

India's die-hard Hindus push to ban beef

NEW DELHI (AP) — Every morning just before dawn, hundreds of trucks loaded with buffaloes trundle into New Delhi's sprawling slaughterhouse complex where young men rush to unload the bellowing cargo. Skidding on heaps of fresh dung, they pull the animals out of the trucks, herding them for the daily auction and eventual slaughter. The work is hard and the money at the end of it, poor.



A worker drags a buffalo after it is unloaded from a truck at Ghazipur slaughterhouse complex in New Delhi, India. India is the world's second-largest exporter of beef, but with the victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party last year, the industry is facing tougher bans on slaughter.

But the business is big. Despite Hindu beliefs that cows are sacred — and the fact that their slaughter is banned in most of the country — India is the world's fifth-largest consumer and second-largest exporter of beef. The meat, which in India comes from bulls and buffaloes, is widely eaten in some communities, particularly by low-caste Hindus and millions of Muslims and Christians.

traders, many of whom have carried their trade for generations, are worried about their jobs.

With the victory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party last year, hard-line Hindu groups are pushing to expand the slaughter ban to include all types of cattle, male or female. Meat

“This is a political decision,” said Mohammed Aqil Qureshi, president of the Buffalo Traders Welfare Association in Ghazipur, the New Delhi neighborhood where the slaughterhouse complex is located. “They want to gratify the Hindus and harass the Muslims.”

A beef ban would hit the poor the most, Qureshi said. “This is poor people's food and is a key source of nutrition for millions of people,” he said.

Beef is far cheaper than most meat in India, often just half the price of chicken, making it a key food for people struggling with poverty.

Fears among meat traders grew last month when India's second-most-populous

state, Maharashtra, extended the slaughter ban to include bulls. While buffalo was not mentioned in the new law, buffalo meat quickly disappeared from most of the state's butcher shops, amid fears of communal violence if it was confused with cow meat.

The ban carries a stiff punishment: Bail is not allowed and anyone convicted of selling or possessing beef faces a 5-year jail term and a \$200 fine, a huge sum for poor Indians.

Within days of the ban, the red-meat business in Mumbai, the state capital, was forced underground, leaving restaurants and eateries scrambling for alternatives. Meat traders in Maharashtra have challenged the ban in court, saying tens of thousands of people have lost their jobs.

The state's decision did not come as a surprise. During his election campaign, Modi promised a countrywide ban on cow slaughter, and that has emboldened Hindu hardliners.

Other states ruled by Modi's party have promised to follow Maharashtra's ex-

ample. The government in Haryana state, bordering New Delhi, is considering laws making cow slaughter comparable to murder. Offenders would face a life term for killing a cow or bull if the state adopts the planned legislation.

Many Hindus regard the cow as the living symbol of their religion. Hindu welfare organizations run “gaushalas,” or cow shelters, in many cities where abandoned cows found wandering the streets are given food and shelter. Feeding a cow is seen by many Hindus as a way to appease the gods and get one's wishes fulfilled.

“Hare Krishna, Hare Krishna,” chanted Minu Aggarwal, a housewife, as she fed soaked lentils and leafy greens to a cow at a New Delhi shelter. The chant means “Lord Krishna,” a popular Hindu god.

As she bent down in obeisance near the animal, a shelter worker touched her head with the cow's tail — a blessing, Aggarwal said.

Pankaj Bansal, a New Delhi businessman feeding pieces of bread to a cow nearby, praised the bans.

“The cow is our mother,” he said. “The ban should be imposed all over the country.”

In recent decades, as millions of Indians traveled abroad for study and work, tastes have slowly changed. Today, many restaurants and small eateries serve steak and kebabs made from buffalo meat. Many people who in the past would not have eaten the meat at home in deference to strictly vegetarian parents and older relatives now openly broil buffalo meat.

Economists say a complete ban on cow slaughter could prove counterproductive as farmers would abandon their animals once they stop giving milk. Worse, farmers may consider it economically impossible to keep cows together if they must feed the animals for the rest of their lives, said Harish Damodaran, an economic analyst.

“The cow has a future only in the states that at least permit selective culling,” Damodaran wrote in the Indian Express newspaper, bolstering his argument with figures that showed farmers switching to buffaloes in states that did not allow cow slaughter.

Posthumous book by Charlie Hebdo chief slams ‘Islamophobia’

PARIS (AP) — The late former editor of French weekly Charlie Hebdo condemns “Islamophobia” as thinly disguised racism in a posthumously published book that was completed two days before he was killed in France's worst terror attack in years.



Stephane Charbonnier

Stephane Charbonnier, known as Charb, was one of 12 people killed by gunmen in the Jan. 7 attack against the Paris office of the satirical newspaper. The two attackers, who were apparently motivated by anger over the paper's caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad, died in a gunfight with police two days later.

Charb's 88-page book, whose title translates as “Letter to tricksters of Islamophobia who are playing the game of racists,” was released in France on Thursday. It criticizes those who exploit anti-Islam sentiment for their own ends.

Unlike the newspaper, the book contains only words, not caricatures — Charlie Hebdo's signature offering.

Like the newspaper, known for lewd and often insensitive humor, the book takes on many sacred cows. He pillories the unquestioning use of the term “Islamophobia” by some journalists either out of laziness or commercial interest, and decries politicians who fan what he considers an unfair debate on national identity.

In an opening poem that targets preconceived notions, Charb writes that his intended

audience includes those who “think it's written in the Quran that drawing the Prophet Muhammad is forbidden ... think caricaturing a jihadist in a ridiculous position insults Islam ... think a drawing is more dangerous than an American drone.”

But Charb also condemns people who demonize Muslims: “If one day all Muslims in France converted to Catholicism ... these foreigners or French of foreign origin would still be seen as responsible for all ills,” he wrote.

He suggests that such attitudes should be characterized as “Muslim-o-phobia” — since it amounts to an irrational fear of people — instead of “Islamophobia,” which would be an attitude against a religion.

In what some might consider poignant prescience, Charb muses at one point about how “one day, just for laughs, I should publish all the threat letters that I received at Charlie Hebdo from Catholic fascists and Muslim fascists” alike.

BRIEFLY

New Hope hosts hour of hymns

HERMISTON — A gathering of song will include the singing of hymns and Gaither songs accompanied by Louise Sundvall.

The Hour of Hymns is Sunday, May 3 at 6 p.m. at New Hope Community Church, 1350 S. Highway 395, Hermiston.

Everyone is welcome. For more information, call Doug Fehrenbacher at 541-561-8327.

Grace and Mercy recently moved to 164 E. Main St., Hermiston. It had previously met at the Hermiston First Presbyterian Church.

Worship services are each Sunday morning at 9 a.m., Sunday school follows at 10:15 a.m. In addition, Inch said mid-week services take place during Lent and other special occasions.

For more information, call the church at 541-289-4535.

Church women celebrate Friendship Day

MILTON-FREEWATER — The Milton-Freewater Church Women United will celebrate May Friendship Day by inviting the Walla Walla CWU ladies to a salad luncheon.

The event is Friday, May 1 at noon at the First Baptist Church, 102 S. Main St., Milton-Freewater. Participants are asked to bring a salad to share; rolls and dessert will be provided. Visitors are welcome.

For more information, contact Helen Richartz at helen_jack@columbiainet.com or 541-558-3969.

Grace and Mercy installs new pastor

HERMISTON — After being served by interns, new parish Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church installed a full-time pastor last month in Hermiston.

Rev. Thomas Inch, who recently served as interim pastor at Trinity Lutheran Church in Coeur d'Alene, Idaho, was installed March 29 at the Hermiston church. He started at the church March 1.

Affiliated with the Evangelical Lutheran Church of America,

Gov. Jindal vehemently defends religious objections bill

BATON ROUGE, La. (AP) — Gov. Bobby Jindal on Thursday gave a full-throated defense of a divisive religious objections bill that critics say could sanction discrimination against same-sex couples in Louisiana.

The Republican governor's comments doubling down in support of the legislation came one day after computer giant IBM sent

Jindal's office a letter signaling “strong” opposition to the bill.

Jindal, speaking to reporters in a wide-ranging interview, attempted to flip the script on opponents by describing the bill as an anti-discrimination measure designed to protect Christians who are morally opposed to same-sex marriage in an increasingly permissive society.

“Religious liberty is not just about the ability to pray a couple of hours a week,” said Jindal, who has presidential ambitions built on an appeal to evangelical Christians and social conservatives. “Religious liberty is about being able to live your life seven days a week according to your beliefs.”

The letter from IBM — which has plans for an 800-worker facility in Baton

Rouge — cuts into the business-friendly reputation Jindal has sought to cultivate and frequently touts.

“A bill that legally protects discrimination based on same-sex marriage status will create a hostile environment for our current and prospective employees, and is antithetical to our company's values,” wrote James M. Driesse, a senior state executive for the company.

<p>Adams Community Church Duane Geyer, Pastor 140 N. Main, Adams, OR 566-9457 Worship 9 am</p>	<p>GRACE AND MERCY LUTHERAN CHURCH, ELCA OPEN HEARTS - OPEN DOOR www.graceandmercy.lutheran.org Sunday Worship 9:00 a.m. Sunday School 10:00 a.m. (Nursery Provided) Fellowship, Refreshments & Sunday School Check Out our Facebook Page or Website for More Information 541-289-4535 Tom Inch, Pastor Grace and Mercy Lutheran Church, ELCA 164 E. Main St. / P.O. Box 1108 Hermiston, Oregon 97838</p>	<p>St. Johns Episcopal Church All People Are Welcome Scripture, Tradition and Reason Family service 9am Sunday Gladys Ave & 7th Hermiston Fr. Dan Lediard, Priest. PH: 567-4672</p>	<p>Redeemer Episcopal Church 241 SE Second St. Pendleton (541)276-3809 www.pendletonepiscopal.org Sunday Morning Worship 9:00 a.m. Wednesday Worship Noon Wednesday Evening Prayer and Pot Luck 6:00 p.m. All Are Welcome</p>
<p>Grace Baptist Church 555 SW 11th, Hermiston 567-9497 Nursery provided for all services Sunday School - 9:30 AM Worship - 10:45 AM 6:00 pm Wed Prayer & Worship - 7:00 PM “Proclaiming God's word, growing in God's grace”</p>	<p>FIRST CHURCH OF GOD First Service @ 8:30am Second Service @ 10:30am 712 SW 27th Pendleton 541-276-1894 www.fcogpendleton.com</p>	<p>FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH -Presbyterian Church (USA)- 201 SW Dorion Ave. Pendleton Service of Worship - 10:00 am Children's Sunday School - 10:20 am Fellowship - 11:00 am www.pendletonpresbyterian.com Open Hearted...Open Minded</p>	<p>Come meet Jesus at PENDLETON BAPTIST CHURCH 3202 S.W. Nye Avenue, Pendleton, OR 541-276-7590 Sunday Morning Worship 8:30 & 11:00 AM Sunday Bible Classes 9:45 AM Sunday Youth Group 6:00 PM Awana Kids Club Tuesdays 6:30 - 8:00 PM K - 6th Grade (Sept-May)</p>
<p>FAITH LUTHERAN CHURCH in Mission for Christ LCMC Bible Study.....9:00 AM Sunday Worship.....10:30 AM Red Lion Hotel (Oregon Trail Room) www.faithpendleton.org</p>	<p>Living Word Christian Center Sunday Worship Service 10:00 AM Wednesday Bible Study 7:00 PM Sharon Miller, Pastor 401 Northgate • Pendleton 278-8082 www.livingwordcc.com</p>	<p>The Salvation Army Center for Worship & Service Sunday Worship Service 9:30 - Sunday School 10:30 - Worship Service Wednesday Bible Study 5:30 Family Fellowship Meal 6:00 Bible Study COME AS YOU ARE 150 SE EMIGRANT (541)276-3369</p>	<p>Peace Lutheran Church ELCA 210 NW 9th, Pendleton Join us Sundays 9:30 am Sunday Worship 10:30 am Fellowship 11:00 am Sunday School & Adult Class ~Come and be at Peace~ on 1290 KUMA noon each Sunday</p>
<p>Community Presbyterian Church 14 Martin Drive, Umatilla, OR 922-3250 Worship: 10 AM Sunday School at 11:30</p>	<p>Faith Center Church Worshipping God • Loving People 108 S. Main • 276-9569 Sunday School 9:30 am Sunday Worship 10:30 am Sr. Pastor, Ray O'Grady pendletonfaithcenter.org</p>	<p>FIRST CHRISTIAN CHURCH (DISCIPLES OF CHRIST) 215 N Main • Pendleton Ph:541-276-5358 Web: www.fccpendleton.org Join us for 10:40am Sunday Worship with Sunday School at 9:30am. Wednesday Fellowship Meal & Study Groups-Open to All Ages-at 5:15pm. Quality Nursery Care is Offered at No Charge.</p>	<p>New Hope Community Church Ministries for the entire family 1350 S Hwy 395, Hermiston Sunday Worship Services: 9 a.m. & 10:45 a.m. Classes for kids during both! Call 567-8441 Servicios en Español</p>
<p>a place to belong Pendleton First INVITING ENRICHING INVOLVING EMPOWERING SUNDAY SERVICES AM Celebration-10:00am AM Kids Place -10:00am The Connection--6:00pm Groups for all ages: Adults, Children, Youth, & College Thursdays Celebrate Recovery-6:00pm Celebration Place-6:00pm Other Groups Available Weekly For more info visit WWW.PENDLETONFIRST.COM 1911 SE Court Ave 541-276-6417 Assembly of God Church</p>	<p>Seventh-Day Adventist Church Saturday Services Pendleton 1401 SW Goodwin Place 276-0882 Sabbath School 9:20 am Worship Service 10:45 am</p>	<p>First United Methodist Church 352 SE 2nd St., Pendleton, OR Office 276-2616 New Pastor Dr. Jim Pierce Worship Service 9:00 AM Fellowship 10:15 AM Broadcast KUMA 11:00 AM Childcare available Choir practice Sundays 8:30 AM</p>	<p>PILOT ROCK BAPTIST CHURCH 585 SW Birch, Pilot Rock, OR 97868 (541) 443-2500 prbconline.blogspot.com Sunday School: 9:30 am Worship Service: 10:45 am Wednesday Services: Kids' Club: 6:00 pm Youth Group: 7:00 pm</p>
<p>GRACE BAPTIST CHURCH Services Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Sunday 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m. Wednesday 7:00 p.m. 2809 S.W. Goodwin Ave. • Pendleton 541-276-3031</p>	<p>BAHA' I FAITH “The Unity of All Mankind” Pendleton Baha'i Center at 1015 SE Court Place Devotions Sundays @ 11:00am; Everyone invited! (541) 276-9360 visit us at www.pendletonbahais.org</p>	<p>To share your worship times call Amanda Jacobs 541-278-2683</p>	