Chief Ministers - **Dinesh Sharma and Keshav Prasad Maurya** and **47 Ministers** were sworn in. Yogi Adityanath, the new Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, is a well-known figure in the State. He made headlines in the past with his fiery brand of **communal politics, promotion of the most virulent and masculinist Hindutva**, the ups and downs of his relations with his party, the Bharatiya Janata Party, and the activities of his **Hindu Yuva Vahini (HYV)**. This is perhaps the first time in India that a head of a religious institution has become the head of a political institution. This chief ministerial appointment can thus be seen as a metaphor for the cementing of the institutional relation between religion and the state under the BJP.

Lord of the east

In his mid-40s and a parliamentarian since the age of 26 from Gorakhpur, **Mr. Adityanath is the mahant of the Gorakhnath mutt, or peeth**, which for centuries, has had a large following mainly among the marginal working sections. The mutt is the seat of the Nathpanthis, who were known for their reformist bent. In the Hindutva spectrum, if the Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) occupies a position to the 'right' of the BJP, then Mr. Adityanath occupies a position which is far to the 'right' of even the late VHP leader Ashok Singhal. He would be placed on the same plane as Pravin Togadia, the VHP's current chief, but unlike him, he is not confined to the VHP but is active in electoral politics through the BJP. There are **several criminal cases pending against him**. He has issued bigoted and hateful statements like "if given a chance, I will install Ganesh statues in every mosque" and "if they take one Hindu girl, we will take 100 Muslim girls". He is also reported to have said that **communal tensions in U.P. are because of the rise in the numbers of the minority community**. His HYV has used slogans like 'U.P. *Gujarat banega/ Padrauna shuruat karega* (U.P. will become Gujarat, with Padrauna making a beginning) in Gorakhpur and Padrauna. In Gorakhpur it used to be said by his supporters, "Gorakhpur *mein rehna hoga to 'Yogi, Yogi' kehna hoga* (To live in Gorakhpur you will have to chant 'Yogi, Yogi')." Mr. Adityanath personifies a politics which does not shy away from **coercion, intimidation, threats and a ruthless unleashing of violence** against opponents - a politics that cannot be categorized as anything but criminal. He represents the institutionalization of **rabble-rousing** and brute force over informed debate and showcases a distinctly pugnacious strain of public activity and politics. He is akin to a feudal lord who maintains his grip on his people and his writ runs over his territory through a mixture of religion, terror and personal loyalty. Eastern U.P. is an area where such violence and criminality is not unusual.

Steeped in Hindutva

Mr. Adityanath inherits the legacy of fiery politics of his guru and predecessor **Mahant Avidyanath**, who passed away in 2014 and who represented a politics that combined aggressive majoritarianism, vilification of minorities, use of muscle power and protection rackets to sustain economic activity. He had a **successful political career from Gorakhpur and joined the BJP in the 1990s**. The senior mahant was at the forefront of the Ramjanmabhoomi movement, ever ready to launch an agitation for the construction of the proposed **Ram temple at the site where the Babri mosque once stood**. His presence in the VHP's Marg Darshak Mandal as a prominent and vocal sadhu along with Mahant Ramchandra Paramhans of Ayodhya and some others gave weightage to the VHP as possessing religious sanctity through the blessings of sadhus.

Topic
Introduction

The VHP in turn gave the sadhus and sants a larger socio-political platform where they could perform their sacred role and also shape political opinion within the mould of Hindutva. They were expected to give society a 'Hindu' perspective on socio-political matters. The dreams of some of them that Bharat would become the 'jagat guru' once more and regain its 'glorious past' under their leadership could be actualized, as their belief went, in the **VHP-BJP-RSS-steered Hindu rashtra**. The Sangh Parivar brought this 'ascetic force' to a decisive political level which was mutually beneficial. Under Avaidyanath, the Gorakhnath mutt of the Naths moved closer to the Sangh Parivar, eventually sealing the partnership between the popular mutt and Hindutva. This was a time when many monastic orders located in U.P. became politicized through their involvement in the Ramjanmabhoomi movement.

Reason for being chosen as a CM:

What can be the factors that led to the elevation of Mr. Adityanath by the BJP as Chief Minister of U.P. over other front runners? No one knows how Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP president Amit Shah and the RSS decide these matters, but the legacy, the personality, the context give us some clues. **Mr. Adityanath is a fiery Hindutva ideologue who has beaten anti-incumbency and consistently led BJP to success** despite, or perhaps because of, the district's underdevelopment. What also goes in his favour is that **he can wield the stick to silence 'anti-nationalism' or 'love jihad' more effectively, being a sadhu**. His politics has highlighted the neglect of eastern U.P. in economic development and his elevation would consolidate the BJP further in eastern UP. Special mention should also be made about his '**handling of opponents**' which he does the way he thinks right. This would be useful for his party to establish its hold over a State known for its **syncretic ganga-jamuni culture** and Dalits and backward caste assertions.

BJP- A Natural Government:

- **Uttarakhand: Eight people** have served as the state's chief minister, across five assembly terms; **five of those belong to the Bharatiya Janata Party** including the current incumbent **Trivendra Singh Rawat**, while the remaining three belong to the Indian National Congress.
- **Manipur:** Since 1963, **eleven people** have served as Chief Minister of Manipur. **Five of these belonged to the Indian National Congress**. The current Chief Minister of Manipur is **Nongthombam Biren Singh**. **He is the first BJP CM** in Manipur.
- **Goa:** Since 1963, **eleven people** served as Chief Minister of Goa, Daman and Diu union territory and of Goa state. The first was Dayanand Bhandarkar of the Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party, who was succeeded by his daughter **Shashikala Kakodkar, Goa's only woman chief minister**. Pratapsingh Rane of the Indian National Congress, during whose reign Goa had achieved statehood, is the longest-serving officeholder, with over **15 years across four discontinuous stints**. The incumbent chief minister is the **Bharatiya Janata Party's Manohar Parrikar**, who was sworn in on 14 March 2017.

Read further:

<http://www.hindustantimes.com/assembly-elections/yogi-adityanath-as-up-chief-minister-how-bjp-has-played-the-biggest-gamble-picking-the-hindutva-leader/story-9XS1pubEd1AqLF1PrSwoPJ.html>

<http://www.thehindu.com/elections/uttar-pradesh-2017/live-yogi-adityanath-swearing-in-in-uttar-pradesh/article17531393.ece>

<http://indianexpress.com/article/india/no-bias-uttar-pradesh-government-for-all-chief-minister-yogi-adityanath-4576753/>