

PRAVASI INDIANS

The India Connection

₹ 200/-

GULF CRISIS WHEN WEST ASIA BURNS, INDIA FEELS THE HEAT

FROM GULF DREAMS TO FORCED RETURN

HERITAGE & GEOPOLITICS
THE ROADS THAT
BUDDHA BUILT

AGING WITH DIGNITY
WHY INDIA MUST
RETHINK ELDER CARE

CRYPTOCURRENCY
BUT RISKS CONTINUE
TO LOOM

आशा भोसले
जो भी है, बस यही
एक पल है

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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



From Global Upheavals to Human Realities

Dear Readers,

In an increasingly interconnected yet deeply uncertain world, the stories we present in this edition of *PRAVASI INDIANS* reflect the anxieties, aspirations and resilience shaping our times. From geopolitics and migration to technology, spirituality and social change, this issue explores how global developments continue to influence deeply personal realities.

We begin with a civilisational perspective that connects India's past with its emerging global role. **UDAY SAHAI** and former diplomat **SANJAY KUMAR VERMA** remind us that India's influence historically travelled not merely through trade or diplomacy, but through ideas, culture and spiritual traditions. Revisiting the journey of Buddhism from Nalanda to Nara and Bodhi Gaya to Beijing, they argue that India's civilisational heritage may once again become one of its most enduring sources of global influence in an era of shifting geopolitical alignments.

The rapidly escalating West Asia conflict forms the central theme of this edition. Our Cover Story by Bengaluru-based senior journalist **B. SEKHAR** analyses how the crisis is no longer a distant geopolitical flashpoint for India, but an economic challenge with direct implications for trade, energy security, inflation and growth. Complementing this macro-economic perspective, **ANJANI KUMAR**'s deeply human reportage from Bihar's Saharsa district captures the emotional and financial fallout of the Gulf crisis on migrant workers and their families. Through the story of returning expatriates whose dreams of stability and prosperity now stand disrupted, the article reminds us that distant wars are often fought most painfully in ordinary homes.

This issue also turns inward — towards the emotional and social transformations reshaping Indian society. **RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI** reflects on how fear, hatred and spiritual disconnection continue to fuel conflicts across nations, communities and families, arguing that lasting peace requires not only political solutions but also inner transformation.

In another thought-provoking article, **DR. VENKATESH GANAPATHY** highlights the silent crisis of elder care in an increasingly globalised society, where ageing parents are often left alone while children pursue lives abroad. His article urges society to rethink old-age homes not as symbols of abandonment, but as spaces of dignity, companionship and care.

In our interview section, **DR. AJAY KELA**, CEO of the Wadhvani Foundation, shares his insights on Artificial Intelligence, dignified employment and the future of inclusive economic growth. **SATISH SINGH** explores the rapid rise of cryptocurrency among India's Gen Z investors, showing how young Indians are embracing digital finance with both optimism and risk.

This edition also carries reflective pieces on culture, memory and public life. Seattle-based **RAHUL UPADHYAY**'s tribute to Asha Bhosle becomes more than musical nostalgia — it evolves into a meditation on memory, mortality and the passage of time. Our Editor-in-Chief and senior journalist **SUDHANSHU RANJAN** examines the difficult question of judicial accountability in India through the Justice Yashwant Varma controversy. Alongside these, our horoscope section by **ACHARYA DINAIK** revisits astrology as a traditional lens for understanding life's patterns, while poet **LALITPRASAD MATHURADUTT JOSHI**'s verses remind us that even in uncertain times, hope and self-belief remain humanity's greatest strengths.

At a time when the world appears increasingly polarised and unpredictable, we hope this edition encourages reflection, empathy and dialogue — values that remain essential not only for societies, but also for individuals navigating a rapidly changing world.

Happy reading *PRAVASI INDIANS*!

Rashmi
CEO and Publisher

We would love to hear from you. We also invite diaspora members to write for us and share their experiences

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The India Connection

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COVER STORY

Our Bengaluru-based South India Bureau Chief **B. SHEKHAR** observes that the West Asia conflict is no longer a distant geopolitical flashpoint for India—it is now an economic reality with direct consequences for trade, energy security, inflation, and growth; is revealing how quickly global tensions can reshape the trajectory of an emerging economic powerhouse. He further says as exports to the Gulf collapse, oil prices surge, and supply chains face mounting disruptions, India finds itself confronting the risks of deep economic interdependence with one of the world's most volatile regions.

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GULF CRISIS

A Delhi NCR-based senior journalist known for his balanced and comprehensive analysis of international affairs, **ANJANI KUMAR** says the escalating conflict in the Gulf is no longer just a geopolitical story unfolding in distant deserts and strategic waterways. Its consequences are now being felt in villages across India, where thousands of migrant workers are returning home jobless, anxious, and uncertain about the future. Through the story of a construction worker from Bihar's Saharsa district, this feature explores how war, economic instability, and global power struggles are disrupting the lives of millions of Indian expatriates whose dreams once depended on the Gulf's promise of prosperity.

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MIND, SOCIETY & PEACE

A well-acclaimed spiritual educator and columnist with over 9,500 articles to his credit, **RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJJI** At a time when wars, extremism, political polarisation, broken families, and emotional distress are becoming increasingly common across the world, an important question confronts humanity: are these crises merely political and social, or are they

rooted in something deeper within the human mind itself? This thought-provoking article argues that most conflicts—whether between nations, communities, political groups, or even family members—ultimately emerge from fear, hatred, insecurity, and spiritual disconnection. Drawing upon history, philosophy, and spiritual insight, the piece reflects on how modern civilization has invested heavily in military strength while neglecting the inner values of compassion, understanding, and harmony. It calls for a transformation not merely of systems and institutions, but of human consciousness itself, suggesting that true peace can emerge only when humanity learns to disarm the mind before attempting to disarm the world.

20-23

ELDER CARE

In his article, **DR. VENKATESH GANAPATHY** examines the growing challenges faced by ageing population adding, "As Indian families become increasingly global, a quiet social crisis is unfolding back home. Millions of elderly parents now live alone while their children pursue careers and lives abroad, often leaving senior citizens vulnerable to loneliness, neglect, financial insecurity and emotional abandonment." The traditional family structures once provided care and companionship in old age, rapid migration, urbanisation and changing lifestyles are reshaping this bond. In this thought-provoking article, the author depicts growing challenges faced by India's ageing population through deeply human stories of

loss, resilience and isolation and argues that India must fundamentally rethink how it views old age homes—not as symbols of abandonment, but as spaces of dignity, care, security and community for a generation that deserves compassion in its final years.

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HERITAGE & GEOPOLITICS

UDAY SAHAI, a Delhi School of Economics alumnus, writer took voluntary retirement from IPS who dropped his baton to follow his passion of writing and has penned 8 books so far; & **SANJAY KUMAR VERMA**, a 1988-batch Indian Foreign Service officer and former Ambassador of India to Sudan, Japan and Canada, observe that long before modern diplomacy, monks and pilgrims carried India's ideas across mountains, deserts and seas, adding "From the Gangetic plains emerged a civilisational network that linked Nalanda to Nara and Bodhi Gaya to Beijing. In an age of geopolitical rivalry, India's Buddhist heritage may once again become one of its greatest sources of influence."

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INTERVIEW

In a free-wheeling interview with *PRAVASI INDIANS*, **DR. AJAY KELA**, CEO of the Wadhvani Foundation, a global non-profit organisation focused on accelerating economic development through large-scale job creation, reflects on the transformative potential of Artificial Intelligence, the importance of dignified employment, and the evolving role of philanthropy in building inclusive societies.

An entrepreneur, technologist and institution builder, Dr. Kela believes that AI can become one of the greatest democratisers of opportunity if combined with strong human systems and institutional support.

32-35

DIGITAL FINANCE

A Mumbai-based columnist, **SATISH SINGH** who currently serves as an AGM with SBI, writes India's cryptocurrency revolution is increasingly being driven by young investors willing to embrace both the opportunities and risks of digital finance; adding "A recent report by PI-42 and Hashed Emergent reveals that more than 60 percent of crypto investors are now under the age of 25, and Gen Z is the dominant force in crypto trading and derivatives, with young Indians from metro cities and small towns are turning to Bitcoin, Ethereum and other digital assets with unprecedented enthusiasm, aided by mobile-first trading platforms."

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न्यायिक जवाबदेही

वरिष्ठ पत्रकार और स्तंभकार सुधांशु रंजन अपनी रिपोर्ट में लिखते हैं कि भारत में न्यायाधीशों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की संवैधानिक व्यवस्था इतनी कठिन है कि अब तक कोई भी न्यायाधीश महाभियोग के जरिए पद से नहीं हटाया जा सका। ऐसे में सवाल उठता है कि न्यायिक भ्रष्टाचार या दुराचार के मामलों में जवाबदेही कैसे तय हो। यह रिपोर्ट न्यायमूर्ति यशवंत वर्मा प्रकरण के बहाने इसी जटिल प्रश्न की पड़ताल करता है।

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एक श्रोता की डायरी

सिएटल से **राहुल उपाध्याय** आशा भोसले को याद करते हुए अपनी रिपोर्ट में लिखते हैं कि आशा जी की आवाज़ सिर्फ संगीत नहीं, बल्कि बीते हुए दशकों की धड़कन है; आगे कहते हैं की पुराने गीतों की दुनिया में लौटना कभी-कभी अपने ही जीवन में लौटना होता है। इस लेख में फिल्मों, गायकों और रेडियो कार्यक्रमों की यादों के बीच एक व्यक्ति अपने समय, अपने स्वाद और अपनी सीमाओं को टटोलता हुआ जीवन, मृत्यु, स्मृति और विरासत पर एक शांत चिंतन में बदल जाता है।

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HOROSCOPE / राशिफल

ज्योतिष **आचार्य दिनायक** के अनुसार, ज्योतिष को अक्सर केवल भविष्य की घटनाओं का अनुमान लगाने का एक साधन ही नहीं, बल्कि मानवीय जीवन के भीतर मौजूद पैटर्नों की व्याख्या करने वाली एक पारंपरिक प्रणाली के रूप में देखा जाता है। 'जन्म कुंडली' (या बर्थ चार्ट) को, किसी व्यक्ति के जन्म के ठीक उस क्षण, आकाशीय पिंडों की स्थितियों को दर्शाने वाले एक मानचित्र के रूप में समझा जाता है। ज्योतिषी ग्रहों की इन स्थितियों का अध्ययन करके उन संभावित प्रवृत्तियों, चुनौतियों और अवसरों का संकेत देते हैं, जो किसी व्यक्ति के जीवन-सफ़र को आकार दे सकते हैं।

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कविता

ललितप्रसाद मथुरादत्त जोशी हिंदी साहित्य की दुनिया में निरंतर सक्रिय रहते हुए अपनी सशक्त कविताओं के माध्यम से पाठकों से संवाद करते रहे हैं। उनके दो काव्य-संग्रह— *बढ़ता भारत और मानव किस ओर बढ़ रहा है*—पूर्व में प्रकाशित हो चुके हैं। उनकी कविताओं में जीवन-संघर्ष, सामाजिक चेतना और आत्मविश्वास की गहरी अभिव्यक्ति मिलती है। अपनी कविता "स्वयं में कुछ विश्वास बचा सा" में वे विपरीत परिस्थितियों में भी धैर्य, आशा और साहस बनाए रखने का संदेश देते हुए लिखते हैं— "अब भी कुछ है टूटी हिम्मत, अब भी स्वयं में कुछ आस जगा सा। ढूंढी है राहों की मंजिल, स्वयं में कुछ विश्वास बचा सा।"

WHEN WEST ASIA BURNS, INDIA FEELS THE HEAT

The conflict in West Asia is no longer a distant geopolitical flashpoint for India—it is now an economic reality with direct consequences for trade, energy security, inflation, and growth. As exports to the Gulf collapse, oil prices surge, and supply chains face mounting disruptions, India finds itself confronting the risks of deep economic interdependence with one of the world's most volatile regions. The crisis is revealing how quickly global tensions can reshape the trajectory of an emerging economic powerhouse.



BY B SHEKHAR

The author, based in Bengaluru, is our South India Bureau Chief.

In early 2026, India appeared firmly positioned as one of the world's most resilient major economies, buoyed by strong domestic demand, a stable macroeconomic framework, and expanding trade linkages across the globe, particularly with the European Union, Australia, the Middle East, and South Asia. Yet the eruption of conflict in West Asia has exposed a critical vulnerability: India's deep economic interdependence with the Gulf region. What was once considered a strategic advantage is rapidly becoming a source of strain across trade, energy security, and financial flows.

A Sudden Reversal in Trade Momentum

India's merchandise trade data for March 2026 underscores the severity of the disruption. Goods exports contracted by 7.4 percent year-on-year to \$38.9 billion, marking a stark reversal from the modest average growth of 0.3 percent recorded during the preceding three months. Imports also declined by 6.5 percent to \$59.6 billion, reflecting both compressed demand and mounting supply-side constraints.

More striking, however, is the regional dimension of the slowdown. According to official estimates, exports to West Asia plunged by nearly 58 percent, while imports from the region declined by more than 50 percent. These figures indicate not merely cyclical weakness, but a structural shock emanating from geopolitical instability.

Dr. Arvind Subramanian, former Chief Economic Adviser to the Government of India, has previously argued in his research on global trade shocks that "geopolitical fragmentation is increasingly becoming a first-order determinant of trade outcomes, especially for economies deeply embedded in regional supply chains." The current crisis appears to validate this thesis.

Energy Dependence: India's Strategic Concern

At the heart of India's vulnerability lies its dependence on imported energy. The Middle East accounts for roughly 40 percent of India's crude oil imports and nearly 80 percent of its natural gas supplies. With crude prices surging—Brent averaging \$95.6 per barrel in March 2026, compared with \$70.7 a year earlier—the macroeconomic implications for India have become immediate and far-reaching.

Research by the International Energy Agency (IEA) has consistently identified India as one of the world's most oil-import-dependent major economies, importing close to 90 percent of its crude oil requirements. This dependence amplifies the transmission of global price shocks into domestic inflation, fiscal balances, and currency stability.

Despite a 35.9 percent decline in crude oil imports in March 2026, largely due to disrupted shipping routes and de-

ferred purchases, India continues to face rising import costs. As economist and academic Rathin Roy recently observed during a policy discussion:

"India will have to watch its balance of payments very carefully. Imports are becoming more expensive even as export earnings weaken."

Sectoral Stress: Gems, Jewellery, and Beyond

The impact of the conflict has been uneven, though deeply felt across several key export sectors. Nowhere is this more evident than in the gems and jewellery industry, where exports plunged 29.3 percent year-on-year in March. The United Arab Emirates—until recently India's largest destination for such exports—witnessed a collapse in shipments amid logistical disruptions and weakening regional demand.

This trend aligns with findings from World Bank trade elasticity studies, which demonstrate that luxury and discretionary goods are disproportionately affected during geopolitical crises because of heightened demand sensitivity and fragile supply chains.

Core exports, excluding volatile components, also declined by 7.5 percent, indicating that the slowdown is broad-based

The war has created unprecedented economic, national security and humanitarian pressures. India has extensive trade relations with the warring and war-affected countries, that the conflict zone straddles critical trade routes and that a large share of India's crude oil and gas needs is met by this very region. India's concerns are naturally greater and therefore it is essential that a united and unanimous voice goes out to the world from India's Parliament on this crisis.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on West Asia Conflict

● ●
India's exports to West Asia have collapsed by nearly 58 percent, exposing the risks of overdependence on a geopolitically volatile region.
 ● ●



rather than confined to a few sectors. Engineering goods, electronics, and rice exports have all reported disruptions linked to shipping delays, rising freight costs, and payment uncertainties.

Petroleum Products: A Rare Bright Spot

Amid the broader gloom, petroleum exports have demonstrated notable resilience, rising 5.7 percent year-on-year. Higher global prices, coupled with the strategic rerouting of shipments to alternative Asian markets, have supported this growth.

Exports to Singapore surged by 158.6 percent, while shipments to Malaysia rose by 84.5 percent, suggesting a significant reconfiguration of trade flows. According to analysts at ANZ Research, "trade diversion is acting as a temporary buffer, but it cannot fully offset the loss of core markets in West Asia."

This shift also contributed to a narrowing of India's oil trade deficit to \$7 billion in March, compared with \$14.1 billion during the same period a year earlier.

Import Compression and Supply Chain Disruptions

On the import side, the contraction reflects both weakened domestic demand and severe supply bottlenecks. Gems and jewellery imports fell by 17.8 percent, while gold imports declined by 31.6 percent, signalling subdued consumption as well as weaker investment demand.

Fertiliser imports—an essential input for India's agricultural sector—also slowed sharply, with growth easing to 2.2 percent from over 26 percent in previous months. Given that West Asia remains a major supplier, this raises fresh concerns regarding input-cost inflation and food security in the months ahead.

The Remittance Channel: A Silent Risk

Beyond trade, the conflict threatens another crucial pillar of India's external sector: remittances. With nearly 10 million Indians employed across the Gulf region and more than 40 percent of India's remittance inflows originating there, any prolonged economic slowdown or labour-market disruption in West Asia could generate significant spillover effects for the Indian economy.

Research conducted by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has shown that remittances play a stabilising role in India's current account, often offsetting persistent trade deficits. A decline in these flows could therefore intensify India's external vulnerabilities.

Macroeconomic Outlook: Growth Under Pressure

For the full fiscal year 2025–26, India's goods exports grew by a modest 0.9 percent to \$441.8 billion, while imports increased by 7.4 percent to \$774.9 billion, widening the trade deficit to \$333.1 billion.

Goldman Sachs, in a recent note, warned that India could face a combination of slower growth, higher infla-



Looking ahead, normalisation of trade will largely depend on geopolitical de-escalation and the reopening of stable shipping lanes in the Gulf. Even in a best-case scenario, trade flows may take 3–6 months to stabilise due to backlog, contract renegotiations and inventory adjustments, while a prolonged conflict could extend disruptions well into the next financial year.

Structural risks, such as India's heavy dependence on West Asian energy and trade routes mean that volatility may persist even after hostilities ease. For Indian exporters, this period calls for diversification of markets and logistics strategies, as the "new normal" in global trade may remain more fragmented and risk-sensitive than before.

Dr. Jagat Shah
Founder, Global Network Institute and Global Export Mentor on Wheels

● ●
Surging crude oil prices and disrupted shipping routes are putting fresh pressure on India's inflation, fiscal balance, and currency stability.
● ●

tion, and a weaker currency if the conflict persists. The report described the situation as a "new broadside" against India's otherwise strong growth narrative.

Similarly, a study by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on external shocks suggests that sustained spikes in energy prices could reduce India's GDP growth by 0.3–0.5 percentage points, depending on the duration and intensity of the shock.

Strategic Reorientation: Diversification and Resilience

The unfolding crisis is likely to accelerate India's efforts to diversify both its energy sources and export markets.

Increased imports of discounted Russian crude, expanding trade with Southeast Asia, and ongoing negotiations with the United States all signal a broader strategic pivot.

Exports to the United States, for instance, improved sequentially to \$8 billion in March, aided by tariff reductions under bilateral trade discussions. However, uncertainty regarding the final trade framework continues to persist.

Shockwaves Through Trade

How the West Asia Conflict Is Recasting India's External Sector

From collapsing exports to surging energy costs, the Iran–US war is testing India's economic resilience and exposing deep dependence on the Gulf.



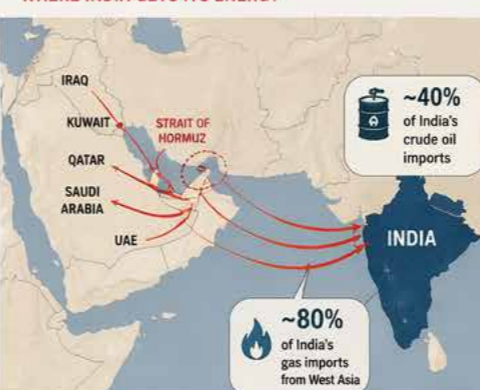
The Strait of Hormuz carries about one-fifth of the world's oil supply.

INDIA TRADE SNAPSHOT: MARCH 2026

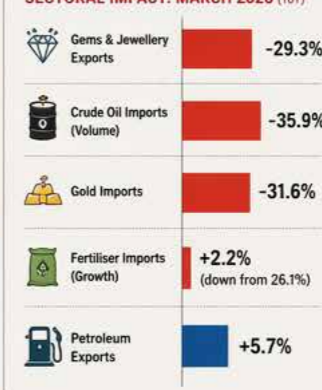


Geopolitical fragmentation is increasingly becoming a first-order determinant of trade outcomes.
— Dr. Arvind Subramanian
Former Chief Economic Adviser, Government of India

WHERE INDIA GETS ITS ENERGY



SECTORAL IMPACT: MARCH 2026 (YoY)



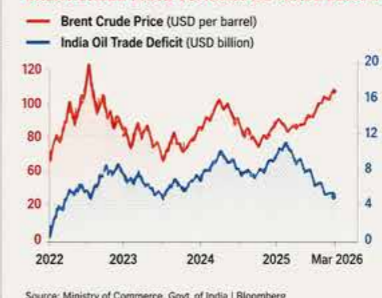
Gems & jewellery exports plunged **29.3%** as demand in key West Asian markets collapsed.

Nearly 10 million Indians work in the Gulf. Over 40% of India's \$130bn remittances come from the region.

TRADE DIVERSION: BEFORE & AFTER CONFLICT



BRENT CRUDE PRICE VS. INDIA OIL TRADE DEFICIT



Petroleum exports rose **5.7%**, a rare bright spot driven by higher global prices and trade diversion.

Rising energy prices are fueling inflation pressures and fiscal strain.

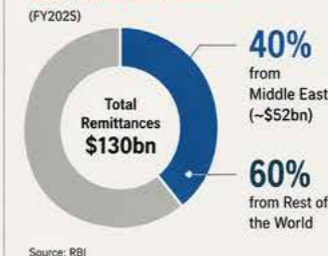
Imports from key regional partners illustrate the scale of disruption:

- Qatar: down 47.9 percent
- Saudi Arabia: down 37.3 percent
- UAE: down 66.3 percent

INDIA'S EXPANDING TRADE DEFICIT



REMITTANCE DEPENDENCY (FY2025)



THE RIPPLE EFFECT: HOW THE CONFLICT IMPACTS INDIA





● ●
Key sectors including gems, jewellery, engineering goods, and electronics are facing severe trade disruptions amid growing uncertainty in Gulf markets.



As Talmiz Ahmad, former Indian ambassador to several Gulf nations, observed:

“The economic relationship between India and the Gulf is so deeply intertwined that disentangling it will take time. But diversification is no longer optional—it is imperative.”

Meanwhile, Dr. Jagat Shah, Founder of the Global Network Institute and Global Export Mentor on Wheels, noted:

“The ongoing Iran conflict has significantly disrupted India’s trade dynamics with West Asia, a region critical for both exports and energy imports. Shipping routes through the Strait of Hormuz—one of the world’s busiest energy corridors—have faced growing uncertainty, leading to sharp increases in freight, insurance, and oil prices. At the same time, supply-chain disruptions and volatile fuel costs are affecting sectors ranging from textiles to steel, making the region temporarily less predictable for exporters.”

Conclusion: A Stress Test for India’s Economic Model

The conflict in West Asia has emerged as a real-time stress test for India’s external-sector resilience. It has exposed structural dependencies—on energy imports, regional trade hubs, and remittance flows—that appeared manageable during stable periods but are now evolving into sources of systemic risk.

While India’s strong macroeconomic fundamentals continue to provide an important buffer, the road ahead will require careful calibration of trade policy, energy strategy, and fiscal management. The crisis may ultimately serve as a catalyst for structural reform and diversification. In the near term, however, it stands as a powerful reminder that in an interconnected global economy, geopolitical shocks can swiftly reshape economic realities. ■

FROM GULF DREAMS TO FORCED RETURN

The escalating conflict in the Gulf is no longer just a geopolitical story unfolding in distant deserts and strategic waterways. Its consequences are now being felt in villages across India, where thousands of migrant workers are returning home jobless, anxious, and uncertain about the future. Through the story of a construction worker from Bihar’s Saharsa district, this feature explores how war, economic instability, and global power struggles are disrupting the lives of millions of Indian expatriates whose dreams once depended on the Gulf’s promise of prosperity.



BY ANJANI KUMAR

A Delhi NCR-based senior journalist, the author is known to focus on presenting a comprehensive and balanced analysis of the international issues.

The escalating conflict in the Gulf has shattered the dreams of millions of Indian expatriates who once viewed the region as a gateway to prosperity. For thousands of migrant workers, the crisis has not only meant the loss of employment but also the collapse of carefully built aspirations, leaving families in India financially vulnerable and emotionally distressed.

For five years, Ramchandra believed he had outrun the inevitabilities of poverty. A skilled construction worker from Bihar’s Saharsa district, he had built a stable life in Oman — steady wages, regular remittances, and the quiet satisfaction of supporting his family back home. Every month, money sent from the Gulf transformed his modest household, helping pay for education, healthcare, and a more dignified existence.

Then came the war.

What began as distant geopolitical tensions involving Iran and U.S.-backed regional forces soon spilled across the Gulf, disrupting economies, unsettling governments, and displacing thousands of workers like Ramchandra. Today, he is back in his village, unemployed and uncertain, watching the life he built abroad unravel under forces far beyond his control.

His story is no longer an exception. It is increasingly becoming the reality for many Indian migrant workers across the Gulf.

A Region of Dreams Turning Into a Region of Doubt

For decades, the Gulf region has served as a magnet for Indian labour. From construction sites in Dubai to oil installations in Saudi Arabia, migrant workers from India have helped fuel the region’s spectacular economic rise. The promise was straightforward: hard work in exchange for financial mobility and social advancement.

But the ongoing conflict has exposed the fragility of that promise.

What once appeared to be a region defined by gleaming airports, booming infrastructure projects, and endless economic expansion now appears in-

creasingly uncertain. Supply chains are under pressure, construction activity is slowing, and companies dependent on migrant labour are beginning to cut costs amid rising geopolitical instability.

This war is not being fought only with missiles and military threats. It is also being fought through fear, uncertainty, and economic disruption.

The Human Cost: Stories from Saharsa

Back in Saharsa, Ramchandra’s village reflects a reality that statistics alone cannot fully capture. Several families in the area depended heavily on remittances sent by relatives working in Gulf countries. Those financial lifelines have now weakened or disappeared entirely.

“Earlier, there was stability,” says a local resident. “Now people are selling land just to survive.”

Ramchandra remembers the day he decided to leave Oman.

“At first there were rumours, then warnings from the company,” he recalls. “Flights were uncertain. Nobody knew how bad the situation might become. I decided to return while I still could.”

That decision, though practical, came at a heavy cost. The job he once considered secure no longer exists. His savings are shrinking rapidly, and the education of his children has become uncertain.

Yet he is far from alone.

Across India — particularly in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, and Telangana — thousands of returning migrant workers are confronting the same harsh reality: sudden unemployment, mounting financial pressure, and an unpredictable future.

The Scale of the Return

India has already acknowledged the seriousness of the crisis. According to the Ministry of External Affairs, more than 52,000 Indians returned from Gulf countries within the first week of the conflict's escalation. Special evacuation arrangements, travel advisories, and emergency support measures have been initiated.

However, this may only be the beginning.

If the conflict deepens or spreads further across the region, the number of returnees could rise dramatically. The Gulf currently hosts more than eight million Indians, making it one of the largest overseas Indian populations anywhere in the world. Even if a small fraction is forced to return home, the economic and social consequences could be enormous.

Remittances from Gulf countries form a critical pillar of India's economy, especially for states heavily dependent on migrant income. Any prolonged disruption threatens not only individual households but also regional economic stability.

A Conflict Beyond Borders

At its core, the current crisis is not merely a bilateral confrontation. It is deeply embedded in the complex geopolitics of West Asia.

Iran views several Gulf monarchies as part of a broader U.S.-led regional security framework. This perception has been shaped by decades of Western military presence and shifting regional alliances, including the Abraham Accords, which formalised diplomatic ties between Israel and countries such as the UAE and Bahrain.

For Tehran, claims of neutrality within the Gulf are increasingly contested.

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Thousands of Indian migrant workers are returning from the Gulf as conflict and economic uncertainty disrupt jobs and livelihoods.
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By targeting strategic assets and asserting its right to self-defence, Iran has signalled its willingness to escalate tensions in an effort to reshape regional power dynamics. The Strait of Hormuz — one of the world's most critical oil transit routes — has emerged as both a strategic pressure point and a potential flashpoint.

The implications are global, but the immediate human consequences are intensely local, particularly for migrant workers trapped in the middle of the crisis.

Gulf Economies and Structural Vulnerabilities

The present conflict has exposed the

structural vulnerabilities of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) economies. These economies depend heavily on five interconnected pillars: political stability, uninterrupted sea routes, energy exports, international finance, and migrant labour.

A prolonged conflict threatens all five simultaneously.

- Political stability is undermined by the constant threat of escalation.
- Shipping lanes face disruption, affecting trade and global energy flows.
- Energy exports become volatile, un-

settling international markets.

- Investor confidence weakens amid uncertainty.
- Migrant labour — the backbone of infrastructure and service sectors — becomes increasingly expendable during periods of crisis.

For companies operating in such conditions, reducing labour costs often becomes the quickest survival strategy. For migrant workers, returning home becomes the safest option.

A Forced Homecoming

The return of workers like Ramchandra is not a planned migration. It is a forced retreat.

Unlike the return of migrant work-

ers during the COVID-19 pandemic, this exodus carries an added sense of abruptness and emotional loss. Many workers have left behind unpaid wages, incomplete contracts, and years of unrealised aspirations.

Reintegration into the Indian economy presents another major challenge.

Rural areas already struggling with limited employment opportunities are poorly equipped to absorb this sudden influx of returning workers. Urban job markets offer little relief, as unemployment and underemployment remain

widespread.

For many skilled workers, there is also a mismatch between their expertise and the opportunities available in India.

Policy Responses and Gaps

The Indian government has taken several initial steps, including evacuation operations, travel advisories, and diplomatic engagement with Gulf nations. However, the scale of the crisis requires a far more comprehensive and long-term policy response.

Key areas demanding urgent attention include:

- Rehabilitation programmes for returnees, including skill mapping and

employment support.

- Financial assistance for families affected by the sudden loss of remittance income.
- Diplomatic efforts to secure unpaid wages and protect the rights of Indian workers abroad.
- Diversification of migration destinations to reduce excessive dependence on the Gulf region.

The crisis also raises a larger policy question. For decades, India has relied heavily on overseas labour migration as a source of economic support. The present situation highlights the vulnerabilities of that model in an increasingly unstable geopolitical environment.

The Psychological Burden

Beyond economics, the conflict has inflicted a deep psychological toll on migrant workers.

For many, the Gulf was not merely

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The story of a worker from Bihar's Saharsa district reflects the larger crisis facing families dependent on Gulf remittances.
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a workplace. It symbolised ambition, achievement, and hope for a better future. The sudden collapse of that dream has left many struggling with anxiety, insecurity, and a painful sense of personal failure.

"I feel like I have failed," Ramchandra says quietly. "I went there to build a future. Now I am back where I started."

Such feelings are becoming increasingly common among returnees, underlining the need for psychological counselling and mental health support alongside economic rehabilitation.

A Global Crisis with Local Consequences

The consequences of the conflict ex-

tend far beyond the Gulf region.

Global oil prices have become increasingly volatile, shipping routes face disruption, and international markets continue to react nervously to the uncertainty. Yet the most immediate and visible impact is being felt within migrant communities.

This conflict is not merely a story of governments, military strategies, or regional rivalries. It is also a story of ordinary individuals whose lives are overturned by decisions taken in distant corridors of power.

Looking Ahead

As the conflict shows no clear signs of resolution, uncertainty continues to dominate the future.

Will the Gulf recover its image as a land of opportunity? Will migrant workers eventually return once stability is restored? Or will this crisis fundamentally reshape global labour migration patterns?

For now, such questions remain unanswered.

What is undeniable, however, is that the cost of this conflict is being borne not only on geopolitical frontlines but also in villages like Saharsa, where dreams remain suspended and resilience is being severely tested.

The Price of Distant Wars

Every morning, Ramchandra still wakes up early, just as he did during his years in Oman. But instead of heading to a construction site, he now walks through his village searching for work that pays only a fraction of what he once earned abroad.

His story is a stark reminder that in an interconnected world, no conflict remains geographically contained. A war fought thousands of kilometres away in the Gulf can profoundly reshape lives in the heart of rural India.

For policymakers, the lesson is urgent: economic strategies built around external dependencies must also account for geopolitical risks.

For workers like Ramchandra, however, the lesson is far more painful — dreams built abroad can disappear overnight. ■

WHY THE WORLD NEEDS SPIRITUAL HARMONY MORE THAN MILITARY POWER

At a time when wars, extremism, political polarisation, broken families, and emotional distress are becoming increasingly common across the world, an important question confronts humanity: are these crises merely political and social, or are they rooted in something deeper within the human mind itself? This thought-provoking article argues that most conflicts—whether between nations, communities, political groups, or even family members—ultimately emerge from fear, hatred, insecurity, and spiritual disconnection. Drawing upon history, philosophy, and spiritual insight, the piece reflects on how modern civilization has invested heavily in military strength while neglecting the inner values of compassion, understanding, and harmony. It calls for a transformation not merely of systems and institutions, but of human consciousness itself, suggesting that true peace can emerge only when humanity learns to disarm the mind before attempting to disarm the world.



BY RAJYOGI BRAHMA KUMAR NIKUNJ JI
(nikunjji@gmail.com)

Writer is a spiritual educator and popular columnist, who has written 9500+ articles/columns till date across India, Nepal & UK.

It is increasingly evident today that disharmony in human relations lies at the root of not only wars, but also countless other social, psychological, and political problems that affect humanity directly or indirectly. The growing fragmentation of families, the alarming rise in divorce cases, and even many psycho-somatic illnesses caused by stress, anxiety, and emotional tension can largely be traced back to the breakdown of human relationships. In recent years, the world has witnessed how conflicts between nations over territorial or political disputes have trig-

gered mass displacement, destruction, and the tragic loss of innocent lives in devastating bombings and military confrontations. One cannot deny that the forces leading to the disintegration of nations, communities, political groups, and even families often emerge from deep-rooted disharmony.

Today, extremism and fundamentalism visible in many parts of the world—particularly across sections of Asia—are fueled largely by religio-political discord. Likewise, many law-and-order crises, social unrest, communal tensions, and even disruptions within

democratic institutions and legislatures arise from conflicts among political parties, linguistic groups, or religious communities. It has therefore become absolutely essential for humanity to seek a meaningful solution to this growing crisis, lest disharmony itself begins to consume the foundations of civilization.

But what is the way forward? How does humanity move beyond conflict and division?

The answer perhaps lies in understanding that most of these problems are ultimately creations of the human mind—products of negative attitudes,



fear, prejudice, insecurity, and destructive patterns of thinking. If we genuinely wish to create harmony in society, we must first disarm our minds before attempting to disarm the world. In other words, the dismantling of the forces of hatred and conflict must begin internally. Humanity must learn new ways of thinking if it wishes to create a new world, because old patterns of negativity can never liberate us from suffering; they can only deepen our crises and multiply human misery.

It is estimated that nearly 2.7 trillion dollars are spent globally every year in the name of “defence” and “security.” Yet, paradoxically, insecurity, fear, violence, and instability continue to rise rather than decline. Even more tragic is the fact that this enormous diversion of global resources toward military expenditure deprives millions of poor

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The article argues that the roots of war, extremism, family breakdown, and social unrest ultimately lie in growing disharmony within human relationships and the human mind itself.
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and vulnerable people of the support, healthcare, education, and welfare they urgently need and rightfully deserve.

Perhaps the time has come to redefine the very meaning of security.

True security does not emerge from an endless state of military preparedness or an arms race among nations. Genuine security lies in trust, cooperation, friendship, compassion, and peaceful coexistence. Humanity’s real enemies are not other human beings, but suspicion, hatred, fear, revenge, violence, and intolerance. These enemies cannot be defeated through military means alone.

It is in this spirit that the Bhagavad Gita reminds us: “The soul is its own best friend and its own worst enemy.” The message is profound. Hatred cannot eliminate hatred; only love can do that. Cruelty cannot be conquered by more cruelty; only kindness can soften it. Likewise, compassion alone has the power to calm the destructive passions that divide humanity.

A deeper study of human civilization also reveals that many of our



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 Despite trillions spent globally on defence and security, fear, violence, and insecurity continue to rise—raising urgent questions about humanity's understanding of peace and true security.

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 Drawing upon spiritual wisdom and historical reflection, the piece calls for a transformation of human consciousness through compassion, understanding, and inner harmony rather than conflict and division.

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present crises are rooted in certain flawed assumptions about human history and human nature. One such belief is that conflict and disharmony have always existed and that humanity has never known an era of complete peace. But if conflict were truly the natural and permanent condition of mankind, why has violence become increasingly destructive with the passage of time? Why are nations continuously inventing more sophisticated and deadlier weapons capable of mass annihilation?

These realities suggest that there must once have been an era when human society lived with far less violence, fewer conflicts, and greater harmony. Ancient scriptures and spiritual traditions across civilizations refer to such a time as Paradise, Satyuga, or the Golden Age—a period when human populations were smaller, nature was pure, relationships were harmonious, and

people lived in peace, dignity, and mutual respect. It was an age of universal harmony.

The aspiration to restore such harmony is not merely spiritual idealism; it is a civilizational necessity. To move toward that future, humanity must transform its attitudes, values, and consciousness. Most of our problems today arise from what may be called spiritual illiteracy—the inability to understand our deeper human identity and interconnectedness. Unless this inner ignorance is removed, no amount of technological advancement or military strength can bring lasting peace.

If humanity can rise above hatred, fear, and division, and awaken a higher consciousness rooted in wisdom, compassion, and unity, then a more peaceful and harmonious world is still possible. Otherwise, despite all our progress, we risk descending deeper into conflict, alienation, and darkness. ■

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AGING WITH DIGNITY

WHY INDIA MUST RETHINK ELDER CARE

As Indian families become increasingly global, a quiet social crisis is unfolding back home. Millions of elderly parents now live alone while their children pursue careers and lives abroad, often leaving senior citizens vulnerable to loneliness, neglect, financial insecurity and emotional abandonment. While traditional family structures once provided care and companionship in old age, rapid migration, urbanisation and changing lifestyles are reshaping that reality. In this thought-provoking article, the growing challenges faced by India's ageing population are examined through deeply human stories of loss, resilience and isolation. The piece also argues that India must fundamentally rethink how it views old age homes—not as symbols of abandonment, but as spaces of dignity, care, security and community for a generation that deserves compassion in its final years.



**BY DR VENKATESH
GANAPATHY**

Based in Bangalore, the author is a management educator.

In an age when families are increasingly spread across countries and continents, the question of elderly care has emerged as one of India's most pressing social concerns. Dr. Vageesh Iyer, a Bengaluru-based medical professional, rightly points to the emotional and practical struggles faced by senior citizens whose children have settled abroad. As long as both parents remain healthy, many continue to live independently with admirable resilience. But life changes dramatically when illness strikes, mobility declines,



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**As migration
reshapes Indian
families, millions
of elderly parents
are increasingly
confronting loneliness,
neglect and emotional
isolation in their
later years.**
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or one partner passes away. In such moments, the absence of a dependable support system can transform daily living into an exhausting struggle marked by loneliness, anxiety, and vulnerability.

The emotional cost of migration is often discussed from the perspective of young professionals adjusting to foreign lands. Far less attention is paid to the elderly parents left behind. Across India, countless senior citizens now live alone in large homes filled with memories but emptied of companionship. Phone calls and video chats may bridge distances temporarily, but they cannot replace physical presence during illness, emo-

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**The article examines
how the collapse of
traditional support
systems is forcing
India to rethink
the meaning of
care, dignity and
companionship
in old age.**
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tional distress, or emergencies.

Even more disturbing are the growing stories of elderly neglect, deception, and abandonment. Many senior citizens spend their final years not in dignity and security, but in emotional isolation and financial uncertainty. There are painful examples from public life as well. Legendary actress Devika Rani was reportedly deceived by domestic help who stole valuable possessions from her home. Acclaimed Tamil writer Rajam Krishnan faced severe hardship after the death of her husband, eventually reverse-mortgaging her home while living through neglect and abandonment. Her final years were marked not merely by financial distress, but by the emotional pain of being deserted by those closest to her.

The plight of widows and widowers is often even more heartbreaking. A man who once stood at the centre of a family may suddenly find himself emotionally sidelined after losing his spouse. Elderly widows, particularly in conservative settings, frequently endure neglect, humiliation, and silent suffering within their own homes. In many cases, deprivation in old age is not only material but deeply emotional — the absence of affection, respect, companionship, and human dignity.

Rethinking Old Age Homes

India must now begin to rethink its deeply rooted perceptions about old age homes. For decades, such institutions were viewed as symbols of

abandonment — places where families “left behind” their parents when they no longer wished to care for them. But changing social realities demand a more mature, compassionate, and practical understanding.

Old age homes today need not be viewed as the final refuge of the forsaken. Increasingly, they are evolving into professionally managed spaces capable of offering security, healthcare, companionship, and dignity. In many situations, they may provide a healthier and safer environment than isolated living within emotionally indifferent households.

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Through real-life examples and social observations, the piece highlights the silent suffering of widows, widowers and senior citizens abandoned within their own homes.
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The Rise of an Urgent Industry

India’s ageing population is growing at an unprecedented pace. According to demographic projections, the country will witness a dramatic rise in the number of elderly citizens over the coming decades. Yet the nation’s elder-care infrastructure remains deeply inadequate.

This challenge also presents a significant opportunity. India urgently needs socially conscious entrepreneurs willing to invest in elderly care infrastructure. While app-based industries, food delivery platforms, and digital consumer services continue attracting enormous investments, elderly care



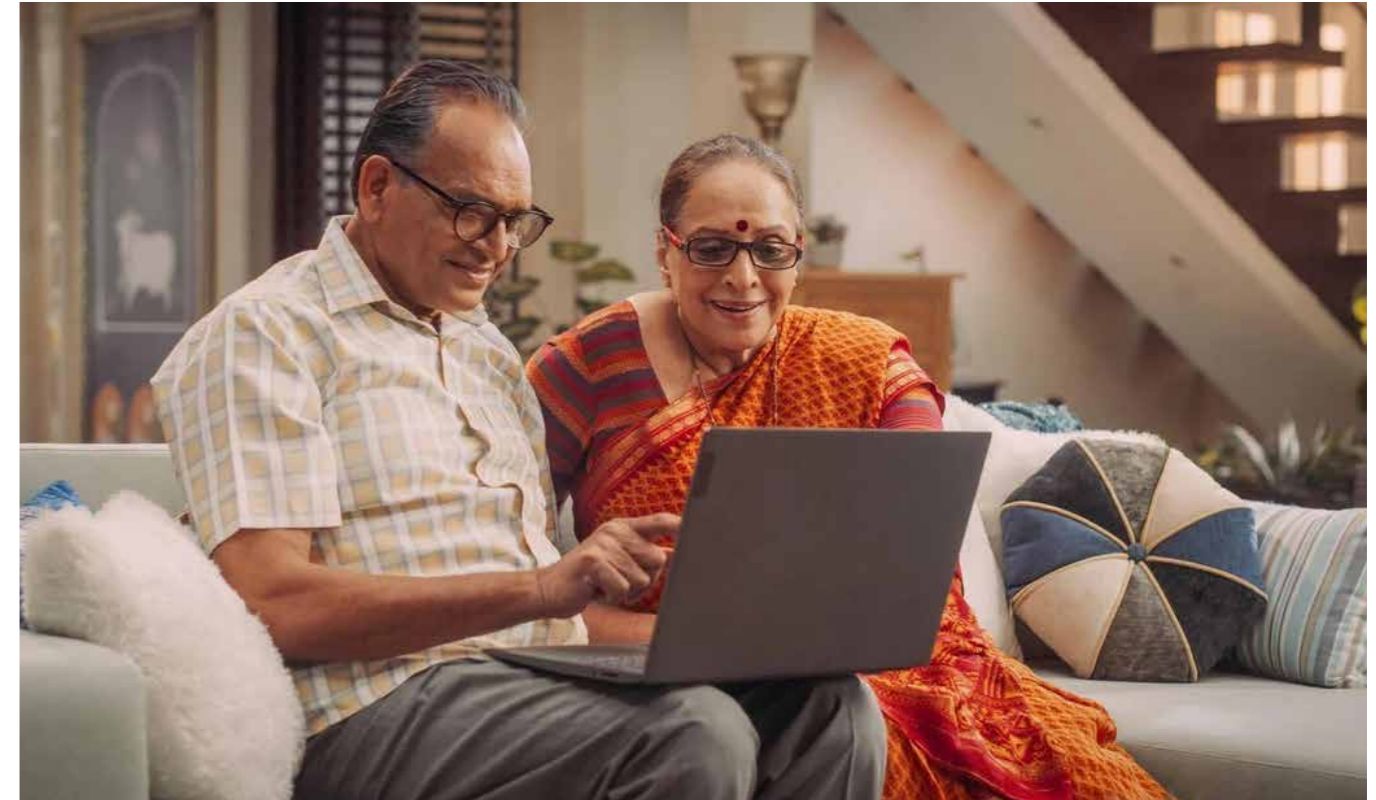
Modern elderly care facilities are changing rapidly. Many now offer round-the-clock medical supervision, physiotherapy, balanced nutrition, emergency support systems, recreational activities, and opportunities for meaningful social interaction. Just as importantly, they provide something many elderly individuals

desperately need: community. Living among peers facing similar experiences often reduces feelings of isolation and depression.

For senior citizens whose children live abroad, such spaces can become not merely shelters, but support ecosystems where they can continue to live active and emotionally fulfilling lives.

remains one of the country’s most neglected sectors despite its immense social importance.

Professionally managed senior-living communities, assisted-care centres, memory-care facilities, and home-healthcare services are no longer luxuries. They are becoming essential components of a modern society



coping with changing family structures, migration, and longer life expectancy.

Importantly, these ventures are not only socially necessary but economically viable. With India’s ageing population expected to expand dramatically by 2050, the demand for quality elder-care services will rise sharply. Entrepreneurs entering this field have the opportunity not only to build sustainable businesses but also to address one of the country’s most urgent humanitarian needs.

The Role of Government

The Indian government must also recognise the growing urgency of elderly care and actively support the sector through policy initiatives. Subsidies, tax incentives, low-interest financing, and public-private partnerships can encourage investment in quality senior-care infrastructure.

Equally important is regulation. Clear accreditation systems and service standards are necessary to ensure accountability, professionalism, and humane treatment across elderly care facilities. India also requires elderly-friendly urban planning — accessible transportation, near-by healthcare centres, recreational

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Challenging long-held stigma, the article argues that modern old age homes can serve not as symbols of abandonment, but as safe spaces of dignity, healthcare and community living.
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spaces, and emergency response systems designed specifically for senior citizens.

As life expectancy rises and traditional joint-family systems weaken, elder care can no longer remain a private family matter alone. It must become a national social priority.

Rewriting the Narrative

Perhaps the most important change India requires is cultural rather than infrastructural. Society must stop viewing old age homes as symbols of failure or abandonment. Instead, they should increasingly be understood as spaces of dignity, safety, care, and companionship.

The true measure of a society lies in how it treats its elderly. A nation that celebrates youth and economic growth while neglecting its senior citizens risks losing its moral balance.

India’s ageing population undoubtedly presents a major challenge. But it also offers an opportunity to build a more compassionate and forward-looking social framework — one that allows people to age not in fear, neglect, or loneliness, but with dignity, security, and human warmth. ■





THE ROADS THAT BUDDHA BUILT

Long before modern diplomacy, monks and pilgrims carried India's ideas across mountains, deserts and seas. From the Gangetic plains emerged a civilisational network that linked Nalanda to Nara and Bodh Gaya to Beijing. In an age of geopolitical rivalry, India's Buddhist heritage may once again become one of its greatest sources of influence.



BY UDAY SAHAY

A Delhi School of Economics alumnus, writer took voluntary retirement from IPS (1988 Batch) who dropped his baton to follow his passion of writing and has penned 8 books so far.



BY SANJAY KUMAR VERMA

With a diplomatic career spanning 37 years, the author served as India's Ambassador to Sudan, Japan, and Canada. Until recently, he was Chairperson of the Research and Information System for Developing Countries (RIS), a leading think tank, focused on the Global South and international economic issues. His interests lie in foreign policy, security, technology, and the global economy.

The spiritual imagination of much of Asia can be traced to the Gangetic plains of northern India, where ideas first took root before travelling farther than any empire ever could. Bodh Gaya, Sarnath, Rajgir, Nalanda and Kushinagar are not merely archaeological sites or stops on a pilgrimage circuit. Together, they constitute the sacred geography of Buddhism, one of humanity's most influential philosophical and spiritual traditions.

From India, Buddhism spread across Sri Lanka and South-east Asia, moved along the Silk Routes into Central Asia and

China, and eventually reached Korea and Japan. In every region it encountered local cultures, adapted to new historical contexts, and yet retained the memory of its origin in India.

Step into a temple in Ulaanbaatar or a monastery in Nara and the same thread becomes visible; even today, nearly half a billion people remain connected to that ancient Indian cord.

This unique historical reality gives India's Buddhist heritage a significance that extends far beyond archaeology or tourism. Buddhist heritage encompasses much more than physical monuments. It includes philosophical traditions, artistic

expressions, systems of learning and living cultural practices that continue to shape societies across Asia. Properly understood, it represents one of India's most powerful instruments of civilisational diplomacy and cultural engagement. Civilisational heritage is not ornamental; it is strategic capital that shapes legitimacy, credibility and influence in ways no short-term policy instrument can.

Preserving and promoting this heritage therefore requires more than routine conservation. It demands a comprehensive approach that integrates monument preservation with the promotion of heritage-related knowledge systems and cultural traditions, the application of science and technology to conservation, community participation, international collaboration and sustainable tourism.

A Civilisational Bridge Across Asia

Historically, Buddhism created one of the earliest and most enduring networks of intellectual and cultural exchange across Asia.

Long before modern globalisation, monks, scholars and pilgrims travelled enormous distances carrying manuscripts, philosophical ideas and artistic traditions. Ancient monastic universities such as Nalanda and Vikramashila became internationally renowned centres of learning that attracted students from across the Asian continent.

The journeys of Chinese monks such as Faxian and Xuanzang remain among the most remarkable examples of this civilisational exchange. Travelling thousands of kilometres in search of authentic teachings, they studied in India for years before returning to China with manuscripts and interpretations that profoundly shaped East Asian intellectual life.

In the twenty-first century, the preservation of Buddhist heritage offers India an opportunity to revive these historic civilisational connections. Cultural diplomacy centred on Buddhist sites can strengthen India's engagement with countries across East and Southeast Asia, deepening relationships rooted not merely in contemporary geopolitics but also in shared historical memory.

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India's Buddhist heritage is not merely archaeological—it is a living civilisational network that continues to shape Asia's cultural and spiritual imagination.

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Looking Beyond the Monumental Sites

Public attention often focuses on a small group of celebrated monuments such as Bodh Gaya, Sarnath or the Ajanta caves. Yet the historical reality of Buddhism in India was far more extensive and interconnected.

Ancient Buddhism functioned through networks of monasteries, pilgrimage routes and centres of learning that stretched across the subcontinent. Archaeological surveys have identified hundreds of lesser-known sites, including village mounds, stupas, inscriptions and sculptural remains scattered across diverse regions.

These sites are invaluable for understanding the social geography of Buddhism. They reveal how trade routes, merchant guilds and local communities sustained monastic institutions over centuries and helped embed Buddhist thought into everyday economic and social life.

However, many of these lesser-known sites remain vulnerable to encroachment, urban expansion and the illegal antiquities trade. Without systematic documentation and protection, important chapters of India's Buddhist past may gradually disappear.

A national programme of archaeological mapping using GIS technologies, drone surveys and satellite imagery could help identify and document these remains more comprehensively. Legal protection, boundary demarcation and community awareness initiatives would ensure that this wider cultural landscape is preserved alongside the more famous monuments.

Harnessing Science and Technology

Today we possess tools—lasers, drones and digital twins—that can ensure that even if physical structures deteriorate, the historical knowledge embedded within them survives.

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From Nalanda to Bodh Gaya, Buddhist sites offer India a powerful avenue for cultural diplomacy rooted in shared historical memory rather than short-term geopolitics.

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Several countries with significant Buddhist heritage have already pioneered innovative conservation approaches. Japan has used high-precision scanning technologies to document temple architecture and statues. China has undertaken large-scale digital preservation of the Dunhuang cave murals. Cambodia has employed sophisticated mapping technologies to guide conservation efforts at the Angkor temple complex.

These global best practices are equally available to India and can significantly strengthen the preservation of its Buddhist heritage.

Three-dimensional laser scanning allows monuments, sculptures and inscriptions to be digitally recorded in microscopic detail. Even if physical deterioration occurs over time, these digital archives remain available for restoration, research and public education.

Drone-based surveys can identify hidden archaeological structures beneath vegetation or subtle soil patterns. Digital reconstruction technologies can recreate ancient centres such



as Nalanda, enabling visitors and scholars alike to visualise how these universities once functioned as vibrant centres of learning.

By combining scientific conservation with digital interpretation, India can preserve its heritage while simultaneously making it more accessible to scholars, pilgrims and students around the world.

Communities as Custodians

Heritage conservation cannot succeed without the active participation of local communities.

If lesser-known village stupas and archaeological remains are lost to urban sprawl, India risks erasing crucial elements of its own civilisational map.

Several Buddhist-majority countries offer instructive examples. In Sri Lanka, village temples frequently function as centres of community life where monks and residents collectively maintain heritage sites. In Thailand, temple complexes serve not only religious functions but also educational and cultural roles.

These experiences demonstrate a simple principle: heritage survives most effectively when communities feel a genuine sense of ownership and pride.

In India, communities living around Buddhist sites can become active partners in conservation. Local residents can serve as guides, heritage volunteers and custodians of local traditions associated with these sites.

At the same time, conservation efforts should gener-

ate tangible benefits for local populations. Responsible tourism can create employment opportunities in hospitality, handicrafts, cultural performances and heritage interpretation.

Educational programmes in nearby schools can help younger generations understand that the monuments in their neighbourhood form part of a global cultural legacy with continuing international relevance.

Managing Pilgrimage Tourism Sustainably

Buddhist pilgrimage tourism is not merely an economic opportunity; it is a living bridge connecting memory, faith and contemporary statecraft.

Every year, thousands of pilgrims from Sri Lanka, Thailand, Myanmar, Japan, Vietnam and other countries travel to India to visit the sites associated with the Buddha's life. For many visitors, reaching Bodh Gaya or Sarnath represents a deeply meaningful spiritual journey.

While domestic tourism to Buddhist heritage sites should certainly be encouraged, it must be guided by principles of sustainability and cultural sensitivity.

Heritage sites must also be protected from the unintended consequences of mass tourism. Cave complexes such as Ajanta contain delicate murals that remain highly sensitive to humidity, light and excessive human activity. Sustained visitor pressure can gradually damage these irreplaceable artworks.

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In an era of geopolitical competition, India's Buddhist legacy represents a unique form of soft power built on ideas, scholarship and civilisational influence.
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Sustainable tourism strategies are therefore essential. Countries such as Bhutan have adopted high-value, low-impact tourism policies that prioritise cultural preservation. Japan has implemented structured visitor-management systems at historic temples and pilgrimage centres.

India's Buddhist circuit could benefit from similar approaches. Integrated pilgrimage routes connecting Bodh Gaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Vaishali and Kushinagar would distribute visitor flows more evenly while offering pilgrims a deeper understanding of Buddhist history and philosophy.

Interpretation centres using digital storytelling and immersive technologies could further help visitors appreciate the historical and spiritual significance of sites before entering them.

International organisations such as the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) can also play an important role in de-

veloping sustainable tourism frameworks for heritage destinations. Collaboration with such institutions can help design visitor-management systems that balance pilgrimage tourism with conservation priorities.

Reviving the Nalanda Spirit

Buddhist heritage is inseparable from a long and distinguished tradition of scholarship.

Ancient universities such as Nalanda attracted students from across Asia who came to study philosophy, logic, medicine, linguistics and metaphysics. These institutions represented some of the world's earliest experiments in international academic exchange, where ideas travelled more freely than political borders ever allowed.

Reviving this spirit of intellectual dialogue remains an important opportunity for contemporary India.

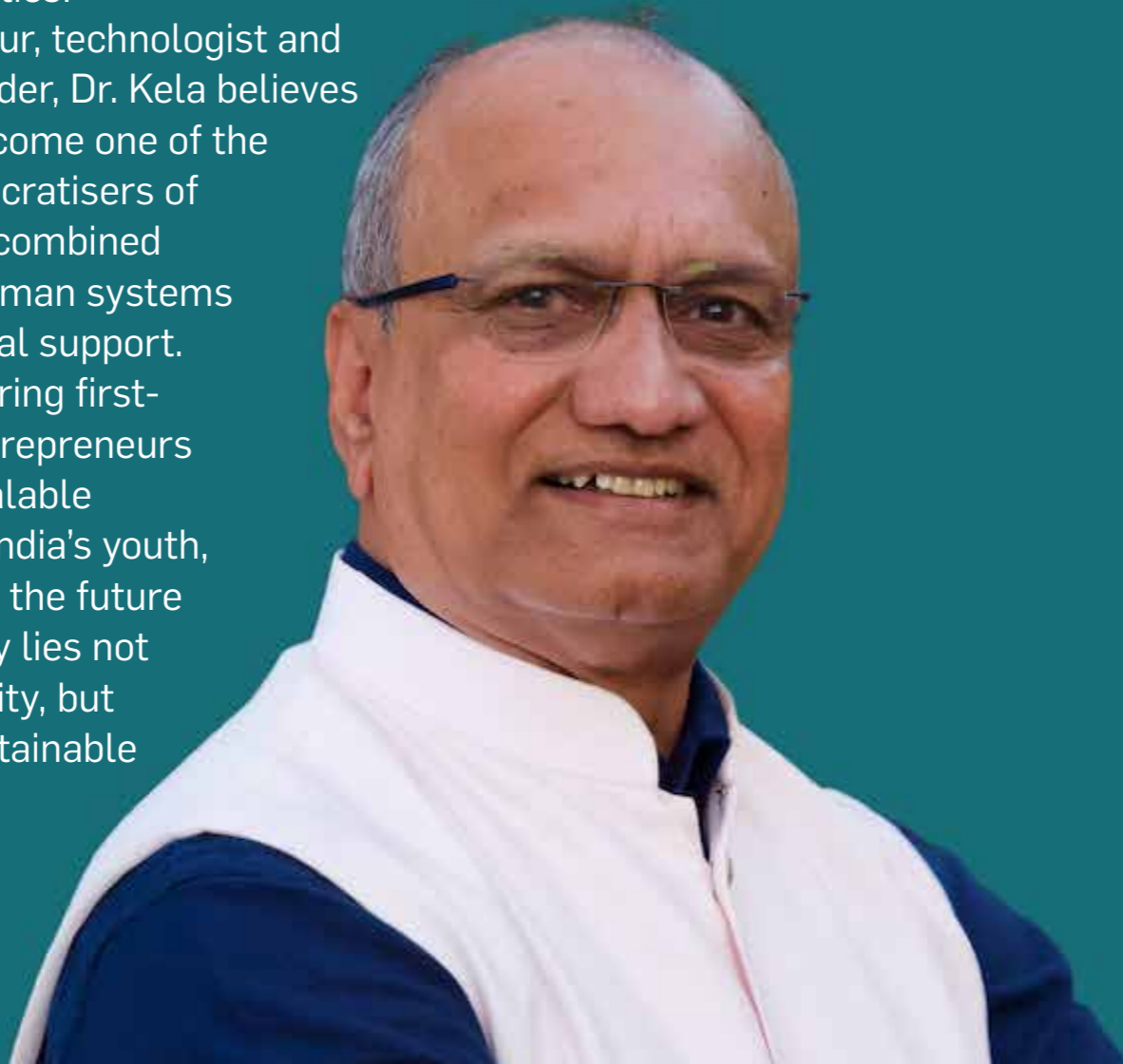
Universities across the world, from Japan and Sri Lanka to the United States, continue to maintain strong programmes in Buddhist studies, archaeology and manuscript preservation. Partnerships with these institutions can support research, the digitisation of ancient manuscripts and sustained scholarly exchange.

International organisations such as UNESCO can also play a vital role. UNESCO's World Heritage programme has already recognised several Buddhist sites, but deeper collaboration could help develop integrated conservation initiatives, transnational research projects. ■

“AI CAN DEMOCRATISE OPPORTUNITY AT AN UNPRECEDENTED SCALE”

In a free-wheeling interview with *PRAVASI INDIANS*, Dr. Ajay Kela, CEO of the Wadhvani Foundation — a global non-profit organisation focused on accelerating economic development through large-scale job creation — reflects on the transformative potential of artificial intelligence, the importance of dignified employment, and the evolving role of philanthropy in building inclusive societies.

An entrepreneur, technologist and institution builder, Dr. Kela believes that AI can become one of the greatest democratisers of opportunity if combined with strong human systems and institutional support. From empowering first-generation entrepreneurs to creating scalable pathways for India's youth, he argues that the future of philanthropy lies not merely in charity, but in building sustainable ecosystems of opportunity. Excerpts...



How can emerging technologies be leveraged to amplify philanthropic efforts and positive societal impact?

Ans: Emerging technologies, especially AI, allow philanthropy to move from isolated interventions to scalable systems change. They make it possible to go from helping thousands to enabling millions.

At the Wadhvani Foundation, we see technology as a democratiser of opportunity. Through our GenieAI platform, we are able to deliver high-quality learning, mentorship, business support and public services to people far beyond elite institutions and major cities, often through nothing more than a smartphone.

However, technology alone is never enough. Its real value lies in how effectively it is embedded within human systems — institutions, employers, mentors, governments and local ecosystems. Philanthropy must therefore go beyond funding innovation. It must ensure that innovation remains inclusive, practical and capable of delivering real-world impact. When digital scale is combined with human support and ecosystem execution, philanthropy becomes not just charity, but a platform for opportunity.

Why is dignified employment — not just any job — the true measure of development?

Ans: A dignified livelihood does far more than generate income. It gives people agency, confidence and a sense of control over their future. It changes what becomes possible for entire families — education, healthcare, aspiration and long-term stability all improve when one person earns meaningfully and with dignity.

Development should therefore not be measured merely by the number of jobs created, but by whether those jobs enable upward mobility and self-reliance. At its core, true development is about empowering people to stand on their own feet and create a better future for themselves and future generations.

Why is supporting first-generation founders one of the highest-impact philanthropic investments?

Ans: First-generation founders often

do not lack talent or ambition — they lack access. Many have no mentors, networks, capital or even examples of success around them. What separates potential from progress is often access to the right support at the right time.

When philanthropy supports such founders, it is often enabling future job creators. Creating these job creators at scale can lead to large-scale nation-building and economic trans-

Emerging technologies like AI can transform philanthropy from isolated acts of charity into large-scale systems of opportunity. Not merely jobs are the true measure of development. Technology must remain inclusive and deeply connected to human systems, institutions and mentorship. India's diaspora can contribute far beyond donations by helping build enduring ecosystems of knowledge, innovation and opportunity. AI has the potential to become a powerful equaliser capable of expanding access, employability and entrepreneurship across social and economic divides.

formation. That is why I believe this is among the highest-leverage investments a society can make.

How can the diaspora channel its success into something more enduring than donations?

Ans: The diaspora's greatest contribution extends beyond capital. It lies in knowledge, networks, credibility and institution-building.

Donations certainly matter, but the deeper opportunity is to help build systems that endure — universities, mentorship platforms, research ecosystems, global partnerships and institutions that continue creating opportunity long after any one contribution is made.

Having lived outside India for over four decades, I believe the diaspora is uniquely positioned to help India not only with resources, but with the mindset and systems needed for long-term growth. The shift, in my view, is from simply “giving back” to “building forward.”

How have your own experiences as an immigrant in the United States shaped your understanding of opportunity?

Ans: My experience as an immigrant reinforced a simple truth: talent is universal, but opportunity is not. I saw firsthand how strongly outcomes are shaped by the ecosystem around an individual.

India's youth today need access, guidance and pathways that help them move from potential to capability to livelihood. What excites me most is that technology now gives us the ability to create those pathways at a scale that simply was not possible a generation ago.

How do you view the intersection of AI and philanthropy globally — and in India specifically?

Ans: Globally, AI is becoming a major force multiplier for philanthropy by enabling knowledge, guidance and services to be delivered at scale and at much lower cost.

In India, however, the opportunity is even greater because of the country's scale, diversity and access gaps. AI here cannot work only for the digitally fluent or English-speaking population. It must work across languages, literacy levels and diverse lived realities.

If designed thoughtfully, AI can become a powerful equaliser — helping students find direction, workers build employability, entrepreneurs grow businesses and citizens access public systems more effectively. ■

WHY CRYPTOCURRENCY CONTINUES TO FASCINATE YOUNG INDIANS

India's cryptocurrency revolution is increasingly being driven by a new generation of young investors willing to embrace both the opportunities and risks of digital finance. A recent report by PI-42 and Hashed Emergent reveals that more than 60 percent of crypto investors are now under the age of 25, with Gen Z emerging as the dominant force in crypto trading and derivatives. From metro cities to small towns, young Indians are turning to Bitcoin, Ethereum and other digital assets with unprecedented enthusiasm, aided by mobile-first trading platforms and social media-driven financial awareness. Yet, beneath the excitement lies a market marked by extreme volatility, regulatory uncertainty and growing concerns over cyber fraud, speculative behaviour and financial vulnerability.



BY SATISH SINGH

A Mumbai-based columnist, the author currently serves as an Assistant General Manager with SBI.

A comprehensive report released on April 2, 2026, by PI-42 in collaboration with Hashed Emergent has revealed a dramatic generational shift in the global cryptocurrency market. Based on the trading patterns of more than 200,000 crypto futures traders worldwide, the report shows that over 60 percent of today's crypto investors are below the age of 25, underlining the growing dominance of Gen Z in the digital asset economy.

The findings also point to a significant behavioural change among young investors. Unlike the early speculative

rush associated with cryptocurrencies, many young traders are now adopting a far more research-driven approach before investing their money. The report notes that more than 60 percent of young investors are actively involved in daily crypto trading, a sharp rise from nearly 45 percent recorded earlier.

The scale of investment has also increased substantially. The average trading volume among young investors rose to nearly ₹1.64 lakh during the financial year 2025–26, compared to ₹88,000 in the previous fiscal year.

India has emerged as one of the world's fastest-growing crypto markets. By the end of 2025, the country reportedly had nearly 11.9 crore cryptocurrency users, with Millennials and Gen Z accounting for almost 75 percent of the investor base. Despite uncertainty surrounding regulation and

market volatility, nearly one in four young Indians is now actively investing in crypto assets.

Youth participation in crypto derivatives trading has expanded particularly rapidly, with Gen Z contributing nearly 61 percent of the growth in this segment. Crypto derivatives are financial instruments that allow traders to speculate on the future prices of digital assets such as Bitcoin and Ethereum without directly owning them. These products are widely used for hedging risk and seeking higher returns through leverage, although they also carry substantial financial risks.

Young investors, especially Gen Z and Millennials, are increasingly using mobile-first platforms such as CoinSwitch and CoinDCX to make small but regular investments through SIP-style strategies. Their portfolios often include established cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum, alongside highly volatile meme coins and emerging digital tokens such as Solana.

Before investing, many young traders conduct extensive research through platforms like Telegram, X (formerly Twitter), YouTube and online crypto communities, where market trends, trading strategies and investment tips are discussed in real time.

At present, India does not have a dedicated regulatory framework governing cryptocurrencies. While digital assets are not recognised as legal tender, they have also not been declared illegal. The government currently classifies them as "Virtual Digital Assets" and imposes a 30 percent tax on profits from crypto trading, along with a 1 percent TDS on transactions involving the sale of cryptocurrencies.

As a result, trading and investing in crypto assets remains legal in India, although cryptocurrencies cannot be used as an official medium of exchange like the Indian Rupee. The RBI-backed Digital Rupee continues to remain the country's only officially recognised digital currency.

To participate in crypto trading,

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More than 60 percent of crypto investors worldwide are now below the age of 25, signalling a dramatic generational shift in digital finance.

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India today has nearly 11.9 crore crypto users, with Millennials and Gen Z accounting for almost three-fourths of the investor base.

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users are required to open accounts with exchanges registered under the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) and complete mandatory KYC procedures. Leading Indian exchanges such as CoinDCX, CoinSwitch and WazirX also follow strict Anti-Money Laundering (AML) compliance protocols.

Interestingly, the crypto boom is no longer limited to metropolitan In-

dia. Nearly 75 percent of Indian crypto investors now come from Tier-2, Tier-3 and Tier-4 cities. States such as Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh are witnessing rapid growth in crypto participation, while regions in North, Central and Eastern India are also recording rising retail engagement. Smaller northeastern states, including Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Me-

ghalaya, are similarly seeing increased participation among young investors.

Another noteworthy trend is the growing participation of women in the crypto economy. Female participation in crypto trading has reportedly risen by nearly 20 percent year-on-year, with women now accounting for roughly one in every eight crypto traders in India. This reflects a broader

social shift, with more women exploring technology-led investment opportunities despite the market's inherent volatility.

However, experts continue to caution against the risks associated with cryptocurrency trading. The market remains extremely volatile, and sharp corrections can wipe out investor savings within hours. Concerns over cyber

fraud, speculative behaviour, money laundering and terror financing also remain significant challenges for regulators and policymakers.

Financial experts warn that while some young investors have earned substantial profits, many others have suffered heavy losses. Critics often compare crypto trading to gambling because of its unpredictable nature

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From Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities to the Northeast, cryptocurrency trading is rapidly spreading beyond metropolitan India

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While some young investors are making significant profits, experts continue to warn that crypto remains a high-risk and highly volatile market.

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 and dependence on timing rather than stable long-term fundamentals.

The psychological impact of market volatility is another growing concern. Financial stress, anxiety and cyber scams have affected many inexperienced investors, especially in smaller towns where awareness about digital finance and cybersecurity remains limited.

As cryptocurrency adoption continues to expand, experts emphasise the need for caution, financial literacy and regulatory clarity. While digital assets may offer opportunities for wealth creation and technological innovation, they also demand discipline, informed decision-making and a strong understanding of risk.

In the end, the crypto market remains a high-risk, high-reward arena. For young investors entering this fast-evolving financial landscape, prudence and education may ultimately prove more valuable than speculation and short-term excitement. ■

महाभियोग से आगे का रास्ता



भारत में न्यायाधीशों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई की संवैधानिक व्यवस्था इतनी कठिन है कि अब तक कोई भी न्यायाधीश महाभियोग के जरिये पद से नहीं हटाया जा सका। ऐसे में सवाल उठता है कि न्यायिक भ्रष्टाचार या दुराचार के मामलों में जवाबदेही कैसे तय हो। यह लेख न्यायमूर्ति यशवंत वर्मा प्रकरण के बहाने इसी जटिल प्रश्न की पड़ताल करता है।



सुधांशु रंजन

लेखक एक वरिष्ठ पत्रकार, स्तंभकार, विपुल लेखक हैं जो हाल ही में दूरदर्शन और आकाशवाणी से सेवानिवृत्त हुए हैं और कई किताबें जिनमें *जस्टिस*, *ज्यूडोक्रेसी*, *एंड डेमोक्रेसी: बाउंड्रीज़ एंड ब्रीचेज़* (रूटलेज) और *जस्टिस वसेंज ज्यूडिशियरी: जस्टिस एन्थ्रोन्ड ऑर एंटीगल्ड इन इंडिया* (ऑक्सफ़ोर्ड) प्रमुख हैं लिख चुके हैं।

न्यायिक जवाबदेही को लेकर काफी लंबे समय से बहस चल रही है। फिलहाल न्यायमूर्ति यशवंत वर्मा के इस्तीफे के बाद इस पर बहस फिर से तेज़ हो गई है। वे गंभीर भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपों से घिरे थे। जब वे दिल्ली उच्च न्यायालय में पदस्थापित थे, तब उनके बंगले के आउटहाउस से कथित तौर पर पंद्रह करोड़ रुपए बरामद हुए थे। गैर-सरकारी सूत्रों के अनुसार यह राशि उससे कहीं अधिक थी। आनन-फानन में उनका स्थानांतरण इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय कर दिया गया। इसका वहाँ के वकील संघों ने शुरू में विरोध भी किया था।

न्यायिक जवाबदेही के दायरे में भ्रष्टाचार के अलावा और भी कई मुद्दे आते हैं। मसलन, अपनी सीमा-रेखा भूलकर दूसरों के अधिकार-क्षेत्र में अतिक्रमण करना, आम आदमी के मौलिक अधिकारों की रक्षा करने में कई बार विफल रहना, सूचना का अधिकार अधिनियम को अपने ऊपर लागू न होने देना, मुकदमों का दशकों तक लंबित रहना और भ्रष्टाचार। हालात कितने संगीन हैं, यह इसी से स्पष्ट है कि १२ जनवरी २०१८ को भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश के बाद उच्चतम न्यायालय के चार वरिष्ठतम न्यायाधीशों ने एक प्रेस कॉन्फ्रेंस कर आरोप लगाया था कि शीर्ष अदालत में सबकुछ ठीक-ठाक नहीं है। उन्होंने कहा था कि मुख्य न्यायाधीश संवेदनशील मामलों को अपनी पसंद की कुछ खास पीठों को सौंप रहे हैं। हालांकि फिलहाल बात भ्रष्टाचार की हो रही है। वैसे इन चारों न्यायाधीशों का व्यवहार भी किसी पैमाने पर पूरी तरह उचित नहीं ठहराया जा सकता।

सरकारी अधिकारी और मंत्री केवल आरोप के आधार पर गिरफ्तार कर लिए जाते हैं, उन्हें पद छोड़ने पड़ते हैं और उनके विरुद्ध मुकदमे भी चलाए जाते हैं। ऐसा न्यायाधीशों के मामले में प्रायः नहीं होता।

न्यायमूर्ति वर्मा के मामले में सुप्रीम कोर्ट की तीन जजों की एक कमिटी ने उन्हें दोषी करार देते हुए उन्हें हटाए जाने की अनुशंसा की। वर्मा ने जांच प्रक्रिया को शीर्ष अदालत में चुनौती दी, जिसे उसने खारिज कर दिया। उन्हें पद से हटाने के लिए संसद में प्रस्ताव लाया गया। आम बातचीत में इसे महाभियोग कहा जाता है, हालांकि संविधान में यह शब्द नहीं है। उनके त्यागपत्र के बाद यह प्रस्ताव निष्फल हो गया। अतीत में कुछ अवसरों पर न्यायाधीशों के खिलाफ ऐसे प्रस्ताव संसद में लाए गए, लेकिन एक भी पारित नहीं हो सका। केवल न्यायमूर्ति सौमिल सेन के विरुद्ध राज्य सभा में प्रस्ताव पारित हुआ था और लोक सभा इस पर विचार करती, उसके पहले ही उन्होंने इस्तीफा दे दिया। किसी सरकारी कर्मि का इस्तीफा निगरानी विभाग की क्लीन चिट के बिना स्वीकार नहीं किया जाता। फिर न्यायाधीशों के मामले में यह दोहरा मापदंड क्यों?

जब संविधान लिखा जा रहा था, तब फेडरल कोर्ट (जो बाद में सुप्रीम कोर्ट बना) के तत्कालीन मुख्य न्यायाधीश ने गृह मंत्री सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल को पत्र लिखकर कहा था कि न्यायपालिका की स्वायत्तता सुनिश्चित की जाए। पटेल ने तुरंत जवाब दिया कि न्यायाधीश नैतिक अभिभावक की भूमिका में होंगे, इसलिए उन पर किसी तरह की निगरानी की आवश्यकता नहीं होगी। यही कारण है कि भ्रष्टाचार निवारण अधिनियम, १९४७ में न्यायाधीशों के बारे में सीधी चर्चा नहीं है। इसकी धारा २ में कहा गया है कि जन सेवक (पब्लिक सर्वेंट) की परिभाषा वही है जो भारतीय दंड विधान की धारा २१ में दी गई है। इसमें न्यायाधीश को भी शामिल किया गया है। १९६४ में के. संथानम कमिटी की रिपोर्ट में भी न्यायाधीशों पर विशेष चर्चा नहीं है। यानी यह मान लिया गया था कि न्यायिक भ्रष्टाचार एक विरलतम चीज़ होगी।

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न्यायमूर्ति यशवंत वर्मा प्रकरण ने फिर उठाया सवाल—क्या न्यायपालिका की मौजूदा जवाबदेही व्यवस्था पर्याप्त है?

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महाभियोग की जटिल प्रक्रिया और न्यायिक स्वायत्तता के बीच जवाबदेही सुनिश्चित करने की जरूरत पर गंभीर विमर्श।

के. वीरास्वामी मामले (१९९१) में उच्चतम न्यायालय की एक संविधान पीठ ने माना कि भारतीय दंड विधान की धारा २१ के अंतर्गत न्यायाधीश जन सेवक हैं, लेकिन साथ ही यह व्यवस्था भी दी कि उच्च या उच्चतम न्यायालय के किसी न्यायाधीश के खिलाफ प्राथमिकी दर्ज करने के लिए भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश की पूर्वानुमति अनिवार्य होगी। न्यायाधीशों और न्यायपालिका की स्वायत्तता के लिए यह सुरक्षा शायद जरूरी भी है। जो पहला महाभियोग प्रस्ताव किसी जज के विरुद्ध लाने की कोशिश की गई थी, वह न्यायमूर्ति जे. सी. शाह के खिलाफ था। विडंबना यह है कि न्यायमूर्ति शाह अपनी ईमानदारी के लिए प्रशंसित थे। उन्हें उनकी शुचिता के लिए दंडित करने का षड्यंत्र एक बेईमान नौकरशाह द्वारा रचा गया था, जिसके खिलाफ उन्होंने एक निर्णय दिया था। उस नौकरशाह ने १९९ सांसदों के हस्ताक्षर महाभियोग प्रस्ताव पर करवा लिए थे। लेकिन तत्कालीन लोक सभा अध्यक्ष गुरदयाल सिंह दिल्ली ने सांसदों को समझाकर मामला आगे बढ़ने नहीं दिया।

वीरास्वामी मामले में दी गई व्यवस्था के अनुसार भारत के मुख्य न्यायाधीश की अनुमति के बाद भ्रष्टाचार के आरोपित न्यायाधीश के ऊपर प्राथमिकी दर्ज की जा सकती है। सवाल यह है कि सरकार ने मुख्य न्यायाधीश की अनुमति क्यों नहीं मांगी। उच्चतम न्यायालय स्वयं भी सुओ मोटो संज्ञान लेकर प्राथमिकी दर्ज करवा सकता था। जांच के बाद सच सामने आता। यदि किसी मंत्री या सरकारी अधिकारी पर आरोप लगता है, तो केवल पद छोड़ देने से उसे मुक्ति नहीं मिलती। उस पर मुकदमा चलता है। लेकिन न्यायाधीशों के मामले में प्रतिमान अलग दिखाई देते हैं। अतीत में जिनके विरुद्ध महाभियोग प्रस्ताव आया, उन्होंने इस्तीफा दे दिया और मामला वहीं समाप्त हो गया, जबकि आरोप गंभीर थे।

अनेक राष्ट्रों में न्यायिक जवाबदेही सुनिश्चित करने के लिए कानून बनाए गए हैं। अमेरिका में ज्यूडिशियल काउंसिल रिफॉर्म एंड ज्यूडिशियल कंडक्ट एंड डिसेबिलिटी एक्ट, १९८० लागू है। जर्मनी में जेजेज डिस्प्लिनरी कमिटी है। कनाडा में ज्यूडिशियल काउंसिल १९७१ से कार्यरत है। भारत में भी ऐसे किसी कानून की आवश्यकता है, क्योंकि महाभियोग की व्यवस्था व्यावहारिक नहीं है। इसकी प्रक्रिया इतनी जटिल है कि आज तक एक भी न्यायाधीश को महाभियोग के जरिए हटाया नहीं जा सका। जब न्यायाधीशों को इतनी सुरक्षा दी गई थी, तब न्यायिक भ्रष्टाचार लगभग कल्पनातीत माना जाता था। लेकिन हाल के दशकों में न्यायिक भ्रष्टाचार के उदाहरण बार-बार सामने आ रहे हैं। न्यायपालिका पर जनता का विश्वास बनाए रखने के लिए जरूरी है कि उसकी जवाबदेही सुनिश्चित और प्रभावी बनाई जाए। यह लोकतंत्र और न्यायपालिका—दोनों के हित में होगा। ■



जो भी है, बस यही एक पल है

पुराने गीतों की दुनिया में लौटना कभी-कभी अपने ही जीवन में लौटना होता है। इस लेख में फिल्मों, गायकों और रेडियो कार्यक्रमों की यादों के बीच एक व्यक्ति अपने समय, अपने स्वाद और अपनी सीमाओं को टटोलता चलता है। आशा भोसले की आवाज़ यहाँ सिर्फ संगीत नहीं, बल्कि बीते हुए दशकों की धड़कन बनकर आती है। लेख आगे बढ़ते-बढ़ते जीवन, मृत्यु, स्मृति और विरासत पर एक शांत चिंतन में बदल जाता है।



राहुल उपाध्याय, सिएल

लेखक पिछले चार दशक से अमेरिका में रहते हुए कविताएँ लिखते हैं और प्रवासी भारतीयों के द्वंद्व और दुविधाओं को उजागर करते हैं।

बचपन से ही फिल्में देखना और गाने सुनना बहुत पसंद रहा। वही एक मनोरंजन का साधन था। फिल्में बहुत बाद में देखनी शुरू कीं, जब हम मेरठ रहने लगे। तब मैं पांचवीं कक्षा में था। बहुत अच्छी-अच्छी फिल्में देखीं—आनंद, अनुराग, दाग। ये सब राजेश खन्ना के जमाने की फिल्में हैं। उनमें मुख्य रूप से गायकों के गीत ही प्रभावित करते थे, जैसे किशोर कुमार। बाद में मोहम्मद रफी, मन्ना डे, मुकेश—इनसे भी परिचित हुआ, पर गायिकाओं की तरफ रुझान नहीं हुआ। बाद में जब हुआ भी, तो लता के गीत ज्यादा पसंद आए।

जब बनारस में मैं इंजीनियरिंग की पढ़ाई कर रहा था, तब उमराव जान के गाने बहुत अच्छे लगे और तब समझ में आया कि आशा भोसले भी कितना अच्छा गाती हैं। पर निकाह के गानों की वजह से सलमा आगा भी उतनी ही अच्छी लगती थीं। और यह बहुत बाद में पता चला कि आशा भोसले, लता मंगेशकर की बहन हैं। यह सोचकर अभी भी आश्चर्य होता है कि शादी से

पहले उन्होंने कभी गाना नहीं गाया। आशा मंगेशकर के नाम से उनका कोई गीत मैंने नहीं देखा है। वैसे तो गायिकाएं बहुत कम उम्र से गाना शुरू कर देती हैं और आशा जी ने भी किया ही होगा। लता जी की बहन होने से फायदा भी होना चाहिए था, पर सुना है कि उससे नुकसान भी बहुत हुआ। क्योंकि कहते हैं कि बरगद के पेड़ के नीचे छोटे-छोटे पेड़ उग नहीं पाते।

बहरहाल, यह सब जानकारी विकिपीडिया पर होगी, जरूर होगी, पर मैं आजकल बहुत कम ही इधर-उधर खोजबीन करता हूँ। जितना मेरे जीवन में आ पाया, उतना ही मैं समझता हूँ। अब आधे घंटे विकिपीडिया पढ़कर मैं यह नहीं बताना चाहता कि मुझे इनकी यह जानकारी है, इनकी वो जानकारी है। हाँ, मुझे यह भी पता है कि इनकी पहली शादी किसी भोसले से हुई थी और फिर वह ठीक नहीं चली। बाद में इन्होंने पंचम—यानी राहुल देव बर्मन—के साथ शादी की और वह भी शायद ठीक नहीं चली। पता नहीं, पर ये साथ में कभी रहे नहीं। इनकी कोई संतान भी नहीं हुई। और बीच में शायद ओ. पी. नैयर के साथ भी इनका कुछ जुड़ाव रहा और सुनते हैं कि एक बार उनके बीच बहुत झगड़ा हो गया। तो खैर, यह तो आपसी रिश्तों की बातें हैं। पर गायिका के रूप में वे बहुत अच्छा गाती थीं और इनके बहुत सारे गीत हैं, जिनकी बहुत लंबी सूची बनाई जा सकती है। पर फिर भी शायद उमराव जान और इजाज़त के गीत ही ज्यादा जहन में आएंगे। बाकी सब शायद दिमाग पर जोर देने पर, दूढ़ने पर मिल भी सकते हैं।

अब बात है इनके गुजरने की। उम्र 92 साल थी। पिछले एक साल तक वे कुछ गा भी रही थीं—किसी शो में, स्टेज पर, किसी न किसी कार्यक्रम में। पर फिल्मों में तो उन्हें गायन नहीं मिल रहा था।

मुझे गायकी की ज्यादा जानकारी नहीं है। मेरे घर हर महीने के चौथे शनिवार को जब गोष्ठी होती है, तो जो भी गाता है, मुझे अच्छा ही लगता है। पर जहाँ तक फिल्मों की बात है, फिल्मों में शायद उन्हें ही लिया जाता है जिनके गायन में दम होता है। मैं फिल्मों में गायन को ही गुणवत्ता का आधार समझता हूँ। मुझे नहीं लगता कि पिछले कुछ सालों में उन्हें किसी फिल्म में काम मिला था, या उन्होंने कोई गीत गाया था। अब कुछ फिल्मकार हैं जिनकी अपनी पसंद-नापसंद होती है। उनमें यश चोपड़ा और बड़जात्या परिवार हैं। उन्हें लता मंगेशकर से काफी लगाव था। वे चाहते थे कि लता जी उनके लिए जरूर जाएं। इसी के चलते वीर-ज़ारा में लता जी ने यश चोपड़ा के लिए गीत गाए। फिर भी सब गीत अच्छे नहीं लगे। एकाध गीत में तो लगा कि लता जी थक गई थीं। उन्होंने भी अपनी दोस्ती के चलते वे गीत गा दिए, वरना उन्होंने भी गायन लगभग बंद कर दिया था।

कलाकारों के लिए तो मैं कहूँगा कि जीवन चाहे जितना लंबा हो, लेकिन जो श्रोता हैं, जो दर्शक हैं, उनके लिए उनका जीवन उतना ही सीमित है, जितना समय तक वे कार्यरत थे, जब तक उनका काम सामने आ रहा था और सराहा जा रहा था। उसके बाद की जिंदगी तो परिवार के लिए है। जो जितना जिए, उतना अच्छा।

अब लोग कहते हैं कि यह एक अपूरणीय क्षति है। मैं समझ नहीं पाता कि यह कैसे कहा जाए। हर इंसान का जाना एक अपूरणीय क्षति है, तो फिर किसी एक खास व्यक्ति के लिए ही क्यों कहा जाए? जब सबके लिए अपूरणीय क्षति है, तो इसमें क्या बड़ी बात हो गई? खैर, ये तो मेरा ही टेढ़ा दिमाग है, जो ऐसा सोचता है।

लता जी को लोग लता दी या लता दीदी कहते थे। आशा जी को आशा ताई। ऐसा क्यों? मेरी समझ से परे है। शायद इसलिए कि दीदी ने शादी नहीं की और ताई ने कर ली। खैर, मेरी समझ से परे है।

कुछ गीत आशा और लता, दोनों ने साथ भी गाए हैं। अब पता नहीं, उस जमाने में तो साथ में ही गाए होंगे। आजकल तो खैर, कोई भी साथ-साथ नहीं गाता। पहले एक आदमी गा लेता है, फिर दूसरा गा लेता है, फिर जोड़ दिया जाता है। उत्सव का एक गीत है—“मन क्यों बहका रे बहका।” वह लता

और आशा, दोनों ने गाया है और बहुत ही सुंदर बन पड़ा है। इस गीत की खासियत यह भी है कि इसके संगीतकार लक्ष्मीकांत-प्यारेलाल हैं। आमतौर पर कलात्मक फिल्मों का संगीत लक्ष्मीकांत-प्यारेलाल के साथ नहीं जोड़ा जाता, और यह इस फिल्म की खासियत थी।

<https://youtu.be/tyOAJ-4sPdw?si=K8Lt8B1yYOWaOg6H>
“ये साए हैं, ये दुनिया है”—यह गीत मुझे उनका बहुत ही पसंद है। उसे मैं सैकड़ों बार, हजारों बार सुन सकता हूँ और कभी भी मन नहीं भरेगा।

<https://youtu.be/USEXZM6mMIQ?si=If9sj8JdSVtQ09Yg>
तीसरी मंजिल का गाना “आजा आजा मैं हूँ प्यार तेरा”। यह गीत आशा जी को बहुत पसंद था, क्योंकि इसमें उस समय के लिए कुछ नवीनता थी। यह एक डांस नंबर था और इसमें कई तरह के प्रयोग किए गए थे—डांस नंबर के हिसाब से। वैसे मुझे इसमें कोई माधुर्य नजर नहीं आता।

उनकी एक और बात मुझे अच्छी लगती थी। वह यह कि वे जब भी किसी कार्यक्रम में जाती थीं, जहाँ कुछ लोग अपनी प्रतिभा दिखाना चाहते थे, तब वे उन गीतों को ध्यान से सुनती थीं। चाहे वे उनके अपने गीत हों या किसी और के, वे हमेशा उनमें कुछ न कुछ सुधार की गुंजाइश ढूँढती थीं और खुलकर बताती थीं। उन्हें यह नहीं लगता था कि अरे, अभी तो नए-नए बच्चे हैं, जितना कर रहे हैं बहुत अच्छा कर रहे हैं, छोटी-बड़ी गलतियाँ नजरअंदाज कर देनी चाहिए।

कुछ लोग कहते हैं कि राष्ट्रीय शोक मनाया जाना चाहिए था। उन्हें भी भारत रत्न दिया जाना चाहिए था। खैर, सबकी अपनी मजबूरियाँ हैं। लेकिन मुझे अच्छा लगा कि विविध भारती पर यूनुस खान ने सजीव प्रसारण किया और आशा जी के कुछ गैर-फिल्मी गीत भी सुनाए, जो ज्यादा प्रचलित नहीं हैं। सजीव प्रसारण मुझे बहुत अच्छे लगते हैं।

गैर-फिल्मी गीतों में जो मुझे बहुत पसंद है, वह है कामायनी का यह गीत। जयशंकर प्रसाद के शब्दों को लयबद्ध करने का कमाल जयदेव ने किया था।

<https://youtu.be/ipsbfYhv0AI?si=XamiV-xGHK7Ppm6z>

पहले भी रिकॉर्ड करके ही कार्यक्रम प्रस्तुत किए जाते थे, पर आजकल ज्यादातर कार्यक्रम रिकॉर्ड किए हुए होते हैं। बिनाका गीतमाला भी 40 साल पहले

रिकॉर्डेड ही होता था। मुंबई में रिकॉर्ड होता था, फिर श्रीलंका जाता था और वहाँ से प्रसारित होता था। पर मैं हमेशा भ्रम में रहा कि यह सजीव था।

सजीव प्रसारण में यूनुस खान का गला रंध गया और वे बता रहे थे कि आँखें नम-सी हो रही हैं। यह भावुकता सिर्फ सजीव प्रसारण में ही हो सकती है और इसीलिए मेरे मन में सजीव प्रसारण के लिए खास स्थान है।

जिस दिन आशा जी गुजरीं, मैं एक गोष्ठी में शामिल था और वहाँ बिना यह जाने कि आशा जी गुजर चुकी हैं, किसी ने अपने जीवन का सबसे पसंदीदा गीत बहुत सालों बाद पहली बार गाया—“आगे भी जाने ना तू”। और वह बहुत ही अच्छा रहा। मुझे लगता है कि एक तरह से हम लोगों ने उन्हें श्रद्धांजलि दी।

जो भी है, बस यही एक पल है।

मैं 63 वर्ष का हूँ और अब मुझे लग रहा है कि मेरे जाने के बाद मेरी संपत्ति का सदुपयोग हो। इसलिए इन दिनों मैं एक ऐसी योजना से जुड़ गया हूँ, जहाँ मुझे लगता है कि पैसा सही जगह काम आएगा। परिवार को तो देना नहीं है। परिवार के पास समुचित धन है, समुचित शिक्षा है, समुचित क्षमता है, जिससे वे अपना जीवन सुख से बिता सकें। मुझे लगता है कि नोबेल पुरस्कार एक अच्छा पुरस्कार है। उसमें भी कुछ गुण-दोष जरूर हैं, पर फिर भी कई तरह से, कई मायनों में वह अच्छा है। मैं भी उसी की पद्धति पर कुछ आगे सोच रहा हूँ। नाम सोच लिया है—“प्रकाश पुरस्कार”। प्रकाश मेरी माँ का नाम है।

THE WISDOM OF THE STARS

Astrology is often understood not merely as a means of predicting future events, but as a traditional system for interpreting the deeper patterns that shape human life. At the heart of this practice lies the Janam Kundli, or birth chart, which maps the positions of celestial bodies at the precise moment of a person's birth. Astrologers study these planetary alignments to identify possible tendencies, challenges, and opportunities that may influence an individual's journey through life. In this perspective, astrology becomes less about fixed destiny and more about understanding the rhythms of existence and the choices that lie before us. Within this long-standing tradition, practices such as chanting mantras, offering charity, observing fasts, and wearing specific gemstones are often recommended as ways to cultivate inner balance and harmonise one's life with the perceived rhythms of cosmic influence.




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With over fifteen years of dedicated practice in astrology, the author brings a deep engagement with classical astrological principles, offering interpretations that are thoughtful, grounded, and insightful.


मई-2026 राशिफल (सभी 12 राशियाँ)


मई 2026 में कई शुभ ग्रह योग बन रहे हैं, जिनमें बुधादित्य योग, रुचक योग और लक्ष्मी नारायण योग प्रमुख हैं। इससे कई राशियों को करियर, धन और रिश्तों में लाभ मिलने के संकेत हैं।


मेष (Aries) 
यह महीना ऊर्जा और तरक्की का रहेगा। नौकरी में नई जिम्मेदारी मिल सकती है। व्यापार में लाभ होगा। परिवार में सम्मान बढ़ेगा। स्वास्थ्य अच्छा रहेगा।


वृषभ (Taurus) 
धन लाभ के योग हैं। नई गाड़ी या प्रॉपर्टी लेने का विचार बन सकता है। नौकरी में प्रमोशन संभव है। प्रेम संबंध मजबूत होंगे।


मिथुन (Gemini) 
मई आपके लिए भाग्यशाली रहेगा। नौकरी के नए अवसर मिल सकते हैं। बिजनेस में विस्तार होगा। रुका पैसा वापस आ सकता है।


कर्क (Cancer) 
भावनात्मक रूप से मजबूत रहेंगे। परिवार का सहयोग मिलेगा। खर्चों पर नियंत्रण रखें। सेहत पर ध्यान दें, खासकर पेट संबंधी समस्या।


सिंह (Leo) 
मान-सम्मान और नेतृत्व में वृद्धि होगी। सरकारी कार्यों में सफलता मिल सकती है। विद्यार्थियों के लिए अच्छा समय है।


कन्या (Virgo) 
कार्यस्थल पर प्रशंसा मिलेगी। प्रमोशन या नई जिम्मेदारी मिल सकती है। आर्थिक स्थिति मजबूत होगी। रिश्तों में मधुरता आएगी।


तुला (Libra) 
तनाव कम होगा। प्रॉपर्टी या निवेश से लाभ हो सकता है। सामाजिक सम्मान बढ़ेगा। प्रेम जीवन बेहतर रहेगा।

वृश्चिक (Scorpio) 
अचानक धन लाभ के योग हैं। परिवार में खुशी का माहौल रहेगा। नया बिजनेस शुरू कर सकते हैं। यात्रा के योग हैं।

धनु (Sagittarius) 
जीवनसाथी और पार्टनर का सहयोग मिलेगा। साझेदारी व्यापार में सफलता मिलेगी। धार्मिक कार्यों में रुचि बढ़ेगी।

मकर (Capricorn) 
मेहनत अधिक करनी पड़ेगी लेकिन सफलता मिलेगी। शिक्षा, संतान सुख और करियर में प्रगति होगी।

कुंभ (Aquarius) 
नई योजनाओं पर काम शुरू होगा। दोस्तों से लाभ मिलेगा। करियर में बदलाव के संकेत हैं। सोच सकारात्मक रखें।

मीन (Pisces) 
आर्थिक स्थिति सुधरेगी। आध्यात्मिक रुचि बढ़ेगी। परिवार में सुख-शांति रहेगी। सेहत सामान्य रहेगी।





ललितप्रसाद मथुरादत्त जोशी

कवि हिंदी में निरंतर अपनी कविताएँ प्रकाशित करते रहे हैं जिनकी कविताएँ 'साहित्यनामा' एवं 'अमर उजाला' में प्रकाशित हो चुकी हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त, इनके दो काव्य-संग्रह *बढ़ता भारत* और *मानव किस ओर बढ़ रहा है* प्रकाशित हो चुके हैं।

स्वयं में कुछ विश्वास बचा सा

गिरते-पड़ते संभले उठकर
श्रासों में उच्छ्वास जगा सा।
थमती है बेचैनी पलपल
रात जगी और प्यास जगा सा।
कि अब भी कुछ है टूटी हिम्मत
अब भी स्वयं में कुछ आस जगा सा।
ढूँढी है राहों की मंजिल
स्वयं में कुछ विश्वास बचा सा ॥

लक्ष्य हुआ राहों में बोझिल
रस्ता ये एकांत कटा सा।
ऊँचे है पर्वत बाधाएं
रूठा हो आकाश जहाँ सा।
नभ में चमका एक सितारा
बाकी सारा आकाश ढंका सा।
मैं उसे संभाले बढ़ता क्षण-क्षण
स्वयं में कुछ विश्वास बचा सा ॥

दीवारों की घेरा-बंदी
मन का कोना है क्लान्त जरा सा।
कि कुछ हलचल जो है इर्द-गिर्द
और कुछ ऐसा है शांत जरा सा।
अदृश्य हुए है जो साथ चले थे
टूटा है आज कुछ श्रांत जरा सा।
मगर आज की ये धुन पकड़ी है
स्वयं में कुछ विश्वास बचा सा ॥

कि दृढ़ संकल्प है अभी अड़ा सा
ये कष्ट बचा है क्षणिक जरा सा।
कि अपने बलबूतों पर है निकले पथ पर
स्वयं में चलता एक तूफान भरा सा।
श्रासों की श्वासे मद्धम है
श्रासों पर ये प्राण खड़ा सा।
कि जब तक है ये प्राण देह में
स्वयं में है कुछ विश्वास बचा सा ॥

Slow Down. Stay Longer. Discover Madhya Pradesh



There is a distinct rhythm to travel in Madhya Pradesh. Visitors begin their journey by breathing in serenity, settling into spaces that feel reassuring, comfortable and quietly welcoming. In this vast heart of India—where sacred rivers flow past ancient temples, forests stretch into the horizon and sunsets reflect across tranquil waters—Madhya Pradesh Tourism's thoughtfully curated stays become an essential part of the experience.

Along Sacred Rivers

In Ujjain, the spiritual presence of Mahakaleshwar Temple shapes the city's rhythm. Samrat Vikramaditya The Heritage offers a refined luxury heritage-style stay close to the temple precinct, while Shipra Residency provides a comfortable base near the ghats for pilgrims and travellers alike. Visitors immerse themselves in the city through the pre-dawn Bhasma Aarti, heritage walks and quiet evenings along the Shipra.

At Omkareshwar, Temple View overlooks the sacred island and offers easy access to the revered Omkareshwar Jyotirlinga Temple, making it ideal for pilgrims and photographers chasing sunrise views.

The journey continues to Maheshwar, where the majestic Maheshwar Fort rises above the Narmada. Narmada Resort offers a peaceful riverside retreat, perfect for sunset boat rides and evenings that echo with the heritage of Maheshwari weaving.

Embrace the Hills

In the cool heights of Pachmarhi, misty mornings and forest trails define the Satpura experience. Glen View provides sweeping valley vistas and calm surroundings, while Highlands places visitors at the centre of the hill station's relaxed charm.

The heritage Champak Bungalow evokes colonial-era nostalgia after excursions to Bee and Duchess Falls, while Rock End Manor offers an intimate heritage stay following trekking, cycling or rock-climbing adventures. As evening approaches, travellers gather at Dhoopgarh for spectacular sunset views before



returning for dinner at Amaltas Restaurant, a unique women-run dining space celebrating local hospitality.

Into the Wild

Few journeys rival the excitement of the Kanha-Bandhavgarh-Pench-Satpura wildlife circuit. At Kanha National Park, Baghira Jungle Resort offers immersive forest stays inspired by the surrounding wilderness, while Safari Lodge Mukki provides convenient access to the Mukki gate for early safaris and nature explorations.

At Bandhavgarh National Park, White Tiger Forest Lodge blends rustic charm with warm hospitality near the historic Bandhavgarh Fort.

In Pench National Park, Kipling's Court reflects the wilderness that inspired The Jungle Book, offering a relaxed retreat between safaris.

Further south at Madhai, Bison Resort overlooks the Denwa River and invites guests to slow down with canoeing, nature walks, birdwatching, photography and meditation sessions.

Lakes and Leisure

In Bhopal, Palash Residency offers a comfortable stay close to the city's cultural landmarks, while Wind n Waves provides tranquil lakeside views that capture the charm of the City of Lakes.

Just outside the city, Kerwa Resort makes for a refreshing nature escape, ideal for relaxed picnics, quiet walks and lakeside photography.

Across Madhya Pradesh, every stay becomes a gateway to culture, nature and heritage—inviting travellers to slow down, stay longer and rediscover the joy of unhurried journeys.

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- ▶ Never share **OTP / PIN / CVV / Passwords**
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