

9. A peaceful India free of disturbances is taking the global centre stage

By Gopal Krishna Agarwal,

This August, we are celebrating the 76th year of our Independence. India now is a much stronger nation, internally as well as externally. This has been possible due to the determination and vision shown by our current leadership.

Apart from its historical import, the month of August has acquired additional significance due to some major milestones accomplished in the recent past, during this month.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has always stood for strong nationalism and keeping national interest above all other considerations. The focus on India First, whether it is in global diplomacy, external and internal security, or economic management, is undiluted. One of the key successes of the government has been the establishment of domestic peace, stability and the elimination of the scourge of terrorism. Home minister Amit Shah has strongly dealt with issues at home - at the core of the BJP's agenda which bogged down India's internal security and caused continuous uncertainties and communal tensions in the country.

For decades since Independence, Parliament has been reiterating that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India, but the region continued to be disturbed on the ground, fostering and breeding terrorism.

Pakistan was bent on bleeding India through a thousand cuts. The young were disenchanted and resorted to pelting stones. The Indian leadership knew that removing Article 370 was the right step to ensure national security, but lacked the courage and conviction. The narrative was that once Article 370 is removed, there will be bloodshed in the region, and even attempting to dilute it would invite international backlash.

The way the nullification of Article 370 was handled with surgical precision was unprecedented. On August 5, 2019, the smoothness of the handling of the whole situation involved dealing with cross-border skirmishes and international perspectives through determined operations on the ground. Though no cost is high enough to be paid to maintain the territorial integrity of our motherland, it was deeply satisfying to note that the objective was

achieved with little loss of life or damage to public property. Today, there is peace and tranquility in Jammu and Kashmir and it is on the path of economic development. The PM's vision and home minister's acumen accomplished the task.

The Ram temple in Ayodhya was another contentious issue. History tells us that the communal tension in India had its genesis in the demand by Hindus of a grand Ram at Ayodhya.

The temple was related to the Asmita and Swabhiman (self respect) of Hindus. This issue led to several riots and the loss of lives. We all dreamt of a grand temple at Ayodhya, with little hope of it being fulfilled. But the adroitness in maintaining law and order before and after the 2019 Ram Janam bhoomi verdict by the Supreme Court underlined the visionary commitment to a cause. Despite the sensitivity of the issue, there were no riots or tension anywhere in the country.

Bhumi puja (groundbreaking ceremony) for the Ram Mandir" was held on August 5, 2020, and now the grand temple is turning into a reality. There are many such instances, but I will not go beyond the issue of triple talaq. The practice of triple talaq is the bane of Muslim women as they were the primary victims of the politics of appeasement. The vote bank of previous governments went to such an extent that gender equality, women empowerment, and equality before the law as enshrined under our Constitution, were blatantly ignored and the apex court's decisions were reversed through a brute majority in Parliament, as seen in the Shah Bano case in 1985. With triple talaq made illegal in August 2019, India's Muslim women have been empowered. India is truly coming of age as a strong nation. India is now peaceful, free of disturbances, with many of the contentious issues settled, and whose point of view on global issues is being considered with respect. Our image as a strong and no-nonsense nation is now well established. PM Modi, with the able assistance of Shah, is taking India to newer heights.