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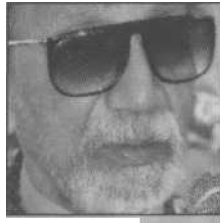
Every Indian has right to settle anywhere

Supreme Court Remarks Send A Strong Message To Thackerays For Their Anti-North Indian Stand

New Delhi: Sending a strong message to Shiv Sena chief Bal Thackeray and his nephew Raj Thackeray for their anti-North Indian statements, the Supreme Court on Friday asserted that every Indian has a constitutional right to settle anywhere in the country.

The apex court also expressed anguish at the increasing tendency of some sections to indulge in violent protests against films, books or paintings which it said should be curbed with an iron hand. "India is not an association or confederation of states, it is a union of states and there is only one nationality that is Indian. Hence every Indian has a right to go anywhere in India, to settle anywhere, and work and do business of his choice in any part of India peacefully," a bench of Justices H K Sema and Markandeya Katju observed in a 36-page judgment.

The apex court made the observation while upholding the Ahmedabad municipal corporation's move to ban the sale of meat in the town during the nine-day "Paryushan festival" observed by the Jain community. The bench's assertion comes



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in the recent backdrop of the Supreme Court's comment that it would not brook any balkanization of the country. "We can understand what is happening. We will not allow/permit balkanization of this country," the court had held on a PIL seeking action against Raj Thackeray for his controversial anti-North Indian remarks. Justices Sema and Katju said the drafting committee of the Constitution had attached great importance to the term "union" as symbolic of the determination of the assembly to maintain the unity of the country.

The apex court said people migrate from "uncomfortable" areas to "com-

fortable areas" in search of their livelihood and other avenues which in the interest of the country's unity cannot be curtailed. "Since India is a country of great diversity, it is absolutely essential if we wish to keep our country united to have tolerance and respect for all communities and sects. It was due to the wisdom of our founding fathers that we have a Constitution which is secular in character, and which caters to the tremendous diversity in our country," the bench observed.

In an allusion to the increasing intolerance to the freedom of speech, the apex court said some are engaging in

