

E-Magazine

₹  
49/-

► INDIA'S STRATEGIC REALITY  
BALANCING AUTONOMY, INCLUSION,  
AND GLOBAL RESPONSIBILITY

► A SHIFTING ALLIANCE:  
BANGLADESH'S DEFENCE TURN  
TOWARDS PAKISTAN

# CULT CURRENT

Vol: 8 Issue: 7 July, 2025

WE MAKE VIEWS



# TUMPPLOSSION

*Is America Still Leading, or Losing?*



# Let's 360°

Media Consultancy

Web solution

Advertising

Publication

Languages Services

Survey & Research

Branding

AV Production

Campaign management

Event organizer

PR partner, PR associate

Content writer & provider

Media analyst

URJAS MEDIA VENTURE IS PERHAPS THE ONLY CONSULTING FIRM THAT CAN GIVE YOUR ORGANISATION A 360 DEGREE MEDIA BUSINESS GROWTH CONSULTING THROUGH IT'S 360 CAPABILITIES. FOR US, CONSULTING DOES NOT ONLY MEAN MECHANICAL COST REDUCTION THROUGH BETTER IT APPLICATIONS, WE FIND OUT WHAT YOUR ORGANISATION REALLY NEEDS AND GIVE YOU AN INTELLECTUAL SOLUTION THAT HELP YOU REDUCE COST AS WELL AS HELPS YOURS BUSINESS GROW AND BEAT THE COMPETITION.

**NOW!!  
OUR CONSULTANT  
WILL GET BACK  
TO YOU IN 24  
HOURS AND PUT  
YOU IN TO THE HIGH  
GROWTH PATH**



**URJAS MEDIA**  
VENTURE

**SMS 'BUSINESS GROWTH'  
TO +91-8826-24-5305 OR  
E-MAIL [info@urjasmedia.com](mailto:info@urjasmedia.com)**

**BEAT THE COMPETITION  
[www.urjasmedia.com](http://www.urjasmedia.com)**

## # POSITIVE INDIA

### UNSUNG HERO

FROM SCRAP TO SPOTLIGHT: KUMAIL'S INSPIRING RIDE



**Ali Kumail**

**A**li Kumail, a 23-year-old from Bijnor, Uttar Pradesh, is living proof that passion can outshine adversity. Forced to quit school after 10th grade due to financial struggles, Kumail never gave up on his dream of building something extraordinary. While working as an AC mechanic, he saved ₹50,000 from his earnings to pursue his passion. With ingenuity and sheer determination, he built an electric tractor using 40% wood and 60% metal. Today, his innovation isn't just turning heads in his village—it's gaining attention across the country. Viral on social media, Kumail's tractor is a symbol of what a "jugaadu mind" and relentless spirit can achieve. His story reminds us all: where there is will, greatness follows. •



## Editorial

**National Editor**

Sanjay Shrivastava

**Editor**

Srirajesh

**Managing Editor**

Sachchidanand Pandey

**Roaming Editor**

Dr. Rajaram Tripathi

**Political Editor**

Anshuman Tripathi

**Metro Editor**

Shakti Prakash Shrivastava

Dr. Rudra Narayan

**Foreign Editor**

Shreesh Pathak

**Corporate Editor**

Gagan Batra

**Digital Editor**

Sunita Tripathi

Jalaj Srivastava

**Assistant Editor**

Sandip Kumar

**Deputy Editor**

Manoj Kumar

Santu Das

**Literary Editor**

Anwar Husain

**Art Editor**

Jaya Verma

**Web and IT Expert**

Anuj Kumar Singh

**Photo Editor**

Vivek Pandey

**Special correspondent**

Kamlesh Jha

Vikas Gupta

**Correspondent**

Sandeep Singh

Anirudh Yadav

**Bureau Chief (International)**

Akul Batra (USA)

C. Sheovaratan (Netherlands)

G. Verma (London)

Dr. Md. Fahim Akbar (Pakistan)

A. Asgharzadeh (Iran)

Dr. Nik Seri (Malaysia)

**Bureau Chief (National)**

R. Ranjan (New Delhi)

Sanjay Kumar Singh (Lucknow)

Captain Sudhir Sinha (Ranchi)

Nimesh Shukla (Patna)

Nagendra Singh (Kolkata)

Rakesh Ranjan (Guwahati)

**Marketing**

Satyajit Choudhury

General Manager

**E-distribution**

Srijit Dey

Vol: 8 Issue:7 July, 2025

Follow us:



fb.com/cultcurrent



@Cult\_Current



cultcurrent@gmail.com

**URJAS MEDIA VENTURE****Head office:** Swastik Apartment, GF, Pirtala, Agarpara, Kolkata 700 109, INDIA, Tel: +91 6289-26-2363**Corporate Office:** 14601, Belaire Blvd, Houston, Texas 77083 USA Tel: +1 (832) 670-9074Web: <http://cultcurrent.com>

Cult Current is a monthly e-magazine published by Urjas Media Ventures from Swastik Apartment, GF, Pirtala, Agarpara, Kolkata 700 109.

**Editor: Srirajesh****Disclaimer:** All editorial and non-editorial positions in the e-magazine are honorary. The publisher and editorial board are not obligated to agree with all the views expressed in the articles featured in this e-magazine. Cult Current upholds a commitment to supporting all religions, human rights, nationalist ideology, democracy, and moral values.



## COVER STORY

26



### TUMPLØSSION

Is America Still Leading, or Losing?

**THE COST** OF CRUELTY 36

**TARRIF** TANTRUMS 38

**NO MORE** FREE RIDE? 42

**AMERICA FIRST**, EARTH LAST 46

**MAKE MEDIA** THE ENEMY AGAIN 49

**ABANDONING** THE WORLD 50

**AMERICA'S** PAKISTAN FANTASY 52

**DIPLOMACY OF WAR** AND DOMINANCE 54

**AFRICA'S** COUP BELT 58

**A SHIFTING** ALLIANCE 60

**SHIPPING** UNDER SIEGE 64

**NEUTRAL** NO MORE? 68

**BATTLEFIELD AI** INDIA'S STRATEGIC SHIFT 72

**CLIMATE REFUGEES** THE NEXT GLOBAL CRISIS 74

12

## VISION BEYOND THE HORIZON



16

## India's Strategic Reality

Balancing Autonomy, Inclusion,  
and Global Responsibility



CONTENT



Kamal at the Oscars!

South Star, Global Stage

76

## Small talk



### ELNAAZ'S DOUBLE BETRAYAL DRAMA!

**D**rama alert! Iranian-German actress Elnaaz Norouzi, known for her roles in Indian films and currently slaying mind games on Karan Johar's reality show *The Traitors*, just dropped a bombshell! In a juicy interview with *Instant Bollywood*, Elnaaz revealed she was seriously betrayed by her boyfriend of four years. But wait—it gets messier. Turns out, her so-called best friend was part of the betrayal! Yes, her BF was two-timing with her BFF the entire time. Shocked? So was she! When asked if she ever suspected a thing, Elnaaz confessed—not at all. Trust issues, anyone? This tea is boiling hot! ●

## The discoveries that will create a stir in 2025

### Cosmic Mystery Solved!

A new breakthrough study has identified the location of the Universe's "missing" matter and recorded the most distant fast radio burst (FRB) ever observed. Using FRBs as a tool, astronomers at the Center for Astrophysics Harvard & Smithsonian (CfA) and Caltech discovered that more than three-quarters of the Universe's ordinary matter is contained in the thin gas between galaxies. This discovery represents how matter is distributed and behaves across the cosmos ●



### Plastic, Fights Bacteria!

Scientists at the University of Nottingham have identified surface patterns that significantly reduce the ability of bacteria to multiply on plastics. This discovery could help prevent infections on medical devices such as catheters. Biofilms are slimy, surface-attached structures that protect bacteria from the body's natural immune defenses. Many medical implants are made from plastic and are commonly used in hospitals. ●

### Gold Leaking from Earth's Core!

Scientists have uncovered evidence that precious metals like gold are leaking from Earth's core into the mantle, ultimately reaching the surface in places like Hawaii. Using a new method to detect subtle isotopic differences in ruthenium, researchers identified a distinct signal pointing to material from the deep core. ●



### NEW QUANTUM AMPLIFIER USES 90% LESS POWER



Quantum computers have the potential to tackle problems far beyond the reach of today's most powerful machines, opening doors in drug discovery, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and logistics. Now, researchers at Chalmers University of Technology in Sweden have made a breakthrough that brings us closer to that future. They've developed an ultra-efficient amplifier that only switches on when it's time to read data from qubits—the heart of a quantum computer. ●

### Maruti Jimny 5-Door Roars into Indian SUV Market

Maruti Suzuki has officially launched the much-anticipated 5-door Jimny in India, expanding its SUV portfolio. Designed for adventure with a rugged build and off-road capabilities, the Jimny offers a spacious interior, a 1.5L petrol engine, and AllGrip Pro 4x4 system. Priced competitively, it's aimed at young explorers and SUV lovers. With its retro charm and modern features. ●



## APPOINTMENTS



**Lt. Gen Dinesh Singh Rana**, *Commander-in-Chief*

On June 1, 2025, Lieutenant General Dinesh Singh Rana was appointed as the new Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command, India's only tri-service theater command, succeeding Air Marshal Saju Balakrishnan.

## Resignation

**Sanjiv Puri**,  
*CMD, ITC Ltd.*

On June 17, 2025, Sanjiv Puri stepped down from his role as Chairman and Managing Director of ITC Ltd after reaching superannuation. Under his leadership, ITC diversified significantly beyond tobacco.



**Ayatollah Ali Khamenei**  
*Supreme Leader of Iran*

We dealt a heavy slap to the U.S.—if they cross the red line again, they'll face more strikes.

## THEY SAID IT...



**Prince William**  
*Prince of Wales*

The climate crisis demands urgency and purpose—without Indigenous leadership, we risk losing nature's wisdom.

## THE TRIBUTE

Swami Vivekananda was one of India's most revered spiritual leaders and a global ambassador of Vedanta philosophy. Born on January 12, 1863, in Kolkata as Narendranath Datta, he was a brilliant student with a questioning mind. His spiritual quest led him to his guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, who transformed his life and inspired him to dedicate himself to the service of humanity. After his guru's death, Vivekananda took the monastic vows and embarked on a journey across India, witnessing firsthand the deep poverty and social injustice plaguing the nation. His response was a clarion call for spiritual and national awakening.

In 1893, he represented India at the World's Parliament of Religions in Chicago, where his powerful address beginning with "Sisters and Brothers of America" earned him global acclaim. He introduced the West to the spiritual richness of Hinduism and the ideals of tolerance, universal brotherhood, and inner strength. His speeches



**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA**  
(12/01/1863-04/07/1902)

emphasized the harmony of religions and the need for India to awaken to its inner power through education and unity.

Swami Vivekananda founded the Ramakrishna Mission in 1897, blending spirituality with social service. He firmly believed that service to humanity was service to God. He inspired generations of Indians, including leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Subhas Chandra Bose. He once said, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached," a call that continues to stir millions even today.

Swami Vivekananda passed away on July 4, 1902, at the young age of 39, but his legacy remains immortal. He was not just a monk but a visionary who laid the foundation for modern India's spiritual resurgence and global engagement. His life continues to be a beacon of strength, wisdom, and service. •





## India Opposes Double Standards on Terrorism at SCO

India's Defense Minister Rajnath Singh's refusal to sign the joint statement at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Qingdao, China has raised several questions. Foreign Ministry Spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal informed that the joint statement could not be issued due to a lack of consensus on certain issues among some member countries of the SCO. In his statement at the two-day SCO meeting held in Qingdao on June 25 and 26, Rajnath Singh also mentioned 'Operation Sindoor,' which was launched in response to the terrorist attack in Pahalgam. He said that in the Pahalgam attack, victims were shot based on their religious identity, and TRF, linked to Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), claimed responsibility for the attack. ●

## Lee Jae-myung Elected President of South Korea



In a dramatic political realignment, Lee Jae-myung has been elected President of South Korea following the impeachment of incumbent Yoon Suk-yeol on 3 June. Lee, the opposition leader from the Democratic Party, campaigned on a progressive platform promising economic reform, social welfare expansion, and renewed diplomatic engagement with North Korea. His presidency marks a sharp pivot in Seoul's foreign policy, as it reconsiders its strategic positioning between China and the United States. ●

## Trump Escalates Trade War with Proposed 50% EU Tariff



Trade tensions surged as former U.S. President Donald Trump announced plans to impose a sweeping 50% tariff on all European Union imports, targeting critical sectors including automobiles and aerospace. Set to take effect on 9 July, the decision reverses previous delays and has drawn immediate threats of retaliation from Brussels. Economists warn that a tit-for-tat escalation could severely disrupt global supply chains and intensify inflation. ●

## World Bank Downgrades Global Growth Forecast

The World Bank has revised its 2025 global growth forecast downwards from 2.7% to 2.3%, citing mounting trade disputes, particularly between the U.S., China, and the EU, as major deterrents to economic stability. Roughly 70% of global economies are projected to underperform, with investment confidence, consumer spending, and private-sector growth all stagnating. Inflationary pressures remain persistent, and emerging markets are especially vulnerable. ●



## Bangladesh SC Reinstates Jamaat-e-Islami in Political U-Turn



In a controversial ruling on 1 June, Bangladesh's Supreme Court lifted the longstanding ban on the Islamist party Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and acquitted former leader Azharul Islam. The decision reverses key elements of the post-revolution framework under former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. National elections in Bangladesh are likely to be held in mid-2026. ●



## UK Pushes to End US Tariffs



**B**ank of England Governor Andrew Bailey has raised alarm over rising trade unpredictability, triggered by Trump-era steel tariffs that remain in place against the UK. In response, Britain has curbed steel imports to shield domestic producers, while Business Secretary Jonathan Reynolds unveiled a £2.5 billion support package for the automotive sector, extending through 2030. The UK is pressing Washington to lift steel duties and stabilise transatlantic trade. ●

## G7 Finalises AI Governance Principles in Hiroshima Process



**T**he G7 nations have formalised 11 core principles for artificial intelligence regulation as part of the “Hiroshima Process,” reinforcing shared commitments to transparency, ethical use, and data privacy. As the EU edges closer to implementing its AI Act, debates intensify over open-source innovation versus state oversight. Meanwhile, China accelerates its AI ambitions through ventures like DeepSeek, prompting calls for greater coordination among Western powers. Upcoming ministerial meetings will likely define future AI governance, particularly regarding model testing thresholds, algorithmic transparency, and data-sharing mandates. The month ahead could reshape global AI norms and regulatory landscapes. ●

## OECD Slashes Global GDP Forecast



**T**he OECD has downgraded its global GDP outlook to 2.9% for both 2025 and 2026, attributing the revision to rising trade barriers, especially U.S.-imposed tariffs. Key indicators point to disrupted supply chains, rising consumer prices, and dampened investor confidence. The U.S. is expected to grow at just 1.6% next year, while China’s economy remains comparatively stable due to targeted stimulus. ●



## Saudi Arabia’s Debt Rises as Oil Prices Fall—IMF Issues Fiscal Warning

**T**he International Monetary Fund has forecast that Saudi Arabia’s debt-to-GDP ratio will soar to 44.5% by 2028, with a fiscal deficit nearing 5%, which is far above previous estimates. Declining oil prices and recent OPEC+ output cuts have strained the Kingdom’s revenue streams. In response, Riyadh is considering VAT increases and intensifying its transition toward renewable energy. Market watchers now await the next OPEC+ meeting, which could determine whether Saudi Arabia boosts production or maintains output curbs. The decisions made this month will influence both the Kingdom’s fiscal trajectory and global energy markets. ●



## PM Modi's Global Diplomacy Tour to Shape India's Foreign Policy

In early July, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Russia and Austria, marking his first international tour since forming the new government. What's catching global attention is the Russia leg—his first visit to Moscow since the Ukraine war began. With the West watching closely, Modi's meeting with President Putin comes at a time when India is walking a tightrope between strategic neutrality and global pressure. Discussions are expected to focus on energy, defense, and trade cooperation. The Austria visit will be the first by an Indian PM in over 40 years, aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and wooing European investors. Domestically, the visit sends a signal that India intends to assert its diplomatic balance, even amid global divisions. ●

## New criminal laws take effect nationwide this month



Starting July 1, India will enter a new legal era as it replaces three colonial-era laws—the Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and Indian Evidence Act—with the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhiniyam. The aim? Faster trials, streamlined investigation procedures, and stronger victim protection. For instance, FIRs can now be filed online, and police must record statements of victims of sexual violence on camera. ●

## NEET-UG Turmoil: Will Justice Be Done?



The NEET-UG 2024 controversy refuses to die down. What began as scattered allegations of question paper leaks and unfair marking has now snowballed into a nationwide scandal involving student protests, legal petitions, and political firestorms. The National Testing Agency (NTA) is under sharp criticism for its lack of transparency, especially after 67 students reportedly scored a perfect 720—raising statistical eyebrows. ●

## India's UPI Goes Global: Digital Rupee Steps onto the World Stage

India's Unified Payments Interface (UPI) is going international—and July is when things truly start picking up. After rollout partnerships with France, Sri Lanka, Bhutan, UAE, and Singapore, Indian travelers can now pay through UPI while abroad, avoiding conversion charges and enabling faster transactions. NRIs will also benefit from being able to send money directly to Indian bank accounts via their home apps. ●



## Monsoon to Hit Full Swing, Flood Alerts Issued



The monsoon has officially covered the entire country ahead of schedule, and while that's good news for agriculture, it comes with rising risks. The IMD has issued red and orange alerts across Assam, Bihar, Maharashtra, Uttarakhand, and Himachal Pradesh. Several areas are already witnessing flash floods, swollen rivers, and landslides, with authorities evacuating thousands from low-lying regions. ●



## Speaker Showdown: First Test for Modi 3.0



**A**s Parliament returns for its Monsoon Session, all eyes are on the election of the Lok Sabha Speaker, a position that symbolizes not just procedure, but power. While the BJP has emerged as the single largest party, it is now dependent on allies like the TDP and JD(U) to run a stable government. These allies are reportedly demanding a say in key posts—Speaker being one of them. A consensus candidate is likely, but any signs of strain or rebellion will hint at possible cracks in the NDA coalition. ●

## ISRO Preps for Big Launches: Chandrayaan-4 & Gaganyaan Move Forward



**I**ndia's space agency, ISRO, is gearing up for a milestone month. Preparations for two flagship missions—Gaganyaan, India's first human spaceflight, and Chandrayaan-4, a follow-up lunar mission—are hitting full throttle in July. Critical tests for astronaut safety, system re-entry, and module detachment are expected this month. If successful, Gaganyaan could launch by early 2025, putting India in the elite club of nations to send humans into space. Meanwhile, Chandrayaan-4 aims to build on the historic success of Chandrayaan-3 by focusing on lunar sample return. These missions aren't just scientific—they're symbols of national pride and technological self-reliance. ●

## Mumbai Coastal Road Nears Completion



**A**fter years of delays and controversies, Mumbai's ambitious Coastal Road project is finally nearing its first phase of completion—set to open by end-July. The 10.6 km stretch from Marine Drive to Worli is expected to reduce travel time from 45 minutes to just 10, offering some relief to the city's suffocating traffic. With tunnels, elevated roads, and eco-parks, the project is also being marketed as an urban beautification boost. ●



## India's Digital Privacy Law Set to Kick In - What It Means for You

**I**ndia's Digital Personal Data Protection Act, passed in 2023, is expected to be formally notified in July, setting the stage for a new era of data regulation. The rules will define how companies collect, store, and process user data, with stricter penalties for violations. Tech giants like Google, Meta, and Amazon are already updating privacy terms and infrastructure, while Indian startups scramble to prepare. The law introduces the concept of user consent, right to data correction, and a redressal mechanism for data misuse. While consumer rights are at the heart of the policy, critics argue the law gives the government too much power to exempt agencies from scrutiny. ●





**SRIRAJESH**, Editor

## INDIA DRAWS THE LINE

# NO COMPROMISE ON TERROR

*India's refusal to sign the SCO joint statement marks a bold shift in foreign policy, asserting zero tolerance for terrorism and strategic autonomy on global platforms.*

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's refusal to sign the joint statement at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting in Qingdao, China, marks a significant shift in India's foreign and security policy. This decision not only underscores India's firm regional stance but also highlights its assertive and uncompromising approach to terrorism on the global stage.

The meeting took place at a crucial juncture, as the global balance of power increasingly moves toward polarization. On one side, European nations are ramping up their military spending under NATO's framework; on the other, China is attempting to position forums like the SCO as counterweights to Western alliances. In such a geopolitical climate, India's strategic clarity and autonomous voice carry even greater weight.

In his remarks, without naming Pakistan directly, Rajnath Singh pointed to certain countries using cross-border terrorism as a tool of state policy. He referenced the recent Pahalgam terror attack as a "heinous act targeting individuals based on religious identity," and cited India's swift and strategic response—Operation Sindoor—as a signal that India will no longer limit itself to passive diplomatic condemnation, but will actively neutralize the sources of terror.

This represents a broader strategic transition: India is shifting from reactive diplomacy to a proactive, security-first doctrine.

Rajnath Singh emphasized the need for perpetrators and sponsors of terrorism to be brought to justice, and urged the SCO to adopt a united stance on the issue. However, the omission of the Pahalgam attack from the joint declaration—and the inclusion of references to incidents in Balochistan, reflecting Pakistani concerns—prompted India to withhold its signature. This move signals India's rejection of China's diplomatic balancing and calls for a more equitable approach to counterterrorism.

China's role in this context is particularly significant. By advocating a "neutral investigation" into the Pahalgam incident and referencing Balochistan, China not only challenged India's sensitivities but also indirectly lent support to Pakistan. This suggests a strategic use of the SCO platform by China to dilute India's influence while shielding Pakistan diplomatically.

While some opposition voices and analysts labeled India's stance as a "diplomatic setback," it is, in fact, a principled and strategic assertion. India has made it clear: there will be no compromise on terrorism, even if it means standing alone in multilateral forums.

Since joining the SCO in 2017, India has evolved from a symbolic member to an active policy contributor. Its forthright stance on terrorism strengthens its position as a moral compass within the organization.

China's broader ambition is to create an alternative security architecture across Central Asia, South Asia, and Russia—an architecture meant to counterbalance the West. However, this vision can only gain legitimacy if China demonstrates transparency and neutrality—qualities that remain questionable, especially in dealings with democratic nations like India that prioritize strategic independence.

The omission of the Pahalgam attack and the inclusion of Balochistan highlights China's tendency to prioritize Pakistan's foreign policy agenda within the SCO. This not only risks escalating tensions with India but also undermines the credibility and purpose of the SCO itself.

India's foreign and defence policy today is more confident, coherent, and assertive than ever. Its message on terrorism is unambiguous: no compromise, no silence. On platforms like the SCO, India does not seek mere symbolic participation but aims to be an influential voice on matters of substance.

This incident also underscores a broader trend: India is now willing to voice its security concerns on the global stage—even at the cost of uncomfortable diplomatic friction. This is the embodiment of a "values-based foreign policy" and "strategic autonomy"—a doctrine that will continue to shape India's emergence as a formidable global player in the years to come.



Ajesh



srirajesh.journalist



@srirajesh



editor@cultcurrent.com

# *VISION BEYOND* THE HORIZON

*Shubhanshu Shukla's groundbreaking space mission marks a pivotal moment in India's space journey—showcasing scientific brilliance, technological innovation, and global ambition. As a symbol of national pride and youth inspiration, this mission not only elevates India among spacefaring nations but also paves the way for future interplanetary exploration.*



Shubhanshu Shukla's space mission marks a transformative milestone in India's space aspirations—firmly establishing the nation's image on the global stage across scientific, technological, and strategic domains. While the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) has already set several benchmarks with missions like Mangalyaan and the Chandrayaan series, this mission stands out not only as a technical triumph but also as a powerful source of inspiration for young scientists and engineers.

This mission elevates India to the league of leading spacefaring nations. It embodies the integration of cutting-edge technology within India's space program. The use of advanced sensors, propulsion systems, and communication technologies reflects the exceptional talent and ingenuity of Indian researchers. For example, the mission's advanced imagery sensors can capture high-resolution images of Earth's surface, which can be leveraged in fields like agriculture, urban planning, and disaster management. Similarly, modern propulsion systems such as ion thrusters enable more efficient and long-distance space travel.

Experts believe that the success of this mission lays a robust technological foundation for India's future space ventures—ones that will be even more ambitious and complex. It not only fuels innovation but also opens new avenues for research and development, making India more competitive and self-reliant in the global space sector.

Internationally, this mission has significantly enhanced India's scientific reputation. India has consistently tackled complex technical challenges to carve out a place in the realm of space research. This mission is proof that Indian scientists can not only achieve global standards with limited resources but can also establish a unique identity in space science through innovation.

By collaborating with the International Space

Station (ISS) and other global space agencies, India has demonstrated its scientific prowess and emerged as a vital player in the international space community. In today's increasingly competitive space race, this mission offers not only a source of national pride but also a strong foundation for future endeavors. It also paves the way for human spaceflight missions like Gaganyaan.

The true value of this mission lies in its power to ignite curiosity and ambition among the youth. Across universities and research institutions, this mission has sparked special seminars, workshops, and discussions. For instance, institutions like the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology have already launched new courses and research projects inspired by this achievement. These initiatives will not only unearth new talent but also help aspiring scientists meet global standards in space research. Experts predict that the coming years will see a surge in academic,



## ACHIEVEMENT

technological, and collaborative excellence within India's space ecosystem.

From an economic standpoint, the mission brings immense value. The technological solutions developed—such as satellite launch systems, communication technologies, and space-grade materials—are opening new opportunities for Indian industries and research institutions. Increased investment in these areas will lead to job creation and elevate India's contribution to the global space economy. It will also enhance export potential in space technologies, strengthening both India's economy and its technological independence.

For instance, Antrix Corporation Limited, the commercial arm of ISRO, is already providing satellite launch services to international clients. This mission's success will further unlock opportunities in this domain.

Strategically, the mission represents a crucial step in bolstering India's defense and security capabilities through technological advancement. Space technologies are now pivotal in reinforcing communication, navigation, and surveillance systems. The experience and foundation gained through this mission will lead to new thinking in defense strategy, contributing to a more robust national security framework. India's indigenous navigation system, NavIC, which provides precise geolocation services, is already a noteworthy accomplishment in this regard.

Ultimately, Shubhanshu Shukla's space mission has taken India's space vision to new heights. It is not only a testament to India's technical and scientific excellence but also a strengthening force for the country's strategic, economic, and educational dimensions. This bold endeavor injects fresh energy and encouragement into future space missions, positioning India to compete with the world's foremost space powers.

This mission is a defining step in India's journey toward becoming a true space power—an achievement that fills the nation with pride and offers inspiration to the global scientific community. The knowledge and experience gained here will undoubtedly inform India's upcoming interplanetary missions, including those to Venus and Mars. •



Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla's Axiom-4 journey marks India's return to the ISS after 41 years. Leading key space experiments, he boldly declares: "This is India's human space future."

**Hardik Dilip Jakharia,**  
Marketing Manager,  
Mumbai

*This article is based on inputs from young journalists Shreya Gupta, Akansha Sharma, Dhanishta De and Riya Goyal.*



# India Speaks: Axiom-4



*Subhnashu Shukla's space journey fills me with pride. As a small-town student and aerospace enthusiast, I see him as a symbol of courage, discipline, and India's rising cosmic aspirations.*

**Bhagyalakshmi Manoj, Btech, Aerospace engineering, Mumbai**



*Subhnashu Shukla's spaceflight is a proud, emotional moment. As a symbol of courage and hope, he carries the dreams of small-town students from blackboards to the stars.*

**Archisman Banerjee, Mumbai**



*This mission marks a proud leap in India's space journey—fueling self-reliance, inspiring youth, and proving our place among global space leaders with precision and innovation.*

**Jeasha Haldar, Intern in IIST, Kerala**



*This successful mission highlights India's rising strength in space science, global potential, and commitment to innovation—paving the way for deeper international collaborations and interplanetary exploration..*

**Dibyojyoti Saha, Astrophysicist & Visiting Fellow- Intern, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research, Mumbaiengineering, Mumbai**



*The Axiom-4 mission is a proud and inspiring milestone. Subhanshu Shukla's achievement motivates young engineers, showcasing India's growing prowess and potential in global space exploration and deep space research..*

**Mahir Ali Quazi , Feynman Aerospace Intern, Mumbai**



*India's recent space mission marks a defining leap in its journey toward becoming a global space power. For aspiring aerospace minds, it's both inspiring and affirming—India is ready for the stars.*

**Samarth R. Kulkarni, ISRO Intern, Mumbai**



*Subhanshu Shukla represents India's next-gen space vision—driven by AI, innovation, and interplanetary ambition. His work is shaping ISRO's leap from reliable launchers to reusable, deep-space technologies.*

**Ranjay Dhar, Senior SW Engineer, Bangalore**



*From Rakesh Sharma's "Sare Jahan Se Acha" to Shubanshu Shukla's "Kya kamaal ki ride thi," India returns to space after 41 years—marking a bold new era in exploration and pride.*

**Soumalya De, Information Technology Officer, Hyderabad**



# India's Strategic Reality

*Balancing Autonomy, Inclusion, and Global Responsibility*

**An Indian Perspective  
Responding to  
Ashley J. Telli's  
"India's Great-Power  
Delusions"**



Srirajesh

Western analysts often approach India's prospects as a great power with a prejudiced mindset — as if India's future is entirely dependent on Western support. They tend to either indulge in excessive praise or reinforce the notion that India cannot advance without Western assistance. Ashley J. Telli's essay, "India's Great-Power Delusions," falls into this familiar trap, viewing India's global positioning, strategic priorities, and internal politics through a narrow, Western-centric lens.

This article offers a balanced, fact-based response to such one-sided criticism. It presents a more grounded perspective that reflects the complexities of India's foreign policy, the vibrancy of its democracy, and the realities of its economic development. We argue that India's strategic autonomy is not an illusion,



***As a nation strides purposefully toward its goals, it inevitably faces a barrage of criticism. Ashley J. Tellis's article, "India's Great-Power Delusions," published in Foreign Affairs on June 17, 2025, is just such an instance. The article questions India's aspirations to become a global power and labels its strategic policies as delusional. But does Tellis's analysis truly reflect the reality on the ground? Is India truly doomed to fall short of great-power status due to its commitment to "strategic autonomy"? Is India's democratic framework so fragile that it cannot bear the weight of global leadership? This rejoinder offers a factual and logical response to these questions, demonstrating that India is neither delusional nor weak. It tells the story of a new India – one that is shaping its identity on the global stage on its own terms, with its own values, and in its own way. This article is an attempt to understand India's strategic reality, free from the biases often found in Western analyses.***

## FOREIGN AFFAIRS

# India's Great-Power Delusions

How New Delhi's Grand Strategy  
Thwarts Its Grand Ambitions

Ashley J. Tellis

July/August 2025 Published on June 17, 2025

but a well-considered policy — and that its democratic process is not weakening, but thriving.

### India's Strategic Autonomy: A Vision, Not a Delusion

Tellis argues that India's non-aligned stance is a hindrance to its emergence as a global power. However, this assessment overlooks both the historical depth of India's foreign policy and the realities of today's

complex international landscape. "Standing on its own feet" — India's strategic autonomy is not a relic of the past, but a key to resilience in a multipolar and unpredictable world order. It enables India to engage with diverse stakeholders without the burden of prior commitments.

Since 2023, India has maintained its defense ties with Russia while simultaneously strengthening strategic partnerships with the United States, France,

and Israel. Recently, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh clearly stated that India does not view its relationships through the lens of any third country — a firm reaffirmation of India's independent strategic posture. "Killing the snake without breaking the stick" — India has shown that it can safeguard its national interests while also advancing international cooperation.

This is not merely a game of power balancing, but a demonstration of prudent, multipolar diplomacy. India's approach is not confined to counterbalancing China; it also positions India as a potential "bridge nation" — capable of connecting the Global North and South, East and West. According to a study by Carnegie India, India's strategic autonomy equips it to respond effectively to global challenges, whether they relate to climate change, terrorism, or pandemics.

## Economic Maturity: A Model of Growth with Inclusion

Tellis downplays India's economic rise by labeling it slower than China's and portraying it as an incomplete power. However, he overlooks the fact that India's development strategy is rooted in inclusion, democratic governance, and long-term stability. "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas" — India's economic growth is a continuous and inclusive process, committed to benefiting all its citizens.

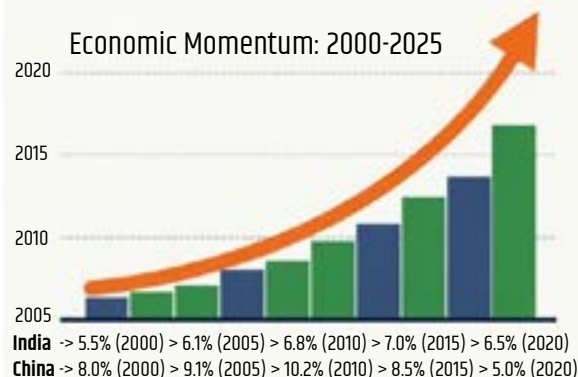
In this context, the IMF's 2024 projections are particularly noteworthy. They show that India is now the world's fourth-largest economy and is expected to surpass Germany and Japan to become the third-largest by 2027. This is not a mere aspiration — it is already a reality. These figures affirm that India is a robust and rapidly growing economy with the potential to serve as a global engine of growth.

Similarly, according to the World Bank, India's Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) — including Aadhaar, UPI, CoWIN, and ONDC — serves as a model for developing nations. A recent report by NITI Aayog highlighted that DPI has significantly enhanced financial inclusion, reduced corruption, and improved the efficiency of government services. This clearly illustrates India's commitment to leveraging innovation and technology to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

## INDIA AND CHINA

### Competing Powers, Diverging Paths

2020-2025



**INDIA**  
(DEMOCRACY)

- Ballot box
- Constitution & Judiciary
- Federal elections
- Independent media

Defense Budget: 2.4 % GDP  
Active Personnel: 1.4 Million

**CHINA**  
(AUTHORITARIAN)

- Great Firewall
- State Surveillance
- One-party dominance
- Media Censorship

Defense Budget: 1.7 % GDP  
Active Personnel: 2.1 Million

#### SOFT POWER & REGIONAL CLOUD

Digital diplomacy in Nepal, Maldives, Africa

Belt & Road Initiative into Pakistan, Central Asia

**INDIA BECOME A LIBERAL POWER IN AN ILLIBERAL WORLD**  
*This chart is prepared by the research team at Cult Current.*

Furthermore, India's startup ecosystem is now the third-largest in the world, home to over 100 unicorns. A Brookings study found that India's startup ecosystem is a major source of innovation and job creation, contributing meaningfully to national economic development.

In contrast, China's growth model has been heavily reliant on debt, infrastructure excess, and limited



transparency. “Greed is a dangerous vice” — China’s rapid growth has been fueled in part by its authoritarian governance, which may not prove sustainable in the long run. According to Bloomberg, China’s debt-to-GDP ratio exceeds 300%, posing a serious economic risk.

India’s economic structure, though comparatively slower, is built on solid foundations — strength, sustainability, and democratic participation — making it not only resilient but also more equitable in the long term.



## Democracy and Diversity: A Vibrant System with Room for Reform

Ashley Tellis’s assertion that India is no longer a liberal democracy is a sweeping oversimplification. As the saying goes, “Slow and steady wins the race.” Yes, India has experienced rising political polarization and certain institutional pressures in recent years, but these challenges have not eroded the foundations of its democracy.

The results of the 2024 general elections are a testament to India’s democratic vitality. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) fell short of a majority and was compelled to form a coalition government — not a sign of democratic decline, but of its endurance. “The people are supreme” — Indian voters have made it clear that they are not willing to hand unchecked power to any single party and remain committed to ensuring ideological pluralism in governance.

Despite occasional pressure, India’s judiciary, Election Commission, and independent media continue to function actively. These institutions remain pillars of democracy, playing a crucial role in checking executive overreach. According to a report by The Hindu, India’s judiciary has, in recent years, struck down several government decisions and defended citizens’ rights. Moreover, opposition parties currently govern in ten Indian states — a reflection of federalism in action and proof that power is not concentrated, but distributed across diverse political voices.

That said, concerns about human rights violations



and religious freedom in some instances are valid and warrant attention. As the proverb goes, “Charity begins at home” — India must continue strengthening the protection of its democratic processes and civil liberties. According to Brookings India, civil society and independent media in India need greater empowerment to ensure government accountability and transparency.

Democracy in India is not a smooth ride; it is a work in progress, shaped by struggles and driven by diversity — and therein lies its greatest strength. Indian voters regularly unseat incumbents, push back against divisive politics, and demand policy responsiveness. “Unity in diversity” is not just a phrase; it is the essence of India’s democratic character — and it is here to stay.

## India on the Global Stage: A Partner, Not a Follower

Tellis underestimates India's global role by portraying it as limited, overlooking how the country has, in recent years, positioned itself as a responsible and proactive global actor. As the Bhagavad Gita teaches, "You have a right to perform your duty, but not to the fruits of your actions" — India acts not for reward, but for global welfare.

During its G20 presidency in 2023, India brought the voice of the Global South to the forefront of international discourse. "One Earth, One Family, One Future" was not just a slogan; it encapsulated India's inclusive worldview. It demonstrated India's commitment to representing the interests of developing nations and contributing meaningfully to solving global challenges.

India's humanitarian leadership was further evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when, under the "Vaccine Maitri" initiative, it supplied vaccines to over 150 countries — while many Western nations adopted a protectionist stance with their vaccine stockpiles. This generosity reflected India's core civilizational value: "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" — the world is one family. Through its actions, India proved itself a compassionate and dependable global power.

Moreover, India has taken the lead on international policy dialogues in areas like global trade, climate justice, data sovereignty, and digital governance. These contributions show that India is not just present on global platforms — it is shaping them with creative, solution-oriented leadership.

India is neither entirely

aligned with the West nor fully integrated into China-led blocs. It walks a path of cooperative balance — one that avoids hegemonic dependence and instead advances inclusive multipolarity. India is a global actor committed to protecting its interests while promoting peace and stability.

As the saying goes, "Balance is the essence of life." India aspires to be a global power that collaborates with all — without being subservient to any.

Comparing with China: It's About Systems, Not Size

Tellis repeatedly draws comparisons between India and China — in terms of GDP, military capability, and global influence. But he fails to grasp a fundamental truth: the political and economic systems of the two

nations are structurally and ideologically distinct. As the proverb goes, "A crow trying to walk like a swan forgets its own gait." India has no need to imitate China; it must grow on the strength of its own values and systems.

While China's economy grapples with a massive debt burden — with a debt-to-GDP ratio nearing 300% — India has maintained fiscal discipline. According to the IMF, India has made significant progress in reducing its fiscal deficit in recent years and remains committed to maintaining macroeconomic stability.

China's development model is driven by authoritarian control, whereas India has pursued growth through democratic means, balancing economic progress with social justice. This underscores India's belief that development is a tool to improve people's



***India is not willing to become a "junior partner" in the pursuit of American strategic objectives. This is the true test of its strategic autonomy. "Be a friend, not a follower" — India seeks a relationship of mutual respect with the U.S., not one of blind alignment.***

lives — not merely to inflate economic figures.

Moreover, while China faces the challenge of a shrinking population, India is on the cusp of a demographic dividend. According to the United Nations, India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country by 2027 — a milestone that reflects a young, dynamic workforce with the potential to drive future economic expansion.

India doesn't aim to become a replica of China. Rather, it seeks to emerge as a power in its own right, rooted in its distinct identity. As the saying goes, "Choose your own path" — India must shape its future based on its own values, culture, and historical experience.

India aspires to be a global power not through dominance, but by contributing to global peace, stability, and shared prosperity.

## India and the U.S.: A Partnership, Not Subordination

Tellis argues that by refusing to enter a formal alliance with the United States, India risks losing American support. This reflects a failure to distinguish between cooperation and subordination. As the saying goes, "Shake hands, but don't let your hands be tied." India is fully committed to collaborating with the U.S., but not at the cost of its sovereignty.

Joint naval exercises like Malabar, technology partnerships involving jet engine transfers and semiconductors, foundational defense agreements such as LEMOA and COMCASA, and close coordination on the Indo-Pacific strategy — all demonstrate that India is a serious and enduring partner to the United States.

However, India is not willing to become a "junior partner" in the pursuit of American strategic objectives. This is the true test of its strategic autonomy. "Be a friend, not a follower" — India seeks a relationship of mutual respect with the U.S., not one of blind alignment. If America genuinely wishes to support free and independent democracies, it must learn to engage with India on its own terms, acknowledging its layered and complex strategic calculus — not trying to mold it into a Western template.

As the proverb goes, "Compromise is acceptable, surrender is not." India values cooperation with the United States, but will always prioritize the defense of its sovereignty and national interests.

## Conclusion: India's Path Is Its Own — Not Misguided, but Measured

A central claim in Tellis's essay is that India is obstructing its own rise through its current policies. But the reality is that India is charting its ascent in its own way — shaped by its complexities, rooted in its values, and guided by long-term vision. As the saying goes, "The path unfolds as you walk it." India knows its destination and is moving toward it slowly, but with steady confidence.

This journey may be unfamiliar to Western analysts, but it reflects a civilizational, democratic, and multipolar strategy — uniquely Indian in its essence. India's policies are not flawless, but they are far from chaotic. They represent a calibrated line drawn through ground realities, historical consciousness, social diversity, and the ever-shifting tides of global politics.

In this middle path lies India's true strength — the power to not only balance the global order but to make it more just, inclusive, and sustainable. "For the welfare of all, and the happiness of all" — India's aspirations are rooted not in domination but in the collective good of humanity.

India's greatness will not be measured solely by its GDP, military capacity, or Western validation, but by its ability to uphold the ideals of inclusion, coexistence, and sovereignty. And by that measure, India is steadily emerging as a solid, sustainable, and globally relevant power.

"Satyamev Jayate — Truth alone triumphs." India marches forward with conviction in its principles and commitment to a better world. Tellis's analysis underestimates India's capacity, but the nation continues its rise — grounded in strategic wisdom, democratic resilience, and global responsibility.

This is not just the story of a rising power. It is the story of building a better world — one that India is helping shape, not by imitation, but by inspiration. •



# HOPE IN HALIFAX

## REWRITING THE INDIA–CANADA SCRIPT

*The recent diplomatic thaw between India and Canada — marked by the decision to appoint new High Commissioners — offers a fragile glimmer of hope amid years of strained ties. But beneath the polished statements and diplomatic smiles lies a minefield of unresolved tensions, particularly around Khalistan extremism. This so-called reset risks becoming a hollow gesture unless both nations confront the core issues with honesty, accountability, and political courage. Trust, after all, cannot be diplomatically appointed.*



Sandeep Kumar

**T**he recent announcement of a thaw in relations between India and Canada, culminating in a pledge to designate new High Commissioners after a prolonged period of diplomatic frost, is a development worthy of careful scrutiny from an Indian perspective. While the pronouncements from both Ottawa and New Delhi emphasize mutual respect and a commitment to the rule of law, the road to a truly normalized relationship remains fraught with complexities, particularly concerning the contentious issue of Khalistan separatism. This article will analyze the potential for a genuine reset, weighing the stated

commitments against the underlying challenges that have plagued the India-Canada relationship for years.

The meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Canadian counterpart, Mark Carney (a name change reflecting a hypothetical future), on the sidelines of the G7 Leaders' Summit, provides a glimmer of hope after years of escalating tensions. The joint reaffirmation of the importance of India-Canada ties, based on mutual respect and adherence to international norms, is a welcome

departure from the acrimonious exchanges that characterized the relationship in recent times. The agreement to designate new High Commissioners, with the stated aim of restoring regular services to citizens and businesses, signals a willingness to move beyond the immediate crisis and rebuild damaged diplomatic channels.

However, the devil, as always, lies in the details. The

the Khalistan movement. The subsequent mutual expulsion of diplomats in October 2024, following Canadian accusations of Indian interference, marked a nadir in bilateral relations, exposing the fragility of the partnership.

From an Indian perspective, the issue of Khalistan separatism is not merely a matter of domestic politics; it is a critical national security concern. The demand



deterioration of ties, which accelerated after the G20 summit in India in 2023, underscores the depth of the underlying issues. Modi's meeting with then-Prime Minister Justin Trudeau on the sidelines of the summit, during which he raised concerns about the "continuing anti-India activities of extremist elements in Canada," highlights the persistent sensitivity surrounding

for an independent ethno-religious nation carved out of the Indian state of Punjab and surrounding areas is viewed as a direct threat to India's sovereignty and territorial integrity. New Delhi has long maintained that Canada has been too tolerant of Khalistan activists, allowing them to operate with impunity and spread their divisive ideology. The perception in India is that

some Canadian politicians have pandered to the Sikh diaspora for electoral gain, turning a blind eye to the activities of extremist elements.

The allegations made by then-Prime Minister Trudeau regarding India's alleged involvement in the assassination of Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a key figure in the Khalistan movement, further inflamed tensions and severely damaged trust between the two countries. While Canada has the right to investigate any alleged crime within its borders, the public accusations, made without presenting conclusive evidence, were viewed in India as a deeply irresponsible act that undermined diplomatic norms and jeopardized bilateral relations.

India views Khalistan activists as a national security threat, accusing them of organizing protests, chanting anti-India slogans, targeting diplomatic missions and Hindu temples, and engaging in violent attacks. New Delhi has banned several pro-Khalistan organizations,

*India and Canada have agreed to restore diplomatic ties by appointing new High Commissioners. The thaw follows years of tension, especially over Khalistan separatism. India views it as a serious security threat, while accusing Canada of inaction. Trust was deeply damaged by public accusations and mutual expulsions.*

deeming them terrorist groups. The perception in India is that Canada has failed to adequately address these concerns, allowing extremist elements to exploit Canadian freedoms to promote their separatist agenda.

Furthermore, India has also been accused of interfering in Canadian elections, allegations that New Delhi has vehemently denied. These counter-accusations highlight the complex and multi-faceted nature of the tensions between the two countries, suggesting a breakdown in trust and a mutual

suspicion of each other's motives.

The potential for a genuine reset in relations hinges on several key factors. First and foremost, Canada must take concrete steps to address India's concerns regarding Khalistan separatism. This includes cracking down on extremist activities, preventing the misuse of Canadian institutions to promote anti-India propaganda, and ensuring that law enforcement agencies are adequately equipped to investigate and prosecute hate crimes and attacks targeting the Indian community.

Secondly, both countries must refrain from engaging in public accusations and instead rely on established diplomatic channels to address any concerns or grievances. The use of inflammatory rhetoric and unsubstantiated allegations only serves to exacerbate tensions and undermine trust. A commitment to transparency and open communication is essential for rebuilding a healthy and productive relationship.

Thirdly, India and Canada must reaffirm their commitment to the rule of law and respect for each other's sovereignty and territorial integrity. This includes refraining from interfering in each other's internal affairs and upholding international norms of diplomatic conduct.

Finally, both countries must focus on strengthening their economic ties and expanding cooperation in areas of mutual interest. Trade and investment can serve as a powerful bridge between the two nations, fostering greater understanding and interdependence. Cooperation in areas such as economic growth, supply chain development, and energy transition can also create opportunities for mutually beneficial partnerships.

From an Indian perspective, the reset in relations with Canada must be approached with cautious optimism. While the initial signs are encouraging, the road ahead is likely to be challenging. The success of this endeavor will depend on Canada's willingness to address India's legitimate concerns regarding Khalistan separatism, and on both countries' ability to rebuild trust and reaffirm their commitment to a mutually respectful and beneficial partnership. Only then can the India-Canada relationship truly be reset and placed on a solid and sustainable footing. The key lies in actions, not just words. •





# Fresh Drink **LEMON TEA**

The Wonderful Taste Of Life



**Order Now**

[www.lemontealndia.in](http://www.lemontealndia.in)



Sanjay Srivastava

# TUMPPLOSSION

*Is America Still Leading, or Losing?*

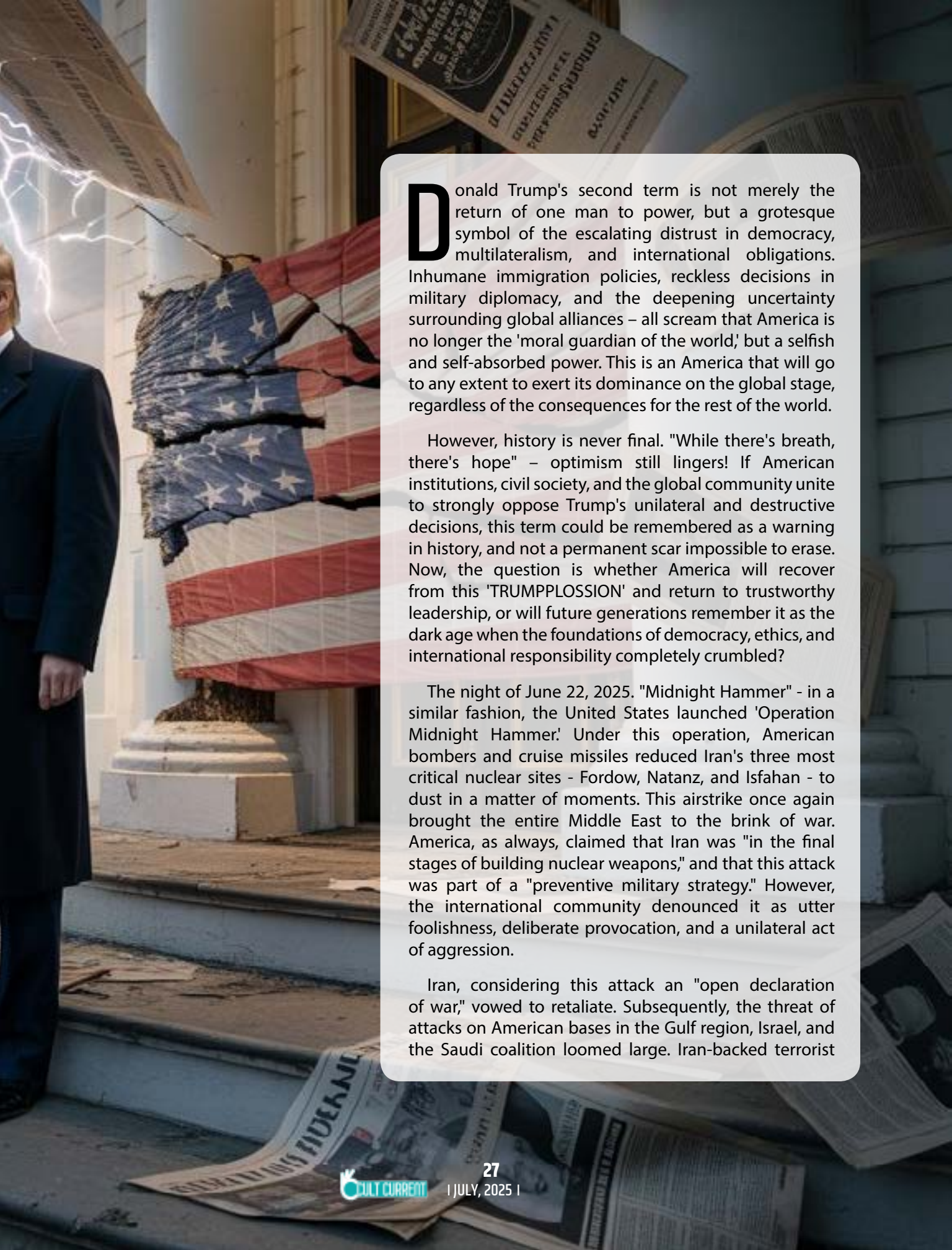
*America, once a symbol of global democracy and leadership, is now fractured from within and increasingly ineffective on the international stage. What were once hailed as “bold” policies during President Trump’s second term are now viewed as chaotic, self-absorbed, and dangerous. Crumbling diplomatic partnerships, internal polarization, and policy instability have dealt a devastating blow to America’s global credibility. At a time when the world is hurtling towards a new balance of power, the question intensifies:*

*Is Trump steering America towards a new direction – or pushing it towards the brink of collapse?*

*Is he laying the foundation for a world of peace and coexistence – or writing the script for a destructive new order?*

All cover stories have been researched and written by the **Cult Current** team under the leadership of **Sanjay Srivastava**.





**D**onald Trump's second term is not merely the return of one man to power, but a grotesque symbol of the escalating distrust in democracy, multilateralism, and international obligations. Inhumane immigration policies, reckless decisions in military diplomacy, and the deepening uncertainty surrounding global alliances – all scream that America is no longer the 'moral guardian of the world,' but a selfish and self-absorbed power. This is an America that will go to any extent to exert its dominance on the global stage, regardless of the consequences for the rest of the world.

However, history is never final. "While there's breath, there's hope" – optimism still lingers! If American institutions, civil society, and the global community unite to strongly oppose Trump's unilateral and destructive decisions, this term could be remembered as a warning in history, and not a permanent scar impossible to erase. Now, the question is whether America will recover from this 'TRUMPPLOSION' and return to trustworthy leadership, or will future generations remember it as the dark age when the foundations of democracy, ethics, and international responsibility completely crumbled?

The night of June 22, 2025. "Midnight Hammer" - in a similar fashion, the United States launched 'Operation Midnight Hammer.' Under this operation, American bombers and cruise missiles reduced Iran's three most critical nuclear sites - Fordow, Natanz, and Isfahan - to dust in a matter of moments. This airstrike once again brought the entire Middle East to the brink of war. America, as always, claimed that Iran was "in the final stages of building nuclear weapons," and that this attack was part of a "preventive military strategy." However, the international community denounced it as utter foolishness, deliberate provocation, and a unilateral act of aggression.

Iran, considering this attack an "open declaration of war," vowed to retaliate. Subsequently, the threat of attacks on American bases in the Gulf region, Israel, and the Saudi coalition loomed large. Iran-backed terrorist



organizations - Hezbollah, Houthi rebels, and Iraqi Shia militias - all joined forces, further deepening regional instability. "Setting Oil Ablaze" - America has done just that, and the consequences will be borne not only by the Middle East, but by the entire world.

Russia and China, as always, condemned this move by America as a violation of international law.

ready to crush itself under its own weight.

And this is the same Trump who roared at his election rallies that he would end the Russia-Ukraine war in 24 hours after coming to power! Who has falsely taken credit for stopping the conflict between India and Pakistan and was desperate to portray himself as a messiah of peace! "Empty Vessels Make the Most



This event proved that Trump's America trusts in immediate displays of power more than strategic restraint. This is a policy that could become a serious threat to global peace. "A Rolling Stone Gathers No Moss" - such is the state of America's foreign policy, which keeps reversing course with its own decisions.

This attack not only shakes West Asia but also devastates the global oil supply, energy security, and political equilibrium. "Provoking Trouble" - this proverb perfectly describes the situation, where a superpower is knowingly pushing itself into a quagmire of war, even knowing that the consequences could be devastating for the entire world. America is behaving like a rogue elephant,

Noise" - Trump's claims are nothing more than hollow promises, made only for show. His heart's desire has always been to win the Nobel Peace Prize, so he can call himself a leader of global peace. But the truth is that Trump's policies promote unrest more than peace.

Trump's eagerness for the Nobel Peace Prize exposes his narrow views and wishy washy leadership style. This prize, awarded to those who promote peace and harmony around the world, has become a spectacle in Trump's hands. His claim that he should have received this award three times not only questions the fairness of international organizations, but also reflects the mistrust he harbors towards

global institutions. "As You Sow, So Shall You Reap" - Trump must understand that winning a peace prize requires not only empty promises but concrete action.

By calling the Nobel Committee a "corrupt" and "left-leaning" institution, Trump has crossed all boundaries of diplomatic decorum. One expects a global leader to respect international institutions, especially those established to promote global peace, cooperation, and justice. "Great Cry and Little Wool" - Trump's criticism is full of pretense, as he himself has violated international laws and agreements.

Trump has cited some successes such as talks with North Korea, the Israel-Arab accords, and the India-Pakistan ceasefire, but the stability and broader global context of these efforts also have clear limitations. Analysts believe that many of these initiatives were unilateral, opaque, and driven by immediate political gain rather than long-term solutions. "Out of Sight, Out of Mind" - Trump's agreements were for show, aimed only at polishing his image, not establishing lasting peace.

Trump's foreign policy revolves around the "America First" slogan, which his supporters consider a bold and nation-first step. But, this same policy narrows America's leadership role on the international stage. "Praising Yourself is Half Scandal" - Trump never tires of praising his own policies, but the truth is that his policies are isolating America from the world.

Since the beginning of Trump's second term, his policies have been criticized from all sides. Some of his decisions have raised serious concerns for global stability, the environment, and health. Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement was a decision that many experts described as a major blow to global efforts against climate change. "Darkness Under the Lamp" - this saying perfectly describes Trump's environmental policy, because instead of protecting the environment in his own country, he is exacerbating the global climate crisis.

Overall, Trump's second term is proving to be a "TRUMPPLOSSION." His policies are not only spreading unrest globally but also creating many problems on the domestic front. In such a situation, it remains to be seen how the world deals with this "TRUMPPLOSSION" and moves towards a peaceful and stable future.

***Since the beginning of Trump's second term, his policies have been criticized from all sides. Some of his decisions have raised serious concerns for global stability, the environment, and health. Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement was a decision that many experts described as a major blow to global efforts against climate change.***

The Trump administration's distance from the United Nations, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and other global institutions, is like a deep wound, which is against America's historical international engagement. "Swimming Against the Tide" - something like this is happening, where America, deviating from the path of global cooperation, is walking on the path of isolationism. This is not just distance, but a breaking of the trust that the world had placed in America.

Trump's advocacy for Russia to be re-included in the G8 and the crude remarks made against leaders like Macron, tear apart the decorum of diplomatic dialogue. This is a "Sweet Tongue, Sharp Knife" policy, where friendship is talked about for show, but in reality, diplomacy is being strangled. Abstaining from joint declarations at conferences creates a wall for global cooperation that is difficult to cross.

Trump aggressively waged a tariff war in his second term. Although this war did not reach any conclusion, it poisoned global trade. "The Cat May Jump One Way or the Other" - it is difficult to say, but it is certain that America's trade relations with partners like China, India, and Canada are not the same as before. What impact this will have on the global supply chain, only time will tell.

Trump's absurd statements about Greenland, the Panama Canal, and Gaza were not only unrealistic but also set aside all the rules of international diplomacy. These statements dealt a severe blow

to the credibility of America's strategic outlook. "A Razor in the Hands of a Monkey" - something like this is happening, where power in Trump's hands is making a mockery of international diplomacy.

America, which teaches other countries about press freedom, is itself banning media houses from press conferences. This step is hollowing out the fundamental principles of democracy. "Fine Feathers do not make Fine Birds" - Trump's step is ridiculous, because he is suppressing press freedom in his own country and advising others. Trump has completely destroyed the reputation that America had regarding press freedom at the international level.

Trump's policies are pointing towards a new global power balance, where traditional allies are now considering alternatives to America. "Fortune Favors Fools" - such is the situation, where countries like China and the European Union are moving forward by taking advantage of America's weakening grip. Now America will either have to redefine its role or remain limited.

Trump's foreign policy has raised the question of whether, in a democratic system, the role of a global leader can only be driven by national interest, or whether it should also be linked to broader ethical, diplomatic, and humanitarian values. "Spare the Rod and Spoil the Child" - Trump must understand that the world does not run on strength alone, but ethics and responsibility are also necessary.

The instability that Donald Trump's policies have created on the global stage is not just a matter of America's internal politics but a deep hole in the fabric of the world order. "To Live in the Water and Wrestle with the Crocodile" - this policy of Trump can prove fatal for America, because he is weakening himself by taking enmity with the world. His priorities have been limited to domestic politics and the slogan 'America First', which has deeply hurt international cooperation, mutual trust, and institutional frameworks. In this situation, the reactions of the international community are also becoming sharp, clear, and multilateral.

Trump's policies have put the world community in a strange dilemma - whether to laugh or cry at his decisions. "As You Make Your Bed, So You Must Lie on

It" - this proverb fits perfectly here, because America is facing the serious consequences of the policies that it has created itself. Now America will have to bear the consequences of its actions.

By dismissing the Nobel Committee as a "corrupt" and "left-leaning" entity, Trump has shattered any semblance of diplomatic restraint. A global leader is expected to respect international institutions, especially those established to promote global peace, cooperation, and justice. "Penny Wise, Pound Foolish" - Trump's criticism rings hollow, as he himself has consistently flouted international laws and agreements.

Trump has cited some successes such as negotiations with North Korea, the Israel-Arab accords, and the India-Pakistan ceasefire, but the sustainability and wider global context of these efforts have clear limitations. Analysts argue that many of these initiatives were unilateral, lacked transparency, and were driven by short-term political gains rather than lasting solutions. "Here Today, Gone Tomorrow" - Trump's agreements were more about self-promotion







than establishing enduring peace.

Trump's foreign policy revolves around the "America First" slogan, lauded by his supporters as a bold and nation-centric approach. However, this same policy constricts America's leadership role on the international stage. "Self-Praise is No Recommendation" - Trump never tires of extolling his own policies, but the reality is that his actions are isolating America from the global community.

Since the onset of Trump's second term, his policies have faced widespread criticism. Certain decisions have sparked serious concerns for global

stability, the environment, and public health. Trump's withdrawal of the United States from the Paris Agreement was deemed by many experts as a significant blow to global efforts against climate change. "The Cobbler's Children Go Barefoot" - this proverb aptly describes Trump's environmental policy, as he exacerbates the global climate crisis instead of safeguarding the environment at home.

Overall, Trump's second term is proving to be a "TRUMPPLOSSION." His policies are not only fomenting global unrest but also creating numerous problems domestically. The world now faces the



daunting task of navigating this "TRUMPPLOSSION" and striving towards a peaceful and stable future, a future increasingly uncertain under Trump's erratic leadership.

The Trump administration's estrangement from the United Nations, the International Criminal Court (ICC), and other global institutions, is a gaping wound, starkly contrasting America's historical international engagement. "Putting the Cart Before the Horse" - this aptly describes the situation, with America, forsaking the path of global cooperation, instead embracing isolationism. This represents not just a physical distance, but a rupture of the trust the world once placed in America.

Trump's advocacy for readmitting Russia into the G8 and the crude remarks made about leaders like Macron, shred the very fabric of diplomatic decorum. It's a "Wolf in Sheep's Clothing" policy, where friendship is feigned while diplomacy is subtly strangled. The avoidance of joint declarations at global summits erects a wall hindering global cooperation that is nearly impossible to surmount.

Trump aggressively launched a trade war in his second term. Though this war has been largely inconclusive, it has poisoned global trade relations. "The Die is Cast" - it's difficult to foresee the ultimate outcome, but it's undeniable that America's trade relations with partners like China, India, and Canada are irrevocably altered. Only time will tell the lasting impact on the global supply chain.

Trump's absurd pronouncements concerning Greenland, the Panama Canal, and Gaza were not only divorced from reality but also disregarded all norms of international diplomacy. These statements have dealt a severe blow to the credibility of America's strategic outlook. "Giving a Knife to a Child" - this is akin to handing power to someone who has no understanding of its responsibility.

America, once a staunch advocate for press freedom, is now banning media outlets from press conferences, undermining the fundamental tenets of democracy. "Physician, Heal Thyself" - Trump's actions are laughable, as he suppresses press freedom at home while preaching it abroad. Trump has utterly tarnished America's reputation on international

press freedom.

Trump's policies indicate a shift toward a new global power balance, with traditional allies now exploring alternatives to American leadership. "When the Cat is Away, the Mice Will Play" - the situation is such that countries like China and the European Union are capitalizing on America's weakening influence, seizing opportunities to advance their own agendas. America must now either redefine its role or risk becoming marginalized.

Trump's foreign policy has raised the fundamental question of whether a democratic system's global leadership role can be solely guided by national interests, or if it must also be anchored in broader ethical, diplomatic, and humanitarian values. "Talk to the Hand" - it will not change anything, Trump must grasp that the world is not only driven by brute force, but also by ethics and responsibility.

The instability sown by Donald Trump's policies on the global stage is not just a matter of America's internal affairs; it's a deep fissure in the very fabric of the world order. "Cutting Off Your Nose to Spite Your Face" - Trump's policy may prove fatal for America, as he weakens himself by antagonizing the world. His priorities remain limited to domestic politics and the slogan 'America First,' which has deeply wounded international cooperation, mutual trust, and established institutions. The responses from the international community are becoming increasingly sharp, pointed, and multilateral.

Trump's policies have left the world community in a surreal state of bewilderment - struggling to decide whether to laugh or cry at his decisions. "What Goes Around Comes Around" - this proverb is particularly apt, because America is now reaping the dire consequences of its self-made policies. Now, America must bear the fruits of its actions.

The European Union, particularly Germany and France, were not only angered by Trump's indifference towards NATO and his uncooperative demeanor at G7 summits, but they resolved to bolster their strategic autonomy. "Once Bitten, Twice Shy" - the European Union is no longer willing to blindly trust America and is forced to take steps for its own security.

Trump's decisions to withdraw from the World

Health Organization and the Paris Climate Agreement have painted America as a "global spoiler," a nation unwilling to cooperate. Environmental experts have gone so far as to label Trump an "environmental arsonist." "Watching the House Burn Down" - Trump is reveling in watching the world burn, showing no concern for the environment.

On the trade policy front, economic clashes with China, India, and the European Union, tariff wars, and currency disputes have alienated America's trading partners. "Sawing off the Branch You're Sitting On" - Trump is undermining his own interests by antagonizing his trading allies. Countries like India have faced difficulties not only economically, but strategically, as America's policy has been perpetually unstable.

Overall, these reactions make it clear that America's allies have begun to view it not as a world leader, but as an "unreliable partner." The intolerance and selfishness displayed in Trump's words and actions are at odds with today's multilateral world. "Nero Fiddled While Rome Burned" - Trump is engrossed in his own agenda, oblivious to the world's plight.

Meanwhile, the agreement between Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr.'s cryptocurrency company, World Liberty Financial (WLF), and Pakistan casts a shadow over the Trump family's image. "Like Father, Like Son" - Trump's sons are also following in their father's footsteps, misusing power without restraint. This agreement occurred when the Trump administration was feigning mediation amid India-Pak tensions, heightening concerns about conflicts of interest. A US Senate committee has launched an inquiry into this deal to investigate whether the Trump family used their political influence for private gain. "Too Late to Lock the Stable Door When the Horse is Stolen" - The Trump family is openly engaging in corruption using their power, and they fear no one.

This story does not end here, as Trump's reign is still ongoing, and he is constantly doing something that surprises the world. "A Kingdom of Fools" - such is the state of America, where everything is topsy-turvy under Trump's leadership. The American administration's immigration policy has shaken the world. Thousands of people took to the streets in Los Angeles to protest Trump's immigration policy,



causing chaos in the city. Protesters described it as inhumane and unconstitutional. There were clashes between police and protesters, and some arrests were also made. Human rights organizations described it as a "crime against humanity." This protest not only questioned Trump's immigration policy but also deeply damaged America's democratic image.

During Trump's tenure, America has chosen a path that will isolate it from the world. It remains to be seen whether America can recover from this "TRUMPPLOSSION," or whether it will become a tale of destruction that future generations will never forget.

Global institutions such as the United Nations, human rights organizations, and UNICEF have unanimously condemned Trump's immigration policy as a gross violation of human rights. "Casting Pearls Before Swine" - the warnings of these organizations proved ineffective for the Trump administration, which was bent on doing its own thing. Even America's First Lady Melania Trump and former President Barack Obama had to condemn this inhumane policy, indicating that this step was not only against international laws, but also against the basic morals of humanity. "When the House is on Fire, What Can You Expect from the Neighbor?" - America itself was violating human rights, so what could be expected from the world?

The Trump administration also attempted to dismantle the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) program, threatening to strip millions of "Dreamers"—children brought to the U.S. illegally by their parents—of education, employment, and legal protection. "Kicking a Man When He's Down" - the Trump administration was essentially making the vulnerable even more helpless. The U.S. Supreme Court deemed this decision unconstitutional in 2020, yet Trump continued to target DACA, emblematic of his stubbornness and lack of empathy.

This policy created profound divisions within America. Universities, governors, and civil organizations condemned this move as "an assault on the future of students." This was a case of "sacrificing humanity at the altar of political expediency" which not only violated legal processes but also wounded



the soul of a nation that has always prided itself on being a "land of immigrants." "A Wolf in Sheep's Clothing"- America presents itself as a land of immigrants, and yet, it treats them inhumanely.

Trump repeatedly fueled racial animosity by labeling Mexican and other Latin American migrants as "criminals," "rapists," and "drug dealers." His "Travel Ban" targeting Muslim-majority countries not only institutionalized Islamophobia but also rejected America's diversity. "It Takes Two to Tango" - Trump cut off America from the world with unilateral decisions and drew lines of division in his own country. The ACLU and other organizations condemned this ban as unconstitutional, causing profound damage to American soft power. Across the globe, America's image shifted from a "nation of refuge" to a "fortress with closed doors." "Like Master, Like Man" - under Trump's rule, America's image became that of a cruel



and insensitive nation, forgetting its own values and principles.

Matters took a turn for the worse when the American President broke diplomatic protocol by meeting with Pakistani Army Chief General Asim Munir, sparking surprise and suspicion in the international community. This move suggested that Trump was bypassing elected governments in Pakistan, preferring direct deals with the military establishment. This cast a large question mark on the credibility of Pakistan's democratic process. "Birds of a Feather Flock Together" - this meeting was evidence that Trump was willing to go to any extent in the game of power and authority, even if it meant disregarding democratic values.

This strategy may have been an attempt to limit China's influence, as aligning the Pakistani army with

America could strain the China-Pak alliance. However, this strategy places US-Pakistan relations on tactical equations rather than a stable footing, which could prove deceptive and dangerous in the long run. "To Have Your Cake and Eat It Too" - Trump wanted to achieve multiple goals with a single move, but this strategy could backfire.

This meeting occurred at a time when relations between India and Pakistan were extremely strained. Trump had offered to "mediate" on the Kashmir issue in the past, which India had rejected outright. In that context, direct talks with the army could cause concern for India. This was akin to "cutting off your nose to spite your face" - Trump was not only harming America with his flawed policies but also endangering allied countries like India.

It is essential for the United Nations and other multilateral institutions to play an active role, maintaining the balance of power and protecting the world from the consequences of Trump's extremist policies. If this happens, Trump's tenure will serve as a warning for the future—an example that the misdeeds of power, when in injudicious hands, have a detrimental impact not only on one country but on the entire world.

In conclusion, it is difficult to say how long Donald Trump's "TRUMPPLOSSION" will last, but the world must decide whether it will recover from this devastation and move towards a better future, or continue to perpetuate this legacy of destruction.

"Whom God Protects, No One Can Kill" - hope still remains. If the international community works together, Trump's destructive steps can be reversed, and a peaceful and just world order can be established.

"After Darkness Comes Light" - it is important to remember that every bad period does not last forever. Trump's tenure was a dark age that taught the world many lessons. It is now up to us to take advantage of those lessons and build a better tomorrow.

Even so, Trump's "TRUMPPLOSSION" can be a new beginning for the world. This is an opportunity where we can learn from our mistakes and move towards a more just, peaceful, and sustainable future. •

# THE COST OF CRUELTY

*Under Donald Trump, U.S. immigration policy veered into unprecedented territory—marked by travel bans, family separations, and mass detentions under the banner of “America First.” Nowhere were the human costs more visible than in Los Angeles, a sanctuary city turned epicenter of resistance and trauma. This article explores how Trump’s hardline stance upended lives, strained institutions, and challenged the very ideals that once defined the American identity.*

Under Donald Trump’s presidency, the United States underwent a seismic shift in its approach to immigration. Framed under the nationalist slogan “America First,” his administration implemented sweeping policies that disrupted the legal and humanitarian fabric of the country. Travel bans targeting Muslim-majority nations, the cancellation of DACA protections, family separations at the border, and reduced legal immigration pathways collectively signaled a hardline approach. While these measures were touted as essential for border security, they ignited legal chaos, economic strain, and a crisis of identity—felt most acutely in cities like Los Angeles.

As a sanctuary city with a large immigrant population, Los Angeles became a frontline witness and victim of Trump’s immigration crackdown. The “Zero Tolerance” policy of 2018, which criminally prosecuted all illegal border crossings, resulted in thousands of families being separated—children placed in detention centers while parents faced prosecution. Images of toddlers in cages circulated worldwide, generating outrage and protest. Los Angeles saw mass demonstrations demanding reunification, with civil rights groups like the ACLU of Southern California filing lawsuits to halt the separations and reunite families. Many children, however, remained lost in a bureaucratic maze for months. Schools in immigrant-heavy neighborhoods reported

spikes in absenteeism, as parents feared deportation raids. Mental health professionals warned of trauma epidemics among children suffering from separation anxiety, fear of ICE raids, and the stigma of undocumented status. Local law enforcement agencies, caught between federal mandates and community trust, found themselves alienated from the very populations they served. In sanctuary jurisdictions, the overlap between ICE and local police blurred, heightening distrust and eroding cooperation in crime prevention.

Trump’s policies also reverberated through the economy. California’s agricultural sector, heavily dependent on migrant labor, experienced severe workforce shortages. Construction and hospitality industries, vital to the state’s economy, suffered similar setbacks. At the same time, the suspension of visa programs like H-1B stifled innovation in L.A.’s booming tech and startup sectors. A Brookings Institution report estimated that billions were lost in GDP due to restricted access to foreign talent and labor.

Beyond economic impact, the policies sparked a cultural and diplomatic backlash. Countries like Mexico, Guatemala, and El Salvador denounced the treatment of their citizens, while global institutions like the United Nations condemned family separation as a human rights violation. Los Angeles, a city proud of its internationalism, faced the collateral damage of damaged diplomacy.





Sister-city programs and cultural exchanges stalled, and the city's global image suffered. Perhaps most alarming was the erosion of America's moral leadership. The Statue of Liberty's message of refuge and hope stood in stark contrast to images of militarized borders and abandoned migrant families. In Union Station, immigrant families released by ICE without aid became symbols of a nation turning its back on its values. Activists, artists, and storytellers across Los Angeles captured these moments through murals, films, and performance art, turning personal pain into collective protest.

The political impact of these policies also emboldened white nationalist rhetoric, giving rise to hate crimes, particularly against Latino and Middle Eastern communities

in Los Angeles. Community organizations reported spikes in violence, graffiti, and harassment. Meanwhile, immigrant communities lived in an atmosphere of anxiety, where even schools, churches, and hospitals—historically considered safe spaces—became zones of fear.

Trump's immigration legacy left lasting scars on Los Angeles and the nation. While framed as protective, these policies proved divisive, costly, and counterproductive. As America considers future immigration strategies, the lesson is clear: exclusion, fear, and hostility do not make a country stronger. Rebuilding trust, restoring legal pathways, and honoring the nation's founding ideals will be critical for healing—not just in Los Angeles, but across a fractured America. ●



# TARIFF

# Tantrums



***Donald Trump's aggressive tariff campaign, masked as economic patriotism, has wreaked havoc on global trade and U.S. markets alike. What began as a promise to protect American industries has spiraled into a self-inflicted economic crisis—disrupting supply chains, inflating prices, and alienating allies. As protectionist policies mount, the U.S. risks isolating itself in an increasingly interconnected world.***

---

**D**onald Trump, the self-proclaimed master negotiator and champion of all things American, has once again decided to “shake things up” on the global stage, this time by unleashing a tariff blitzkrieg upon the world. Ostensibly designed to safeguard American industries from the ravages of unfair competition, this protectionist crusade feels less like a calculated strategy and more like a toddler throwing a tantrum in a global trade sandbox, flinging sand (in this case, tariffs) at anyone who dares to build a sandcastle higher than his. The result? Fractured supply chains, fueled inflation, and an increasingly isolated America, left to sulk in the corner with its protectionist toys while the rest of the world tries to clean up the mess.

The initial promise of tariffs is always enticing: a gleaming shield protecting domestic industries from the “onslaught” of foreign competition, allowing them to thrive and create jobs. In practice, however, tariffs have a nasty habit of acting more like boomerangs, whacking the thrower squarely in the face. U.S. firms, suppliers, and ultimately, the long-suffering consumers, bear the brunt of these policies through higher input costs, disrupted operations, and a general sense of economic unease. As a dryly academic Wharton School analysis points out, Trump’s tariff regime—ranging from a somewhat comical 10% to a positively ludicrous 60% on targeted countries—functions as a hidden tax, slowing GDP growth and reducing household incomes by a greater margin than an equivalent increase in corporate taxes. It’s economic

alchemy gone horribly wrong, transforming the potential for prosperity into a steaming pile of fool’s gold. One might wonder if anyone in the administration bothered to consult an actual economist before embarking on this ill-advised crusade.

The ever-pesky specter of economic policy uncertainty, that dreaded boogeyman of financial markets, is climbing to record highs, fueled by Trump’s erratic trade pronouncements and his general penchant for economic brinkmanship. One never quite knows what the next tweet will bring, what industry will be arbitrarily targeted, or what long-standing trade relationship will be summarily dismantled. Japan, among other economies, has already seen its GDP take a not-insignificant hit (around 0.9%) due to the global insecurity sparked by U.S. tariffs. Businesses, understandably hesitant to invest in such a volatile climate, are delaying hiring and capital projects. Households, faced with rising prices and the looming threat of economic recession, are postponing those big-ticket purchases they were so diligently saving up for. The result is a global domino effect, a messy and disheartening slowdown in what was once a reasonably synchronized period of economic growth, all thanks to one man’s penchant for protectionist pyrotechnics.

And of course, no trade war is complete without a healthy dose of retaliatory tariffs, those vengeful spirits that haunt the global marketplace, forever seeking to even the score. From Canada and Mexico to India



and China, countries are responding to Trump's tariff offensive with tariffs of their own, creating a tit-for-tat cycle of escalating duties and escalating tensions. The triggers for these skirmishes are often absurdly petty: higher duties on Chinese electronics, Canadian energy, Indian goods—the economic equivalent of playground squabbles escalating into full-blown gang wars. These moves erode trust, push national economies toward recession, and destabilize key sectors globally, transforming international trade into a high-stakes game of chicken with potentially catastrophic consequences for everyone involved.

The damage, naturally, isn't confined to government spreadsheets and macroeconomic indicators. Industries across the spectrum, from carmakers struggling to source affordable steel to construction companies grappling with sky-high aluminum prices, are feeling the pinch of Trump's policies. Consumers, of course, are the ultimate victims, paying more for everything from clothing and electronics to groceries and gasoline. U.S. steel and aluminum duties have inflated costs for manufacturers and builders, squeezing profit margins and forcing companies to either absorb the losses or pass them on to consumers, further fueling inflation and eroding purchasing power. Even global behemoths like Walmart, those masters of supply chain efficiency, have admitted to either absorbing or passing on these increased costs, signaling the pervasive and inescapable nature of the tariff burden.

The international economic bodies, those bastions of measured and cautious pronouncements, are now sounding the alarm with increasing urgency, warning of the trade war's devastating toll on the global economy. The OECD, for instance, projects global GDP shrinking to a dismal 2.9% in 2025–26—down from a previously anemic 3.3%—citing trade uncertainty and tariff barriers as the primary culprits. The IMF, never one to be outdone in the doomsaying department, echoes this grim prognosis, projecting U.S. growth slashed to approximately 1.6% and warning that global recession risks have tripled under prolonged tariffs. It's a symphony of economic pessimism, all conducted with gusto by Trump himself, a masterful performance of self-inflicted wounds on a global scale. One has to wonder if he truly grasps the magnitude of the damage he's inflicting, or if he simply sees it as a necessary sacrifice in his quest to "Make America Great Again."

Adding to the already considerable mess is the



looming threat of inflation, ever ready to pounce at the slightest provocation. Tariffs, combined with the ever-present threat of escalating tensions in the Middle East, threaten to raise energy and consumer prices across the board, reversing hard-won inflation gains and forcing the Federal Reserve to delay much-anticipated interest rate cuts. This creates a precarious situation where households and businesses alike are squeezed from both ends, struggling to cope with rising costs and limited access to capital. The financial markets, while temporarily buoyed by fleeting moments of optimism, risk a catastrophic tumble if economic growth falters, transforming Wall Street into a high-stakes casino where the odds are stacked against everyone but the house. It's a recipe for disaster, meticulously crafted and expertly executed by an administration seemingly indifferent to the consequences.

Unsurprisingly, Trump's trade policies are forcing a dramatic realignment of global economic partnerships. Countries are scrambling to forge new alliances and



***The most unsettling aspect of this entire debacle is the eerie echo it evokes of the Great Depression and the infamous Smoot–Hawley Tariff, widely blamed for collapsing global trade and exacerbating the economic crisis.***

the levels seen during that disastrous period, risking a repeat of international fragmentation as economies erect defensive trade blocs, shutting themselves off from the world and condemning themselves to economic stagnation. It's as if history is trying to warn us, shouting from the rooftops about the dangers of protectionism, but the Trump administration, blinded by its own ideological fervor, simply refuses to listen. One has to wonder if they truly believe that "this time is different," or if they're simply willing to gamble with the global economy in pursuit of their own narrow political goals.

In conclusion, Trump's trade offensive may provide a temporary boost to his domestic approval ratings, appealing to a misguided sense of economic nationalism, but it's ultimately a pyrrhic victory, a triumph that comes at such a high cost that it's barely worth celebrating. U.S. consumers, workers, and markets are paying a steep price for Trump's protectionist zeal, enduring higher prices, reduced economic opportunities, and a diminished quality of life. Meanwhile, global growth is stalling, supply chains are fracturing, and strategic alliances are shifting, leaving America isolated and diminished on the world stage. America's once far-reaching and admired economy may find itself more insulated, but it also finds itself more alone, a fortress besieged by its own self-inflicted wounds.

Ultimately, Trump's trade war serves as a stark reminder of the dangers of economic nationalism and the importance of international cooperation. Tariffs, in theory, are supposed to build walls to protect domestic industries; in practice, they tend to wreck entire economies, both at home and abroad. The hope now is that the world can learn from this misguided experiment and steer a course back toward a more open, cooperative, and prosperous global trading system. But with Trump still wielding the tariff hammer, the future remains uncertain, and the threat of further economic disruption looms large. •

abandon old loyalties in a desperate attempt to mitigate the damage and protect their own interests. India, for example, is emerging as a potential beneficiary of the trade war, as firms divert manufacturing away from China to more neutral hubs, capitalizing on the chaos and positioning itself as a rising economic power. While some U.S. allies, like Canada and Mexico, seek solace in regional partnerships, pivoting deeper into North American trade, many countries are forming their own regional blocs to insulate themselves from the economic shocks emanating from Washington, creating a fragmented and increasingly hostile global trading system. The long-term implications of these shifts are difficult to predict, but one thing is certain: the world is changing, and America's position within it is becoming increasingly precarious.

Perhaps the most unsettling aspect of this entire debacle is the eerie echo it evokes of the Great Depression and the infamous Smoot–Hawley Tariff, widely blamed for collapsing global trade and exacerbating the economic crisis. The 2025 tariffs, in many cases, exceed

# "No More Free Rides?"

## Trump's NATO Exit and the Price of Abandoning Allies

**D**onald Trump's recent pronouncements regarding NATO – that the U.S. "funds NATO while Europe lives the good life" – weren't merely critiques. They were precisely calibrated, if predictably ham-fisted, blows to one of the world's most enduring security alliances. His "America First" dogma, by now a tired cliché, has reached new heights of absurdity, with NATO being repackaged as a bad deal, a sort of dilapidated country club overrun with mooching Europeans sipping free cocktails on the backs of hardworking American taxpayers.

Beneath this cartoonish bluster lies a disturbing truth: Trump isn't negotiating; he's engaged in a slow-motion demolition of America's role in the world. He's trading strategic reliability for the fleeting dopamine rush of a well-received rally speech. And in doing so, he's not simply insulting allies – he's practically gift-wrapping geopolitical victories for adversaries who can barely contain their glee.

### NATO as a Business Transaction: The Art of the Protection Racket

To Trump, NATO isn't a strategic necessity forged in the crucible of WWII and the Cold War – it's an Excel spreadsheet gone rogue. He perpetually frames the alliance as a disastrous investment, where the U.S. foots the bill while Europe leisurely polishes its monocles. Never mind that NATO's structure isn't based on membership dues or user fees. Trump's petulant complaint reduces complex multilateralism to a mafia-esque protection scheme: "Pay

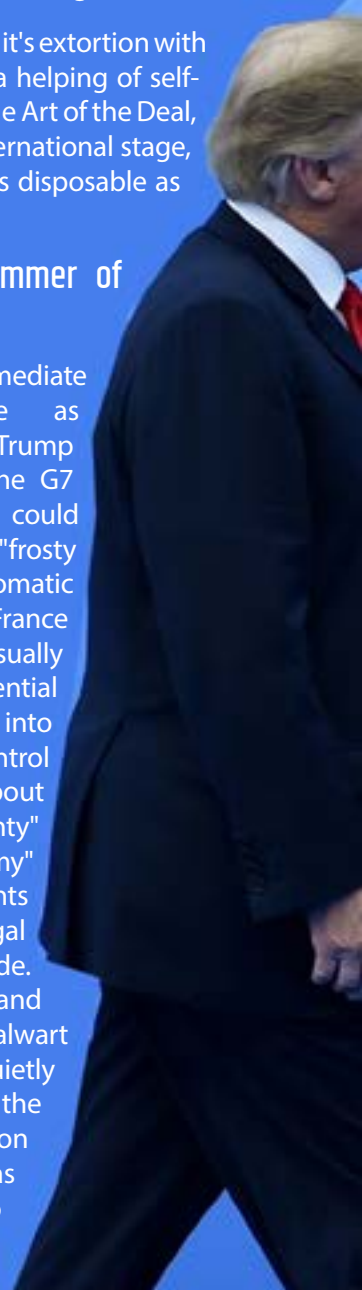
up, or you're on your own, capisce?"

In essence, he's transformed Article 5 – NATO's sacred mutual defense clause, the very bedrock of the alliance – into a negotiable term of service, a "terms and conditions may apply" disclaimer scrawled in tiny font at the bottom of a predatory loan agreement.

This isn't diplomacy; it's extortion with a flag pin and an extra helping of self-aggrandizement. It's the Art of the Deal, reimagined for the international stage, where principles are as disposable as yesterday's headlines.

### A G7 Without a Glimmer of Hope?

The immediate reverberations were as predictable as a Trump tweet at 3 AM. At the G7 Summit, the mood could best be described as "frosty with a chance of diplomatic meltdown." France and Germany, usually paragons of deferential diplomacy, went into strategic damage control mode, muttering about "European sovereignty" and "strategic autonomy" like worried parents discussing the prodigal son's latest escapade. Meanwhile, Canada and the UK, those stalwart transatlantic allies, quietly began asking the uncomfortable question that everyone was desperately trying to avoid: "What if the U.S. simply... doesn't





show up next time?"

Trump's absence wasn't merely physical – it was philosophical, a gaping void where leadership and vision should have been. He effectively turned the G7 into a G6, a gathering of weary nations trying to salvage what they could from the wreckage of American exceptionalism. More crucially, he turned global diplomacy into a revolving door of fleeting agreements made on the whims of ego, not the solid

foundation of evidence and shared values.

## Transatlantic Rift: Cracks Become Fault Lines and Filing for Divorce

Europe, long accustomed to the cozy embrace of the U.S. security umbrella, now finds itself scrambling to construct a new one from scratch, like a homeowner frantically patching a leaky roof in the middle of a hurricane. Germany is suddenly

throwing money at its defense budget with a fervor previously reserved for its luxury car industry, investing over €100 billion in an attempt to modernize its rust-bucket military. France, with its perennial aspirations of global grandeur, is rallying behind the concept of "strategic autonomy," envisioning a European army capable of standing toe-to-toe with the world's superpowers (minus, of course, the pesky need to actually deploy it). And the Scandinavian states, Poland, and the Baltic nations, ever mindful of the ominous shadow cast by their Russian neighbor, are frantically forging contingency frameworks in case Washington abruptly pulls the plug, leaving them exposed to the icy winds of Putin's geopolitical ambitions.

This isn't "burden-sharing," that quaint notion of allies cooperating for mutual benefit. It's post-divorce contingency planning, the frantic division of assets and the drafting of restraining orders in anticipation of a messy and acrimonious separation.

Trump's simplistic logic – that America has been somehow bamboozled into defending Europe – willfully ignores the fact that U.S. global leadership isn't a charitable act; it's a strategic imperative, a calculated investment in stability and influence. When you undermine allies, you don't just shrink responsibilities – you shrink influence, rendering yourself a



diminished force in a world that increasingly demands cooperation and collective action.

## Russia Smiles While NATO Recoils in Horror

Perhaps the most chilling and dangerous fallout from Trump's reckless rhetoric is the geopolitical opportunity he's so generously handed to Vladimir Putin on a silver platter. Putin has long harbored a fervent desire to fracture NATO, to splinter the alliance into a collection of squabbling nations easily manipulated and dominated by Moscow. Trump, in his infinite wisdom, has handed him the sledgehammer, offering Putin the chance to realize his long-held dream. When Trump casually declared that he'd "let Russia do whatever the hell they want" to delinquent NATO members, Moscow didn't just break out the champagne – it took copious notes, meticulously studying the chinks in the alliance's armor and plotting its next move.

Ukraine is now a grim cautionary tale, a stark reminder of the price of vulnerability and the consequences of relying on unreliable partners. Eastern European countries like Estonia and Latvia, those small but fiercely independent nations bordering Russia, are gripped by a quiet panic, acutely aware that in Trump's transactional world, their sovereignty is only as strong as their checkbook, and that their freedom is only as valuable as the latest poll numbers in Iowa.

In emboldening Russia through such breathtaking rhetorical negligence, Trump didn't just weaken NATO – he weakened deterrence itself, inviting aggression and undermining the very foundations of peace and stability in Europe.

## Strategic Suicide in Slow Motion: A Darwin Award for Foreign Policy

The irony is as cruel as it is predictable. By threatening to pull out of NATO unless other members "pay more," Trump may inadvertently accelerate the very reality he claims to fear: a Europe militarily independent of the U.S., a continent capable of defending itself without relying on American firepower. And once Europe learns to walk alone, Washington may find itself without a seat at the table it built, relegated to the status of a disgruntled spectator watching from the sidelines as the rest of the world moves on without it.



American leadership isn't sustained by invoices and threats; it's sustained by trust, by a shared commitment to values and principles, and by a demonstrated willingness to stand by allies in times of crisis. And trust, once broken, isn't easily repaired by throwing another percentage point at the defense budget; it requires a sustained effort to rebuild relationships and reaffirm commitments, a task that seems increasingly beyond the grasp of a leader whose only currency is transactional advantage.

## The Bigger Picture: From Superpower to Super-Pariah?

The Trump doctrine, if one can dignify it with such a lofty term, rests on a crude and simplistic equation: power = money = leverage. But in the intricate dance of diplomacy, power flows from alliances, from adherence to norms and treaties, and from predictability. Trump, with his erratic tweets, his dollar-driven ultimatums, and his apparent disdain for anything resembling strategic thinking, offers none of those.

In Asia, allies like Japan and South Korea, long accustomed to relying on American protection, are quietly hedging their bets, exploring alternative



security arrangements and forging closer ties with regional powers like China. In the Middle East, authoritarian regimes take note: America under Trump doesn't punish betrayal; it rewards audacity, emboldening rogue actors and undermining the delicate balance of power in a volatile region.

Global perception matters, perhaps more than any spreadsheet or balance sheet. And under Trump, America is no longer the indispensable nation, the beacon of freedom and democracy that once inspired hope and admiration around the world. It's the unpredictable one, the unreliable partner, a liability disguised as a leader, a cautionary tale for a world grappling with the challenges of a rapidly changing global order.

### **Satirical Interlude: NATO Membership, Now on Subscription!**

Imagine NATO as a streaming service for the 21st century, a geopolitical Netflix if you will. The "Basic Plan" offers access to empty promises and vaguely worded statements of support. The "Premium Plan" includes slightly more convincing security guarantees, plus access to behind-the-scenes briefings with

disgruntled diplomats. And the "Deluxe Tier" provides full U.S. commitment... as long as you're on good terms with the host, and as long as your defense budget meets his arbitrary and ever-changing demands. With Trump at the helm, even America's closest allies are left wondering, "Did we accidentally subscribe to America, or just another season of *The Apprentice*?"

### **The Moral Hollowing of Foreign Policy: What Price Glory?**

Trump's vision of foreign policy lacks one fundamental element: a moral compass, a sense of right and wrong that transcends the narrow pursuit of self-interest. He doesn't ask what alliances stand for – only what they deliver in terms of tangible benefits. But NATO was never about ROI, about maximizing profit and minimizing risk. It was about collective resolve, forged in blood and bound by trust, a commitment to defending shared values against a common enemy. Undermining it for the sake of applause lines and fleeting political gains is not just ignorant – it's historically obscene, a betrayal of the sacrifices made by generations who fought to build a more peaceful and secure world.

### **Conclusion: When the Sheriff Leaves Town – and Takes the Horses**

If NATO ultimately crumbles under the weight of Trump's ego and transactional approach, history won't remember it as a mere financial disagreement. It will remember it as a betrayal by the one country that once held it together, a tragic failure of leadership that left the world more vulnerable, more divided, and more dangerous.

Trump sees alliances as scams, treaties as traps, and diplomacy as theater, a stage for his own self-aggrandizing performance. But what he calls "deals," the world sees as desperation – and perhaps, decline, the twilight of American power and influence.

Once upon a time, America was the sheriff of the free world, the defender of liberty and justice, the guarantor of peace and stability. Under Trump, it's just a man selling badges – and charging rent for protection, a sad and cynical caricature of its former self. The world is watching, and the verdict is far from flattering. •





# America First Earth Last

**D**onald Trump's potential return to power looms as a climate catastrophe for the world, threatening to undo decades of progress and dismantle America's leadership role. A second Trump administration poised to pull the U.S. out of the Paris Agreement and other vital climate initiatives isn't just a policy shift; it's a devastating act of self-immolation on the global stage, drawing condemnation from scientists, diplomats, and world

leaders who recognize the profound dangers of abandoning our planet.

Historically, the United States has been a key player in shaping international environmental protocols, from the Kyoto Protocol (despite its later rejection) to the Paris Climate Accord under President Obama. These commitments projected American diplomatic strength, fostered clean energy innovation, and mobilized global financing for climate-vulnerable



China and India to grow unfettered. This view ignores the long-term global economic and environmental costs of inaction, dismissing the strategic value of collaborative leadership in combating climate change.

The environmental ramifications are dire. The U.S. withdrawal weakens international climate targets, jeopardizing the Paris Agreement's goal of limiting global warming to 1.5°C. Without American leadership and funding, climate-vulnerable nations struggle to adapt. The exit halts U.S. involvement in critical funding mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund, the Loss and Damage Fund, and the Just Energy Transition Partnership (JETP), leaving a multibillion-dollar gap in climate financing. The Times Union rightly argues that Trump's rollback signals a broader retreat from global responsibility, increasing the risk of crossing the 1.5°C threshold and triggering irreversible consequences for ecosystems, food security, and human health.

Diplomatic and strategic fallout is inevitable. Leaders from the EU, South America, Africa, and Asia have voiced concerns about the destabilizing effects of America's climate policy reversals. As André Corrêa do Lago, president of the upcoming COP30 summit, noted in *The Guardian*, the absence of the U.S. will make it harder for other countries to meet their own climate commitments, eroding the credibility of multilateral negotiations. This power vacuum has been readily exploited by China, which has

nations. Trump's initial withdrawal from the Paris Agreement in 2017 was a dramatic departure. A second withdrawal solidifies the perception of the U.S. as an unreliable partner, prioritizing narrow nationalism over global well-being.

Trump's "America First" doctrine places short-sighted domestic industrial growth above international cooperation, claiming climate agreements impose "unfair economic burdens" while allowing nations like



strategically positioned itself as a climate champion, investing heavily in renewable energy. The Financial Times highlighted how the European Union and China stepped in to support South Africa's energy transition after the U.S. abandoned its JETP commitments, a band-aid solution that underscores America's waning influence.

Economically and technologically, withdrawing from climate agreements hinders American interests. Green technology is both an environmental imperative and a major growth sector. American companies risk falling behind European and Asian counterparts in clean energy innovation as the world pivots to renewable energy. Regulatory instability caused by policy whiplash also deters private sector investment. The Washington Post revealed that mixed signals from the government undermine investor confidence, particularly in sectors requiring long-term commitments, pushing innovation and capital to countries with stable, forward-looking climate policies. The impact on developing nations is particularly devastating. Climate change disproportionately affects countries that contributed least to the crisis. American leadership and funding have been crucial in supporting mitigation and adaptation strategies in Africa, Southeast Asia, and the Pacific Islands. The sudden halt of funding jeopardizes critical infrastructure projects, disaster resilience plans, and agricultural reforms. AP News and the World Resources Institute report that the absence of U.S. contributions significantly delays global progress, placing undue pressure on the EU and other donor nations and raising questions about the sustainability of global climate finance.



Trump's actions undermine the rule-based international order, striking at the heart of accountability, cooperation, and shared responsibility. Geopol Report argues that such actions embolden other nations to renege on their international commitments, potentially triggering a domino effect that unravels decades of diplomatic progress, a particularly dangerous prospect given the necessity of collective action on climate change.

Finally, America's global image suffers from this retreat. By withdrawing from climate accords, the U.S. tarnishes its reputation as a benevolent superpower. International think tanks show a decline in global trust toward the U.S., particularly among youth and civil society organizations. The symbolic value of U.S. climate leadership cannot be overstated. Its departure weakens enforcement and sends a message that short-term political gains outweigh long-term global responsibilities.

Trump's decision to abandon climate agreements in a potential second term carries dire consequences for the planet and the United States' standing in the world. It reflects a retreat from moral responsibility, economic foresight, and diplomatic engagement. At a time when the world needs collective action and visionary leadership, the U.S. risks becoming a cautionary tale of missed opportunities and waning influence. Reclaiming its position as a global leader requires a recommitment to cooperation, innovation, and sustainability. Climate change knows no borders, and neither should the solutions. The world is watching, and history will judge America's choice. •



# Make Media the Enemy Again

The tension between a democratic government and a free press became open hostility under President Donald Trump, whose administration waged an unprecedented assault on media institutions and journalistic integrity. This wasn't just inflammatory rhetoric; it amounted to veiled censorship and intimidation, undermining American democracy and damaging its global reputation as a beacon of free expression.

Trump weaponized the term "fake news," using it to dismiss any critical coverage and branding respected outlets as "enemies of the people." This incited hostility towards journalists, creating a chilling effect and eroding public trust. His administration also took practical steps bordering on censorship, drastically reducing press briefings, restricting access to information, and blacklisting reporters. The revocation of CNN reporter Jim Acosta's press credentials highlighted the administration's willingness to push legal and ethical boundaries to control the narrative.

Trump exploited social media to circumvent scrutiny, using Twitter to bypass traditional media filters and spread misinformation, conspiracy theories, and personal insults. This behavior normalized toxic discourse and deepened societal divisions. His administration also targeted whistleblowers and government leakers, prosecuting more leak cases than any other in American history and stifling investigative journalism, which relies on confidential sources.

Furthermore, the Trump administration suppressed scientific and public health information. During the COVID-19 pandemic, government scientists were sidelined or muzzled, and vital information was distorted to serve political ends, costing lives and demonstrating the dangers of subordinating truth to political expediency.

These actions had global consequences. Trump's combative stance toward the media provided authoritarian regimes with a convenient precedent for silencing dissent and justifying media crackdowns, eroding America's moral authority.

Despite the onslaught, American journalism showed resilience, with investigative reporting uncovering critical issues and media outlets adapting by fact-checking the President and strengthening collaborative reporting efforts. Organizations like ProPublica, NPR, and The Atlantic expanded their roles in maintaining factual integrity and civic accountability.

Though Trump's influence lingers. Media polarization remains stark, and his continued presence in public discourse ensures that antagonism toward the press endures. Restoring public confidence in journalism and reinforcing the role of the media as a cornerstone of democracy remains a critical challenge.

The Trump administration's antagonistic relationship with the media threatened the democratic fabric of the nation. By undermining journalistic institutions, fostering a culture of fear and misinformation, and attacking the very idea of truth, Trump set a dangerous precedent. The preservation of democracy depends on a free and fearless press, and the lessons of the Trump era must not be forgotten.●

*As global crises intensify, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has remained a vital force for humanitarian aid and geopolitical stability. But sweeping funding cuts now threaten to dismantle decades of progress. This article examines the devastating human, legal, and strategic fallout of defunding USAID—and what's at stake when America retreats from the world stage.*

# Abandoning the World

## The Devastating Costs of USAID Cuts

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has long served as a cornerstone of global development and American foreign policy. For decades, it has tackled poverty, disease, and instability, serving as both a moral force and a strategic counterweight to rivals like China and Russia. However, recent funding cuts to USAID are more than financial adjustments—they represent a human, legal, and geopolitical crisis with far-reaching consequences.

### Human Impact: Preventable Tragedies

The most immediate fallout is human. According to Financial Times, cuts to the President's Malaria Initiative could lead to over 13 million infections and 100,000 preventable deaths in Africa, mainly among children. This is just one example of the deadly ripple effect. USAID has historically supported HIV/AIDS treatment for 1.6 million people and helped combat polio, measles, and tuberculosis. These efforts are now at risk.

The Times estimates the total death toll from discontinued USAID programs could exceed 300,000, including over 200,000 children. MyJournalCourier warns that, if left unchecked, the next 10–15 years could see 25 million additional deaths due to the collapse of aid in health, sanitation, and nutrition. These are not just statistics—they represent real lives lost due to political decisions.

### Legal and Political Fallout

The funding cuts have also triggered legal challenges. Critics argue the executive branch exceeded its authority by withholding funds appropriated by Congress. A federal judge recently ruled this likely violated the Constitution, reaffirming Congress's power over federal spending.





Moreover, ProPublica revealed internal communications suggesting some White House officials were willing to “bend or break the law” to cut aid. This isn’t just bureaucratic wrangling—it’s a test of the U.S. commitment to democratic checks and balances.

### Strategic Misstep: Power Vacuum for Rivals

Strategically, defunding USAID plays into the hands of geopolitical rivals. Retired military leaders have warned that cutting aid hands influence to China, Russia, and

USAID’s withdrawal from regions like Africa and the Indo-Pacific cedes influence to authoritarian models of aid, weakening U.S. soft power and diplomatic leverage. As CSIS notes, “When America leaves, autocrats arrive.”

### Conclusion: A Moral and Strategic Imperative

These cuts are not just a retreat from global leadership—they’re a humanitarian disaster in the making. Reinstating funding, reasserting congressional oversight, and embracing new technologies for aid transparency



even North Korea. General James Mattis once remarked that failing to fund USAID would require more military spending—highlighting how development is integral to security.

are urgent priorities. In today’s interconnected world, development aid is not charity—it’s national security, diplomacy, and moral leadership combined. Ignoring this fact risks global instability—and America’s place in the world. •



# America's Pakistan Fantasy

*Donald Trump's recent courtship of Pakistan's army chief has raised eyebrows in New Delhi. Is it a strategic masterstroke or a dangerous echo of Cold War-era delusions? This analysis unpacks the US's persistent fascination with Pakistan's military, viewed from an Indian perspective that sees beyond the flattery to the region's complex realities and potential pitfalls of transactional diplomacy. Trump's actions expose enduring misjudgments regarding Pakistan.*

In the intricate dance of global diplomacy, where appearances often mask true intentions, the recent encounter between US President Donald Trump and Pakistan's army chief, General Asim Munir, demands careful scrutiny. Viewed against the backdrop of potential US-Israeli strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, Trump's overtures should be understood not as a standalone event but as a calculated maneuver driven by a blend of expediency and, arguably, a profound misunderstanding of the region. Trump's statement that he "was honoured" to meet Munir and his claim that Pakistanis "knew Iran better than most" were not off-the-cuff remarks but a deliberate message underscoring America's perceived need for Pakistan's diplomatic and potentially military support. However, this courtship of the Pakistani general, as viewed from New Delhi, is yet another example of America's enduring delusions regarding Pakistan.

India can see through this US-Pakistan charade with remarkable clarity. There's no need for an anxious or overtly vocal reaction. Instead, a measured approach – observe, evaluate, and act with precision when necessary – is the more prudent course. Trump's decision to engage directly with Pakistan's army chief, especially through the symbolic gesture of a White House lunch, is hardly surprising. It echoes the outdated logic of the Cold War era, where the US, impatient



with the democratic complexities in a military-dominated environment, sought solace in the perceived order and control promised by generals.

Pakistan, a veteran of anti-communist Cold War alliances like SEATO and CENTO and a crucial US ally during the Soviet-Afghan war, is well-versed in the nuances of American strategic thinking. From Dwight D. Eisenhower's affinity for General Ayub Khan to Ronald Reagan's strategic embrace of General Zia-ul-Haq, a recurring pattern has emerged. However, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, courting generals might yield tactical advantages but often leads to strategic disasters.

This time, the subtext is particularly concerning. Trump's praise of Pakistan's knowledge of Iran is more than just rhetorical flattery. It signals to the Pentagon and certain factions within the Israeli right that the US, with Iran's nuclear program in its sights, views the Pakistani military as a potential lever in the broader Middle Eastern calculus. The fact that the Pakistani populace generally holds sympathetic views towards Iran and views Israeli aggression with concern is seemingly irrelevant in this cynical calculation. Powerful elements in Washington appear to see the Pakistani army as an instrument of influence.

Against this backdrop, the hyped lunch with Munir was less a diplomatic courtesy and more a psychological inflation, a deliberate stroking of the ego of a man who likely perceives himself as a modern-day field marshal presiding over a captive state. Even as Trump boasted of his role in "averting war" between India and Pakistan – a patently false claim that New Delhi promptly rejected – he was likely aware of the war plans taking shape in Tel Aviv. The timing of the flattery of Munir, coming so close to the potential Israeli action, suggests a prelude to another power play in West Asia, not South Asia. By aligning the US with Israel, even if the American role is confined to diplomatic and intelligence support, Trump risks sacrificing strategic flexibility and diplomatic leverage. The Pakistani military might be willing to take extraordinary risks in acting against Iranian interests, provided Washington assures them of some tactical advantage vis-à-vis India. Pakistan's official condemnation of Israeli strikes on Iran is rendered almost meaningless by the image of its army chief seated at Trump's lunch table.

This situation raises vital strategic implications for India. First, it reaffirms the enduring reality that Pakistan's military remains its only truly coherent institution, wielding unparalleled control over its foreign policy, nuclear doctrine, and internal security. Second, it underscores

that the Western world, particularly the US ruling elite, continues to view Pakistan through a transactional lens. This is hardly new, but it is increasingly detached from the current geopolitical realities.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent rejection of Trump's uncalled-for claim regarding the India-Pakistan ceasefire sent a clear message: India refuses to be dragged into a charade of equivalence. This is no longer the Cold War or a unipolar world. India doesn't share a hyphen with Pakistan; what they share is geography, and increasingly, very little else. In the Trump-Munir exchange, New Delhi sees a populist president treating foreign policy as theatre, a militarized state desperate for global validation, and a global order flirting dangerously with instability.

Nevertheless, this spectacle demands vigilance. The symbolic coronation of Munir within Pakistan could embolden the military establishment to engage in brinkmanship. New Delhi cannot afford complacency. While it's premature to determine whether this apparent reset in the US-Pakistan relationship is a genuine thaw or just a fleeting upswing, Trump's flattery of Munir has opened the door to a broader psychological campaign detrimental to India's interests: one that seeks to portray the Pakistani military as a stabilizing force, even as it acts as the principal source of regional instability.

India must continue to deepen its strategic relationships, not just with the US, whose political trajectory remains uncertain, but also with the EU, France, Japan, the Gulf countries, and Australia. The West must be reminded that if it seeks a genuine counterweight to Chinese power, it will not find it in the client military of a garrison state. It will find it in a vibrant democracy that stands as a bulwark against authoritarianism. India is not merely a "market" or a "partner"; it is the backbone of any reliable Indo-Pacific institutional architecture. The historical blunder of US diplomacy has often been its impatience, seeking short-term gains over long-term understanding. Its gestures may appear dramatic, but its memory is woefully short. India doesn't need to constantly highlight its importance; it must simply act accordingly.

The recent spectacle may have been farcical, but it warrants serious reflection. As the Trump administration seeks to reshape old alliances based on discredited assumptions, the smile on Munir's face as he sat across from Trump was not a smile of victory. It was the smile of a man flattered into tactical utility. India, having witnessed many Pakistani generals flattered before their eventual downfall, has no need for such illusions. ●

*West Asia once again stands on the brink of a geopolitical explosion. The recent clash between Iran and Israel—with the United States playing an indirect role—is nothing short of a warning about the devastating consequences of a post-war peace. The question arises: was this a limited military action aimed solely at Iran's nuclear program, or part of the strategic chaos that Western powers have repeatedly deployed in the region?*

## WEST ASIA

# Diplomacy of War and Dominance

Israel claims that Iran's nuclear ambitions pose an existential threat. This justification echoes the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, when the false narrative of "weapons of mass destruction" was used as a pretext for war. By launching a unilateral military strike, Israel disregarded international law and global public opinion.

Carried out under the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the strike is being defended under the guise of "preemptive caution." In reality, it appears to be a calculated move to dismantle the balance of power in West Asia and assert regional dominance. According to reports from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), Iran has repeatedly affirmed that its nuclear program is strictly for peaceful purposes. Yet Israel's persistent suspicion and military actions have done more to destabilize the region than secure it.







Once again, the United States' role has proven to be duplicitous. While American intelligence agencies admit that Iran is still far from developing a nuclear weapon, the political leadership continues to endorse Israel's claims. This contradiction is less a case of strategic confusion and more a deliberate tactic—one that ensures ongoing tension in West Asia, justifying arms sales, diplomatic interventions, and the continued presence of U.S. military bases. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), the U.S. remains the world's largest arms exporter, and West Asia is one

of its most lucrative markets.

The return of Donald Trump to the U.S. presidency in 2025 signals a sharp turn in global diplomacy. Trump's foreign policy has consistently revolved around the doctrine of "America First," often leading to withdrawal from multilateral agreements, increased pressure on allied nations, and economic or military threats against adversaries.

In 2018, the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the Iran nuclear deal (JCPOA) and imposed crippling sanctions on Tehran. This move not only represented a diplomatic failure but also dragged the region into a new phase of instability. In Trump's worldview, Iran is the "root of all evil," while Israel is a key strategic ally. This extremist classification has rendered U.S. policy in the region deeply biased.

With Trump back in office, fears have resurfaced that Washington will again abandon any path toward reconciliation with Iran. While some of his team members are considered pragmatic, Trump's personal approach to foreign policy remains rooted in aggressive nationalism and the open exercise of power.

In this mindset, multilateral organizations are seen as secondary, even obstructive. Institutions like the United Nations are viewed not as global forums but as hindrances to American interests. If this attitude extends to West Asia, Israel may once again receive a free hand—and the U.S. may ramp



up efforts to “legitimize” military actions against Iran under the banner of national security.

Meanwhile, China has taken a markedly different stance. Not only did it uphold Iran’s sovereignty, but it also strongly condemned Israel’s military actions and advocated for a peaceful resolution to the crisis. In an emergency session of the UN Security Council, China described Israel’s strike as “military adventurism” and labeled it a “grave threat to regional peace.”

China also held separate dialogues with the foreign ministers of Iran and Israel, signaling its commitment to regional stability over military escalation. This diplomatic engagement underscores Beijing’s multilateral vision in international affairs—a vision that has found considerable support within the global community.

The 25-year strategic cooperation agreement signed between Iran and China in 2021—which covers energy, trade, infrastructure, technology, and defense—signals the emergence of a new geopolitical axis in the region. Despite U.S. sanctions, China remains Iran’s largest trading partner and, as of January 2024, imports nearly 70% of its oil from Iran.

That said, this partnership also faces significant hurdles: incomplete infrastructure projects, technical limitations, and regional volatility. However, China’s backing serves as a strategic shield for Iran on the global stage, providing it with the diplomatic cover necessary to resist international pressure and maintain its sovereignty.

Iran has already made it clear that its nuclear program is intended for peaceful purposes. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), signed in 2015, stands as evidence of this. However, the Trump administration unilaterally withdrew from the agreement in 2018. With Trump’s possible return, concerns are mounting that the U.S. might again exert pressure on Iran, potentially igniting a new crisis in West Asia.

In March 2025, the deputy foreign ministers of China, Russia, and Iran met in Beijing, where they



advocated for a JCPOA-based solution and criticized the U.S. for its unilateral sanctions. This initiative represents not only a diplomatic balancing act but also an attempt to counter Western dominance.

For India, Trump represents a double-edged sword. On one hand, he seeks to align India with his anti-China strategy; on the other, his aggressive policies in West Asia could negatively impact India’s energy security, the safety of Indian expatriates, and trade routes. Hence, India’s strategy must remain cautious and balanced—neither fully leaning toward the American bloc, nor alienating traditional partners like Iran.

India has historically maintained strategic relations with both Iran and Israel. Its involvement in the Chabahar Port project and energy partnerships gives depth to its ties with Iran. Simultaneously, India’s collaboration with Israel in defense technology, cybersecurity, and agricultural innovation is robust and growing.

However, when it comes to tensions in West Asia,



India's position has consistently been clear and balanced—"respect for sovereignty, adherence to international law, and diplomatic resolution of conflicts." India is not only concerned about the safety of millions of its citizens living in the region, but also about the stability of global oil supplies and trade routes, which are critical for its economy.

Any disruption in the supply of oil and gas from Iran or the Gulf nations can directly impact India's economic health. Millions of Indian workers are employed in the Gulf and West Asia. A regional war or prolonged instability could endanger their safety. According to data from the Ministry of External Affairs, nearly 8 million Indian citizens were working in Gulf countries as of 2023. Thus, India must carefully balance its relations with the U.S., Israel, Iran, and China. It cannot afford blind allegiance to any one side.

It is increasingly evident that there is no military solution to the problems in West Asia. Unilateral actions by the U.S. and Israel have only exacerbated instability. Meanwhile, countries like China are

proposing peaceful solutions—an approach that aligns with India's own traditions of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam and coexistence through peace.

Iran has responded to Israeli and American military actions, but the scale of its retaliation has remained limited. It is essential that the global community voices support for Iran's sovereignty and legitimate rights. A democratic and multipolar nation like India is well-positioned to play this role—advocating for diplomatic de-escalation and conflict prevention on international platforms.

The recent Iran-Israel conflict has once again exposed how chaos is being weaponized as a strategy—not to resolve disputes, but to reassert dominance. India must raise its voice firmly on the global stage, making it clear that the world does not need an era of military conflict, but a century of peace and cooperation. This vision is what can lead India toward global leadership—along the path of justice, balance, and harmony. India must proactively contribute to global peace and stability, not only in West Asia but across the world..●



# AFRICA'S COUP BELT

## Democracy Under Siege



Shreya Gupta

*Military coups are resurging across Africa's Sahel, toppling governments and redrawing geopolitical lines. Driven by insecurity, corruption, and shifting global alliances, this wave of juntas threatens democracy, deepens instability, and signals a dramatic recalibration of power on the continent.*

In recent years, Africa—particularly the Sahel region—has experienced a dramatic resurgence in military coups, unsettling a continent that had seemed to be moving beyond its turbulent history of juntas and authoritarianism. From Mali and Niger to Burkina Faso and Chad, a new era of military rule is emerging, reshaping political dynamics, regional alliances, and the future of democracy across Africa.

Between 2020 and 2024, at least nine successful coups were carried out across the continent, with the Sahel acting as the epicenter. Countries like Mali (2020, 2021), Guinea (2021), Burkina Faso (twice in 2022), Chad (2021), Niger (2023), and Gabon (2023) have seen their civilian governments toppled, often with significant public support. The reasons for these power seizures are consistent: widespread corruption, mounting insecurity due to jihadist insurgencies, economic hardship, and a growing disconnect between the political elite and ordinary citizens.

Crowds in cities like Bamako and Niamey have often welcomed the military with open arms, seeing soldiers as a force of last resort after years of misrule. In some cases, these celebrations have included Russian flags—reflecting a broader geopolitical shift.

### What's Fueling the Coup Wave?

#### 1. Security Collapse:

The Sahel has become a stronghold for jihadist violence. Groups linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State continue to expand, while governments struggle to maintain control. In Burkina Faso, nearly half the country is outside

government authority. Militaries have capitalized on this security vacuum, presenting themselves as saviors in the face of escalating violence.

#### 2. Failed Governance:

Across many coup-hit nations, frustration with civilian governments has reached a boiling point. Allegations of electoral fraud, nepotism, and the decay of public institutions have eroded public trust. In places like Guinea and Gabon, rigged elections and dynastic politics have left citizens disillusioned and desperate for change—any change.

#### 3. Shifting Global Influence:

Foreign powers play a significant, if indirect, role. Russia, through the Wagner Group and its affiliates, has expanded its footprint by offering military support without the “strings” of democratic accountability. In Mali and Burkina Faso, military leaders have embraced Moscow, pushing out French forces and U.S. advisers.



China, meanwhile, maintains a non-interference policy, focused on protecting its commercial interests. Its quiet pragmatism and investment in infrastructure have made it an attractive economic partner, even under military rule.

In contrast, Western powers are losing influence. France has been expelled from several Sahel countries, and U.S. sanctions and aid freezes have done little to reverse the coups. The West now faces the hard task of rethinking its engagement strategy—balancing democratic ideals with pragmatic security concerns.

## The Democratic Backslide

The coups mark more than a momentary crisis—  
t h e y



represent a dangerous normalization of military rule. Juntas that initially promised quick transitions to democracy, like those in Mali and Burkina Faso, have repeatedly delayed elections. Regional bodies such as ECOWAS and the African Union have struggled to respond effectively, and sanctions have

often had limited impact.

Public sentiment remains divided. While some citizens—particularly younger populations—see military rule as a break from decades of political stagnation, human rights groups warn that crackdowns on dissent, media repression, and authoritarianism are rising.

## Security and Humanitarian Fallout

The security situation remains dire. Coups have not curbed extremist violence; in fact, the focus on political consolidation has often distracted from anti-insurgency efforts. Coordination between regional forces has also suffered, weakening the collective fight against terrorism.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian toll is worsening. Over five million people are displaced across the Sahel, and food insecurity is escalating as violence disrupts farming and aid distribution.

## Beyond the Sahel: Contagion Risk

The coup wave has spread beyond the Sahel. Gabon's 2023 coup was sparked by widespread dissatisfaction with dynastic rule and corruption, suggesting similar dynamics could trigger unrest elsewhere. Without meaningful governance reforms, other fragile democracies remain vulnerable.

## The Road Ahead: Rebuilding Democracy

### ***What's needed now is a multidimensional response:***

**African Leadership:** ECOWAS and the African Union must offer more than sanctions—support for institutional reform and security training could help shift incentives away from military rule.

**Delivering on Democracy:** Civilian governments must prove they can offer more than broken promises. Job creation, public service delivery, and anti-corruption efforts are essential to restoring faith in democracy.

**Rethinking Global Engagement:** The West must recalibrate its role, moving from paternalistic approaches to supporting African-led solutions. Meanwhile, the growing roles of Russia and China must be acknowledged as part of a complex geopolitical landscape.

### ***Final Thoughts:***

A Critical Juncture Africa's coup resurgence is not just a rollback of democracy—it's a wake-up call. Decades of flawed governance, security crises, and foreign manipulation have created a perfect storm. The continent stands at a crossroads. The decisions made by African leaders—and the support they receive from the international community—will shape the trajectory of governance, security, and development for generations to come.

The dream of democracy in Africa is still alive, but it requires bold, urgent, and collaborative action to ensure it doesn't fade into history. •

---

*Shreya Gupta is an emerging voice in journalism, currently reporting with Cult Current.*



# A Shifting Alliance

## Bangladesh's Defence Turn Towards Pakistan



Sohini Bose

***Once bitter rivals, Pakistan and Bangladesh are now moving toward an unexpected defence partnership. Under an unelected interim government, Dhaka is distancing itself from New Delhi and warming to Islamabad. This shift — marked by joint exercises and possible arms deals — signals a bold realignment of Bangladesh's identity and could reshape South Asia's strategic balance.***

Once at war with one another, the armies of Pakistan and erstwhile East Pakistan — modern-day Bangladesh — are keen to partner with each other in defence cooperation. Under the interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus, Bangladesh's foreign policy is taking a direction that stands in stark contrast to its history of fraught relations with the country from which it won independence in 1971. In its fifty-five years of existence, Dhaka has generally maintained a distance from Islamabad. Relations warmed considerably between 2001 and 2006, when a coalition of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Jamaat-





Munir, Pakistan's Chief of Army Staff and General Sahir Shamshad Mirza, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, at the Pakistani General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. The next day, Lt. Gen. Hasan met Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters in Islamabad. Both sides discussed regional security dynamics, the scope for joint military exercises, training programmes, and defence trade.

e-Islami governed the country. The subsequent return of the Awami League to power in 2009, led by Sheikh Hasina and bearing the legacy of her father, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman — a pillar of the Liberation War against Pakistan — re-established minimal diplomatic interaction with Islamabad. As the Awami League remained in office for the next fifteen and a half years until last August, this practice became a near-permanent feature of Bangladesh's governance. However, as rising discontent against the Awami League led to Prime Minister Hasina's ouster, the interim government has deliberately begun to diverge from "Awami traditions" to forge a new national identity — one that consciously distances itself from the country's historical and geographical realities.

### Exchanges and Exercises

Over the past few months, there have been several defence exchanges between Pakistan and Bangladesh, signalling a thaw in bilateral ties. In January alone, two notable interactions took place between the defence personnel of both countries. The first meeting took place in two parts. On 14 January, a Bangladeshi military delegation led by the Principal Staff Officer of the Bangladesh Armed Forces Division, Lieutenant General SM Kamrul Hasan, met General Syed Asim

Later in the month, a military delegation led by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Director General, Major General Shahid Amir Afsar, visited Dhaka to meet their Bangladeshi counterparts. This was one of the first high-level engagements between the ISI and Bangladeshi officials in decades, aimed at strengthening military and intelligence cooperation. In February, Dhaka's warship BNS Samudra Joy participated in a naval exercise, Aman-25, hosted by Islamabad in the northern part of the Arabian Sea, off the coast of Karachi. Besides Bangladesh, the multinational event included navies from 120 countries, including three of India's neighbours: Sri Lanka, Myanmar, and China.

### The Changing Narrative

Addressing the Aman Dialogue 2025, the Bangladesh Navy Chief, Admiral Mohammad Hasan, underscored the importance of the military exercise, saying, "Land divides but sea unites." This statement echoes a comment made earlier in the year by the Pakistani military, which alluded to the two nations as "brotherly countries" that must remain "resilient against external influences." The phrasing is geopolitically significant and represents a notable turn in the established historical narrative of bilateral differences. It comes amidst talks of Pakistani promises to train the

Bangladesh Army and Dhaka's reported interest in acquiring JF-17 Thunder fighter jets from Pakistan to upgrade its military assets under its "Forces Goal 2030". Jointly developed by Beijing and Islamabad, these jets symbolise a potential trilateral defence partnership between China, Pakistan and Bangladesh — particularly as Beijing is the largest defence partner of both countries and is involved in arms transfer and infrastructure development. As per the latest available data, 81 percent of Islamabad's (2020-2024) and 73.6 percent of Dhaka's (2010-2020) imported weaponry was sourced from China.

As the data verifies, China has been Bangladesh's largest defence partner since the Hasina administration. However, over the past decades, Dhaka pursued a "diplomacy of balance" in its engagement with India and China, which enabled it to effectively navigate major power politics, aligning with its national interests while maintaining its autonomy. That balance has become lopsided in recent months, with ties straining between Dhaka and New Delhi over multiple issues, including the shelter of the former PM Hasina in India. In the purview of defence, Bangladesh has reportedly invited Chinese investment to develop an airbase at Lalmonirhat, near India's strategically sensitive Siliguri Corridor — which connects the politically fragile Northeast to the rest of the country — without regard for New Delhi's sensitivities.

Dhaka's recent outreach to Islamabad is further shifting regional dynamics against India, particularly with the potential for a Pakistani military presence in Bangladesh on the grounds of defence cooperation. Such a move would place Pakistan closer to India's borders along the Northeast, West Bengal, and in the strategically significant Bay of Bengal — a region crucial for India's economic and military security, as well as for strengthening ties with Southeast Asia. This possibility is especially concerning amid escalating tensions following the April 2025 Pahalgam terror attack, for which New Delhi holds Islamabad accountable. India's military response in the form of Operation Sindoor and the resulting cross-border shelling has deepened hostilities.

In such a situation, although Chief Advisor Yunus has reiterated Bangladesh's commitment against terrorism, Dhaka's growing alignment with Islamabad



will remain a cause of apprehension for India. Controversial statements such as the one made by Major General (Retd) ALM Fazlur Rahman, a former Bangladesh Army officer and close aide of Yunus, stating, "If India attacks Pakistan, Bangladesh should occupy the seven states of Northeastern India... I think it is necessary to start discussions with China on a joint military arrangement in this regard," although made on private social media handles, are unsettling. While the interim government has distanced itself from this remark, Rahman's position as chairman of the National Independent Commission investigating the 2009 Bangladesh Rifles revolt underscores the need for careful consideration of the statements made by individuals in prominent public roles.

India remains Bangladesh's largest neighbour, sharing not only contiguous territory and 54 transboundary rivers, but also a history of shared heritage, culture, language and people. Furthermore, the two countries trade in essentials (though this has declined since the regime change in Dhaka) and are mutually dependent on the sustainable use of common resources and the exchange of fundamental services, such as medical tourism. Near the end of the Awami League administration, India and Bangladesh





had been exploring the expansion of their defence industrial cooperation. Counter-terrorism formed the bedrock of their defence partnership, and the joint military exercise 'Sampriti' was regularly held until its 11th edition in 2023. While given the current circumstances, the advancement of this defence partnership seems remote, consideration for mutual sensitivities is fundamental to a stable neighbourhood policy.

The second question concerns the extent to which an interim government in Bangladesh can legally pursue such strategic shifts. By design, an interim or "caretaker" government with limited authority is primarily entrusted with the responsibility of overseeing elections and ensuring a smooth transition to an elected administration. Further, the legal validity of the interim government, headed by Mohammad Yunus as Chief Adviser, has been repeatedly questioned due to a 2011 Constitutional Amendment Act that abolished the system of non-party caretaker governments in Bangladesh. Although the High Court Division of the Bangladesh Supreme Court has recently "partially annulled the Fifteenth Amendment to the Constitution and reinstated the non-partisan, neutral caretaker government system",

legalising the Yunus administration, it remains a non-elected government. Therefore, conflicting views concerning the limits to the interim government's authority and whether its policy directives represent the views of the Bangladeshi populace exist.

The Bangladesh interim government's emerging foreign policy reflects a conscious departure from decades of strategic regional balancing. Its growing military alignment with Pakistan, alongside increasing divergence from India, signals a potential shift with far-reaching implications for South Asian security, especially amid deepening India-Pakistan hostilities. It is crucial to watch how New Delhi and Islamabad fit into Bangladesh's changing narrative of national interests and how these countries respond. As the region grapples with rising tensions, Bangladesh's foreign policy choices and strategic defence posture will play a critical role in shaping the broader trajectory of peace and power dynamics in South Asia. •

*Sohini Bose is an Associate Fellow with the Strategic Studies Programme at the Observer Research Foundation. Her area of research is India's eastern maritime neighbourhood, where she explores connectivity, geopolitics and security concerns in the Bay of Bengal and Andaman Sea.*





# Shipping Under Siege

## The Red Sea Crisis and a Shifting Global Tide



Dhanishtha De

**S**ince late 2023, the Red Sea—a vital maritime corridor between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa—has descended into geopolitical turmoil. At the heart of this disruption lies Yemen’s Houthi insurgency, a militant Zaidi Shia group aligned with Iran. Originally acting in solidarity

with Gaza following the Israel–Hamas war, the Houthis have since launched a full-fledged hybrid naval campaign, targeting commercial vessels linked to Israel, the U.S., and major NATO economies.

This campaign, now termed the “Red Sea Crisis,” is an outgrowth of Yemen’s long-running



### Impact of Red Sea crisis on trade and prices limited for now

In response to mounting attacks, global shipping giants like Maersk and MSC rerouted vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, adding 10–14 days to Asia–Europe journeys. By early 2024, Suez Canal traffic had dropped by 68%, according to Lloyd’s List Intelligence.

To counter the threat, the U.S. launched Operation Prosperity Guardian in December 2023, forming a multinational coalition involving aircraft carriers, destroyers, and missile defense systems. CENTCOM reports that over 700 aerial and missile threats have been intercepted since the campaign began. However, by April 2025, U.S. operations alone had cost more than \$1.6 billion—raising questions about long-term sustainability.

Egypt, which controls the Suez Canal, has suffered significant economic fallout. Canal revenues—once \$9.4 billion annually—have declined by over 40% due to the diversion of shipping routes. This blow to foreign exchange inflows has exacerbated Egypt’s financial woes and stirred security concerns along its Sinai and Sudanese borders.

Saudi Arabia finds itself in a delicate position. After a China-brokered détente with Iran, Riyadh hoped for a more stable regional order. But ongoing Houthi attacks from Yemen continue to threaten Saudi borders. Rather than escalate, the Kingdom now adopts a cautious posture—supporting Western operations without jeopardizing its fragile peace

civil war, compounded by Iranian influence and a wave of regional hostilities. The Houthis, also known as Ansar Allah, seized Yemen’s capital, Sanaa, in 2014 and have evolved into a formidable non-state actor. Their capabilities have been bolstered by Iranian missile and drone technology, and possibly Russian satellite intelligence.

Framing their maritime assaults under the “Axis of Resistance,” the Houthis claim their attacks are meant to support Palestinians and weaken Western influence. In November 2023, they hijacked the *Galaxy Leader*, a Bahamian-flagged vehicle carrier, symbolizing their strategic shift from land-based conflict to maritime disruption.

The Red Sea’s strategic importance cannot be overstated. At its southern end lies the Bab el-Mandeb Strait, a chokepoint through which nearly 12% of global trade passes—including 30% of container traffic and significant volumes of oil, LNG, and grain.

with Tehran.

Meanwhile, Djibouti, positioned at the Bab el-Mandeb, hosts military bases from the U.S., China, France, and Japan. Though this international presence offers a semblance of deterrence, Djibouti's economy—heavily dependent on port activity tied to Ethiopia—remains vulnerable to prolonged instability.

China's strategy contrasts sharply with the West's. Rather than engage militarily, Beijing has reportedly secured non-aggression guarantees from Houthi intermediaries, ensuring safe passage for Chinese vessels.

India, heavily reliant on Suez-bound routes to ship pharmaceuticals, textiles, and auto parts to Europe, now faces delays and rising costs. In response, New Delhi is reviving the International North–South Transport Corridor (INSTC), a land-and-sea route connecting India to Europe via Iran and Central Asia.

By mid-2024, East Asia–Europe container freight rates surged from \$1,500 to over \$5,000 per TEU, with Mediterranean-bound shipments nearing \$6,800. This spike has triggered inflation in industries from electronics to automotive manufacturing.

Efforts to secure the region have expanded, though coordination remains fragmented. The U.S. and 23 partners continue Operation Prosperity Guardian, while the UK has deployed Royal Navy destroyers equipped with missile defenses. The EU's Operation Aspides focuses on vessel escort missions, but with limited engagement rules.

The humanitarian consequences are dire. Yemen, already one of the world's most aid-dependent nations, has seen over 400,000 deaths in the last decade. In April 2025, cruise missile strikes on Ras Isa and Hodeidah—intended to disrupt drone platforms—hit humanitarian warehouses, killing 80 people and cutting off aid to over 1.3 million.

The ecological toll is equally severe. The



rerouting of maritime traffic around Africa has added an estimated 35 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions annually, according to the International Maritime Organisation. In the Red Sea, coral reefs off Eritrea and Saudi Arabia are being damaged by chemical pollutants and military debris. The UN estimates restoration could take two decades, with total environmental costs projected to exceed €600 million.

In response, logistics giants like DHL and Hapag-Lloyd are investing in AI-driven platforms to forecast disruptions and reroute shipments in real time. These tools, leveraging machine learning and satellite data, form part of a growing maritime risk consultancy sector.

Yet despite all these efforts, a deeper problem persists: the inadequacy of international maritime law in dealing with modern non-state





threats. While the 1982 UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) governs state behavior at sea, it is largely silent on rebel groups wielding military-grade capabilities. Legal scholars are now proposing a Fourth Geneva Maritime Protocol to better define the rights and limits of armed non-state actors at sea.

Ultimately, the Red Sea crisis reveals not just the power of a single insurgent group to disrupt global trade, but also the fragility of a maritime order long assumed to be stable. As ships navigate increasingly dangerous waters, they carry more than cargo—they bear the weight of unresolved tensions over sovereignty, legality, and the future of global cooperation. While the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) remains a cornerstone for regulating navigation, it falls short when it comes to dealing with modern threats—especially non-state groups now armed with military-grade weapons. Legal experts from institutions

like Cambridge, Heidelberg, and Sciences Po are calling for a new framework: a proposed Fourth Geneva Maritime Protocol. This would help define the legal standing of rebel groups at sea, set clearer rules for response, and allow for more coordinated international action.

The crisis in the Red Sea is more than a series of attacks by a fringe rebel group, it's a stark reminder of how vulnerable global trade routes really are, and how quickly control over the seas can shift. The long-standing maritime order, built on the belief that states would uphold the rules and keep the waters safe, is beginning to show cracks. As ships sail through increasingly hostile waters, they're not just transporting goods, they're carrying the weight of unresolved questions about sovereignty, international law, and clashing worldviews. •

*Dhanishtha De is a dedicated and inquisitive journalist contributing to Cult Current.*

# Neutral No More?

## India's Strategic Balancing Act



Riya Goyal

Since gaining independence in 1947, India has charted an independent path in international affairs, formulating a foreign policy rooted in its colonial past, development goals, and desire for global influence. One of the most defining principles of this policy has been the concept of non-alignment, initially introduced during the Cold War era by India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru. Non-alignment offered India the ability to avoid getting caught in the ideological and military rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union. However, over the decades, and especially in recent years, India's stance in global geopolitics has transformed. This raises a key question: Is India's current neutral posture a modern iteration of Nehruvian non-alignment or a new, pragmatic strategy—often described as strategic nationalism—driven by economic and geopolitical interests?

The Origins and Ideals of Nehruvian Non-Alignment  
Nehruvian non-alignment was born in response to the global polarization of the Cold War. The world was essentially split between two superpowers, and newly independent nations like India feared losing their sovereignty and development autonomy by aligning too closely with either bloc. In 1961, Nehru, along with leaders like Josip Broz Tito of Yugoslavia and Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt, founded the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). This platform aimed to give

a collective voice to the post-colonial world.

The foundation of this approach lay in the ideals of India's anti-colonial struggle and Mahatma Gandhi's principles of peace and non-violence. India's policy was also guided by the Panchsheel principles—mutual respect, non-aggression, non-interference, equality, and peaceful coexistence. Rather than political isolation, non-alignment allowed India to form strategic ties with both sides as needed. For instance, while India sought American help during the 1962 Sino-Indian war, it also signed the Indo-Soviet Treaty of Peace in 1971 during the Bangladesh Liberation War. These moves demonstrated a certain flexibility within non-alignment, prioritizing security over ideology.

Nehru's vision helped India become a moral leader of the developing world, giving voice to newly independent nations. However, the policy was not without criticism. Detractors labeled it idealistic, even hypocritical at times, and pointed out that it did little to check the rise of authoritarian powers like China.

### The Post-Cold War Shift: From Non-Alignment to Strategic Engagement



The global order changed dramatically with the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. India, which had until then shared a close but unofficial alignment with the USSR, was forced to reconsider its strategy. At the same time, India underwent major economic reforms under Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao, embracing liberalization and opening up to global markets.

These changes marked a transition from ideological neutrality to interest-based diplomacy. The landmark moment came in 1998, when Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee authorized nuclear tests, signaling India's intent to remain strategically autonomous and self-reliant in defense.

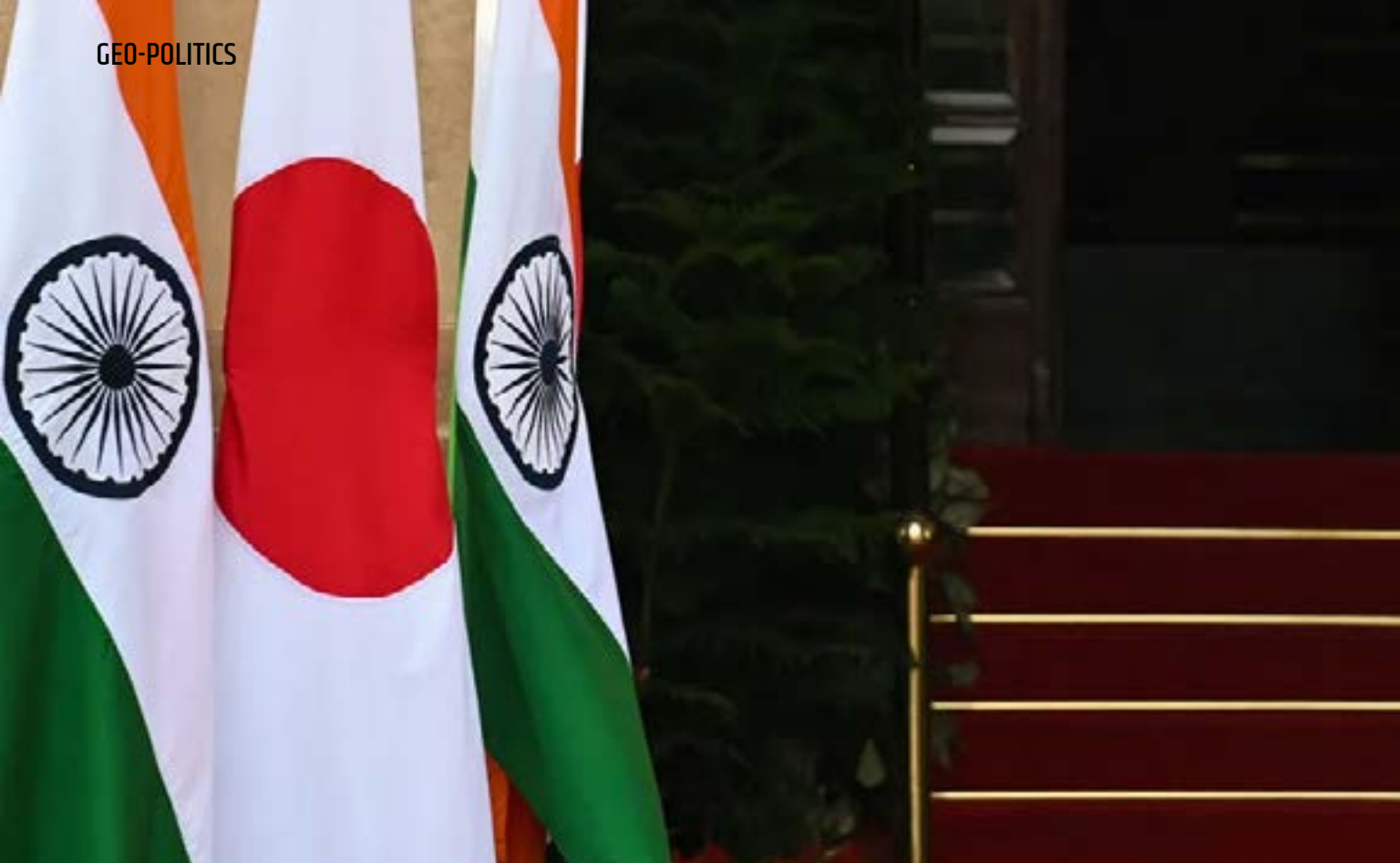
**A significant turning point** was the 2008 India–U.S. Civil Nuclear Agreement, which not only legitimized India's nuclear status but also symbolized deepening Indo-U.S. ties. India began engaging more with multilateral forums like ASEAN, BRICS, and the Group of

15, adopting the idea of “strategic autonomy” in place of strict non-alignment. This allowed India to partner with diverse nations—including the U.S., Russia, Iran, and Israel—on different issues without binding commitments.

**The Modi Era:** A Doctrine of Multi-Alignment With the advent of Narendra Modi's leadership in 2014, Indian foreign policy embraced a more assertive and multifaceted approach. Often described as multi-alignment or strategic nationalism, this approach places India's national interest at the center of diplomatic efforts. The focus has shifted from ideological purity to realpolitik.

**Key features of Modi's foreign policy include:** Diversified Strategic Partnerships: India has built strong relations with both traditional allies and former adversaries. Defense cooperation with the U.S. has increased through platforms like the Quad and





agreements such as LEMOA and COMCASA, while ties with Russia remain intact through defense deals like the S-400 missile system.

**Principled Neutrality:** India has abstained from condemning Russia in international forums during the Russia–Ukraine war, opting instead to promote peace and dialogue. This position protects India’s energy and defense interests without alienating Western allies.

**Leadership of the Global South:** India continues to champion the concerns of developing countries. This was evident in the 2023 G20 Summit under India’s presidency, where it successfully lobbied for the inclusion of the African Union as a permanent member.

**Economic and Security Focus:** The Atmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) initiative aims to reduce dependence on foreign defense imports, while strategic connectivity projects like the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC) are enhancing India’s influence in Central Asia.

**Flexible, Issue-Based Alignment:** India now engages with different powers depending on context.

It cooperates with the U.S. on Indo-Pacific security, with Russia on energy, and with Gulf nations on labor and investment.

This “strategic nationalism” differs from Nehru’s idealism. While the tools may look similar—non-alignment, neutrality, multilateral engagement—the motivation has shifted from moral leadership to calculated advantage.

**Comparing Two Doctrines:** Non-Alignment vs Strategic Nationalism While both Nehruvian non-alignment and Modi’s multi-alignment share a common desire to avoid entanglement in global conflicts, their purpose and execution differ sharply.

**Ideology vs Pragmatism:** Nehru emphasized peace and anti-colonial solidarity. Modi’s policy, by contrast, is interest-driven and designed to enhance India’s global clout.

**Neutrality as Morality vs Strategy:** Nehru’s neutrality aimed at moral leadership. Today, neutrality is a tool to maintain flexibility in a volatile world.

**Global Role:** Nehru sought to unite the Global South.



Modi wants India to be a global power, pushing for UN Security Council reforms and greater economic influence.

**The Russia–Ukraine Conflict:** A Case Study India's response to the Russia–Ukraine conflict illustrates this shift. Despite Western pressure, India has refused to condemn Russia outright, instead calling for peace. This decision stems not from ideology but from practical concerns:

**Energy Security:** Russia offers discounted crude oil, which is critical to managing inflation in India.

**Defense Dependence:** Russia remains a key supplier of arms and technology.

**Geopolitical Strategy:** Maintaining Russia as a friendly power helps counterbalance China in Asia.

India's approach has drawn criticism from Western media, but its proactive diplomacy—such as evacuating Indian citizens and providing humanitarian aid—demonstrates that neutrality doesn't mean passivity

Foreign policy analysts offer diverse perspectives on India's new path. Harsh V. Pant describes it as strategic autonomy, while External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar calls it "all-alignment," emphasizing issue-based engagement. Some, like Suhasini Haidar, worry that India's balancing act could appear inconsistent. Others, like Martand Jha, see it as an evolved form of non-alignment suited to the modern multipolar world.

## Challenges and Opportunities

India's multi-alignment strategy is not without complications. Managing ties with rival blocs—like being part of both the Quad and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)—requires careful diplomacy. Additionally, China's influence in South Asia and border tensions remain ongoing concerns

**However, there are also significant opportunities:**

**Economic Gains:** Partnerships with Japan, the U.S., and Gulf nations offer investments and technology.

**Strategic Security:** Stronger defense capabilities through multilateral forums and indigenous production.

**Global Leadership:** India's growing influence in forums like the G20 signals its ambition to shape the world order.

## Conclusion

India's contemporary foreign policy marks a clear departure from Nehruvian non-alignment. While echoes of the past remain, especially in the desire to preserve autonomy and avoid entanglements, today's approach is driven by strategic nationalism—a calculated, interest-based engagement with the world.

The case of the Russia–Ukraine war highlights this pragmatic shift. India continues to abstain from power blocs not out of ideological purity but to safeguard its energy, defense, and geopolitical interests. In an increasingly fragmented world, India's multi-alignment strategy, though complex, positions it well to become a leading force in shaping a new multipolar global order—on its own terms. •

*Riya Goyal brings curiosity and conviction to her work at Cult Current.*



# Battlefield AI India's Strategic Shift



Akansha Sharma

***AI integration in warfare enhances real-time threat detection, minimizes human error, and enables faster, data-driven strategic and tactical decisions.***

In today's fast-evolving security landscape, artificial intelligence (AI) is revolutionizing how wars are fought. Gone are the days when conflict was limited to boots on the ground, tanks, and missiles. Modern warfare increasingly relies on smart systems, unmanned drones, and real-time data analytics. AI is now central to military strategy, offering unmatched speed, precision, and predictive power. Countries across the globe are racing to harness these advantages, and India is no exception. Its recent success in Operation Sindoor marks a major milestone in the integration of AI into national defenses.

Conducted along the Line of Control (LoC) and insurgency-affected border zones, Operation Sindoor



was a high-stakes counter-terror mission that showcased India's growing capabilities in AI-driven warfare. The operation featured a network of autonomous drones developed in collaboration with DRDO and Indian tech startups. These drones, equipped with AI-powered facial recognition and heat mapping, tracked enemy movements and relayed live intelligence to field commanders. More than passive surveillance tools, they analyzed behavior, ranked threat levels, and suggested target priorities, dramatically improving operational responsiveness.

On the ground, AI-powered surveillance systems aggregated data from multiple sources—sensors, satellite feeds, and social media—into a threat assessment dashboard. This allowed Indian forces to anticipate enemy tactics, respond to infiltration attempts swiftly, and prevent escalation into open conflict. Meanwhile, India's cyber units used machine learning to guard military networks against digital threats. These algorithms detected malware, neutralized phishing attempts, and adapted to new forms of cyberattacks in real time.

One of the standout elements of Operation Sindoor was "Netra-AI," an AI-based strategic decision-support system. Netra-AI simulated battlefield scenarios and offered data-driven recommendations to military leaders. Factoring in terrain, enemy strength, logistics, and civilian risk, it allowed for smarter and faster decisions, helping shape mission strategy dynamically.

India's push for AI in defense mirrors global trends. The United States, China, and Russia are all investing heavily in autonomous weapons, smart surveillance, and AI-guided missile systems. However, the Indian approach stands out for its emphasis on indigenous innovation and ethical governance. Programs like iDEX (Innovations for Defence Excellence) have created a

defense-tech ecosystem that encourages local startups to develop next-generation military solutions. Companies such as ideaForge and NewSpace Research are already contributing to India's tactical edge in border security and reconnaissance.

Despite the promise, AI warfare raises tough ethical and operational challenges. One concern is accountability. If an AI drone mistakenly kills civilians based on faulty data, who is responsible—the operator, the programmer, or the system itself? The issue of "adversarial AI"—when enemy systems attempt to mislead or disable friendly AI—also adds complexity to digital battlefields. India is addressing these concerns through its Defence AI Council, which is drafting guidelines for ethical use, human oversight, and transparency.

Internationally, the lack of consensus on regulating lethal autonomous weapons is troubling. Efforts by the United Nations and expert forums remain mired in geopolitical tensions. Yet as countries move toward automated warfare, global norms and safeguards become more urgent than ever.

Strategically, AI is shifting the balance of military power. Superiority will increasingly depend on algorithmic speed, data control, and cyber resilience—not just troop numbers or weapon stockpiles. For India, with multiple hostile borders and a goal of strategic autonomy, AI offers a way to overcome traditional limitations.

Operation Sindoor proves that AI is no longer futuristic—it is already a force multiplier. By investing in domestic R&D, ethical frameworks, and joint operations doctrine, India is positioning itself for the wars of tomorrow. In a world where AI defines both the threat and the response, mastering this technology may prove to be the ultimate defense. ●

*Akansha Sharma brings curiosity and conviction to her work at Cult Current.*



***Artificial Intelligence is reshaping modern warfare, and India's Operation Sindoor marks a pivotal step—demonstrating how AI-driven technologies are enhancing defense capabilities, decision-making, and national security in real-time conflict scenarios.***

# CLIMATE REFUGEES

## The Next Global Crisis



Divya Panchal

In 2020, the Carteret Islands of Papua New Guinea saw an unprecedented event: the official relocation of its inhabitants due to rising sea levels, saltwater intrusion, and unrelenting storms. These islanders became some of the world's first recognized climate refugees—a term that, despite its increasing relevance, still holds no legal weight under international law. Their experience is not an isolated tragedy; it's a preview of a looming global crisis. As the climate emergency deepens, so too does the scale and complexity of climate-induced displacement. Yet, the world remains dangerously underprepared.

### A Worsening Crisis of Displacement

The numbers are staggering. In 2022 alone, over 32 million people were displaced by weather-related disasters, according to the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC). Climate change is a threat multiplier—it intensifies existing vulnerabilities, from food and water insecurity to weak governance, and pushes people out of their homes due to floods, droughts, hurricanes, and rising seas.

In low-lying island nations like Kiribati, Tuvalu, and the Maldives, rising ocean levels threaten to erase entire countries. In South Asia, unpredictable monsoons and chronic flooding displace millions in Bangladesh. Across sub-Saharan Africa, prolonged droughts are upending the lives of pastoralist communities. Even developed countries

aren't immune—wildfires in California and hurricanes in Florida have triggered large-scale evacuations and long-term displacement.

Despite the global scope of this crisis, there is no coordinated legal or policy framework to protect those displaced by climate change. The systems we rely on were built for a different era, one defined by political conflict rather than environmental collapse.

### Statelessness and the Loss of Home

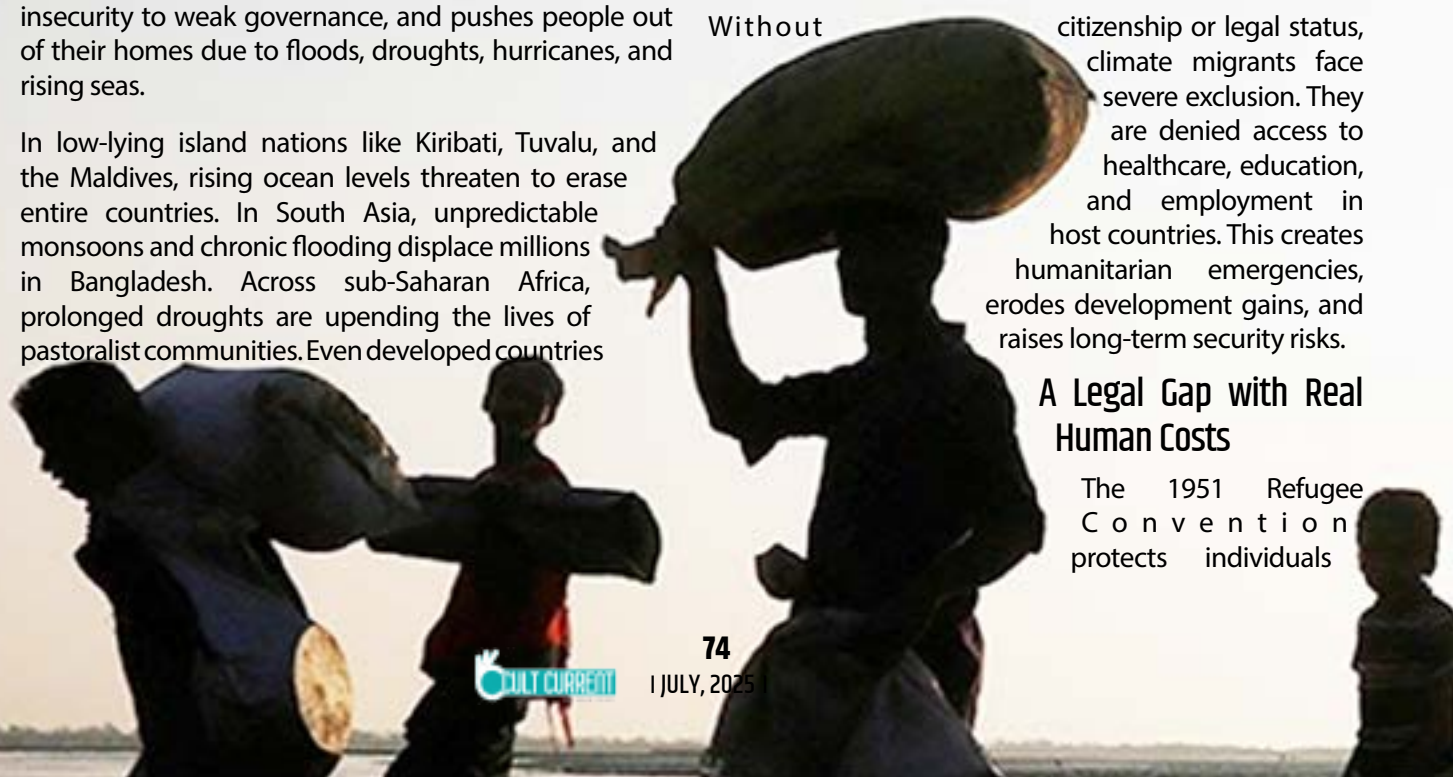
Climate-induced displacement doesn't just mean the loss of shelter—it can also lead to the loss of national identity. For countries at risk of disappearing entirely, the prospect of statelessness is real. Kiribati's purchase of land in Fiji as a relocation site, and Tuvalu's efforts to create a "digital nation" to preserve its legal sovereignty, highlight how unprecedented this issue is.

Without

citizenship or legal status, climate migrants face severe exclusion. They are denied access to healthcare, education, and employment in host countries. This creates humanitarian emergencies, erodes development gains, and raises long-term security risks.

### A Legal Gap with Real Human Costs

The 1951 Refugee Convention protects individuals



***As climate change intensifies,  
millions are being uprooted by  
rising seas, droughts, and disasters  
creating a new wave of climate  
refugees the world is still unprepared  
to recognize or protect.***

fleeing persecution, but it excludes those escaping environmental disasters. Climate refugees fall into a legal grey area—neither fully recognized nor protected. Attempts to update the definition have been slow and politically fraught. Even progressive efforts, like New Zealand's proposed climate refugee visa, were quietly shelved due to political hesitancy and fear of setting a precedent.

Regional instruments such as the Kampala Convention (Africa) and the Cartagena Declaration (Latin America) offer broader protection but are non-binding and limited in reach. The UNHCR acknowledges climate change as a displacement factor, but its mandate prevents formal inclusion. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) is more flexible but lacks legal authority.

## Humanitarian Responses Fall Short

Climate displacement is unique—it often unfolds gradually and intersects with other crises. Yet humanitarian responses are still geared toward sudden-onset, conflict-based displacement. This leaves climate-displaced populations underserved and vulnerable.

Urban areas are increasingly absorbing displaced rural communities. Cities like Dhaka see hundreds of thousands of climate migrants annually, many ending up in slums without basic services. Women and children are especially at risk, facing gender-based violence, malnutrition, and exploitation. In regions like the Sahel, resource-driven migration is also fueling intercommunal conflict.

## A Global Policy Vacuum

Despite international frameworks like the Paris Agreement and the Global Compact

for Migration referencing climate displacement, their recommendations are vague and unenforceable. The lack of political will—particularly from high-emission nations—has resulted in weak, fragmented policies.

This policy void disproportionately affects the Global South, which bears the brunt of climate impacts while contributing the least to the crisis. Meanwhile, projections suggest that by 2050, more than 216 million people could be internally displaced by climate change in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America alone.

## Toward a New Paradigm

The world urgently needs a unified, rights-based approach to climate displacement built on three pillars:

**Legal Recognition:** International law must evolve to protect climate refugees, whether by amending existing conventions or drafting a new treaty

**Humanitarian Adaptation:** Aid agencies must tailor their responses to the specific needs of climate-displaced populations, with a focus on long-term integration.

**Global Cooperation:** High-emission countries must not only reduce emissions but also finance relocation and adaptation in vulnerable regions.

## Conclusion

Climate refugees are not a future problem—they are a present reality. Whether it's the villagers of the Carteret Islands, drought-stricken communities in the Sahel, or families in Louisiana fleeing rising seas, their stories demand global attention and action. Migration, if managed ethically and strategically, can become a form of resilience. But it requires vision, compassion, and above all, justice. ●

---

*Divya Panchal approaches her work at Cult Current with both curiosity and conviction.*





# Kamal at the Oscars!

## South Star, Global Stage

**Despite a recent** stumble at the box office with *Thug Life*, South Indian cinema icon Kamal Haasan is proving that true stardom is not measured by a single film's fate. In a stunning comeback of recognition, the legendary actor has been invited to join the prestigious Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences—the governing body of the Oscars.

On June, 26, the Academy announced its "Class of 2025," an elite group of 534 global film professionals selected across disciplines. Among them are three notable Indian names: Kamal Haasan, Bollywood actor Ayushmann Khurrana, and celebrated filmmaker Payal Kapadia, fresh off her Grand Prix win at Cannes 2024.

Haasan and Khurrana have been invited to join the Actors Branch, acknowledging their body of work—*Vikram*, *Nayakan*, *Article 15*, and *Anhadhun*, respectively—while Kapadia joins the Writers Branch, following acclaim for *A Night of Knowing Nothing* and *All We Imagine As Light*.

Academy CEO Bill Kramer and President Janet Yang expressed their enthusiasm, stating:

"Through their dedication to cinema and the larger film industry, these extraordinary individuals have made indelible contributions to global filmmaking."

Unlike open applications, Academy membership is by invitation only, a distinction earned through industry impact and peer recognition. Joining the ranks this year are also international stars like Ariana Grande, Kieran Culkin, and Mickey Madison, as well as key studio heads from Disney, Sony, and MUBI.

For Kamal Haasan, this is not just an invitation—it's a validation of decades of cinematic excellence. He may have faced a rough patch recently, but his influence, artistry, and stature continue to command global respect.

As India's cinematic power expands on the world stage, Kamal Haasan's journey reminds us:  
Legends never fade—they evolve.

Shubh Navratras



DISTINCTIVE **STYLE**  
THRILLING **POWER**



C A M R Y

POWERFUL.  
LUXURIOUS.

*Awesome*



- ATTRACTIVE LOW INTEREST OF 5.99 %\*
- COMPLIMENTARY EXTENDED WARRANTY\*
- COMPLIMENTARY 5 YEARS ROADSIDE ASSISTANCE

\* Terms and conditions apply. Visit the nearest dealer for more details.



RNI TITLE CODE : DELENG19447

You only hear the gushing sound...  
Rest is all silent.

Style Series  
Single Lever Basin Mixer

Experience it. Look at it from all angles. Check out the contours,  
the craftsmanship, the perfection of form and the waterfall...

Glamour ■ Convenience ■ Technology



**MARC SANITATION PVT. LTD.**

A-2, S.M.A. Co-op. Industrial Estate, G.T. Kamal Road, Delhi-110 033  
Ph: 27691410, Fax: 011-27691445/27692295 E-mail: [info@marcindia.com](mailto:info@marcindia.com) Website : [www.marcindia.com](http://www.marcindia.com)