

Ram temples should be built across India: Advani

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) prime ministerial candidate L.K. Advani Wednesday advocated building temples in honour of Hindu god Ram throughout the country.

He was speaking to reporters here after watching the Hindi version of the Telugu film 'Sri Ram Mandir', about a Ram temple at Bhadrachalam in Andhra Pradesh. Advani also released the Hindi audio CD of the film.

'After watching this movie, I was reminded of the Rath Yatra I undertook 18 years ago when (late BJP leader) Vijayaraje Scindia wished me luck at Somnath (in Gujarat from where the journey began),' Advani said.

'It changed my life and I can say it in many ways affected the politics of India. Today I feel a connect with the event,' he added.

The movie, starring Nagarajuna and Nageshwar Rao, is about the ancient temple in Bhadrachalam that is closely connected with the life of saint-composer Bhakta Ramadas or Gopanna, an ardent devotee of Lord Ram. Nagarajuna plays the lead in the film.

'As said in the movie, a Ram temple should be built in every part of the country. The film also shows that Ram bhakti (devotion) can lead to harmony among all religions,' Advani said.

Gopanna, said to be a revenue official of ancient Bhadrachalam, was accused of misusing public funds to build the Ram temple and was imprisoned by the local ruler, a Muslim.

The film depicts the change of heart of the ruler after Lord Ram appears in his dreams. He then forgives Ramadas, who is believed to have undergone many ordeals in his endeavour to build the temple.

Advani has been in the forefront of the BJP campaign to build a Ram temple at Ayodhya, a key plank of his party's agenda.

The movie is reportedly a huge hit in Andhra Pradesh and its producers say they would release its CDs in six languages.

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