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CULT CURRENT

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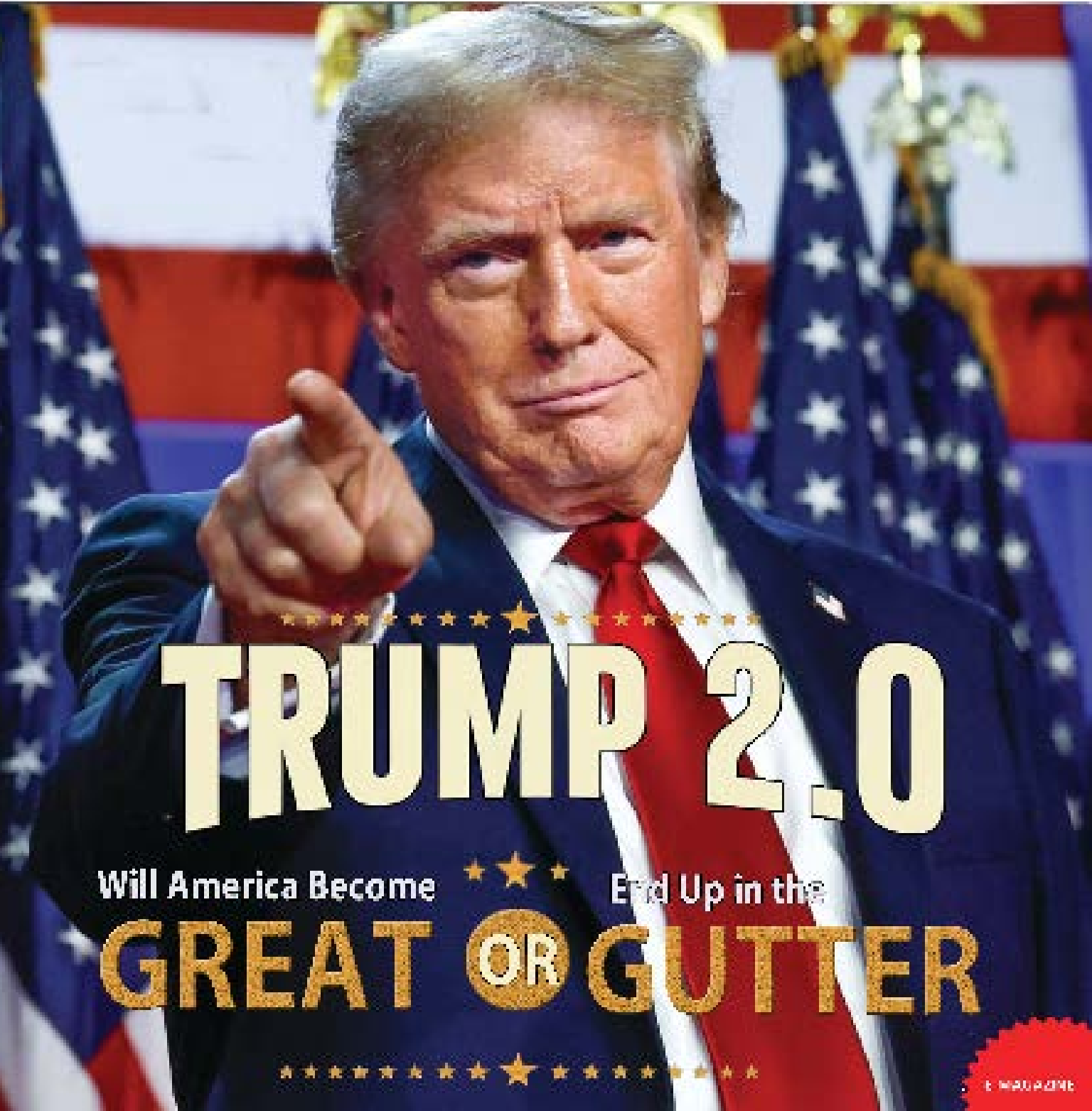
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'Soft Hindutava'
or New Political
Drama?



◀ Quantum Teleportation
A Remarkable
Scientific
Achievement



◀ Bangladesh
Will the Awami
League Rise
Again?



TRUMP 2.0

Will America Become

End Up in the

GREAT OR GUTTER

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POSITIVE INDIA

UNSUNG HEROES

THE LURE OF THE CORAL, UMA'S PURSUIT.



Uma Mani

Uma Mani's story is an inspiring journey. At the age of 49, taking her first deep-sea scuba dive demonstrates her passion and courage. Although her childhood love for art was overlooked, she never gave up. After marriage and fulfilling her family responsibilities, she started painting again at 40. When she saw coral reefs, their beauty captivated her. However, seeing the pollution in the sea saddened her and she decided to save marine life. Uma made her art a weapon and began to raise awareness among people. The film 'Coral Woman' spread her story around the world, inspiring many. Today, Uma is an inspiration, showing that you can fulfill your dreams at any age and bring about change in the world. Her story teaches us that art has the power to bring about change, and if you have the dedication, nothing is impossible.

Cora!
Woman



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FEBRUARY, 2025 |



CONTEMPORARY

Small talk



DANGAL GIRL UPSET BY SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION

Actress Sanya Malhotra, who will play the role of a housewife in her upcoming film Mrs., shared her views on gender inequality prevalent in society. She believes that society has a lot of expectations from women, the main one being that women leave their careers after giving birth to children, but why only them? Sanya says, "It has become natural that women quit their jobs after having a child, but the child belongs to both, right? It's the responsibility of both." Sanya Malhotra has gained considerable recognition by playing versatile roles in her films *Jawan*, *Dangal*, *Kathal*, and *Pagglait*.

The discoveries that will create a stir in 2025

DNA Exchange

New research shows bacteria form species and maintain cohesion through frequent DNA exchange (homologous recombination). This "sexual" process reinforces distinct species boundaries, overturning previous assumptions that bacteria don't form species. The findings have major implications for microbiology, medicine, and environmental science.



Ancient Mantle Islands Found

New research reveals two continent - sized "islands" deep within Earth's mantle. These ancient regions, at least half a billion years old, are hotter than their surroundings. The findings challenge the idea of a rapidly flowing mantle, suggesting less flow than previously thought. Seismologists used earthquake vibrations to "see" these hidden structures, like using X-rays.

Prepares for Spacewalk

ISS astronauts prepared for a spacewalk and conducted space gardening research. Expedition 72's seven members also worked on electronics maintenance and cargo packing. NASA's Suni Williams and Butch Wilmore completed health checks before organizing spacewalk gear. Their 6.5 - hour spacewalk, to remove old hardware and search for microbes.



NASA TESTS ADVANCED ROVER TIRES FOR MARS EXPLORATION



NASA tested advanced rover tires, featuring shape memory alloy springs, on simulated Mars terrain. Despite exploring only 1% of Mars' surface, NASA prepares for future missions. Durable and flexible tires are crucial due to Mars' challenging terrain. SMA spring tires offer a promising solution for rover mobility on the red planet.

Kia Syros SUV Enters Indian Compact SUV Segment

Kia has launched the new Syros SUV in India's competitive sub-compact SUV segment. While official pricing is yet to be announced, a first drive revealed its design, engine performance, features, and comfort. This new offering from the South Korean automaker aims to compete with established players like Maruti, Tata, and Mahindra. Whether it's a worthwhile option for buyers remains to be seen.



APPOINTMENTS



M. Rajeshwar Rao

Deputy Governor, RBI
The Reserve Bank of India has assigned the charge of the Monetary Policy and Economic Research departments to its Deputy Governor, M. Rajeshwar Rao. This change has been made after Deputy Governor Michael Patra's term ended on January 15.

Resignation

Nakul Jain, CEO, PPSL

Nakul Jain has resigned from the position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Paytm Payments Services Limited (PPSL). The company has announced that they are actively searching for a new CEO and will announce a new appointment soon.



THEY SAID IT...



There is a need to further enhance India-U.S. mutual cooperation in areas such as technology, trade, investment, energy, and defense.



We are committed to a mutually beneficial and trustworthy partnership. We will work together for the well-being of our people and for global peace, prosperity, and security.

THE TRIBUTE

Sarojini Naidu was a prominent female leader of India's freedom struggle, known as the 'Nightingale of India' for her poetic talent. She was born on February 13, 1879, in Hyderabad. Her father, Aghornath Chattopadhyay, was a scholar and scientist, while her mother was a poet. From childhood, she was a brilliant student and began writing English poetry at a young age. She pursued higher education at King's College, London, and Cambridge University in England.



SAROJINI NAIDU

(13/02/1879-02/03/1949)

Sarojini Naidu's contribution was not limited to literature; she was also actively involved in the Indian independence movement. Inspired by Mahatma Gandhi, Gopal Krishna Gokhale, and Bal Gangadhar Tilak, she plunged into the freedom movement. In 1916, she joined the movement for women's equality and education. After the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in

1919, she strongly criticized the British rule. She actively participated in the Civil Disobedience Movement and the Quit India Movement and was imprisoned several times.

In 1925, she became the first female president of the Indian National Congress, which was a major achievement for women at that time. She was known for her powerful speeches and charismatic leadership. After India's independence in 1947, she was appointed the first Governor of Uttar Pradesh, making her India's first female governor. She continued to work for national unity, women's empowerment,

and social reforms even after independence. Sarojini Naidu, the 'Nightingale of India', made unique contributions in poetry, the freedom struggle, and women's leadership. She was an inspiring figure.



DeepSeek Creates a Stir: China's AI Chatbot Becomes a Global Talking Point

Chinese startup DeepSeek has recently created a stir in the global tech world with the success of its AI chatbot. The company has developed an effective AI model using low costs and minimal resources, which is challenging leading American AI models. DeepSeek's chatbot has reached the top position in the free apps category on the Apple App Store, leading to a decline in the shares of American tech companies. Nvidia's shares have seen a decrease of up to 17%. US President Donald Trump has called it a 'wake-up call' for the American tech industry. However, some tech experts, including Elon Musk, have expressed doubts about DeepSeek's claims. DeepSeek recently faced a cyber attack, after which it has temporarily limited the registration of new users.

Trump Halts Foreign Aid Citing Wasteful Spending



President Trump's decision to halt all US foreign aid drew criticism, but White House Press Secretary Caroline Levitt defended the move, revealing that the Biden administration had allocated \$50 million for a condom distribution program. Levitt stated that the newly formed Government Efficiency Department (DOGE) and the Office of Management and Budget found that taxpayer funds were designated for condoms in Gaza. Calling it an absurd waste of taxpayer money, she emphasized Trump's focus on responsible spending.

Biden's Putin Assassination Plot!



Tucker Carlson alleges Biden's administration plotted to assassinate Putin. The former Fox News anchor claimed on his podcast that the Biden government "tried to kill Putin," a claim he repeated to his guest, journalist Matt Taibbi, without providing evidence. The Kremlin has responded by stating that all necessary steps are being taken to ensure Putin's safety. The Biden administration has not yet commented on these accusations.

Italian PM Meloni Faces Investigation Over Libya Official's Release



Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni is under investigation for allegedly releasing a Libyan police officer, Osama Almasry Najiim, who was arrested under an ICC arrest warrant. Despite the investigation, Meloni is not obligated to resign, and facing an inquiry in Italy doesn't prove guilt. Meloni stated she was under investigation for aiding a crime and misusing public funds. Najiim was released and sent home via an Italian state plane days after his arrest. The ICC has sought clarification, stating they were not informed of his release. Meloni believes the investigation was initiated by a lawyer who complained about Najiim's release and the use of a state plane. The ICC accused Najiim of murder, torture, rape, and sexual violence and had notified Italy of his entry into Europe.

Supersonic Flights Near Reality with US Tests



Supersonic flights may soon become a reality as two US aircraft are set for testing. Boom Supersonic will demonstrate its XB-1, while NASA tests the X-59. Successful trials could lead to commercial supersonic travel, with Boom already having over 130 orders. XB-1's flight aims to break the sound barrier, following decades since the Concorde, signaling a potential shift in air travel.

Millions in Germany Denied Voting Rights Due to Citizenship



Around 10 million residents of Germany, approximately 14% of the adult population, cannot vote in the upcoming federal election due to not being German citizens. This excludes roughly 60% of the international population living in Germany. Activist Phil Butland, a long-term resident, highlights the issue, noting that despite living and working in Germany for decades, he cannot participate due to citizenship restrictions.

Denmark urges EU support over Trump's Greenland ambitions

Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen met with European leaders in Berlin, Paris, and Brussels, seeking support against President Trump's threats to seize Greenland.



Trump expressed interest in acquiring the Arctic island, citing its strategic importance and natural resources, even suggesting military action. Frederiksen's tour followed growing European concern after a Nordic summit. German Chancellor Scholz emphasized that borders cannot be changed by force.

Conflict in Africa: Humanitarian Crisis Deepens in Goma



Rwandan-backed rebels have seized control of the city of Goma in eastern Congo. The strategically important city holds billions of dollars worth of mineral wealth. Experts believe that M23 fighters have taken control of the city. This takeover is expected to escalate the conflict and humanitarian crisis.



Is Elon Musk a Time Traveler?

Elon Musk has addressed claims of being a time traveler, fueled by a 1953 sci-fi book predicting a Martian leader named "Elon." Musk jokingly tweeted about being a 5000-year-old alien time traveler, sarcastically expressing disbelief at why people doubt him. The book, "Project Mars" by Werner von Braun, imagines humanity colonizing Mars, with the leader named "Elon". While likely coincidental, even the original German manuscript names Mars's leader "Elon," adding to the mystery. Musk, with his Martian colonization goals, is no stranger to such speculation.



ISRO Makes History with 100th Launch

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) successfully launched its GSLV-F15 carrying NVS-02 at 29th Jan, 6:23 AM from Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh. This marked ISRO's 100th launch from the country's space center. The GSLV-F15 is the 17th flight of India's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV) and the 11th with an indigenous cryo stage. It's also the 8th operational flight of the GSLV with an indigenous cryogenic stage. GSLV-F15's payload fairing is a metallic version with a diameter of 3.4 meters. According to ISRO, the launch will place the NVS-02 satellite into Geosynchronous Transfer Orbit, which will enhance India's regional navigation satellite system from 4 to 5 satellites.

Most Rural Indian Teens Use Smartphones



ASER 2024 reveals 82.2% of rural Indian teens (14-16) use smartphones, but only 57% used them for studies last week. 76% used them for social media. While most have access, few own phones. Boys are more likely to own smartphones and show greater digital skills than girls. Kerala leads in study-related smartphone use.

Hospitals Halt Ayushman Bharat Over Unpaid Dues



Around 600 private hospitals in Haryana threaten to halt Ayushman Bharat scheme services due to 400 crore rupees in unpaid dues by the central government. The Indian Medical Association (IMA) claims payments are pending since August 2024 and warns that hospitals will cease treatment under the scheme from February 3rd if the dues remain unsettled. BJP promises to implement the scheme in Delhi if elected.

Global Trust in Scientists Remains Strong

A survey across 68 countries, including India, reveals that most people still trust scientists, despite concerns about declining public confidence.



The study, published in Nature Human Behaviour, found that people believe scientists should play a more active role in society and policymaking. India ranks second in trust towards scientists, following Egypt, indicating strong faith in science, though influenced by education, income, and location.

Bird Flu Kills 33 Demoiselle Cranes in Jaisalmer



Bird flu has caused the deaths of 33 demoiselle cranes (kurjan) in Jaisalmer, Rajasthan. The deaths, primarily in Degray Oran and Mohangarh areas, began on January 11th. Samples from Degray confirmed H5N1 avian flu, while 14 cranes falling mid-flight in Mohangarh are under investigation. The local veterinary department is following protocols, while a quick response team is monitoring the situation.

AP to Launch WhatsApp Governance Soon



The Andhra Pradesh government plans to launch WhatsApp Governance starting January 30th. People will now be able to avail 161 services through the messaging app, eliminating the need to repeatedly visit government offices for documents. During a review meeting at the secretariat, officials demonstrated the new program to Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu. In the first phase, the government will provide 161 services.

'My DNA is Indian,' Says Indonesian President During India Visit

Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto's visit to India, where he was the chief guest at the Republic Day celebrations, has concluded, but his remarks during the trip continue to spark discussion. Subianto attended the parade at Kartavya Path alongside President Droupadi Murmu and received a salute from the Indonesian military contingent. His visit also included a stop at Rajghat to pay respects to Mahatma Gandhi. However, his most talked-about moment came during a banquet at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Before the meal, President Subianto shared that he had undergone genetic sequencing and a DNA test which revealed his "Indian DNA." He added that he automatically starts dancing when he hears Indian music, attributing it to his Indian DNA.



BJP is India's Richest Party



BJP, claiming to be the world's largest party, is also India's richest, with over ₹7,000 crore in cash and bank balances, compared to Congress's ₹857 crore. BJP's 2023-24 Lok Sabha election expenses were ₹1,700 crore, a 60% increase from the previous year. Congress spent ₹600 crore, a three-fold rise. BJP received ₹1,685 crore in donations, double last year's.



India Faces Dual Threat: Severe Floods and Drought in Several Districts

A new study reveals that 51 districts in India face severe flood risk, with 118 at high risk. Simultaneously, 91 districts are under severe drought threat, and 188 at high risk. The study, by CSTEP and IITs Guwahati and Mandi, identifies 11 districts in various states with high vulnerability to both floods and droughts. The report assesses the vulnerability of districts and potential damage caused by these disasters. It highlights that drought risk is widespread, affecting districts across 22 states, and that the risk is heightened when districts are vulnerable due to various factors.



SRIRAJESH, Editor

The Era of Diplomacy

India's New Global Role

This situation could present an opportunity for India. As a neutral mediator, India can contribute to resolving this conflict.

The global politics of the 21st century stands at a juncture where mastery in the art of diplomacy and balance of power determines a country's stability and its global influence. At such a time, India has a unique opportunity to strengthen its role as a balancing power. The potential visits of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin to India have not only highlighted India's strategic position in this regard but have also given a new direction to the changing equations in global politics.

The Russia-Ukraine war, which has had a profound impact on global politics and the economy since 2022, is now at a stage where the need for a resolution has become more apparent than ever. India, by adopting a stance of neutrality in this conflict, has achieved a unique balance. On one hand, India has maintained its traditional ties with Russia, while on the other, it has sustained a positive dialogue with Western nations.

Donald Trump's statement that Saudi Arabia could play a key role in stopping this war points to a new perspective. According to Trump, increasing oil production could weaken Russia's economic power. However, this approach is more theoretical than practical. Russia's economy is primarily dependent on energy exports, and a drop in oil prices could affect its revenue. But assuming that economic pressure alone will make Russia change its policies would be an oversimplification.

For India, this situation could become an opportunity. As a neutral mediator, India can contribute to the resolution of this war. Proposing to host talks between Russia and Ukraine or advancing the process of ceasefire negotiations could be a positive diplomatic move for India.

The potential visit of Russian President Vladimir Putin to India is a significant opportunity to further deepen India-Russia relations. Historically, India and Russia have had very strong ties in the areas of defense, energy, and technical cooperation. During Putin's visit, discussions on defense deals, such as the S-400 missile system, are expected. Additionally, significant progress could be made toward realizing the maritime route from Chennai to Vladivostok.

In this era of energy crisis, Russia's significance for India increases even further. Amidst the global energy crisis, the availability of crude oil and natural gas imported from Russia could play a critical role in maintaining India's economic stability. Moreover, Putin's visit could offer India an opportunity to further strengthen the possibility of playing a mediator's role in the Russia-Ukraine

conflict.

Donald Trump's potential visit to India presents a chance to elevate India-U.S. relations to new heights. During Trump's administration, the strategic partnership between India and the U.S. had gained strength. Discussions on the role of the Quad (India, the U.S., Japan, and Australia) would be particularly important during this visit. This group is gaining increasing importance to counter China's growing influence.

Trump's visit could serve as a platform to deepen India-U.S. defense cooperation, technology transfer, and trade agreements. For India, this is not only an opportunity for economic growth but also a chance to further solidify its strategic position. In the context of India's tense relations with China, this visit is crucial. Growing cooperation with the U.S. could help India maintain a strategic balance against China. Another key aspect of Trump's visit could be the strengthening of India's position in the Indo-Pacific region.

For India, this situation presents both opportunities and challenges. Maintaining a balance between Russia and the U.S. will test Indian diplomacy. Amid rising tensions between Russia and Western countries, India will have to not only maintain its neutrality but also safeguard its interests.

While India's mediation in resolving the Russia-Ukraine war could make it a significant force in global politics, cooperation with the U.S. could bring economic and strategic benefits. However, amidst all of this, India must ensure that it maintains its independent and balanced foreign policy without showing bias toward either side.

The potential visits of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin offer India the chance to redefine its role in global politics. Through these visits, India can demonstrate that it is not only a reliable partner but also a responsible and neutral power capable of playing an active role in resolving global crises. These visits provide India with an opportunity to take its diplomatic capabilities to new heights. Whether it is mediation in the Russia-Ukraine war, strengthening energy and defense cooperation, or attempting to create a strategic balance with China – India has the capability to lead on all these fronts.

Through the potential visits of Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin, India will have the opportunity to redefine its global role and reinforce its diplomatic power. However, this visit will not just be an opportunity but also a challenge for India. The key to India's success will lie in maintaining its independent foreign policy amid global pressures and conflicts, balancing its national interests, and securing long-term strategic partnerships. This is an era of diplomacy, and India is moving toward becoming a key player on this chessboard. It now depends on how effectively and steadily India utilizes these opportunities to establish its global role.

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TRAMS & KOLKATA

A Priceless Bond of Heartbeat and Heritage

Cult Current Bureau

Kolkata, also known as the 'City of Joy,' still preserves its cultural heritage and old-world charm. Among the various facets of this city, one of the most unique and precious links is the tram. The relationship between trams and Kolkata is not just about transportation; it's a part of the city's soul. It is part of the

heartbeat that resonates daily on the streets of Kolkata, intertwined with the lives of its inhabitants. Today, no one in Kolkata can imagine the city without trams. Even now, the deserted tram tracks on roads where trams have been discontinued seem to reproach every Kolkata resident.



Trams were first introduced to Kolkata in 1873. Back then, it was a horse-drawn carriage that ran from Sealdah to Armenian Ghat. Gradually, time changed, and trams moved along with this change. Although trams are now powered by electricity rather than horses, their slow pace and old-fashioned style have kept Kolkata's heritage alive. It's not only an affordable mode of transport for the people of Kolkata, but it also helps the city remain free from atmospheric pollution. It has become so integral to the lives of Kolkata's people that there seems to be no point in commuting without a tram. Similarly, hand-pulled rickshaws have been associated with Kolkata, but they were deemed inhumane because they were pulled by humans. Therefore, they were discontinued, but the memory still lingers in the hearts of Kolkata residents.

Tram: An Identity of Kolkata

Bengali and Hindi cinema have presented trams in a new dimension. In films, trams are often depicted as special places where heroes express their love to their heroines. These scenes have turned trams into more than just a simple vehicle; they have become a symbol of the city's identity. The sound of tram bells, the rustling of its wheels, and the conversations of passengers on board all form an integral part of Kolkata's life. The experience of roaming the streets of Kolkata on a tram with discounted tickets during school days is one that cannot be expressed in words. 'Adda,' a form of casual socializing, is an integral part of Kolkata's culture. Despite the presence of good restaurants and coffee houses, you can still sometimes see groups of young



people sitting on trams for no reason, chatting and joking.

Due to all of this, trams have become deeply embedded in life. Whenever any legal case related to trams comes up, it's not just an issue about a vehicle; it is related to Kolkata's heritage, its emotions, and its existence.

Political Clouds Over Trams

In January 2023, a bench of the Kolkata High Court, comprising Chief Justice T.S. Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhattacharya, heard a public interest litigation. This petition was filed by an organization named 'People's United for Better Living in Kolkata' (PUBLIC). The petition alleged that the state government's process of bituminization (laying asphalt on roads) would lead to the removal of trams and possibly the sale of their depots to private companies. The petitioners stated that this decision was not based on any scientific study.

The petition cited examples of cities like London,



Paris, and Istanbul which have revitalized their tram networks. In such a scenario, removing trams from Kolkata is not only unethical but also impractical. It would impact not just the city's transportation but also the environment, public health, and social structure negatively.

Court's Concerns and State Government's Accountability

During the first hearing in May 2023, the petitioners' lawyer reminded the court that the government was celebrating the completion of 150 years of trams in Kolkata. The court also expressed surprise and asked why a heritage like the tram was being terminated. "It is a heritage, why do you want to end it? Why can't it be improved?" the court asked the state government.

The state government said that they were trying to modernize the trams. However, the court believed that before removing the trams, a detailed study of its impacts should be conducted. The court clearly ordered that no bituminization process should be carried out on the tram tracks until a decision is reached on the petition.

Tram Heritage and Kolkata's Culture

During the hearing of another petition in June 2023, the Kolkata High Court made this significant comment, "Trams are a part of Kolkata's heritage, and the state government has a duty to preserve this heritage not only for the present but also for future generations." The court also said that when the people of Kolkata take pride in Durga Puja receiving the UNESCO heritage tag, they should also take pride in the revival of tram services.

This statement from the court echoes the feelings of the people of Kolkata towards the trams. Trams are not just a vehicle; they are a symbol of Kolkata's culture and history. Ending their existence would not only mean eliminating a means of transportation but also extinguishing a city's soul.

Future Challenges and the Existence of Trams

As time progresses, the sound of trams on the streets of Kolkata is gradually diminishing. Currently, the tram network that once spanned 116.62 kilometers has been reduced to only 33.04 kilometers. The direction in which Kolkata's future will move is something only time will tell.

However, it is the responsibility of all of us to ensure that this heritage of Kolkata is preserved. What the outcome of the ongoing tug-of-war between the state government and the court will be is something interesting to watch. But whatever happens, the place of trams in the hearts of the people of Kolkata will always remain.

Kolkata's Heartbeat: The Tram

Perhaps one day the trams of Kolkata will once again run on the streets of the metropolis with the same enthusiasm and vigor as they used to in the old days. Perhaps the people of Kolkata will once again be able to slow down the pace of their lives by riding trams and relive those moments that connect them to this city. This relationship between trams and Kolkata can never end. No matter what challenges arise, trams will always remain alive in the soul of Kolkata. This metropolis and its trams will continue to beat together, bound by a thread that will never weaken with time.





ARVIND KEJRIWAL

'Soft Hindutva' or New Political Drama?

Arvind Kejriwal has adopted the tactic of referencing the Ramayana and Hanuman Chalisa on his political platforms to target his opponents. This is a departure from his usual image...



Santu Das

Arvind Kejriwal's rise in Indian politics was originally rooted in the anti-corruption movement, where he convinced his supporters that he would establish a new political culture in the country that transcends religion, caste, and class. His early actions clearly communicated that he aimed to bring a system that was

entirely free of corruption and based on public service, opposing traditional politics. However, in recent years, Kejriwal's politics have taken a new turn, which analysts define as a shift towards 'soft Hindutva.'

In a recent interview, Kejriwal portrayed himself as a devout follower of Hanuman, stating that he had worshipped Hanuman



since childhood. This is not the first time he has publicly shared his religious beliefs. Even before filing his nomination for the 2025 Delhi Assembly elections, he visited a Hanuman temple and recited the Hanuman Chalisa in front of media cameras. This is not only a public display of religiosity but also symbolizes that Kejriwal's politics are now revolving around Hindu symbols.

This shift is not just limited to the public display of religion. Kejriwal has also started using references to the Ramayana and Hanuman Chalisa on his political stages to criticize his opponents. This is quite different from the image he had a decade ago, where he stood against corruption and his politics were beyond religion and caste. To understand this change, we must examine his political strategy over the past few years.

The primary reason for Kejriwal's transformation is political gain. After the 2017 MCD elections, where 'AAP' suffered a heavy defeat, Kejriwal altered his strategy. Out of the total 270 MCD seats, 'AAP' won only 48, while the

BJP secured 181. Following this defeat, Kejriwal began using religion and religious symbols to connect with the public and manipulate electoral calculations.

In 2018, the Delhi government under 'AAP' launched a free pilgrimage scheme for senior citizens, taking them to religious places like Ayodhya, Rameshwaram, and Vaishno Devi. This move helped 'AAP' establish a significant religious and cultural base, particularly among Hindu voters.

During the 2022 Gujarat Assembly elections, Kejriwal suggested printing images of Hindu deities on currency notes. This proposal was aimed directly at appealing to Hindu sentiments and presenting an image of 'soft Hindutva' parallel to the BJP's Hindutva agenda. Kejriwal also claimed that his government adheres to the principles of Ram Rajya, inspired by Hindu religious and moral ideals.

Many analysts view Kejriwal's religious inclination as an example of 'soft Hindutva,' a result of the growing influence of Hindutva in Indian politics. Since 2014, the BJP has promoted 'Hindutva-driven nationalism,' challenging the concept of secularism. Consequently, several political parties have realized that secular politics alone cannot lead to power.

Until 2018, Kejriwal avoided religious politics, but later, he began using it as a political tool. Activities like visiting Hanuman temples and reciting the Hanuman Chalisa indicate that Kejriwal has now entered the realm of religious politics. This shift may be necessary for his party's broader acceptance and electoral success, but it is a departure from his original ideals and anti-corruption image.

Recently, 'AAP' announced a new scheme for priests and granthis, promising monthly salaries to those working in temples and gurdwaras. Alongside this, the decision to take stringent action against Bangladeshi and Rohingya refugees in Delhi is also part of 'AAP's' electoral strategy.

Arvind Kejriwal's political journey is proof that the allure of 'soft Hindutva' is growing in Indian politics. Using religion to achieve electoral success and broader public support is no longer limited to the BJP.

Many analysts view Kejriwal's religious inclination as an example of 'soft Hindutva.'



During the Delhi riots, when Arvind Kejriwal did not address the pain of the Muslim community, it became evident that he did not want to risk losing his Hindu voter base.

One of the major reasons for Kejriwal's success is his careful use of religious symbols to appeal to both Hindus and Muslims.



There are seven Assembly seats in Delhi where Muslim voters play a decisive role, including Seelampur, Okhla, Mustafabad, Chandni Chowk, Ballimaran, Matia Mahal, and Babarpur. However, recognizing that it's impossible to win elections solely on Muslim votes, Arvind Kejriwal has made significant changes in his strategy, attempting to appeal to Hindu voters as well.

Senior journalists believe that the decline of the Congress party in Delhi, and the shift of its voter base towards the Aam Aadmi Party, is the main reason for this change. Congress, which was once seen as the primary party for Muslim voters, has now weakened in comparison to the Aam Aadmi Party. Kejriwal is confident that Muslim votes are secured with him, which is why he has started using Hindu symbols. In line with this, he began visiting Hanuman temples and reciting the Hanuman Chalisa. This change reflects his 'soft Hindutva' image, setting him apart from the BJP's more rigid Hindutva.

During the Delhi riots, Kejriwal avoided addressing the pain of the Muslim community, making it clear that he didn't want to lose his Hindu voter base. By distancing himself from the protests at Shaheen Bagh, he ensured

that his image didn't become that of a pro-Muslim supporter, allowing him to retain Hindu voters.

Kejriwal's approach in Delhi politics is part of a larger strategy. There was a time when Kejriwal was popular among the Muslim community, but now he has traded the skullcap for Hanuman's mace. This change is purely driven by his ambition for power. Symbols play a significant role in electoral politics, and by choosing Hanuman, Kejriwal has attempted to strike a balance with Hindutva.

While the BJP has placed Lord Ram at the center of its political agenda, Kejriwal has chosen Hanuman. During the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections, his recitation of the Hanuman Chalisa and campaign images showing him holding Hanuman's mace clearly indicate this. It's all about choosing the right symbols to attain power. Kejriwal is not countering the BJP; rather, he has become a part of the Hindutva discourse.

Kejriwal's real goal is Hindu votes, but he doesn't want to alienate Muslim voters either. He is trying to strike a balance, maintaining trust with both communities. They don't want to lose votes either. In this situation, they are

trying to create a balance where they can maintain trust between both communities.

Kejriwal is not engaging in the politics of hatred against one religion to gain the votes of another, but rather, he is attempting to strike a balance. However, it is not Kejriwal himself creating this balance; the circumstances are doing it on their own.

In the end, Arvind Kejriwal's 'soft Hindutva' policy and his efforts to secure Muslim votes can be seen as an electoral strategy in Delhi politics. He is using religious symbols to strengthen his Hindu vote bank, while also trying to keep Muslim votes on his side. The goal is to achieve power, and this strategy has earned him a significant place in Delhi's political landscape.

A major reason for Arvind Kejriwal's success in this electoral equation is his careful use of religious symbols, enabling him to attract both Hindu and Muslim voters. This balance is adding a new dimension not only to Delhi's politics but also to the broader political landscape of the country.



QUANTUM TELEPORTATION

A Remarkable Scientific Achievement



A new era in the world of science and technology is about to begin, where quantum teleportation and traditional networks can work together. Recently, an unprecedented experiment has proven that quantum and traditional networks can operate through the same optical fiber. This experiment is a significant step, making it easier to implement quantum networks on a large scale.

When we talk about quantum teleportation, the word "teleportation" may first bring to mind the characters from science fiction movies, who instantly travel from one place to another. However, this case is somewhat different. Quantum teleportation means transferring a quantum state from one location to another without physically sending it. This is based on the principle of quantum entanglement, where the states of two particles remain connected regardless of the distance between them. In the future, this technology will be used in quantum computing, cryptography, and other critical networking tasks. This experiment has made the process even more significant, as it has now been demonstrated that quantum signals can be transmitted within the same fiber alongside traditional optical traffic.

Key Features of the Experiment:

In this experiment, quantum teleportation was successfully carried out over a 30.2-kilometer-long optical fiber, which was simultaneously carrying traditional communication traffic. The fiber was transmitting classical traffic at 400 gigabits per second. The quantum state was successfully transferred from one location to another, using a crucial technique known as 'Bell State Measurement.' The most remarkable aspect of this experiment is that the quantum signal was transmitted in such a way that it wasn't affected by the high-power classical signal. To understand this, we can draw an analogy with the mythological tale of the 'Samudra Manthan,' where both nectar and poison were churned together but handled differently. Similarly, this experiment discovered a way to manage both quantum and traditional signals together.

The Convergence of Quantum and Traditional Networks:

Currently, the internet networks we use are based on optical fiber, which transmits data using light waves to reach from one location to another. However, to enable quantum networks, we need a network that can also transmit quantum signals. Until now, such networks needed to be built separately, resulting in high costs. But this experiment has proven that quantum and traditional signals can be sent through the same optical fiber, providing significant cost and infrastructure benefits. It's like having bicycles and high-speed cars travel together on the same road, but with both having a safe journey. Scientists have successfully overcome this challenge. They solved an issue known as 'Spontaneous Raman Scattering,' which can occur from high-power classical

signals and harm the quantum signal. To tackle this, special optical filters and precise timing adjustments were used.

Advantages of Quantum and Classical Networks

This successful experiment will open many new doors. First and foremost, it is a significant step towards implementing quantum networks in real life. In the future, we will be able to use technologies like quantum computing and quantum encryption, which will be far more secure and powerful than current computing technologies. This technology will bring about a revolutionary change in data security and privacy. In ancient mythology, we find references to 'secret knowledge,' such as when Lord Vishnu gave the gods the secret knowledge of immortality. Similarly, quantum networks represent the future of secure data transfer. Simply put, just as the nectar of immortality was hidden to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands, quantum cryptography will keep data safe and protected from any kind of cyber attack.

Future Challenges and Possibilities

Although this experiment has achieved significant success, many challenges still lie ahead. One major challenge is maintaining quantum signals over long distances without distortion. Additionally, this technology may currently be expensive for large-scale use. However, as time progresses, the technology will improve, and its costs will decrease. According to mythology, in every era, a new incarnation emerges to show humanity a new direction. Similarly, in the field of technology, quantum networks are a new incarnation that will redefine our lives in the future.

This convergence of quantum and traditional networks is a historic achievement in the field of science and technology. This experiment is leading us toward a future where quantum networks will not only enhance the speed and capacity of the internet but also strengthen data security. Just as Arjuna collaborated with Krishna in the Mahabharata to plan their war strategy, this technology will bring a new kind of security and high-speed strategy to our digital world.

This is just the beginning, and in the future, we will witness even more incredible and astonishing outcomes from this technology.



The New 'Ism' in Politics

POPULISM



Sandeep Kumar



When left-wing, right-wing, and centrist ideologies used to guide politics through the complexity of ideologies, it is now becoming a thing of the past. These ideologies, which once connected with the pulse of the people and defined every aspect of politics, are now struggling to remain relevant, standing on the margins. A new wave, the arrival of a new era, has emerged: 'Populism.'



There was a time when left-wing, right-wing, and centrist ideologies shaped politics through their complex philosophies, but those days are gradually becoming a thing of the past. These ideologies, which once resonated with the heartbeat of the masses and influenced every aspect of politics, are now on the sidelines, struggling to stay relevant. A new wave, marking the arrival of a new era, has emerged—its name is 'Populism.' This new 'ism' is not only rapidly rising but is breaking down the walls of political traditions and leaving old ideologies behind. Politics today has turned towards a direction where the direct involvement of the people and their concerns play a central role. Populism has shaken the very foundations of the right, left, and center. Whether it's in India, the United States, or the countries of Europe where public dissatisfaction and aspirations are writing the narrative of new leadership—populism is waving its flag in every corner.

In contemporary times, left-wing ideologies in Western countries have almost become non-existent. Not only politically, but even in the social sphere, leftism has lost significant influence. In most parts of Europe, this ideology has lost its grip, and perhaps the only exception is the UK. There, under the leadership of Prime Minister Keir Starmer, the Labour Party still exists, but its position remains increasingly challenging. Starmer, seen as a traditional leftist leader, finds himself surrounded by the growing influence of far-right figures like Elon Musk. Musk, who holds significant global influence due to his innovations and political views, continues to create difficulties for Labour Party leadership. As a result, the Labour Party in the UK is also struggling with an existential crisis, while the left's identity has nearly vanished in the rest of Europe.

On the other hand, the right-wing has also lost much of its old strength and vigor. In the United States, the Republican Party, traditionally known for its strong right-wing base, is now grappling with internal crises due to Donald Trump's aggressive and divisive leadership. Trump's 'Make America Great Again' (MAGA) movement has completely distanced itself from the Republican Party's traditional right-wing ideology. Under his critical and derogatory approach, Trump has targeted key party leaders, deepening internal divisions. He insulted Nikki Haley as 'Birdbrain' and criticized John Bolton as 'Dumb as a Rock.' Not only this, Trump's aggressive campaign even extended to the old pillars of the Republican Party, like Dick Cheney and his daughter Liz Cheney.

This clearly shows that Trump's MAGA movement has now drifted far away from the Grand Old Party's traditional right-wing ideology. It has emerged as a new ideology, distinct from the conventional right and challenging it. Thus, both left-wing and right-wing ideologies are losing their old identities in Western politics, and a battle for power is unfolding between new, radical ideas—a reflection of the changing political landscape.

Currently, the political ideology landscape in different parts of the world appears to be changing rapidly. This transformation is not just limited to ballot boxes and election results; its broader social and economic impacts are also becoming evident. Economic analyst Ruchir Sharma recently pointed out in an article that in the developing countries where recent elections were held, 85% of the ruling parties faced defeat. This statistic not only indicates political instability but also reflects that traditional political ideologies are failing to meet the public's expectations and

aspirations. The rise of new ideologies in countries like France and Italy symbolizes this shift, and Germany may soon follow the same path. Clearly, traditional left and right ideologies are now struggling in their old forms, and the world is rapidly moving towards a new ideology.

This new ideology is called—Populism. It is a political approach that challenges the conventional left, right, and centrist ideologies. The most successful symbols of this movement include leaders like Donald Trump, Giorgia Meloni, Viktor Orbán, and Marine Le Pen. Their policies and strategies differ from traditional right-wing ideologies, and labeling them as simply 'right-wing' would be an oversimplification. The rise of populism is proof that people are now weary of complex ideologies and heavy doctrines, and are being drawn toward simple, direct, and practical policies.

Populism and its definition: The biggest characteristic of populism lies in its simplicity and practicality. It is an ideology that speaks of straightforward and simple politics, rather than getting entangled in complex moralities, the depths of history, or the intricacies of facts. It prioritizes the daily issues of the people, which is why its appeal is wide and influential. This form of populism is now emerging in various countries across the world, and India is a prominent example.

In India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had earlier criticized the 'revdi culture,' referring to the temptation of offering free services and amenities to gain votes. He had called it a threat to democracy. However, after the Karnataka elections, the BJP also resorted to this populist politics, offering free electricity, water, and benefits. This is a clear populist politics that has now become the mainstream, emerging significant political stream not just in India, but worldwide.

The rise of populism points to countries and leaders who are trying to directly respond to people's aspirations in a rapidly changing world. Where old ideologies and 'isms' are entangled in complexity, populism supports politics that is simple, direct, and based on the fundamental needs of the people. This is why this movement is deeply rooting itself in the political landscape today.

In India, the politics of populism is rapidly emerging, and it has left behind traditional left-wing, right-wing, and centrist ideologies. Ideological commitments are weakening in today's politics, and parties like the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have established themselves as symbols of this change. These parties focus more on populist policies that are directly linked to people's problems, rather than ideology. The promise of free services, offering personal benefits, and promoting people-friendly policies has become a major feature of the current political landscape. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is also now following this path. Once known for its Hindutva-based nationalism, the BJP now seems to believe in populist politics. Despite Prime Minister Narendra Modi's criticism of the 'revdi culture,' in the recent elections, the BJP made free services and populist announcements an important part of its electoral strategy. This clearly shows that ideology-free politics has attracted all major parties, and the influence of populism is now deeply embedded in Indian politics.

The form of populism differs in each country, and its objective is to directly address the emotions of the people. In developed countries, populism often manifests in the form of expelling migrants, suspicion towards foreign cultures, and nationalist policies. Leaders like Donald Trump, Viktor Orbán, and Giorgia Meloni have become symbols of

nationalism and populist policies in their respective countries, making them popular among the masses. On the other hand, in developing countries like India, the form of populism is a little different. Here, populism appears in the form of social security schemes, free services, and issues directly related to the public. There are several examples of populist politics in India, where promises of free electricity, water, ration, and other facilities have become part of common election promises. Such policies under populism not only target the poor and middle class but also gain popularity across all sections of society.

The rise of populism indicates that old ideologies—left-wing, right-wing, and centrist—have lost their influence. These ideologies are now failing to meet the expectations of the people. Populism, breaking free from these old boundaries, focuses on the priorities of the people, with its main objective being to solve the real problems of the masses. This is why populism is rapidly gaining popularity and leaving traditional 'isms' behind. Ideology-based politics is now on the fringes. The biggest characteristic of populism is that it is not bound by any specific ideological framework. Instead of adopting the ideology of any particular side, it is capable of adapting itself according to the emotions and needs of the people.

A new era in global politics has begun, with populism emerging as the mainstream. Traditional left-wing, right-wing, and centrist ideologies are now struggling because they do not meet the expectations of modern voters. Populist politics, which directly appeals to the hearts and minds of the people, is now establishing dominance on a global level. Whether it's India, the USA, or Europe—the influence of populism is now being felt everywhere. This marks the beginning of a political era where the expectations and needs of voters have overtaken ideologies.





Nagendra Singh

On the afternoon of July 16, 2024, when student leader Abu Saeed was shot and killed by the police in Bangladesh's Rangpur district, a completely different scene was unfolding in Dhaka. At the Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock, senior leader and minister of the Awami League, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's party, Abdur Rahman, was comfortably enjoying a poetry reading by a local poet in his office. In a video, he was seen sitting back in a chair, resting his hand on his right cheek, and enjoying the poetry. When he learned about Saeed's murder and the growing protests, he dismissed it, saying, "Nothing will happen; the leader [Hasina] will handle it."

This scene, where one part of Bangladesh's streets was engulfed in bloodshed while a minister remained calmly seated in a safe

Inner Conflict in Bangladesh

party workers are frustrated that the leadership has completely cut itself off from the people. Many workers have become so disheartened that they are contemplating leaving politics altogether.

Will the Awami League Rise Again?

A senior student leader expressed his frustration, saying, "When we planned to overthrow the Hasina government, we thought our leaders would help us. But when the time came, our leaders abandoned us and fled." Members of the Bangladesh Chhatra League now feel isolated.

position, became a symbol of deep inner conflict for the country's citizens. It highlighted how disconnected the top leadership of the Awami League had become from the issues and discontent rising among the people.

Just three weeks later, a fierce student-led movement overthrew the Sheikh Hasina government. The protests, which began on July 1, led to 834 deaths and left over 20,000 people, including women and children, injured. The movement against Hasina's government grew so large that on August 5, 2024, Sheikh Hasina had to flee to India. This event marked the end of her 16-year rule.

Now, five months later, the situation for the Awami League has become just as difficult. Instead of acknowledging their mistakes, the party's top leadership has been avoiding responsibility by labeling these events as part of a foreign conspiracy. The party's General Secretary, AFM Bahaauddin Nasim, blamed the movement on international conspiracies, saying, "We have been victims of an international conspiracy, and proof will be found soon." This statement clearly demonstrated the party leaders' insensitivity and complete disconnection from the people.

Deep contradictions have now emerged within the Awami League. On one hand, the top leaders claim that they had acted in the right direction, while on the other hand, mid-level leaders and

There has been no apology or remorse from the senior leaders of the Awami League regarding the party's actions so far. Instead, party spokespeople have labeled the student movement as terrorist activity and accused it of being part of pro-Pakistan forces. This statement from the party leaders is only escalating public anger. Political analysts believe that such strategies have failed to improve the party's image.

The Awami League now faces a difficult road to re-establish itself. To revive its old identity, the party will have to work hard. The biggest challenge in this effort will be facing the criticism coming from within the party and restoring trust among the public. Political analysts believe that if the party takes responsibility for its leaders' actions and takes steps in the right direction, it can regain its lost support.

Political analyst Ali Riaz states, "The Awami League needs to apologize for its mistakes and take steps towards change in its current leadership. Only if these conditions are met, can the party's future be secured."

The path to rebuilding for the Awami League is difficult, but it is not impossible. The party will need to bring about changes in its policies and regain the lost credibility among the people. If the party reforms its leadership and structure, it may be in a stronger position to participate in the next elections. But the biggest challenge will be how much the party is willing to self-reflect and improve on its past actions.

President Ruto's strategy demonstrates that he is willing to go to any extent to maintain power. He has resorted to old methods of intimidation and division, but it remains unclear how long he can ignore the demands of the current young population.



Cult Current Bureau

The People vs. Power

The Struggle for Democracy

In recent days, Kenya's political situation has taken a worrying turn. During the 2024 General Zed protests, President William Ruto had two clear options: either he could take serious steps against corruption and meet the public's expectations, or, like in the past, he could rely on violence and repression to remain in power. Unfortunately, Ruto chose the second path, and Kenya has once again entered an era of political violence and repression.

Repression and Disappearing Voices

In recent months, a large number of people in Kenya have suddenly gone missing, which has become a cause for concern. These abductions are happening without following any legal process, and there are signs that the government is behind them. Interestingly, the Ruto government, which is believed to be responsible for these abductions, has been ordering investigations into them. This is a form of Orwellian deception, where the public is expected to ignore the situation while the government continues to speak of democratic values. Even close associates of the President have been affected by this repression. For example, when the son of Kenya's Attorney General Justin Muturi was arrested, Muturi directly contacted the President, and his son was immediately released. For speaking out on the issue, Muturi faced repeated criticism from Ruto's allies. This shows that the government's attitude is not only against ordinary citizens but also affects those close to the power center.

Deceptive Politics and Democratic Facade

President Ruto's government speaks of democratic ideals on one hand, but uses violence to suppress its opponents on the other. This is a dual political strategy where Ruto has increased cooperation with authoritarian regimes like Turkey, Uganda, and Rwanda, and has strengthened his hold on power by arresting or exiling foreign dissenters. To maintain a democratic image on the international stage, Ruto seeks to stay in power under the pretext of national security.

Kenya's people now face a major question: how does society react when political leadership openly tries to

distort the truth? President Ruto's attitude has not only disrespected democratic values but also raised the question of whether opposing the government has any meaning anymore. This paints a picture of a society that has lost trust in its political class but still believes in its strength and capacity for change.

The Politics of Truth and Division

Kenya's Catholic Bishops' Conference has called this situation the "culture of lies." They claim that the government is defining the truth according to its own narrative, and the only truth is what the government says. This is a serious political problem that can be seen not only in Kenya but also in other countries around the world where democracy is in crisis. The question arises: in a place like Kenya, where people hope for change, how will the government's lies and violence be dealt with?

President Ruto's strategy shows that he is willing to go to any extent to maintain power. He has relied on old methods of intimidating and dividing the people, but it is unclear how long he can continue ignoring the demands of the current young population. The way the government is suppressing opposition is a dangerous sign that Kenya's politics could witness even more instability.

The Future Struggle and the Future of Democracy

Under President Ruto's leadership, Kenya's future looks unstable. This struggle for power is not limited to Kenya; it serves as a warning to other democratic nations where power-hungry leaders are disregarding the wishes and rights of the people. This political landscape in Kenya will not only affect the country's internal politics but also signals that global democracy is facing similar threats.

For the people of Kenya, the question now is whether they will tolerate this political deception, or whether they will once again bring their desire for change to the forefront and hold the government accountable.

This article is based on Michele Gavin's blog post "Accountability Gone Missing in Kenya" published on the CFR Blog.



ISRAEL

Permanent Victory or Temporary Relief?

A. Asgarzadeh

On October 7, 2023, the war between Israel and Hamas not only shook the political landscape of the Middle East but also raised global concerns about peace and security. This war has taken steps towards a peaceful resolution after 15 months, but its outcomes remain difficult to understand. Has Israel truly achieved its military and strategic goals, or is this just a temporary success? The answer to this question is not only important from a military perspective, but also from political, diplomatic, and humanitarian angles.

Definition of Victory and Israel's Objective:

Victory is not limited to military success; it encompasses achieving strategic objectives, regional stability, and hopes for long-term peace. Israel had clearly stated its objective in the war

that began on October 7 was to "destroy Hamas," a terrorist organization ruling the Gaza Strip. While the Israeli military killed the top leaders of Hamas and destroyed its military infrastructure, the organization's strength and roots are so deep that it has resurfaced.

Hamas members are flexible in their strategy and, despite heavy losses, have maintained their network. According to Israeli military reports, around 17,000 Hamas fighters were killed, yet the organization remains powerful, indicating that completely eradicating Hamas was not possible. Even after the war, many of Hamas's operatives remain in Gaza, and its roots are deeply embedded in Palestinian society.

Success in Israel's National Security Direction:

Israel's goal in the war was not only to destroy Hamas but also to ensure its national security. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu viewed this war as a victory from a national security perspective and declared that "our armies have destroyed Hamas and all our war objectives have been achieved." Netanyahu's statement supports the idea that Israel effectively demonstrated its military strength and succeeded in reducing the threats within its borders.

During the war, Israel's forces targeted several key military sites, including weapons storage, rocket launch pads, and other strategic locations. However, Israel did not have a plan in place to ensure permanent peace in Gaza, which shows that the results of military action may not be secure in the long term. Additionally, while Israel made efforts to minimize harm to civilians during the war, the significant loss of life among Gaza's civilians raised questions about human rights and war crimes.

The Gaza Crisis and Humanitarian Perspective:

The humanitarian crisis resulting from the war in Gaza calls into question Israel's military success. Millions have been displaced, and health facilities have been devastated. Nearly 92% of

Gaza's population has been displaced, pushing the region into a severe humanitarian crisis. The war has led to civilian casualties on both sides, refugee crises, and issues like food security.

Currently, the situation in Gaza is such that its citizens are struggling to meet basic needs. Hospitals, schools, and water supply systems have been destroyed, complicating life further in Gaza. The Israeli government claims it minimized violence against civilians, but it is impossible to deny the reality of the violence during the war.

Iran and Regional Power Dynamics:

Another crucial aspect for Israel is the regional power balance. Israel and its allied nations attempted to weaken Iran's influence during the war. Israel carried out attacks on Hezbollah in Lebanon and Iranian military bases in Syria, leading to a decline in Iran's military position. Additionally, Israel targeted Iran's missile and defense systems, which can be seen as a significant strategic advantage.



During his campaign speeches, Donald Trump had said, "You know, in the 1890s, our country... probably was the richest, because we had a strict tariff system. And we had a president-you're familiar with McKinley, right? He was really a very skilled businessman, and he earned billions of dollars for the country at that time." Trump's intention is to make America great again. While most believe that under Trump's leadership, America will regain its former glory and its hegemony will be stronger than ever, there are contradictions as well. Many argue that Trump's plan for America is centered around old-school tyranny, arrogance, short-sighted economics, isolationism, and white male supremacy - policies that would turn America into a villain on the.....

COVER STORY

★★★★★★★★★ TRUMP 2.0

Will America Become ★★★★★★ End Up in the
GREAT OR GUTTER
★★★★★★★★★



SRIRAJESH

... world stage and economically weaker. America may not move forward, but will certainly regress back to the 1890s. On the foreign policy front, if Trump 2.0 promotes current policies, they could prove disastrous and costly for America. A website, Global Witness ORG, states that Trump's return is a threat to democracy, people, and the entire planet...

Many media sources suggest that this would be negative for the environment, economy, technology, and science, but several analyses contradict this by stating that although Trump's return may be a blow to many countries and may cause them harm, he will undoubtedly achieve his goal of making America great again. But will he, really?

Donald Trump, who took office as the 47th President of the United States on January 20, 2025, for his second term, emerges as a staunch nationalist and right-wing leader on the global stage. His rise will provide a positive boost to right-wing political forces around the world, and once again, the world will witness nationalism being raised in various forms across different nations.

Upon taking the oath, Trump immediately passed a series of executive orders covering topics ranging from trade, immigration, and U.S. foreign aid to demographic diversity, civil rights, and the appointment of federal employees. Some of these have an immediate political impact on the U.S., while others are more symbolic in nature.

The broad scope of the Republican president's actions reflects many of his electoral promises and his resolve to steer the country quickly towards a right-wing direction, consolidating executive power in the Western region. However, the impact of these actions will not be limited to U.S. borders but will equally affect the rest of the world.

Trump's proposed immigration and border security program aims to bring sweeping changes to the American political and social structure. This program not only tightens current immigration laws but also seeks to redefine national security,

military intervention, and the criteria for U.S. citizenship. His approach presents the situation as an "invasion" at the U.S. borders, focused on illegal immigration and immigration control.

Trump's Military Use: The Challenge to Posse Comitatus Trump's orders include provisions to involve the U.S. military in immigration control, deploying the Ready Reserve and National Guard for border security. Additionally, military properties will be used for detention facilities, land and air transport, and logistics services. This step conflicts with the 1878 Posse Comitatus Act, which generally limits the use of military personnel in domestic law enforcement functions. Trump has linked it to national security, and it is being viewed as a military step that strengthens his presidential powers.

Redefining Birthright Citizenship: A New Interpretation of the 14th Amendment Trump's immigration orders redefine birthright citizenship under the 14th Amendment. Now, a child born in the U.S. will only be considered a citizen if their parents are legal permanent residents of the U.S. This order is facing legal challenges in federal courts, but if enacted, it could affect the citizenship status of millions.

Suspension of the Refugee Program and a New Screening Process Trump's orders include

Trump's order calls for suspending the US refugee admissions program until January 27, 2025. This suspension will continue until a review of the immigration system is completed.



suspending the U.S. refugee entry program until January 27, 2025, pending a review of the immigration system. Additionally, a stricter vetting process will be implemented for those seeking visas or other immigration benefits. This process will be based on standards used during Trump's first term, with a focus on national security.

Construction of the U.S.-Mexico Border Wall and Security Measures Trump has prioritized the construction of a wall and other barriers on the U.S.-Mexico border. Additionally, a Homeland Security Task Force will be formed to collaborate with state and local law enforcement agencies to combat criminal gangs and international criminals.

Ban on the "Catch and Release" Policy Trump has

proposed a ban on the so-called "catch and release" policy, under which certain immigrants are allowed to remain in the U.S. until their immigration court hearing. This policy will be terminated, and all illegal immigrants will be detained and deported. The Department of Homeland Security has been instructed to create new detention facilities for this purpose.

Termination of the Family Reunification Program The family reunification program that brings citizens from Cuba, Haiti, Nicaragua, and Venezuela and their family members to the U.S. will also be terminated. The Trump administration aims to focus on individuals undergoing legal immigration processes instead.

Revocation of Biden's Policies on Climate Change and Global Migration Trump also plans to revoke Biden's order, which planned migration patterns due to the effects of climate change. According to Trump, this policy is unnecessary, and instead, national security should be prioritized.

Trump has also proposed denying federal funds to non-governmental organizations that assist illegal immigrants and plans to withhold federal funding from "sanctuary" cities that fail to enforce federal immigration laws.

Proposal to Declare International Cartels as Terrorist Organizations

A proposal to designate international cartels related to immigration as "Foreign Terrorist Organizations" or "Specially Designated Global Terrorists" is also part of Trump's executive orders. This would invoke the Foreign Enemies Act, which could significantly impact their activities. Inclusive American Identity and Immigration

Trump's orders direct the Attorney General



Trump has suspended America's participation in the global tax agreement. The purpose of this agreement was to prevent multinational corporations from evading tax payments.

economy.

External Revenue Service and Tariff Policies

Trump has proposed establishing an "External Revenue Service" to collect duties and revenues related to foreign trade. Additionally, he has begun reviewing trade relations with China and is considering imposing new or increased tariffs on China. During his campaign, Trump had threatened to impose tariffs of up to 60% on China, and this proposal signals a new direction in trade relations between the U.S. and China.

Fentanyl and Trade Restrictions

Fentanyl, which is a major cause of the drug problem in the United States, is a focus for Trump. He has specifically requested a review of the flow of fentanyl coming from Canada, Mexico, and China. He has recommended imposing tariffs and restrictions, which could be a decisive step in controlling America's drug problem.

Withdrawal from Global Tax Agreement

Trump has suspended America's participation in the global tax agreement. The agreement was intended to prevent multinational corporations from avoiding tax payments. This move by Trump is designed to give American companies more advantage in global competition, aligning with his "America First" approach.

TikTok Ban and Social Media Policy

The U.S. ban on TikTok has been suspended for 75 days. Trump has given the new administration the opportunity to assess the national security threat posed by the platform, and a potential American buyer is being sought. Additionally, he has reduced government intervention in tackling misinformation and disinformation on social media

Donald Trump's immigration and border control program is an effort to fundamentally change U.S. immigration policies. These policies will not only affect U.S. citizenship criteria and border security but will also have a profound impact on both domestic and international politics. The proposed program includes several important issues, such as military intervention, the redefinition of civil rights, and a review of the role of non-governmental organizations.

Trade and Economy

Now, let's talk about trade and the economy. Donald Trump's approach to trade, business, and the economy is based on a comprehensive and aggressive strategy aimed at reducing the U.S. trade deficit, promoting domestic industries, and challenging the global trade structure. His policies,

Focus on Controlling Consumer Prices

A priority for the Trump administration is to control consumer prices. He has directed executive agencies to tailor their policies in such a way as to reduce the prices of consumer goods. Trump seeks progress reports from his top economic advisors every 30 days, highlighting how seriously he is taking this issue. This effort to control consumer prices may be an important step toward economic stability and improving the standard of living for ordinary citizens.

Review of Trade Deficit and Unfair Trade Practices

The Trump administration has directed the Secretaries of Finance and Commerce, the U.S. Trade Representative, and other experts to investigate the causes of the U.S. trade deficit and

identify unfair trade practices. This includes the possibility of implementing "global supplementary tariffs," which could be a major part of Trump's trade policies. This approach is aimed at providing protection to domestic industries and balancing global trade imbalances. Trump has tried to ensure that American companies and producers can succeed in global competition and resolve trade disputes with major economies like China.

Review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement

While rewriting NAFTA, Trump has planned to review this agreement by 2026. In this regard, he has threatened to impose a 25% tariff on Canadian and Mexican goods. This step is intended to boost U.S. production and address trade imbalances. Although he has not yet signed this move, it reflects his focus on American production and the



to avoid violating the freedom of expression of American citizens.

Trump's trade and economic policies are part of his efforts to secure a stronger position for the U.S. in international trade and the global economy. His approach aims to empower domestic industries, reduce America's trade deficit, and redefine international trade agreements. Through tariffs, duties, and trade reviews, Trump has chosen a path that signals major changes in America's global trade policy.

Climate, Energy, and Environmental Issues

Trump's policies on climate, energy, and

environmental issues are focused on maintaining dependence on fossil fuels and increasing domestic energy production, in contrast to the previous administration's policies. His priority is expanding the energy sector, using traditional resources, and reversing Biden administration's environmental policies.

Exiting the Paris Climate Agreement was the first major step by the Trump administration, rejecting international climate cooperation and efforts to reduce carbon emissions. This move symbolizes his 'America First' approach, which believes that the Paris Agreement harms America's economic and trade interests while providing

unfair benefits to other countries. The Trump administration's policy focuses on increasing domestic energy production, ignoring the threats of climate change.

Declaring a national energy emergency is a symbolic step allowing the government to seize private land and resources. Its purpose is to bring rapid change to the energy sector, particularly in fossil fuels. This signals that Trump is prioritizing domestic production over property rights and environmental protection.

Ending Biden's electric vehicle policies is part of Trump's fossil fuel dependence agenda. While the

Biden administration promoted electric vehicles and renewable energy to combat climate change, Trump's policy focuses on traditional energy sources. Trump believes that promoting electric vehicles would weaken America's traditional energy sector, whereas the fossil fuel industry supports American jobs and the economy.

Accelerating fossil fuel extraction in Alaska and reinstating leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge reflects Trump's priorities for environmental conservation. The Arctic, a potential source of fossil fuels, is seen by the Trump administration as an economic opportunity. This move has raised concerns among environmental groups, who believe it could harm the natural environment and indigenous communities in the region.

Dismantling regulations and reinstating old hunting laws in states like Alaska prioritize more traditional land-use freedoms. The Trump administration believes that state governments can better manage their resources and should not be restricted by federal laws and regulations. This policy seeks to maintain traditional practices like hunting and fishing, which are important economic and cultural activities for many rural communities.

Restricting the development of wind energy and making the Outer Continental Shelf ineligible for wind energy leases reflects restrictions on renewable energy sources. This policy strengthens Trump's fossil fuel-centered approach, despite climate scientists and environmental organizations repeatedly calling it a necessary step to combat the climate crisis.

In summary, Trump's climate and energy policies focus on preserving America's traditional energy resources and industries, while minimizing international climate cooperation and environmental protection efforts. These policies are aimed at boosting the American economy and increasing energy independence, but their long-

term environmental and global consequences could be significant.

Transgender and Civil Rights

A deep analysis of the policies declared by the Trump administration reflects the ideological direction and administrative priorities. Firstly, it is evident that the decision to dismantle Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs is an attempt to halt the progressive changes that have been occurring in society. The order to remove 'Chief Diversity Officers' and 'Equality Action Plans' from government departments and agencies signals that the Trump administration favors a homogeneous, traditional framework that will adopt a more conservative approach, focusing on collective identity rather than individual differences.

A 60-day deadline for policies and contractors associated with DEI shows the administration's urgency. Moreover, the cancellation of Biden's directives on racial, ethnic, and LGBTQ rights

sends a clear message that the Trump administration emphasizes traditional values and structures, particularly on issues of gender and gender identity. This represents a major setback for the LGBTQ community, which had benefited from many rights and inclusive policies during the Biden administration.

Withdrawing from the Paris Climate Agreement is the Trump administration's first major move to undermine international climate cooperation and efforts to reduce carbon emissions.

Additionally, the recognition of only two genders in government documents and the rejection of the concept of 'gender identity' underscores the administration's stance that it views gender as biologically and traditionally defined. This will also impact schools and prisons, where inclusive provisions for transgender people will be removed.

Federal Employees and Government Structure

An analysis of this policy proposal shows the Trump administration's focus on government structure and federal employees. The most prominent aspect is the establishment of a 'Government Efficiency Department,' which will be led by Elon Musk. Under

Musk's leadership, this department aims to cut federal programs and spending, demonstrating the administration's priority to reduce expenditures and improve government efficiency.

Each agency head will be required to form a 'DOGE Team,' which will work with Musk. This centralized approach seeks to inspire various government agencies toward private sector efficiency and performance. The restriction on federal hiring, with certain exceptions, is part of the effort to limit the number of federal employees and cut government spending. However, this restriction will not apply to crucial areas such as border security, immigration, and military services, ensuring the protection of national security and interests.

The restriction on federal regulations, particularly in agencies where Trump-appointed officials are not present, is an attempt to further control the administration's priorities and approach.

Additionally, the directive for all federal employees to return to full-time work and the review of Senior Executive Service (SES) officials is a step towards more transparent control by the administration. Under this policy, SES officials must remain loyal to the president's policies, and failure to do so could result in dismissal.

Moreover, prioritizing 'dedication to the Constitution' in federal appointments reflects the administration's belief that those working in government should be committed to American ideals.

In summary, this policy approach centers on government efficiency, control, and national security, while signaling changes in traditional hiring and structures.

Healthcare

The Trump administration's healthcare policy analysis reveals several key aspects that diverge from Biden's priorities. Trump's plan focuses on reversing Biden's directives aimed at simplifying Medicaid enrollment, guaranteeing insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act, and efforts to reduce drug costs. Biden's policies were



centered on making healthcare more accessible and reducing medical expenses.

However, Trump's proposal does not eliminate critical policies such as Biden's \$35 monthly cap on insulin or the annual \$2,000 out-of-pocket limit for Medicare prescription drugs. These policies are part of laws passed by Congress and cannot be overturned by the Trump administration, indicating that some of Biden's significant healthcare policies will remain in place.

Additionally, Trump's policy focuses on reversing many of Biden's orders and directives related to COVID-19. This measure aims to undo the strict regulations implemented by Biden during the pandemic, which had a significant impact on social and economic life. This step signals a move towards a more normal state, where the COVID-19 guidelines will be relaxed in favor of a more flexible approach.

Trump administration policies point in the direction of a freer market and less government intervention, limiting Biden's reforms in healthcare. However, with some major drug price controls and Medicare-related policies unlikely to change, it is also clear that not all major changes are possible immediately.

Thus, Trump's policies in healthcare signal a shift toward a free market with less government intervention, while also acknowledging that some major changes will not be immediately possible due to the constraints of existing laws.

Nationalism and Symbolism

Donald Trump's emphasis on nationalism is clearly visible in his policies and symbolic decisions. One example of this is his decision to restore the name of Mount McKinley in Alaska, which honors America's 25th President, William McKinley. Former President Obama had renamed the mountain Denali, which was historically the name given by indigenous tribes. Trump's decision behind this was to recognize America's national pride and its historical leaders. However, his order did not change the name of Denali National Park and Preserve, indicating respect for the historical heritage of local tribes.

Additionally, Trump demanded new architectural

standards for federal buildings to preserve and honor America's classical and traditional architectural heritage. His intention behind this order was for federal buildings to reflect American cultural heritage and beautify public spaces. This is another symbolic step of Trump's nationalist ideology, highlighting his desire to preserve America's regional and traditional heritage.

Death Penalty and Crime Policy

Trump's approach is clearly biased in favor of law and order. His directives ordered the Attorney General to review whether the 37 federal inmates, whose death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment by Biden, could be prosecuted again for capital crimes in state courts. Additionally, he directed that "all necessary and legal measures" be taken to ensure the availability of suitable drugs for lethal injections.

A significant aspect of Trump's policy was his order to overturn Supreme Court rulings that limited the use of the death penalty in state and federal territories. He also encouraged state and district attorneys to seek the death penalty in all possible cases. This reflects his tough stance on law and order and supports his stringent policies on crime.

Capital Riot and 2020 Election

Trump's decisions after the Capitol riots clearly reflect his political ideology and commitment to his supporters. He announced the commutation of sentences for hundreds of people convicted for the January 6, 2021, Capitol attacks and granted them full pardons. His justification was that the attacks were a result of electoral fraud against him, which he described as the "weaponization of the federal government."

He directed the Attorney General and other officials to review the investigations and enforcement actions taken during Biden's tenure to ensure that no unjust actions were taken against his supporters. Additionally, he ordered an investigation into the U.S. government's behavior with social media platforms, which Trump characterized as censorship efforts. This investigation also directed for "appropriate corrective actions" to be recommended.

Trump revoked the security clearances of 50 individuals who had cooperated with Biden's 2020 campaign on the Hunter Biden laptop case. This decision was made by accusing intelligence officials of allegedly trying to influence the election. Trump ordered the Director of National Intelligence and the CIA Director to present a report within 90 days recommending disciplinary actions.

Conclusion

Donald Trump's policies are based on nationalism, crime control, and controversies surrounding the 2020 election. He restored the name of Mount McKinley and emphasized the preservation of federal building architectural standards with the aim of honoring American heritage and traditions. He also sought to reintroduce the death penalty and promoted tough policies on law and order. Regarding the Capitol riots and the 2020 election, Trump sought to protect his supporters and called for a review of Biden administration policies. These decisions clearly reflect Trump's nationalist stance and tough approach to law and order.





★★★★★
TRUMP 2.0
AMERICA FIRST
★★★
OR
THE PATH OF
CONTINUITY?
★★★★★



SRIRAJESH

In this article, we will compare the foreign policies of Trump and Biden and analyze what changes and continuities we might witness during Trump’s second term.



On January 20, 2025, U.S. President Donald Trump returned to power. Speculation is rife about the direction of his new foreign policy across the globe. While his predecessor, Joe Biden, emphasized democracy and global cooperation, Trump prioritized the "America First" policy. There is a clear distinction between the two leaders' approaches, yet some areas of continuity remain. Even though each president brings their personal perspective and style, this continuity largely stems from the geographical, economic, and political realities of the United States. Regardless of who is president, the U.S. follows a steady path to protect its national interests and values.

Key Differences in Trump and Biden's Foreign Policies:

During Biden's tenure, the U.S. supported Ukraine, vowed to defend Taiwan, focused on climate change, and promoted democratic values. He also prioritized international alliances and global coalitions against China. His administration ensured that the U.S. retained its global leadership, rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement.

In contrast, Trump had several notable differences in his approach. He questioned support for Ukraine, hesitated on the Taiwan issue, dismissed the threat of climate change, and showed less interest in promoting human rights and democracy. Trump criticized U.S. allies for not contributing enough to defense spending and took a tough stance against China. His belief was that the U.S. should prioritize its interests first and ensure that any global cooperation brings tangible benefits to America.

Continuity Between Trump and Biden's Foreign Policies:

Despite significant differences in their foreign policy approaches, there are areas of continuity. For instance, Biden recognized China and Russia as America's top global competitors, which was a key part of Trump's policy. Additionally, Biden maintained the tariffs and tech controls imposed on China during Trump's administration. Biden also adhered to the agreement made by Trump for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan and provided lethal aid to Ukraine, as Trump had done.

Moreover, Biden continued the Abraham Accords, a significant diplomatic success of the Trump administration. He sought to strengthen U.S. relations with Saudi Arabia, an issue that had been important during Trump's tenure. Thus, while there may be differences in style between Biden and Trump, continuity in core policy areas can still be observed.

Potential Changes in Trump's Second Term:

In Trump's second term, we may witness some important changes. Firstly, relations with U.S. allies may take a harsher tone. In his first term, Trump claimed that many countries had benefited from U.S. security for free, and he aimed to change this. Additionally, his focus has always been on trade deficits and economic competition, particularly with China. This policy might become even stricter during his second term.

Regarding China, the Trump administration is likely to view it as a major challenge to U.S. economic and security interests. To counter China's growing influence in the Indo-Pacific region, Trump may work on strengthening alliances with U.S. partners like India, Japan, and Australia. An example of this would be defense agreements like Quad and AUKUS, initiated during Trump's time and furthered by the Biden administration.

Differences and Similarities in Style:

The stylistic difference between Trump and Biden's foreign policies is evident. Trump is seen as a leader who makes unilateral decisions with less dialogue with allied nations, whereas Biden emphasized consultation and communication with partners.



Trump often clarified his policies via Twitter and social media, while Biden adopted more traditional diplomatic methods. Nonetheless, the Biden administration has also made unilateral decisions in several instances, such as imposing export controls on Chinese tech companies.

The Stability of Foreign Policy:

Despite changes in administrations, certain areas of foreign policy remain consistent. For example, President Obama criticized George Bush's "war on terror," but he carried out military actions in more countries than Bush. Similarly, Donald Trump criticized NAFTA and the U.S.-Korea Free Trade Agreement during his campaign, but as president, he signed revised versions of these deals. This demonstrates that even though presidential candidates promise policy changes during their campaigns, many areas remain consistent regardless of who occupies the White House.

Stable American Interests:

Several factors in American foreign policy remain stable over time, such as preventing a hostile power from dominating Eurasia, protecting maritime freedom (which is crucial for trade), maintaining the stability of energy supplies from the Middle East, and supporting Israel. These stable interests result in less variability in American policy, which remains more or less consistent under every president.

Regular American Intervention:

There is continuity in several areas of American foreign policy. For example, the policy of bringing



political change in Cuba has been ongoing since President Eisenhower. The policy of encouraging NATO countries to spend more on defense has continued since President Kennedy. Similarly, the U.S. has used military force to protect its interests in the Middle East, a practice that began under President Jimmy Carter and continues to this day. Additionally, negotiations with North Korea, the Israel-Palestinian peace process, and missile defense plans have all remained consistent across American administrations.

Role of Congress:

The U.S. Congress plays a crucial role in maintaining stability in foreign policy. For instance, after the U.S. recognized Beijing over Taiwan, Congress passed the Taiwan Relations Act, ensuring support for Taiwan. Similarly, when President Carter planned

to withdraw U.S. forces from South Korea in 1977, Congress intervened. Likewise, when Trump showed warmth towards Russia, Congress enforced Obama-era executive orders in legal form.

Continuity in International Relations:

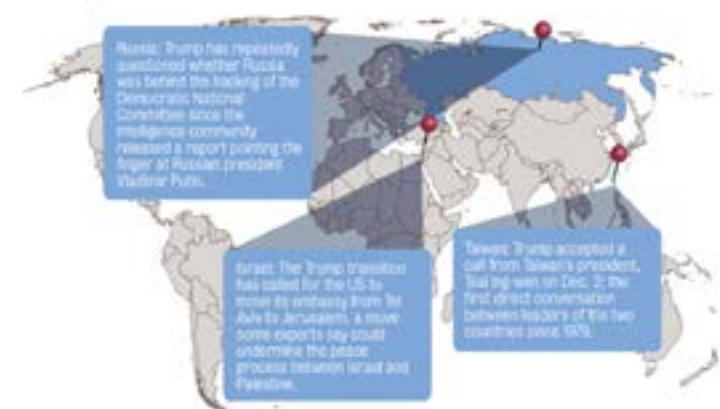
The framework of American foreign policy ensures that key foreign alliances are always maintained. For example, despite different approaches under various administrations, U.S. relations with Israel, Saudi Arabia, and China have remained intact. Whether it was Biden or Trump, the U.S. has always viewed China as a global challenge and maintained its strategic ties with Saudi Arabia.

Impact of Presidential Personality on Foreign Policy:

The article also highlights that the president's

TRUMP'S FOREIGN POLICY

Even before Donald Trump takes the oath of office, he has caused a stir in the international relation community with some of his actions. Here are a few that caused the most attention.



Sources: New York Times, Graphic reporting by Ryan Jones, national and higher education news editor; Graphics by Maggie Elie, Graphics contributor



personality and leadership style impact foreign policy. For example, while there may have been differences in the foreign policies of Obama and Trump, the core policies they adopted weren't vastly different. Both Trump and Biden emphasized the power of personal relationships, although their approaches were different. Trump utilized social media, while Biden followed more traditional diplomatic methods.

Limits to Policy Change:

No matter who the president is, merely words and threats aren't enough to bring about fundamental

changes in American foreign policy. For example, rather than withdrawing from NATO, a president may only signal that they won't defend an allied country if it were attacked. This is a way of undermining policy, challenging international stability but not entirely changing it. Similarly, if a president is dissatisfied with Japan, they may pressure the U.S. military presence there.


Regional Priorities:

Both Obama and Biden prioritized the Indo-Pacific region in American foreign policy, and the Trump administration could also include this region in its foreign policy agenda. However, these regional priorities come with challenges, such as dealing with the growing influence of China and Russia.

Policy of Avoiding Conflict:

Lastly, the foreign policy sentiment remains that U.S. administrations try to avoid military conflicts. Just as Biden tried to avoid military conflict in Russia, Afghanistan, and the Middle East, Trump also attempted to avoid such conflicts in his strategy.

Donald Trump's second term could mark a significant turning point in American foreign policy under his 'America First' policy. While Biden focused on global cooperation, democracy, and climate change, Trump's focus will primarily be on America's economic and security interests. Though their approaches may differ, continuity can be observed in some areas. It will be interesting to see how global diplomacy shifts during Trump's second term and what new direction his leadership sets for the U.S. and the rest of the world.



TRUMP 2.0

Economic Growth Through Clean Energy Is Trump Ready?

The widespread wildfires in Los Angeles are yet another horrific example of the rapidly growing and deadly impacts of climate change. Those who deny climate change are misguided and could cause immense environmental damage, especially if they hold powerful positions, like Trump, who could hinder efforts to prevent or mitigate the damages caused by climate change. Trump, who is an advocate for economic growth, should reconsider the effects of climate change and see how addressing it could create vast economic growth opportunities by generating new businesses and millions of jobs in clean energy production.

Climate Change and the Economy



Alon Ben-Meir

As of January 14, 2025, the wildfires in Los Angeles have already claimed 25 lives (17 in the Eaton fire and 8 in the Palisades fire) and are projected to cause damages amounting to \$250 to \$275 billion. More than 12,000 structures have been destroyed, and it is now considered one of the largest and deadliest wildfires in U.S. history.

In Pacific Palisades alone, California has reported damage or destruction to 5,316 structures. These numbers are expected to rise as the fires continue at the time of writing.

Those who consider climate change a hoax cannot deny the many undeniable facts based on decades of research and clear evidence, including the melting of ice sheets and glaciers, rising sea levels, changes in plant and animal behavior, and a nearly 1°C rise in global temperatures since 1880.

This seemingly small figure is economically significant; a 2017 study found that with every 1°C increase in temperature, the U.S. risks losing 2.3% of its GDP.

However, before we explore the potential for economic growth by developing new industries to address climate change, it is essential to focus on the massive losses and death toll caused by just six devastating events in the past four years, which occurred among many other climate-related disasters in the U.S.

In August 2020, Hurricane Laura was a powerful Category 4 storm that produced storm surges over 15 feet and historic wind speeds of 150 mph, the

strongest since 1856. It caused 42 deaths and \$28.1 billion in damages.

From August to December 2020, massive firestorms in California, Oregon, and Washington resulted in 46 deaths and \$19.9 billion in damages. These fires wiped out several small towns and left millions suffering from poor air quality for months.

In August 2021, Hurricane Ida took 96 lives and caused \$84.6 billion in damages. The storm spanned from Louisiana to New York and was ranked among the top five to seven costliest tropical storms.

In February 2021, a historic cold wave and winter storm that affected most of the U.S. caused 262 deaths and \$27.2 billion in damages, making it the costliest winter storm in history. Texas was the hardest-hit state, accounting for most of the deaths (210).

In September 2024, Category 4 Hurricane Helene hit Florida's Big Bend region with winds over 140 mph. This cyclone caused \$78.7 billion in damages and claimed 219 lives. It produced storm surges of over 15 feet and more than 30 inches of rain, resulting in severe flooding in western North Carolina.

Finally, in October 2024, Hurricane Milton, which rapidly intensified from Category 3 to Category 5, claimed 32 lives and caused nearly \$35 billion in damages. It made landfall in Florida and spawned several tornadoes, further compounding the damage from Helene.

These six climate-related storms, along with the Los Angeles fires, have led to 722 deaths and more than

\$523 billion in damages, along with the untold pain and suffering of thousands who lost loved ones and the hundreds of thousands who were forced into the arduous and expensive process of rebuilding their lives after displacement.

Although fires and storms are natural events and will continue to occur, climate change has intensified their severity and frequency, resulting in a higher death toll and billions spent on rebuilding efforts. Imagine if just half of the \$523 billion in damages from these disasters were invested in the clean energy industry—how many new clean energy businesses could have been created?

The time is long past when those who believe climate change is a hoax must understand that it is real and cannot be slowed or reversed on its own. In the future, climate change-related storms and fires will only increase, bringing with them trillions in costs and thousands of deaths.

Those who deny climate change must also realize that aggressive and sustained action to address it will not harm businesses, particularly in the fossil fuel and gas production sectors, but will do the opposite. It will generate new businesses dedicated to clean energy production, and oil and gas companies can play a key role, for example, by managing renewable energy supply chains, thereby earning even more profit.

The United States has the resources and scientific knowledge needed to build new industries generating clean energy and expand existing ones. At this crucial moment, the incoming Trump administration should collaborate with states to provide federal funding for investments in clean energy industries.

This includes building iron-air batteries for long-term energy storage, producing green hydrogen, developing advanced nuclear technology (expected to play a key role in meeting rising electricity demand), massively expanding solar energy production capacity, boosting all new utility generation capacity, and constructing onshore and offshore wind turbine manufacturing facilities.

Finally, the manufacturing of electric cars and the development of more energy-efficient transportation can significantly reduce carbon emissions.

These efforts aim not only to keep the rise in global average temperature within 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, as outlined in the Paris Agreement, but also to create a dramatic increase in job creation. According to the World Economic Forum's 'Future of Jobs' report, new innovations will generate many job opportunities in clean energy sectors, not only offsetting the job losses caused by limiting the use of fossil fuels and gas but adding 78 million new jobs.

Many Republicans in the House and Senate would support a national initiative to invest hundreds of billions of dollars in clean energy if Trump signals that he will back such legislation, provided there are no new restrictions on the fossil fuel and gas industry.

Given Trump's powerful political influence within the Republican Party and his unpredictable nature, he may change his stance, as he has done many times, and pass such legislation without facing serious opposition. In this context, he could count on the almost unanimous support of the Democrats.

Many would disagree and argue that, given Trump's public stance on climate change, there's no chance he will change his mind. Perhaps that's true. However, they should remember that Trump is not a rigid supporter of Republican ideology. He is not a radical, and he will adopt climate change-related laws if they guarantee economic expansion and the creation of millions of new jobs, which are at the heart of his economic agenda.

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Biden failed, Trump will be a catastrophe



Omar El Akkad

At the beginning of the new year, the announcement was made for the recipients of America's highest civilian honor, the Presidential Medal of Freedom. Among those honored this year was José Andrés, a Spanish-American chef and humanitarian. His organization, World Central Kitchen, has been performing life-saving work globally, most recently gaining attention for its efforts in Gaza. Reflecting on his achievements, Mr. Andrés recalled what then-Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan told him when he came to America in 1993: "If you love America, America will always love you back." He attended a ceremony at the White House, where several prominent figures were present, and President Joe Biden showered him with praise for his exemplary work and accomplishments.

This moment encapsulated the current divisive era in America: the President of the United States was awarding a medal to a man whose organization had lost staff in a massacre, supported and funded by the very President himself. All around, people were smiling, as if the dead were too far away to spoil the moment.

On January 20, Biden's controversial and dismal presidency came to an end, and he was replaced in the White House by a man who might now be known as the worst president in history. This marks the beginning of another chapter where America spirals from instability to madness.

Concerns and despair over Trump's presidency

Last time, in 2016, people erupted in anger.



There were protests across the nation, filled with disbelief and outrage that someone like Trump could not only run a flashy campaign but also win the presidency. However, this time, it's hard to say, "This is not our America." Trump's first victory was explained away by terms like "economic anxiety"

and "neglected Republican voters," but now, it's just a sad acceptance. Those who were once ready to take to the streets are now building mutual aid networks, knowing that many of the country's institutions will be weakened, rendered ineffective, or disappear altogether.

Now, almost every check on Trump's power — be it the prospect of re-election, impeachment, or criminal conviction — has vanished. This will be a government free from any moral restraints, institutional limitations, or accountability.

Uncertainty surrounding the latest administration

Even before Trump's term began, its defining feature had already emerged: a constant flow of outrageous statements, scandals, and absurdities.

For the next four years, we will face this person's delusions. Today, it's the deportation of refugees and the rollback of climate regulations; tomorrow, it could be a threat to invade Canada. The ultimate goal is to exhaust the people, so they say, "I'm fed up, as long as my paycheck arrives on time and my Amazon packages get delivered, I don't care what these leaders are doing."

Biden's Legacy Disintegrates

It will take a long time to fully assess this Democratic administration. But even now, it's clear that there is a significant gap between Biden's policy and actions. Emergency speeches on climate change, yet continued reliance on fossil fuels; talks of peace, but ongoing funding of wars.

For the Democratic Party, this electoral defeat may not matter as much as it seems. The party's top leaders know that Trump's administration will show the most cruelty against the weakest and most vulnerable.

Climate Change and Inequality

In January, large parts of Los Angeles burned down. The destruction was incredible, or maybe it's wrong to say that—it was deeply imaginable. Four years ago, devastating fires on the West Coast wiped out the state of Oregon. Even today, there are empty plots next to new homes, where only chimneys and pipes remain.

Many people think climate change will bring widespread equality, but that's not the case for now. The areas of Los Angeles will be rebuilt, because this is the richest country in history. Those with resources will rebuild their beachfront homes, while the rest will be forced to go elsewhere.

It's crucial that we document the cruelty to come so that we don't become desensitized to it.

Omar El Akkad is the author of the forthcoming book One Day, Everyone Will Have Always Been Against This.

"Courtesy of The Globe and Mail."

Democrats have a new weapon to take on Trump: federalism



Renée Loth

President Trump has disrupted the traditional order of American politics to such an extent that it sometimes feels like the guiding stars we once relied on for political direction have fallen from the sky. In this topsy-turvy world, the ideas and organizations once deemed wholly negative have now become useful. One such example: Democrats and progressive legal scholars are revisiting federalism, the political theory which holds that powers not explicitly granted to the federal government are retained by the states.

Most Republicans have followed federalism and its promise of decentralized government; in fact, the Federalist Society played a crucial role in shaping the judiciary during Trump's first term. Even Trump — who wasn't one for relinquishing power — used federalism to avoid responsibility when he decided to make abortion illegal. ("We sent it back to the states, and now... a lot of good things are happening," he said in a 2024 campaign video.)

For decades, federalism had been a curse for liberals, as "states' rights" were used to justify racial discrimination, block universal healthcare or same-sex marriage, and even, just a few years ago, reject vaccination or quarantine orders during the COVID-19 pandemic. But when Washington itself becomes hostile to civil rights and liberties, federalism could serve as a way to curb excessive governmental power. Yale Law School's Dean Heather Gerken argued, "Federalism has no political color. It can be a source of progressive resistance."

It's a sweet irony that a principle once used to slow



progressive change in America has now become a tool in the hands of progressive leaders, who are using it to thwart Trump's agenda. In California, Governor Gavin Newsom has proposed a \$50 million legislative package to make the state's

vast and wealthy population "Trump-proof," with a primary focus on protecting the state's immigrants from deportation — a promise Trump made in his inaugural speech to carry out "like never before." In Illinois, Governor J.B. Pritzker has vowed to maintain the state's "sanctuary" status, which prevents most local law enforcement from cooperating with federal immigration officials. "If you come for my people, you come through me," Pritzker warned — a pledge that will soon be put to the test.

After the Supreme Court overturned Roe v. Wade, Massachusetts took steps to protect reproductive

areas Trump has targeted, such as LGBTQ rights and gun violence protection.

Like during Trump's first term, Democratic states are preparing lawsuits to block or at least delay his sweeping orders. Trump's habit of steamrolling states and even Congress is already pointing toward a constitutional crisis. Just one day after his inauguration, 18 attorneys general filed a lawsuit in Massachusetts to block Trump's efforts to revoke citizenship for U.S.-born children of immigrants — a guarantee under the 14th Amendment. Campbell is leading this lawsuit and recently told the Globe, "We have the tools to fight any threat, and we are not afraid to use them."

But this is not just about opposing Trump's agenda. Blue states under the banner of federalism can also promote positive policies: raising the minimum wage, progressive tax reform, protection for a free press, environmental standards, and the legalization of drugs. As Justice Louis Brandeis wrote nearly a century ago, the federal system allows "bold states" to experiment with "new social and economic ideas."

In fact, a U.S. Supreme Court case, initially lamented by liberals, may now help strengthen progressive state actions. In June, the Court overturned the so-called Chevron decision, which had directed courts since the 1980s to side with federal agencies when Congress failed to provide clear guidance (for instance, when the Environmental Protection Agency tries to enforce environmental regulations). The June decision's reasoning—that the federal government cannot "order" states to enforce vague federal rules—diminishes the power of the executive branch, i.e., Trump.

Constitutional experts often note that federalism can be ineffective and lead to a divided government. But in these strange times, perhaps it is time to embrace division and use it in states to protect public health, civil rights, the environment, and democracy, where these treasures are still valued.

This article is a curated and summarized version of Renée Loth's original article "Democrats have a new tool to fight Trump: federalism."



Chandra Prakash Salve



TRUMP 2.0

Role of the Quad

A photo session after the first Quad Foreign Ministers' meeting of the Trump Administration 2.0 featuring Japan's Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and Australia's Foreign Minister Penny Wong.

In international politics, power, security, and diplomatic strategies evolve over time. The changes in the relationship between India and the U.S. over the past few years have been significantly influenced by decisions taken by the Trump administration. In particular, analyzing the Quad initiative involving India, Australia, Japan, and the U.S. becomes crucial.

When U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio held his first meeting under the Trump administration, it highlighted several aspects that made it clear that the Trump administration's approach to the Quad, considering China's growing power and regional security, was extremely important. In the joint statement released after this meeting, the four

countries signaled their unity on issues like maritime security, international law, and regional development, while opposing China's expansionist policies.

The Purpose and Development of the Quad

The Quad was formed in 2007 when India, Japan, Australia, and the U.S. came together to provide relief efforts in the Indian Ocean after the 2004 earthquake and tsunami. Since then, the group has evolved into a multilateral platform where cooperation on various global issues, such as emergency aid, climate change, and maritime security, has been emphasized. However, regional security, particularly China's growing military and economic strength, has become a significant part of this initiative.

India's Foreign Minister S. Jaishankar has expressed his clear opinion about the Quad. He believes that for India, collaborating in the Quad is important as it goes beyond military security, fostering economic and environmental cooperation as well. He has repeatedly stated that India's interest lies in becoming not only a powerful military force but also a prominent global partner.

India and U.S. Cooperation in the Context of China

The purpose of the Quad is to counter China's growing aggression, particularly in strategic areas like the South China Sea and Taiwan. During the Trump administration, the U.S. viewed India as an essential partner. S. Jaishankar, expressing his views, stated that India should form strategic partnerships with global powers to curb China's rising influence.

Trump was very clear about his tough stance on China, referring to it as an "official adversary" and a "threat." U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio, who had always held an aggressive stance towards China, furthered Trump's approach by portraying China as a serious threat. He made several harsh statements

regarding China's human rights violations and its territorial claims.

India too has opposed China's expansionist policies, especially concerning border disputes. Tensions along the India-China border and China's military cooperation with Pakistan have been a concern for India. In this context, India-U.S. cooperation becomes vital, especially when both countries need to protect their respective national interests.

'America First' Policy and India

Under Trump's 'America First' policy, the primary objective of U.S. foreign policy was to protect American national interests. This policy aimed at increasing U.S. influence abroad but also led to dissatisfaction in relationships with several countries. For India, this was a challenge, as there were imbalances in trade relations with the U.S., and the Trump administration had repeatedly threatened to raise tariffs.



However, S. Jaishankar tried to manage this situation diplomatically. He stated that India would protect its interests but would continue diplomatic discussions with the U.S. He also mentioned that it was crucial for India to not only enhance its relations with the U.S. but also maintain its independent policy.

India, while understanding the U.S. 'America First' approach, also worked to boost its cooperation with the U.S. both economically and strategically. The Indian Foreign Minister clarified that India's goal was not just to agree with the U.S. perspective on China but also to present India's viewpoint on global issues.

Quad and International Security

The Quad was formed to counter China's growing influence. In a joint statement, the four member countries expressed opposition to any unilateral

actions that attempt to forcibly change the regional status quo. This statement was a clear message against China's expansionist policies.

China has repeatedly accused the Quad of attempting to create an "Asian NATO," which is a misunderstanding. The Quad is not a military alliance but a platform to enhance diplomatic and strategic cooperation between countries. S. Jaishankar has expressed that the goal of the Quad for India is to promote peace and security, not escalate military conflicts.

The growing diplomatic relations between India and the U.S., especially under the Trump administration, have become significant in the context of the Quad and South Asia. It is necessary to shed light not only on India-U.S. relations but also on issues concerning Pakistan and Bangladesh, which hold central positions in South Asia's security, economic, and diplomatic dynamics.

Quad and the Context of Pakistan-Bangladesh

Although the primary objective of security and strategic cooperation under the Quad is to challenge China, its impact also extends to countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh, which are significant in the political and security context of South Asia. Pakistan's position has always been contentious from the perspective of the Quad. As a close ally of China, Pakistan has repeatedly accused the Quad of attempting to encircle China and create a negative diplomatic atmosphere against it. For Pakistan, this poses a challenge to its security and regional power, as the military and strategic strategies of the Quad directly conflict with Pakistan's security policies.

Relations between Pakistan and the United States have never been straightforward. During the previous Trump administration, pressure was applied on Pakistan, especially when the U.S. urged Pakistan to take action against terrorists. The growing cooperation between the U.S. and India worried Pakistan, as their relationship challenges the alliance between China and Pakistan.

Bangladesh, which is known as a major neighbor and

friendly nation of India, has seen its friendly relations with India deteriorate over the past six months, creating a tense situation. The geographical location of Bangladesh and the Islamic extremist activities within the country are not only affecting its minority Hindus, Buddhists, and Christians, but also its relations with India. As a result, the economic development processes, which were being facilitated by cooperation with India, the U.S., Australia, and Japan, have been deeply affected. Bangladesh has established strategic ties with China through close trade and infrastructure projects, such as Chinese investments in Bangladesh and inclusion in the Belt and Road Initiative. This contradicts India's interests. Bangladesh has thus far remained neutral toward the Quad, but the growing relationships with India and the U.S. could influence Bangladesh's diplomatic policies. For Bangladesh, maintaining relations with China holds significance, but its relations with India and the U.S. are equally important for its internal and external security, as well as its economic outlook. Pressure will be mounted on Bangladesh for the restoration of a democratic government, with the interim government's chief advisor, Mohammad Yunus, potentially facing difficulties due to the strained relations between him and Trump.

U.S. and India's Policy toward Pakistan

The approach of both India and the U.S. toward Pakistan has been quite complex. India has consistently taken an aggressive stance on issues like terrorism and border security, while the U.S. has viewed Pakistan as a strategic partner. Under the Trump administration, the U.S. criticized Pakistan for being a haven for terrorists and expected concrete action against Pakistani terrorist organizations. Trump questioned security and economic cooperation with Pakistan, leading to a decline in U.S. support for Pakistan.

India took advantage of this situation to strengthen its ties with the U.S. and isolate Pakistan on international platforms. India's diplomacy made it clear that to counter any regional challenges posed by Pakistan, it would need U.S. assistance.

After Donald Trump took office for a second term as president in 2025, significant changes were seen in India-U.S. relations. Trump's 'America First' policy gave a new direction to these relations, impacting issues such as trade, energy, immigration, and regional security between the two countries. We will discuss these issues in detail and analyze how India-U.S. relations evolved under Trump's administration.

Gagan Batra

TRUMP 2.0

A New Direction in Indo-U.S. Relations

Under Trump's administration, India took steps to simplify market access for U.S. companies. The main reasons for this change included addressing trade imbalances and avoiding the risks of 'competitive tariffs'. Trump had raised the issue of trade imbalance and supported the reduction of tariffs on goods imported from the U.S. India specifically planned to reduce import duties on agricultural products, high-quality medical equipment, and luxury motorcycles, making it easier for U.S. companies to enter the Indian market. For example, Trump engaged with motorcycle manufacturers and suggested reducing import duties on luxury products in India. This led to an improvement in trade exchanges between the two countries.

This step was also beneficial for India as it increased the supply of U.S. products and reduced trade imbalances. However, despite these trade reforms, imbalances remained in some areas. Trump's 'America First' policy prioritized U.S. interests, and although tariffs were reduced in many sectors, reducing the U.S. trade deficit remained a priority.

Energy Sector Cooperation

Trump's decision to maximize energy production opened the door for new partnerships between India and the U.S. in the energy sector. Under Trump's administration, India planned to



increase its purchase of American oil and gas. With the increase in energy production in the U.S., India received a stable supply of American energy products, which proved helpful in meeting India's energy needs.

Most of India's energy needs are met through imports, and in this context, the increasing supply of U.S. energy products benefited India. Under Trump's administration, India expanded opportunities to import more crude oil and gas from the U.S. Additionally, India strengthened its energy infrastructure, opening new avenues for investment by U.S. companies.

As a result of this cooperation, energy trade grew, and India gained new guidance on its energy security. This cooperation in the energy sector proved significant under the Trump administration, as it boosted trade exchanges between the two countries.

Immigration and H-1B Visas

Immigration and visa policies also had a special relationship between Trump's administration and India. Trump adopted strict policies to curb illegal immigration to the U.S., and India increased cooperation with the Trump administration, especially in identifying and deporting Indian nationals illegally residing in the U.S.

The H-1B visa, which was important for Indian IT professionals, also underwent several changes under Trump's administration. Under Trump's approach, this visa became more challenging for Indian IT professionals, as Trump planned to tighten these visa programs. However, India clarified its stance and regularly negotiated on visa policies, aiming for improvements in

the visa process, although these negotiations continued for a long time between the two countries.

Joint Strategy Against China

Trump's administration devised a strong strategy in partnership with India to challenge China's growing influence. To counter China's aggression, India and the U.S. promoted cooperation among the Quad countries. Marco Rubio held meetings with the foreign ministers of India, Japan, and Australia to discuss measures to curb China's growing influence. Cooperation among the Quad countries brought a new depth to India-U.S. relations. Trump encouraged security cooperation among the Quad countries, making it crucial for India to enhance strategic cooperation against China. Shared strategic interests between the two countries in challenging China's regional dominance motivated them to work together. This partnership could prove vital for regional security in the future, particularly in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region.

Under Trump's administration, significant progress was made in India-U.S. relations on issues like trade, energy, immigration, and regional security. Despite Trump's 'America First' policy, India and the U.S. increased their cooperation by understanding each other's national interests. The personal relationships between the leaders of both countries and their shared strategic interests further strengthened these ties. While challenges remained in some areas, such as H-1B visas and trade imbalances, overall, the relations between India and the U.S. saw positive changes.



TRUMP 2.0

Broken Hopes of Afghan Refugees

Cult Current Bureau

Due to decades of ongoing conflict in Afghanistan and the increasing influence of the Taliban, many Afghans were forced to flee their country. Many of them submitted their applications in the hope of resettlement in the United States and waited for years for the process to complete. However, when the Trump administration unexpectedly halted the visa process, these refugees' hopes were shattered. This decision has created an atmosphere of uncertainty and despair in the lives of many Afghan refugees temporarily residing in Pakistan.

Afghan students studying at an English school in Islamabad were stunned upon hearing the news that their American resettlement process had been halted. Previously enthusiastic and hopeful, these students are now submerged in disappointment and deep depression. Syed Hasib Ullah, a 20-year-old teacher who had also applied for resettlement in the U.S., says, "This was a terrifying moment for us. We had been waiting for three years, and now there is no hope left." These students and teachers had made several plans for their future, which are now hanging in the balance.

Challenges for Refugees

A student at an English school in Islamabad, who had hoped to study in the U.S., broke down in tears upon hearing the news. Due to Taliban rule in Afghanistan, she had to leave her education incomplete, and now with the stoppage of the U.S. visa process, her hopes for higher education are also fading. For these refugees in Pakistan, there is no legitimate way to work or pursue formal education, and the U.S. resettlement was their only hope.

Disappointment for Hundreds of Afghans

Between 10,000 and 15,000 Afghan refugees are awaiting Special Immigrant Visas (SIV) or refugee resettlement in Pakistan. Many of these people came here to escape the atrocities of the Taliban, but now they too feel helpless about their safety and future. This crisis worsened in 2023 when Pakistan expelled Afghans, stating its inability to accommodate them due to economic and security issues. Among these refugees are individuals who have worked significantly for the U.S., such as family members of American military personnel and development workers involved in U.S. projects.

Feeling of Betrayal

Fifty-seven-year-old Fatima, who has worked for decades on women's rights and development, now feels betrayed due to the sudden halt in the U.S. visa process. She says, "You supported us at that time and pushed us forward, so we worked with you. Now you are leaving us behind at a time when we need you the most."



Fatima is particularly concerned about her 15-year-old daughter's education, who has been out of school for several years. Additionally, she hopes her 22-year-old daughter can complete her engineering studies.

Impact of the Message

Trump's order has not only deeply wounded the morale of the refugees but has also raised questions about U.S. policies. Despite spending billions of dollars on military interventions and development projects in Afghanistan, there is now an inability to assist those who worked with American forces and defended their interests. Hasib Ullah said, "We helped you, and now we expected help from you."

Human Rights and Ethical Responsibilities

This tragedy of Afghan refugees brings back questions about human rights and ethical responsibilities in global politics. Afghan refugees living in Pakistan are not only grappling with an economic crisis but are now losing their hopes for a secure future. The safety and resettlement assurances they were given under U.S. policies have now become an unfulfilled dream for them.

Iran-Russia's New Partnership

Global Influence and Potential Outcomes

The emerging new partnership between Iran and Russia signals a significant shift in the global geopolitical landscape. The growing cooperation between these two nations is not only raising concerns among Western powers but could also have far-reaching implications for global trade, energy security, and regional stability. The confirmation of the "Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Agreement" during Iranian President Masoud Pejashkian's visit to Moscow on January 17 will further strengthen this alliance.



Iran's economy is heavily dependent on oil exports, which become unstable due to fluctuations in global oil prices. Additionally, Iran is facing an inflation rate of around 35%, which hinders its economic growth.

Despite these challenges, both countries need to carefully navigate their economic and diplomatic policies to prevent current vulnerabilities from worsening.

6. Global Impact and Geopolitical Situation

This partnership could lead to a shift in the global balance of power. The Iran-Russia alliance presents a challenge to Western powers, particularly the United States and the European Union. Despite Western sanctions, both countries have integrated themselves into new trade routes and Asian markets.

Advancements in energy, transportation, and military cooperation under this alliance could redefine security and economic strategies not just in the Middle East but on a global scale.

This partnership challenges the geopolitical realities where Western powers have long held dominance. As Iran and Russia deepen their military and economic cooperation, their position against Western intervention will continue to strengthen.

However, in the future, this alliance will face external challenges, especially in the context of shifting power dynamics between the United States, Russia, and China.

The emerging partnership between Iran and Russia signals significant changes in global politics. A strong alliance in the fields of transportation, energy, and military cooperation will not only counter Western sanctions but also establish a new axis in the global power balance.

Despite the many internal and external challenges facing this partnership, both countries will need to address them. If they can focus on their long-term strategic goals and overcome internal obstacles, this alliance will emerge as a significant player in global geopolitics in the years to come.

This updated version is being republished based on the original article titled "What Will the New Iran-Russia Partnership Mean for the World?" which was published in The Moscow Times.

solidified their positions as regional powers. Iran's supply of advanced military technologies, such as drones, to Russia has not only strengthened both countries militarily but has also been seen as a crucial defensive strategy against Western military interventions.

The increasing utility of the Shahed-136 drones (known in Russia as "Geran-2") in Ukraine has provided Moscow with a low-cost, high-capacity tool to target Ukrainian cities. This technology has the potential to spread to Eastern Europe and other regions.

4. Future Challenges and Obstacles

While this partnership promises deeper cooperation in the future, it also faces several challenges. Internal political differences between Iran and Russia, economic difficulties, and divisions in their geopolitical agendas could disrupt the full potential of this partnership.

In recent years, Russia has made efforts to balance its relationship with Western powers, particularly the United States, which has led to tensions with Iran. For instance, in the 2000s, when Russia supported UN sanctions against Iran, the relationship deteriorated. Additionally, Russia's delays in supplying the S-300 missile defense system also undermined trust between the two countries.

5. Economic Crisis and Future Challenges

Economically, sanctions have impacted the ability of both Russia and Iran to fully exploit their energy reserves.

The main pillars of the Iran-Russia partnership include transportation, energy, defense, and regional security. The cooperation between these two countries is not limited to economic transactions but extends to shared goals of maintaining regional stability and countering Western influence.

1. Transportation Cooperation: The North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC)

A crucial part of this partnership is the North-South Transport Corridor (NSTC), which will facilitate trade between Iran, Russia, and other regional and international partners. This infrastructure project is a strong step against Western sanctions, as it will provide both countries the opportunity to strengthen their trade relations and secure mutual benefits.

This corridor will not only enhance Iran-Russia trade but will also play a vital role in creating access to markets in Europe, Central Asia, and China-India. It will provide both countries the chance to play a significant role in global trade routes, thereby strengthening their political and

economic positions.

2. Energy Cooperation: Independence from Western Markets

Energy cooperation between Iran and Russia forms the backbone of this partnership. Western sanctions have limited the energy industries of both countries, prompting them to seek alternative routes. Russia, which owns the world's largest oil and gas resources, is collaborating with Iran in developing its energy sector. This collaboration includes steps such as exploration, drilling, and infrastructure improvements.

Under the new agreement, several Russian companies will make large investments in Iran's energy sector, upgrading and expanding Iran's energy capabilities. Furthermore, this collaboration becomes even more significant in the context of rising energy demands in Asia.

3. Military Cooperation: Expanding Regional Power

Military cooperation between Iran and Russia has

30 Dead in Maha Kumbh Stampede



A stampede that occurred around 2 a.m. on the day of Mauni Amavasya at the ongoing Maha Kumbh in Prayagraj has led to a major tragedy. Reports indicate that more than 30 people have lost their lives, and many others have been injured. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed his grief over the incident and extended condolences to the families of the deceased. The stampede occurred on Mauni Amavasya, which is one of the holiest days for devotees at the Maha Kumbh. It was estimated that around 100 million people would visit the confluence (Sangam) for a dip on this day. Due to the belief in the significance of taking a holy dip at the Sangam, a large number of devotees gathered at the riverbanks. This year, a special planetary alignment also added to the fervor, causing heightened enthusiasm among the devotees to take a dip at the Sangam. This tragic incident has raised serious questions about the safety and crowd management at the Maha Kumbh. While Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has acknowledged that several people were seriously injured and many lost their lives, the lack of clear and timely information from the administration has increased confusion and concern among the public.

2025

MAHAKUMBH

Divinity of Spirituality in
the Confluence of Culture



Jalaj Srivastava

Located on the sacred land of India, Prayagraj is where the holy rivers Ganga, Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati merge. This place is not merely a geographical confluence but a grand meeting point of spirituality and culture. It is the land that has been the center of meditation for seekers, sages, and saints for millennia. The Kumbh Mela held at this confluence is not just a religious ritual, but a celebration of the entire Indian culture that connects us to the depths of our civilization.

The tradition of Kumbh Mela is ancient, rooted in mythological stories. According to belief, during the churning of the ocean between the gods and demons, when there was a struggle over the pot of nectar, a few drops of nectar fell at four places on Earth—Prayagraj, Haridwar, Ujjain, and Nashik. At each of these places, the Kumbh Mela is held every twelve years. However, the Maha Kumbh of Prayagraj is special because it is not just a twelve-year event but a symbol of a complete cycle that occurs once every 144 years. It is during this time that countless devotees, saints, and yogis gather at the confluence, bathe in the holy waters to purify their souls, and immerse themselves in a spiritual journey.

This year's Maha Kumbh is especially significant, with an expected 450 million devotees. It is not just about numbers but represents the faith that stretches from every corner of India to every corner of the world. Every devotee, whether rich or poor, comes here, takes a dip in the confluence's waters, purifies themselves, and takes a step towards a new life. This is not just a religious occasion; it symbolizes the triumph of unity and humanity. When millions of people gather on the soil of the confluence, they do not merely bathe; they experience the unparalleled spiritual energy that has accumulated on this land for millennia. This confluence at Kumbh is like nectar for humanity, purifying life and guiding the soul towards liberation.

Kalpavas: The Yajna of Penance

During Kumbh, a significant attraction at the confluence is the 'Kalpavas'. It is not just a process of bathing but a complete spiritual discipline. Kalpavas is the time when devotees stay on the banks of the confluence for a month, abandoning the simplicity of daily life to live like ascetics. Waking up in Brahma Muhurat, taking three dips in the holy water, and eating only once a day are all part of the Kalpavas ritual. This ascetic life is not just about external discipline; it is a means of purifying the soul. When a person bathes in the cool waters of the confluence, they not only purify their body but also liberate themselves from internal impurities. Kalpavas is a symbol of spiritual practice that leads us away from materialism and towards the true form of the soul.

The Confluence of Harmony and Unity

Kumbh Mela is not just a religious festival; it is also a symbol of social harmony and cultural unity. There is no discrimination based on caste, religion, or class. Millions of devotees, regardless of their background, bathe together in the sacred waters of the confluence and share a common experience.

This festival symbolizes the vast unity of humanity, teaching us that we all originate from the same source. Every individual who comes here experiences that their purpose is not limited to material achievements but extends to purifying the soul and attaining liberation. The unique nature of Kumbh Mela represents a cultural heritage that has kept Indian society united and bound by love for millennia.

Royal Bathing and Akhadas

The traditional procession of royal bathing and the Akhadas during Kumbh further add to the grandeur of the festival. Large groups of Naga sadhus, ascetics riding on elephants, and saints

adorned in traditional attire and jewelry moving towards the confluence create a scene reminiscent of a divine pilgrimage.

This procession is not just a display but a symbol of spiritual tradition that connects us to the depths of our Sanatan Dharma. The Naga sadhus, with their ascetic practices, participate in the Kumbh, conveying the message that spiritual power and devotion are far more important than any material achievement.

Global Attraction: The International Importance of Maha Kumbh

Today, the Maha Kumbh is no longer just for Indians; it has established its identity on a global scale. Pilgrims and tourists from all over the world come to participate in this unique event. Foreign devotees come not only to experience spirituality but also to deeply study Indian culture and traditions.

In recent years, the attraction of Maha Kumbh has also increased in Islamic countries. People from Pakistan, Qatar, UAE, and Bahrain are showing interest in learning more about Maha Kumbh. This proves that Indian culture and its spiritual heritage have made their mark worldwide.

Dharma Sabha: Awakening of Eternal Power

Maha Kumbh is not only a spiritual event but also shapes the future direction of the nation. The Dharma Sabhas held here bring together social organizations to find solutions to the challenges facing the nation. The Ram Mandir movement also began from one of these Dharma Sabhas at Kumbh, and today it has become a symbol of national pride.

In the Maha Kumbh of 2025, the awakening of Sanatan Dharma's power is taking place. This event is not just about preserving the heritage of the past but also sending a message to be prepared to face the challenges of the future.

The Grand Spiritual Journey

Every devotee who comes to Maha Kumbh becomes part of a unique spiritual journey. After bathing in the confluence, when they return home, they carry not only physical purity but also inner peace and prosperity. The Maha Kumbh is a mirror that acquaints us with the truth and purpose of our lives.

The confluence teaches us that the solution to all the struggles and hardships of life lies in spirituality and faith. This endless festival of Maha Kumbh awakens our consciousness and inspires us to walk the path that leads us to liberation. The final bath of the Maha Kumbh is a symbol of union with the supreme divine, which transcends our temporary bodies.

There is a common perception about politics that self-interest is the greatest religion here. The meaning is clear: in politics, no one is a permanent friend or enemy. There is no room for any kind of sensitivity. Everything depends on the pursuit of self-interest. If your interests align with someone, that person is considered your closest ally. This is why political interference is increasing in every aspect of society today. In such a situation, how can a grand event like the Kumbh remain unaffected? However, since the highest position here is occupied by religious faith, the form of politics in this context is indirect rather than direct. All religious activities here are examined for political gains or losses.

If the entire cabinet of the ruling BJP government in Uttar Pradesh dips in the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna, and the invisible Saraswati River at Prayagraj and holds a cabinet meeting on the banks of the Sangam, the opposition calls it politics. It is possible that the opposition's assumption may not be very defined due to the political moves of both sides. But the way Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed hope of earning around two lakh crore rupees from the Mahakumbh is not just empty rhetoric; it follows a well-thought-out, visionary formula.

Whether it's the Magh Mela, the Ardh Kumbh, the Kumbh, or the Mahakumbh, the responsibility for ensuring their successful completion lies with both the state government and the central government. However, after becoming the Chief Minister, Yogi Adityanath, a staunch practitioner of the Nath sect, has shaped almost all the Kumbh events in Prayagraj in such a way that year after year,



Shakti Prakash Shrivastava

these religious gatherings are becoming examples of divinity and grandeur. Whether it's the 2019 Kumbh or the 2025 Mahakumbh, both have set records for better organization. This event, which has been held for centuries, has now become a symbol of India's cultural, political, and social awakening. It can also be considered the result of political awakening that once, under limited resources, people would stay in simple tents under the open sky on the banks of the Ganga and Yamuna, singing devotional hymns. Today, however, foreigners are spending lakhs of rupees daily on tent stays and helicopter rides, contributing to foreign capital in the country. This is, in some way, the result of the foresight of the Gorakhnath Peethadhishwar and the head of the state, Mahant Yogi Adityanath, who has traversed from a saintly life to a political one. It might even be considered part of his politics. Regardless of how it's perceived, today, when devotees arrive at the Mahakumbh, they invariably say, "Jai Ho Yogi." The reason for this is quite straightforward. According to the evidence found about this Kumbh, which has been organized since ancient times, the Chinese traveler Huen Tsang, who visited India in the 7th century, wrote that King Harshavardhana

had organized a religious assembly on the banks of the Ganga. References to Kumbh events organized by Akharas are found in medieval history between the 9th and 18th centuries. Thus, every six years, the Ardh Kumbh is held, and every twelve years, the Kumbh takes place. The twelfth Kumbh is called the Mahakumbh. The 2025 Kumbh is being called Mahakumbh because it is happening after 144 years.

In such a scenario, if politics proves to be beneficial for both the ruling power and the common people, it should undoubtedly be welcomed. Just as political parties forget their differences during wartime and stand with the government, similarly, political parties should unite during such events like the Kumbh and positively cooperate with the smooth functioning of the governance system. This will not only enhance the country's image abroad but also increase the likelihood of substantial foreign investment coming into the country through an undefined medium. The economic foundation gained from this will not only strengthen the nation but also help place the country in the ranks of prosperous nations.



'Fire Girl' Mahira Sharma's Bold Picture Has Fans Saying - 'Baby Doll, You're Rocking It!'

Many people become overnight stars from Salman Khan's popular show Bigg Boss, and the same happened with Mahira Sharma, a contestant from season 13. Known for being trolled during the show, Mahira is once again in the limelight, and this time it's due to some incredibly bold pictures that are setting social media on fire!

During the show, Mahira's name was often linked with Paras Chhabra, and even though she may not have been part of any big projects, she always remains in the news. Mahira frequently shares pictures and videos for her fans on social media. This time, she has certainly made her fans' hearts race even faster!

Some hot backless pictures of Mahira have surfaced directly from the bathroom, raising the temperature of the internet. The sexy poses she strikes with her hand on the mirror are absolutely mesmerizing. Fans have flooded the comment section with praise—some wrote, "Massa Queen is always on fire," while others said, "Baby Doll, you're rocking it!"



Mamata Kulkarni Becomes Mahamandaleshwar of Kinnar Akhada

Mamata Kulkarni, once a famous Bollywood actress, recently took sanyas at the Mahakumbh 2025 held in Prayagraj. She has now become the Mahamandaleshwar of the Kinnar Akhada. As a result, Mamta Kulkarni has been the subject of much discussion. Amidst all this, a video of her is going viral on social media. Recently, Mamata Kulkarni had an interview with NDTV, during which she revealed several controversial secrets. In the conversation, the actress also spoke about whether she had any relationship with the notorious gangster Chhota Rajan.

Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia

Ready to Make Bollywood Debut?

After making her debut with a Punjabi film, it is now believed that Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia is set to make her Bollywood debut with the much-anticipated sequel of Kapil Sharma's hit comedy film Kiss Kis Ko Pyaar Karoon 2.

Nimrit, who is known for her immense popularity among television audiences, has had fans eagerly awaiting her Bollywood debut. A source from the film industry mentioned, "There are discussions about Nimrit Kaur Ahluwalia being included in the cast of Kiss Kis Ko Pyaar Karoon 2. Though nothing is final yet, her name has emerged as a strong contender. Given her popularity and charm, she could be a great addition to the film's cast."

If this turns out to be true, Nimrit could become part of this highly anticipated sequel, which promises to be filled with laughter and entertainment. Fans are especially excited about the possibility of seeing Nimrit in a new avatar, particularly in the comedy genre.



ISRO's SpaceX

The Significance of This Historic Achievement



Sanjay Srivastava

The success of the docking has ensured that India will successfully complete its plans to reach the Moon with humans, bring back samples from there, undertake interplanetary missions, and establish its space station in a timely manner. This success will prove to be the key to accomplishing many ambitions. **Salam ISRO...**

ISRO has provided the country with another moment of pride. Everyone witnessed this remarkable achievement at an altitude of 470 kilometers above the Earth, when it successfully carried out its SpaceX or Space Docking Experiment, ultimately succeeding in docking two spacecraft or satellites together in space. However, the task of establishing an electrical connection between the two and then successfully undocking them remains. But there is great hope that this will be completed successfully in the near future. The process of docking, where one spacecraft connects to another in low Earth orbit, and undocking, when they separate, is crucial. This technology, now possessed only by India after Russia, the United States, and China, is critical for future human space

missions. Although the three global superpowers—America, Russia, and China—achieved this feat 58, 57, and 13 years ago respectively, India's success is particularly commendable because despite numerous international agreements and collaborations related to space cooperation, no international space agency or country shared this complex system and technology with India. India, however, developed its indigenous docking mechanism and patented it as the "Indian Docking System." We performed this experiment with more advanced and slightly different space technology than Russia, the US, and China.



Once the remaining complex maneuvers are completed, the foundation for achieving our space objectives will be even more solidified.

There is no doubt that without the success of this mission, it would have been difficult for India to send human passengers into space via Chandrayaan-4, Mars Orbiter, or Gaganyaan, establish and operationalize its own space station, collect samples from the Moon or other planets, or launch multiple rockets into space—especially for large space missions. The success of this test has made it easier to

achieve these space ambitions. After this technological breakthrough, the ability to fix any malfunction in a satellite while in orbit and to refuel any spaceship in space will also become possible. This success will enhance ISRO's confidence and pave the way for interplanetary missions, advanced space explorations, future moon missions, and human migration between planets.

Last year, ISRO not only released its roadmap for the next 15 years but also publicized plans for 2040-2047. These include the second human flight of Gaganyaan in 2026-27 and the third human flight in 2028-29. The plan is to send three human-rated spacecraft by 2029, and after assessing their success and making necessary improvements, the final Gaganyaan mission—LUPEX—will send astronauts into space and return them in 2030. By 2035, ISRO plans to build its own space station with five modules, the first of which will be launched in 2028, followed by the others. The ability to dock these modules together in space will be made possible with this technology. This technology will also be necessary for creating the space station and facilitating travel to and from it, along with delivering supplies from Earth. ISRO has also prepared plans to land an Indian robotic humanoid on the surface of the Moon in 2037-38. In 2040, ISRO plans to send a manned spacecraft to the Moon, making the first Indian footprint on its surface, and safely landing the crew module in the ocean afterward. To send astronauts to the Moon or to bring back lunar samples through the Chandrayaan-4 mission, it will be necessary for one spacecraft to dock and undock with another in space. Hence, this technology is essential for achieving that goal as well.

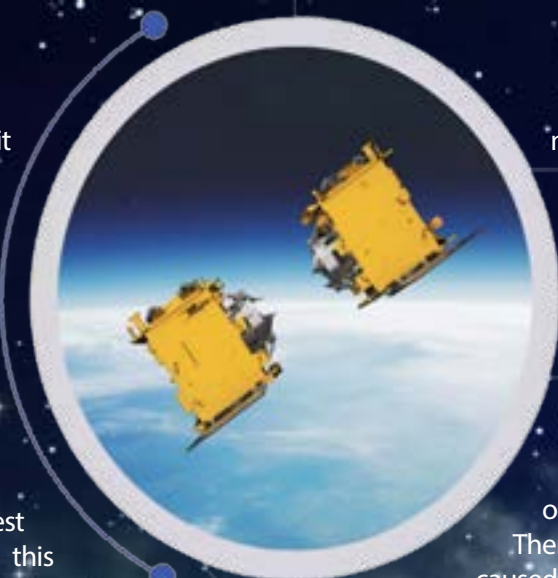
Due to congestion in space, the SpaceX launch on the night of December 30 was delayed by two minutes, as there were



other satellites in the same orbit and path. The space is heavily crowded not just with active satellites but also with decommissioned ones. The private company Starlink's 7,000 communication satellites are expected to increase to 12,000 soon, while thousands of others are inactive and have become space debris. The SpaceX test may provide a solution to this problem of space debris. Through its satellite robotic arm, a satellite or cube set can be grabbed and pulled in, not only correcting the orbits of drifting satellites but also removing debris from inactive satellites. During the SpaceX mission, several specialized tests will be carried out in real-world conditions, such as a performance test on the docking mechanism to test the final phase of docking, the Vertical Docking Experiment Laboratory for testing the docking system in controlled conditions, and the Rendezvous Simulation Lab with real-time simulations to check its algorithms. Additionally, new sensors that take precise measurements, like the laser range finder, rendezvous sensor, and docking sensor, will be tested. A new processor will also be tested during this mission. Along with ISRO's 14 payloads, 10 payloads from non-governmental organizations, start-ups, and academic institutions will conduct experiments on space radiation and microgravity. The data collected from these experiments over the next two years will help in developing autonomous systems for future missions. For the first time, a

multispectral payload will be used for monitoring natural resources and vegetation, with eight lobia seeds grown as part of a biological experiment, to measure plant growth.

On December 30, 2024, ISRO had planned to join two satellites in low Earth orbit with one acting as the target and the other as the chaser on January 7. However, it was delayed. Then, on January 9, technical issues caused another delay in the docking, and by January 12, after bringing the two spacecrafts within 3 meters of each other, they were safely moved back to a secure distance. At that point, it was speculated that the docking would only be possible in March. However, ISRO made history by successfully docking the spacecrafts, controlled from Earth, at an altitude of 470 kilometers, with the satellites traveling at nearly 28,800 kilometers per hour, almost ten times the speed of a bullet. The remaining task is to transfer electrical power and then undock the spacecrafts. One of ISRO's key future objectives is to develop a reusable rocket before 2047. Given the progress ISRO has made, this success seems inevitable. This achievement not only demonstrates India's growing strength in the field of space but also provides a solid foundation for the country's future space ambitions. This is especially important at a time when space has become a new domain of global geopolitical competition, with rising rivalry.



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