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## Diasporic Politics

### Why in news?

The recent clashes in Leicester in the United Kingdom, and the building polarisation in New Jersey are two recent instances of how diasporic politics is taking a new and deeper turn.

### What is diaspora nationalism?

- Diaspora nationalism is the phenomenon in which people living in foreign countries advocate, finance, and often arm nationalist movements in the countries they have left, often out of a nostalgic longing for an idealized homeland they have been forced to abandon.
- **Khalistan issue**- The fringe movement for a Sikh state (Khalistan) in India was sustained entirely by financing from North American Sikhs.
- **Case of Sri Lankan Tamils**- The Sri Lankan Tamil diaspora in Europe (and particularly the UK) kept Tamil nationalism alive in the island-state for decades.

### Communal tinges

- **Babri Masjid Issue**- The demolition of the Babri Masjid in India saw widespread violence in Britain with temples attacked and a petrol bomb thrown at a Mosque.
- **Islamic fundamentalism**- The idea of using Britain as a launch pad for jihadi ideology was present in some groups that in turn licensed full-blown Islamophobia amongst many non-Muslim communities.

*The scholar Benedict Anderson has called 'long- distance nationalism' can kill people in faraway homelands.*

### What is the Leicester clash about?

- Disturbances in Leicester first began on August 28 2022 when fans from Hindu and Muslim communities reportedly clashed after India secured a win against Pakistan in the Asia Cup T20 tournament.
- Trouble flared up after an unplanned protest was taken out in Leicester.
- The situation worsened as videos of clashes began to circulate on social media.
- There were also reports of temple vandalism.
- The Indian High Commission in London issued a strongly worded statement condemning the violence against the Indian community.

## What about the New Jersey incident?

- **Bulldozer controversy-** On the occasion of Independence Day, bulldozers were brought by specific groups to the parade.
- The move seemed to be open and provocative against a particular community as bulldozers are alleged to be a weapon in the hands of the government to destroy their homes and livelihoods.

## Why are diaspora fractures more distinctive in the US and the UK?

- **Involving politicians-** In the Eighties, after clashes broke out, there were no attempts to draw politicians in the UK or US in accusations of partisanship in India's communal conflicts.
- But in the discourse, the narratives are even pointing fingers at the local state, as if it was partisan in failing to protect a particular community.
- In the US, Hindu-Muslim politics is spilling into the inner core of the Democratic Party.
- **Explicit involvement of Indian state-** The Indian government's statement that begins with violence perpetrated against the Indian community appears to be polarised.
- **Political benefits-** The global ideological patrons of conflict will have an investment in politically milking these incidents.

## References

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