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[Home](#) > Madrassas: behind closed doors Are south Asia's Islamic schools causing a surge in extremism?

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[Financial Times](#) [1]

Source Item:

[Madrassas: behind closed doors Are south Asia's Islamic schools causing a surge in extremism?](#) [2]

Tags:

[Education](#) [3]

[Extremism](#) [4]

[Radicalisation](#) [5]

[Islamic-Texts](#) [6]

Date Published:

Sunday, 28 May, 2017

Summary:

Research and interviews by the FT into the madrassa phenomenon across south Asia show that "Deobandi" has become shorthand for a Sunni Muslim extremist, at least among some commentators. The ubiquitous Deobandi madrassas spawned across Asia since the school's foundation in 1866 were once seen by Muslims as "forts of Islam" amid the westernisation of British India. More recently, however, they have been described as dens of jihadism and violence. Atal Bihari Vajpayee, then Indian prime minister and a leader of the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata party, called religious schools in neighbouring Pakistan "factories of terror" after an Islamist attack on the Indian parliament took the two countries to the brink of war in 2001.

Image:



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Links

- [1] <https://shariawatch.org.uk/?q=authors/financial-times>
- [2] <https://www.ft.com/content/d807f15a-7db0-11e5-98fb-5a6d4728f74e>
- [3] <https://shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/education>
- [4] <https://shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/extremism>
- [5] <https://shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/radicalisation>
- [6] <https://shariawatch.org.uk/?q=tags/islamic-texts>