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POSITIVE INDIA

UNSUNG HEROINE

GRANDDAUGHTER'S INVENTION FOR GRANDFATHER

hile most 12-year-olds are playing with toys, Shalini from Patna was inspired by her grandfather's struggles to create something truly special. Seeing his walker become useless when he faced stairs, Shalini decided to take action. She developed an Adjustable Walker, incorporating technologies like a hydraulic mechanism, clutches, and a lever locking system. This innovative walker allows the elderly and people with disabilities to navigate stairs with ease and confidence. Shalini's invention earned her a national award, and with the support of the National Innovation Foundation, it was patented. Today, it's available in the market through the company Vissco. Shalini's story proves that when your resolve is strong, it's not age, but your vision, that matters!



Shalini Kumari



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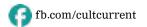
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HEALING IN INDIA Healthcare Horizon







DONALD TRUMP

Will He Be a Bismarck or a Napoleon?

Russia After Putin

A Legacy of Conflict?



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Small talk



NYSA DEVGN OUT OF SCHOOL!

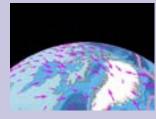
ysa Devgn, the daughter of Bollywood superstar couple Ajay Devgn and Kajol, is often in the limelight for her glamorous style. But this time, she's making headlines not for her fashion, but for her education. A social media post claims that Nysa was expelled from United World College in Singapore a year ago for unspecified reason! While the Devgn family has remained silent on the matter, the news, which went viral on Reddit, has stirred up a buzz in the gossip circles.

The discoveries that will create a stir in 2025

Fighting Depression with the Power of Sound!

A groundbreaking discovery from the University of Texas is revolutionizing the treatment of mental illnesses. Research has shown that gentle sound waves (ultrasound) can safely stimulate the brain's emotional center, the amygdala, without surgery or medication. This noninvasive treatment, lasting three weeks, brought remarkable relief to patients struggling with depression, anxiety, and PTSD.



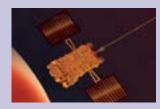


Ice Melt, Continents Shifted!

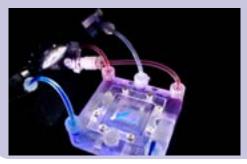
According to scientists at the University of Colorado, when the Ice Age ended 10,000 years ago, the melting of ice sheets not only raised sea levels, but also caused continental plates to slide more rapidly. The study revealed that the North American plate's movement increased by 25%, while the spreading rate of the Atlantic Ocean saw a rise of up to 40%.

The Sun Roars!

In February 2024, India's solar mission, Aditya-L1, recorded a powerful X6.3 class solar flare erupting from the sun. This is the first time that such clear images have been obtained from the sun's lower atmospheric lavers. Launched September 2023. Aditya-L1 is positioned at the L1 point between the sun and Earth and is equipped with seven scientific instruments.



CELLS ARE PRINTING NOW!



Scientists at the University of Pittsburgh have developed CHIPS, 3D-printed collagen scaffolds that help grow living tissue by mimicking the body's internal structure. This technology will not only aid in studying diseases like diabetes, but may also become an alternative to animal testing in the future.

Tesla Gearing Up in Mumbai, Opening Impressive Showroom in BKC

Elon Musk's electric car company, Tesla, has finalized its third Indian office in Mumbai's Bandra-Kurla Complex (BKC). This 30-seat office, located in a co-working space within Phoenix Market City, has been leased for one year at a monthly rent of 300,000 rupees. In addition, Tesla has also secured locations for two showrooms in India — the first in BKC, Mumbai, and the second in Aerocity, Delhi.





APPOINTMENTS



Dr. Poonam Gupta
Deputy Governer, RBI
Dr. Poonam Gupta becomes
RBI Deputy Governor April
1, 2025, the first woman to

hold the role. Formerly Director-General of NCAER and on the PM's Economic Advisory Council, she brings significant expertise.

Resignation

Sumant Kathpalia,

CEO & MD, IndusInd Bank Sumant Kathpalia, IndusInd Bank's CEO, resigned effective April 29, 2025. He took "moral responsibility"



for accounting errors related to ₹1,960 crore in derivatives, prompting his immediate departure.

Narendra Modi

Prime Minister of India

India is prepared to go to any extent against terrorism. Those who perpetrated this attack and those who conspired will face consequences beyond their imagination; justice will be served severely.

THEY SAID IT...



Shahbaz Sharif
Prime Minister of
Pakistan

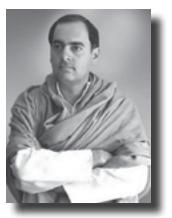
Pakistan is ready for a "neutral, transparent, and credible" investigation to find the real culprits behind the Pahalgam terror attack that killed 26 innocent people.

THE TRIBUTE

Rajiv Gandhi, born August 20, 1944, in Mumbai, was a prominent figure in Indian politics, inheriting a legacy from his mother, Indira Gandhi, and grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru. Educated at prestigious institutions like Doon School, Imperial College, and Cambridge, he initially sought a life outside politics, becoming a pilot for Indian Airlines after marrying Sonia Gandhi in 1968.

However, tragedy struck in 1980 with the death of his brother, Sanjay Gandhi, leading Rajiv to enter politics. He won the Lok Sabha seat from Amethi and soon rose through the ranks, becoming President of the Indian Youth Congress in 1981. His organizational skills were evident during the 1982 Asian Games.

The assassination of Indira Gandhi in 1984 thrust Rajiv into the Prime Minister's office. At 40, he was India's youngest PM, leading the Congress party to a landslide victory in the 1984 elections. He envisioned a modern



RAJIV GHANDHI (20/08/1944-21/05/1991)

India, championing technological advancements in computers and IT, earning him the title "Architect of Modern India."

His tenure wasn't without challenges. The Bofors scandal and the Shah Bano case created significant political storms. The deployment of the Indian Peace Keeping Force to Sri Lanka in 1987, intended to stabilize the region, ultimately backfired, creating animosity with the LTTE.

Rajiv Gandhi's life was tragically cut short on May 21, 1991, when he was assassinated by an LTTE suicide bomber during an

election rally in Sriperumbudur. Posthumously, he was awarded the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honor, recognizing his contributions to the nation. His legacy remains complex, marked by both visionary leadership and significant political turmoil.



Carney's Return and Distance from the US

ark Carney of the Liberal Party will once again become the Prime Minister of Canada. The party won 169 out of 343 seats in the general election, just 3 seats short of a majority. The main rival, the Conservative Party, was reduced to 144 seats, and its leader, Pierre Pauliver, even lost his own seat. After winning the election, Carney announced that Canada's traditional relationship with the United States is over. He stated that America's betrayal has caused deep pain and is a lesson the country will never forget. Signaling a new direction of self-reliance, Carney said, "Now we will think for ourselves and dream big." Khalistan-supporting leader Jagmeet Singh also lost the election and addressed his supporters emotionally.

Arrested in Triple Homicide



Sweden: Teenager

olice in Uppsala, Sweden, have arrested a teenager in connection with the triple homicide that occurred on April 29th. The suspect is accused of opening fire in a hair salon in the city center and fleeing on a scooter. The victims were between 15 and 20 years old. Police are investigating possible connections. gang One victim was previously under police surveillance and suspected of planning an attack on a relative of notorious gangster Ismail Abdo.

Chinmov Das Granted Bail by Bangladesh HC



he Bangladesh High Court granted bail to former ISKCON leader Chinmov Das. He and 18 associates were arrested last November on charges of sedition. They were accused of hoisting a saffron flag over the Bangladeshi national flag on October 25th at Laldighi Maidan in Chittagong. The decision sparked controversy, with demands for his immediate release. Chinmov Das has been a vocal advocate for minority rights and has called for laws to protect minorities.

Australia's AAA Rating Not at Risk: Albanese

ustralian Prime Minister **Anthony** Albanese has dismissed concerns that election spending poses a threat to the country's AAA credit rating. He stated that the Labor government has practiced responsible economic



management, turning a \$78 billion deficit into a \$2 billion surplus. S&P Global recently warned that the rating could be affected if spending is not controlled. However, Albanese affirmed that Australia's financial position remains among the best in the world.

Pakistan to Take Indus Waters Treaty Dispute to International Court



ollowing India's unilateral suspension ■ of the Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan is preparing for international legal action. Minister of State for Law and Justice Ageel Malik stated that Pakistan is considering challenging the decision at the World Bank, the International Court of Justice in The Hague, and the Permanent Court of Arbitration.

Germany Skeptical of Putin's Ceasefire Proposal



Defense erman Minister **Boris Pistorius** has expressed deep skepticism regarding the unilateral ceasefire announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin from May 8th to 10th. He stated that the Kremlin has made similar empty promises in the past that were not kept. Citing the example of the Easter ceasefire, he deemed it untrustworthy. Pistorius urged the US to continue Ukraine, supporting stating that the security of Europe is at stake.

Controversy Erupts Over 'Pakistan Conference' at Harvard After Pahalgam Attack



"Pakistan Conference" organized by Harvard University's South Asia Institute has sparked controversy. Students have criticized the event, arguing that it could legitimize statesponsored terrorism, especially in light of the recent tragic terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Jammu & Kashmir, which students described as a religiously motivated massacre. Harvard student Surbhi Tomar expressed her displeasure regarding the Pakistan Conference. Speaking to reporters, she said that what happened in Pahalgam was a religiously motivated targeted killing. "At a time when Harvard invites people who have ideologically justified such attacks, there is a danger that pro-terrorist views may be legitimized on our campus."

New Restrictions on Cesarean Deliveries in Turkey



Turkish government has recently implemented new Ministry of Health regulation that bans elective Cesarean deliveries in medical centers. This decision applies to institutions that only provide outpatient services and lack overnight care facilities. Health experts believe that continuous monitoring is necessary for Cesarean operations, which is only possible in hospitals.



Zelenskyy's Alleged Threat to Attack on Russia's Victory Day Sparks Outcry

ussian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has accused Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of threatening to attack the Victory Day parade on Moscow's Red Square on May 9th. Russia has announced a three-day ceasefire for the occasion, while Kyiv has demanded 30 days of unconditional peace. Zelenskyy stated that Russia must be attacked at its "pressure points" for "diplomatic leverage." Meanwhile, Ukrainian MP Roman Kostenko claimed that planning an attack on Red Square is "not difficult." Zakharova described this as indicative of a terrorist mentality.



Controversy Escalates Over Nishikant Dubey's Remarks Against SC

he Supreme Court clarified on April 21st that a petitioner does not need its permission to file a contempt petition against BJP MP Nishikant Dubey. The court advised the petitioner to file the petition, but that it would require the approval of the Attorney General. The matter arose after Dubey commented on the Supreme Court and the Chief Justice, stating that "the Supreme Court is responsible for inciting religious war in the country" and that the court is violating its boundaries. This controversy ignited after the Supreme Court questioned the validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act. Following this, Rajya Sabha MP Dinesh Sharma also commented that Parliament is supreme under the Constitution.

Burnihat Engulfed by Pollution



urnihat, city in Meghalaya once known for its greenery, has now become the most polluted city in the world. Two-year-old Sumaiya Ansari's respiratory illness has become a symbol of this crisis. According to an IQAir report, the PM 2.5 level here is 25 times higher than WHO standards. Mining, industry, and fuel combustion have poisoned the air. People are suffering from respiratory, skin, and eye diseases, and life has now become a daily struggle.

Language Dispute Erupts Again Over Education Policy

Nadu amil has strongly opposed the implementation of the three-language formula under the New Education Policy (NEP-2020). The state government alleges



that there is an attempt to impose Hindi and that the central government is pressuring them by linking it to education funding. While the central government claims that the policy is flexible and aims to increase opportunities in education. •

Trump Tariffs Toll: Kashmiri Carpet Industry Struggles



Kashmiri carpet industry, a centuriesold heritage, is now struggling under the weight of US tariffs. Weavers like Mohammad Yusuf and his wife Shameema are striving to preserve this traditional art. Dependent on the American market, this industry is falling behind machine-made due to tariffs imposed by the Trump administration. Global competition declining demand have pushed artisans to the margins. An area that once had hundreds of weavers has now dwindled to a few, and the heritage is in crisis.

One Innocent Child Goes Missing Every Eight Minutes



hild trafficking is a serious and growing problem in India. Every eight minutes, a child goes missing, many of whom are victims of sexual exploitation, child labor, and violence. In 2023, there were 20,000 children on the streets, half of whom were homeless. Uttar Pradesh faces the most dire situation, with cases of child trafficking increasing rapidly. The Supreme Court has directed all states to take a strict stance on this issue.

DRDO Develops Futuristic Drone-Killing Technology



DRDO has successfully shot down a flying drone with a truck-mounted 30-kilowatt laser weapon Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh. This stateof-the-art laser beam incinerated 'fixedwing drone' at a height of 3.5 km in a matter of seconds. This technology is named MK-2. India has now joined the ranks of countries like China. the US, and Russia that have developed laser weapons. According to DRDO chief Samir V. Kamat, this is just the beginning.

Digha Temple: 'Religious Power' or 'Political Strategy'?



grand temple built in Digha at a cost of 250 crore rupees will be inaugurated by Mamata Banerjee on April 30th. Made of red stones from Rajasthan and Vietnamese marble in the Kalinga architectural style, the temple features a 65-meter-high spire, three large pavilions, a stage for religious events, a fire station, and a police outpost. The Trinamool government has described it as a cultural center built at local demand, but the opposition has called it Hindutya politics and a waste of government money. Suvendu Adhikari and the BJP have questioned its religious validity, calling it a 'copy of Puri.' The Congress and Left parties have also criticized it. Analysts believe that Mamata Banerjee is bringing this temple under a 'soft Hindutva' strategy in response to the BJP's aggressive Hindutva.

Will Raj and Uddhav Unite for Marathi Identity?



ivisions nothing new in Shiv Sena's history, but a potential unification of Raj Thackeray and Uddhav Thackeray could major turning point in Maharashtra politics. Recently, both leaders have signaled a willingness to unite, prioritizina "Marathi identity" and "the wellbeing of Maharashtra." Raj called the differences "minor," while Uddhav of conditional spoke support.



Calls for the Return of the Monarchy in Nepal

he demand for a monarchy and a Hindu nation is once again gaining momentum in Nepal. Protests in support of former King Gyanendra Shah are taking place on the streets of Kathmandu, with monarchy supporters raising their voices against the country's disorder, corruption, and political instability. While people stood in favor of democracy in 2006, the same public now wants the return of the monarchy. This movement is important for India in many ways—geopolitical balance, Nepal-China relations, and the regional reverberations of Hindu nationalism.



SRIRAJESH, Editor

PAKISTAN

IS NOT JUST A COUNTRY, IT'S A MENTALITY

After losing several wars to India, Pakistan adopted "terrorism" as its strategy.

he tragedy of India's partition not only carved out borders but also gave rise to two distinct mentalities. Pakistan is often viewed as just a nation, but it's more than a geographical entity; it's a specific state of mind—one born of resentment, insecurity, and a supremacist religious segregation. We should see Pakistan as a mental condition, an ideology rooted in history, whose branches still spread as terrorism, violence, and cultural division.

Pakistan was not built on a positive ideological foundation. It was based on an emotional campaign fueled by religious slogans like "Islam is in danger," which Jinnah opportunistically exploited for personal gain. Jinnah himself wasn't deeply knowledgeable about Islam, but he weaponized religious identity. The idea that Muslims and Hindus couldn't coexist not only formed the basis of partition but also laid a foundation for future hatred and conflict.

The "politics of distance" propounded by religious thinkers like Shah Waliullah became a self-destructive tool in the hands of the Muslim League and leaders like Jinnah. Pakistan's foundation was negativity—that we are not like Hindus, that we are different, and on that basis, we need a separate country.

From its first day, a self-contradictory extremism began to fester within Pakistan. In this country formed in the name of Islam, hatred and violence replaced the true teachings of Islam. Whether it was the war against India in 1947 or the horrors of the Bengali genocide in 1971, the core of Pakistan's military and political thinking has been anti-India sentiment and a misinterpretation of Islam.

The foundation of the two-nation theory was shaken when Bangladesh broke away from Pakistan in 1971. Bengali Muslims proved that the creation of Pakistan was not about protecting Islam, but a political deceit against communal and linguistic oppression. The constant repetition of the "two-nation theory" by military rulers like General Asim Munir is not only turning a blind eye to historical truth, but also a sign of desperation from a bankrupt nation.

After losing several wars to India, Pakistan adopted "terrorism" as its strategy. A nation plunged its resources, its youth, and its foreign policy into such fanaticism that terrorism became an "economic industry." Kashmir, whose political future was yet to be decided in 1947, has had its peace forcibly consumed by Pakistan's infiltration for seven decades.

General Munir's recent statement that "we will not forget Kashmir" is once again an attempt to give ideological legitimacy to terror. The truth is that today Indian Jammu and Kashmir is setting new records in development, employment, and tourism, while poverty, oppression, and discontent smolder in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Pakistani rulers have no answer to this, only empty slogans of war and terror.

Ironically, the very principles of Islam are completely absent from Pakistan's politics, despite the country being formed in its name. In the Quran, Allah is called "Rabb-ul-Alamin"—the cherisher of all creation. Then from which Islam is Pakistan's narrow, violent nationalism inspired? If Islam is in danger, as is repeatedly said, then this questions the very truth of Islam.

Pakistan, by rejecting the global perspective of Islam, has become a carrier of a radical, narrow ideology. Afghanistan, Iran, Bangladesh, Indonesia—all are Muslim-majority nations, but no nation is as selfcontradictory and violent as Pakistan. Even the atrocities committed against Muslims in China do not disturb Pakistan because Pakistan's Islam is only "political Islam" against India—devoid of humanity and driven by self-interest.

Pakistan is being recorded in history not as a state, but as a failed experiment. It is an idea built on a lie—that religion can create a nation. When the very foundation of this idea is weak, no matter how many times the building is rebuilt, it will collapse.

Today, as India is scaling new heights of development, Pakistan is trapped in the barren plains of its own past—neither the leaders have vision, nor the military has wisdom. If Pakistan really wants to survive, it will have to abandon "anti-India" sentiment and adopt the path of "selfimprovement"—a path that demands freedom in thought, inclusion in society, and responsibility in politics.

Can Pakistan get out of this mentality? Or will it remain in history only as a warning—that nations built in the name of religion, when they abandon self-reflection, become hell for their own people.







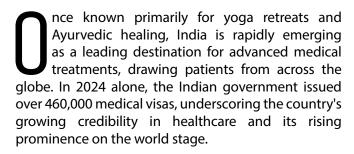








Jalaj Srivastava



While patients arrive from all corners of the world,

key sources of medical tourism in India include Iraq, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Bangladesh. However, geopolitical shifts are having a notable impact. As Anas Abdul Wajid, Chief Sales and Marketing Officer at Max Healthcare, explains, "Since 2021, we've seen a decrease in visas issued to Afghan patients as India does not recognize the current regime in Afghanistan." Similarly, ongoing political instability in Bangladesh is affecting the flow of patients seeking treatment in India.



Medical tourism in India is far more than just hospitals; it fosters a vibrant ecosystem of hotels, restaurants, translation services, travel agencies, and pharmacies. In Gurugram's Sector 50, for example, a local bakery operator can count in Arabic, Pashto, and Russian, while a nearby restaurant serves authentic Arabic cuisine. A variety of hotels and lodging options cater specifically to the needs of patients and their families.

When it comes to health, patients seek more than just treatment—they crave trust and security. This is precisely why Cassandra and her husband from the Philippines chose India over the United States or Japan for their son, Zulqarnain Ali's, liver transplant. "The chances of survival were slim in the Philippines, and the other options were incredibly expensive," they said. In India, they found a more affordable and accessible path to successful surgery at Max Super Speciality Hospital, navigating the city with Uber and preparing



their own meals in their hotel.

According to the National Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (NOTTO), India performed 18,378 organ transplants in 2023, with 1,851 of those involving foreign nationals. Within the Delhi-NCR region alone, 1,445 transplants were performed, predominantly from living donors, often relatives of the patients.

Gurugram is quickly becoming a favorite destination for international patients after New Delhi. Local hotels, restaurants, pharmacies, and taxi services are increasingly tailored to meet the unique needs of these visitors. Abu Ismail, who traveled from Iraq with his brother for cancer treatment at Fortis Hospital, stays in an apartment hotel where the staff communicates using translation apps.

In 2024, over 320,000 medical visas were issued to Bangladeshi citizens, representing nearly 70% of the total. But experts like Abdul Wajid foresee potential declines due to recent strains in India-Bangladesh relations. A similar pattern emerged with Afghanistan after the Taliban took power in 2021. The number of Afghan citizens seeking medical treatment in India plummeted from 22,463 in 2021 to a mere one in 2024. This followed the closure of India's embassy in Kabul and its relocation to New Delhi.

Nepal isn't included in these statistics as Nepali citizens can seek medical treatment in India without a visa. Despite this, India's appeal persists, even attracting citizens from developed countries. In 2024, 1,911 people from the United States and 785 from the United Kingdom traveled to India for medical care.

A NITI Aayog report projected India's medical tourism sector to reach \$5–6 billion by the mid-2020s and estimated



it could reach \$13 billion by 2022.

Niyazov, a Turkmen citizen who personally financed his daughter's treatment, was impressed by the e-visa process. He contrasts it with the fees of \$35 to \$1015 (₹"2,983–₹"86,525) charged to Indian citizens for entry into Turkmenistan. Abdul Wajid explains that India reciprocates the relative ease with which its citizens obtain visas in other countries.

The Indian government has recognized medical tourism as a 'Champion Service Sector' and allocated a ₹5,000 crore fund in 2018 to promote the sector. The e-visa facility for patients and their companions simplifies the process of traveling to India. However, experts believe the sector needs more transparency and regulation.

"If someone approaches a healthcare facilitator, they have no way of knowing if they'll be taken to a reputable hospital or a dodgy nursing home," says Abdul Wajid. He has encountered several cases where patients

arrived in India only to find themselves stranded and needing relocation.

We have contacted the Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Health, and the Delhi government to understand what grievance redressal mechanisms are available in India for foreign nationals, what types of fraud they encounter, and how political events in countries like Bangladesh and Afghanistan affect medical visa flows. Information will be released when it becomes available.

Yet, where patients find the right doctors and facilities, treatment in India can be life-changing. "Both doctors who treated my daughter were extremely helpful," Niyazov said. "We hope she lives a healthy life."

This article draws data and facts from Nushaba Iqbal's report "How India Is Turning Into A Popular Medical Tourism Hub," published on IndiaSpend, with due credit.

Russia After Putin A Legacy of Conflict?



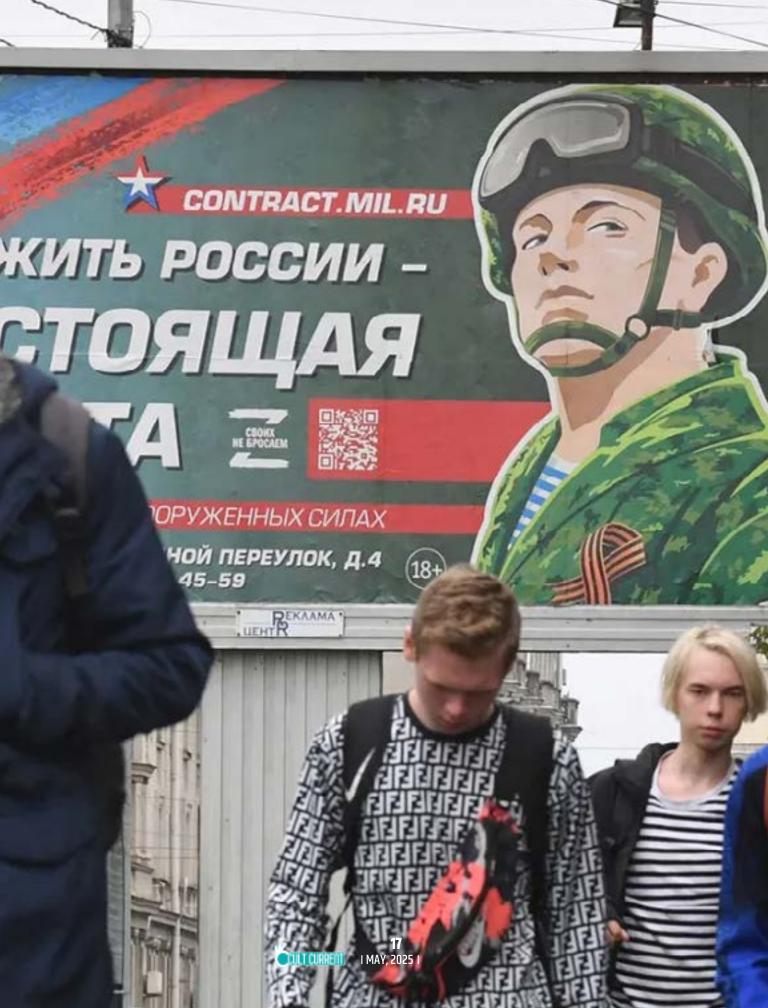
Alexander Gabuev

Putin's February 2022 invasion of Ukraine shattered the world order, inflicting immense suffering on Ukrainians and fundamentally reshaping Russia itself. But can even a ceasefire have championed by a sympathetic US president undo Putin's commitment to Western antagonism? Can Kyiv's peace sever Russia's deepening ties with China? This is a critical examination of the challenges facing the West as it grapples with Russia's future, a future inextricably linked to Putin's choices and their enduring consequences. The coming era demands a bold new vision.

ussian President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 marked a decisive turning point in history. While the most immediate impact was felt by Ukraine, which was subjected to the brutal aggression, the war also transformed Russia in ways that outsiders may not fully grasp. No ceasefire, not even one mediated by a U.S. president sympathetic to his Russian counterpart, can undo the extent to which Putin has made confrontation with the West the organizing principle of Russian life. Similarly, even if hostilities in Ukraine cease, the depth of the relationship Putin has forged with China cannot be reversed.

As a result, Putin's Russia has become increasingly repressive, and anti-Western sentiment has become even more pervasive throughout Russian society. Since







2022, the Kremlin has waged a sweeping campaign to suppress political dissent, promote pro-war and anti-Western propaganda domestically, and create a broad class of Russian citizens who benefit directly from the war. Millions of Russians, including top officials and many of the country's wealthiest people, now view the West as their mortal enemy.

Although U.S. and European officials have strongly opposed Putin's aggression over the past three years, they have at times unwittingly reinforced Putin's narrative that the West resents Russia and that their conflict is an existential struggle. Western leaders' strategy has been marred by a lack of a coherent, long-term approach and by rhetoric that has suggested a grander design than actually exists. For example, in 2024, Kaja Kallas, then the Prime Minister of Estonia and now the EU's top diplomat, stated that Western leaders should not worry that NATO's commitment to a Ukrainian victory could lead to Russia's disintegration. The Kremlin's propaganda machine immediately seized upon this statement to propagate the idea that the West's ultimate goal is to

President Donald Trump's efforts to swiftly end the war drove a wedge into the transatlantic alliance. While Trump's cordiality with Putin might foster a minor easing of tensions between the U.S. and Russia, Putin's ingrained suspicion of the West makes true reconciliation unattainable.



dismantle Russia.

U.S. President Donald Trump has disrupted the transatlantic alliance by seeking a quick end to the war. However, even if Trump's friendly overtures to Putin lead to a superficial thaw in U.S.-Russian relations, Putin's fundamental distrust of the West makes genuine reconciliation impossible. He cannot be certain that Trump will be able to persuade Europe to restore ties with Russia, and he knows that a new U.S. administration in 2028 could easily reverse course. Few American companies are eager to return to Russia. And Putin will not abandon his strategic relationship with Chinese President Xi Jinping. The Kremlin will continue to embrace Chinese technology, including digital control tools, rely on China's markets and financial system, and deepen its security ties with Beijing, even if it increases the risk of a confrontation with Washington.

While Trump's policy of appeasement may lead some European leaders to adopt an even tougher stance toward Russia, that would be a mistake. Putin's

regime is unlikely to collapse from within. Therefore, deterrence must remain the cornerstone of Western policy, especially European strategy, at least in the short term.

However, Putin will eventually leave the stage. While his successors are likely to come from within his inner circle, they will have greater freedom to chart a new course for the country and strong incentives to improve the situation. Even though the Russian population is not restless, Putin's Russia is weak from within. The most obvious way for Putin's successors to improve the country's position would be to rebalance its foreign policy. Therefore, even as European leaders strengthen their efforts to deter Russia, they must also prepare to seize the opportunity that will arise when Putin departs.

They must envision a new kind of relationship with Russia, one that is free from the illusion that Russia must transform itself as completely as West Germany did after World War II in order to become a reliable economic and strategic partner. They must propose specific terms for peaceful coexistence, such as arms control strategies and forms of economic interdependence that prevent either side from using economic leverage as a weapon. And European leaders (as well as those American leaders who do not share Trump's pro-Putin leanings) must begin to communicate their vision by making their statements about Russia clearer, even in announcements about increasing their military budgets.

While not everyone in the Kremlin shares Putin's anti-Western sentiments, many Russian elites privately acknowledge that the war in Ukraine was not only a moral crime but also a strategic blunder. The easier it is for these pragmatic individuals to envision a better relationship with the West, the more likely they are to prevail in the inevitable power struggles that will follow Putin's departure. It is therefore essential for the West to adjust its message to Russia, not only for future planning but also as a sound strategy for the present. If Western leaders cease to reinforce the Kremlin's narrative that they seek perpetual conflict with Russia, they may diminish the appeal of far-right and far-left populists who claim that the defense industry is simply intent on waging endless war.

However, if Western leaders continue to suggest

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that engaging in dialogue with Russia is pointless, they risk pushing future Kremlin leaders down a dangerous path, leaving them with no choice but to perpetuate Putin's policies, including dependence on China. Some in the West may feel that the past three years have demonstrated their limited ability to influence Russia's trajectory. However, they still possess tools that they have not fully utilized, and it would be unwise to abandon them.

During Putin's initial two terms in the Kremlin (2000-2008), Russia's GDP nearly doubled due to rising commodity prices, Western investment, market reforms, and a burgeoning entrepreneurial class. Compared to Russia's authoritarian Tsarist and Communist eras, and the chaotic decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country had never been so prosperous and free. Although economic growth slowed in the 2010s, the social contract largely remained intact.

However, the war in Ukraine has brought about significant changes to the Russian economy and the social contract that sustains it. In January 2024, economist Alexandra Prokopenko wrote in Foreign Affairs that the Kremlin faced an "impossible trilemma": the need to fund an increasingly expensive war, maintain living standards, and safeguard Russia's macroeconomic stability – goals that cannot be achieved simultaneously.

Putin solved the problem by prioritizing the war effort. Between 2025 and 2027, the Russian government plans to allocate approximately 40% of its budget to defense and security, which will come at the expense of essential areas like healthcare and education. For many Russians, the war has been economically beneficial. After a slight dip in 2022, Russia's GDP grew by 3.6% in 2023 and 4.1% in 2024, fueled by defense spending. The major economic drawbacks of the war, such as double-digit inflation, only started to emerge in late 2024. Even when the fighting stops in Ukraine, the Russian economy will remain heavily militarized. The defense industry will need to replenish the massive loss of military equipment, and Putin has launched an expensive military modernization program.

If the war in Ukraine restarts or continues, the economic situation for Russians could worsen significantly. However, this scenario is unlikely to lead to widespread pressure for regime change. As the Russian economy has come under increasing pressure, Moscow has responded by tightening its grip on society. The Kremlin has criminalized criticism of the war and the military, and has launched highprofile legal cases against both well-known and lesser-known dissidents. The government has dramatically increased the number of people it deems "foreign agents" and has stepped up its attacks on "undesirable"



organizations, leaving those who oppose the war with a stark choice: exile or imprisonment. Police and security forces are highly motivated to pursue these cases, as they receive rewards for each "enemy of the state" they apprehend.

While making it prohibitively costly to criticize the war, Putin has also turned it into a source of wealth redistribution. Of course, the primary beneficiaries are his close associates and their patronage networks. Some have taken advantage of the departure of foreign and multinational corporations by acquiring

undervalued assets or simply seizing them, often with the support of powerful figures such as Chechen leader Ramzan Kadyrov. In addition to the wealthy elites, thousands of others have benefited from the war, such as entrepreneurs who make money by circumventing sanctions. Furthermore, hundreds of thousands of white-collar professionals, particularly those in IT, finance, and business services, are earning higher salaries as their dissident counterparts emigrate



and their skills become more scarce.

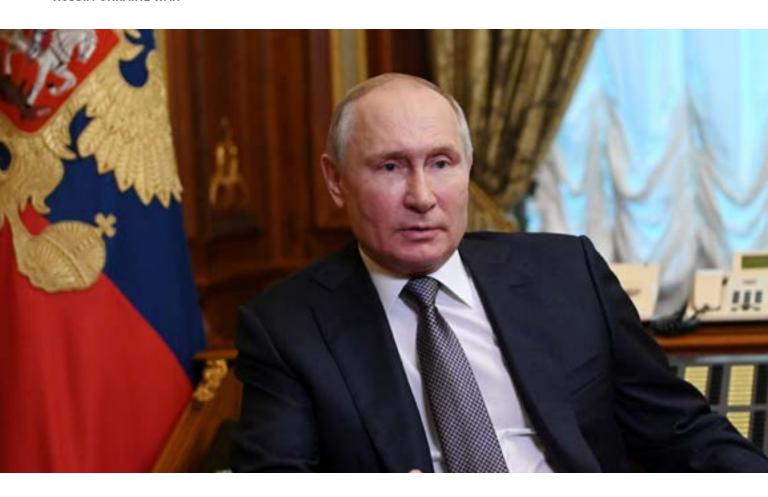
In addition, Putin has purchased support by financially rewarding those fighting on the front lines, workers in military factories, and their families. According to the Kremlin, approximately 700,000 Russian soldiers were deployed to the front in June 2024. The average Russian soldier now earns roughly \$2,000 per month, which is twice the national average and four times the average income in the regions that contribute the most recruits. Since the beginning of the invasion, over 800,000 Russian troops have been

killed or wounded, and the government has paid their families as much as \$80,000 for each death or injury. The Kremlin's financial outlays have thus created a large segment of the population whose material advancement and career prospects are dependent on an unjust war. In 2024, the Kremlin launched a program to train and place veterans in public-sector or government jobs.

The war has also become a means of social mobility for Russian public-sector workers. Civil servants now have a new career path: working in the occupied territories speeds up their promotions. For the hundreds of thousands of Russians employed in counterintelligence and law enforcement, catching Western and Ukrainian agents and neutralizing antiwar activists and journalists has become a way to climb the career ladder. All of this has made the Russian bureaucracy far more political. Even in relatively pragmatic institutions such as the central bank, Western-trained technocrats are becoming warriors in the fight against Western sanctions.

Long before the full-scale war in Ukraine, Russian society, thanks to Putin's repressive policies, suffered from inertia and a sense of learned helplessness. But in recent years, the Kremlin has engaged in extensive social engineering to instill a deep-seated distrust of the West in the Russian psyche. In September 2022, it introduced weekly propaganda sessions in all schools, disguised as patriotic lessons, that promote pro-war narratives. The state has become more interventionist in entertainment and culture, forcing independentminded musicians, artists, and writers into exile, labeling dissident writers as "extremists," and staging show trials of liberal intellectuals who opposed the war. Drawing inspiration from the Chinese Communist Party, the Kremlin has sought to create a digital iron curtain, banning Instagram and Facebook and throttling YouTube, which nearly half of all Russians over the age of 12 used daily.

Of course, a black swan event could shatter this "Fortress Russia." The recent sudden collapse of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria showed that even the most brutal regimes can be more fragile than they appear. However, the complete collapse of Putin's regime remains unlikely. Even if the cash needed to buy off potential critics begins to dry up, the state can compensate by resorting to greater brutality.



The war in Ukraine has done more than just temporarily disrupt Russian foreign policy; it has fundamentally changed it. Russian foreign policy is now guided by three objectives: building alliances to support the war effort, sustaining an economy targeted by sanctions, and retaliating against the West for its support of Ukraine. Russian officials have made significant new investments in partnerships with regimes and entities willing to impose additional costs on the West, particularly North Korea, Iran, and Iranian proxies such as the Houthi militia in Yemen.

If the war ends and the United States lifts its sanctions, the Kremlin might temporarily suspend some of its most audacious anti-American activities, such as providing weapons to U.S. adversaries like the Houthis. However, it will retain the ability to resume those activities once the Trump team leaves office. The Kremlin has also worked to maintain and expand its ties to developing countries around the world by heavily discounting Russian commodities and boosting exports to India, Southeast Asia, Africa, the

Middle East, and Latin America.

Most significantly, Russia has decisively turned toward China. Before the war, the two countries were in a state of asymmetrical interdependence, in which China had more leverage but Russia hedged its bets by maintaining trade, financial, and technological ties with Europe. However, since 2022, Putin has accepted a far greater level of dependence on China in exchange for Beijing's support for the war effort. The Kremlin has been able to sustain the war for three years only because of the flow of critical weapons components from China. The Russian economy has remained afloat because China now purchases 30% of Russian exports, up from 14% in 2021, and provides 40% of its imports, up from 24% before the war. Beijing also provides Moscow with a Yuan-denominated financial infrastructure that it can use to conduct foreign trade.

Russia has gambled that this dependence will prove beneficial. Because Beijing is Washington's primary adversary, strengthening China is, in the Kremlin's America and Europe must also confront Russia's "shadow war." Moscow is actively undermining democracy through a range of tactics, including sabotage, assassinations, spreading disinformation, and election interference.

view, a strategic investment in the decline of American global dominance. For that reason, Russia now shares weapons designs with China that it had previously hesitated to divulge. It has encouraged its research institutions and universities to contribute to China's innovation ecosystem, and has initiated joint Chinese-Russian projects in the natural sciences, applied mathematics, IT, and space. The number of Russians working for Chinese companies such as Huawei has increased dramatically. Moscow supplies China with cheap commodities such as oil and gas via land routes, ensuring Beijing's access to resources in the event of a maritime blockade, as well as uranium for China's nuclear weapons program.

During his 2024 reelection campaign, Trump promised to "un-unite" China and Russia. As president, he seems to be trying to do so with his warm overtures to Putin. But no matter what Trump does, Russia under Putin will never cease to pose a threat to Europe and the United States. Europe will need to continue to work to deter the Russian regime and to prepare to do so with far less U.S. support. European leaders should continue to frame this effort as a transatlantic endeavor, best pursued through NATO or, if the Trump administration will not engage, through a team of senior U.S. allies comprised of foreign policy experts, military leaders, and American defense industry leaders.

The first priority is to scale up defense production. While analysts sometimes present this as a straightforward challenge, it is not. If policymakers focus on strengthening Europe's security without addressing the continent's sluggish economic growth, they will only embolden populists who oppose increased defense spending and advocate for appeasement of Putin.

Europe and the United States must also counter Russia's so-called shadow war. Moscow has developed various methods of undermining democracies' security and political systems, including acts of sabotage, targeted killings, online disinformation campaigns, and election interference. The Kremlin is proud of these methods and is likely to continue using them even after a ceasefire is reached in Ukraine. No framework currently exists for managing hybrid-war escalations with Russia, and one must be developed. The United States, as well as Europe, will need to make generational investments in counterintelligence, counterterrorism, and the fight against organized crime. The organic rise of radical Islam and far-right extremism in Europe has created fertile ground for the Kremlin to exploit.

In addition to strengthening deterrence, Western leaders, particularly European leaders, must begin to consider a different approach to Russia. The country that Putin's successors will inherit will almost certainly be profoundly unbalanced due to years of excessive military spending, declining access to cutting-edge technologies, excessive reliance on China, and the ways in which the war in Ukraine has exacerbated existing demographic challenges. Given the extent to which Russia's military, intelligence, and law enforcement elites have invested in the war in Ukraine and profited from it, Putin's successors will have little immediate incentive to break with the past. Even the most pragmatic Russians will not want a hostile relationship with China. However, a substantial faction within the Russian elite understands that the war in Ukraine was a disaster and may well want to gradually undo the most harmful aspects of Putin's legacy, but only if they know that the door on the Western side will be open to them.

Adjusting the West's message to Russia and making that message coherent will be a difficult task, and not simply because Trump has shattered the unity

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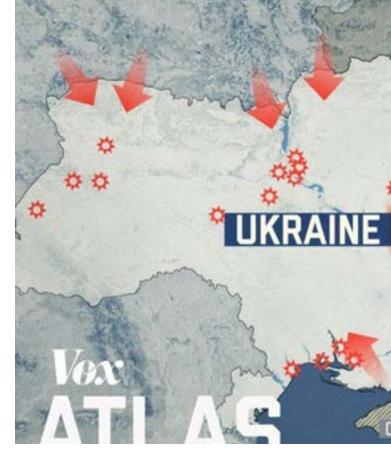
of the transatlantic alliance. Within Europe, different governments have different views of Russia. However, European policymakers and American politicians who do not want to follow Trump's approach can begin by formulating a concrete vision of a more stable security relationship.

If events continue along their current course, NATO and Russia will soon be heavily armed with conventional weapons, including tanks and drones, as well as strategic weapons, such as hypersonic nuclear missiles. The risks posed by this scenario are familiar from the Cold War, and the solution is the same: arms control agreements with robust verification mechanisms and communication channels for managing crises. If Western and Russian negotiators can build sufficient trust, the next step would be to sign agreements that impose cuts on conventional and strategic weapon stockpiles, similar to the U.S.-Russia Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (which expires in 2026) or the Treaty of Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (which NATO and Russia suspended in 2023). Both sides could discuss ways to limit their interference in each other's domestic affairs if Russia is willing to cease its efforts to undermine democracies.

Economic interdependence once served as a source of prosperity for both Russia and the West. By the time Putin departs, Europe will likely have fully eliminated its dependence on Russian commodities. If so, resuming imports of certain Russian raw materials would not threaten Europe's independence; rather, it would further diversify European supply chains. Restoring trade relations would also benefit Russia by reducing its reliance on the Chinese market.

However, no meaningful reconciliation between Russia and the West can occur without addressing the criminal war that Putin launched against Ukraine. Even if Moscow and NATO initiate arms control talks on missiles, for example, a stable new equilibrium cannot be established as long as Kyiv is threatened and continuing to build missiles. Any future project aimed at restoring full economic ties with Russia will need to generate funds for Ukraine's reconstruction or even some form of reparations.

Moscow, of course, is unlikely ever to accept the word "reparations" in any official document. However, a special tax on Russian commodities sold



to Europe, for example, could generate funds for Ukraine for a fixed number of years. Alternatively, international actors could establish a fund for Ukraine's reconstruction into which Russia pays a certain percentage of its GDP for a specified period. The faster the Russian economy grows, the more money Ukraine will receive, which would incentivize the EU to purchase Russian commodities and invest in the country.

Many European countries will want to involve Ukraine in crafting any strategy toward Russia after Putin leaves power. For many in Kyiv, a permanently weakened or even destroyed Russia may seem like the best outcome. But such an outcome would hardly serve Europe's interests, given the dangers posed by the collapse of a massive neighbor whose territory is teeming with weapons of mass destruction. NATO membership for Ukraine is currently unacceptable to Putin, and his successors may prove to be just as hostile to the idea. However, more pragmatic Russian leaders may eventually come to realize that Ukrainian membership in NATO poses a lesser threat to Russia than a vengeful Ukraine unbound by the alliance's rules and discipline.



In order to convey this new vision to the Russian people, Western countries must urgently revive the channels of communication that have been allowed to wither during the war. It must be made clear to Russians, both ordinary citizens and those in positions of power, that the Kremlin seeks to isolate Russia from the West, and not the other way around. Artists, scientists, intellectuals, and athletes who have not disseminated war propaganda should not be boycotted simply because they are Russian, and Europe needs to adjust its visa policies, which currently make it nearly impossible for Russians to travel to the continent.

In public statements, Western leaders and officials must tirelessly emphasize that they do not oppose the Russian people, but only Putin's disastrous policy choices. They should argue that these choices have made Russians less prosperous and less secure. Western officials also need to reestablish regular contact with the Kremlin bureaucrats and foreign policy experts who will form the backbone of the Russian state apparatus after Putin departs. They can begin to do so at international forums, where discussions with Russian counterparts can serve shared interests, such as preventing accidental provocations at sea and in

the air. Obviously, many Russian interlocutors will be attempting to gather intelligence. However, this is hardly a new risk.

Envisioning Russia after Putin may seem distant and abstract, especially after past attempts to remove him have failed, including Yevgeny Prigozhin's mutiny in 2023. Discussing ways to reconnect with Russia may even seem divisive. The unity displayed by the West on Ukraine before Trump's reelection was a major achievement. Now, with a president sympathetic to Putin in the White House, European unity may seem even more vital. However, many European countries, especially those on NATO's eastern flank, are unwilling to consider any form of détente with the Kremlin, even after Putin is no longer in power.

Nevertheless, they must. Western leaders must acknowledge and address the concerns of their own citizens, many of whom do not want to see a costly, open-ended conflict with Russia. And imagining a pragmatic relationship is not merely an intellectual exercise, but a tool to encourage Russia to pursue reform. Even if Putin would never respond positively to Western overtures, their existence could sow divisions within his regime after he leaves power. Putin has not groomed a successor because he fears losing his grip on power. If he eventually designates one, that person will be weaker than him, creating opportunities for rival political factions to compete for influence. Even if a full-blown succession crisis does not erupt, Russia's transition after Putin could resemble the period following Stalin's death in the 1950s, in which the emergence of a de facto collective leadership led to a shift toward liberalization and pragmatism. The recent change in U.S. leadership caught Europe unprepared. A sudden change of power in the Kremlin will similarly take Europe by surprise unless Western countries more actively envision what their relationship with Russia could look like after Putin. An endless cycle of cold and hot wars is not inevitable. But if Western leaders delay discussing a different vision, they risk enabling Putin's efforts to make confrontation with the West his lasting legacy.

(This article is an curated version based on the facts presented in "The Russia That Putin Made," an article published in Foreign Affairs by Alexander Gabuev.)

INDIA ON ATTACK WHAT NEXT?

The brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam has reignited India's national security strategy. It is now evident that Pakistan-sponsored terrorism remains determined to challenge Indian interests. The pressing question is: how will India respond this time? Will the response be limited to diplomatic pressure, or will it include decisive military action?



Desh Mange JUStice



The brutal murder of innocent tourists in Pahalgam has shaken the entire nation. The bloodied land of Kashmir cries out for justice, every Indian heart filled with outrage. Will the government deliver a fitting response to these merchants of terror? Will the families of the victims receive justice? "The Nation Demands Justice" – this article offers a serious analysis of the Pahalgam tragedy and the challenges facing India.



n the afternoon of April 22nd, when merchants of terror emerged from the forests nestled along the edges of the lush green meadow of Baisaran, the peaceful valleys of Kashmir were once again stained with blood. The silence in the valleys was shattered by screams, innocence was strangled. These terrorists asked the male tourists about their religion, shaming humanity, ruthlessly delivering death sentences based solely on religious identity, and then... bullets rained down.

The screams of women echoing in the horror of

the forest, their futile cries to protect their loved ones, lingered in the cold Kashmiri air for a long time – as if every leaf, every pebble had become a witness to that cruelty. The killers vanished into the forests, but that moment plunged countless hearts into lifelong mourning. Indian soldiers took those fleeing in the shadow of terror into their safe hands, consoling them – as if holding aloft the last torch of humanity.

The Kashmir Valley, often oscillating between the yearning for separation from India and the desire for normalcy, shuddered completely that day. That





evening, when the bodies arrived in Pahalgam, a cold blanket of grief covered the entire town. Families that had joyfully set out for Baisaran just hours earlier were now lamenting helplessly amidst the rubble of their shattered worlds. The unspeakable pain on the faces of women and children became permanent – as if every tear was now too small, every sob unable to express that pain.

The savagery of that violence was so shocking that all debates over identity and statehood became secondary at that moment. News reports published in Kashmir's leading newspapers became a silent scream against this inhumanity. Hotels and lodges emptied, the colorful dream of tourism shattered in a single blow. The valley, which was called a piece of paradise, was once again stained with the blood of innocents.

As details emerged, the heart-breaking truth became clear – terrorists targeted non-Muslim men and spared the women. The message behind this brutality was clear - by targeting a tourist destination like Pahalgam, just a few kilometres from the Line of Control, the terrorists tried to show the world that their power is still alive, and their hatred is still deep.

As a former military officer rightly said – this attack was not just violence, but a political declaration. Pakistan has still not abandoned its attitude towards Kashmir

and wants to remind the international community of the bitter truth that the tragedy of Kashmir is not yet over. Despite India limiting its relations with Pakistan, Pakistan has not changed its intentions.

In this tragedy, humanity groaned – and Kashmir, which has always dreamed of being called the land of flowers and paradise, was once again soaked in its own bloody tears. There was pain in the valleys, screams in the winds, and countless questions in the hearts of the people.

The terrorist attack in Kashmir came just days after Pakistani Army Chief General Asim Munir's inflammatory speech – in which he said that Hindus and Muslims cannot live together, their lifestyles, culture, and objectives are all different, which is why Pakistan was created under the two-nation theory, and reiterated the old slogan while calling Kashmir the "lifeline" of Pakistan – the attack was not a coincidence but part of a well-thought-out conspiracy. The plan may have been in the works for some time, but the timing of the attack was chosen to coincide with US Vice President JD Vance's visit to India. As if to send a message to the world in the shadow of terror.

Control over terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir lies entirely in the hands of the Pakistani army and its intelligence agency ISI. The aim of this attack was clear

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– to show the world that the Indian government's claim that terrorism is almost over and that the return to normalcy in the state, especially the flourishing tourism, is still unsafe is false.

But India also responded to this challenge with equal clarity and firmness. Addressing a public rally in Madhubani, Bihar on April 24, Prime Minister Narendra Modi chose to speak in English – so that his message could reach across the world clearly. There was pain in his voice, but also a rock of resolve. He said, "From this land of Bihar, I want to say to the whole world – India will find every terrorist and their supporters, will punish them, no matter where they are hiding in any corner of the earth. India's spirit will never break with terrorism. We will ensure that justice is done. Today the whole country is united in this resolve. Whoever believes in humanity is standing with us. I express my gratitude to those countries and their leaders who are with India in this difficult time."

Now the ball had been thrown. The question was now not if, but only when – and India's response was going to be serious but concrete. The clock of justice was ticking.

Prime Minister Modi cut short his Saudi Arabia trip. Meanwhile, Home Minister Amit Shah left for Srinagar on April 23. On the same evening, the Cabinet Committee on Security Affairs met, where some tough decisions were taken against Pakistan immediately. The decisions were not just written on paper but were a testimony to India's intention.

It was decided in the meeting that the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty would be temporarily suspended. The decision was taken to close the Integrated Check Post at Attari. In addition, Pakistani citizens will no longer be allowed to come to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme and those who had already received visas would also be considered cancelled now. Doors were closing, relationships were cooling, but India stood firm on its resolve.

Not only that – the defence, naval and air force attachés at the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi have been given one week to leave India. India will also recall its military attachés from its High Commission in Islamabad. The number of officials present at both countries' High Commissions will be reduced from 55 to 30 by May 1.

It was clear that India now wanted to show, through its words as well as its actions, that terrorism would no longer be tolerated – no matter how high a price it may have to pay on the diplomatic front. The silence that pervaded the valleys was like the calm before a storm. India was silent, but a flame was burning within - a flame of justice, a flame of revenge, and most of all, a flame to save humanity.

The lament of Kashmir has ignited India's outrage.

Although the Indus Waters Treaty is essentially a bilateral agreement,



despite the World Bank's mediation and arrangement of "neutral" experts for dispute resolution. Until now, it has been effective only because of India's restraint, even during times of war and tension. This restraint was like a silent promise, that humanity comes first. But now, after the screams rising from the blood-soaked fields of Pahalgam, India has changed its strategy.

India is now free to engage in activities such as the construction of small dams, run-of-river projects, expansion of canals, and freight waterways. This is not just paperwork, but a concrete decision that will cause great difficulties for Pakistan, which is already struggling with severe water and electricity shortages. Major cities like Karachi are troubled by severe heat and water crises, which have been exacerbated by administrative mismanagement. Every drop is precious, and now India will decide who gets how much.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has made it clear that the culprits will not be spared under any circumstances. This is not an empty promise, but a resolve, which has also been strongly reiterated



by Home Minister Amit Shah and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. India's military options are being considered in depth, as a hasty step may not yield the desired results.

The sudden increase in military activity over Pakistan-occupied Kashmir after the Pahalgam attack suggests that India is seriously working on its strategy. This is not a show, but a preparation, a warning to those forces that want to disrupt India's peace. India's experience after the Pulwama attack shows that the enemy wants to limit India's options by increasing activity. India is ready to respond to every move.

Currently, targeted military actions – such as air strikes on specific terrorist hideouts or Lashkar-e-Taiba bases – are emerging as a viable option. The presence of Rafale fighter jets has given India the capability of precision strikes without crossing the LoC or the international border. This is not a threat, but a



"This is the worst attack on civilians in recent memory. The aim was to destroy peace and harmony in Kashmir, but its people will never surrender to terrorists. The international community must take a hard look at Pakistan's role in this atrocity."

Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister, J & K



"This attack is an outrage against humanity. The government must not conflate terrorists with innocent civilians. The government needs to proceed with sensitivity to prevent innocent people from paying the price. Kashmiris must stand as one against terrorism."

Mehbooba Mufti, PDP Supremo



"The return to normalcy in Kashmir has proven to be a mere mirage. Kashmiri people don't support attacks on tourists, or ordinary citizens. The Pahalgam incident is a massacre. Such acts are not only against humanity but also have a profound impact on the region's economy."

Anuradha Bhasin, Journalist



"This is another tragic day in Kashmir's bloody history, as tourists who came here were brutally killed. The suffering and helpless people of Kashmir know how deeply such tragedies wound the hearts of loved ones."

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq, Chairman, Hurriyat Conference



"This is a deeply appalling and savage event. As a Kashmiri, as a politician, and as someone born here, our defining characteristic has always been our hospitality. These terrorists have stained that reputation beyond repair. This tragedy makes our heritage seem almost unimaginable."

Sajjad Lone, People's Conference



truth, that India now has the ability to kill its enemies by entering their homes. Now it is considered certain that India's response will not only be sharp, but whatever the timing, its impact will be profound.

This attack occurred at a time when US Vice President JD Vance was on a family trip to India, and is reminiscent of the Chittisinghpura massacre of 2001, when 35 Sikhs were killed just before then-US President Bill Clinton's visit. It is not a coincidence, but a pattern, that terrorist attacks often happen around the time of high-level visits. The attempt to defame the Vajpayee government at that time failed.

Clinton spent only a few hours in Islamabad, while in India he addressed the Parliament and mentioned his role in persuading Pakistan to withdraw from the LoC during the Kargil War. This is not something to be forgotten, but a lesson from history, that India has always chosen the path of peace, but when it comes to security, it can go to any extent.

This time too, President Donald Trump spoke to Prime Minister Modi without delay and announced full support to India. He said, "Our full support and sympathy is with Prime Minister Modi and the people of India." This is not a diplomatic statement, but a promise of friendship, that democracies around the world stand with India.

On April 23, Amit Shah paid tribute to the dead, met the grieving families, and conducted an aerial inspection of the Baisaran meadow. This visit was not only to assess the site of the attack, but also to show that the government stands firmly against terrorism. There was sorrow on his face, but determination in his eyes, that India will not bow down under any circumstances.

Prime Minister Modi also postponed his immediate visits and expressed his condolences on X (formerly Twitter), saying: "The perpetrators of this heinous act will surely be punished. Their evil intentions will never succeed. Our resolve to fight terrorism is unwavering and will become even stronger." This is not a political speech, but a vow, that India will risk everything to protect its citizens. Shah has returned to Delhi after reviewing security in the Valley and Jammu region and strategizing a large-scale campaign against terrorists.

Sketches of three of the terrorists involved in the



"This barbaric attack, targeting innocent civilians and tourists, is an attack against each and every one of us. It seeks to destroy not just our economy but also the fragile peace and stability we've been striving for in Kashmir."

Waheed Para, MLA, PDP



"This barbaric act has shattered the very spirit of our valley. Those who journeyed to our homeland, hoping to experience the tranquility, and legendary Kashmiri hospitality, were instead confronted with unspeakable cruelty and terror."

Shakeel Qalandar, FCIK

attack have been released, two of whom are said to be locals. This fact is a matter of particular concern, as it shows that even though the recruitment rate in terrorist organizations has decreased, separatist sentiments are still smoldering in some areas. When these fires will erupt, no one knows. After this attack, security forces have launched a massive search operation. It is suspected that some terrorists may still be hiding in the forests and keeping an eye on the security forces. There is danger at every step, and India has to be vigilant every moment.

Although parties like Mehbooba Mufti's Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) have supported the shutdown against the attacks, their grievance-based politics has only fueled a sense of alienation and discontent. It's no secret, but a bitter truth, that some politicians want to maintain an atmosphere of unrest in the valley for their own political gain. This policy, which has been going on for years, is now contributing to creating a sensitive ground for terrorist networks in the valley.

After the action against Hurriyat leaders and Hawala funding networks, Pakistan's military and intelligence establishment is looking for new strategies. Through attacks like Pahalgam, it wants to revive militancy in the Kashmir Valley. This is not a game, but a conspiracy, that Pakistan will never let Kashmir live in peace. Even though Pakistan's civilian government has denied any involvement in the attack, it is well known that the military establishment and ISI work independently on their agenda, which is often not even known to the civilian leadership. This is nothing new, the army has always interfered in Pakistan's politics.

In the past too, India had considered military options in response to terrorist attacks, but the then political leadership exercised restraint. After the 2001 Parliament attack, Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee mobilized troops on the borders under Operation Parakram, but there was no open war. After the 2008 Mumbai attacks, military options were considered under the leadership of then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, but ultimately no action was taken. Whatever the reasons, the message of restraint was clear.

However, after the Modi government came to power, there was a decisive change in the retaliatory policy. In the 2015 Myanmar operation, successful cross-border attacks were carried out against NSCN-K rebels. After the Uri attack in 2016, for the first time, surgical strikes were carried out publicly to destroy terrorist launch pads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. The Balakot airstrike in response to the 2019 Pulwama attack sent a big strategic message to Pakistan that India will no longer let terrorist activities go unanswered. This is not a change, but a revolution, that India has now abandoned the policy of silence.

The wounds of Pahalgam are deep, but India's resolve is as unwavering as a rock. Now it remains to be seen how India fulfills its commitment.

Even though Pakistan continues to deny any damage from these attacks, the ground reality tells a different story. Keeping the Balakot area closed for a month and a half is like trying to bury a corpse to hide a lie. But the truth is ultimately the truth, it does not hide, it screams.

This is not the era when India only condemned, and sat idle. Today, India has many sophisticated options for limited conflict and special operations – like the modern equipment available to a skilled surgeon. Fighter planes like Rafale have given wings to India's spirits. Now it is possible to strike accurately even from long distances, it is possible to disturb the enemy's sleep.

COVER STORY

After that blood-soaked scene in Pahalgam, India's priority is - to uproot the poisonous network of those terrorists, to calm the separatist sentiments that are smoldering beneath the surface, and to expose the true face of Pakistan to the world.

India has moved far beyond that era when it was limited to just diplomatic protests or symbolic reactions. Today's Indian policy has patience, firmness and a clear thought process. This thought says - "There is a limit to tolerance". The response to attacks like Pahalgam will be a part of this thinking. The masterminds of terror have to be taught such a lesson, that their future generations also tremble with fear. Every option is open, India is ready to walk on every path. The Pakistani "Deep State" - that web of army and intelligence agencies, which has been poisoning this area for decades – is not only disrupting regional equations, but also showing its dominance to the powerful around the world. It repeatedly reminds us how costly it can be to ignore it. The bloody game in Pahalgam should also be considered a part of this conspiracy. It wants to dim India's shine, to erase the strong image of Modi Ji. But does it understand that those who play with fire burn their own hands?

Pakistan wants to show that it still has the power to ignite the fire in this area. It also wants to send a message to powerful countries like the United States that even though its dominance has decreased slightly, its old friends and its policy approaches can still change the course of the world. But doesn't it know that lies have no legs?

But in recent years, Pakistan's tricks have not worked much. After the arrival of the Taliban in Afghanistan, it thought that it had gained "strategic depth", but soon it realized that the Taliban was not ready to become its puppet. On the contrary, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan itself started carrying out blasts inside Pakistan, Baloch fighters publicly insulted the army, and wars broke out on the borders. Was this less than a nightmare? The mistakes of the generals in Rawalpindi are coming to the fore again and again. They probably think that by spreading terror in India they can turn the tables, but they do not know how hollow their thinking is. They may also believe that the disputes going on in India on matters like Wagf Board, or the anger over Article 370, will give them an opportunity to create unrest even in calm waters. But they forget that India has now awakened, and it is ready to thwart their every move.

The Hollow Claim of "NORMALCY"

The Pahalgam massacre has exposed the government's claims of "normalcy," revealing the ground reality of Kashmir. This attack is a result of security lapses, governmental failure, and political instability. In this article, we expose this painful truth of Kashmir and consider the questions the government must answer. Can peace ever be established in Kashmir?

pril 22, 2025... Baisaran Valley, Pahalgam. Lush green fields, bustling tourists, and an atmosphere of joy suddenly transformed into screams, bullets, and mourning. Terrorists targeted innocent civilians, asked for their religious identity, and then brutally murdered them. It was a massacre that not only shrouded the valleys of Kashmir in a veil of sorrow but also exposed the hollow claims of "normalcy" that the government and the media have been constantly propagating for the past several years.

The Pahalgam attack is a tragedy that has exposed the insecurity, fear, and uncertainty prevailing in Kashmir. This attack is not just the result of violence perpetrated by a few terrorists, but it is the result of the failure of the government machinery, lapses in security, and turning a blind eye to the ground reality of Kashmir.

In the past few years, the government and the media have together created a false narrative of "normalcy" being restored in Kashmir. By showing the increasing number of tourists, the launch of development projects, and pictures of a peaceful atmosphere, it has been claimed that everything is fine in Kashmir now. But the Pahalgam attack is a slap in the face to this false narrative.

This attack proves that terrorism still exists in Kashmir, separatist sentiments are still smoldering, and ordinary citizens are not safe. The claim of "normalcy" is just a mirage, which is far from reality.

According to renowned journalist Anuradha Bhasin, "Normalcy in Kashmir has proved to be merely a mirage. The Kashmiri people do not support attacks on tourists, pilgrims, and ordinary citizens. The Pahalgam incident is a massacre. Such acts are not only against humanity, but also have a profound impact on the region's economy."

Former military officer Praveen Sahni also believes that the claim of normalcy in Kashmir is false. He said, "This is wrong. The reality is that Kashmir is a war zone." He also said that the heavy deployment of security forces, restrictions on civilians, and the issuance of domicile certificates to non-Kashmiris threaten to change the population balance.

The Pahalgam attack is the result of a major lapse in security. It is legitimate to question why adequate security arrangements were not made in such a sensitive area, where there was a large crowd of tourists? How did the terrorists get the opportunity to attack and escape without any obstruction?

Whose responsibility was it to ensure the safety of the tourists? Did the intelligence agencies provide information about the threat? If they did, why was no action taken on it?

Demanding accountability from the government, Srinagar advocate Arshi Zuhur said, "First of all, the government has the responsibility. No one is coming forward and saying that there has been a lapse in security or that we have taken the situation lightly. Home Minister Amit Shah and Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha should take responsibility."

The lapse in security is not just a case of negligence, but it is the result of the failure of the government machinery and turning a blind eye to the ground reality of Kashmir.

The government machinery in Kashmir is plagued by corruption, red tape, and lack of

But India's changed thinking has thwarted all their plans. The surgical strike and Balakot airstrike have made it clear that India is not going to be afraid anymore, it is not going to bow down anymore. Now India does not just protest, now it strikes, and it strikes in such a way that the enemy remembers it for seven generations.

The Pahalgam attack is a warning, a bitter reality that there are still some shortcomings in security. We need to rethink our ways. Experienced troops like the National Rifles need to be given more strength, because they know the area well, they understand the people there. We need to revive our old "spies", because only they can bring news of every activity happening on the ground. We also need to see how our special forces, Jammu and Kashmir Police, NSG, and army units work together.

Most importantly, we need to find out what mistake was made in Pahalgam, so that we can prevent such attacks in the future. No matter how powerful the wrongdoer is, they must be punished, so that no one else even thinks of doing such a thing. The good thing is that this time Pakistan did not find any friends in the world after the Pahalgam attack. Even though there was some debate in our country on issues like Waqf Board, there was no major reaction from anywhere, nor did Muslim countries oppose us.

It is also a truth that today no one even remembers who the Pakistani ambassador is in India. There was a time when there was a lot of talk about their office in Delhi, they were praised a lot in the media. But now the situation has changed. Now we don't care even if Pakistan extends a hand of friendship, or offers to play cricket.

The Pahalgam attack has given Pakistan a chance to be included in our conversation again, but now the situation is not the same as General Munir had thought. India has now awakened, it is not only protecting its borders, but it is protecting its soul. Now it has understood when to remain silent, and when to roar.

The Pakistani "Deep State" is still playing its old tricks, but India has adopted a new approach. It is now stronger, more intelligent, and more aggressive than before. And this new India is ready to thwart every conspiracy in the future. This resolution, raised from the blood-soaked valleys, will never weaken now.

accountability. Instead of fulfilling their responsibilities, government officials remain engaged in fulfilling political agendas.

It is this lack of accountability that makes it easier to carry out attacks like Pahalgam. Terrorists get help only with the connivance of local authorities and the police.

The government should take strict action against this and make government officials accountable. Without transparency and accountability, it is futile to expect peace and development in Kashmir.

Since the removal of Article 370 in August 2019, political instability and uncertainty in Kashmir have further increased. The government had claimed that this decision would bring development and peace to Kashmir, but the reality is quite the opposite.

After the removal of Article 370, democratic processes in Kashmir have weakened, political activists have been imprisoned, and restrictions have been imposed on ordinary citizens. This has increased anger and distrust towards the government among the people. Praveen Sahni believes that China's influence in Kashmir has increased further after the removal of Article 370. He said, "China does not want war, but since August 2019, it has stood in support of Pakistan's sovereignty."

To remove political instability and uncertainty in Kashmir, the government should restore democratic processes, release political activists, and remove the restrictions imposed on ordinary citizens. Pakistan has always been involved in promoting terrorism and separatism in Kashmir. The Pahalgam attack is also part of that nefarious conspiracy of Pakistan.

Pakistan provides training, weapons, and financial assistance to terrorists in Kashmir. The Pakistani intelligence agency ISI tries to incite separatist sentiments and create instability in Kashmir.

India should deal strictly with Pakistan and force it to stop supporting terrorism. India should expose Pakistan on the international stage and put pressure on it to stop interfering in Kashmir. China's influence is constantly increasing in Kashmir. China is a close ally of Pakistan and it supports Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

China is investing billions of dollars in Kashmir and is

increasing contact with Pakistan through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). China's growing influence is a new threat to India, as it will provide Pakistan with more support and confidence.

India should strengthen the security of its borders with China and prevent China from interfering in Kashmir.

The Pahalgam attack is a wake-up call for India. This attack tells us that the claim of "normalcy" in Kashmir is false and there are many challenges in the areas of security, governance, and political stability.

India needs to adopt a comprehensive and multifaceted strategy to eliminate terrorism and separatism in Kashmir. This strategy should include the following measures:

- **Security:** Strengthening the security system in Kashmir, taking strict action against terrorists, and preventing infiltration from across the border.
- **Governance:** Eliminating corruption, making government officials accountable, promoting transparency, and protecting the rights of ordinary citizens.
- **Political Stability:** Restoring democratic processes, releasing political activists, removing restrictions imposed on ordinary citizens, and starting dialogue with all stakeholders.
- **Economic Development:** Promoting economic development in Kashmir, creating employment opportunities, and reducing poverty.
- **Social Harmony:** Promoting social harmony and brotherhood between different communities, keeping youth away from radical ideologies, and bringing about positive change through education and awareness.
- International Diplomacy: Putting pressure on Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism, preventing China from interfering in Kashmir, and gaining the support of the international community.

After the Pahalgam attack, it is now necessary for the Indian government to face the truth, learn from its mistakes, and make a new beginning to bring lasting peace and stability to Kashmir.



Will Water Become the New Battlefield?



The bloody events in Pahalgam have shaken Delhi, leading India to suspend the decades-old Indus Waters Treaty. Will water now become the new battleground? This move could trigger a severe water crisis in Pakistan, but Kashmir won't escape unscathed either. Between revenge and an uncertain future, was India's decision the right one? This article explores every facet of the issue.

he bloodshed in Pahalgam sparked political turmoil in Delhi. India suspended the Indus Waters Treaty – an agreement that has bound India and Pakistan for decades, surviving wars and terrorist attacks. This decision wasn't just a strategic move; it was retaliation for every wound inflicted by Pakistan. But was India's action justified? And what impact will it have on Pakistan and Kashmir?

Pakistan has threatened to view India's action as a direct "act of war," stating it might retaliate by





revoking all bilateral treaties with India, including the Shimla Agreement. Meanwhile, Pakistan Peoples Party leader and former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto, addressing a fiery public rally, declared that if India stops the Indus River water, Indian blood will flow in the Indus waters. Such threatening statements have further escalated tensions between the two countries, making the situation even more dangerous and potentially leading to war.

Established in 1960, this treaty governed the sharing of water between India and Pakistan. It granted India full rights over the eastern rivers – Beas, Ravi, and Sutlej – while Pakistan received the waters of the western rivers – Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab. The treaty also outlined mechanisms for resolving disputes, including a Permanent Indus Commission, Neutral Experts, and arbitration tribunals.

But is this agreement, crafted in 1960, still relevant today? Has Pakistan ever truly respected the treaty? The answer is likely "no."

By suspending the Indus Waters Treaty after the Pahalgam attack, India has attempted to put pressure on Pakistan. India's goal is for Pakistan to cease supporting terrorism and stop interfering in Kashmir.

Following this decision, India will no longer be

The Indus River is
Pakistan's lifeline,
essential to its agriculture,
energy, and urban water
supply.

obligated to provide Pakistan with information related to the Indus River waters, it can construct dams and reservoirs on the western rivers, and can prevent Pakistani officials from visiting hydroelectric projects.

But does India have the infrastructure needed to stop Pakistan's water supply? Currently, the answer is "no." However, India has initiated several water projects – such as the Shahpurkandi Dam and Ujh Dam – which could allow it to reduce the water flow to Pakistan in the future.

The Indus River is Pakistan's lifeline. Its agriculture, energy, and urban water supplies are entirely dependent on this river. If India cuts off Pakistan's water, a devastating water crisis could ensue, leading to a decline in agricultural production, an





energy crisis, and social unrest.

Pakistani leaders are calling this a "water war" and viewing it as an act of aggression. Former Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto even stated that if India stops the water, Indian blood will flow in the Indus. Is this just inflammatory rhetoric, or is Pakistan truly prepared for war?

The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty is also a cause for concern for Kashmir. On one hand, there's a feeling of revenge and anger in the minds of Kashmiri people after the genocide of Kashmiri Pandits and they want to support India in every way to eliminate terrorism. On the other hand, if water is used as a weapon to increase economic pressure on Pakistan, it will also affect Kashmir, as the western rivers originate in Kashmir itself. Suspending the Indus Waters Treaty is a complex issue with many facets. On one hand, it could be an effective way to pressure Pakistan, but on the other hand, it could increase regional instability and harm the Kashmiri people.

Some experts believe that India should not completely abrogate the Indus Waters Treaty but rather negotiate with Pakistan to amend it. This would help India protect its interests and force Pakistan to stop supporting terrorism.

India's approach is based on a policy of zero tolerance against terrorism. After the Pahalgam attack, India made it clear to Pakistan that it would not tolerate terrorism and would take every possible step to combat it, whether diplomatic, economic, or military.

India must remain firm in protecting its interests, but it must also consider the impact of its decisions on the Kashmiri people and regional stability.

The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty marks the beginning of a new chapter between India and Pakistan. It now depends on both countries how they handle this situation. If they choose the path of peace and cooperation, they can overcome this crisis. But if they choose the path of conflict, they will have to face serious consequences.

To bring peace and stability to Kashmir, India should engage in meaningful dialogue with Pakistan, protect the political, economic, and social rights of the Kashmiri people, and take strict action against terrorism. Only then can the dream of peace and harmony in Kashmir come true.

This is not just about water sharing; it's a question of the future of two countries and the pain of a valley.

WHAT NEXT?



The brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam has reactivated India's national security strategy. It's clear that Pakistansponsored terrorism remains a persistent threat to Indian interests. The question now is: how will India respond this time? Will the response be limited to diplomatic pressure, or will it involve decisive military action? And how will National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's role shape this complex landscape?

ndia's response is likely to be multifaceted, involving both diplomatic and military options. On one hand, efforts to isolate Pakistan internationally and tarnish its image will intensify. On the other hand, a limited and targeted military operation will send a clear message to Pakistan that India will no longer tolerate any attacks.

Under Ajit Doval's leadership, India's diplomatic strategy will not be limited to "rhetoric" but will be used as a powerful tool to put pressure on Pakistan. This strategy will center on the following points:

- Isolating Pakistan on International Forums: Efforts to "blacklist" Pakistan before the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) will be accelerated. Proposals to increase sanctions against individuals and entities directly linked to terrorist organizations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed at the United Nations will be promoted. Attempts will be made to build global consensus on declaring Pakistan a state sponsor of terrorism on multilateral forums such as the G20, SCO, and BRICS.
 - Intensive Dialogue with Key Countries: Close dialogues will be held with the US, France, Germany, and other key countries to prevent any attempts to provide military assistance or financial concessions to Pakistan.
 - **Using Regional Relations:** Bilateral relations with Arab countries will be used to weaken Pakistan's traditional support base.

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Doval's diplomatic approach is based on the principle of "name, provide evidence, and tell the world." This strategy aims to maintain constant pressure on Pakistan by weaponizing international economic sanctions and political isolation.

Although diplomatic efforts will continue, India will not remain silent militarily. Drawing on past experiences (the 2016 surgical strikes, the 2019 Balakot airstrike), India has several options open in response to the Pahalgam attack:

- **Surgical Strike 2.0:** Targeted attacks across the LoC on active terrorist launch pads and training camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.
- **Stand-off Strike:** Limited cross-border air strikes by the Indian Air Force, specifically targeting terrorist camps and launching sites.
- **Special Forces Mission:** Commando-based covert operations involving deep penetration to destroy terrorist networks.
- **Drone Strike:** Targeting terrorist logistics established by Pakistan in border areas with drones, avoiding direct conflict, but sending an effective message.

Each of these military options has its own risks and benefits. India will adopt a carefully

balanced approach, keeping the retaliatory action precise, targeted, and limited, while sending a clear message to Pakistan that any future attacks will not be tolerated.

Ajit Doval, regarded as one of India's most influential security strategists, is at the center of this entire scenario. His role will be important on many levels:

• Intelligence
Coordination: Doval will
ensure that information
from RAW, the Intelligence
Bureau, Military Intelligence,

and other agencies is rapidly coordinated. His style is to take immediate action on 'actionable intelligence,' not just prepare reports.

- Guidance to the Prime Minister: Doval is Prime Minister Narendra Modi's closest security advisor. He will present an in-depth analysis of the risks and benefits of potential military options (surgical strikes, air strikes, or drone operations), and guide the Prime Minister to make the best decision according to the situation.
- **Cyber Resistance:** Under Doval, India may launch cyber operations to target Pakistan's terrorist networks and fake news factories on the cyber front as well.
- Crisis Management in Kashmir: For potential internal turmoil in the Kashmir Valley, Doval will establish better coordination between the state police, paramilitary forces, and intelligence agencies to manage the crisis. "Winning Hearts and Minds" programs will be reactivated to build trust among citizens.
- Building an International Narrative: Under Doval's direction, Indian missions and spokespersons will be tasked with delivering a coherent narrative that India is a victim nation, and Pakistan is an aggressive terror-inspired state. This narrative will garner sympathy and support for India in international media and political forums.

This time, India's action will be sharp, precise, and shocking. A clear message will be sent to Pakistan that India will now charge the price for any attacks.

It's time to punish PAKISTAN



Air Marshal Anil Chopra (Retired)



The gruesome massacre of innocent holidaymakers near Pahalgam in India's Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory has been condemned by all major world leaders including US President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

t least 28 people were killed and several others injured in the attack. That it happened when US Vice President J.D. Vance was in India indicates the audacity of the attackers and their backers. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi who was on a visit to Saudi Arabia had to cut his trip short and rush back. The Indian security establishment immediately went into a huddle. Home Minister Amit Shah and the Army Chief rushed to Pahalgam to take stock of the situation on the ground.

The terrorists have already been identified and their Pakistan links established. The three military chiefs are now discussing a response and are considering all options. This will not be allowed to go by. There is nationwide anger. There will be repercussions. A team of National Investigation Agency (NIA) officials are investigating on the spot. Recent events in Bangladesh, the infiltration and riots in West Bengal, and Pakistan

army chief's venomous position on Hindus are indicative of a major game play.

The Pakistani army chief talks supremacism

Addressing the Overseas Pakistanis Convention in Islamabad, General Asim Munir echoed the words of Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan, who famously believed that Hindus and Muslims followed different philosophies, customs, and laws – making national unity impossible. Munir returned to the very roots of Pakistan's ideological foundation. "Our religion is different, our customs are different, our traditions are different, our thoughts are different, our ambitions are different – that's where the foundation of the two-nation theory was laid. We are two nations, we are not one nation," he said.

He urged overseas Pakistanis to never forget that



they belong to a "superior ideology and culture," and to pass down this ideology to future generations. "You have to narrate Pakistan's story to your children so that they don't forget it," he added.

Pakistani footprint all over the Pahalgam attack

Hindu hatred is clearly visible from the modus operandi of the attack. Tell-tale signs of the Pakistani army's backing are emerging. Pakistan cannot stand the peace and prosperity emerging in Kashmir. The state has been incident-free since its special autonomy status was revoked in 2019. Tourist numbers have been going up. Public participation in elections have been very significant. Chief Minister Omar Abdulla has been working closely with the New Delhi government for betterment of the masses.

But Kashmir's integration with India was not palatable to the Pakistani ruling establishment. Pakistan is an ideological state, and its army has taken up the mantle of the guardian of that ideology. India's 1.3-million-strong army cannot intimidate Pakistan, Munir said. He obviously forgets about the meek surrender of 93,000 Pakistani soldiers in that ended the two-week-long 1971 Indo-Pakistani war.

"China condemned the Pahalgam terror attack and said they oppose terrorism in all its forms. Hope China will then find courage to ask tough questions to their "iron brother" Pakistan on why it continues to sponsor

terrorism on directions of Asim Munir, Let this be clear. Mastermind of **Pahalgam** terror attack is not Hafiz Saeed Lashkar or Tayyiba. e Mastermind **Pahalgam** of Massacre Asim Munir of **Pakistan** Army sitting in Rawalpindi. Pakistan Army and ISI need



to pay for the bloody carnage in Kashmir. Modi Govt should act boldly," tweeted senior journalist Aditya Raj Kaul, a Hindu Kashmiri.

Political and diplomatic response

The Indian public is angered and demanding that the mantra "never forget, never forgive" be put into action.

For a long time, India has taken the soft line. Perhaps that is the reason some have taken India for granted. It cannot allow itself to be seen as a weak state. There are



lessons to be learned from Israel.

There are diplomatic, political and military options. All need to be exercised in tandem. Strong expressions of support and solidarity have been received from many governments around the world, which have unequivocally condemned the Pahalgam terrorist attack. The world is with India. Multiple nations have suffered from terrorism. Notably, major Islamic countries like Saudi Arabia and the UAE have spoken in favor of India.

India's immediate response to the attack was broad-reaching. It has suspended the 1960 Indus Water Treaty, which allowed for water sharing providing irrigation to vast swathes of Pakistani land. All trade between the two nations, including through third countries has been suspended. The Integrated Check Post Attari, a strategic cross-border trade checkpoint and the only legal land route for trade, was closed with immediate effect. Pakistani YouTube and other social media channels have been barred in India. Cricket and other sporting events have been suspended. Pakistani nationals will not be permitted to travel to India under the SAARC Visa Exemption Scheme (SVES) visas. SVES visas already issued to Pakistani nationals are deemed cancelled, with any Pakistanis currently in India under an SVES

given 48 hours to leave.

Military, naval and air advisors in the Pakistani High Commission in New Delhi (the Pakistani diplomatic mission in India) have been declared personae non grata and given a week to leave India. India will be withdrawing its own defense/navy/air advisors from the Indian High Commission in Islamabad as well. Their posts in the respective High Commissions are deemed annulled. The overall strength of the High Commissions will be brought down to 30 from the present 55 through further reductions by May 1. India will use its financial and diplomatic muscle to teach Pakistan a lesson.

There are other things that can be done. Indirect options India could use include supporting secessionist forces in Pakistan and giving more backing to the insurgencies in Balochistan, Sindh, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

Military options

The Indian government's Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) reviewed the overall security situation in its meeting at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's residence and directed all forces to maintain high vigil. The armed forces have already launched Operation Tikka, a high-

level anti-terrorism campaign. A few terrorists have already been eliminated. The Indian Army is giving a massive response to unprovoked firing at the Line of Control (LoC) between the India- and Pakistan-controlled parts of Kashmir. The ceasefire there is de facto annulled. Indian armed forces are already carrying out preparatory joint military exercises. Selective mobilization of the armed forces is possible and would send a strong signal. If it comes to that, India could exercise a massive punishing multi-domain strike.

India has many unspoken options. It could activate operatives to strike military establishments within Pakistan. An artillery barrage against terrorist training camps across the border could be launched. In case of open warfare, Pakistan would run out of ammunition much faster. Much wider air strikes against a host of terrorist camps can be carried out. BrahMos and other cruise missiles can be used.

The Indian Navy's aircraft carrier has already sailed into the Arabian Sea. A few submarines could follow or may already be in the region. The Indian air force is formidable, with the French Rafale fighter jets armed with Scalp-EG and Meteor missiles. The Su-30 MKI, upgraded MiG 29 and Mirage-2000 are also potent assets.

New Delhi could coordinate with the Baloch Liberation Army and Pashtun insurgents in Pakistan to open multiple fronts. The escalation would have to be graded and carefully managed. A disproportionate Pakistan military response should be expected and prepared for.

India could also work towards selective US- and Israel-style assassinations of terrorist leaders in Pakistan plotting against.

Pakistan has few backers. Iran and the Saudis are not its friends anymore. China will at best act as a mediator. The US, Russia, Israel and Europe will back India for a controlled aggression. The bigger aim here is to show the Pakistani army in poor light. Call the nuclear bluff.

Punishment should not be a one-off event. It has to be a continuous program from now on. Make it painful for Pakistan to support terrorism. Peace overtures like the Aman ki Asha ('Hope for Peace') joint media campaign must end. Meanwhile, greater attention must be devoted to building military capability. Increase air

New Delhi could coordinate with the Baloch Liberation Army and Pashtun insurgents to open multiple fronts inside Pakistan. This escalation must be carefully classified and managed, with preparations made for a disproportionate response from the Pakistani military.

force fighter squadron numbers. Stop downsizing the army. Get more nuclear submarines. Increase nuclear warheads.

Pakistan's response

Pakistan has also put its military on alert. Border areas are being sensitized by them for possible Indian attack. Pakistan has suspended the 1972 Shimla Agreement that had marked the LoC as the temporary border. Islamabad has closed its airspace for Indian airlines. Anti-India rhetoric has been boosted to raise the morale of the public. Pakistan has also announced that diversion of water due to it under the Indus Water Treaty will be treated as an act of war. It is a wait-and-watch situation.

Time to stop terrorist infiltration

There are many Indian politicians, especially in West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, who consider illegal Bangladeshi and Rohingya migrants as their political support base and are turning a blind eye to their arrival and settlement. It is time to take appropriate actions to curb this trend. There is a tendency for security forces and intelligence agencies to be less vigilant when there is an extended period of peace. It happened in Kargil.

Kashmir is a different story. Vigil will be required for decades ahead. If these terrorists were within the region for nearly a month as reports indicate, then we need to look in the mirror. The Indian judiciary is often seen as soft against terrorists. This needs serious review. The public has to be sensitized much more against terrorists. The time to act is now. A soft reaction will invite further dastardly attacks.

Air Marshal Anil Chopra (Retired), an Indian Air Force veteran fighter test pilot and is the former Director-General of the Center for Air Power Studies in New Delhi.



Will He Be a Bismarck or a Napoleon?

When Donald Trump returned to power in 2025, a pressing question emerged among analysts: Would he introduce a major shift in foreign policy? Would he continue his earlier strategy of "Great Power Competition"? Would he take the path of cooperation and agreements? Or would he pursue something entirely new that could transform international relations?



he concept of "Great Power Competition" in international politics has taken an interesting turn. Once considered outdated and irrelevant, it experienced a dramatic revival with the first presidency of Donald Trump in the United States. Trump's 2017 National Security Strategy prominently featured it, signaling a shift in U.S. foreign policy. Instead of prioritizing cooperation with countries around the

world, the US would now focus on confronting rivals like China and Russia.

The Trump administration believed that both China and Russia were challenging U.S. geopolitical advantages and attempting to establish an international order more favorable to themselves. Therefore, the U.S. priority was to ensure it remained ahead of these nations. Later, Trump's successor, Joe Biden, largely continued this strategy, albeit with a greater emphasis on promoting American values and democracy.

Now, with the possibility of Donald Trump returning to power in 2025, analysts are grappling with a crucial

question: will he make any significant changes to foreign policy? Will he continue his previous strategy of "Great Power Competition"? Will he shift toward a path of cooperation and compromise? Or will he pursue a course that fundamentally transforms international relations?

Analysts initially anticipated continuity in Trump's foreign policy strategy upon his return to power in 2025. However, this did not happen. Surprisingly, Trump broke with the consensus he himself had established. Now.

he desires to cooperate with China and Russia rather than compete, and he's willing to consider agreements previously deemed against U.S. interests. Trump has expressed a desire to end the war in Ukraine as quickly as possible, even if it means publicly humiliating Ukraine and allowing Russia to annex its territories.

However, relations with China remain strained, particularly over tariffs. Nevertheless, Trump has expressed a willingness to pursue a broad agreement with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Meanwhile, he has intensified economic pressure on European allies and Canada, even threatening to seize areas like Greenland and the Panama Canal. It is also a surprising fact that the US, which always stood by its allies, is now bent on economically harming its allies.

Some observers have attempted to fit these actions of Trump's into the framework of "Great Power Competition." They argue that getting closer to Russia is a clever geopolitical move, designed to create a rift between China and Russia. Others believe Trump is simply pursuing a more nationalistic variety of "Great Power Competition," one that leaders like Xi Jinping, Putin, and even India's Narendra Modi and Hungary's Viktor Orbán would understand. However, this is all speculation. The reality is that no one knows what Trump's future steps will be.

But the truth is that Trump's global vision isn't one of "Great Power Competition," but rather of Great Power Collusion. He envisions a world akin to the 19th-century

> system, where powerful leaders come together to govern the world as they see fit. In this system, powerful work together to maintain the world order. He believes that collectively, they can solve challenges and ensure stability. Trump believes it is his duty to establish peace throughout the world.

> This approach represents a fundamental shift in U.S. foreign policy. While it opens possibilities for cooperation and stability, it also presents several dangers.

> European "Concert of Europe" nations

Several dangers are hidden within this approach. First, the assumption that spheres of influence can be easily defined and managed is misleading. History has shown that tension and competition always exist between powerful nations, even when they pretend to cooperate. Every nation has its own interests, and nothing is more important to anyone than national interests. In such a situation, differences are bound to arise when powerful nations with different backgrounds and ideologies come together.

Second, this transactional approach underestimates ideological differences. Trump may not care how Xi Jinping manages his sphere of influence, but crushing democracy in China could provoke opposition in the U.S. and other countries. The issue of human rights is also a major concern, and as a responsible global power,

Tensions with China persist,

notably over tariffs, but Trump

still wants a broad deal with

President Xi. Simultaneously,

he's increased economic

pressure on European allies

and Canada and even

threatened to seize Greenland

and the Panama Canal.

ANALISYS

the U.S. should work to promote human rights around the world.

Third, this approach silences the voices of smaller nations. Trump has no interest in including Ukraine in negotiations about its future or consulting with European allies. He believes that only powerful leaders can decide the future of the world.

Fourth, this approach can breed instability. When great powers try to suppress those who challenge the existing order, they often provoke resistance and give are no problems in the future. Every country should get equal rights. This is the only way to build a secure future.

It's clear that Trump's foreign policy is a complex and multifaceted issue. His approach has both advantages and disadvantages. It remains to be seen how he will shape the world in the coming years.

Historical Perspective:

Looking at the history of the balance of power, it's important to understand that Trump's idea of



rise to movements that can challenge their power. History teaches us that when powerful nations impose their will on smaller countries, it leads to instability and conflict.

However, Trump's approach could be successful if the world moves towards peace and stability.

Trump believes that he will maintain relations with China and Russia by being driven by trade rather than ideology. But doing so is not right. Such conduct under his leadership could come at the cost of global security.

Therefore, America should listen to every country and maintain a fraternal relationship with them so that there

"Great Power Collusion" isn't new. In the 19th century, European powers established a system called the "Concert of Europe," which aimed to maintain peace and stability on the continent. In this system, major powers worked together and recognized each other's spheres of influence.

However, this system ultimately failed as competition and ambitions grew between the powers. This history serves as a warning about the potential dangers of Trump's approach. We need to learn from history that we should not use wrong methods to increase our sphere of influence. Everyone should be treated equally.

The Role of Middle Powers:



It's also crucial to note that the rise of middle powers is complicating international politics. Countries like India, Brazil, and South Africa are now playing a more assertive role on the global stage, and they are not in the mood to accept any world order that marginalizes them.

Trump's "collusion of powers" strategy could alienate these countries and increase international instability.

Global Challenges:

Global challenges like climate change, pandemics, and terrorism require international cooperation. Trump's "collusion of powers" strategy could undermine the cooperation needed to address these challenges. Donald Trump's foreign policy is a complex and controversial subject. His "Great Power Competition" strategy opens up possibilities for cooperation and stability, but it also involves significant dangers.

It remains to be seen how Trump will shape the

international order in the coming years. But it is clear that his policies will have a profound impact on global politics.

The Trump administration should keep the lessons of history in mind and take smaller countries and allies along with it. Only then can peace and stability be brought to the world.

Trump's statement that "powerful countries have the right to control the world" is a dangerous idea. This could lead to chaos and make the world an even more dangerous place. In such a situation, it is wise to take everyone along.

Trump should work to improve international relations. At the same time, he should also ensure that all countries benefit from security and prosperity, not just a few powerful countries.

In conclusion, it would be fair to say that Trump has an opportunity to choose a path that can lead the world towards a more peaceful and prosperous future. It is now up to him how he uses this opportunity.



TARIFFS AND TURMOIL: How Trump's Trade War Backfired

Vitaly Ryumshin

'I've officially seen it all.'

've lost count of how many times that phrase has echoed in my mind lately. Every time Donald Trump torches another piece of the established global order, I find myself staring blankly, wondering how we arrived at this point – and what crucial plot points I missed in the ongoing saga of modern politics.

During his campaign, Trump made grandiose promises to "teach a lesson" to every one of America's trading partners. True to his word, he wasted no time putting that threat to the test. He floated a trial balloon in February, slapping tariffs on imports from Canada and Mexico, citing their alleged failure to adequately address migration and drug trafficking. Ottawa and Mexico City quickly capitulated, validating Trump's apparent

belief that tariff threats could strong-arm nations into negotiations. This apparent success emboldened him to expand the strategy globally.

The ensuing chaos was, frankly, more captivating than many anticipated.

Markets stumbled. Oil prices cratered. Economists nervously predicted a looming recession. Americans, perhaps sensing the instability, began hoarding essential goods. The media, predictably, engaged in a frenzy, vying to coin the most sensational nicknames for the unfolding economic drama. The White House, meanwhile, remained eerily calm, insisting that everything was proceeding "according to plan."

And what was the grand plan, precisely? Trump



himself articulated it quite plainly: to force the world to "kiss his ring."

This encapsulates the classic Trump playbook - what some have labeled "psychopath strategy." engineers a crisis, then offers carefully calibrated rollback as a show "goodwill," demanding concessions in return. In this the instance,

desired concessions included rectifying America's trade deficits and incentivizing the return of manufacturing jobs to U.S. soil. However, this time, Trump may have overreached. Initiating a trade war with the entire world simultaneously didn't just destabilize governments; it unnerved Americans at home. As the very real prospect of a recession loomed, Trump's approval ratings took a nosedive. A growing segment of the public began to perceive the president and his administration as, to put it generously, lacking in basic competence.

This widespread discontent presented Democrats with a rare opening to seize the initiative. Anti-tariff protests erupted across the nation, fueled by liberal groups and activist organizations. Trump faced public condemnation from prominent figures like Barack Obama and Kamala Harris. Congressman Al Green even announced his (third) intention to introduce articles of impeachment.

And the alarm wasn't just being sounded on the left.

Republican Senator Ted Cruz, chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee, ominously warned of a potential "bloodbath" for the GOP in the 2026 midterm elections if the tariffs triggered a full-blown recession. Billionaires on Wall Street – many of whom had previously supported Trump – began to voice their dissatisfaction. Most notably, Elon Musk, a longtime Trump ally, publicly excoriated the president's trade advisor, Peter Navarro, branding him "an idiot" and "dumber than a bag of potatoes."

Faced with mounting political, financial, and public pressure, the Trump administration swiftly pivoted. On April 9th, Trump announced that 75 countries had approached him seeking trade deals. In response, he temporarily reduced tariffs to 10% for a 90-day period, framing it as a window for negotiation.

But not everyone is yielding.

China, in particular, has proven to be a far more formidable adversary. The U.S.–China trade war continues to escalate, with reciprocal tariffs now reaching a staggering 140% – and still climbing. If left unchecked, trade between the world's two largest economies could plummet by as much as 80%, with potentially catastrophic consequences for both sides.

So, what's on the horizon?

Two scenarios seem most plausible. Either Trump pressures his trading partners into swift concessions and triumphantly declares victory, or he abandons the effort midway through, seeking a new distraction – much like his handling of the Ukraine situation.

Remember the fanfare when Trump pledged to broker peace in Ukraine "within 24 hours"? Or, at the very least, "within 100 days"? The moment it became apparent that this wasn't achievable, the White House abruptly ceased all discussion of the matter.

That's Trump's MO. Create a spectacle, dominate the news cycle, then quietly move on once the strategy loses its effectiveness.

And let's not forget that he still has a few cards left to play. Gaza, for example, which he once grandiosely described as the "Riviera of the Middle East." Or the Iranian nuclear issue, another favorite subject of his unrealized "brilliant ideas."

So, no – I won't claim to have seen everything. If anything, recent events have taught me that with Trump, there's always more madness lurking just around the corner.

And the truly unsettling part? Sometimes, against all odds, it actually works.

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TRUMP'S TARIFF GAMBITThe End of Globalism?

Love him or hate him, Donald Trump might have been onto something with tariffs. Is it possible that his "America First" approach was more than just bluster? Shockingly, perhaps. These trade barriers could be the last, best defense against a global order dominated by BRICS and the death of the dollar. Get ready to rethink everything you thought you knew about Trump's economic policies. Are we witnessing the end of globalism?

Angelo Giuliano

am not a supporter of Donald Trump, but I can recognize the potential of tariffs as a strategic counter to globalism and the multipolar world led by BRICS – Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.

Tariffs are taxes levied on goods imported into the United States, paid by American importers rather than foreign governments. For example, if a company imports Chinese steel subject to a tariff, it incurs an additional cost at US Customs, often passed on to consumers through higher prices. Trump utilized tariffs extensively – targeting steel, aluminum, and numerous Chinese goods – to protect US industries, promote domestic production, and curb the expansive reach of globalism, which has reduced some nations to mere transit points for multinational corporations. Tariffs also address the significant US trade deficit, where imports vastly outstrip exports. By raising the cost of foreign goods, they could bolster American manufacturing and diminish that disparity. Historically, the US relied exclusively on tariffs to finance its government, a practice dominant in the 18th and 19th centuries when income taxes were nonexistent. Before the 16th Amendment in 1913, tariffs funded federal operations - roads, defense, and administration - without taxing individual earnings, a system Trump's tariff-heavy approach partially revives to support economic objectives. This reduces reliance on creditors like China, which holds a substantial share of US debt. Many, however, conflate tariffs with sanctions, assuming a punitive intent. Under Trump, tariffs are distinctly an economic tool, advancing his America First agenda by prioritizing US interests, marking a shift from a globalist system under US leadership - where international cooperation and institutions prevailed - toward a US-centric imperialism that asserts dominance through economic might, potentially paving the way for a multipolar world defined by competing spheres of influence.

The US holds a formidable advantage: its market represents a critical portion of many countries' exports, granting significant leverage. Nations such as Canada, Mexico, and China depend heavily on American consumers – far more than the US relies





on their markets. When Trump imposed tariffs on Canadian steel, Canada faced immediate pressure to adapt, as losing US trade was untenable. Mexico acquiesced during trade negotiations under tariff threats, and South Korea would likely face similar constraints. This asymmetry enhances tariffs' coercive power, compelling smaller economies to adjust rather than resist.

In recent years, tariffs have generated considerable revenue, echoing their historical role as the sole federal income source in earlier eras, offering funds that could establish a sovereign wealth fund potentially invested in gold or cryptocurrencies - to strengthen US economic autonomy, counter inflation, or leverage digital advancements. Strategically, this enhances national security by reducing dependence on states Washington deems adversarial, like Russia and China, protecting against disruptions in vital supplies such as rare earths or energy. For critics of globalism, tariffs offer a means to reclaim sovereignty, augmented by financial gains. They also suggest a potential exit from supranational bodies like the World Trade Organization (WTO), which Trump views as restrictive. Disregarding WTO rules could presage a withdrawal from global trade frameworks, possibly unsettling the European Union, where divergent interests – such as those between Germany and Italy - might intensify divisions. This may mark America's final effort to counter the rise of BRICS, resisting a shift from US-led globalism to a multipolar order with distinct spheres of influence.

The US dollar's status as the world's reserve currency is crucial, facilitating low-cost borrowing, effective sanctions, and trade dominance. Tariffs reinforce this by tackling the trade deficit and financing sovereign initiatives, yet BRICS' dedollarization efforts - promoting alternative currencies - threaten its foundation. Should the dollar's preeminence falter, funding a wealth fund or industrial revival becomes problematic, foreign investment wanes, and US influence diminishes. Against the multipolar vision of BRICS, tariffs are a vital bid to preserve economic power; losing dollar hegemony would render this approach unviable.

The drawbacks, however, are considerable. Inflation increases as higher import costs elevate prices for goods like clothing, electronics, and vehicles, compounding prior price pressures in the US. Supply chains, already complex, suffer further disruption, leading to delays and shortages. Industries reliant on foreign components – such as automakers needing semiconductors - face

THE TARIFF SPECTACLE: Is America Plundering India's Agriculture?

n April 2nd, 2025, US President Donald Trump made a decision that sent shockwaves through India's agricultural sector. He imposed a 26% "countervailing" tariff on Indian Basmati rice. Trump hailed this as "Liberation Day" for America, claiming it would reduce the US trade deficit and protect domestic industries. But this move robbed Indian Basmati rice producers of their sleep. Is this just a business decision, or a deliberate strategy to ruin Indian farmers?

India is the world's largest exporter of Basmati rice. In fiscal year 2024-25, India exported 5.94 million tons of Basmati rice, with Punjab and Haryana playing leading roles. The aroma of this rice had become India's identity even abroad. The United States was a major buyer of Indian Basmati rice and, until now, only imposed a 10% import duty. This provided Indian producers with a good level of competitiveness, allowing them to earn a good profit by selling their crops. But Trump's new tariff shattered this golden dream.

In April 2025, US Vice President JD Vance visited India with the aim of further strengthening trade relations between the two countries. He met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and discussed several trade agreements. Vance spoke of India purchasing US defense equipment and increasing cooperation in the energy sector. In return, India hoped that the United States would offer some relief on the tariff imposed on Basmati rice, but this agreement has not yet materialized. Was Vance's visit just a show, or does America really want to maintain friendship with India?

The new tariff has increased the price of Indian Basmati rice in the US market, reducing its competitiveness. Pakistan, which already sells rice at a lower price, is now trying to take advantage of this opportunity. American importers are also putting pressure on Indian exporters to bear the burden of the 26% tariff themselves, further worsening the situation for Indian exporters.

For small farmers, it's as if the sky has fallen. They do not have enough money to bear the burden of the tariff, and if their crops do not sell, their families will starve. Is this just business, or a game of taking someone's life?

India's Basmati rice producing farmers are looking towards the government in this difficult time. Farmer unions have appealed to the government to negotiate with the United States to have this tariff removed. They say that if the government does not help them, they will have to give up Basmati cultivation and switch to growing ordinary

challenges, while smaller firms struggle to cope. Retaliatory actions exacerbate the situation: China has targeted US agricultural exports, and Europe reciprocated. A dearth of STEM professionals - engineers and technologists - impedes swift industrial redevelopment. Certain products, like smartphones or rareearth-dependent technologies, would be exorbitantly costly to produce domestically due to high labor expenses and limited Reindustrialization requires immense investments in infrastructure, training, and time - new facilities like steel mills demand years to develop.

For opponents of globalism, tariffs reduce the trade deficit, finance sovereignty in a manner reminiscent of the tariff-exclusive funding of old, and contest WTO authority while opposing BRICS' momentum toward a multipolar world of regional powers. America's export leverage - evident in its influence over Canada and Mexico - fortifies its stance. Withdrawal from the WTO could emancipate American policy, potentially deepening EU rifts, such as between France and Poland. Yet, shortages of skilled workers, elevated costs, and extended timelines pose risks. Inflation rises, supply chains falter, and trade disputes escalate - China's responses are deliberate, and the EU remains steadfast. The deficit may lessen, but at the cost of pricier goods and reduced availability. The dollar's dominance is indispensable: de-dollarization undermines this strategy.

The appeal is substantial: tariffs

generate revenue, address the deficit, counter adversaries, and leverage US market influence against BRICS, aligning with Trump's economic America First strategy shifting from globalist cooperation to imperial assertion – rather than punitive sanctions. This revenue, recalling an era when tariffs alone sustained the government before income taxes existed, holds promise - gold for stability, cryptocurrencies for innovation. execution is formidable. Inflation pressures intensify, supply disruptions persist, and businesses - especially smaller ones - suffer, while larger entities adapt slowly. The trade deficit may improve, with nations like Canada and Mexico yielding to US pressure. An exit from the WTO could disrupt global trade norms, and EU divisions might widen, signaling a multipolar shift. In resisting BRICS, the dollar's role is paramount - its decline would spell failure. Security may strengthen, but economic stability could weaken. For globalism's opponents, this offers control, resources, and defiance. For the US it is a high-stakes endeavor: promising if successful, perilous if it falters. As the multipolar era advances, with spheres of influence emerging, this may represent its final counterstroke.

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paddy. This could lead to a sharp decline in Basmati rice cultivation, and India would lose a part of its identity.

There is pressure on the government to protect the interests of farmers, but it is not easy to bow down to the United States. Will the government be able to steer the farmers through this difficult game of diplomacy and trade?

This is not just a matter of tariffs on Basmati rice. This is a question of trade relations between India and the United States, the lives of farmers, and the country's economy. This is a warning of how ruthless the rules of trade can be in the world, and how one decision can change the lives of millions of people.

The Indian government must face this challenge head-on. It must not only negotiate with the United States, but also provide all possible assistance to its farmers. Basmati is not just a crop, it is India's pride, and every possible effort must be made to save it.

Will India win this rice-war, or will its farmers give up in this ruthless world? Only time will tell. But one thing is certain, more than victory or defeat, this battle requires humanity and empathy.



THE US-INDIA SPACE COLLABORATION

A Perspective from Emerging Frontiers

Mandeep Rai

s leading nations in the final frontier, India and the United States (US) share a legacy of space collaboration since the formation of the Indian National Committee for Space Research (INCOSPAR) in 1962, when India launched its first sounding rockets from Thumba with US support. The enduring partnership expanded through pathbreaking projects like the Satellite Instructional Television Experiment (SITE) using NASA's ATS-6, followed by the Indian National Satellite System (INSAT). Although India's non-alignment policy and tilt towards the erstwhile Soviet Union briefly stalled cooperation, post-Cold War ties have revived significantly. 2004 marked a 'space renaissance' moment for India when two professional societies carved the plan for providing opportunities to rebuild strategic partnerships in the space sector. The political decision establishing the Civil Space Joint Working Group (CSJWG) in 2005 gave way to joint ventures in the following years. It focused on lunar exploration, satellite navigation, and Earth observation, including Chandrayaan-1, NISAR (NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar), Mars exploration and India's participation in the Artemis Accords.

As prime players in the New Space era, both countries are charting a new frontier under the Initiative on Critical and Emerging Technologies (iCET) framework, strengthening collaboration across civil, security, and commercial sectors. During Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit in February 2025, the iCET was rebranded as Transforming Relations Utilising Strategic Technologies (TRUST) to advance cooperation in space



in addition to defence, Artificial Intelligence (AI), semiconductors, and biotechnology. Strengthening their collaborative footprint in space, two Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) astronauts are set to undergo training at the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), paving the way for the maiden joint US-India mission to the International Space Station (ISS) aboard the Axiom-4 mission scheduled this year. The upcoming launch of the NASA-ISRO Synthetic Aperture Radar (NISAR) satellite this year is geared to significantly advance capacities in disaster management, climate change monitoring, and infrastructure assessment across the globe. A proposed 'Space Innovation Bridge' under the India-US Defence Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) aims to foster US-India startup partnerships in satellite technology and space situational awareness. The growing space cooperation in defence deepens with India's participation in the US Space Command's Global Sentinel exercise and ongoing missile technology export reviews to support commercial

satellite launches, reinforcing their role as prominent players in the growing space economy.

Insight into the Space Economy

The latest estimates from the space report peg the global space economy at US\$ 570 billion. In 2023, the US led the largest single space budget by far, yet its share of the global space budget decreased from over 75 percent in 2000 to 60 percent in 2023. The Indian space economy is currently valued at approximately US\$ 8.4 billion, constituting a 2 percent share of the global space market. India envisions scaling the space economy to US\$ 44 billion by 2033, including US\$ 11 billion in exports, amounting to 7-8 percent of the global share. Notwithstanding the budget constraint, ISRO, with a 15 times smaller budget than NASA, has demonstrated some distinguished accomplishments, namely the Chandrayaan-3 Mission and SpaDeX.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation

COLLABORATION

and Development's (OECD) outlook for the space economy till 2040 reflects that the transformation of the space sector needs partnerships across countries to address mutual challenges, developing the apt contracts for commercial and public missions to ensure a safe space environment. In the same vein, the space economy for both nations is crucial and thrives on collaboration, innovation, and a collective vision. Amid evolving trade challenges, the need for a cohesive and collaborative strategy becomes even more compelling to advance the shared space ambitions of the US and India.

The looming threat of potential tariffs on Indian imports raises the question of whether the space sector will withstand the effect. The Union Budget 2025-26 in India reduced the customs duties on ground installations and satellite launches, along with goods for the manufacturing of launch vehicles, lowering the input costs and enhancing manufacturing and exports. India has strategically shielded its space sector from tariff-related disruptions, maintaining resilience against escalating global trade tensions, according to Pawan Kumar Goenka, Chairman of IN-SPACe. He highlighted that substantial reductions in tariffs on satellite launches, ground infrastructure, and launch vehicle components have positioned India's space industry with a distinct competitive advantage in global sourcing. While minor procedural challenges persist concerning the import of certain components, Goenka emphasised that India's space sector remains largely unaffected by the retaliatory tariffs affecting other industries. The space tech industry experts applauded the resilience towards these shocks and see it as a combination of strategic sourcing, strong policy, support, and expanding global partnerships.

As with any interdependent ecosystem, the space sector too is vulnerable to cascading impacts across its entire value chain, ranging from the procurement of raw materials to the fabrication of radiation-hardened components, posing a risk of detrimental effects for national space agencies and private enterprises. Escalating costs associated with government-backed initiatives, such as the Mars Mission and NISAR, threaten to delay project realisation even further, compounding existing challenges. At the same time, the economic



pressures risk diminishing startup competitiveness, constraining access to capital, and ultimately slowing the momentum of transformative innovation within the global space economy. However, given that both nations value space partnership as a futurefocused area, there is a strong need to shield it from any indirect tariff shocks through diplomatic engagements, exclusive exemptions, readjusting trade, and technological frameworks for taking forward a smooth sail in space partnership.

The space sector is witnessing a seamless fusion of Al and space technology, making strides in groundbreaking advancements in mission planning, autonomous navigation, astronomical dataset analysis, robotics, and Earth observation. However, several untapped opportunities in space continue to exist for both countries where AI can be leveraged, particularly in energy solutions for space missions and space mining technologies. In addition to the existing subsystems of the satellite, future satellites will be equipped with advanced edge computing and built-in AI infrastructure—such as Graphics



Processing Units (GPUs) and algorithms—to provide edge intelligence on the fly. To enable this, power remains a crucial design factor. Beta radiations from isotopes like tritium and nickel 63 can be alternatives for overcoming the power challenges in Al-enabled satellite design. NASA plans to utilise this breakthrough in ultra-high energy density batteries for diverse future applications, including deep-space missions, CubeSATs, autonomous power systems for spacecraft and SATCOM (Satellite Communications) networks. A promising avenue for collaboration while strengthening energy security in space lies in the co-development and sharing of beta-voltaic battery technology for Al-enabled deep space missions that offer a volumetric energy density nearly 100 times greater than that of conventional lithium-ion batteries when considered over a 20year lifespan.

Al has emerged as a key enabler for an ambitious area of space mining. While ISRO's current focus remains on lunar and Martian exploration, India, as a signatory of the Artemis Accords backed up by its

strengthening AI ecosystem, is well-positioned to explore the growing area of asteroid mining. India has proven capability in developing cost-effective space technologies (showcased through the SpaDeX mission and ADITYA L1), advancements in propulsion, material science and robotics. Combined with a robust space research pool and AI talent, these strengths provide a solid foundation for space mining capability. Developing advanced algorithms on existing hyperspectral and telemetry data, while integrating Chandrayaan and NASA's OSIRIS-Rex datasets, is a unique opportunity to be grabbed for creating predictive AI models for prospecting asteroids. Both countries can also explore intelligent mining solutions and in-situ resource utilisation to optimise various processes for extraction and refining through the development of next-generation radioisotope thermoelectric generators that use heat as a source of energy. As global interest in asteroid mining intensifies, driven by its race towards rare minerals, India and the US must gain a strategic incentive to position bilaterally as key players in this next frontier of Al-enabled space exploration.

The trajectory of India-US collaboration holds immense strategic and technological value in the present global security landscape and the Indo-Pacific. Fostering a vibrant and resilient space ecosystem that drives innovation, deepens collaboration, and builds a sustainable value chain is no longer optional but imperative. As Space 2.0 rapidly evolves amid unprecedented technological disruption and AI emerging as a force multiplier, both India and the US must adopt an avant-garde approach that is bold, adaptive, and future-ready. With the new space age completing a quarter century, the near future demands more than visionary statements. It calls for actionable strategies, agile execution, and meaningful partnerships for the two countries as key anchors of building an open and inclusive Indo-Pacific economy. To stay ahead, both countries must walk beyond diplomatic posturing, mobilise stakeholders, and translate ambition into real impact, crafting a legacy defined by a collective Al vision for space advancement.

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What's really cooking between Trump and Tehran?

Farhad Ibragimov

astWeek, the second round of US-Iran nuclear talks took place in Rome, following an initial meeting held a week before in Muscat, Oman. Both sides had described the talks as "constructive," but that optimism quickly collided with a wave of conflicting signals from the Trump administration. Despite the encouraging tone, it remained unclear whether a new nuclear agreement was truly within reach.

At the outset of negotiations, National Security Advisor Mike Waltz – an outspoken Iran hawk – laid down a hardline condition: Iran must completely dismantle its uranium enrichment program if it wanted any deal with the US. But after the Muscat meeting, Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff, who led the US delegation, struck a very different note. In an interview with Fox News, he suggested that Tehran might be allowed to maintain limited uranium enrichment for peaceful energy purposes – something that would have been a nonstarter just days earlier.

Witkoff emphasized the importance of strict verification protocols to prevent any militarization of Iran's nuclear capabilities, including oversight of missile technology and delivery systems. Notably absent from his remarks? Any mention of "dismantlement." This shift hinted that the administration might be considering a

modified return to the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) – the very agreement that Trump tore up in 2018, branding it a "disaster."

But the pivot didn't last. Just one day later, Witkoff reversed course in a post on X, doubling down on the demand for full dismantlement of Iran's nuclear and weapons programs. So what triggered the rhetorical whiplash?

According to Axios, Trump huddled with top national security officials just three days after the Muscat talks to reassess the US strategy. In that meeting, Vice President JD Vance, Witkoff, and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth argued for a pragmatic approach. Pushing Tehran to dismantle its entire nuclear infrastructure, they warned, would tank the talks. Iran had already made it clear that such sweeping concessions were off the table. Vance even suggested Washington should brace for some level of compromise.

But not everyone agreed. A rival faction – led by Waltz and Secretary of State Marco Rubio – saw things differently. They argued that Iran's current vulnerability gave the US a unique upper hand, one that shouldn't be squandered. If Tehran failed to meet America's terms, they insisted, the US should be ready to strike militarily or greenlight Israeli action.

The divide exposes a deeper strategic rift within the Trump administration. Between the maximalist view that Iran must be completely disarmed and the more flexible position that aims to curb weaponization while preserving peaceful enrichment lies a vast gray area. The lack of a unified message – or even basic consensus – risks leaving the US at a disadvantage against a seasoned and coordinated Iranian negotiating team.

In short, Trump finds himself in a difficult balancing act. On one hand, it's clear he wants to avoid military escalation. The decision to send Witkoff – a figure known for his willingness to compromise – signals a genuine interest in diplomacy over saber-rattling. If hardliners had the upper hand in Washington, it's unlikely the second round in Rome would have happened at all.

On Monday, April 21, Trump cautiously told reporters the talks were going "very well," but warned that real progress would take time. His choice of words reflected a desire to stay flexible, while acknowledging the





complexity – and risks – of negotiating with Tehran.

Optimism seems more palpable on the Iranian side. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said the two sides had found significantly more common ground in Rome than in Muscat. His remarks suggest that momentum is building and that real progress may be on the horizon.

Araghchi's itinerary also raised eyebrows. Before heading to Rome, he made a stop in Moscow, where he met with President Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. He reportedly carried a personal message from Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei – what he called "a message to the

world."The West didn't miss the symbolism: the visit was widely interpreted as a public reaffirmation of the Moscow–Tehran alliance. Retired US Army Colonel and former Pentagon advisor Douglas MacGregor noted on X that any major American military action against Iran would likely draw a response from Russia, Tehran's strategic partner.

On that same day, President Putin signed a law ratifying a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Iran – further cementing political and economic cooperation. Against the backdrop of fragile US-Iran talks, the Moscow-Tehran axis suddenly looks more consequential. With these growing ties, Washington may find it harder to exert unilateral pressure on





Iran.

Meanwhile, not everyone in Tehran is sold on the negotiations. Many Iranian officials remain skeptical of Trump, whose decision to unilaterally scrap the JCPOA in 2018 still looms

large. Their distrust extends beyond Trump himself to a broader concern: that future US presidents may once again reverse course. If Obama's deals were dismantled by Trump, why wouldn't Trump's agreements suffer the same fate?

Despite these tensions, major international outlets have confirmed that two more rounds of talks are planned: one in Geneva next week, and another in Oman the week after. The continued diplomatic activity points to a shared interest in keeping the conversation alive. For now, both Trump's measured optimism and Iran's cautious tone suggest that, at least in the near term, the risk of war has receded.

This de-escalation in rhetoric reflects a deeper truth: despite lingering mistrust and domestic political pressures, both sides see value in staying at the table. You don't have to be a policy wonk to see that. But in Israel, the mood is far more anxious. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu – never one to hide his skepticism about engaging Iran – has condemned the talks. For Tel Aviv, negotiations risk softening Tehran's isolation and threatening Israel's strategic position.

Still, Trump's priority isn't regional politics – it's his legacy. He wants to be seen as the president who avoided war and brokered a deal the American public can get behind. In that light, Netanyahu's objections may have to wait.

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INDIA-USA A More Equal Partnership

Harsh v. Pant | Vivek Mishra

he Four-Day Visit of US Vice President JD
Vance from April 22 to 25 carried a mix
of substance, symbolism and urgency
that bilateral relations between India
and the US needed under a new administration
in the US. Vance, for whom it was his first visit
to India despite close family ties, carried a
sense of assurance from the second Donald

Trump administration whose approach to the broader world has marked a drastically different course since his first term. The only other destinations that Vance had chosen prior to his India visit were Europe and Greenland. As such, his India trip early on in his term marks a continuation of the positive assessment of New Delhi in Washington's renewed sense of





strategic priority. Perhaps the standout feature of Vance's visit was the intended balance that the Trump administration seeks between robust bilateral ties, a cultural connect with a strong Indian diaspora, and an aligned

vision of the future based on energy goals, innovation, technology, investment and the vitality of both democracies.

Vance's speech in Jaipur provided clarity on America's policy priorities on India, especially on how it will differ from the past. Vance made it clear that the US will no longer practice 'preachiness' to India, hinting that past administrations had adopted such an approach. If the US seeks parity in trade, which is a key priority of Trump, then signalling that the US wants to avoid a top-down tone and tenor could be a great starting point. This is even more relevant in times when the world is scrambling to readjust to Trump's reciprocal tariffs, increasingly by putting aside

their differences.

Vance drove home the rationale behind America's changed approach to global trade and the need to rebalance economic relations with its trading partners by citing the example of his native Middletown—a place that has become the symbol of America's fall in manufacturing capacity, waning government support for industry, the need to shore up industry by striking a favourable deal for the US, and the urgency to redo America's trade relations on the basis of 'fairness'. These, although carved out exclusively in reference to Vance's defence of the shifting US stance on trade, sound strikingly similar to India's own needs.



Besides America's economic justification to rejig the global trading system, Vance pointed to a principled alignment between India and the US predicated on the broader principles of labour rights, fair trade practices and a system of trade which is balanced and predictable, referring to countries which manipulate the system to their benefit.

There are two clear and common goals for India and the US: economic and national security. Trade is now catapulted to the top of the pillars driving this new momentum in India-US relations. Trade relations between India and the US have proved to be a timely tether for binding bilateral ties, thereby also showcasing how the current administration in Washington will approach things differently from its immediate predecessor.

The \$500-billion bilateral trade target announced in February by both countries for the end of this decade is ambitious and will require groundbreaking expansion in bilateral trade. Given that India had a trade surplus of over \$45 billion with the US in 2024, bringing down the deficit will require a careful approach from Delhi, especially as India has now entered the critical phase of trade negotiations with the terms of reference for the trade deal finalised. For India, sectors like agriculture, dairy products, automotive components and pharmaceuticals will be key.

While India will protect its critical sectors in negotiations, it is important that Delhi has signalled a willingness to be conciliatory and meet the US halfway. Bringing parity between the average tariffs that India and the US apply on each other's goods—39 per cent and 5 per cent, respectively—could be one of the most challenging areas as the two countries embark on critical trade negotiations.

Beyond trade, Vance highlighted four additional areas crucial for strengthening relations: national security, joint defence manufacturing, collaboration in technology





and innovation, and renewed energy ties. The concept of joint national security preparedness between India and the US is not new; however, the evolving nature of challenges in this increasingly dynamic domain allows each US president to leave a distinct imprint on the bilateral relationship.

The other aspect of security was in spotlighting the importance of joint manufacturing of critical

defence systems by India and the US as part of the COMPACT initiative announced in February this year. Co-production of critical state-of-the-art defence systems like Javelin anti-tank guided missiles and Striker infantry vehicles are examples of collaboration in national security which could rapidly change the battlefield dynamic in combat situations. In the long run, tech transfer and strategic learning from these collaborative projects could substantively feed India's self-reliance in defence manufacturing. The pitch to sell F-35s to India by the US may be attractive but is likely to be contingent on assessments of the system's necessity by the armed forces.

Marking continuity from the joint statement that the two countries made in February this year, Vance's visit adds urgency to India-US relations, which is aligned with the broader strategic objectives that the two countries seek to achieve in the Indo-Pacific. The emphasis on "peace through mutual strength" as a strategy for India and the US to seek peace in the Indo-Pacific accompanied the idea of continued

momentum for the Ouad.

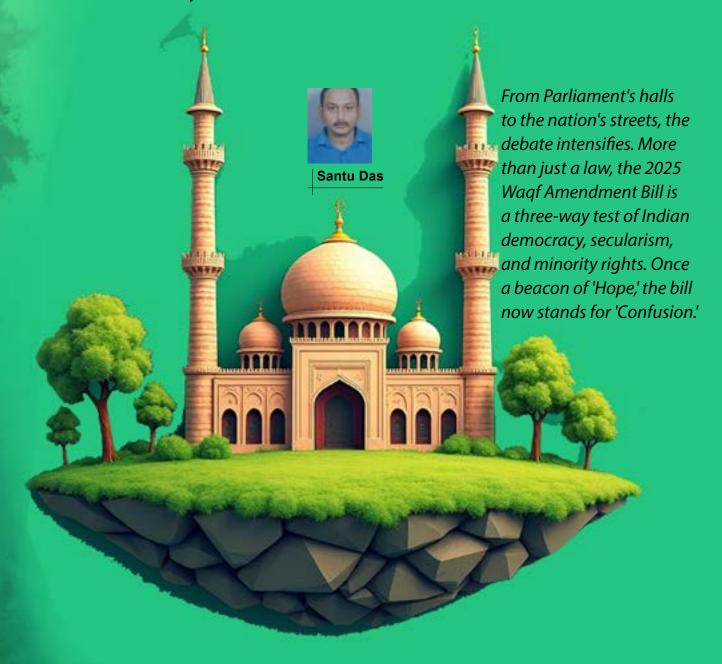
Vance's visit was a signal that the Trump administration's grand recalibration would involve ending the longstanding asymmetric bargain in which the US traded hard power for soft power. In other words, the administration is likely to pursue a two-pronged strategy in its dealings with friends, partners, and allies. While it will drive a hard bargain on trade and investment, it will also offer strategic reassurances based on parity—expecting countries to meet the US halfway in assuming greater responsibility for burden-sharing. One way to strike a grand bargain with the Trump administration is to numerically depict India's contributions in the changing bilateral

dynamic. Energy supplies to India, which both Trump and Vance have harped on, may emerge as an area which India could use to achieve trade parity with the US.

Finally, the US vice president's visit coincided with the terrorist attack in Pahalgam in Kashmir, perpetrated by Pakistan—a pattern uncannily reminiscent of past high-level US visits to India. While India's immediate priority should be to consider a response that reestablishes deterrence with its rogue neighbour, Delhi must also seize this moment to deepen counterterrorism cooperation with the US and, more broadly, with the international community. The recent extradition of Tahawwur Rana from the US may have signalled the Trump administration's commitment to a zero-tolerance approach to terrorism, but this may also be the right time for Washington to offer unequivocal support for India's counterterrorism efforts.

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The Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025 A Complex Intersection of Faith, Politics, and the Constitution



rom the corridors of Parliament to the streets of the nation, the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025 has become the focal point of a major debate in India's political, social, and constitutional landscape. More than just a legislative proposal, it is a touchstone that puts the secular framework of Indian democracy, minority rights, and political ethics under scrutiny. The Bill's passage in the Lok Sabha (288 to 232) and Rajya Sabha (128 to 97) reveals that it wasn't a simple majority. The government had to resort to political maneuvers to secure the support of its allies.

While the Biju Janata Dal opposed the Bill in the Lok Sabha, they shifted their stance in the Rajya Sabha. When the AIADMK registered their opposition, the BJP reportedly prepared for organizational changes at the state level. NDA allies like Jayant Chaudhary, Chirag Paswan, and Chandrababu Naidu initially spoke in favor of Muslim interests but ultimately supported the Bill.

Was this a policy of harmony, or a result of power dynamics?

Minority Affairs Minister Kiran Rijiju has dubbed it the 'HOPE' Act (Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency and Development Act). He claims that the law will empower Muslims, especially the Pasmanda community and women, through transparent management of Waqf properties.

However, the passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill 2025 was followed by violent riots in the Murshidabad district of West Bengal between April 8th and 13th. Protesters blocked National Highway 12, set police vehicles on fire, and attacked the office of a local Member of Parliament. The violence resulted in three deaths and over ten injuries. Approximately 274 people were arrested, and more than 400 were displaced and forced to seek refuge in the Malda district. The opposition has fueled these sentiments, branding the bill a "deception." Akhilesh Yadav of the Samajwadi Party called it a conspiracy of "state capture" of Waqf properties. The Congress, TMC, and Left parties have jointly challenged it in court as a violation of Articles 25, 26, and 14 of the Constitution.

Key provisions of the new law:

- Wagf boards will include non-Muslim members.
- Every board must include at least two Muslim women.

- The District Collector or an officer of higher rank will determine the recognition of Wagf property.
- The exemption from the Limitation Act has been abolished.
- The annual contribution received by Waqf institutions has been reduced from 7% to 5%.
- Institutions with an income exceeding ₹1 lakh will now be audited by state government auditors.
- It will be mandatory to register all Waqf properties on a central portal within six months.

The government considers this a measure of transparency, but Muslim organizations perceive it as interference in religious freedom.

Even within the NDA coalition, discontent has begun to surface following the bill's support. In Bihar, some MLAs from JDU and LJP have resigned. In western Uttar Pradesh, the RLD is facing criticism from its Muslim voter base. In Andhra Pradesh, Muslim workers of the TDP are showing resentment.

The question arises: is the BJP seeking to expand its base by weakening the political ground of its allies? Or is this part of a long-term strategy?

The RSS mouthpiece, Organiser, claimed that the Church and Christian missionaries possess more land than the Waqf. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi reacted sharply to this, accusing the government of also targeting Sikh, Christian, and tribal communities.

This rhetoric prevents the Waqf Bill from remaining solely a Muslim issue—it transforms it into a debate centered on India's multi-religious structure.

A petition by senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi presents the bill as a violation of Articles 14 (equality), 25 and 26 (freedom of religion), and the basic structure of the Constitution.

The matter is now before the Supreme Court. But the question is—can the judiciary remain free from political pressures?

Nationwide protests are intensifying. Muslim organizations have described it as a new CAA. Rallies are taking place in Delhi, Lucknow, Bhopal, Hyderabad, and Kolkata. Reports of police crackdowns and detentions are emerging from BJP-ruled states. All of this raises questions about the health of democracy.

Murshidabad Communal Violence A Crisis for Social Harmony

The passage of the Waqf
Amendment Bill, 2025, ignited
violence in Murshidabad,
West Bengal, with devastating
consequences for lives,
property, and social unity.
This contentious issue has
now culminated in a standoff
between the judiciary and the
executive.



he violence that erupted in West Bengal's Murshidabad district after the passage of the Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025 has shaken the country's social fabric. Between April 8th and 13th, the unrest resulted in three deaths, over ten injuries, and more than 274 arrests. Hundreds were displaced, seeking refuge in the neighboring Malda district.

The Waqf Amendment Bill includes provisions such as the appointment of non-Muslim members to Waqf boards, granting government officials the authority to determine Waqf properties, and abolishing the Waqf Board's exemption from the Limitation Act. This has led to widespread discontent within the Muslim community, manifested in protests against the bill.

Demonstrations began in Murshidabad following presidential approval on April 5th. On April 12th, armed mobs looted and set fire to Hindu homes and shops in the Dighori, Jafarabad, Ranipal, and Bedbona neighborhoods. In Jafarabad, Hargobind Das (71) and his son Chandan Das (41) were beaten to death. Tensions further escalated on April 13th after the news of Ejaz

Ahmed's death spread. Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee alleged that external elements, hired for ₹6000-₹7000, were involved in the violence. BJP leaders, on the other hand, accused Muslim fundamentalists and Bangladeshi elements of complicity. However, a report found no evidence of Bangladeshi citizens' involvement.

On April 21st, lawyer Vishnu Shankar Jain filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking the deployment of central police forces in the state and the imposition of President's Rule. Remarks from the bench of Justices B.R. Gavai and A.G. Masih during the hearing further strained relations between the judiciary and the executive branch.

The Murshidabad violence has made it clear that the Waqf Amendment Bill is not merely a legal change, but a serious challenge to social and political stability. The government must establish dialogue with all stakeholders and take the concerns of minorities seriously. Simultaneously, efforts must be made to restore trust in society, respecting the independence of the judiciary and the values of the Constitution.

WAQF AMENDMENT BILL 2025

When Politics Challenges the Constitution

From the Halls of Parliament to the Streets of the Nation: The Waqf Amendment Bill, 2025, Dominates India's Political, Social, and Constitutional Discourse.

Polarization in Parliament, **Unrest on the Streets**



LOKSABHA: 288 Vs 232 RAJYASABHA: 128 Vs 97





Unified Waqf Management, Empowerment, Efficiency, and Development Act

Government's "Hope," Opposition's Neglect



The New Structure of the Waqf Board

Change or Interference

Key Provisions of the New Law:

- Waqf boards will include non-Muslim members.
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institutions has been reduced from 7% to 5%.

Institutions with an income exceeding ₹1 lakh will now be audited by state government auditors.

Charting the Future of EU-CENTRAL Asia Relations

Ayjaz Wani

Amid geopolitical shifts spurred by the Russia-Ukraine war, the EU is strengthening ties with Central Asia. The first EU-Central Asia Summit in April 2025 focused on regional connectivity, trade, and energy, boosting a strategic partnership with the resource-rich Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan.



In addition to the US\$ 10.6 billion investments in the Trans-Caspian Transport Corridor (TITR) in 2024, the EU announced a US\$ 13.2 billion investment package in Central Asia during the Summit. Strong connectivity with Central Asia lends direct access to the EU for increased regional trade, especially for its ever-increasing domestic demand for energy and critical raw materials. On the other hand, the strong ties with the EU present the Central Asian Republics with an opportunity to diversify their foreign policy, which for decades has remained under the

cooperative hegemony of Russia and China.

In today's dynamic geopolitical environment, enhancing ties with Central Asia, which holds substantial geostrategic and geoeconomic significance, has become the EU's fundamental goal. The increasing geopolitical contestations have compelled the EU to reevaluate its foreign policy and establish new, sustainable, diversified supply chains for energy and critical minerals needed in strategic sectors. The EU-Central Asia summit occurred when other major players concentrated on



their strategic issues. For example, Russia's actions in Ukraine, China's trade conflicts, and the United States' (US) protectionist policies under the Trump administration. Commending the region's strategic location, Von der Leyen emphasised four main areas for cooperation: connectivity, raw materials, clean energy, and digital connectivity. Following the Russia-Ukraine war, connectivity emerged as the highest priority for both regions through the TITR initiative under the EU's Global Gateway Strategy. The TITR connects landlocked Central Asia

to Europe via the South Caucasus, achieving 4.5 million tonnes in container transportation in 2024, with a target of 10 million tonnes by 2027. Due to modernisation and infrastructure challenges, only 100,000 containers are being shipped from Central Asia to the EU.

At the summit, the EU earmarked US\$ 3.4 billion to enhance connectivity and modernise the TITR, which has the potential to enable the EU to receive approximately 800,000 containers each year.



The EU is Central Asia's second-largest trade partner, representing 22.6 percent of the region's foreign trade. It is also the biggest investor in the region, accounting for over 40 percent of all investments. The EU mainly imports crude oil, gas, and metals and has negotiated enhanced partnership and cooperation agreements (EPCAs) with all Central Asian nations except Turkmenistan. Additionally, Central Asia boasts extensive reserves of essential minerals, such as uranium, along with 40 percent of the world's key resources like lithium, graphite, and manganese. Kazakhstan alone produces 19 of the 34 minerals vital for the EU economy. Meanwhile, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan hold reserves of 71, 17, and 43 critical minerals, respectively.

As of 2023, the EU relies on imports from China, Malaysia, and Russia for 94 percent of its rare earth elements, raising concerns about the stability of the supply chain disruptions. The EU is working to reduce its dependence on countries like China and Russia, and at the summit, it allocated US\$3.69 billion towards essential raw materials in Central

Asia. Addressing the significance of the region's critical minerals and global competitors, Von Der Leyen, without mentioning China, stated that other powers are "only interested in exploiting and extracting." She assured the EU would adopt a different approach by preserving local industries and values. The EU has also prioritised developing renewable energy projects and hydrocarbons in Central Asia as the region grapples with the increasing impacts of climate change. The EU will invest around US\$7.2 billion in these projects, and leaders agreed to hold another investors' summit later this year to develop connectivity, especially TITR.

Central Asian countries have made progress in resolving enduring regional conflicts. Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan only recently finalised their border demarcation by signing the Khujand Declaration. These border disputes have historically hindered cooperation and integration in Central Asia, leading to border skirmishes. Now, Central Asian nations are developing new trade routes to boost regional trade and collaborate on industrial





efforts. However, tensions in the broader Eurasian region, especially involving Azerbaijan and Armenia, could overshadow the growing strategic connections between the EU and Central Asia. The conflict between Azerbaijan and Armenia escalated the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in 2023, forcing thousands of ethnic Armenians to flee to Armenia. TITR and most of the gas and oil supplies from Central Asia to the EU run through the South Caucasus.

Following the Summit, Russia initiated joint counterterrorism military drills with Tajikistan and increased its cultural diplomacy efforts. In parallel, with the growing significance of TITR, Beijing is seeking to align the BRI with TITR in the South Caucasus, especially in Georgia and Azerbaijan. China has also invested heavily in gas, oil and other critical minerals and imports 30 percent of its gas from the region. Beijing also leverages the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) to strengthen its hard power in the area. China has conducted numerous joint military exercises with countries in Central Asia and offered training and defence

technology both bilaterally and multilaterally.

For decades, China and Russia's increasing influence has constrained the import and export capabilities, as well as foreign policy options, of Central Asian countries. Nevertheless, Central Asian nations seem increasingly inclined to engage with Europe and other partners to restore their standing in the evolving global landscape. Although the EU has not officially challenged Russia and China, it actively seeks to provide alternatives and create strategic autonomy in trade, connectivity, critical mineral extraction, and various other sectors for both regions. The growing EU commitment to stronger relations with the region will foster regional integration and enhance economic ties between the two areas. However, effectiveness depends on the ability of regional leaders to collaborate and prioritise economic growth over geopolitical rivalries and disputes, both in Central Asia and the South Caucasus.

Ayjaz Wani (PhD) is a Fellow in the Strategic Studies Programme at the Observer Research Foundation



Tripti's Take: Career's My "Animal," Not Marriage!

TRIPTI DIMRI, Bollywood's rising star after "Animal," is captivating audiences nationwide. Her portrayal of Zoya alongside Ranbir Kapoor propelled her career into overdrive. Previously acclaimed for roles in "Bulbul," "Qala," and "Laila Majnu," Tripti's innocent charm and striking looks have garnered a massive fanbase. When questioned about marriage, she playfully responded, "I'm currently married to my career! The wedding altar is a distant prospect." This confirms Tripti's focus on hitting career milestones. Marriage? That's a story for after the intermission! She is prioritizing her work. ●

Shreya Ghoshal

Music World Stands Against

Pahalgam Terror Attack

THE PAHALGAM TERRORIST ATTACK on April 22, 2025, shook the entire nation, claiming the lives of innocent tourists. Bollywood and the music industry have expressed grief and outrage. Shah` Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, Priyanka Chopra, Alia Bhatt, Akshay Kumar, Sonu Sood, and Sidharth Malhotra condemned the cowardly act on social media.Showing solidarity, singer Shreya Ghoshal cancelled her Surat concert, stating that "peace and unity are needed, not music, in such times." Her action resonates with fans and fellow artists, seen as an example of sensitivity and responsibility. The entertainment world is expressing their support to the victims of this attack. Many believe other musicians will follow

Esha Deol: Love Story Over?

DHARMENDRA AND HEMA MALINI'S beloved daughter, Esha Deol, is making headlines again, but this time it's about her marriage, not movies. In 2012, Esha married businessman Bharat Takhtani in a beautiful ceremony.

However, a viral Reddit post suggests trouble, noting Esha's stopped posting pictures with her husband and is now only seen with her mother, Hema Malini.

Esha hasn't commented, but fans are wondering if this Bollywood princess is about to embark on a solo flight. Is it truly the end of their love story? Only time will tell.

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