



CONGRESS SADDLED
WITH ANARCHIC DYARCHY

INSIDE
**ADANI'S
RELENTLESS
LEGAL PURSUIT**

TERROR REBOOT IN
BANGLADESH



VOL. 01, NO. 1 JULY 2025, NEW DELHI ₹50

NEW DELHI POST



DEVIL OF FRAUD

Inside a billion dollar money laundering empire



FEARLESS

AUTHENTIC

UNCOMPROMISED

NEW DELHI
POST

India has hammered Pakistan in all four wars between the two countries—1947, 1965, 1971, and 1999. Now, in 2025, Operation Sindoor has carried out precision strikes deep inside Pakistan, further raising the profile of the Indian armed forces. *New Delhi Post* presents some rare photographs capturing the heroics of our soldiers.

Just a few weeks after independence, India and Pakistan fought their first war in Jammu and Kashmir. Here is a rare picture of Indian troops in the Naushera sector of J&K.

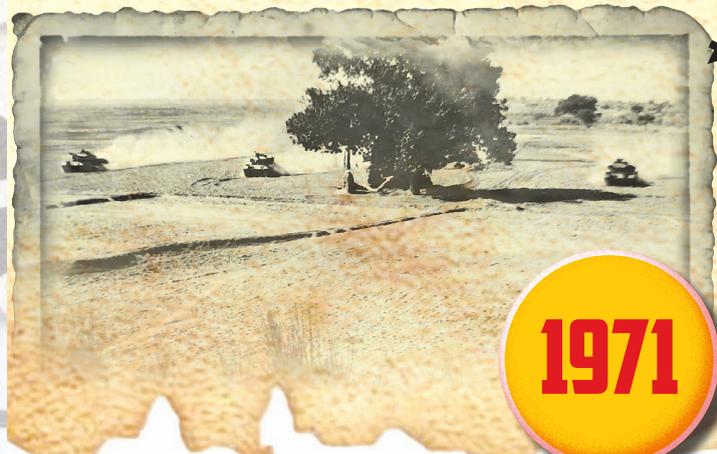


1965



Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri played a firm and decisive role during the 1965 war. To divert Pakistani pressure on J&K, Shastri ordered the opening of a new front in Lahore, significantly escalating the scale of the 22-day war. On October 18, 1965, the PM visited the Lahore front.

Indian forces captured the Haji Pir Pass and the surrounding bulge in POK between August 26–28, 1965. Experts say if there was one battle that can truly be called a turning point in the war, it was the Battle of Haji Pir Pass. However, the pass was later returned to Pakistan under the Tashkent Agreement, nullifying a huge strategic gain.



1971

The historic Battle of Basantar in the Western Sector is remembered for the courage of Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal. In a fierce tank battle, the 21-year-old officer's tank was hit by enemy fire, and he was severely wounded. When ordered to withdraw, he refused to do so. Surrounded by several enemy tanks, Khetarpal made the supreme sacrifice near this tree. He was posthumously awarded the Param Vir Chakra, India's highest military decoration for wartime valour.

CONTENTS

Vol. 01, NO. 1, New Delhi
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PERSPECTIVE



Congress saddled
with anarchic dyarchy

17



Radical Zeal and
Economic Ruin:
Pakistan's Alarming Slide
Under General Munir

22

Deterrence Redefined: India's
Post-Pahalgam Security Doctrine

24

Can Yunus Deliver Free and
Fair Election in Bangladesh?

37



Geopolitical
Stakes of Nepal's
Monarchist
Resurgence

39

FLAGSHIP STORY

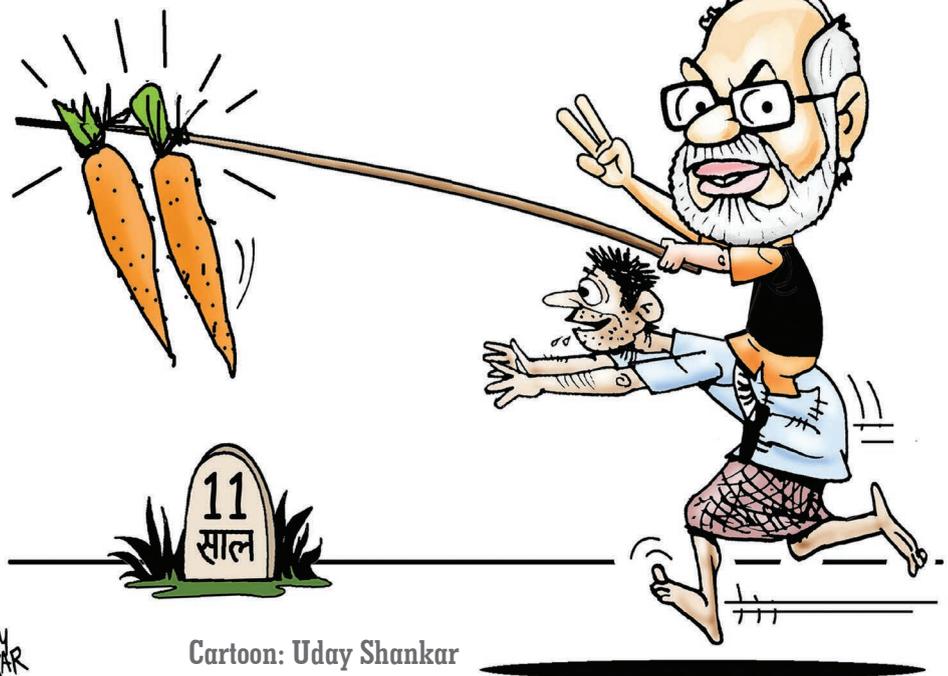


DEVIL OF FRAUD

08

POLITICALLY (IN)CORRECT

11 YEARS OF MODI GOVT.



Cartoon: Uday Shankar

EXCLUSIVE

From Carmichael to Courtroom: Inside Adani's Relentless Legal Pursuit **19**

Endgame in the Red Corridor **26**

Terror reboot in Bangladesh **34**



Stonewalling in Space **37**

WORLDVIEW



Don's Immigration war **29**

Crown and crisis **31**

BUZZ

Mission: Impossible—The Final Reckoning **43**

BEYOND FILTERS

Immortality Inc. **46**

NEW DELHI POST

Because the Truth Must Be Told

Reclaiming Journalism's Soul

New Delhi Post steps into India's media landscape with a fierce, unyielding vow: to champion truth in an age when journalism stands at a perilous crossroads. The craft we love is under siege. Social media and slick technology have spawned a new breed of pseudo-journalists, flooding information with unverified claims and hidden agendas. This unchecked torrent shapes minds with reckless abandon, eroding the sacred line between rigorous journalism and hollow noise.

The pressures mount further. Government overreach and corporate muscle have cornered too many media houses, shrinking the space for fearless, in-depth reporting. But *New Delhi Post* rises here, determined to reclaim journalism's soul. We reject the lure of clickbait, the taint of paid narratives, and the pull of partisan divides. Our mission is clear: to deliver stories that are raw, real, and rooted in relentless research—because truth demands nothing less.

Authenticity is our heartbeat. We seek the untold stories—the dreams, struggles, and triumphs that pulse through humanity—with unflinching honesty. We foster dialogue that enlightens, not enrages. Our reporting dives deep, unearthing insights that don't just inform—they ignite thought, demand accountability. We don't peddle headlines; we craft narratives that endure. Our pages are a fortress of integrity, untouched by compromise. We are here to hold power to account, to amplify the silenced, to offer solutions that bring change. For us, journalism is not just a craft; it's a crusade for a better India.

We call on you, our readers, to fuel this fight. Back us, stand with us. India deserves a media that burns bright with courage and clarity. We pledge to be that flame—fierce, unwavering, alive with purpose. Let us make it roar. Together! ■

SAID UNSAID

“

We might have to put DOGE on Elon. You know what DOGE is? DOGE is the monster that might have to go back and eat Elon

”

Donald Trump
US President

(in reply to billionaire Elon Musk's objection to the controversial budget plans and subsidies)



RACE FOR CM IN BIHAR

What once seemed like a straightforward contest for the chief minister's post in Bihar is now turning into a complex political drama. In Bihar, the chief ministerial race seemed clear: Nitish Kumar for the NDA and Tejashwi Yadav for the Mahagathbandhan. But undercurrents suggest otherwise. Union Home Minister Amit Shah recently reiterated Nitish Kumar as the NDA's face, yet speculation has grown after some JD(U) MLAs voiced concern that the BJP may be planning to back Prashant Kishor, founder of Jan Suraj, post-polls—possibly due to Nitish's health issues. Kishor, an upper caste leader with a growing base and a paid volunteer network, is seen as potentially eroding the BJP's core vote bank. Meanwhile, within the Mahagathbandhan, Congress in-charge in Bihar Krishna Allvaru stirred controversy by refusing to confirm Tejashwi as the alliance's CM candidate, stating that only he is the convenor. The ambiguity has unsettled the RJD camp, as Congress sees growing influence among upper caste voters, partly due to the campaign role given to Bhumihar leader Kanhaiya Kumar.



KERALA CURVEBALL

Shashi Tharoor may be emerging as an unlikely pivot in Kerala's political realignment. Speculation is swirling around the Congress MP's political future. Since his bid for the Congress presidency, Tharoor has visibly remained at odds with the party leadership, particularly Rahul Gandhi. Tensions have also emerged with senior Congress leaders in Kerala, possibly due to internal competition over the chief ministerial face for the 2026 assembly polls. K C Venugopal, a close confidant of Rahul and Priyanka Gandhi, is seen as a frontrunner. Meanwhile, senior BJP leaders are said to be exploring the idea of bringing Tharoor on board and projecting him as their CM candidate—a move that could echo Himanta Biswa Sarma's switch from the Congress to the BJP in Assam. Despite a strong RSS base, the BJP has lacked a charismatic face in Kerala. Tharoor's growing popularity, especially after leading a parliamentary delegation abroad and forcefully articulating India's position on Operation Sindoor, is seen as filling that leadership void.

DIDI VS DIDI IN BENGAL?

As the BJP gears up for the 2026 assembly elections, its strategy for West Bengal is beginning to take a bold new shape. The party recently held a closed-door brainstorming session to devise strategies for the elections in five states. However, the central leadership remains uncertain about its approach in West Bengal. Despite efforts by state leaders Sukanta Majumdar, Suwendu Adhikari, and now Samik Bhattacharya at the helm, the party feels it may not be strong enough to mount an effective challenge against Mamata Banerjee. To bolster its prospects in West Bengal, the BJP is reportedly considering bringing a woman leader to the fore to counter Mamata's strong connection with women voters. MP Locket Chatterjee and MLA Agnimitra Paul—both seen as potential game changers in Bengal's political landscape—may be given key positions in the near future.



HASINA'S BIG PLAN

As political uncertainty has reached its peak in Bangladesh with no certainty about the future of Awami League, former Prime Minister of Bangladesh Sheikh Hasina seems to be toying with several ideas. One of them is the formation of a government-in-exile like the Mujibnagar model. Another proposal within the party is to first reorganise it by bringing new faces into the leadership before attempting a political comeback.

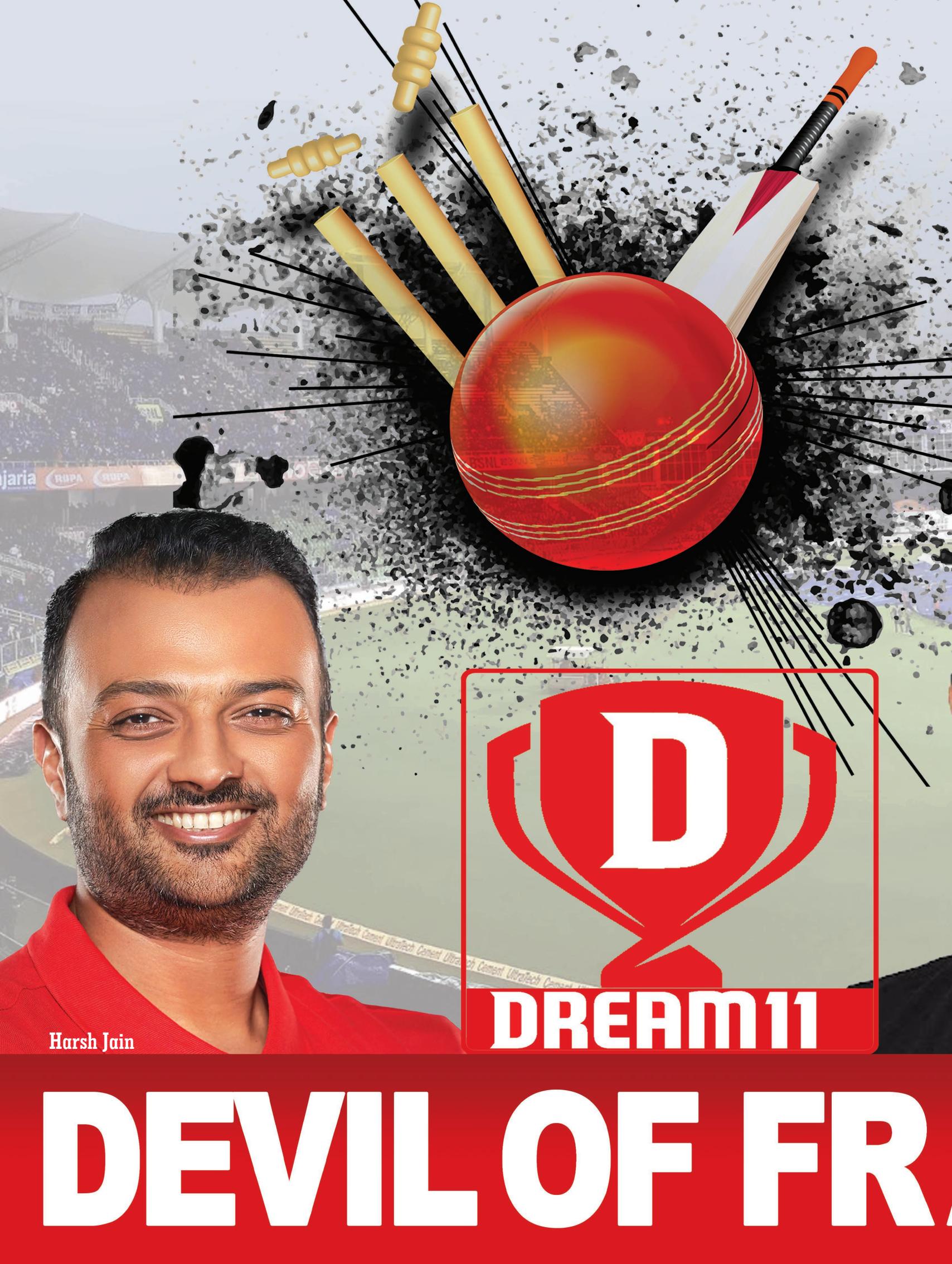
WHISPERS IN JAIPUR

Speculation is rife within the BJP about a possible leadership change in Rajasthan, as several legislators have voiced dissatisfaction with Chief Minister Bhajanlal Sharma's functioning. BJP president J P Nadda recently visited Jaipur and held multiple meetings, during which he publicly praised Bhajanlal's leadership. Sensing a potential change, several contenders, including former CM Vasundhara Raje, were notably active in these meetings. She is normally not seen in programmes organised by the CM. Interestingly, Union Minister for Culture Gajendra Shekhawat, MoS Bhagirath Choudhury, and most BJP MPs were also present at the meetings. While the CM may have felt reassured by Nadda's endorsement in front of rivals, insiders note that the BJP often praises incumbents before replacing them—a pattern seen in other states. The praise, therefore, may not rule out an eventual change of guard in the desert state.



Gautam Lahiri is a Delhi-based veteran journalist. Currently he is the president, Press Club of India

Cartoon: Uday Shankar



Harsh Jain



DEVIL OF FR



Bhavit Sheth

AUD

India's fantasy gaming behemoth Dream11's rise is no fantasy—it is a textbook case of FDI fraud, round-tripping, and foreign control hiding behind Indian faces. At the heart of this empire lies a sophisticated shell structure involving US-based entities, dummy Indian directors, and a trail of regulatory blind spots.

Registered in the US tax haven Delaware, Dream11 Inc. acquired 100% control of its Indian arm by 2022, violating several norms and using fictitious office addresses. While Indian businessmen Harsh Jain and Bhavit Sheth remain the public faces, the real power and ownership are controlled by a foreign company. Regulatory filings used fake company IDs, valuation scams inflated share values by 56,000 times, and ₹774 crore in loans were secured purely on brand hype. To facilitate the laundering, a ₹10 share was shown as ₹5,62,246 of the foreign company, "Dream Sports Inc.", with an inflated valuation of ₹5,801.29 crore. The entire process was executed through round-tripping to convert black money into white.

New Delhi Post's investigation uncovers Dream11 as a brand built on deception, distortion, and deliberate opacity—committing financial cross-border crimes within the elite ecosystem of Indian cricket. Cloaked under the guise of legitimacy, the company used the sport not as a passion, but as a tool to further its objectives.

Money moves out of India

Reintroduces as FDI via offshore structures

No actual Indian shareholders

Unknown true beneficiaries

FDI despite sectoral policy ambiguity

Inflated company valuations to benefit stakeholders

Concern regarding corporate structure

Sponsors Indian cricket team despite foreign ownership

Silence from BCCI and Indian authorities



BEHIND THE FANTASY

How Dream11 engineered a global network of round-tripping, money laundering and FDI violations, moving India's wealth overseas

On March 6, 2013, Dream11 Inc. (later renamed Dream Sports Inc.) was officially registered at 2711 Centerville Road, Suite 400, Wilmington, Delaware 19808, USA. Delaware, a safe haven for white-collar criminals, is now among the most preferred destinations in the world of clandestine offshore dealings. This is where the world's largest fantasy sports platform, Dream11, is legally based—or so the company claims.

While this location is described as the legal office of Dream11 Inc., the truth is quite different. This address actually belongs to Corporation Service Company (CSC), a professional registered agent. CSC facilitates the creation of thousands of anonymous entities, often used for money laundering and tax evasion, providing these entities with an offshore foothold in the US.

Later, the address 960 Holmdel Rd, Building II, Holmdel, New Jersey 07733 was listed as the company's US headquarters. However, this location is not a corporate office, but the premises of Malhotra & Patel LLC, an accounting firm run by Indian-origin professionals: Meet Malhotra, Atul Malhotra, and Anurag Patel. Similarly, in New York, a man named Amit Duggar plays the same

role for Dream Sports Inc.

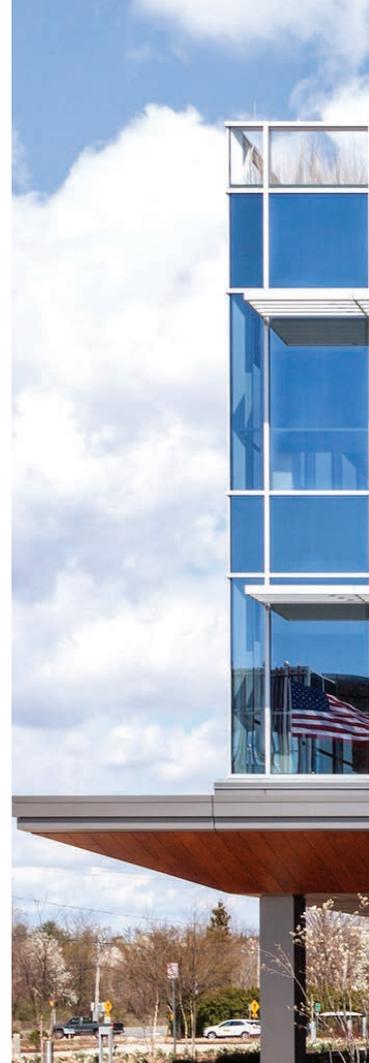
Curiously, no Dream11 Inc. employees work out of these locations, nor does any business take place there. They serve only as mail-forwarding addresses—akin to P.O. boxes—classic indicators of shell companies.

New Delhi Post has conducted detailed investigations, analysing correspondences between Sporta Technologies Pvt Ltd, the Indian operating firm, and Dream11 Inc. from 2007 to 2022. Every document was scrutinized, and each page examined with forensic precision. Our investigation reveals that a carefully orchestrated corporate shuffle was behind Dream11's meteoric rise.

While Dream11 Inc. was registered in Delaware on March 6, 2013, a shell game was already unfolding in India. On August 13, an existing company—Adwaiya Realtors Pvt Ltd—was acquired and renamed Dream11 Fantasy Pvt Ltd.

But the story does not stop there. On October 3, 2024, Dream Sports Inc. was incorporated in New York. Just two months later, on December 10, 2014, Dream11 Gaming Zone LLP was registered with India's Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA).

While all official formalities were handled by agents in New York and Delaware, in India, the





same roles were played by businessmen Harsh Jain and Bhavit Sheth, who acted as directors in both geographies. However, New Delhi Post probe reveals that they were merely puppets, with the real owners of the multi-billion-dollar brand, Dream11, hidden in the shadows.

On 28 May 2019, the name of Dream11 Fantasy Pvt Ltd was changed to Sporta Technologies Pvt Ltd. Earlier, in 2018, another company, Fumistic Gaming LLP, was renamed as Dream Duo

In a telling move that raised more than a few eyebrows, the entire families of Harsh and Bhavit were inducted as directors of Dream Duo in the same year. Crucially, Harsh Jain—also known as Harsh Anandkumar Jain—is the son of Anand Jai-kumar Jain, one of the most trusted confidants of the Ambani family, often dubbed Dhirubhai Am-bani's "third son" in business circles.

Fast forward to 2024, and the corporate chess-board shifted again. All previous directors were replaced, with Sambhav Shrenik Mehta—who had once served as a director at Dream11 Gaming Zone LLP back in 2014—reinstated as director of Dream Duo. Interestingly, all the new directors share deep

business ties with Clover Media Private Limited, a firm closely associated with Anand Jain and his extended family.

This “convergence” of the same family was publicly touted in April 2024 as the “homecoming” of Dream11 to Indian soil. But our investigation exposes this narrative for what it truly was: a carefully planted rumour, serving as a smokescreen to obscure a far murkier corporate reality.

Beneath the complex web of indirect corporate ownership, the involvement of Anand Jain comes to light. His presence hints at a quiet but strategic connection to Reliance Industries, operating like an unseen hand behind the scenes of this corporate game.

All this begs the question: has Dream11 Inc. genuinely ceased its US operations? The answer is no. But has the 99.99% stake—round-tripped from India to the US in 2015 at just ₹10 per share—been transferred back to India? That remains uncertain.

So, who really “returned”? The so-called

HIDDEN RELIANCE HANDS?

2015

₹10/share stake round-tripped from India
Dream11 Inc., USA

2018-2024

Identity obfuscation, director reshuffles
Fumistic Gaming LLP renamed to Dream Duo
Families of Harsh and Bhavit become directors
Dream11 Fantasy Pvt Ltd renamed to Sporta Technologies Pvt Ltd
Entire directorship reshuffled
"Return to India" (Dream Duo) rumours surfaced;
but DREAM11 Inc. still operational in USA



Family Nuxus

Name	Role / Link
Harsh Jain	Director, son of Anand Jain
Bhavit Sheth	Co-founder, family involved
Anand Jain	Close Ambani aide; called "Dhirubhai's third son"
Sambhav Mehta	Long-time associate; reinducted in 2024

THE SMOKESCREEN

Unseen hands of Anand Jain	Is there a strategic connection of Reliance Industries?
Has Dream11 truly ceased US operations?	No
Has the 99.99% stake returned to India?	Unclear
Black Money Laundering	Via international corporate layering
"Homecoming" of 2024	A manufactured narrative
Who returned?	Frontmen (puppets), not real owners
Were Indian agencies fooled?	Yes; MCA, FEMA, ED, RBI bypassed

Clover Media Pvt Ltd

Central node and common link of all directors

Umbrella entity with deep family ties

"puppets"—mere frontmen in an international charade—managed to fool Indian regulators like the MCA, FEMA, ED, and RBI. Using forged paperwork, they laundered black money across borders, all while staying in plain sight.

How does one define a scenario where a foreign-registered entity carries out 100% FDI with no oversight, launders illicit funds through round-tripping, sanitises the wealth of India's elite, inflates its valuation through "creative" accounting—and becomes the official sponsors of Team India and also expanded the fantasy sports business worldwide even tying up with notorious South African event Betway SA20 T20.

Further deepening the concerns are glaring inconsistencies in official registration records. Dream11 Inc. submitted an 11-digit Company Identification

Number—52985018100—to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) in India. However, in Delaware, company registration numbers are always seven digits long. The correct Registration Authority Entity ID, according to US records, is 5298501. This is not merely a clerical error; it suggests a deliberate attempt to obscure ownership structures and may point to falsified or misleading corporate disclosures.

The trail of deceit does not end in Delaware. In New York, another entity under the name "Dream Sports Inc." is registered with DOS ID: 4646396, adding yet another layer to the labyrinthine network of offshore registrations. The rationale behind maintaining parallel entities across multiple US states remains unclear, but it undoubtedly complicates financial and legal scrutiny. ■

2

CASH AND CONCEALMENT

The dirty secret behind Dream11's share valuation scam

A closer examination of the valuation reports exposes a deeply embedded deception. On February 24, 2022, the share value of Dream11 Inc. was artificially inflated—from just ₹10 to an astonishing ₹5,62,246. This dramatic spike was justified by citing brand partnerships with the BCCI, which also enabled the company to secure ₹774.6 crore in loans from major Indian banks.

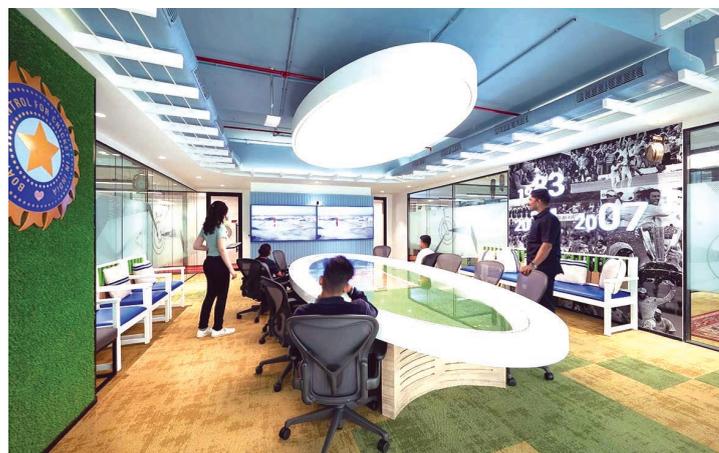
Although the inflated valuation formed the basis of the Dream11 scam, the company made all-out efforts to give it an air of credibility. It reports referenced business contracts with top-tier cricket entities—including Indian cricket players, the ICC, BCCI, and IPL. This illusion of legitimacy helped sell shares at an astronomical price of ₹562,246 against the face value of a meagre ₹10. New Delhi Post has uncovered the modus operandi of this valuation scam, exposing how the shadowy promoters behind the Dream11 brand inflated its valuation to ₹1,568 crore. At the heart of the scheme is Sporta Technologies, with three key companies playing major roles—the most prominent being Dream11 Inc.

In 2013, co-founder Harsh Jain owned 99.99% of Sporta Technologies, effectively making him the sole controller of the company. But by 2021, that entire stake had quietly disappeared and transferred to the Delaware-based Dream Sports Inc.

Surprisingly, there is no record of how this transfer took place. No board resolution was filed with the Registrar of Companies to explain the change. There

is no public documentation showing whether the stake was sold, gifted, or restructured. Yet, several crores' worth of ownership changed hands, without any apparent oversight from Indian regulators.

On 24 February 2022, the company's equity shares were suddenly valued at ₹5,62,246 each, despite having a face value of just ₹10. Soon after, 2,933 shares were sold at ₹3,09,313 apiece. This sharp discrepancy raises serious concerns of financial wrongdoing. Possible motives include money laundering, round-trip-



Dream11's India Office in Mumbai

ping, tax evasion, benami ownership, and deliberate overvaluation for fundraising.

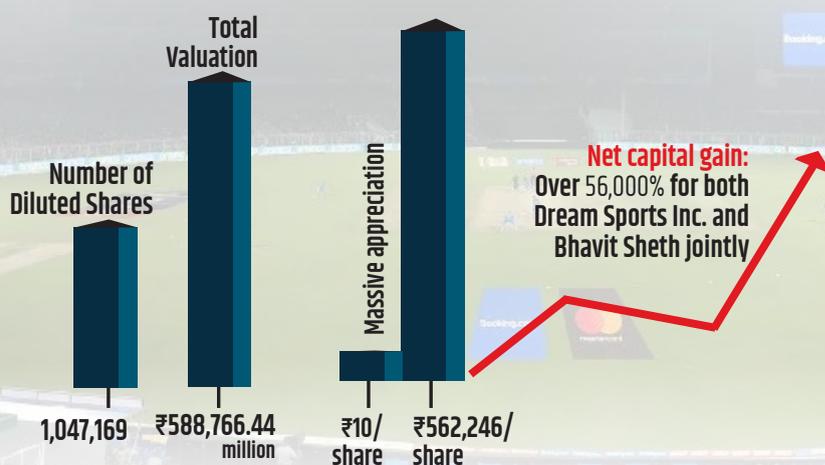
As of August 31, 2021, foreign promoters collectively held 1,041,264 equity shares in Sporta Technologies, effectively giving Dream11 Inc. a 97.17% stake in the company.

Earlier that year, on March 31, 2021, a chartered ac-

EQUITY VALUATION COMPARISON CHART

(As per valuation report dated February 24, 2022)

Shareholder	Shares Held	Value/ Share	Total	Value/ Share	Total	Capital Gain	Capital Gain%
Dream Sports Inc.	1,031,189	₹10	₹10,311,890	₹562,246	₹5,799,479,394	₹5,789,167,504	56126.59%
Bhavit Sheth (jointly with DSI)	78	₹10	₹780	₹562,246	₹43,854,188	₹43,853,408	56121.46%
Total	1,031,267	₹10	₹10,312,670	₹562,246	₹5,843,333,582	₹5,833,020,912	56571.22%



countant Harsh Chandrakant Ruparelia prepared valuation report estimating the value of each share in Sporta Technologies at approximately ₹3,09,300. Based on this valuation, 2,933 equity shares were allotted to a company named Antordaya Commercial Pvt Ltd at the same rate. Earlier, on January 17, 2017, a company called Multiples Private Equity Fund LLP was issued 279 Compu-

Dream Sports Inc.'s holding to ₹5,801.29 crore—a staggering return of 56,250%.

On the same day, a DCF or Discounted Cash Flow-based valuation estimated the total equity value of the company at ₹588,766.44 million (as quoted by a valuer Shashank Maloo), based on a share count of 1,047,169.

INDIAN CRICKET, FOREIGN SHADOWS

July 1, 2023

- ▶▶ BCCI appoints Dream11 as Team India's lead sponsor
- ▶▶ The iconic Team India jersey now features a brand with murky foreign roots

BIG QUESTIONS

- ▶▶ Is India's favourite sport now fronting for foreign capital?
- ▶▶ Are fans being subtly pushed toward betting?
- ▶▶ Is cricket being used for foreign financial agendas?
- ▶▶ Why are BCCI and govt silent despite visible red flags?

orarily Convertible Preference Shares (CCPS) at a face value of ₹100 with a massive premium of ₹329,961.68 per share, totalling ₹14.77 crore as paid-up capital.

As of March 2021, Dream Sports Inc. held 1,031,189 equity shares in Sporta Technologies, each with a face value of ₹10, giving it a 99.99% ownership stake. By February 24, 2022, the value of each share had surged to ₹5,62,246, raising the estimated total value of

On December 31, 2021, Dream Sports Inc. was allotted 279 shares CCPS at a nominal value of ₹100 each. These were later converted into 12,969 equity shares on February 15, 2022, under the supervision of Maloo. The total value of the converted equity shares was ₹1,29,690, and they were formally issued to Dream Sports Inc. on March 28, 2022.

An initial investment of just ₹27,900 was converted into equity worth ₹72.95 crore—delivering an extraordinary return multiple of approximately 2,615 times, which appeared to be a round-tripping, money laundering under the guise of corporate restructuring.

Each share originally acquired at ₹100 was now effectively valued at ₹5,62,246, based on an inflated valuation. Notably, Bhavit Sheth served as both the applicant on behalf of Dream Sports Inc. and the approver representing the Indian entity—raising serious concerns about a potential conflict of interest. ■



THE PAPER EMPIRE

The curious case of Dream11's corporate structure and puppet frontmen

In August 2013, Adwaiya Realtors Pvt Ltd was renamed Dream11 Fantasy Pvt Ltd. The company then operated under the name Dream Fantasy and had an initial shareholding of 10,000 shares—9,950 held by Harsh and 50 by Bhavit.

On February 18, 2015, all but one share—retained by Bhavit—were transferred to Dream11 Inc. In a move shrouded in secrecy, Dream11 Inc. acquired 99.99% of the shares of an Indian entity owned by Harsh and Bhavit, headquartered at Unit No. 7, Trade World, B-Wing, Kamla City, S.B. Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013. The transaction was executed in blatant violation of Indian laws. Dream11 Inc. effectively took control of a shell company that had a registered “office” but no employees, functioning solely on paper.

On February 24, 2019, Bhavit's remaining 50 shares were also transferred, giving Dream11 Inc. 100% foreign ownership of the Indian fantasy sports company—all without a clear, sector-specific regulatory framework governing online fantasy gaming in India at the time.

To cover its tracks, Dream11 Inc. issued a ‘certificate’ to Bhavit suggesting the transfer was necessary to remain compliant with Indian laws. Dream11 Inc. claimed that if Bhavit's shareholding dropped to zero, the Indian company's existence would become null and void. However, in practice, Dream11 Inc. already owned his remaining shares, and the certificate appeared more like a legal prop—designed to mislead regulators.

This move allowed Bhavit—no longer an actual shareholder—to continue appearing as the official operator of India's largest fantasy gaming platform, while real control rested offshore. Bhavit simultaneously served as director of both the Indian and US entities—signing documents for both sides, often in the same transactions. He passed board resolutions in India, authorising them on behalf of Sporta Technologies. These cross-jurisdictional authorizations were often routed via New Jersey, with email trails tracing back to Bhavit himself. His signatures appear on loan documents submitted to Indian banks, raising serious jurisdictional concerns: Should legal liability lie in

NO SHARES, NO ASSETS, YET ₹766 CRORE LOAN

SILENT OPERATOR: BHAVIT SETH

- ▶ Silent operator Bhavit Sheth, the executive director with no equity
- ▶ Yet, he managed to raise a staggering ₹766.6 crore in debt—without mortgaging any immovable assets.
- ▶ Only collateral: 6-month fixed deposit (FD): no clarity on FD ownership
- ▶ Credit facilities extended by: Kotak, Barclays, RBL, AU, CSB, Axis Bank, Yes Bank; routed through NBFCs: Indiabulls Housing Finance, Indostar Capital Finance Ltd, Shriram City Union Finance

UNANSWERED PUZZLE

- ▶ How did banks clear massive loans without equity-based commitment?
- ▶ Why was there no immovable asset collateral?
- ▶ Who owned the short-term FD?
- ▶ Was bank due diligence compromised?

OCTOBER 22, 2020

- ▶ ₹150 Cr loan request to IndusInd Bank (Opera House Branch, Mumbai) signed by Bhavit Sheth

ON PAPER, Bhavit executed everything—signing, authorizing, and legitimizing what now appears to be a well-organised, cross-border paper fraud.



FANTASY SPORTS OR GAMBLING?

- Ambiguity remains around fantasy sports classification in India
- Dream11 flourishes by exploiting a legal loophole between “Game of Skill” and “Game of Chance”
- Fantasy sports marketed as “skill games”, but in practice, resembles online betting

FDI POLICY GREY ZONE

- Online fantasy sports not recognized as separate sector
- FDI banned in:
 - Gambling & betting
 - Lottery businesses

the US or India?

On paper, Bhavit executed everything—signing, authorizing, and legitimizing what now appears to be a well-organised, cross-border paper fraud. His dual role reveals how one individual could control both ends of a corporate shell, bypassing laws meant to prevent such conflicts of interest.

Despite operating in India, Dream11 Inc. never completed KYC formalities with the MCA. No official documents were submitted on the company’s

behalf either. Even as real control resided overseas, paperwork in India continued to project a façade of domestic ownership and governance.

In contrast, Harsh stayed largely behind the scenes. Like his father Anand Jain, he avoided all formal paperwork—his name appears on no signatures, resolutions, or legal filings.

Further irregularities arise under Section 61 of the Companies Act, 2013, which states: *A company may, if so authorized by its Articles of Association, alter its share capital by passing an Ordinary Resolution in a general meeting.* This means a company can alter its share capital only through a general meeting of shareholders. But when Sporta Technologies, repeatedly increased its share capital, neither Harsh nor Bhavit was an actual shareholder. How were such changes legally approved then?

This discrepancy raises serious questions about corporate governance and shareholder manipulation. Harsh may have played the symbolic face of the company, while Bhavit acted—perhaps unknowingly—as a “sacrificial goat” in a deeper game of shadow ownership and control by foreign entities. ■

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CONGRESS SADDLED WITH ANARCHIC DYARCHY

Dual power centres in Delhi and states have proved to be the recipe for intra-party chaos. The dreary conclusion is inescapable, what with the party's quixotic losses in Haryana and Maharashtra

At age 140, the Congress's health card is not a good read. The party has two chains of command, one de jure and another de facto. The reference here is to Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, whose writ carries greater weight and runs faster than that of the elected party president.

The dichotomy is not an issue in the party where the Gandhi family enjoys a special status. They indeed are a dynasty, but not in the sense the Bharatiya Janata Party would have one understand. They are a democratic dynasty—the likes of which abound in South Asia—who win and lose elections in their pursuit of power. The worrisome part is that the Congress is losing more elections than it is winning against an ascendant BJP since 2014.

Pragmatic electoral tie-ups, together with Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra before the 2024 polls, captured popular imagination, increasing the party's tally in the Lok Sab-

ha to nearly 100. The question today is whether that was a flash in the pan, the Congress looking abysmally under-prepared to keep up the momentum?

Dual power centres in Delhi and states have proved to be the recipe for intra-party chaos. The dreary conclusion is inescapable, what with the party's quixotic losses in Haryana and Maharashtra. It mercifully won Jharkhand in tandem with Hemant Soren's JMM. But so shaky now is the coalition that many fear it might fall apart before the upcoming Bihar polls.

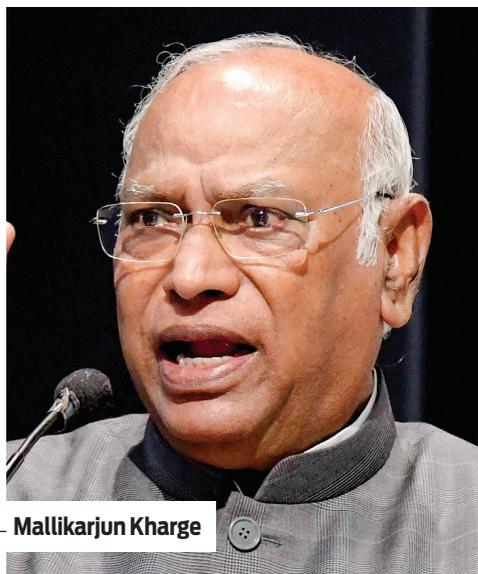
What is ailing the Congress-JMM alliance despite cordial inter-personal relations between the Gandhis and Sorens? A blunt answer to that would be—organisational atrophy and extra-curricular pursuits of political managers assigned to the mineral-rich state.

The purpose here is not to besmirch images. The objective is to underscore the perfunctory selection of leaders for sensitive tasks involving coalition partners. The mess some of them make tells the quality of human resources and political advice available to the Kharge-Rahul duo.

The blame for several such appointments, with or without the express clearance of the big two, lies at the doorstep of Rahul's major domo, K C Venugopal. As AICC general secretary (organisation), he is the emperor, so to speak, of all that he surveys. His job profile or political clout is no different from that of the late Ahmed Patel in the Sonia Gandhi era.



Rahul Gandhi



Mallikarjun Kharge

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Venugopal, however, lacks the understated ways of Patel, who remained in the background while serving Sonia. He did at times pull rank, but with the explicit knowledge and authority of the party chief. In those days, a word from Patel was perceived as a word from Sonia.

The arrangement worked perfectly; Patel, the plenipotentiary, performed the difficult, dirty job of seeking resignations or delivering marching orders to ministers, state presidents, and party functionaries. He also quelled dissidence; his persuasive ways gave the sulking leaders a sense of belonging that kept them from leaving the party.

Barring sundry exceptions, no such fire-fighting happens these days in the Congress. How else does one explain Shashi Tharoor's incremental distancing from the party? The alienation, ironically, is attributed to Venugopal, who has a serious clash of ambition in Kerala with the charismatic Thiruvananthapuram MP. While Patel preferred low visibility, Venugopal's gawkily obtrusive. He tends to be a master of all traits, even conducting media briefings and featuring in photo frames with the Gandhi family members. Quite irritating at times is his forced omnipresence.

In 2009, when Sonia's office was not informed about the participation of an Indian army contingent in France's Bastille Day parade, Patel was assigned to politely convey to Dr Manmohan Singh that the government he headed was that of the Congress. The message

was not a reprimand. It was a reminder.

Patel did not arrive from nowhere. Sonia drafted him on her team on the strength of his stint in Rajiv Gandhi's inner circle. He was an experienced hand, not a neophyte.

In a reshuffle Sonia carried out in 2002, four years after joining active politics in 1998, she appointed Ambika Soni and Patel as her political secretaries. The decision fetched a lot of flak. This writer too questioned the need for two political secretaries when the Congress president had an entire working committee for advice and guidance.

In a meeting later, Sonia recalled my comment to clarify that she did so to obviate a single power centre in her secretariat. With Venugopal seeking to control the behemoth that's the Congress, one is compelled to ask why Rahul has not gained from Sonia's experience. His trusted lieutenant's understanding of the Congress's myriad political tiers is no better than his own. He plays favourites and dares often to act beyond his remit.

I was shocked beyond belief on being told the other day that the entry to the new AICC headquarters at Kotla Marg—named Indira Bhawan—was graded and hugely restricted, not just for the Press (which one can understand, given the shenanigans of a section of the electronic media) but also party workers. There are different entry passes for different floors, signifying party hierarchy.

The arrangement barricades the *janata* from the party that takes pride in having led a mass movement to win freedom from the British. Gone are the days when party workers could roam around at the AICC headquarters at 24, Akbar Road, often bumping into and managing to have a word with senior office bearers. Now, leaders are hardly seen at Akbar Road and workers at the new complex—the keys to which are with Manish Chatrath, the designated in-charge of the Kotla Marg complex.

Party veterans agree that the AICC complex cannot be like a cantonment. The state of affairs, chuckled a leader, is proof that God exists: "How else does one explain a functional anarchy that's the Congress?" ■



AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal with Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi

Two deceased war veterans were named as alleged co-conspirators in a recent submission by a company in the Adani Group in a court in Australia. The somewhat bizarre filing was part of a legal battle that has been going on now for more than four and a half years between the group's mining company on the one hand and an environmental activist, Benjamin Pennings, on the other.

The latest court filing indicates the extent to which the wealthy Adani Group will go against an individual, Pennings, who, together with many others, has been opposing the establishment of what was once described as the "world's biggest greenfield coal mine" project located in the Carmichael region of the Galilee Basin of Queensland in north-east Australia.

ADANI'S LEGAL WAR TARGETS ACTIVIST, DEAD VETERANS

The Adani conglomerate is headed by Gautam Adani – one of India's and one of the world's richest businessmen. He is close to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Pennings grew up in the working-class suburbs of Adelaide and Sydney and now lives with his family in Brisbane. He actively participated in campaigns to stop the coal mine from coming up.

The coal mine project, which includes a railroad and a seaport at Abbot Point, has been opposed not just by environmental activists like Pennings but also by groups representing the Wangan and Jagalingou aboriginals. They have argued that the coal mine, the railroad and the port would damage the fragile ecology of the area near the Great Barrier Reef, a "world heritage site" declared by UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization).

Global financial institutions from around the world withdrew from funding the mining project, resulting in it being scaled down

FROM CARMICHAEL TO COURTROOM

INSIDE ADANI'S RELENTLESS LEGAL PURSUIT

OZ COURT CASE REVEALS HOW DEEP POCKETS SHAPE GLOBAL LITIGATION

to less than a quarter of its original size. India's biggest public sector bank, the State Bank of India, had planned an investment of one billion US dollars in the project, but that too did not materialise.

In the legal battle between Pennings and Adani, the former has been accused by the latter of trying to disrupt mining operations by conducting protests against the Adani company's suppliers and contractors.

On December 6, 2024, the Supreme Court of Queensland in Brisbane, Australia,

dismissed significant portions of a legal case instituted by Adani Mining against 52-year-old Pennings. Presiding over the court, Justice Susan Brown labelled some of the company's claims as "confused and embarrassing".

More than four years earlier, on September 11, 2020, the same court had imposed an injunction on Pennings to stop him from using "confidential material" and ordered him to take down social media posts and stop campaigning against the coal mine.

Ten days later, on September



Adani Group's controversial Carmichael coal project in Queensland, Australia



21, 2020, Pennings told me how his wife and children were being followed and that his home had been raided twice by “detectives” engaged by the Adani Group. This, he argued, was not merely against his right to privacy but illegal at the same time.

Pennings acknowledges that he and others who campaigned against the setting up of the coal mining project were not entirely successful, although the size of the project was drastically reduced.

The Adani project has received the support of politicians in Queensland, cutting across party lines on the ground that many jobs have been created. The first consignment of coal was shipped from Abbot Point to India in December 2021.

In 2023, Adani dropped the part of its claim that Pennings had unlawfully accessed secret information. In her 63-page judgement, Justice Brown threw out allegations that Pennings had caused two contractors to withdraw from the Carmichael coal

ADANI'S OPPOSITION TO PENNINGS APPEARS TO BE ON A WEAK WICKET

mining project, calling them “embarrassing” and “inconsistent”.

Adani Mining appealed the judgement and made fresh pleas. In March, a different judge, Justice Paul Freeburn published an interlocutory judgement establishing a timeline for Pennings to file an amended defence. He said the

case appeared to be “making no real progress towards a trial”, according to an exclusive report by Ben Smee published in *The Guardian Australia* on April 9.

The report quoted Justice Freeburn saying: “And so, some four-and-a-half years into the litigation, the plaintiffs have recently filed and served their fourth version of the statement of claim and now expect, by their proposed directions, a further amended defence, a reply and a regime for particulars and

disclosure... This is in respect of events that occurred between 2015 and 2020 – that is, between five and 10 years ago.”

As mentioned, Adani Mining has named two dead Australian war veterans in court documents alleging they were part of the conspiracy against the coal mining company to disrupt its operations. These veterans are Bill Ryan, who passed away in 2019, and Mike Fitzsimon, who fought in the Vietnam War and died in 2022.

Two other alleged co-conspirators have been mentioned in the court submission by Adani. However, their names have been misspelt, according to *The Guardian Australia*. The publication interviewed the sons of Ryan and Fitzsimon, who used very harsh language against Adani.

Pennings was quoted as saying the two war veterans “heroes, dedicating their final years to protect us from climate breakdown.” He added: “I’m not sure what’s happened that’s led Adani to pick them out now, years after they have passed away. It is just another twist and turn in this harrowing five-year saga.”

Adani Mining put out a statement that its legal proceedings were “solely against Mr Pennings” and that other alleged co-conspirators were “simply named in our evidence of Mr Pennings’ activities”. The statement went on: “Any attempt by Mr Pennings or Mr Ryan’s family to suggest otherwise is incorrect and speaks to the way Mr Pennings has conducted himself throughout this case...We make no apologies for protecting our rights and the rights of hard-working Queenslanders to go about their legal and legitimate work.”



File picture of a protest against Adani's coal project in Australia

The Adani project has received the support of politicians in Queensland cutting across party lines on the ground that many jobs have been created. The first consignment of coal was shipped from the Abbot Point to India in December 2021

Justice Freeburn reportedly said: “The proceeding has not languished through a lack of resources. The judgment of Brown J in December 2024 explains that a costs statement prepared by the plaintiffs, in respect of some costs orders in favour of the plaintiff, claimed (Australian dollars) \$1.1 million... That was described by Her Honour as a ‘startling amount’ given the

applications occupied less than two days [of] hearing time, albeit with some level of complexity... On any view, the litigation has consumed large slabs of the parties’ resources and the court’s resources. It is hard to escape an overall impression that the parties are mired in the trenches of interlocutory warfare”.

Adani claimed Pennings had “spent years trying to delay these civil legal proceedings from going to trial”.

However, what seems apparent to this correspondent is that – in Australia, India, or elsewhere – financial resources matter a lot in “lawfare”. ■



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RADICAL ZEAL AND ECONOMIC RUIN PAKISTAN'S ALARMING SLIDE UNDER GENERAL MUNIR

While Pakistan had earlier acknowledged that terrorism was unacceptable and the Line of Control should be respected, it is now clear that Pakistan's present Army Chief, General Asim Munir, holds a different view. He appears to have little interest in stopping cross-border terrorism

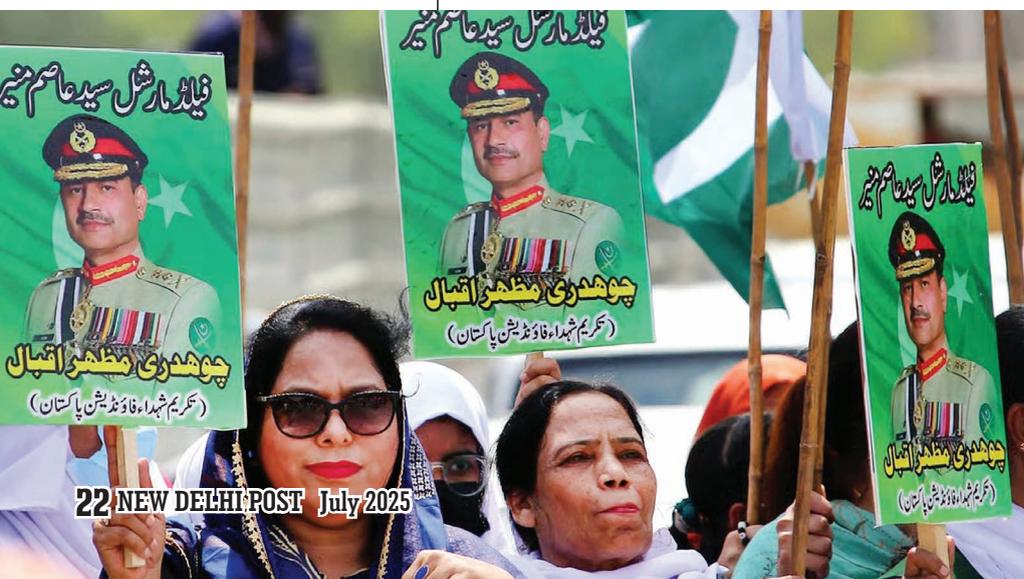
Pakistan today faces mounting internal and external challenges that have left it in prolonged economic and diplomatic isolation with most foreign countries, except China, exercising extreme caution before offering any meaningful assistance. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, a pragmatic politician averse to adventurism, now leads the government. In contrast, his elder brother, Nawaz Sharif has a very different legacy. His tenure is remembered for duplicity; while he famously welcomed India's then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee during the 1999 Lahore visit, his army chief was simultaneously orchestrating the infiltration of Pakistani troops into the Kargil heights. India responded swiftly and decisively, driving the intruders out in what became a defining moment in Indo-Pak military history.

Circumstances in Pakistan changed rapidly in the years following the Kargil conflict. Realizing that war would lead the country nowhere, General Parvez Mushar

raf initiated 'back channel' diplomacy with India. These discreet negotiations, conducted during the tenures of Prime Ministers Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh, led to a broad, informal understanding that ruled out any redrawing of borders. These talks focussed instead of making the Line of Control (LoC) functionally "irrelevant"—allowing for the free movement of people, goods, and services.

The dialogue gave rise to what became known as Musharraf's Four-Point Formula for resolving the Kashmir issue. The proposal included: progressive demilitarisation of both sides of Kashmir, no change in territorial boundaries, unrestricted cross-border movement, provision for self-governance (short of independence), and a joint mechanism to address issues of mutual concern. Crucially, the entire framework was premised on the cessation of cross-border terrorism and infiltration.

While Pakistan had earlier acknowledged that terrorism was unacceptable and the Line of Control should be respected, it is now clear that Pakistan's present Army Chief, General Asim Munir, holds a different view. He appears to have little interest in stopping cross-border terrorism. This was starkly reflected in his response to the Pahalgam terror attack, which he reportedly welcomed. By all accounts, General Munir exhibits a Messianic zeal in treating terrorism not just as a tactical tool, but as a central pillar of his approach to India. He is also



Pakistan remains economically stagnant and persistently appealing for foreign aid to ensure that it does not become bankrupt. There is little doubt that there are going to be no easy solutions to Pakistan's economic problems

believed to be actively nurturing links with individuals and networks associated with the Khalistani movement, particularly in countries like Canada where such elements have gained political traction.

General Munir has bolstered his power by aligning himself with the hardline views of radical Islam in Pakistan. Unlike his predecessors such as General Musharraf or his own mentor General Qamar Javed Bajwa, Munir displays little of their strategic nuance or diplomatic pragmatism. His visceral hostility towards India is apparent, and his reaction to the Pahalgam terror attack, which he reportedly welcomed, underscored his aggressive posture. By all indications, he played a key role in orchestrating the atrocities through his loyal operatives. Lacking experience in global affairs and driven by an intense ideological fervour, Munir failed to anticipate or prepare for a forceful Indian response. What followed was a swift and punishing military retaliation by India—one that caught Pakistan's establishment off guard in its scale and precision.

Rather than taking the usual and expected route of using air and military powers, the Modi Government resorted to a massive use of highly accurate missiles to target key governmental institutions and even the centres housing well-known terrorists and terrorist organisations, apart from important military installations. This was the first instance when it achieved its military and diplomatic objectives in a matter of hours. Unlike the arduous mountain warfare seen during the Kargil conflict, where Indian infantry had to climb



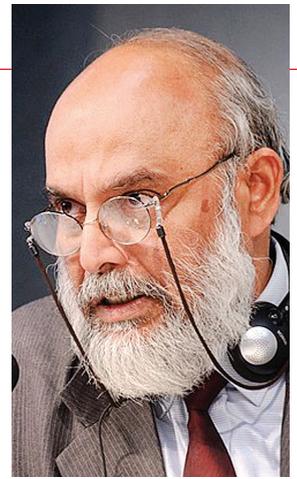
General Asif Munir

high mountains, the operations on April 22, 2025, were swift and precise, requiring no such physically demanding manoeuvres by Indian forces.

New Delhi's diplomatic offensive in the aftermath of Operation Sindoor laid bare the full facts to the rest of the world. Pakistan did receive predictable support from its long-term friends like China and Turkey. But the delegations led by prominent members of Parliament from virtually every major political party who spread out across the world ensured that the military action taken by India was understood clearly. More importantly, there appears to be growing international understanding that while a democratic, secular India has moved ahead swiftly, Pakistan remains economically stagnant and persistently appealing for foreign aid to ensure that it does not become bankrupt.

There is little doubt that there are going to be no easy solutions to Pakistan's economic problems. There is little reason to believe that Pakistan will become an economically self-reliant country in the foreseeable future. Its rate of savings is pitiable and unlikely to change soon. Pakistani workers in neighbouring Persian Gulf countries still send large remittances regularly. Despite this, Pakistan continues to be desperately short of foreign exchange resources. Ending support for terrorism and behaving like a good neighbour with India may provide some relief for ordinary Pakistanis. But the likes of General Munir are hardly likely to allow any government in Pakistan to follow a sensible path. ■





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DETERRENCE REDEFINED: INDIA'S POST-PAHALGAM SECURITY DOCTRINE

The nature of defence and security-related challenges that will shape India-Pakistan relations shortly will be mediated by three interlinked domains, and New Delhi's ability to manage them with the requisite degree of astuteness and strategic nimbleness

India-Pakistan relations are in a state of suspended hostility with the pause in Operation Sindoor, a military operation New Delhi had launched against terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan on May 7, in response to the terror attack in Pahalgam on April 22 that killed 26 people, mostly tourists.

The cessation of hostilities was announced on May 10 and has held since – albeit in an uneasy manner. The Indian military was able to effectively demonstrate that it could strike terror infrastructure deep in Pakistan with precision, notwithstanding some tactical mistakes in the early phase of Operation Sindoor.

Consequent to the May 10 agreement that both nations would desist from further military action, New Delhi has indicated

that a new normal has been set as far as state-sponsored terrorism is concerned. Refusing to be intimidated by 'nuclear blackmail', the Modi government has announced that it intends to treat any future Pakistan-sponsored terrorism as an act of war, with India adopting a strategy of escalation dominance to deter future attacks.

The nature of defence and security-related challenges that will shape India-Pakistan relations shortly will be mediated by three interlinked domains, and New Delhi's ability to manage them with the requisite degree of astuteness and strategic nimbleness.

The most critical determinant is the nuclear domain. After the pause of Operation Sindoor, India has asserted that it will not be 'blackmailed' by Pakistan's nuclear weapon capability. Prime Minister Narendra Modi



The devastated JeM headquarters in Bahawalpur, Pakistan, after Indian airstrikes during Operation Sindoor

India must ensure that its bilateral nuclear deterrence posture remains stable and crisis-proof. This would enable New Delhi to consider responding in the conventional military space if there is another Pakistan-related terrorist attack

underlined it in his address to the nation on May 12, when he said, "India will not tolerate any nuclear blackmail. Terror camps growing under the shelter of nuclear blackmail will not be tolerated".

During Operation Sindoor, India repeatedly conveyed to Pakistan that it was not targeting any nuclear facility or assets of that country to ensure that there was no panicky WMD (weapons of mass destruction) escalation. India's objective was limited to degrading the terrorist infrastructure that the Pakistani army has nurtured for decades, and it is now evident that there was no tangible nuclear element in Operation Sindoor. The CDS General Anil Chauhan confirmed this in his recent remarks in Singapore.

There is a grey area in that US President Donald Trump has repeatedly claimed that he enabled the ceasefire, since there was imminent danger of a "bad nuclear war" – a claim that neither India nor Pakistan has accepted.

Hence, India must ensure that its bilateral nuclear deterrence posture remains stable and crisis-proof. This would enable New Delhi to consider responding in the conventional military space if there is another Pakistan-related terrorist attack.

The related domain is the quality of India's conventional military capability, and this came into sharp focus during Operation Sindoor. Air power proved to be a critical component in the success of this operation, and the inadequacies in this sector were spelt out unambiguously by the Chief of Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal AP Singh, in his recent address at the CII summit.

It is worth recalling that a parliamentary committee headed by Major General (Retd) B C Khanduri had highlighted both quantitative and qualitative gaps in India's military inventory nearly a decade ago during the first term of the Modi government. However, necessary funding support to redress the gaps has not been forthcoming.

India's conventional military preparedness will have to be of a higher order and improved texture (jointness and integration

of capabilities) than what it had been before Operation Sindoor, if the credibility of the 'new normal' is to be acknowledged by the adversary. The other strand that will have to be factored in is that in the next engagement or war, Pakistan will fight with Chinese armaments and be guided by the PLA operational awareness and related command and control template. This will make it a two-front war, a reality that Indian planners will have to contend with.

The third domain is India's intelligence capability related to terrorism. It merits recall that Operation Sindoor was initiated in response to a terror attack in Pahalgam. The scourge of terrorism degrading India's internal security has been an abiding challenge since the Indira Gandhi years. The more recent instances of cross-border supported terror attacks include Indian Parliament attack in 2001, Mumbai in 2008, Pulwama in 2019, and Pahalgam in 2025. Each of them is a tragic punctuation, and regrettably, in each case, it was an intelligence lapse.

India's abiding internal security challenge is to ensure that no further acts of major terrorism dent the internal security fabric of the country and endanger the lives of innocents, be they Indian citizens or tourists. To pre-empt any such exigency, the existing inadequacies in the national intelligence grid and region-specific intelligence gathering capabilities must be reviewed objectively, and necessary policy corrections must be applied.

This is an area that has been languishing since the Kargil War of 1999, and the various recommendations made by the KRC (Kargil Review Committee) have been relegated to the backburner by successive governments.

In announcing the new normal, India has set a demanding benchmark for itself – that it will act decisively in the event of another terror attack. Whether to preempt such an attack or apprehend the perpetrators when this happens, the composite national security capability will have to be honed. The contours and tenor of India-Pakistan relations will be shaped by the outcome, or the lack thereof. ■



ENDGAME IN THE RED CORRIDOR

HOW TO REBUILD BASTAR AFTER THE MAOIST RETREAT

After decades of insurgency, displacement, and deep-rooted mistrust, there is a growing sense that Chhattisgarh's Maoist chapter is nearing its end. The killing of Maoist chief Nambala Kesava Rao last month, followed closely by the retreat of his deputy, Venugopal, from Bastar, marks not only a significant strategic win for the government but also a potential turning point for the region's embattled tribal communities—particularly those living in the dense forests of Bastar.

The Maoist movement, once a formidable insurgency entrenched in the dense jungles of Dandakaranya

— with Bastar as its epicentre — is now in visible decline. Reports from remote villages across Bastar, long considered the core of Maoist activity, indicate that senior leaders such as Venugopal, the group's second-in-command, have fled, underscoring the erosion of their operational control.

But is this truly the end? And if so, what next? Three crucial, unresolved questions loom over Bastar:

- How to facilitate the collective surrender of the remaining predominantly Adivasi Maoist fighters?
- How to ensure justice for victims of over half a century of conflict?

- What should a sensitive, meaningful roadmap for development look like for these long-isolated communities?

Unlike West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh (now Telangana), or Bihar—where revolutionary literature and popular movements had deep foundations—Bastar's brush with the Maoist ideology is unique. Maoist leaders never considered Bastar a fertile ground for true revolution. Instead, following the collapse of their movement in West Bengal by the late 1970s, Maoist strategists identified Dandakaranya as a safe haven to bide their time. The plan was never to launch a revolution in Bastar; it was



AS THE GUNS FALL SILENT AND THE MAOIST LEADERSHIP RETREATS INTO OBSCURITY, THE FUTURE OF BASTAR HINGES ON HOW THE STATE NAVIGATES THE TWIN IMPERATIVES OF JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT

to lie low till conditions elsewhere improved.

Yet, in this liminal space, the state's missteps transformed the region into a Maoist stronghold. In the 1990s, under BJP chief minister Sundarlal Patwa, the government in undivided Madhya Pradesh, acknowledging its lack of grassroots presence in Bastar, collaborated with local Congress and CPI leaders for a "Jan Jagran Abhiyan"—an awareness campaign that quickly degenerated into a state-sanctioned witch hunt. The police, acting on political cues, began harassing tribals suspected of Maoist sympathies. Ironically, the tribal communities, who had ben-

efited from the Maoists' low-key resistance against forest officials and local exploitation in the prior decade, were now pushed fully into the rebels' embrace. This was, in effect, the genesis of Maoism in Bastar—not as a purely indigenous uprising, but as an unintended outcome of misguided and heavy-handed state intervention.

The second wave of intervention proved even more destructive. In 2005, five years after Chhattisgarh had been formed, Salwa Judum—framed as a grassroots uprising against Maoist influence but widely criticised for its excesses—further militarized and polarized Bastar. Backed by the state, this vigilante-style campaign led to widespread violence, forced displacement, and deepening mistrust within tribal communities. Far from weakening the insurgency, it fractured the local society and inadvertently bolstered Maoist legitimacy as state brutality made their resistance appear more justified in the eyes of many villagers.

But in their third, more strategic campaign against Maoist insurgency, personified by Union Home Minister Amit Shah's stated objective of ending the left-wing insurgency, the BJP has succeeded, largely due to shifting sentiments among Bastar's native Adivasi leaders. Over time, tribal elders realized that, while Maoists may have spoken their language and lived among them, their struggle had ceased to bring any true long-term benefit to the society. Tired of endless conflicts and mounting casualties, the region's leaders became open advocates for peace, eroding the Maoists' popular base.

Indeed, in the war for legitimacy—like all revolutions, ultimately a social drama—it is the people who decide. As safety and hope began to

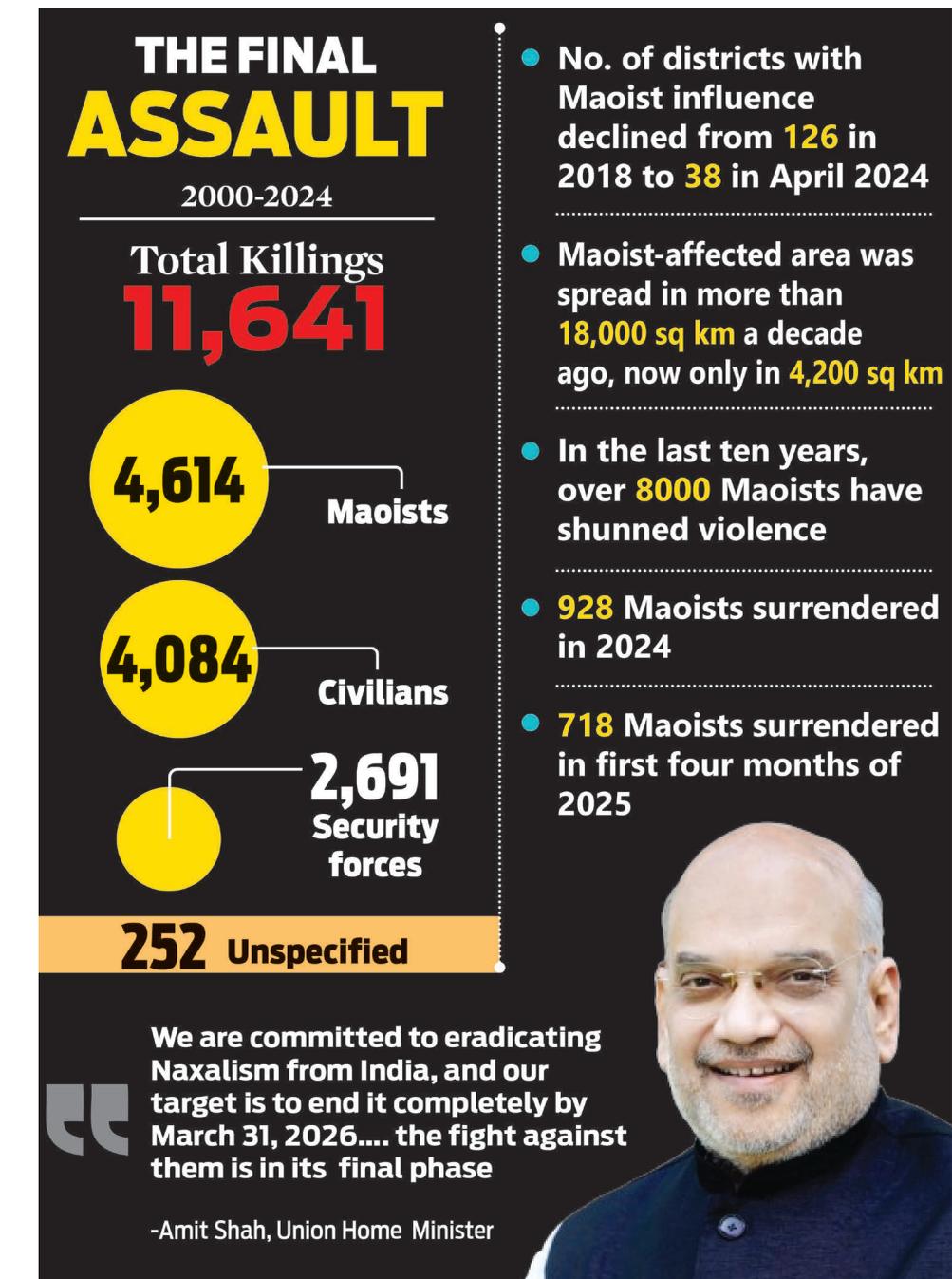
return, so too did a growing scepticism toward the ‘revolutionaries’ who had long promised change but failed to deliver it.

Today, it is the tribals who have borne the brunt of the conflict, left as casualties by both the state and the Maoists. The police, the rebels, and those accused of being informants for either side have all been predominantly Adivasi. Now, as the guns fall silent and the Maoist leadership retreats into obscurity, the future of Bastar hinges on how the state navigates the twin imperatives of justice and development.

A possible blueprint lies in the past. In 1980, acting on the advice of state planners, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi ordered the drafting of a Bastar Development Plan that emphasized just two priorities: ensuring fair prices for forest produce and supporting tribals in cultivating a second crop. The rationale was clear—unlike in land-scarce West Bengal or Bihar, the well-being of Bastar’s tribals is rooted in sustainable livelihoods, not political manoeuvring or land disputes.

Yet, this plan was sidelined—first by Indira Gandhi’s assassination, and later by successive Congress and BJP governments. Now, as peace tentatively returns, the question is whether today’s policymakers will honour Indira’s vision. Or, will they defer instead to “MOU-ism”—where development is synonymous with opaque mining contracts, often riding roughshod over local opposition and risk inflicting fresh injustices on a population already exhausted by decades of conflict?

The defeat of Maoist militancy in Bastar is both a victory and a test. If justice takes a back seat to extractive



deals and broken promises, memories of violence will fester. Disenfranchised youth, denied redress, may again fall prey to another wave of insurrection.

But if this moment is seized—with respect for local livelihoods, cultural autonomy, and genuine justice for victims—then this remote heart of India has a chance to emerge as a model for post-conflict reconciliation and indig-

enous-led development.

The writing on the trees in Bastar is clear: True endings are best measured not by victory, but by the depth of our healing. ■



Shubhranshu Choudhary is a senior journalist. He is also working to create a model of democratic media

When Amandeep Singh, a 27-year-old from Punjab, landed at Amritsar Airport in handcuffs early this year, after being deported from the US, his return symbolised the human toll of President Donald Trump's aggressive new immigration push. Singh was one of 682 Indian nationals expelled this year alone—victims, critics say, of a crackdown increasingly defined by fear, legal overreach, and racial targeting.

The Trump administration's sweeping actions have brought federal raids to factory floors, students to detention cells, and marines to American city streets, sparking outrage from civil rights advocates, Indian American lawmakers, and the Indian government alike.

Los Angeles became ground zero earlier this month when Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents detained over 300 undocumented immigrants in coordinated raids. As protests escalated, Trump deployed 2000 National Guard troops and 700 Marines to "restore order". The decision drew sharp rebuke.

"We will liberate Los Angeles from Third World lawlessness," Trump declared at Fort Bragg. "If I didn't act quickly, LA would be burning to the ground."

The Democratic leaders were quick to condemn the militarized crackdown. Former Vice-President Kamala Harris, who once served as California senator, called the deployment "a dangerous escalation meant to provoke chaos".

"These protests had been overwhelmingly peaceful," she emphasized, accusing the Trump administration of weaponizing fear. Harris lost the November presidential election to Trump.

Representative Pramila Jayapal, the

Immigrants, including Indians, face fire in Trump's America. Remittances, student visas, and tech ties at risk amid diplomatic tension

DON'S IMMIGRATION WAR

first South Asian American woman elected to the US House, was more direct: "Trump is weaponizing the military against US citizens and immigrants alike... This isn't just an attack on immigrants, it is an attack on our foundational freedoms".

Indian American Congressman Ro Khanna, representing a heavily South Asian district in Silicon Valley, questioned the legality of it all: "It's not your legal view that makes the deci-

sion in America. It's the federal judiciary ... If the court issues a preliminary injunction, will you agree to abide by the law?" Representative Ami Bera, the senior most Indian American lawmaker, echoed a broader concern: "We must not give in to an administration seeking to inflame tensions and provoke violence... I call for the withdrawal of Marines from Los Angeles".

Back in India, images of shackled deportees arriving barefoot in Amritsar

and Ahmedabad, students being forced to self-deport, or being detained at airports, have triggered condemnation from political leaders. Parliamentarians criticised the US for denying consular access and violating diplomatic norms. The Ministry of External Affairs confirmed that access was often blocked.

As per unofficial estimates, nearly 725,000 undocumented Indians are estimated to reside in the US, making them the third-largest unauthorised group by nationality.

While undocumented immigrants are being deported, legal migrants—especially Indian H-1B professionals and F-1 students—are facing unprecedented scrutiny. Under Trump’s revived “Buy American, Hire American” doctrine, H-1B visa approvals have plunged. Visa rejections are rising.

Indian professionals—long the backbone of Silicon Valley—now face new wage thresholds, stricter job scrutiny, and reduced renewal chances. “It’s not just about jobs—it’s about the credibility of the American Dream,” said Prakash Nair, a laid-off Bengaluru-based software engineer. “I followed every rule. Now I’m being told I don’t belong,” he claimed.

A Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) think-tank report warns that the visa squeeze could “fracture US-India tech partnerships” and derail one of the most productive talent exchanges globally.

In one high-profile case, an Indian student from Haryana was detained at Newark Airport and deported within hours. His family, who sold land to fund his education, now faces financial ruin. The incident came to light after a viral video showed the student being restrained by US authorities at the airport. It triggered outrage in India and raised



The Trump administration’s anti-immigration drive, which deported many Indians

concerns among Indian Americans. Over 300,000 Indian students currently studying in the US are grappling with a sharp rise in visa revocations—sometimes for minor infractions, such as unpaid fines, misunderstandings about work policies, or participation in peaceful protests.

“Students are rethinking their American aspirations,” said an admissions officer at Stanford. “STEM talent is now flowing elsewhere.” Universities in Canada, the UK, and Australia report record numbers of Indian applications.

Meanwhile, Indian applications for the EB-5 investor visa—which grants green cards in exchange for an \$800,000 investment—have doubled. But only 700 visas are available annually, and wait times are long.

Perhaps the most controversial policy yet is the administration’s proposed 3.5 percent remittance tax on transfers by individuals without a US Social Security number. Analysts say this would target undocumented immigrants and could deal a major blow

to families in India.

India receives over \$27 billion annually in remittances from the US alone. A World Bank brief estimates that the tax could reduce that flow by 10–15%, straining rural economies across Punjab, Bihar, and Telangana.

From immigration raids to student detentions, the consequences are reshaping the Indian American experience—and India’s diplomatic calculus.

Analysts and community leaders say this is only the beginning. They fear expanded ICE raids, even in sanctuary cities, troop deployments in more metros, visa denials, and deportations affecting legal migrants. That would mean a dip in Indian student and tech interest in the US, while diplomatic tensions between New Delhi and Washington could increase.

“This is not merely about immigration—it’s about America’s character,” said Rep. Jayapal. “And we’re at a breaking point,” she added. But President Trump has doubled down on the policy.

“If we don’t secure our borders and enforce our laws, we no longer have a country,” Trump said in a press briefing. “We are restoring law and order. The only people who fear this are those who are breaking the law.”

Secretary of State Marco Rubio defended the administration’s actions on national security grounds: “This is not about race or nationality. It’s about sovereignty,” Rubio said. “We’re doing what any responsible nation must—protect our borders and enforce immigration laws.” ■



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Pro-monarchy agitation in Kathmandu

Making sense of pro-monarchy protests in Nepal

This spring, Nepal witnessed a fresh wave of pro-monarchy demonstrations centered in Kathmandu, marking the most significant royalist mobilization since the country became a republic in 2008. The protests sparked nationwide debate over monarchy versus republic, revealing a growing polarization in Nepali society.

While royalist protests have occurred before, this time they generated greater momentum and media attention. For the first time, mainstream political parties began sensing a potential threat to the republican order. Khusbu Oli, a central committee member of the Rastriya Prajatantra Party (RPP), the largest royalist party in Parliament, said public dissatisfaction with the republican system is growing. “The economy is stagnant, youth are leaving in search of better opportunities, and political parties are prioritizing narrow interests over national goals,” she argued. Oli believes that restoring the monarchy and Hindu state is the only path to stability and progress.

What distinguishes the recent protests from earlier ones is the involvement of more youth and a broader coalition. A ‘People’s Movement Committee’, led by Panchayat-era veteran Navaraj Subedi, has brought together over 45 fringe politi-

cal parties and Hindu groups. For the first time, former King Gyanendra Shah took an active role, offering both political and financial backing, and even issuing video appeals in support of the movement.

The turning point came on March 9, when Gyanendra returned from Pokhara. Around 14,000 people gathered at Tribhuvan International Airport to welcome him, according to police. The symbolic show of support bolstered his confidence, and he began actively guiding the movement. Subedi was chosen to unify the royalist factions. However, tensions emerged within the RPP, as some members resented being sidelined from leadership roles.

The first major rally was held on March 28 under the controversial businessman Durga Prasai. It turned violent, though the cause remains disputed. Royalist groups blamed the police for using force, while authorities claimed protesters initiated the violence. No independent inquiry has been conducted to verify either side’s claims. The incident led to the arrest of senior RPP leaders and many supporters. They are now facing criminal charges, dealing a serious blow to the movement. Despite the setback, royalist forces regrouped and launched another round of protests starting May 15. Demonstrators from across Nepal converged

in Kathmandu, and although turnout was smaller, the events remained largely peaceful. RPP senior leader Kamal Thapa was briefly detained and released the same day. However, the movement soon lost steam due to poor organization, internal rifts, low public turnout, and the arrival of the monsoon.

The ‘India factor’ also fueled controversy. On March 9, a protester was seen carrying a photo of Yogi Adityanath, sparking speculation about Indian backing for the movement. Leaders of ruling parties voiced suspicions, given India’s dissatisfaction with Nepal’s 2015 constitution. Nepal’s Foreign Minister Arzu Rana Deuba raised the issue directly with Indian counterpart S Jaishankar during the Raisina Dialogue in New Delhi, receiving a firm denial. Nepal’s Ambassador to India Shankar Sharma later met Adityanath to seek clarification, which he also denied. Despite denials, Gyanendra and Adityanath share a long-standing personal connection, and some Hindu groups affiliated with India’s BJP reportedly support Nepal’s Hindu movement.

At present, the royalist movement is on hold. “Launching the decisive phase of our movement just before the monsoon was a strategic mistake,” conceded RPP spokesperson Mohan Shrestha. “But the turnout this year gave us hope. Once the monsoon ends, we will return with full force.”

Royalist leaders now say they are not seeking a return to absolute monarchy. Instead, they advocate for a ceremonial monarchy reinstated through peaceful negotiations with major political parties—a proposal that may continue to stir debate in Nepal’s fragile democracy. ■



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SOUTHERN DISTURBANCES

PMK and BRS Dynasties Splinter in Public View

A sudden and dramatic rift between Pattali Makkal Katchi (PMK) founder Dr S. Ramadoss and his son, party president Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, has spilled into the public eye, sending shockwaves through the party and confusing cadres and observers alike. The timing and nature of the fallout have sparked intense speculation and raised concerns about the party's direction and future in Tamil Nadu's dynamic alliance-driven political landscape.

The discord appears to have surfaced following the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, in which the PMK allied with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led NDA in Tamil Nadu. The alliance failed to yield electoral benefits, and the PMK was unable to make any significant impact, triggering dissatisfaction among senior leaders, especially S. Ramadoss. While Anbumani has been keen on modernizing the party and expanding its relevance beyond its traditional Vanniyar vote base, the elder Ramadoss reportedly remains rooted in a purist vision of the party, strongly opposing certain ideological and strategic compromises, especially with the BJP.

The tensions reportedly escalated after a series of internal meetings where differences in strategy and political alignment turned into visible confrontations. Matters became public when the senior Ramadoss, in an unusual and pointed press release, openly criticized Anbumani's decisions, leadership style, and his closeness with the BJP. This unprecedented move shattered the image of a tightly controlled family-run party.

TAMIL NADU

FATHER-SON RIFT

This familial and ideological clash has left PMK in a delicate position. The party, known for its disciplined structure and centralized leadership under the father-son duo, now faces a crisis of credibility. Cadres are divided — while some remain loyal to the founding patriarch S. Ramadoss, others back Anbumani, who is seen as the future face of the party and a more pragmatic strategist. Internal communications suggest confusion and low morale, especially among district-level leaders.

The rift also risks eroding the party's traditional support base among the Vanniyar community, which has historically backed the PMK in blocs. If the split widens or persists, it could create space for rival parties, particularly the DMK, to attract disillusioned sections of PMK supporters.

S. Ramadoss has long been sceptical of an alliance with the BJP, primarily because of the perception that the BJP's ideological stance is at odds with Tamil Nadu's regional political culture and secular ethos. He has warned that aligning too closely with the BJP could alienate PMK's grassroots supporters and damage its identity as a Tamil-centric party. His resistance is rooted not only in political pragmatism but also in a deep concern that PMK may lose its independent voice under the shadow of a national party. The BJP is reportedly alarmed by the open

rift in the PMK. With its limited footprint in Tamil Nadu, the BJP views PMK as a crucial regional ally that can help mobilize community-based votes. Senior BJP leaders have already reached out to both Ramadoss and Anbumani in a bid to resolve the conflict. Their interest is pragmatic: a fragmented PMK weakens the NDA in Tamil Nadu, while a united front offers the BJP some hope in a state where it struggles to gain traction.

The ruling DMK and its allies are quietly watching these developments with interest. The PMK's internal crisis could prove advantageous to the DMK-led front. In several northern Tamil Nadu constituencies, the PMK's strength has been the biggest obstacle for the DMK. A weakened or divided PMK may lead to a split in votes in favour of the DMK, especially among Vanniyar voters. Moreover, the conflict in the PMK reinforces the DMK's narrative of a "divided and directionless opposition," helping them consolidate their electoral ground.

The fallout between S. Ramadoss and Anbumani is more than just a family dispute — it is a moment of reckoning for the PMK. Whether the party can recover and reunite under a single vision or disintegrate under the weight of its contradictions remains to be seen. As the 2026 Assembly elections approach, the direction the PMK takes could influence broader political realignments in Tamil Nadu. ■



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Bharat Rashtra Samity (BRS) MLC Kavitha Kalvakuntla's recent revolt of sorts against her brother and party working president KT Rama Rao (KTR) caught not only her party leaders but also those of other parties unawares. She went to the extent of alleging that there were attempts to merge BRS with the BJP some time ago.

Neither her father, former chief minister and party supremo K Chandrashekhara Rao (KCR) nor KTR bothered to rebut her allegations. Instead, KCR issued a gag order to all party members against reacting to Kavitha's charges. For now, Kavitha is quiet, but things may not be okay for her in the future. She has a fight on her hands against her gradual marginalization within BRS.

Odds are stacked against Kavitha, but hopes are alive due to upcoming women's reservations in legislatures. Kavitha is restive within her party. Her May 2 letter to KCR, which was leaked to the media, has exposed fault lines in BRS. Adding fuel to the fire, she alleged that her father, 'a god', is surrounded by devils. She charged that these devils are trying to merge BRS with the BJP.

Kavitha entered politics way back in 2006-07. After returning from the US, where she was studying, she joined the cultural front of TRS and very soon founded Telangana Jagrithi. Initially, her main task was to popularize Telangana festival Bathukamm and the publication of party journals and books.

In the 2014 elections, Kavitha won the Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat while KTR was elected as MLA from Siricilla and became a minister in the KCR government. Initially, there was

TELANGANA

SIBLING RIVALRY

no overlapping of roles between them. But when KTR became the working president of the party, and Kavitha lost her Lok Sabha seat in 2019, the differences between the siblings began to widen.

After losing the Nizamabad LS seat in 2019, she became an MLC. Her arrest in the Delhi liquor scam and five months in jail before the 2023 assembly and 2024 general elections put several question marks on her political future.

Kavitha entered politics way back in 2006-07. After returning from the US, where she was studying, she joined the cultural front of TRS and very soon founded Telangana Jagrithi. Initially, her main task was to popularize Telangana festival Bathukamm and the publication of party journals and books

As a fighter, Kavitha wanted to hit back at her rivals, the BJP and Congress. But she hates the BJP more because it was the party that defeated her in Nizamabad and put her in jail.

Kavitha is an ambitious politician who never settles for a lesser role in the party. She wants to grow into a big leader. Such a hint emanates from her active role at Jagrithi, a social and cultural group that she founded. Jagrithi is the only Telangana body with branches worldwide.

While KTR is tipped to be the BRS's chief ministerial candidate in the 2028 assembly polls, he would

not want Kavitha to be another power centre in the party. KTR is ready to make Kavitha a Rajya Sabha MP or an MLA in the future, but would not like to give her equal status.

That is not acceptable to Kavitha. She wants a bigger role, either as BRS working president or national general secretary. KCR, though he loves his daughter, will not sideline KTR for the sake of Kavitha.

Kavitha has at least three options. One, she may float a new political party. Already, social media is abuzz with the names of the new party. But this may not happen immediately. A new party needs huge funds, and she may not have that much money with her.

Two, Kavitha will continue with BRS, but keep putting pressure on the father-brother duo for a bigger share of power. This is possible because there is enough space and scope for her to work in BRS. There are reports that Jagrithi will contest the upcoming local body polls.

The third option for her is to join the Congress. In her letter of May 2, she targeted the BJP while remaining silent on the Congress. BJP leaders are already saying that Chief Minister Revanth Reddy is behind Kavitha's letter attack. Although politics springs bizarre surprises, the BJP is currently not an option for her, because she sees it as her tormentor. ■



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The massacre of 26 people in Pahalgam prompted a swift Indian retaliation through Operation Sindoor that destroyed multiple terror camps and eliminated dozens of militants in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir.

One of the most significant hits was on the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) headquarters, known as the Markaz Subhan Allah camp, in Bahawalpur. The strike not only destroyed the entire facility but also killed relatives of JeM chief Masood Azhar. The extent of damage from the strike, coupled with the site now marked as 'permanently closed' on Google Maps, clearly indicates that the outfit is unlikely to rebuild the facility anytime soon.

While JeM may find it hard to revive easily in Pakistan, Indian intelligence agencies have now picked up information that the outfit is gradually moving to Bangladesh to set up cells and modules. JeM would work closely with Harkat-ul Jihadi Islami (HuJI) and other terror groups with the sole focus of hitting India's north-eastern states. This would mean that JeM would have independent modules and cells in Bangladesh.

Muhammad Yunus, who became the head of the interim government after Sheikh Hasina's departure last year, was quick to open up to Pakistan and China, sending a message that he wanted to be closer to these countries rather than India. Also, immediately after assuming office, the Yunus government released several hardcore anti-India terrorists and criminals with strong connections with Pakistan's ISI.

Two very crucial moves that Yunus made alarmed Indian agencies as



TERROR REBOOT IN BANGLADESH

India prepares for multi-front challenges as Pakistan eyes Dhaka axis

they posed a massive security threat. The first was opening up the country's sea route to Pakistan. Secondly, he eased the visa norms to such an extent that getting into Bangladesh from

Pakistan would be as easy as hailing a cab. This means that Pakistan can transport arms and ammunition easily through the sea route and also send terrorists without worrying too much,



as the visa norms are too lax for Pakistanis.

JeM and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), making their moves in Bangladesh, did not begin after Operation Sindoor. It was an ongoing process, but following the retaliation by the armed forces, the process has been fast-tracked.

The opening of the sea route and easing of visa norms have significantly simplified travel for Pakistanis to Bangladesh. Intelligence Bureau sources reveal these channels have been used to send top recruiters and cadres into Bangladesh, with the Pakistan High Commission in Dhaka playing a key role. Notably, in 2015, consular official Mazhar Khan was charged by Bangladesh for links to terror groups and involvement in a fake currency racket. The High Commission continues to be a conduit for facilitating terrorist entry into Bang-

ladesh.

Alongside sending Pakistani terrorists to Bangladesh, the ISI has launched a major recruitment drive, training local Bangladeshi youth and Rohingyas in Bandarban, Chittagong. Recruits are being inducted into JeM and LeT, with the ex-Pakistan Army Special Forces overseeing the training programme.

ISI has outlined a four-pronged strategy: establish bases in Bangladesh with support from local terror groups and Jamaat-e-Islami; train recruits to carry out attacks in India; drive mass infiltration to stoke communal tension and alter demographics in the Northeast and West Bengal; and radicalise students by infiltrating universities via the Islami Chhatra Shibir. LeT's Saifullah Kasuri hinted at this plan on May 28, declaring from Kasur, Lahore, that "the time has come to divide Bengal".

Agencies have warned that a similar strategy may be deployed in Indian universities, with radical elements infiltrating campuses to indoctrinate select students, mirroring the pattern seen in Bangladesh. The primary targets would be universities located in states bordering Bangladesh.

Security agencies have learned that JeM and LeT are establishing independent modules in Bangladesh to launch direct attacks on India, bypassing increased surveillance by India's armed forces on the Western front. With plans to eventually shift the headquarters of these two terror outfits from Pakistan still underway, the ISI is accelerating efforts in Bangladesh, seeking to gain control over its administration and law enforcement to turn the country into a strategic terror launchpad.

JeM and LeT are focusing on Bangladesh's coastal stretch from Chittagong South to Cox's Bazar and the Myanmar border. HuJI has six camps in this area, and two Pakistan-based terror groups are planning on setting up at least two each in these areas.

JeM also plans to fill the vacuum left by the weakened Jamaat-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB), particularly in the Rajshahi region. Indian intelligence warns that JeM will leverage JMB's strong network, especially its links in West Bengal, to infiltrate India, as seen in the 2017 Burdawn bomb case. Additionally, JeM plans to plant operatives in mosques across Bangladesh to aid its radicalisation efforts.

Amar Bhushan, who served in the BSF Intelligence, the Intelligence Bureau, and the Research and Analysis Wing (RA&W), says that the moves are extremely concerning. He notes that while Pakistani terror groups have long supported their counter-

parts in Bangladesh, the recent push to establish independent modules there marks a serious escalation and a growing security nightmare for India.

Bhushan reveals that as an officer in the RA&W, he had flagged a nexus between ISI and Bangladesh's Directorate General of Forces Intelligence (DGFI) that aimed at orchestrating large-scale infiltration into India. After the 1971 war, Pakistan perceived Bangladesh as a lost cause but sought to destabilise India by stoking communal unrest in the Northeast and West Bengal. While past infiltration attempts fell short because of friendly Indo-Bangla ties under Sheikh Hasina, the current pro-Pakistan Yunus regime in Dhaka has given the ISI a freer hand to escalate its operations, Bhushan warns.

According to the Intelligence Bureau, alongside LeT and JeM, groups such as HuJI, JMB, and Ansarullah Bangla Team (ABT) are coordinating terror efforts. Though operating in different spheres, they share a common goal: to turn Bangladesh into an Islamic state and target India.

ISI aims to unify these groups under a single agenda, using Bangladesh as an active front while giving LeT and JeM time to regroup in Pakistan. Once in place, this strategy would force India to counter terror threats on two fronts: Bangladesh-based modules targeting the North-east and West Bengal, and Pakistan-based groups resuming operations in Jammu and Kashmir.

Security planners warn that India may soon face LoC-like tension along the Bangladesh border. With the added threat from China, this could escalate into a multi-front challenge. On the eastern front, the focus would be on curbing terrorist infiltration, illegal immigration, and currency counterfeiting—likely leading to



ROGUES' GALLERY

- The Yunus govt released at least **43 militants and high-profile criminals**—many are hardcore Islamists with strong anti-India stances
- 17 prisons came under attack, allowing over 2000 inmates, mostly radicals, to escape

<h3 style="background-color: yellow; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 5px;">JASHIMUDDIN RAHMANI</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Chief of Ansarullah Bangla Team, an al-Qaida-affiliated terrorist group; the outfit is banned in India ● Notorious for hate-filled sermons advocating jihad ● Viciously anti-India; after his release, he warned of breaking up India and hoisting Islamist flags in Delhi 	<h3 style="background-color: yellow; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 5px;">ABDUS SALAM PINTU</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Former Bangladesh National Party (BNP) minister ● Funded HuJI for the recruitment and training of terrorists from POK and Bangladesh to 'bleed India' ● Convicted of a plot to assassinate Sheikh Hasina in 2004
<h3 style="background-color: yellow; display: inline-block; padding: 2px 5px;">LUTFOZZAMAN BABAR</h3>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Former BNP minister; was involved in the 2004 botched attempt to kill Hasina ● Strong link with HuJI ● Trained youths from POK and Bangladesh, primarily madrasa students, in handling firearms and bombs ● Mobilised funds, arms and ammunition for insurgents in Kashmir 	

frequent skirmishes between the BSF and Bangladeshi forces.

Dr Abhinav Pandya, author of the book 'Inside the Terrifying World of Jaish-e-Mohammad' and founder of Usanas Foundation, warns that Pakistan's strategy is to engage India on two fronts by deploying ISI-backed terror groups directly in Bangladesh. The ISI aims not just to control local outfits but to operate its own for coordinated attacks. India, he says, will

need to launch repeated operations like Operation Sindoor to target terror masterminds and keep the threat in check. ■



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CAN YUNUS DELIVER FREE AND FAIR ELECTION IN BANGLADESH?

Even with Hasina's ouster, Bangladesh's quest for democracy and the right to choose their government through the ballot remains uncertain. To quench that thirst, Bangladeshis are now looking towards the country's interim leader, Muhammad Yunus

The last time Bangladesh held its freest, fairest, and inclusive national elections was in December 2008, when ousted Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League party won a decisive victory. Since then, the South Asian nation, known for its political turmoil, has witnessed three more parliamentary elections – all swept by Hasina's party – amid boycott by main opposition parties and allegations of widespread vote-fraud.

Hasina's sham victory in the last polls in January 2024, which deprived millions of young, newly enrolled voters of their first chance to choose their representatives, had largely contributed to alienating her from the people. The university students who orchestrated the anti-Hasina agitation in the

name of ending discrimination in government jobs leveraged the simmering public anger that finally exploded into a mass uprising on August 5 last year, leading to the collapse of Hasina's government, and ending more than 15 years of her authoritarian rule.

But even with Hasina's ouster, Bangladesh's quest for democracy and the right to choose their government through the ballot remains uncertain. To quench that thirst, Bangladeshis are now looking towards the country's interim leader, Nobel Peace Prize winner Professor Muhammad Yunus. Whether Bangladeshis, especially the new young voters, will get a chance to flock to the polling centres and exercise their verdict freely depends on Yunus and his advisers.



Muhammad Yunus



Sheikh Hasina

Interestingly, critics of the BNP and the army chief are trying to drag India into the country's election politics. They use social media to spread lies and colour the BNP and even the army chief as pro-Indian, just because they want the election before December

Election, however, has not been the only issue for Yunus, who prepares to celebrate the first anniversary of his interim administration in August. Since he took over as the country's de facto prime minister with the official title of chief adviser, Yunus laid emphasis first on reforms and justice for the July-August carnage before the next elections could be held. True to his promise, the 84-year-old interim leader has initiated steps to reform the country's 1972 Constitution, judiciary, election system, anti-corruption agency and police. Yunus's government has also started the process of holding a trial of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and several others on charges of crimes against humanity by a revamped International Crimes Tribunal (ICT), the same tribunal that tried and executed several top leaders of the radical Islamic party, Jamaat-e-Islami, during Hasina's rule. Ironically, the lawyer who represented the Jamaat leaders has now been appointed as the chief prosecutor of the tribunal. Hasina's trial formally started on June 1.

While reforms have progressed at a snail's pace, consensus is in the doldrums, and the tribunal plunged into controversy, Yunus finally announced a comparatively firm outline for the next elections. It will be in the first half of April next year. The announcement was made during a 39-minute Eid-ul-Azha speech last month. "We want the largest number of voters, the largest number of candidates to participate in the next elections. Let it be remembered by the nation as the freest, fairest and impartial elections."

The goal sounds lofty, and not without hurdles. Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP), currently the largest party, has rejected Yunus's April 2026 poll pitch, raising some serious concerns. BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir explains why April is not suitable for holding polls in Bangladesh. He cites scorching summer heat, public exams and above all Ramadan,

the Islamic month of fasting, in support of the party's stand. Instead, the party insists on holding the vote by December this year, a view also held by the country's powerful Army Chief General Waker-Uz-Zaman.

But Jamaat, the party that collaborated with Pakistan during Bangladesh's 1971 War of Liberation, has hailed Yunus for the announcement of polls in April, which was also its suggestion. Meanwhile, the National Citizen Party (NCP), the platform launched by the student leaders of the July 2024 uprising and known for its closeness to the interim government, insists on completing the reforms and Hasina's trial before the next elections. The other big issue about which little is being said publicly is about banning Hasina's party from contesting the polls. Will an election without the participation of one of the country's oldest parties be acceptable? Will such an election help stabilise the country at a time when it is most needed?

Interestingly, critics of the BNP and the army chief are trying to drag India into the country's election politics. They use social media to spread lies and colour the BNP and even the army chief as pro-Indian, just because they want the election before December. India has repeatedly insisted that it considers Bangladesh's next election as its internal matter, and New Delhi has no desire to meddle in it. Having said so, New Delhi has also made it clear that any substantive discussion with Dhaka on major bilateral issues can only be held with an elected government. There has recently been a campaign to paint BNP's influential leader Salahuddin Ahmed, as an agent of India's spy agency RA&W simply because he has been vocal about the next polls by this December. Ahmed returned home after Hasina's fall last year, having spent nine years in Shillong. No matter whether it likes it or not, India continues to be a factor in Bangladesh, even as doubts remain over the next general elections. ■



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GEOPOLITICAL STAKES OF NEPAL'S MONARCHIST RESURGENCE

As of now, this agitation is driven entirely by public frustration. People are disillusioned with the collective failure of political parties to meet even the minimum expectations of governance and inclusive development. There is widespread anger over rampant corruption and blatant displays of greed for power

In recent months, Nepal has been witnessing growing public sentiment for the revival of monarchy and restoration of its formal Hindu identity—thereby challenging the historic transformation that followed the end of the 10-year long Maoist insurgency and mainstreaming of the Maoists into the democratic polity, which culminated in the declaration of Nepal as a secular federal democratic republic.

As of now, this agitation is driven entirely by public frustration. People are disillusioned with the collective failure of political parties to meet even the minimum expectations of governance and inclusive development. There is widespread anger over rampant corruption and blatant displays of greed for power among a handful of ageing political leaders who have been taking turns to become the prime minister in unstable coalition governments.

Despite the growing signs of nostalgia for the monarchy, its return currently appears somewhat unlikely. However, this could change, given the evolving geopoliti-

cal trends in the region.

Three countries would be following developments on this front with special attention: India, China and Pakistan.

Traditionally, China has been a supporter of monarchy because it perceived the institution as being wedded to strategic autonomy and opposed to being in India's sphere of influence.

India's fluctuating relationship with the monarchy was largely shaped by that very perception. In addition, India frequently expressed support for a healthy multi-party democracy—something neither King Mahendra nor his successors favoured.

India did not sufficiently account for the fact that the monarchy's posture, particularly its frequent use of the 'China card', was largely a response to India's aggressive promotion of democracy. Instead, India somewhat misread this behaviour as a strategic and irreversible anti-Indianism, which it was not. The Kings of Nepal, due to deep religious, familial and cultural ties with India, were incapable of being anti-India in the way that the Maoists and far-left parties have often demonstrated. At the same time, the monarchy failed to grasp a core reality that India, despite its size and power, was a highly insecure country. It tended to interpret Nepal's displays of strategic autonomy as tilting towards China, often incorrectly, as a threat to its regional advantage. In other words, many of the misunderstandings that periodically strained India-Nepal relations could have been avoided



King Gayendra

Today, the overall situation has become even more complex and serious in terms of challenges to India's security. China is no longer a passive spectator feigning neutrality in, for example, India's relations with Nepal or Pakistani mischief against India

with better mutual understanding between New Delhi and the Nepali monarchy.

When King Birendra gave up absolute power and agreed to become a constitutional monarch following an India-backed mass agitation against him in the late 1980s (Janandolan 1), China was left confused as the pro-India Nepali Congress party emerged as the most popular party and came to power with a clear majority.

But within a few years, the opposition Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist), or CPN (UML), stirred a wave of anti-India sentiment over the Tanakpur barrage. Although the barrage was built on Indian territory, it used a small portion of Nepali land—an issue the UML capitalised on politically. The China card was back in play. In the 1994 election, the UML won the most seats and formed a minority government. Prime Minister Manmohan Adhikari signalled a shift in foreign policy by expressing a desire to end Nepal's special relationship with India, and, breaking with tradition, expressed a desire to visit China before India on his first official trip.

The Maoist insurgency, which began in 1996, was inspired by China but not favoured by it, as it continued to back the monarchy. It watched while India's relations with the monarchy and Nepal improved dramatically under India's twin-pillar policy of supporting both the monarchy and democracy.

Nepal-Pakistan relations during this phase grew strained because the Pakistan Deep State (Army, ISI, government and the smuggling-terrorism nexus) began large-scale systematic use of the open border with India and the mosques and madrasas along the border for activities aimed against New Delhi. The monarchy had deep misgivings about possible moves to dilute Nepal's Hindu identity, and the Pakistan Deep State, in turn, felt uncomfortable at the repeated exposures of its activities relating to the smuggling of counterfeit currency and arms, with the monarchy discreetly using its influence to curb them.

Today, the overall situation has become even more complex and serious in terms of challenges to India's security. China is no longer a passive spectator feigning neutrality in, for example, India's relations with Nepal or Paki-

stani mischief against India.

In the post-Pahalgam situation, India must contend with the sobering reality that a prolonged two-front conflict with Pakistan and China may already be underway. Within this strategic context, regional developments, such as the theoretical possibility of the restoration of Nepal's monarchy and reasserting its identity as a Hindu state, take on renewed significance. While India's official stance of non-interference is prudent, Nepal, as a Hindu Monarchy, even with the King as constitutional monarch, may be a more reliable and reassuring factor than Nepal as a fragile democracy amenable to Chinese influence and with a laissez-faire attitude to China's proxy Pakistan. The Maoist and UML leadership have sometimes indulged in a kind of reckless nationalism that conveniently aligns with Chinese strategic interests, particularly by fueling anti-Indian sentiment. A striking example is the Kalapani border dispute, during which the Nepalese Parliament passed a unanimous resolution asserting territorial claims over the disputed areas, including some never claimed before. This expanded territorial map has since been printed on 100-rupee banknotes, effectively embedding a mechanism for generating anti-Indian feelings amongst the populace at will. The action has rendered the border dispute politically intractable and now stands as a persistent source of bilateral tension.

In the emerging context, China may be less enthusiastic about the revival of Nepal's monarchy, while India may become increasingly ambivalent about supporting a monarchy-less democracy mired in an endless transition, marked by chronic political instability and dominated by extreme leftist leaders. It is hardly reassuring that, even as India and Pakistan exchanged sharp words in the wake of the Pahalgam terror attack, Nepal was hosting a high-level delegation of the Pakistani army.

India should maintain open channels of communication with all parties in Nepal, including those advocating for the restoration of the monarchy and a Hindu state. It must also be prepared to adapt its twin-pillar policy if the people of Nepal opt for the return of the monarchy in some form. ■



GOVT PLAYS HIDE AND SEEK IN PROVIDING CRITICAL INFORMATION ON PRIVATE PARTICIPATION IN SPACE SECTOR

STONEWALLING IN SPACE

In an era where transparency is a constitutional duty, the Department of Space seems to be prioritising secrecy over accountability. Two recent RTI attempts reveal how its commercial arm, New Space India Limited (NSIL), and authorisation body IN-SPACe are stonewalling legitimate public interest queries by citing dubious exemptions, shielding beneficiaries of taxpayer-funded space technology from public view.

In March 2025, the Department of Space informed Parliament that NSIL had signed 75 technology transfer agreements with private entities and onboarded unnamed firms to build Earth Observation satellites. It also announced a satellite-based

plan to monitor 1 lakh fishing vessels. An RTI application was filed seeking details on the private beneficiaries of ISRO's publicly funded technologies and the policy behind the surveillance initiative.

What followed is a textbook example of how public institutions frustrate transparency. The RTI application addressed to NSIL sought details of Indian industries involved in satellite construction and technology transfer, copies of the agreements signed, and policy documents governing the fishing vessel surveillance plan. The request was firmly rooted in the principle that information about publicly funded projects and agreements should be disclosed proactively, without requiring formal requests.

Yet, the Central Public Information Officer (CPIO) of NSIL refused to share even the names of the private entities. Citing national security and commercial confidentiality, the CPIO withheld the information in its entirety. The portion of the query concerning the fishing vessel was transferred to the Department of Fisheries, which, unfamiliar with the satellite-based initiative, responded with unrelated guidelines under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana—highlighting bureaucratic disarray, or perhaps, deliberate obfuscation.

A first appeal was filed against the denial of information on ISRO tech beneficiaries and the improper transfer of the fishing vessel query. The appellate order is awaited.

A second RTI application was submitted in May 2025, this time focusing on IN-SPACe, the nodal agency for private sector engagement under the Indian Space Policy 2023. According to a Rajya Sabha reply, 56 private firms had received authorisation to engage in space-based activities. The RTI query sought the norms and procedures of the authorisation process, names and contact details of the beneficiaries, details of the technologies transferred, and terms and financial payments involved. Again, these are questions of clear public interest: which companies are receiving publicly funded technology, at what cost, and under what conditions?

But IN-SPACe's CPIO declined to divulge most of this information, citing non-disclosure agreements (NDAs) signed with the private entities. Curiously, the CPIO even failed to correctly cite the exemption clause—mentioning "Section 8(d)" instead of 8(1)(d)—displaying a lack of rigour. Moreover, he refused to transfer the financial information query to NSIL, though he had the power and responsibility to do so under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act.

Meanwhile, on June 8, the Ministry of Defence announced that the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) transferred the technologies of nine critical systems to 10 industry partners. All 10 companies were named in a press release by the Ministry of Defence.

The question is if the DRDO can make the names of private entities public to which it has transferred defence-related technology, why should another public entity, NSIL, be exempt from the same standard? Transparency in such matters should



be consistent across all public institutions, especially when they involve the transfer of public-funded technology.

Blanket rejections citing NDAs and commercial confidence are ushering in a troubling precedent. If all government-private deals are allowed to hide behind such claims, the Right to Information framework risks becoming hollow. The law was designed to ensure transparency, especially when public interest is at stake. However, that principle is increasingly being sidelined, with safeguards meant to protect public

accountability routinely ignored,

What is at stake is not just names and figures – it's a public oversight of a vital, tax-payer funded sector. ISRO's achievements were built entirely with public money. The shift toward privatisation via NSIL and IN-SPACe marks a major policy change. If private firms are profiting from ISRO's work, citizens have a right to know who they are and on what terms.

If the identities of beneficiary firms, the financial terms of technology transfer and the policy documents guiding such engagements are kept hidden, how can the public evaluate whether the process is fair, equitable, and in the national interest?

What's more troubling is the invocation of national security in cases where no such justification is warranted. Building Earth Observation satellites or tracking fishing boats are civilian applications with no direct connection to classified defence activities. Using "national security" as a cover for lack of transparency not only undermines the RTI Act—it insults its spirit.

These two RTI interventions and the evasive responses highlight the urgent need for systemic reform. IN-SPACe must be notified as a public authority under the RTI Act without waiting for the enactment of the Space Bill. NSIL, in turn, must proactively disclose all technology transfer agreements, ensuring transparency in its dealings involving public resources. ■



Venkatesh Nayak is
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Human Rights Initiative and
an RTI activist

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE THE FINAL RECKONING

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WHAT'S HOT

Tom Cruise once again proves he is still Hollywood's ultimate blockbuster star in the film that blends breakneck thrills, iconic stunts, and heartfelt callbacks. Both a finale and a tribute, it's everything a summer blockbuster should be.

The movie is a high-octane spectacle that pushes the boundaries of action cinema, reaffirming why the franchise has become a benchmark for stunt-driven thrillers. From daring underwater sequences in an Arctic-sea submarine to jaw-dropping aerial stunts atop vintage biplanes, Ethan Hunt (Tom Cruise) pushes the limits with breathtaking intensity. With stunning visuals, tight pacing, and masterful use of air and sea warfare, it's an unforgettable spectacle.



What sets this installment apart is its timely and chilling premise—Ethan faces off against a rogue AI intent on seizing nuclear control and dominating global digital networks. The stakes are higher than ever, blending pulse-pounding ac-

tion with a sharp warning about unchecked technology. Christopher McQuarrie's direction delivers both relentless thrills and thought-provoking commentary, making this the franchise's most gripping chapter yet.

LOOK AHEAD

June buzzed with anticipation as **28 YEARS LATER** marked Danny Boyle's return to post-apocalyptic cinema. Early buzz hits at a revival of the original's raw, unrelenting energy—gritty, gripping, and timely.

BALLERINA, a sleek spin-off from the John Wick universe, delivers a potent blend of stylish action and revenge-fueled elegance. Anchored by Ana de Armas's fierce, commanding presence, it promises choreography as sharp as its heroine's resolve.

Then there's **THE MATERIALISTS**—a sharp satire of romance, power, and privilege set in millennial Manhattan. With its biting dialogue and timely themes, it's poised to spark conversation and stir debate.

June also brought enchantment for younger audiences with the live-action **HOW TO TRAIN YOUR DRAGON** reboot, promising a blend of awe and nostalgic wonder.

By Praveen Nagda

(The author is a film critic; Festival Director, KidzCINEMA and Culture Cinema Film Festivals)

PAKISTAN'S AMERICAN BODYGUARD



When bombs fall, backchannels buzz — and this time, the buzz comes with a Trumpian twist. After Operation Sindoor, both India and Pakistan rushed to Washington, D.C., briefcases in hand. Their mission: influence American minds. Their weapons: former Trump loyalists. The result: something in between The West Wing and WWE, leaving diplomacy in the region totally reality TV-ready. To stay on top of the narrative war, India has hired Jason Miller, ex-senior adviser and MAGA media maestro, for a tidy \$1.8 million

a year. Pakistan's pick is more in keeping with the style of *The Apprentice*. Meet Keith Schiller — Trump's longtime bodyguard, Oval Office gatekeeper, and also the man who once hand-delivered former FBI Director James Comey's firing letter. Fun fact: Schiller also played a curious role in Trump's alleged Stormy Daniels hush-money saga, reportedly standing guard during sensitive negotiations. So there you have it — India flexes comms strategy, Pakistan flexes biceps!

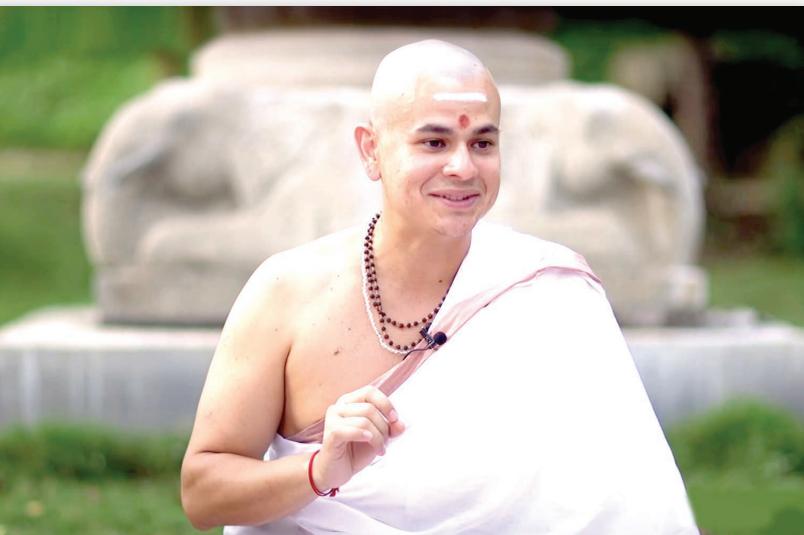
KASHMIR'S IIT QUEENS

Not one. Not two. But three Kashmiri girls — Maleeha, Sadaf, and Janees — have cracked the impossible and made it to the IITs. In a first for the Valley, these brilliant young women have shattered stereotypes and ceiling-high expectations with flair, grit, and academic firepower. From power cuts to patchy internet, they conquered it all — Maleeha with relentless focus, Sadaf scoring a whopping 99.5 percentile in JEE Mains, and Janees staying steady and sharp all the way to Advanced. From snowy rooftops to national ranks, these three are not just breaking records — they're rewriting the Valley's academic destiny.



BAREFOOT BRAZILIAN

Brazilian Vedic teacher Jonas Masetti won hearts across India when he walked barefoot, wearing a simple white dhoti, to receive the Padma Shri from President Droupadi Murmu. Also known as Acharya Vishvanath, Masetti is no ordinary yogi — he's a Rio-born former mechanical engineer who swapped the corporate grind for the quiet wisdom of Vedanta. His spiritual journey took him from Brazil to Swami Dayananda's ashram in Tamil Nadu—and back again, to spread the Vedic word. Today, his Vishwavidya Gurukulam in Brazil is enriching over 1.5 lakh students through online courses. That is surely a giant step for cross-cultural spirituality. Masetti humbly called the award an honour for his entire tradition, not just himself.



JAPAN'S UNDERWATER UTOPIA

It's bold. It's blue. And it might just be the future. Say hello to Ocean Spiral, a futuristic deep-sea city dreamed up by Japan's Shimizu Corporation. Part sci-fi, part climate solution, this ocean-bound beauty aims to house 5000 people beneath the waves. The plan — a floating dome connected to a nine-mile spiral anchored to the seabed. Inside — living quarters, labs, farms, and even desalination pods. The plan is to operate this underwater city using Ocean Thermal Energy Conversion, harnessing the natural temperature difference between warm surface water and icy deep-sea currents to power the city 24/7. No fossil fuels. No emissions. Just smart science. Food will be grown in aquatic pods. Water will be created from the sea itself. And, the buildings will be printed using 3D tech. But all good things come with a price tag — of \$25 billion for the dream city. If all goes to plan, Ocean Spiral will be a reality by 2030.



35 STONES AND A WAKE-UP CALL

How much is too much cola? For a 60-year-old man in Brazil, the answer was written in stone — 35 of them, to be precise. After years of guzzling nearly 3 litres of Coca-Cola daily, he landed in surgery when doctors discovered dozens of bladder stones clogging his urinary tract. Urologist Dr Thales Andrade performed the painstaking two-hour procedure, removing stones roughly 1cm in size, caused by a cocktail of bad habits: high soda intake, low water consumption, combined with an enlarged prostate. Health experts say this isn't just a freak case — it's a fizzy red flag. Soft drinks can dehydrate, acidify urine, and promote mineral crystallization, increasing the risk of kidney and bladder stones. The lesson is, don't let the bubbles backfire into a health crisis.

STAND TALL, FLY CHEAP?

Imagine flying the way you ride the metro — on your feet, shoulder to shoulder, holding on tight for a short trip. That's the vibe budget airlines may be aiming for with the introduction of "standing-only" airplane seats by 2026. Developed by Italian manufacturer Aviointeriors, the Skyrider 3.0 is



more of a saddle than a seat — a vertical perch designed to reduce space between passengers and squeeze in up to 20% more travellers per flight. The seat pitch will be just 23 inches, down from the 28-31 inches in budget airlines. The idea is simple: cut down fuel costs, slash ticket prices, and open up ultra-cheap options for short domestic hops. Think of it as the aircraft version of rush hour on the Delhi Metro or Mumbai Local — intense, quick, and purely functional.

Still, if greenlit, this could transform budget travel. The skies may soon welcome a new kind of passenger: one who flies standing. Ready to swap reclining comfort for just reaching your destination — fast and cheap?



A well-known author of several books; he writes on science, myth, and human potential

In the time it takes you to read this article, thousands of your body's cells will age—and some may die. But what if we could stop that from happening? Or even reverse it?

Until recently, the idea of living forever seemed like fantasy—something out of ancient epics or science fiction. But today, in elite research labs across the world, scientists are inching closer to what once felt impossible: the ability to live forever? And the facts are astonishing.

The longest any human has lived is 122 years. That was once believed to be the biological ceiling. But new discoveries suggest we might just be scratching the surface. Increasingly, researchers are viewing aging not as an inevitable decay, but as a cellular programme—something built into our biology. And like all programmes, it may be rewritten.

One of the most exciting breakthroughs in recent science revolves around Yamanaka factors—a set of four genes that appear to reset the age of a cell. In a 2022 study from USA-based Salk Institute for Biological Studies, older mice treated with these factors regained sharper vision, stronger muscles, and better memory—without tumours or unwanted side effects. Their biological clock had been turned back, not by magic, but by molecular reprogramming. The question now is: could we do the

same in humans? It's no longer a fantasy. Human clinical trials using similar epigenetic reprogramming techniques are already underway. According to the researchers leading these efforts, the goal isn't just to extend life, but to extend youth—to delay the diseases and declines that accompany aging.

Alongside this, a futuristic field called nanomedicine is taking shape. Researchers are designing microscopic machines—small enough to travel through your bloodstream—that could one day repair tissues, destroy diseased cells, and even clear out early signs of cancer, long before symptoms emerge. As described in Nature Nanotechnology, some of these nanodevices have already shown promise in preclinical models. Imagine having invisible repairmen inside you, working 24/7 to keep you young and healthy.

Another area drawing excitement is senolytics—drugs that target and eliminate “zombie cells,” or senescent cells. These

are cells that have stopped dividing but refuse to die, and they release toxic chemicals that cause inflammation and age-related diseases. A recent review in Nature Reviews Drug Discovery explains how removing these cells in animals has extended both lifespan and vitality.

But some scientists are thinking even further ahead. One such frontier is cryonics—the freezing of bodies (or brains) after death in the hope that future technologies will bring them back. Preservation techniques have advanced to the point where brain tissue can be frozen while preserving fine neuronal structure.

And then comes the most radical idea of all: digital immortality. What if you could upload your thoughts, memories, and personality into a machine? Brain-computer interfaces already allow paralysed individuals to type or move robotic limbs by thought alone. As astonishing as all this sounds, it begins to feel eerily familiar when seen through the lens of ancient mythology. In the Hindu tale of Samudra Manthan,

gods and demons churn the cosmic ocean to retrieve Amrita, the nectar of immortality.

This brings us to the most important question of all: What happens when we succeed? Will people live to 150 or 200, with the strength and clarity of youth? Will five generations dine at the same table? Will love last centuries? Will careers span multiple lifetimes? Will death become optional?

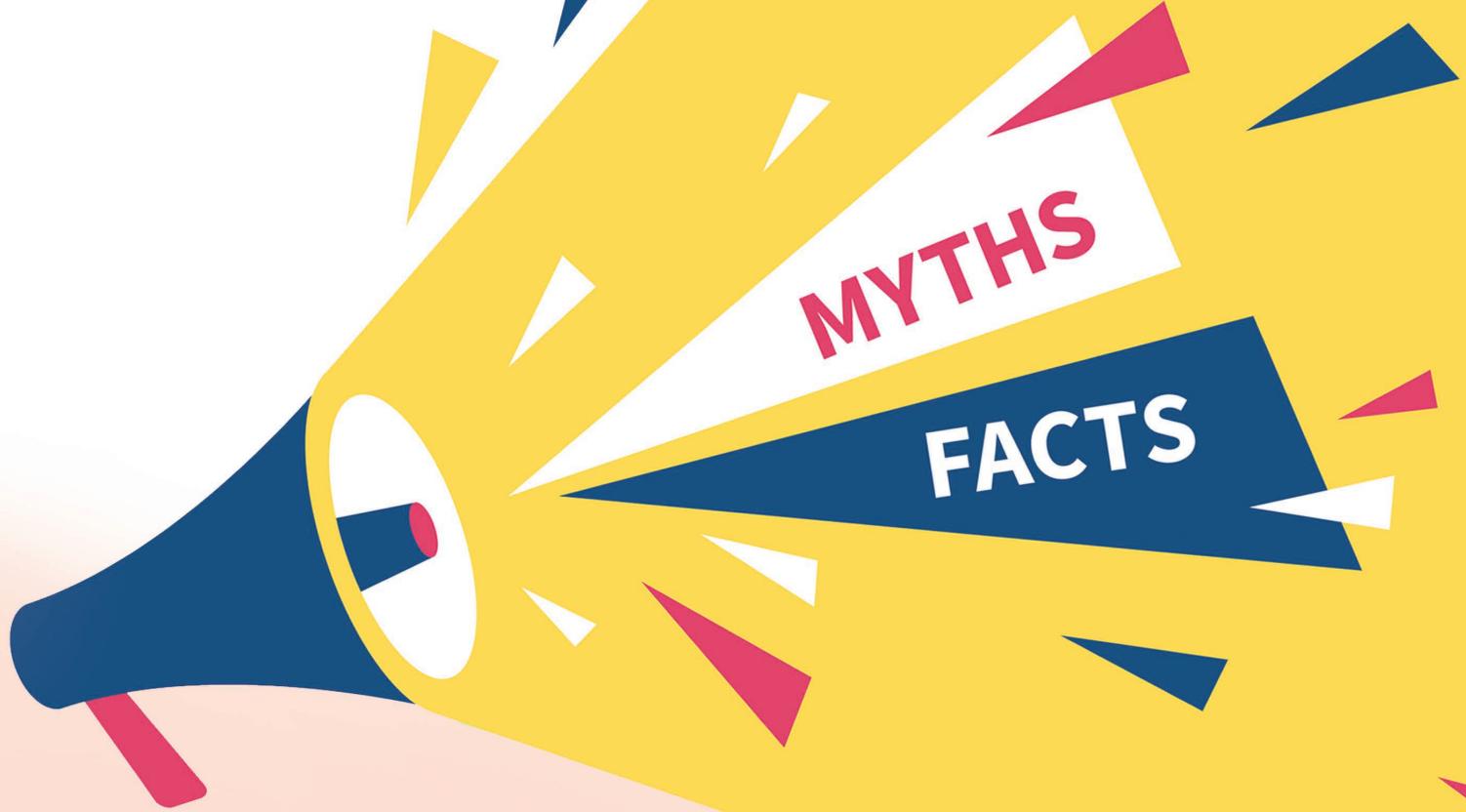
The futurist physicist Michio Kaku writes: “Death, in some sense, may become optional... Perhaps various branches of genetically enhanced humans will populate different parts of the solar system and eventually diverge into separate species.”

We are now standing at the edge of a future humanity has never faced. The line between myth and medicine, between miracle and machine, is blurring fast. Whether this vision excites or unsettles you, one thing is certain: the rules are changing. Science is rewriting the story of life—and perhaps, just perhaps, remembering something the ancients always knew. ■

IMMORTALITY INC.

Are we close to living forever?





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