

Sankaracharya decries attack on Hinduism

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BHUBANESWAR, 15 JUNE: Emphasising the need to protect India's tradition, culture and religious values, Sankaracharya of Puri Gobardan Math, Swami Nischalanand Saraswati, blamed the political class for carrying forward a distorted development agenda which is destroying the nation.

It is "vinash" and not "vikas" that is taking place, he observed, while talking to reporters here and insisting that India has turned directionless. He went on to refer to the Ram Setu controversy and the conversions that are taking place.

"Why is it that conversion is deemed not a problem in our neighborhood, be it due to the influence of Pakistan or China?" he questioned, before announcing that the politics of the 'vote bank' is squarely responsible for allowing large scale conversion to take place.

The seer went on to express concern over the onslaught on the Hindu religion and culture as well as the attacks on religious leaders. Responding to questions on the recent murder of a head of one of the ashrams in Puri, he said it was "a matter of concern" that the state government is unable to protect sadhus.

"A couple of years ago, I used to take pride in telling people across the country about the safety of Puri. I used to say that even at 2.00 a.m. one could walk around Puri without any fear. But I can't say the same thing now."

Answering questions on the suspected links between Maoists and a religious group, the Puri seer said it was for the Chief Minister to spell this out. "Ask the CM, why are you asking me?" demanded the seer, before adding that he was not bothered about threat letters being sent to him.

"The CM should say who killed Laxmanananda Saraswati and who was behind the murder. Laxmanananda was attacked on nine previous occasions and he had escaped, but the tenth attack was committed by trained and armed people. This indicates that somebody had conspired and engaged trained people to eliminate Laxmanananda," he said.

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