

DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS | JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA – 700032, WEST BENGAL, INDIA
NAAC 'A+' ACCREDITED

1st
MONTHLY



International
Relations
Scholastic
Conclave
2026



PRAXIS

IRSC NEWSLETTER
June Edition
Digital copy





PRAXIS



JUNE EDITION

IRSC MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

JULY 24, 2026



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LEFT-LED RESISTANCE AGAINST BULLDOZER

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About International Relations Scholastic Conclave

The International Relations Scholastic Conclave, organised by the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur University, is a student-driven academic forum that brings together students, scholars, and professionals to engage with critical global issues. Since its inception in 2010, the conclave has been a pursuit of intellectual exploration, aiming to unravel the complexities of global politics. By convening a diverse group of experts and students, the event facilitates in-depth discussions and debates on key themes in International Relations. It serves as a platform to encourage critical thinking, promote academic excellence, and bridge the gap between theory and real-world practice. Building on the success of the previous edition, which featured distinguished speakers such as Christophe Jaffrelot, Liyaqat Ayub Khan, Alka Acharya, and Esther Brito Ruiz, whose expertise spans areas like Indology, South Asian politics, Sino-Indian relations, human rights, and diplomacy, this year’s conclave will further expand its outreach. The upcoming edition aims to enhance student participation alongside international experts, ensuring broader engagement and a more dynamic exchange of ideas. With an anticipated increase in attendance, the impact and reach of the event are expected to be greater than ever. Scheduled for September 2026, the conference is strategically planned to maximize participation from the Organizing Committee, attendees, and esteemed guests from prestigious national and international universities and institutions. This conference will allow IRSC to foster an inclusive intellectual space for students to engage with pressing global problems and nurture a functional understanding of adaptation patterns in international relations.



Theme

Strategic Autonomy and Global Re-alignment : Exploring India’s Prospect in a Multipolar World

About Department of International Relations

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Vision

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Convenors' Note

It is with profound honor that we welcome Jadavpur University, a distinguished Indian academic institution dedicated to cultivating policy engagement, fostering informed discourse, and advancing critical scholarship in International Relations and Strategic Studies.

The current transformation of international politics clearly shows that strategic autonomy and global realignment are the most effective concepts for comprehension. A multipolar order has taken shape in the wake of unipolarity's decline, the return of great-power rivalries, a more diffuse distribution of economic and technological might, and the fracturing of global governance. This new order is defined not so much by any stable equilibrium as by the interplay of competitive and cooperative networks.

In such an environment, strategic autonomy has evolved beyond a simple doctrine of non-alignment or policy independence into something far more dynamic. It is the means by which states can safeguard their sovereignty and decision-making prerogatives, expand their partnerships and agency, and all the while sidestep the rigidities of bloc politics. Theoretical lenses offer various ways to read this: for the realist it is about the balance of power and survival; liberal institutionalism points to its function within multilateral bodies and issue-based coalitions; constructivists would stress how identity and history inform foreign policy; and from a critical or postcolonial vantage point it is seen as an assertion of political and epistemic autonomy in the face of entrenched hierarchies.



Prof. Shibashis Chatterjee
Convenor, IRSC '26

India's approach to strategic autonomy, characterized by its intricate grand strategy at the intersection of power, development, and normative leadership, warrants consideration beyond mere diplomatic preference. Amid a deep global realignment, what matters is not just India's adaptation to multipolarity but also the role it plays in shaping its institutional and normative underpinnings. We invite scholars to this conference to put these questions to the test, examining the empirical and theoretical dimensions of India's bid for influence in a world where such influence is more hotly contested, along with the contradictions and constraints that accompany it.

We are therefore currently in a period of significant global shifts. The complex, multipolar world, along with climate change, unprecedented technological advancements, and evolving economic relationships, presents security challenges and other complexities that require a thorough, multidisciplinary analysis. The IRSC serves as a platform for students, policymakers, practitioners, and scholars to examine these issues from a multidisciplinary perspective and shape India's global perception in an increasingly interconnected world.

The Conclave has always aimed to bridge the gap between academic practice and public policy, and this year's event will be no exception. Our goal is to encourage evidence-based discussions and exciting ideas originating from different institutions and platforms. We also prioritize mentoring emerging researchers, connecting them with prominent experts to strengthen Indian IR scholarship.

The IRSC, supported this year by the Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR), is a flagship program of the Department of International Relations at Jadavpur University and promotes intellectual openness and methodological diversity. We hope the ensuing discussions at the Conclave will continue beyond the event, inspiring new research and policy ideas on global issues.

The presence of speakers, guests, and participants helps make this Conclave a hub of ideas. We expect three days of productive discussions and lasting academic connections.

Indian Constitution in its articles 14 and 15 promises Equality with legal binding and ensures opportunities without discriminations as normative principles and foundational commitments of the Indian Republic. It sets the tone for the ideals of a democratic nation. The egalitarian visions of Constitution framers under the leadership of Babasaheb Ambedkar has lifted the state from the darkness of prejudice and despicable hierarchies attached to human birth. Imaginations of the radical project of democratic modernity was institutionalized by the constituent assembly. The long walk towards modernity was not an easy task in a deeply gatekept Indian society. As Beneath the spectacle of Indian civilization, lied formidable glorification of humiliations, social exclusion, injustice and archaic ideas of liberty. Needless to say, Indian liberals pushed the narrative of cradle of civilization and cultural exceptionalism by aestheticizing thousands of years violent social past. Cultural supremacy was fused with casteist immoralities to subjugate and sanitise millions of marginaliseds to generate manufactured consent through coercion. The elite privilegeds refusal to reckon with the postcolonial attempts to democratise the idea of Nation remains an unfinished task. Anti colonial Philosopher Frantz Fanon aptly observed , Decolonisation is the putting into practice ‘‘The last shall be first and the first last’’. The naked truth is, the desire of casteist colonial settlers remains obnoxiously fixated at structural superiority. The discomfort to confront with the anti-democratic realities testifies the quiet love for intergenerational privileges. Championing primordial ironies like Vikshit Bharat and MAGA movement endorses and activates the denials of course correcting the colonial violence and approves Whites and Upper Castes as racially superior and rest as subhumans. The social and moral ruptures that has undergone into framing of Shining India and Vishwaguru can be India's very own template of Images of Incivilities. Therefore, Finding India a place in global world order may bounce back on its own face while democracy has not taken the social roots, the idea of liberty and equality is countered by the hegemonic brutalities. As the Faculty Convener of The International Relations Scholastic Conclave (IRSC),2026 Edition, I hope, we may go beyond enthusiastic endorsements of corporatised IR and foster emancipatory approaches to understand State in global politics.



Dr. Subhajit Naskar
Convenor, IRSC '26

From The Editorial Board

Dear Readers,

It is our distinct honour and privilege to introduce you to the inaugural monthly edition of Praxis, the newsletter for this edition of the International Relations Scholastic Conclave 2026, hosted by the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University. For more than a decade now, IRSC has served as a beacon of excellence, inclusivity and diversity. It has also been resolutely focused on fostering dialogue, academic deliberations and serving as an academic forum for propelling newer and brighter scholarly perspectives. Over the course of the past two months, our dedicated Editorial Committee members have played a significant role in upholding these values in our day to day operations, and have ensured that through our weekly newsletters, voices across all academic disciplines have been heard, appreciated and depicted unbiasedly. Their hard work and commitment towards academic enquiry have not only emerged as an endeavour of journalistic integrity, but have also fueled the spirit of intellectual exchange and multidisciplinary deliberations among our readers.

In these challenging times, where society at large is undergoing a paradigmatic shift with regards to the encompassments of its collective consciousness, the youth of today is not only witnessing a metamorphosis surrounding its political identity, but it also embracing greater pedagogical and intellectual versatility; enabling them to not just recognise, but also question those systemic inequalities which plague the very fabric of our existence. Therefore, intellectual journalism has emerged as the need of the hour, wherein we, the youth, can independently share a safe space to facilitate the interchange of opinions and ideas, and inculcate the best practices necessary to disseminate knowledge, information and awareness. This initiative is a manifestation of this vision, which has been deeply inspired by the likes of our faculty members, our Teacher coordinators, and our Student Coordinators. We thank them for their continuous support, renewed enthusiasm, and unwavering efforts in making this dream of ours, a reality.

In this edition of IRSC, We, the Editorial Board, are guided by our shared commitment to equitable representation, not just within our own institutional workspace but rather the academic fraternity at large. We hope that this serves as an alternative space for the youth and experienced academics alike to express and realise their intellectual capabilities, in an era which is marked by its evolving perception of ideas and impressions. We look forward to capturing and representing those voices which often remain unheard, unseen, or are left unattended. From international politics to strategic studies, from nationwide political movements to local and indigenous narratives, we attempt to establish a precedent for the youth, where equity, accountability and fairness of thought can be preserved as intrinsic values, which not only steer our own behaviour, but rather serves as the foundation of all democratic institutions and ideas alike. This newsletter not only attempts to uncover the political realities at the international level, but also rationally portray regional and domestic developments, challenging existing stereotypes and dominant narratives that shape our day-to-day socio-political ecosystem. As we undertake this journey to furnish our readers with an enthralling experience from an impartial journalistic lens. Through our endeavour, we hope to instill a sense of awareness and social responsibility among every one of our readers, thus paving the way for a better tomorrow.

Yours in curiosity and inquiry,

Kangkana, Swapnaneel and Jayasmita,
The Editorial Board, IRSC 2026.



Kangkana Roy



Swapnaneel Datta



Jayasmita Sarkar

International Relations
Scholastic Conclave 2026

CALL FOR ARTICLES

for
PRAXIS
IRSC Newsletter



Theme

Strategic Autonomy and Global Re-
alignment: Exploring India's
Prospects in a Multipolar World

Sub-themes

- Theory and praxis of strategic autonomy
- India, Global Governance, and the New World Order: From Bridge-Building to Agenda-Setting
- Geopolitics of Connectivity and Contestation in the Indo-Pacific and Eurasia
- Non-Western Perspectives and Civilizational States in Contemporary IR Theory
- Emerging and Disruptive Technologies: New Frontiers of Power and Vulnerability
- Strategic Autonomy in Hybrid Threats
- Viksit Bharat: Problems and Prospects on the Path to Development by 2047
- Climate governance in the era of Globalisation
- Role of Migration in a Multipolar World Order

Guidelines

- Maximum **2000 words**
- Times New Roman, 12 pt
- APA Citation Style
- Submit in **.doc/.docx** format
- Subject Line: **"IRSC Article"**
- ***Not a Research Paper**



Send your articles to:
[**irsceditorial@gmail.com**](mailto:irsceditorial@gmail.com)



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CUBA IN CRISIS: U.S. OIL BLOCKADE, BLACKOUTS, AND THE POLITICS OF PRESSURE

Madhuwrita Nandi; UG III: Cuba has been experiencing repeated total nationwide blackouts as of March 2026, and due to the ongoing Iran war, the world’s attention towards Cuba has been sidelined. On January 29, 2026, President Donald Trump signed an executive order declaring a national emergency and accusing the Cuban government of “extraordinary actions that harm and threaten the United States.” Specifically, the executive order asserted that Cuba’s government aligns itself with and supports “numerous hostile countries, transnational terrorist groups, and malign actors adverse to the United States”, including Russia, China, and Iran. The order also accused the Cuban government of persecuting political opponents, suppressing free speech and the press, and committing other human rights violations- actions that have been documented by human rights organizations over the years. The order effectively launched an oil blockade on Cuba by imposing new tariffs on countries that directly or indirectly supply oil to Cuba, which led Mexico to suspend shipments to Cuba. The U.S. has continued to try to cut off Cuba from oil by seizing oil shipments bound for Cuba and intercepting vessels in the Caribbean Sea searching for fuel for Cuba. After the U.S. deposed Venezuela’s President Maduro in January 2026 and claimed control over Venezuela’s oil, Trump declared that no Venezuelan oil would go to Cuba. As the U.S. oil blockade starved Cuba of fuel, 10 million people in the country have been thrown into a deepening humanitarian crisis. Fuel shortages have meant frequent blackouts, forcing hospitals to suspend operations and schools and businesses to close. Shortages of cooking gas, gasoline, and diesel have also strained the country’s transport, food supplies, and water pumps. The energy crisis has led to soaring inflation, including surging food prices, and a rapidly devaluing Cuban peso. Russia, which has been allied to Cuba for decades, has sharply criticized the Trump administration’s blockade and pledged to provide the country with “necessary support, including financial aid”. However, as of March 20, 2026, the U.S. Treasury Department has said that Cuba will not be allowed to take delivery of Russian crude, even as the fuel-starved island appears poised to receive two tankers carrying oil and gas. In February 2026, United Nations human rights experts condemned the U.S.’s effective fuel blockade on Cuba, calling it a “serious violation of international law” and “an extreme form of unilateral economic coercion.” However, the Cuban government and its citizens have vowed to show ‘unyielding resistance’ to U.S. oil blockade. In addition to adopting domestic energy rationing measures, Cuba’s government has sought to dramatically increase its solar power generation amid the ongoing fuel shortage. The Cuban government has also denied the U.S. embassy in Havana’s request to import fuel to keep generators running for the building. The Cuban Ministry of Foreign Relations told U.S. diplomats that it was “bold” and “shameless” of the U.S. to try to ship two containers of fuel while the rest of the country sits in darkness.



After Venezuela and Iran, the U.S.’s new imperialist target is Cuba. The U.S. has put the Cuban government, led by President Miguel Diaz-Canel, under immense pressure to comply with Trump’s wishes for regime change, better business opportunities with the U.S., and more. Trump has also floated the idea of a “friendly takeover” of Cuba, saying that he will be having the “honour” of taking Cuba. However, Deputy Foreign Minister Carlos Fernandez de Cossio denied that the nature or structure of the Cuban government was up for negotiation. He added that a change of the ruling system was “absolutely” off the table in discussions. This shows that despite the pressures which have been created due to the blockade, Cuba is not bowing down to U.S. dominance.

INDIAN *VASUDHAIVA KUTUMBAKAM* TO NORDIC SUSTAINABILITY: LOOKING INTO THE INDIA-NORDIC SUMMIT 2026

Adrija Bhattacharjee; UG III: At a time when global diplomacy increasingly reflects a cycle of recurring conflicts and crisis management, the 3rd India–Nordic Summit in Oslo, held on 19 May 2026, presented something rarer: a vision of partnership built not on fear or coercion, but on possibility and hope. Bringing together India and the five Nordic nations of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, the Summit marks a transition in global diplomacy. What began in Stockholm in 2018 as a dialogue platform, has now evolved into a Green Technology and Innovation Strategic Partnership, reflecting a balance between Nordic egalitarian modernity and India’s plural development model. Marked by the first visit of an Indian Prime Minister to Norway in 43 years since the era of ex-PM Indira Gandhi, this summit took place in the background of the rising need for cooperation between both sides, with the Nordic states bringing world-leading expertise in green transition, blue economy, maritime sustainability and digital governance as India presents, pharmaceutical markets, manufacturing capacity, consumer goods like textiles, and strategic centrality in the IndoPacific.



Several key areas of outcomes have emerged with leaders agreeing to leverage the recently operationalized India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA), alongside progress on the India-EU FTA, unlocking pathways for mobilising nearly 100 Billion Dollar in effective Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) into India for over a 15 year period and potentially create a million jobs, contributing to the ‘Make In India’ investment flows. Discussions also expanded into AI governance, 5G and 6G cooperation as well as space collaboration including Swedish participation in India’s upcoming Venus mission. This summit reinforced and rather ramped up India’s role as a co-architect of future global norms, engaging the Nordic Bloc to scale their ideas beyond the affluent Northern societies, into the realities of the Global South. It also gave a glimpse into the strengthening of Indian foothold in the Arctic, which is rich in natural gas, hydrocarbons and minerals, where even though India doesn't hold significant geographical relevance, has continued to maintain a substantially scientific role, owing to the Svalbard Treaty. Even though India was granted observer status in the Arctic Council, following this Summit, India now hopes to establish an IndiaNordic Arctic mechanism, since all Nordic nations are members of the Arctic Council, which would be significant in countering China’s influence in the Arctic Region, for which India is also focusing on its Eastern Maritime Corridor, which would integrate Arctic Shipping Routes. While significant challenges like differing strategic outlooks on Russia and Nordic concerns around governance standards remain, the 2026 IndiaNordic Summit signals something larger for the entire international community: that the next phase of global order doesn't necessitate power rivalry when it can be based on coalitions of innovation and shared responsibility.

Dates of IRSC 2026

9th September, 10th September & 11th September

THE CORRIDORS OF POWER: *BRI* & *IMEC* IN A STRATEGIC DUEL

Aditya Chourasiya; UG III: Centuries ago, the Silk Road emerged as a bridge between various civilisations. Today, its successor, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), has become a flashpoint for global frictions. As India and its Western allies prepare to launch the India-Middle EastEurope Economic Corridor (IMEC), we are witnessing a paradigm shift: trade routes are becoming the new frontlines of global power influence.

In 2013, China launched its most ambitious project, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Xi Jinping referred to it as the “project of the century” and announced the construction of ports, railways, and highways all across Asia, Africa and Europe. The economic corridors of the Silk Road belt connect Beijing to Europe and the whole of Asia, while the Maritime Silk Road stitches the Chinese waters to the other end of the belt through the Indian Ocean. As a part of the Maritime Silk Route, China has established key strategic ports in Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Djibouti.

While China portrays BRI as a developmental initiative to strengthen the trade routes, it is often criticised for creating long-term dependencies and debt-trapping weaker economies.

In contrast, IMEC, was announced during the G20 Summit in 2023, as a collaborative alternative to BRI. It seeks to connect India to Europe via the Middle East through the establishment of ports, railways, and energy pipelines. IMEC is backed by India, the United States, and members of the European Union to not just enhance trade connectivity but also offer an alternative to the Chinese Belt. The corridor is expected to link the Indian ports to the UAE and connect onward to Europe through Saudi Arabia via the establishment of rail networks. Unlike the BRI's top-down, state-led model, IMEC is more transparent and functions on the sovereign interests of the nations, making it more diplomatically resilient but also operationally slower.

These two ambitious projects overlap in their promise of facilitating trade and providing regional integration. However, BRI is largely driven by China’s global ambitions, while IMEC is a multilateral effort involving various actors. BRI is already operational across several regions and is a decade ahead, whereas IMEC is still in its early MoU planning stages. Moreover, the IsraelHamas war and instability in the Persian Gulf have halted the land-bridge portion of IMEC. The comparison between BRI and IMEC highlights a prominent transformation in global politics: politicisation of trade routes and networks. China’s trillion-dollar investments in BRI are already securing it an influential presence in critical maritime zones, while IMEC represents an attempt by other powers to balance that influence.

The tussle between BRI and IMEC is not just about economic influence, but it showcases the competing geostrategic visions of China and India and reflects a broader struggle for influence and dominance in Asia and beyond. China is hoping to shape the regional order through its centralised longterm planning while India’s approach is more collaborative yet uncertain. The sphere of connectivity is becoming a political and strategic concept. They are, therefore, becoming critical instruments of geopolitical competition.

As the world moves towards a multipolar system, power will no longer be solely defined by territory or economic might but by connectivity and control over the global supply chains. The contest between BRI and IMEC is not merely about trade routes but about shaping the future architecture of international relations. The battle of influence through networks will emerge as a critical determinant of global power. Will China rise to the apex with its domineering Belt and Road? Will IMEC emerge as a viable alternative or become a geopolitical mirage in the deserts of the Middle East?

नेपाल चुनाव २०२६: भारत-नेपाल सम्बन्धमा यसको प्रभाव

Vedant Rai; UG III: २०२६ मा भएको नेपाली चुनावले यस हिमाली देशको राजनीतिक परिदृश्यमा ठूलो परिवर्तन ल्योको छ। यस चुनाव सेप्टेम्बर २०२५ मा के.पी. शर्मा ओली नेतृत्व सरकारलाई अपदस्थ गर्ने जेन जी (Gen Z) क्रान्तिको पुष्ठभूमिमा भएको थियो। सरकार र राजनीतिक अभिजात वर्गले भ्रष्टाचार र नातावादको अगि बढाउने अनि देशमा आर्थिक विकास नगरेको दोष लगाउदै प्रदर्शनकारीहरू सडकमा उत्रिए, यद्यपि, विरोधको तत्काल कारण ओली सरकारले सामाजिक सञ्जाल माथि प्रतिबन्धको विरोदमा थियो। यस क्रान्तिले सुशीला कार्कीको अन्तरिम सरकारको सुरुवात गर्‍यो जसको नेतृत्वमा यस चुनाव सफल भएको छ ।

२०१५ मा पारित संविधान अन्तर्गत, पहिलो पटक एकलैले संसदको तल्लो सदनमा कुनै राजनितिक दलले लगभग दुई तिहाइ बहुमत प्राप्त गरेको छ । बालेन्द्र शाहको नेतृत्वमा रहेको राष्ट्रिय स्वतन्त्र पार्टीले (रास्वपा) गठबन्धनको राजनीतिक प्रवृत्तिलाई तोड्नको छ । यस चुनावमा पुरानो राजनीतिक शक्तिहरू अनि नयाँ राजनीतिक दलहरूको भिडंत देखियो। नेपालको राजनीतिक प्रक्रिया अन्तर्गत, संसदका १६५ सदस्यहरू प्रत्यक्ष रूपमा एकल निर्वाचन क्षेत्रमा निर्वाचित हुन्छन् भने ११० समानुपातिक प्रतिनिधित्व मार्फत निर्वाचित हुन्छन् जस अन्तर्गत RSP ले १८२ सिट जित्यो, जबकि परम्परागत पुराना दलहरू नेपाली कांग्रेस, नेपाल कम्युनिष्ट पार्टी (संयुक्त मार्क्सवादी-लेनिनवादी) नेकपा (एमाले) र नेपाली कम्युनिष्ट पार्टीले क्रमशः ३८, २५ र १७ सिट प्राप्त गरे।

नेपाल धेरै संस्कृति भएको विविधतायुक्त र युवा देश हो जहाँ औसत उमेर तीस भन्दा कमि छ। रास्वपाले लगभग हरेक क्षेत्रमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गर्न सफल भएको छ। यसले शहरी नेपालका धेरैजसो सिटहरू जितन साथै कडा प्रतिस्पर्धा भएका ग्रामीण निर्वाचन क्षेत्रहरूमा राम्रो प्रदर्शन गर्न सफल भएको छ। यस चुनावमा सत्तारूढ दलहरू माथि सत्ताविरोधी भावना भएको साथै नातावाद र भ्रष्टाचारसँगको दोषका कारण यस दलहरू हारेका छन् । रास्वपाले सामाजिक सञ्जाललाई आफ्नो फाइदाको लागि प्रयोग गर्न र नेपालमा आफ्ना युवा दर्शकहरूसँग जोडिन सक्षम भएको थियो जहाँ औसत उमेर तीस वर्षभन्दा कम छ। सबै दलहरूले चुनावमा उम्मेदवारहरूको मनोनयन गर्दा जातीय गणितलाई ध्यानमा राखेका देखिन्छ। रास्वपाले मधेशीहरूको बाहुल्य रहेको मधेश प्रान्तमा धेरैजसो सिटहरू जितेको थियो भने बालेन्द्र शाह आफैँ मधेशी समुदायबाट आएका हुन्।

रास्वपाले पूर्वी नेपालमा जस्तै जनजन्ती बाहुल्य भएका सिटहरू पनि सफलता पाएको छ जहाँ किराती जाति उल्लेखनीय मतदान समूह बनाउँछन् ।यस चुनावमा रास्वपाले जात, क्षेत्र र पुस्तालाई पार गर्ने व्यापक राजनीतिक गठबन्धन सिर्जना गर्न सक्षम भएको छ जसको कारण यो सत्तामा पुगन सफल भएको छ ।

नेपाल दुई एसियाली शक्ति भारत र चीनको बीचमा अवस्थित भएका हुनाले काठमाडौँमा हुने कुनै पनि परिवर्तनमा दुवैको चासो छ। रास्वपाले आफ्नो घोषणापत्रमा भारत र चीन जस्ता दुई महाशक्तिहरू बीचको बफर राज्यबाट नेपाललाई उनीहरू बीचको समृद्ध पुलमा रूपान्तरण गर्ने वाचा गरेको छ। यसले दुवैप्रति सन्तुलित र कूटनीतिक दृष्टिकोण राखने लक्ष्य राखेको छ। यसले राजनीतिक पङ्क्तिबद्धताबाट आर्थिक सहयोगमा ध्यान केन्द्रित गरेको छ। यसले भारतसँगको कनेक्टिभिटी र यसको विद्युत व्यापार बढाउने कुरामा जोड दिँदै चीनबाट पूर्वाधार परियोजनाहरू सिक्ने र वित्तपोषण गर्ने लक्ष्य राखेको छ। घोषणापत्रमा भारतसँगको सीमा विवादलाई वार्ताद्वारा समाधान गर्ने पनि वाचा गरिएको छ। सरकारले भारतीय र नेपाली मुद्राहरू बीचको लामो समयदेखि चलिरहेको स्थिर विनिमयलाई पुनः वार्ता गर्ने वाचा गरिएको छ। यसले भारत र चीनलाई सन्तुलनमा राख्ने र एकतर्फ झुकावबाट बच्ने योजना बनाएको छ। यसले अधिल्लो ओली सरकारको चीन झुकावलाई सच्याउने लक्ष्य राखेको छ। रास्वपाले नेपालको जलविद्युत क्षमता बढाउने लक्ष्य राख्दै धेरैजसो बीआरआई (BRI) परियोजनाहरूमा केस-बाइ-केस अद्यन पनि गर्ने योजना बनाएको छ। धेरै विज्ञहरूले विदेश नीतिमा रास्वपा नेतृत्वको अनुभवको कमीलाई औल्याउँछन्।

नयाँ सरकारले अशांत र अस्थिर दुनियाँको सामना गर्नेछ। पश्चिम एसियामा संकट र यस क्षेत्रबाट धेरै नेपालीहरूको उद्धार यसको सबैभन्दा तत्कालको कठिन कार्य हुनेछ। सरकारको अर्को तत्काल चुनौती भनेको ७४७ मिलियन डलरको पहलबाट “अमेरिकी मिलेनियम चुनौती सहयोग कोष” व्यवस्थापन गर्नु र साथै अमेरिकाबाट थप सहयोग प्राप्त गर्ने प्रयास पनि गर्नु हो। नयाँ दिल्ली र बेइजिङबीच बढ्दो शंकाले नेपाललाई आफ्नो प्रभाव परीक्षण गर्नलाई उर्वर भूमि बनाएको छ।

भारतको लागि, काठमाडौँमा स्थिर पाँच वर्ष सरकार , भारत-नेपाल सम्बन्धमा नयाँ पुनर्स्थापनाको अवसर हो ; अधिल्लो ओली सरकारको चीन झुकाव सच्याउने अवसर हो। नयाँ दिल्लीले नयाँ सरकारको अनुरोदमा कोसी र महाकाली पानी सन्धिहरू जस्ता केही पानी सन्धिहरू पुनः वार्ता गर्न तत्पर छ। यद्यपि, नेपालमा शक्तिको शान्तिपूर्ण हस्तान्तरण र लोकतान्त्रिक अभ्यासलाई नयाँ दिल्लीले धेरै स्वागत गरेको छ किनकि यो आफ्नो छिमेकीमा अराजकताबाट जोगिएको छ साथै नेपालमा चीनसंग झुकाव भएका दल चुनावमा असफल भएका छन् ॥



ভাষা ও সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতাবাদ

তনিকা দেব; দ্বিতীয় বর্ষ: ভাষা ভাবপ্রকাশের মাধ্যম। ভাষা যেমন ভালোবাসার বহিঃপ্রকাশ প্রকাশ,ঔপনিবেশিকতার হাতিয়ারও বটে। পৃথিবীতে সামাজিক বোধের সূচনালগ্ন থেকে আজ অবধি নব্য সামাজিকবোধের ভাষা হয়ে উঠেছে গুরুত্বপূর্ণ নির্ধারক । ভাষা কখনও কলমকে নিজের মতো করে গণপ্রচার চালিয়েছে, কখনও আবার রুখে দিয়েছে প্রতিবাদের শেষ সম্বল। সংবাদপত্রগুলিতে থেকে আজকের যে বাংলা ভাষা আমরা দেখতে পাই, তা কিন্তু একরূপী নয়। পশ্চিমমবাংলার বিভিন্ন জেলায় বাংলা ভাষার নিজস্ব বাচনভঙ্গী রয়েছে। কোচবিহার কিংবা পুরুলিয়া অথবা সুন্দরবনের যে বাংলা বাচনভঙ্গী, তা কলকাতার কথ্য বাংলার চেয়ে আলাদা। তবে, মান্য বাংলা বলতে আমরা আজও কলকাতার বাংলাকই বুঝি। সরকারীভাবেও বাংলার এই রূপটিই বিশেষ গুরুত্ব পায়, তবে এক্ষেত্রেও রয়েছে সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতাবাদ। যেহেতু ব্রিটিশ আমল এবং তৎপরবর্তী সময়ে কলকাতাই শাসনস্থল হিসেবে পরিগণিত হয়েছে, তাই শাসকের ভাষাই হয়ে গেছে সরকারি ভাষা। বাণিজ্যিক টানে কিংবা রুটি রুজির সংস্থানে কলকাতায় আগমন ঘটেছে যেসব বাঙালির, তাদেরও বাচনভঙ্গীহয়ে উঠেছে কলকাতার কথ্য বাংলা। প্রচলিত নিউজ মিডিয়ার বাংলা ভাষাতেও কলকাতার মান্য বাংলার আধিপত্য । তাই ছোটো থেকে মফস্বলের বাংলায় কথা বলা সাংবাদিকও বাধ্য হয় কলকাতার মান্য ভাষায় খবর উপস্থাপন করতে। ঝাড়খন্ডী উপভাষা, মেদিনীপুরী বা কাঁথির উপভাষা, রাজবংশী বা কামরূপী উপভাষা, বরেন্দ্রী উপভাষা এগুলি ছাড়াও নানা উপভাষার উপর কলকাতার কথ্য বাংলার আধিপত্য আসলে শাসকের স্থির করা শাসনব্যবস্থা এবং সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতাবাদ। বাংলা ভাষার ওপর ঔপনিবেশিকতার আঘাত নেমে এসেছে। আবার ভৌগোলিকতার দরুণ যেসব বাঙালি সাঁওতালি কিংবা নেপালি ভাষায় কথা বলে, তার ওপরেও কখনও কখনও নেমে এসেছে সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতাবাদের খাবা।ভাষা নামক রাজনৈতিক এবং সাংবাদিকতার মতো বিষয়ের ওপর যেমন জুড়েছে ধর্মের বিদ্যুৎপ্রবাহ। ধরুন, আপনার কথা বলার ভাষাতেই আপনি মন্দির,মসজিদ, গির্জা, মঠবা যেকোনো উপাসনাগৃহে প্রার্থনা করুন, কোনোরকম মাধ্যমের উপস্থিতি ছাড়াই! করা সম্ভব। কিন্তু, আমাদের সামনে রয়েছে ভাষা নামক বিরাট ব্যবধানের প্রাচীর। আগ্রাসনের ইতিহাসের নবগঠিত কাঠামোয় ধর্মীয় সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠের কথা উঠে আসে, প্রাসঙ্গিক হয় হিন্দিবলয়ের হস্তক্ষেপের কথাও। তবে ধর্মের ভাষা কী হবে, সেই নিয়ে কলহ নেহাৎ নতুন নয়। গৌড়া মৌলবাদী ধার্মিকরা তো বরাবরই চেয়েছে ধর্মেরভাষা হোক কঠিন, দুর্বোধ্য সাধারণ মানুষের ধরা ছোঁয়ার বাইরের, তা সে যে ভাষাই হোক। বাইবেলের ভাষা নিয়ে বহু কলহের সাক্ষী আছে গোটা বিশ্ব। শোষণ এবং আগ্রাসন এই পৃথিবীতে একমুখী হয়নি । ভাষার ক্ষেত্রে তো নয়ই। সংস্কৃত ভাষা থেকে ক্রমপর্যায়ে বাংলার আগমনে বাংলা ভাষার আধিপত্য বেড়েছে । বাংলার উপর হিন্দি আধিপত্য তথা সমগ্র দেশে ইংরেজি ভাষার আধিপত্য যেমন নেমে এসেছে তেমনি বাংলা ও তার ভৌগলিক বৈশাদৃশ্যতায় পরিবর্তন করেছে আধিপত্যের পক্ষ। বিভাজনের রেখায় জাতীয়তাবাদের ভাষা ধুয়ে মুছে গেলেও আধিপত্যের ভাষা কী হবে, তা আজও ঠিক করে দেয় সংখ্যাগরিষ্ঠতাবাদী শাসক।

THE RISE OF RIGHT-WING FUNDAMENTALISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH: A STUDY OF DEMOCRATIC COUNTRIES AFTER THE DECLINE OF SOCIALIST REGIMES

Apurba Basu & Manali Moulik; UG III: “A Civilization can be judged by the way a society treats its minority”- Mahatma Gandhi

In this era of artificial intelligence, one of the biggest challenges for the history-conscious social scientists is to construct the truth against monolithic religious fundamentalism. Firstly it used to make us astonished, what is the component of such religious fundamentalism even in this era of ultramodern technology? Is there anykind of monolithic equation between communalism and secularism? What is the idea of Indian alternative secularism? How is the fundamentalist idea combined with nationalist sentiment? All of these questions has their innate trajectory into the hierarchical religious concept and our socio-economic mosaic. Also one thing should be understood from here, that right wing politics is getting the privilege from this perspective and the share of bigger economic cake is going to their selective capitalist counterparts. So on the other hand this is also helping in the rise of crony capitalism. In this article we will solemnly follow three segment to justify all of the answers. First of all, we seek to examine the connection of religious fundamentalism with the sense of our nationalism. In the second part, the monolithic communalism and idea of mainstream secularism will be justified in a multilingual and multi-religious country like India, here we try to decipher the hierarchical formulation and prescription of so-called, quote-unquote “Hindutva”. Third segment used to search the reasons of failure of socialist regimes in most of the south Asian countries and the occupying attitude of right wings politics by eliminating socio-economic context and insertion of religio-cultural issues.

Nationalism and fundamentalism: Indian nationalism can’t be defined in an Euro-centric sense. Main organizing principle of Indian polity happened on 1947. The attempt of pre-1947 Indian nationalism, was to fight against a colonial imperial power to make the motherland free from the British rule. The famous astronaut Rusty Schwekhart who was the leading space scientist and astronaut of Apollo 9 space mission (1969) he asserted, “When go around the earth in an hour and half you begin to recognize that your identity is with the whole thing...you look down there and you look down there and you can’t imagine how many boarders and boundaries you cross...” So the drastic limitation of national concept is somehow peculiar and misleading. Religious fundamentalism is now a component of romantic nationalism to set binary opposition. Multimedia, audio-visual representation is a great way to control mass psychology in this way and to make a mass community feeling unsecured by generating delusions. So if we look at our national trajectory, then very soon after 1947,the mass euphoria over the British departure needed into collective memory. In the social trajectory, the economic front began to stagnate, exacerbating the problem of unemployment, poverty, corruption in public life, tenacious illiteracy, population explosion etc. Centrifugal and disruptive forces reoccupied the centre-stage with unprecedented vehemence. So the concept of nationalism, instead of giving birth to an unified national society, seems to have delivered a whole litter of communities divided from one to another in terms of religion, caste, class, region and creed. The state used to oppress its own citizens. It became increasingly nervous about even minor and marginal struggles against any form of exploitation. So the pan-Indian polity no longer attracts the allegiance of the majority of the masses and is increasingly being replaced by smaller entities is clear from the emergence and struggle of nationalities often denigrated through charges of regionalism, linguistic chauvinism and separatism. Communalism and communal violence is spreading to newer areas with increased intensity, becoming more frequent and engulfing more and more sections of people. So it became a communal nationalism in a double sense ; it is communal not only vis-a-vis other religious communities but equally so vis-a – vis the large mass of lower castes within the Hindu fold. It is therefore more appropriately termed as ‘upper caste Brahminic Nationalism.’ It is a misleading status of our narrow nationalism.

Monolithic concept of communalism and secularism – a brief search towards right wings opportunism: The term ‘secular’ has come from the Latin word ‘saeculum’. Which means ‘this time.’ Or which is different from ‘that time’(when state was similar to divine power, the separation came from the time of Thomas Hobbes). So this idea of secularism means something which is not connected with religious perspective or divine world. It will think for the ecclesiastical matters and this world. Theoretically there exist three types of states other than a secular state:

Theocratic state b) state with one established religion c) state with multiple established religion: Secularism also used to work with multiple establishments, but main difference of it exists in its secular goal. In such context, a secular state can’t have and religious end or should have to prefer any religious community for their identity in passive or active citizenship. French secularism used not to allow anyone in their parliament with any religious symbol to represent their identity. Our Indian secularism is somehow different. Which we can term as ‘alternative secularism’. But recent upraising of ‘Hindutva ‘ethnocentric politics made a challenge to protect such constitutional ideology.

Ground politics of BJP-RSS-BD can be renamed as ‘glorification of community based past.’ Such theory obviously needs an enemy to represent their theory. But it does not only went against the Muslims but also used to form a hierarchical Hindu society where dalits, tribal lower caste will face the same marginalized treatment. Such hierarchical society will make the marginalized more exploited and upper caste elite will get the supreme position in society. This kind of hierarchical aspect used to exploit the masses. The configuration of religious hierarchy used to form an idea that, our community is pro-justice and others are aggressive. They used to attack us and exploit us from the historical period. Political scientist Aloysius said, “When it is the topic of the Hindus and concern about Hindutva, then how did the Muslims come in the trajectory? Why should he hatred is going on against them” Actually such monolithic communalism and right-wings politics cannot stand without the narration of an opposition. Any kind of state as the previous mentions, should have three orders about its religious formation or secular constitution. The connection/disconnection is explained in the table below-

Orders	Theocratic state	State with established religion	Mainstream secular state
1. End or goal of the first state order	C	C	D
2. Officials and personnel- second order	C	D	D
3, Law and policy- third order	C	C	D

C= CONNECTION
D= DISCONNECTION

So the entire trajectory is trying to explain that religious prospect could not bring in secular state. In their political expansion they want to show that they are very secular and even in the inner trajectory all people of a community is same to them. A Mahar Hindu and a Bhumihaar Hindu ; a Dalit Hindu and a Maharashtrian Brahmin Hindu can not be same. The caste and class exploitation of innate community is not describes there. So it will easily establish the hierarchical regime to accumulate the larger share of wealth in a society .

Socialist regime and their failure: Reasons and reflection: History told us that most of the global south countries have embraced socialism after their independence. But why did the regime failed? Somehow from the last period of 20th century, fall of USSR happened on 1990, the upraising of right wings functionaries occurred. Even some of them are totally captured by religious fundamentalist government. Somewhere such fundamentalism is going through the background of any so-called political party. Dr. Samuel. P. Hartington mentioned this problem in his book as ‘Clash of civilizations’. The last phase of cold war (1980-88) was somehow connected with it. The Soviet-Afghan conflict or the civil wars in Africa showed the relevance of that perspective to us. It cannot be denied that a long time after the end of their colonial period, those countries of global south have developed their infrastructure and technological improvement occurred. GDP of those countries increased, but GDP and GDP per capita is not the same dialect. It does not mean that those countries have solved all of their socio-economic problems. Instead of that, relative poverty, huge unemployment raised there. So what is turning the face of human oriented socialist politics to religion -based fundamentalism? One reason of that could be the unpopularity of communist regime in global South. The case of Cambodia and death of almost 1,60,000 people created a bad impact in the mindset. Transition of Communist Party of China from their previous ideology to a capitalist and business -expansionist attitude made people frustrated about this ideology. Also south Asia used to have the lack of labor power now. Marxist analysis about industrial economy has now turned into speculation based financialized economy. So the trade unions or organizing platform for the workers became easily disappeared. It is not a problem about fall of socialist regime, but for the upraising of right wings fundamentalist also. People’s mindset was carefully captured by them. Economic frustration and loneliness of people just fueled it up. Otto Strasser, a 1930 period full-time Marxist-Leninist revolutionary of Germany once said, “You Marxists always point to the theories of Marx. Marx thought that theory is confirmed only in practice. But you always come up with explanation of the defeat of workers’ international. Your Marxism has failed. The defeat in 1914 you explain with the ‘defection of social democrats’, that of 1918 with their politics of betrayal and now you have new ‘explanation’ for the fact that in the present world crisis the masses turn to the right instead of the left. But your explanation do not alter the fact of these defeats! Where, in the past eighty years, has there been any confirmation of the social revolution by practical action? Your basic error is that you deny on ridicule the mind which moves everything, instead of comprehending it.”

This metaphysical assumption about mind sometimes made the lack of support for the socialist regimes. People’s mindset and their frustration in that time was tactfully used by the fundamentalist. Some other reasons are also responsible for its fall but the former discussion can’t be denied.

Conclusion: Upraising of right-wings politics and religious fundamentalism replaced the socialist regime in this neo-colonial world. The development of technology, GDP growth and marvelous show of weapons can not define the deep-rooted problems in society. Political goals and attitudes are deeply connected with our social sphere, so proper observation can also determine its outlook. For the so-called globalization, the global south itself faced so many discontents and setbacks. Now their political context is shifting from socio-economic trajectory to religio-cultural form. Which is not a good sign at all for the marginalized citizens and minorities of those countries. Contemporary political scientists should be careful about this growing turbulence of global south.

THE RISE OF “6.0” POLITICS: BRANDING GOVERNANCE IN TAMIL NADU

Ankita Sarkar; UG III: What happens to democracy when the political leaders are no longer simply elected but are continuously ‘upgraded’ in public imagination? In Tamil Nadu, where welfare politics and strong leadership narratives have long shaped electoral outcomes, this question is becoming more visible.

In the electoral context of Tamil Nadu, especially within Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the political discourse revolves around the branding of governance. Since returning to power in 2021, DMK's Chief Minister, M.K. Stalin, has focused on welfare schemes to achieve the ‘Dravidian Model’ and has launched various welfare schemes like ‘Kalaigñar Magalir Urimai Thogai’ (Kalaigñar's Women's Right Grant) and Pudhumai Penn (Higher Education Assurance Scheme). DMK's new manifesto promises additional welfare schemes such as a one-time coupon of ₹8,000 for women to purchase electronic appliances. Along with these welfare schemes, Tamil Nadu had a history of leader-centric and personality-driven political communications. From the Dravidian movement to the current phase under M.K.Stalin, political identities of Tamils have often been shaped around prominent leaders and their public image. In the age of expanding digital platforms and algorithms, and to attract the new generation voters, DMK, along with other political parties, cannot solely rely on the welfare scheme, so the leaders have started to project a charismatic public image. The party's IT wing, social media team and online supporters’ network have started to make a digital BLOGS narrative of ‘6.0’, which represents the party's bid for a sixth term of DMK in power since 1967. It is noteworthy that the narrative indicates a metaphor borrowed from technology culture, suggesting the version improvement. Political messaging also extends into the cultural forms. The campaigning slogans and songs incorporate Tamil culture. In the context of the recent delimitation bill, M.K. Stalin raised concern and publicly burned a copy of the bill, hoisting a black flag. He declares the bill a ‘black law’. This video clip spread through social media accompanied by the DMK's political song ‘Stalin Thodarattum, Tamil Nadu Vellattum’ (Let Stalin Continue, Let Tamil Nadu Win). So the raised issue of federal balance and representation against the delimitation bill is strategically transformed into a social media breakthrough by the party's IT wing. As the polling day approaches, the success of the narrative of ‘6.0’ will depend on the electorate – whether they find it a genuine upgrade of governance or a sleek new skin on the older policies.

THE BLOOD- DRENCHED SIDE OF VIKSIT BHARAT: A SAGA OF VIOLENCE EXPERIENCED BY THE ADIVASIS OF SIJIMALI

Ishita Das; UG III: “I assure the tribal community that their land, forest and water will be preserved by this government”. Standing on the dais Mohan Charan Majhi, the adivasi Chief minister of Odisha addressed these lines to those who had gathered to celebrate the Adivasi Mela. The people who listened to such promises sitting afar in air-conditioned rooms felt that “Viksit Bharat” would ensure the welfare of every section of the society. However, the Kondh adivasis knew that such promises are made to be broken. The nature of this assurance would become clear if we honestly look into the fifty-year mining lease provided by the Odisha government to Vedanta Limited. They were extracting bauxite from the Sijimali (locally called Tijmali) hills. The adivasis of Banteji, Talaampadar, Kantamal (locally called Kutamal) rose in resistance against such operation.

On April 03, 2026, it was announced that an approach road would be constructed to access the bauxite mines. The signatures of the adivasis have already been forged in documents stating that they have consented to the construction.

In the opening days of April, the Sub-Collector of Rayagada ordered the adivasis to vacate their village in Kutamal. An order was issued prohibiting the gathering of more than 4 persons within 100-metres radius of the same.The adivasis stepped up their vehement opposition. They built barricades using mahua branches and did not allow the officials and police to construct the approach road. They shared among themselves the responsibility of guarding the Tijmali hills.

As per the norm of this ‘Viksit Bharat’ resistance against injustice is always dealt with an iron hand and this case was not an exception. At about 03:00 a.m. on April 07, 2026, the police force entered the Kutamal village and unleashed severe brutalities on the adivasis. The latter were dragged out from their dwellings, physically assaulted (including one pregnant woman). The uniformed hooligans were accompanied by some other ununiformed goons. Tear gas was released which seriously affected the children alongside the adults.

The government remains busy boasting of the pious canvas of “Viksit Bharat”. However, in reality, the pillars of this ‘Vikas’ stands on the foundation drenched in the blood of adivasis. They are still continuing their struggle to liberate mother nature from the shackles of greed.

This indomitable spirit gets reflected in the following lines:
“They tried to bury us, they didn’t know we are the seeds.”
– Jacinta

IS HINDUTVA PROFICIENT IN SPEAKING BENGALI? THE CULTURAL PARADOXES OF *BJP*’s ASCENDANCY IN BENGAL

Arpam Ghosh; UG III: The future of BJP rule in Bengal will hinge on its ability to make Hindutva a true part of the local idiom, not merely a borrowed vocabulary of Politics. If it succeeds, it could dramatically alter the state's political environment. But if it fails, its political triumph may turn out to have been easier than its cultural one. The tale of the BJP's ascent in Bengal is thus more than a tale of politics. It is a tale of the ongoing contestation of national ideology and regional identity, religion and culture, and finally, the question of ruling over a land before knowing it. The rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to power in West Bengal is one of the biggest changes in the political landscape of the state in its contemporary history. For a long time, the state seemed immune to the trends of Hindu nationalism that swept large parts of north and west India. The state took pride in having a unique political tradition built on the ideals of the Bengal Renaissance, leftist politics, linguistic nationalism, and cultural pluralism in its own right. However, the BJP’s success means that all previous ideas regarding the state's politics need to be revised. The fundamental issue, however, goes well beyond numbers: is Hindutva really proficient in speaking Bengali? The BJP’s rise in Bengal presents a cultural contradiction. “Hindutva” though being a Bengali term, the ideology of it, had largely emerged from the Hindi heartland. And that relies on symbols, images, ideologies, slogans and politics of northern and western India. Bengal, in contrast, celebrates personalities like Rabindranath Tagore, Kazi Nazrul Islam, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, Raja Rammohan Roy, Swami Vivekananda, Subhas Chandra Bose, etc. icons who represented an idea of nation and religion that was not exclusionist in nature but more inclusive, embracing of humanism and equal vision.To rule over Bengal, therefore, is not just to secure its votes. It is to make peace with a civilizational tradition that communicates through literature, language, music, and history. For the BJP, the task will be to reconcile its pan Indian project of Hindu nationalism with a regional culture that has historically been one of dissidence and linguistic pride.



COCKROACH JANATA PARTY: TINY “CREATURES” THAT CRAWLED INTO POLITICS

Pracheta Biswas; UG II: “In a gentle way, you can shake the world.”
—Mahatma Gandhi

On May 15, 2026, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant, presiding over a Supreme Court bench, described unemployed young Indians as ‘like cockroaches’ who, failing to find jobs, turn to social media, journalism, and RTI activism to ‘attack the system.’ He called such individuals ‘parasites of society.’ Interestingly, after facing backlash, the chief justice issued a clarification on Saturday (May 16) saying that a section of media misquoted him and called Indian youth “the pillars of a developed India”. It is well documented that the terms such as cockroaches, parasites, vermin and termite have three distinct effects:

- It frames the targeted group as exploitative and extractive persons, who attack a healthy body, extract illegitimately from it and weaken and infect the host body (nation/society).
- It implies the existence of a healthy ‘host’ that must be protected at all costs by removing the parasite.
- It positions the elimination of parasites as a therapy or a treatment. The violence against parasites is often considered a cure rather than a crime. Exterminating parasites carries no guilt.

India Hate Lab’s 2025 annual report documented 141 political speeches in a single year in which minorities were described as ‘termites,’ ‘parasites,’ ‘insects,’ ‘pigs,’ and ‘bloodthirsty zombies.’ Thus, when the ultimate enforcer of constitutionality endorses hate speeches regarding the youth, backbone of any country, many young people responded through satire and sarcasm—the only way to express emotions in an already repressive situation where students are being labelled as ‘anti-nationals’ for criticizing the government. The Cockroach Janata Party movement taps into growing frustration over unemployment, living costs and inflation gaining over 22 million online followers on Instagram.

The group claims to be "the voice of the lazy and unemployed". Its tongue-in-cheek membership criteria include being chronically online and having "the ability to rant professionally". It has used AI-generated images to promote its cause online and has inspired the hashtag #MainBhiCockroach ("I too am a cockroach"). Young volunteers have also turned up dressed as cockroaches at clean-up drives and protests in recent days. It is no secret that the government is actively trying to crush the resistance because the group's founder Abhijeet Dipke said Indian officials had "taken down our iconic website" and asked why they were "so scared of cockroaches". He wrote on X that the group, which is not an official political party, was already working on a new "home" and added: "Cockroaches never die." Its official X page - with more than 200,000 followers - is also inaccessible in the country. Those trying to open it are shown a message that it has been withheld "in response to a legal demand". The key question is whether the movement will remain a short-lived internet phenomenon or evolve into a sustained form of political resistance. At present, it lacks a clear organizational structure and appears to rely more on emotional mobilization than on a coherent ideological programme. But, digital protest is the new political language – younger generations increasingly communicate politically through memes, satire and viral content. Digital activism is becoming the first step towards deeper involvement. Already, the CJP is using Iran’s Mosaic doctrine by setting up local accounts trying to resist actively against the Censorship Raj. Thus, Cockroach Janata Party may be temporary as a trend, but significant as a reflection of democratic nature in youth.

THE SAFFRON SHIFTING OF BENGAL: NEO-FASCISM, CLASS REALIGNMENT, AND THE RECENT AFTERMATH

Bhargab Putatunda; UG II: The results of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly election marked a watershed moment in contemporary Indian politics. For the first time in nearly half a century, the political force governing the central apparatus in New Delhi secured a definitive mandate in West Bengal, capturing a landslide victory. The Right-Wing political formation unseated the incumbent Trinamool Congress [TMC], fundamentally reorganizing a territory long considered a resilient bastion of the regional exceptionalism and secular, vernacular politics. To understand this historic shift, one must look beyond superficial explanations of sudden cultural mutation or religious polarization. Instead, the transition demands an analytical framework capable of parsing the complex economic anxieties, systematic class fractures, and structural transitions defining global neofascism in the 21st century.

Neo-Fascism in this context operates as a distinctive mutation of the late-stage capitalism. It can be defined as an aggressive synthesis of the Right wing populism, corporate backed neoliberalism, intensive state centralization, and the systematic cultivation of majoritarian identity politics designed to displace structural class grievances. In West Bengal, this ideological apparatus succeeded by exploiting a profound crisis of material security. By presenting a vision of streamlined corporate development alongside the targeted mobilization of marginalized identities, the right-wing formation dismantled the decentralised, patron-client regional apparatus of the TMC. This paper argues that the ascendance of this new regime is rooted in a fundamental realignment of class structures, systematically reconfiguring the material experiences of the working class and deepening the ideological divisions within the middle class.

Defining the "Class Character" of Neo-Fascism in Bengal

A central paradox of contemporary neo-fascist movements is their capacity to secure massive subaltern and proletarian support while executing an economic agenda explicitly tailored to the interests of concentrated corporate capital. The class character of this movement in West Bengal rests precisely upon this dualism: a highly sophisticated corporate-state nexus masked by a populist, anti-elite aesthetic. Throughout its rise, the right-wing formation relied heavily on structural and financial backing from macro-monopoly capital, promising an unhindered environment for corporate extraction, infrastructural deregulation, and the weakening of labor protections under the banner of a unified development model. This corporatestate nexus provides the financial and structural backing necessary to sustain the movement’s expansive reach. To ground this big-capital agenda in a highly politicized state like Bengal, the movement engineered what can be termed "Subaltern Hindutva." Rather than operating as a purely upper-caste, urban-bourgeois project, the rightwing apparatus systematically embedded itself within historically marginalized, non-elite castes and communities across the peripheral geographies of the state. Regions in North Bengal and the western Jangalmahal belt, alongside specific displaced and Dalit communities such as the Matuas and Rajbanshis, became the bedrock of this consolidation. By mobilizing these peripheral communities, the movement successfully displaced vertical class focus—the traditional conflict between workers and capitalists—with a horizontal identity-based narrative. By weaponizing real, material grievances regarding underdevelopment and localized exclusion under the TMC’s regime, the right-wing formation reframed these class-based deprivations through a vocabulary of identitybased neglect. It brilliantly co-opted the rhetoric of antielitism, targeting the localized, petty corruption of TMC's regional operatives—commonly critiqued as the "syndicate raj"—while obscuring its own deep alignments with macro-level corporate deregulation. Consequently, the class character of this neofascist transition is profoundly predatory: it captures power through the democratic agency of the dispossessed, only to deploy that power to serve concentrated capitalist accumulation.

Effects on the Working Class: The Hawker Evictions and Economic Disenfranchisement

The immediate material consequences of this political shift have fallen most heavily upon the state's sprawling, highly informalized working class. Over the preceding decades, the transition from formal manufacturing and Lefttled trade unionism toward a service-oriented, hyper-fragmented informal economy had already left West Bengal’s proletariat highly vulnerable. Under the TMC, this informal workforce was integrated into localized networks of municipal patronage. Following the regime change, these fragile mechanisms of informal survival were abruptly dismantled by an aggressive assertion of state authority through bulldozer actions and the destruction of informal stalls. This shift is starkly illustrated by the sweeping anti-encroachment, demolition, and hawker eviction drives launched across key urban and semi-urban centers, including Baruipur, Howrah, and major commercial hubs within Kolkata.

Operating under the rubric of enforcing "civic order" and clearing "illegal encroachments," municipal authorities deployed bulldozers to raze thousands of makeshift stalls and informal marketplaces. Key transit arteries surrounding major rail terminals like Sealdah and Howrah stations were transformed into sites of state coercion. In suburban hubs like Baruipur, the sudden use of administrative force directly targeted a vital self-sustaining ecosystem of subsistence earners, pushing thousands of families toward immediate destitution. These eviction drives represent a classic neofascist strategy of capital accumulation through spatial displacement. By violently clearing informal vendors, the state seeks to sanitize urban spaces to accommodate corporate retail interests and real estate speculation. Crucially, this material dispossession is accompanied by intensive ideological manipulation. To prevent the emergence of unified working-class resistance, the right-wing apparatus works to fracture the proletariat along horizontal lines. Material anger over lost livelihoods is systematically redirected away from state policies toward communal scapegoating, where economic precarity is blamed on the presence of undocumented immigrants or minority communities, effectively dissolving cross-communal labor solidarity.

Fractures in the Middle Class: Elitist Aesthetics versus Peripheral Aspirations

While the working class bears the direct material costs of these policies, the West Bengal middle class has experienced profound internal ideological fracturing. Historically, the middle class in Bengal, particularly the urban intelligentsia (Bhadralok), anchored state politics in a language of secularism and social democracy. The rise of a right-wing regime has shattered this consensus, exposing deep splits between the urban elite and the mofussil neo-middle class. The urban Bhadralok experience acute cultural anxiety over the erosion of secular traditions, yet their resistance is compromised by an elitist focus on aesthetics, leading many to tacitly support the "clean-up" of sidewalks at the expense of the poor.

Conversely, the growing "neo-middle class" in suburban and semi-rural towns has embraced the political transition. Driven by intense aspirations for material mobility and frustrated by decades of industrial stagnation, this demographic rejected traditional cultural exceptionalism. For these suburban youth, the promise of national integration and the "Double-Engine Growth" model holds far more appeal than abstract defenses of regional heritage. They view the chaos of the informal economy not as a social safety net, but as an obstacle to modernization. This disdain for municipal "chaos" aligns them with the right-wing's promise of a disciplined, corporate-friendly urban order.

The Left-Led Resistance and the contested Aftermath

The political aftermath of this transition has fundamentally reordered the institutional landscape of West Bengal. As the traditional ruling regional administrative party crackdowns, faltered the under task of institutional resistance has fallen to Left-led trade unions. Flashpoints of this resistance have emerged directly from the sites of state-enforced displacement. In Baruipur and Kolkata, Left-affiliated unions like the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) spearheaded mass mobilizations and street confrontations with demolition squads. These actions attempted to reassert the constitutional right to livelihood under Article 19(1)(g) and move the discourse back toward vertical class struggle. However, the efficacy of this resistance faces immense structural challenges. The new regime has moved swiftly to consolidate its authority across state institutions, restructuring university administrations and local police forces along ideological lines. The political terrain is rapidly solidifying into a highly polarized environment where communal fragmentation is used to neutralize labor solidarity. The ongoing battles led by trade unions on the streets represent a fundamental struggle over the democratic character of public space and economic rights in a post-2026 political landscape.

Conclusion

The political transition in West Bengal offers a powerful case study in how contemporary neofascism adapts to capture complex, historically progressive regions. The right-wing victory was not achieved by altering its core commitment to macrocorporate accumulation, but by adroitly capitalizing on the fragmented identities and economic anxieties of both the subaltern working class and the aspirational neo-middle class. The aggressive hawker demolition drives implemented under the banner of urban modernization reveal the structural priorities of this new regime: prioritizing corporate real estate and capital accumulation over informal labor survival. Whether Left-led resistance can successfully translate immediate material anger into a sustained, cross-communal class solidarity remains the definitive question for the future of the region.

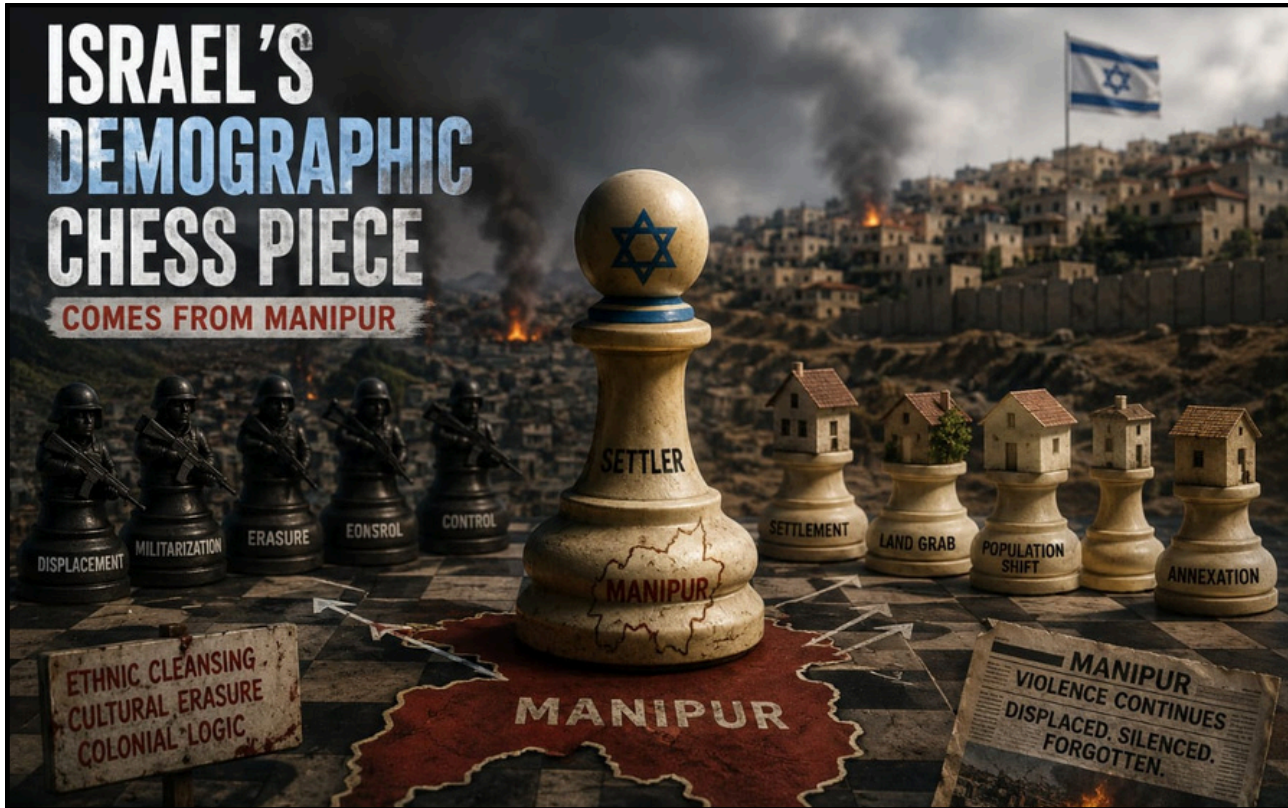


ISRAEL'S DEMOGRAPHIC CHESS PIECE COMES FROM MANIPUR

Ritoja; UG II: White, snow capped mountains in the distance, towering pine trees, scattered around the hilly roads. The soft breeze plays around, sweeping away dead leaves along the swirly stone path. Amongst all these, stands a petite synagogue, right in the cradle of the hills of Churachandpur, located in Manipur. One might ask; “Aren’t Buddhism and Christianity the two core religions in the North East?”. Of course they are. Then how did a community emerge in North East India who identify themselves as descendants of an ancient Israeli tribe?

The B’nei Menashe claim to be the descendants of the biblical tribe of Manasseh, considered one of the lost tribes of Israel. They stem from a Tibetoburmese ethnicity, known as the Mizos in Mizoram and Kukis in Manipur. According to the claims and beliefs of the B’nei Menashe, they trace their journey from northern Israel to Assyria, through Afghanistan, the Himalayas and Mongolia, eventually arriving in Manipur and Mizoram, around 500-600 years after exile. They possessed no holy texts or records, but oral traditions were passed down across generations, remembering their ancestors’ eastward journey after their exile from the Kingdom of Israel. Before colonization of the British, the Kuki-Mizos dwelled in traditional tribal societies and had their own distinct, ancestral religion, which mentioned a mysterious progenitor called Manasia or Manmasi. Through colonization, the community was Christianized. As they came to know the Bible, many were struck by parallels between its stories and commandments and elements of their old preChristian religion. This belief began to spread that Manasiya or Manmasi was the biblical Manasseh, the son of Joseph and that the Kuki-Mizos were descendants from the tribe named after him; one of the ten tribes that vanished after the Assyrian Empire conquered the kingdom of Israel in 722 BCE and exiled much of its population. In 1951, Challianthanga (also known as Pu Chala), the Pentecostal Deacon from Bullawan village in Mizoram had a vision claiming that the Mizos were the descendants of the Israelites. During the same timeline, T. Daniel Lhungdim; a poet, educator and headmaster, based in Churachandpur, began his in depth research on this connection, authoring “Israel Ihiuve” (We Are Israel) in 1974. His work grabbed the attention of Rabbi Eliyahu Avichail, founder of the Israeli organization Amishav, who helped the B’nei Menashe document their historical and cultural connections to Judaism in the 1980s. Their claim was contested and debated until 2005 when Israel's then Sephardi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Amar recognised this population as ‘Zera Yisrael’ (Seed of Israel). Under a plan approved in late 2025, approximately 1,200 community members immigrated to Israel in 2026, with a second stage set to bring an additional 4,600 by 2030. They are mandated to undergo formal orthodox conversion called Giurin Hebrew upon arriving in Israel to be fully recognised as Jews under the Law of Return.

The B’nei Menashe are eager to return back to their ancestral land but it's not only theological. In the recent Indian political scenario, the ethnic violence between the Kuki-Zo and Meitei communities in Manipur has reshaped daily life since 2023. Villages burned, thousands displaced and access to proper healthcare, food supplies, necessities and education repeatedly disrupted, leading the population into the instability. Israel on the other hand, due to its demographic position and small population, welcomed the “Lost Tribe”, not in 2005 but in 2026 due to their own incentives. The timing of the ongoing war with Gaza alongside the instability of the Mesnashe tribe created a rare alignment. The war has heightened the anxiety about Jewish population, thus with the settlement of the religious ‘quality immigrants’ in the Galilee region, where Palestinian citizens form a demographic majority, the Israel government will regain its majority in the area. The spiritual and cold demographic arithmetic ultimately proves the recent immigration decisions while the B’nei Menashe tribe are happy to return after holding on to their identity for hundreds of years, keeping their ancient flame alive across millennia and continents.



বাংলার ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ ভাবমূর্তি বনাম তৃণমূল স্তরের ধর্মীয় মেরুকরণের বাস্তব চিত্র

অনিন্দ্য পাল; দ্বিতীয় বর্ষ: “আমাদের বাঙালিয়ানা, আমাদের সভ্যতা শত-সহস্র বছর ধরে সহাবস্থানের ঐতিহ্য ধারণ ও বহন করে আসছে।” – এইসব বাক্যালাপের মধ্য দিয়েই বাঙালী ভদ্রসাধারণের কাছে ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা হয়ে উঠেছে জীবন্ত সাংস্কৃতিক শংসাপত্র। বাঙালির চিরকালের এক অদ্ভুত বিশ্বাস যে কোন বাক্যের শেষে “রবীন্দ্রনাথ বলেছেন” যোগ করলে তার যুক্তিগত শক্তি দ্বিগুণ হয়ে যায়। বাঙালি মধ্যবিত্তের ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার সবচেয়ে বড় প্রমাণ হোল তার বুকশেলফ। বাস্তব জীবনে স্বধর্মের কিংবা অন্যধর্মের প্রতিবেশীর নাম না জানেলও, ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতার বাকযুদ্ধে উপনিষদে বলা হয়েছে...”, "লালন অনেক আগেই বলে গেছেন...", "বিবেকানন্দ তা স্পষ্টতই বলেছিলেন..."- এই বিশেষকিছু বুলি আওড়ে যায়। বাঙালির ধর্মনিরপেক্ষতা সম্পূর্ণরূপেই তাত্ত্বিক ও আলোচনাপ্রবণ। তবে বাস্তব সমাজে তৃণমূল স্তর থেকে ধর্মীয় ভীতিপ্রদর্শন এবং সাম্প্রদায়িকতার বিষ উগড়ে দেওয়ার যে উদগ্র বাসনা রাজনৈতিক নেতানেত্রী এবং কিছু মৌলবাদীদের মধ্যে পরিলক্ষিত হচ্ছে, তা প্রতিহত করার শক্তি বা ইচ্ছে তথাকথিত শিক্ষিত উচ্চবিত্ত বাঙালী ভদ্রসমাজের প্রতিবাদের পদ্ধতিতে নিহিত নেই।

দৈনন্দিন জীবনযাপনে একটু সচেতন হলেই তৃণমূল স্তরের ধর্মীয় মেরুকরণের চিত্র সুস্পষ্ট হয়ে যাবে। গতবছর, শিয়ালদহ স্টেশন থেকে ট্রেনে চেপে আসার সময় একজন ২৭ বছর বয়সী মুসলিম স্টুডেন্টকে (Aliah University এর student) ১০,১২ জন হিন্দুত্ববাদী লোক ঘেরাও করে ও তাকে হেনস্থা করে “বাংলাদেশী” তকমা দেয়। বিগত বছরগুলিতে এইরকম প্রচুর খবর পাওয়া গেছে যেখানে মুসলিম লোকজনের সমাগমে হিন্দুত্ববাদী কর্তৃক উসকানিমূলক ভঙ্গি, “জয় শ্রীরাম” শ্লোগান, প্রভৃতি করা হয়েছে। এছাড়াও, অনিয়ন্ত্রিতভাবে ধর্মীয় আস্থায় আঘাত করার জন্যে মুসলিমদের প্রতি ছুটে এসেছে অশ্রাব্য, অসৌজন্য কিছু শব্দের বাহার। এবার সমস্যাটা হচ্ছে সারাদেশ যখন এইরূপ ঘটনা গুলি নিরন্তর ঘটে যেতে দেখছে, সেই সময় বাংলায় ঘটে চলা সাম্প্রদায়িক সম্প্রীতি লঙ্ঘনের প্রতিবাদে তথাকথিত বুদ্ধিজীবীমহল এবং ভদ্রসমাজের ভূমিকা কী? সেই সাথে আরেকটি প্রশ্ন খুবই গুরুত্বপূর্ণ যে সাধারণ মানুষ কি আদৌ ধর্মীয় সহাবস্থানকে প্রগতিশীল দৃষ্টিতে দেখে? শিক্ষাপ্রতিষ্ঠানে, কর্মস্থলে, ট্রেনে বাসে, বন্ধুদের আলোচনায় প্রায়শই মুসলিমদের নামাজ, রোজা, দাড়ি নিয়ে ঠাট্টা করে, হাসিতামাশার বা বিদ্রূপ করার দৃশ্য আমাদের কাছে খুবই পরিচিত, আবার অনুরূপভাবে হিন্দুদের রীতিনীতি, পৌরাণিক কাহিনী নিয়ে উপহাসের ছবিও দৃশ্যমান।

এক্ষেত্রে বাঙালি ভদ্রসমাজ বৈজ্ঞানিক যুক্তিবাদীতা এবং প্রগতিশীল চিন্তাভাবনাকে প্রমাণ করার জন্যে জনসচেতনতা বৃদ্ধির বদলে কথায় কথায় মানুষকে ছোট করা, বিদ্রূপ করতেই বেশি আনন্দ পায়। ধর্মীয় গৌড়ামি, ব্রাহ্মণ্যবাদী দৃষ্টিভঙ্গি, মৌলবাদী আচরণ ঠিক এইসমস্ত কারণেই মাথাচাড়া দেয়, এবং নিজ নিজ ধর্মের শ্রেষ্ঠতা প্রমাণে এগিয়ে আসতে সচেষ্ট হয়। ফলে সাধারণ মানুষ একে অপরের ধর্ম ও সংস্কৃতি সম্পর্কে সঠিক জ্ঞান অর্জন করার বদলে একে অপরকে তুচ্ছতাচ্ছল্য করে এবং এভাবে সর্বোপরি যে বিষয়টির হানি ঘটে, তা হল “মানবতা”। কারণ, যে তথাকথিত ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ বাঙ্গালিসমাজ নিজের ধর্মের শ্রেষ্ঠত্ব স্থাপন এবং পরধর্মের বিদ্রূপ কিংবা নিল্যায় নিরন্তর নিজেকে নিযুক্ত করে, সেই সমাজে ধর্মের সহাবস্থান আদৌ সম্ভব কিনা, সে নিয়ে প্রশ্ন থেকেই যায়।

স্বাধীনচেতা মানুষ যদি সমাজে স্বাধীনভাবে নিজের ধর্ম পালন করতে না পারে, কিংবা সে যদি কোনো ধর্মাবলম্বী না হয়ে নাস্তিকও হন, তবেও যদি তাকে বিভিন্নভাবে বিদ্রূপ ও ব্যাঙ্গাত্মক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গির শিকার হতে হয়, তবে সেই সমাজ কোনোভাবেই ধর্মনিরপেক্ষ সমাজ নয়। ফলে, রাজনৈতিক বা সামাজিক যেকোনো উগ্রপন্থী দল বা গোষ্ঠী সহজেই বাঙালির মানবতা এবং সামাজিক শৃঙ্খলার হানি ঘটায়।

ANTAGONIZING YOUNG ASPIRATIONS: THE RECURRING CASES OF NEET SCAM

Koyel Bal; UG III: The agency that claims equitable, transparent and efficient management of examinations for selection of candidates at some of the crucial sectors of service in India, appears in the spotlight of one of the biggest controversies flagged in the decade. The National Testing Agency (NTA) entrusted with the responsibility of conducting the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for selection of future medical professionals since 2019, has consistently failed to not only deliver its duties but also in sabotaging the corruptive web that has estranged the aspirations of millions of youths. This poses to us twin problems of social injustice and psychological torment that the youths are made vulnerable to.As reports suggests, the leaked question paper of NEET 2026 has been sold by coaching institutes at as high rates as ten-fifteen lakhs, which not only breaches the ethical integrity of student selection in professional core of the India’s healthcare unit, but also shows deep disregard towards the principle of social justice. Additionally, tremendously arduous quality of question paper, like it was in case of NEET 2025, also pushes aside the students who lacked proper ambience and infrastructure for receiving quality education competing with well-off students passing out from private institutions, far below the margin. It ceremonially strips off the youths belonging to economically and socially marginalized communities to come forward and bag their deserving seats at academic and professional units,which are sold off to undeserving candidates, that pull the strings on ground of having been come from exceptionally opulent backgrounds. It creates a generational condition for perpetual backwardness and further exacerbation of inequalities among these economically underprivileged families which financially collapse beyond recovery, and they fear to further consider investing in education and coaching. Further, the incident of paper cancellation should take into acknowledgement the psychological distress it puts the student into. Applying for a Pan-India based entrance test requires

a student to go through immense mental drilling to handle peer captivations and familial expectations along with their own readiness to appear for an exceedingly competitive examination, like NEET. The condition worsens when NTA's on ground proctors, at examination centres, purposefully harass the students, ushering them into a tumultuous state of mind, further degrading the quality of their examination endeavour. Students often commit self-extermination in the urge to self-defiance from scornful comments from peer groups, family as well as the community of belonging at large. Even if not self-harm, such recurring cases of such scams exposes the youths to severe anxiety and hopelessness and retards their self-motivation and confidenceto further appear for any competitive examinations.

Adani Invasion: Great Nicobar Island Gamble

Udatta Gupta; UG II: The term "nationalism" is often used as a weapon to silence those who are willing to speak their minds and question what is being done to our country in its name. We see this when thousands of hectares of natural forests are handed over to private corporate entities, or when critical infrastructure—including India's ports, airports, power grids, and energy networks—is concentrated in the hands of a single corporate group. In an economy of more than 1.5 billion people, such a concentration of economic power moves away from the principles of competitive capitalism. Instead, it creates a state-sanctioned corporate monopoly.

Today, this nexus between sovereign power and corporate capital has reached the gates of India's most remote, its most ecologically sensitive frontier outpost of Great Nicobar Island in the name of the 81,000 crore Great Nicobar Island Development Project, a massive government infrastructure project, which environmentalists,anthropologists, and lawyers argue may permanently destroy a prehistoric ecosystem and jeopardize the lives and livelihood of tribal communities.The focus here, is on the southernmost tip of India, Great Nicobar Island, less than 40 nautical miles from the Strait of Malacca – the single busiest maritime point on the earth – is being transformed from a biosphere to a commercial and military hub through a NITI Aayog and ANIIDCO-implemented 30-year government master plan which includes the establishment of a 14.2 million TEU mega port at Galathea Bay to rival Singapore and Colombo; a dual-use military and civilian airport capable of handling 4,000 passengers during peak hours; a 450 MVA power complex; and a new city of over 16,610 hectares estimated to house 336,000 residents by 2055, despite the current population being under 9,000. Great Nicobar Island is not just an empty rock, not just a virgin plot of land; it is one of the earth's most biodiversity-rich hot spots in an old tropical rainforest, 85 percent of which remains unspoiled. 130.75 square kilometers of these forests will be cleared for the new town, port, and airstrip, and the government plans to clear at most 7.11 lakh trees out of 18.65 lakh in the project area in phases, and trees are not counted in simple arithmetic, you can't offset the loss of endemic island biodiversity by planting a few trees in as emi-desert ecosystem 2,000 kilometers away; in fact, the impact is squarely on several critically endangered, endemic species like the Giant Leatherback Turtle, Galathea Bay – the site for the proposed International Container Transhipment Terminal is the single most important nesting ground in India of the Giant Leatherback sea turtle (Dermochelys coriacea) - the world's largest living reptile - that travels thousands of miles across the ocean to lay its eggs on these particular undisturbed sandy beaches and building an enormous deep water port with a breakwater construction requires extensive dredging of the sea bed and causes catastrophic levels of light and noise pollution,and would drive these creatures permanently away from their nesting ground. The island is also home to the endangered Nicobar Megapode,endemic only to these islands; unlike all other birds, it does not incubate its eggs; instead, it builds huge incubation mounds of soil and decomposing organic material along the coastal forests which would be decimated in the coastal development of the new town. Hundreds of species of exotic fish and marine life in the waters surrounding the island thrive in coral reefs, port construction involves massive dredging of the sea bed and coastal reclamation, causing siltation of the water and turning vibrant marine ecosystems into underwater deserts. The impact of this colossal project is no less severe.

Great Nicobar Island is home to two indigenous tribes who have lived on the island for thousands of years; about 1094 individuals, coastal dwellers dependent on fishing and coconut plantations; and a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG) of about 237 individuals – the nomadic hunter gatherers in the interior rainforests who have remained isolated from outside intrusion: the Shompen tribes.The government claims to be committed to tribal welfare, assuring no physical displacement of Nicobarese or Shompen and the exclusion of inhabited tribal areas (New Chingen and Rajiv Nagar)from the project scope, and yet 73.07 square kilometers of legally designated tribal reserve forest lands would be denotified.to.provide land for the infrastructure while the state claims to have re-notified 76.98 square kilometers of land elsewhere thus maintaining a net increase of 3.912 square kilometers in tribal lands; anthropological evidence suggests the deep and structural damage would be severe; the Shompen, whose entire existence

depends on the contiguous rainforest and undisturbed landscape, would be forced into contact with disease, exploitation and cultural extinction. Legal experts further argue that the project bypasses the Forest Rights Act 2006 by pushing the project forward and infringing on the Shompen tribes' right to free, prior, and informed consent over changes that affect their lands. There's another danger with the building of this colossal concrete hub on Great Nicobar; it sits atop a highly volatile and seismic zone, during the deadly 2004 earthquake and tsunami; Great Nicobar suffered tremendous damage from the tectonic shift, the island subsided as much as meters in some parts of the island; and the Indira Point lighthouse, which was formerly on land, now stood surrounded by water and the protective mangroves of Galathea Bay were destroyed or submerged. Geologists warn of continued tectonic pressure given the cluster of earthquakes around the Nicobar archipelago, and an investment of billions of dollars into the construction of large and rigidly designed infrastructure like a port and a city on a seismically active subduction zone could lead to devastation and industrial catastrophe in the event of another earthquake or tsunami. Tropical rainforests are intricate and interconnected systems, where the felling of almost a million trees would create widespread disruption of the local micro-climate and rainfall, and also lead to accelerated soil erosion on this island; as per as per environmental regulations, a "compensatory afforestation" plan has been approved by the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change, but with no land on the Great Nicobar Island, it is to be undertaken on the degraded lands of the Aravalli Hills in Haryana and parts of Madhya Pradesh, meaning a monoculture of seedlings in an arid climate in Haryana will do absolutely nothing to recreate this highly intricate, multi-layered tropical rainforest ecosystem in the Indian Ocean; there is absolutely no substitute for the destruction of endemic island biodiversity than with trees, especially in a semi desert climate thousands of kilometers away. You can't compensate for the loss of animals that only inhabit Great Nicobar island with trees. The Giant Leatherback Turtle is found to prefer Great Nicobar and Galathea Bay is of special importance to the Giant Leatherback Sea turtle. It is a place where the Giant Leatherback Sea Turtles are most important in India to lay their eggs. The Giant Leatherback Sea turtle is a reptile and travels huge distances on earth to reach the Great Nicobar islands. It favors Great Nicobar islands to lay its eggs because they are undisturbed and it can lay eggs on sand. Defense of the Great Nicobar project is solely based on "strategic necessity" , arguing that India needs to exhibit its naval strength to counter foreign maritime encroachment in the Indo-Pacific, keep a vigil over the Strait of Malacca, and provide alternatives for shipping, to garner its share of global trade earnings. However, we have to consider what a nation stands for. Is a nation a flag, military installations and corporate statements? Or, is it the land, the people, the natural flora and fauna and heritage that have existed since time immemorial? Those who believe in true patriotism understand that true national security is not by destroying the very foundation of our ecology. Destroying an ecosystem that is so unique on our planet for the sake of corporate empires, using geopolitics as a cover, and displacing tribes and flora and fauna for the benefit of these monopolies is not patriotism, but rather greed. In defense of the country from threats without destroying the country from within. Our true power comes from sustainable governance and the protection of indigenous rights and the ecological system which is the foundation for life on Earth. It is now time for the country and their respective governments to understand that an economy and ecology need to co-exist, and if we do not take a step back and reconsider the Gamble of Great Nicobar we might be losing one of the greatest natural reserves on Earth, a place that once stood tall as a haven and now faces to be a structure of concrete and Corporate selfishness.

GRASSROOTS RESISTANCE AND SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: A CASE STUDY OF MAHAD SATYAGRAHA

Shritama Karmakar; UG III: Grassroots resistance is when regular people come together to challenge systems in their daily lives. It starts from people's real-life experiences not from leaders and aims to change both material conditions and how people think. Social change happens when local struggles start to change how power works, cultural norms and institutions in ways. The Mahad Satyagraha of 1927, led by Dr B.R. Ambedkar, is an example of grassroots resistance changing Indian society. The movement was about Dalits are able to drink water from the Chavdar Tank in Mahad, Maharashtra. It challenged the practice of untouchability by targeting access to water. Around 2,500 Dalits marched to the tank with Ambedkar, who publicly drew water and drank it. This transformed an ordinary act into a powerful statement of equality and human dignity.At Mahad grassroots resistance worked in ways. It asserted civic rights using a previous resolution that said public water sources should be open to the "Depressed Classes". The movement exposed the gap between the law and reality. It challenged the structure of caste by showing that Dalit presence could not "pollute" water, thereby undermining the legitimacy of caste ideology. Furthermore it politicized oppression: Ambedkar framed untouchability as a question of rights, self-respect and collective action.The social transformation triggered by Mahad was slow but deep. The satyagraha inspired Dalit movements. It strengthened Ambedkar's strategy of "Educate, Agitate, Organize." It contributed to the embedding of equality and anti-discrimination principles in India's constitutional framework. In 1937, when the Bombay High Court affirmed the right for Dalits to use the tank, a local struggle had effectively reshaped law and public discourse. Mahad shows how grassroots resistance can lead to social transformation by turning a fight for water into a broader fight for dignity, rights and a new moral order.

VIKSIT BHARAT 2047: LEVERAGING AGENTIC AI FOR SUPPLY CHAIN SOVEREIGNTY AND GLOBAL COMPETITIVENESS

Debadrito Sarkar; UG III: "Success in creating AI would be the biggest event in human history." —Stephen Hawking

India's aspiration to become a developed nation by 2047 under the vision of Viksit Bharat represents one of the most ambitious economic transformation projects of the twenty-first century. According to the vision outlined by policymakers and economic experts, India aims to expand its economy from approximately USD 4 trillion today to nearly USD 30 trillion by 2047, requiring sustained annual growth of 7to8 percent over the next two decades. Achieving this goal will depend not only on economic expansion but also on enhancing productivity, technological innovation, manufacturing capabilities, and supply chain resilience.

In recent years, global supply chains have undergone profound disruptions due to the COVID19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, trade wars, semiconductor shortages, and climate related challenges. These developments have exposed the vulnerabilities of excessive dependence on concentrated production hubs and highlighted the importance of supply chain sovereignty as a critical component of national security and economic competitiveness. For India, which seeks to establish itself as a global manufacturing and export hub, the ability to build intelligent, resilient, and self reliant supply chains has become a strategic necessity rather than a policy choice.

India's AI market is projected to reach approximately USD 17 billion by 2027, supported by one of the world's largest AI talent pools comprising over 420,000 professionals. Simultaneously, the Indian AI in supply-chain market is expected to grow from USD 249.5 million in 2023 to over USD 3.2 billion by 2030, reflecting a remarkable annual growth rate exceeding 44 percent.

Furthermore, industry estimates suggest that AI driven agentic commerce and autonomous decision-making systems could contribute as much as USD 3 trillion to India's economy by 2047.

As global competition increasingly hinges on technological innovation and resilient supply chains, Agentic AI can play a pivotal role in advancing India's strategic autonomy and economic security. Through autonomous decisionmaking, predictive analytics, and intelligent logistics, it can enhance efficiency, strengthen domestic manufacturing, and reduce external dependencies. Aligned with the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, Agentic AI represents more than a technological innovation it is a strategic enabler for building a selfreliant, globally competitive, and economically resilient India in the decades ahead.

Agentic AI and Supply Chain Sovereignty: Supply chain sovereignty has become a vital component of economic security in the twenty-first century. Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, semiconductor shortages, and trade restrictions exposed the risks of excessive dependence on concentrated global supply chains. For India, achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 requires building resilient and self-reliant domestic supply chains, reducing external dependencies, and strengthening economic stability, competitiveness, and national security in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

In this context, Agentic AI offers India a transformative opportunity to strengthen supply chain sovereignty. Unlike conventional AI systems that primarily provide analytical support, Agentic AI systems can autonomously monitor, predict, and respond to disruptions across complex supply chain networks. Through real-time data processing, predictive demand forecasting, intelligent inventory management, and autonomous logistics coordination, these systems can significantly reduce operational inefficiencies and improve resilience.

The economic rationale for adopting Agentic AI is compelling. India's manufacturing sector currently contributes approximately 17% of GDP and supports more than 27 million jobs. Despite challenges such as fragmented logistics networks, demand volatility, and infrastructure bottlenecks, AI-powered supply chains can optimize transportation routes, reduce inventory costs, and improve production planning. These capabilities enhance operational efficiency, strengthen manufacturing competitiveness, and enable Indian industries to compete more effectively in global markets while supporting sustainable economic growth.

Furthermore, India's growing AI ecosystem provides a strong foundation for this transformation. The country's AI market is projected to exceed USD 17 billion by 2027, supported by more than 600,000 AI professionals, over 700 million internet users, and one of the world's largest digital public infrastructures. India also accounts for nearly 16% of the global AI talent pool, positioning it as a major hub for AI-driven innovation.

Agentic AI can also enhance India's strategic autonomy by reducing dependence on foreign technologies and vulnerable international supply chains. Recent studies indicate that 96% of Indian government leaders are actively pursuing Sovereign AI strategies, reflecting a growing recognition that technological self-reliance is closely linked to national security and economic resilience. AI-enabled supply chains can help India monitor critical imports, identify vulnerabilities, diversify sourcing networks, and respond rapidly to geopolitical disruptions.

As India seeks to achieve a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047, sustained productivity growth will be essential. Agentic AI-driven supply chains can contribute significantly to this objective by enhancing efficiency, reducing costs, and strengthening manufacturing competitiveness. Therefore, the pursuit of supply chain sovereignty through Agentic AI should be viewed not merely as a technological modernization effort but as a strategic pathway toward economic resilience, industrial leadership, and the realization of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Strategic Autonomy through Indigenous AI Capabilities: As the global economy becomes increasingly driven by artificial intelligence, data, and digital technologies, strategic autonomy is no longer confined to military or diplomatic domains. Today, a nation's ability to develop, control, and deploy its own technological infrastructure has become a critical determinant of economic resilience and geopolitical influence. For India, the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 requires not only economic growth but also technological self-reliance. In this context, building indigenous AI capabilities is essential for achieving strategic autonomy in an increasingly competitive and fragmented global landscape.

The global AI ecosystem is dominated by a few technologically advanced nations and multinational corporations that control AI models, cloud infrastructure, semiconductors, and digital platforms. For India, excessive dependence on foreign AI technologies can create supply chain vulnerabilities, cybersecurity risks, and data security concerns. Such reliance may limit independent decision-making in critical sectors, affecting strategic autonomy, economic resilience, and competitiveness. long-term national.

To address these challenges, India must invest in the development of domestic AI infrastructure, including high performance computing facilities, sovereign cloud systems, semiconductor manufacturing, and indigenous large language models. The IndiaAI Mission, supported by an allocation of over ₹10,000 crore, represents an important step in creating a robust national AI ecosystem. Such investments will enable India to reduce dependence on foreign computational resources while fostering innovation among domestic startups, research institutions, and industries.

A secure and sovereign data ecosystem is vital for India’s AI-driven future. Leveraging platforms like Aadhaar, UPI, DigiLocker, and ONDC, India can transform digital data into a strategic asset. Strong governance, ethical AI, and indigenous AI infrastructure will enhance innovation, resilience, strategic autonomy, and support Viksit Bharat 2047.

Strengthening India's Position in Global Supply Chains: In an era characterized by geopolitical uncertainty, technological disruption, and the reconfiguration of global production networks, India's aspiration to become a developed nation under the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 depends significantly on its ability to strengthen its position within global supply chains. As multinational corporations increasingly seek to diversify manufacturing bases beyond China through the "China+1" strategy, India has emerged as a promising destination for investment, production, and innovation. However, capitalizing on this opportunity requires more than low-cost labor or a large domestic market; it demands intelligent, resilient, and technologically advanced supply chain ecosystems. In this regard, Agentic AI can serve as a critical enabler of India's global economic ambitions.

The China+1 strategy has gained momentum as companies seek to reduce their dependence on a single manufacturing hub and mitigate risks associated with geopolitical tensions, trade disputes, and supply chain disruptions. India possesses several advantages in attracting such investments, including a large workforce, expanding infrastructure, favorable government policies, and a rapidly growing digital economy. Yet, challenges related to logistics efficiency, supply chain visibility, and operational coordination continue to affect competitiveness. Agentic AI offers a solution by enabling autonomous decision-making, predictive forecasting, and realtime optimization across manufacturing and logistics networks.

One of the most significant contributions of Agentic AI lies in enhancing manufacturing efficiency. Through intelligent automation, predictive maintenance, and data-driven production planning, AI systems can minimize downtime, reduce operational costs, and improve resource utilization.

These capabilities are particularly important as India seeks to increase the manufacturing sector's contribution to GDP and establish itself as a global production hub. AI-powered factories can respond dynamically to market demand, optimize inventory levels, and ensure higher productivity, thereby making Indian industries more competitive in international markets.

Agentic AI can significantly enhance India's export competitiveness by optimizing logistics and reducing supply chain inefficiencies. With logistics costs accounting for nearly 13to14% of GDP well above the global benchmark of 8to10% AI-driven systems can improve route planning, warehouse management, and real-time cargo tracking. These efficiencies lower operational costs, reduce delays, and strengthen the competitiveness of Indian exports in global markets. Integration into global value chains increasingly depends on technological sophistication and supply chain reliability.

Agentic AI enhances transparency, traceability, and resilience by providing end-to-end supply chain visibility and proactive risk management. These capabilities strengthen investor confidence and attract global investment. By supporting the China+1 strategy, improving manufacturing efficiency, and boosting export competitiveness, Agentic AI can position India as a trusted global manufacturing hub. Therefore, strengthening India's role in global supply chains through Agentic AI is essential for realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047.

Economic Growth and the Vision of Viksit Bharat 2047: The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 aims to transform India into a developed nation by the centenary of its independence. To achieve this objective, India must sustain high economic growth, improve productivity, and accelerate technological innovation. In this context, Agentic AI has emerged as a transformative force capable of driving economic expansion across manufacturing, logistics, commerce, and services. By enabling autonomous decision-making, predictive analytics, and intelligent automation, Agentic AI can significantly enhance efficiency and competitiveness across the economy.

India's ambition to become a USD 30 trillion economy by 2047 requires sustained annual growth of approximately 7to8 percent. Achieving such growth will depend heavily on productivity gains. According to industry estimates, Artificial Intelligence could contribute between USD 500 billion and USD 1 trillion to India's economy by 2030 through increased efficiency, innovation, and automation.

Furthermore, India's AI market is projected to exceed USD 17 billion by 2027, making it one of the fastest-growing AI ecosystems globally.

In manufacturing, Agentic AI can optimize production planning, reduce machine downtime through predictive maintenance, and improve quality control. These improvements are particularly important as India seeks to raise manufacturing's contribution from approximately 17 percent of GDP to 25 percent under its industrial development strategy. Similarly, AI powered logistics systems can reduce transportation inefficiencies and inventory costs. Given that logistics costs account for nearly 13 to14 percent of India's GDP compared to the global benchmark of 8to10 percent even modest efficiency gains could generate billions of dollars in economic savings annually.

Agentic AI is also expected to stimulate innovation and employment. India already possesses one of the world's largest AI talent pools, with more than 600,000 professionals working in AI-related fields. As AI adoption expands, new employment opportunities are likely to emerge in data science, machine learning, robotics, cybersecurity, and digital infrastructure. Simultaneously, AI driven startups and research ecosystems will foster innovation and attract investment.

Navigating Challenges and Building the Foundations for an Agentic AI Future: While Agentic AI presents immense opportunities for strengthening India's position in global supply chains and realizing the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, its successful adoption also raises significant challenges related to cybersecurity, data governance, workforce readiness, and ethical AI deployment. Addressing these concerns through comprehensive policy frameworks will be essential if India is to leverage Agentic AI as a strategic tool for economic growth and global competitiveness.

One of the foremost challenges is cybersecurity. As supply chains become increasingly dependent on interconnected AI systems, the risk of cyberattacks, data breaches, and digital disruptions grows substantially. A successful cyberattack on logistics networks, manufacturing facilities, or critical digital infrastructure could have severe economic consequences.

According to recent estimates, cybercrime is expected to cost the global economy nearly USD 10.5 trillion annually by 2025. For India, protecting AI-driven supply cybersecurity chains frameworks, through secure robust cloud infrastructure, and resilient digital networks is therefore a strategic necessity.

Data governance represents another critical concern. Agentic AI systems depend on vast quantities of data for decision-making and optimization. However, issues related to data privacy, ownership, security, and cross-border data flows remain complex.

As India advances its digital economy, robust data protection regulations and transparent AI governance frameworks are essential for safeguarding national interests and maintaining public trust. Developing sovereign data infrastructure can further reduce dependence on foreign digital platforms and strengthen technological autonomy. At the same time, a shortage of advanced AI expertise remains a significant challenge. To address this gap, India must invest in STEM education, AI-focused training, research institutions, and industry-academia collaboration to build a future-ready workforce capable of driving innovation and supporting the growth of Agentic AI.

Ethical challenges such as algorithmic bias, transparency, accountability, and job displacement require effective regulatory oversight. To ensure inclusive and responsible AI development, India needs a comprehensive Agentic AI strategy aligned with Viksit Bharat 2047, emphasizing investments in AI infrastructure, semiconductors, cybersecurity, indigenous research, startups, and innovation driven public-private partnerships.

Conclusion: As India advances toward the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, Agentic AI has the potential to become a transformative force driving economic growth, technological self-reliance, and global competitiveness. By strengthening supply chain sovereignty, enhancing strategic autonomy through indigenous AI capabilities, improving manufacturing efficiency, and deepening integration into global value chains, Agentic AI can significantly contribute to India's development ambitions. However, realizing this potential will require robust investments in digital infrastructure, cybersecurity, data governance, skill development, and ethical AI frameworks. With a forward-looking policy approach, India can harness Agentic AI as a strategic catalyst for building a resilient, innovative, and globally influential economy.



LAND, LABOUR AND DISPLACEMENT: CONTINUITIES BETWEEN DO BIGHA ZAMIN AND CONTEMPORARY RURAL INDIA

Subhajit Ghosh; UG III: The modern landscape of Indian agriculture resembles a gallery of broken promises, where the romanticized “Annadata” has been reduced to a statistic within corporate gain. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledged that farmers’ incomes would double by 2022, the reality has shifted toward dispossession and insecurity. This trajectory mirrors the tragic arc of Shambu in Do Bigha Zamin, where development becomes an instrument of displacement. Modernization often masks a deeper moral crisis, transforming the relationship between farmer and land into a transactional exchange driven by industrial capital. The 1953 film Do Bigha Zamin, directed by Bimal Roy, remains a powerful lens to examine India’s socioeconomic evolution after independence. More than a personal story, it critiques a developmental model that prioritizes industrial growth over agrarian stability. It captures a moment when the idealized agrarian “motherland” collided with industrial ambition, producing cycles of displacement and labor exploitation that persist today. Land, once tied to subsistence and identity, becomes a commodity in service of capital. In the early 1950s, India attempted to dismantle the Zamindari system and implement land reforms. Yet, as the film shows through Shambu’s plight, power remained concentrated. The landlord’s plan to build a mill on his land reveals a shift in value—not as livelihood, but as profit. For the farmer, land represents dignity and continuity; for the capitalist, it is an exploitable asset. This ideological conflict underscores the violence embedded in economic transition.

Shambu’s migration to Kolkata exemplifies the “rural push” behind urbanization. He does not move in search of opportunity but is driven by debt and dispossession. This reflects a broader pattern where rural distress fuels migration, transferring poverty from villages to cities. In the city, his labour is devalued. His transformation from cultivator to rickshaw puller signifies not only economic decline but also loss of identity.

The city becomes a site of survival rather than progress. The film also explores how displacement reshapes family structures. With men migrating, women like Parvati shoulder greater responsibilities, reflecting the gendered burden of rural distress. When she enters the city, she encounters new vulnerabilities, highlighting the erosion of community support systems. Meanwhile, Shambu’s son Kanhaiya is exposed to the moral ambiguities of urban survival, where economic pressure blurs ethical boundaries.

Politically, the narrative unfolds during the 1951-52 Indian general elections, suggesting a growing democratic consciousness. However, this democracy appears distant from rural realities. Electoral participation fails to address structural issues such as indebtedness and land alienation, exposing a gap between political promise and lived experience. The film’s conclusion is a stark indictment of this model of development. Shambu’s inability to reclaim even a handful of soil from his land—now industrialized—symbolizes the rupture between farmer and land.

It reflects a system where progress is achieved at the cost of displacement and environmental disruption. In contemporary India, the relevance of Do Bigha Zamin remains striking. Its themes persist in land acquisition conflicts, migrant labor crises, and agrarian distress. The rickshaw puller has evolved into the gig worker, navigating an unstable urban economy without security. Yet the underlying dynamic remains unchanged—a rural push into precarious livelihoods.

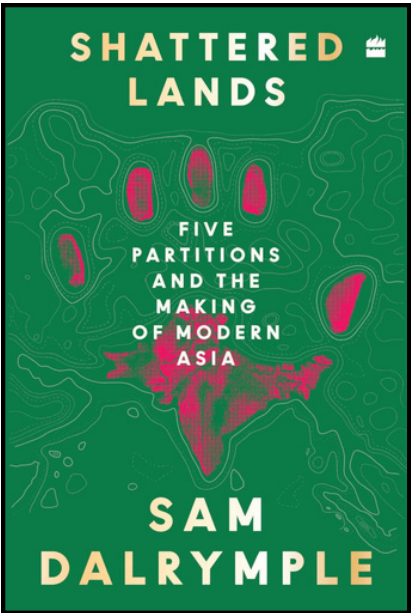
Ultimately, Do Bigha Zamin is not just a story of the past but a reflection of an ongoing struggle. It challenges the meaning of progress in a society where growth often comes at the expense of those tied to the land. The tension between agrarian roots and industrial ambition remains unresolved, and the fence separating Shambu from his land still stands—stronger and harder to cross.



BOOK: SHATTERED LANDS: FIVE PARTITIONS AND THE MAKING OF MODERN ASIA

AUTHOR: SAM DALRYMPLE

PUBLISHER: FOURTH ESTATE 2025 (Imprint of HarperCollins Publishers)



Sananda Roy; UG III: A Saga of Strategic Recrystallisation of ‘Middle East’, ‘South Asia’ and ‘Southeast Asia’: Shared Maps, Buried Memories, Colossal Inheritances Who Belongs, Who is Othered?

An impressive mirror to the struggles of autonomy, where shattered geographies echo the praxis of survival and the dialectics of sovereignty and identity.

“Someone who is Bangladeshi today was a Pakistani before December 1971, and before August 1947, he or she was an Indian citizen. A man and his place of birth may undergo transformations of their nationality and citizenship without his being consulted, international borders may be changed any number of times.” —Raja Tridiv Roy, Chakma, ”Shattered Lands”

With the decline of globalisation, intensification of borders, resurgence of nationalism all across the world in the last decade, and as the economic, social, political divides across South Asia growing ever wider, we stand at a crossroads, where the promise of interconnected future gives way to fractured sovereignties, institutionalized exclusion, and individual societies renegotiate identities, power and solidarity through persistent rivalries. And suddenly, among the din of all these, a politico-historical banger like this, makes one realise that throughout centuries, under the spell of collective amnesia, the fragile fabric of belonging has always remained ensnared in destructive patterns that tumble into oblivion, again and again.

Memory and history are reflections of the same truth, if one is bent, the other follows in its shadow.This luminous, incisive, meticulous non-fiction, unfolding over 400 pages, compels us to confront a pressing enigma : Aren't we all but dust carried by the gales of political storms - bits of flotsam in the whirlwind of politics, tied together into one, by invisible threads of inherited wounds and resistance?

The book provokes a theoretical problem of strategic studies: can conflict-afflicted societies ever achieve genuine autonomy, or does the praxis of survival necessarily erode the purity of independence?

1 sprawling empire.12 modern nations.

Unmaking of the British Raj was a record of ambition and betrayal, of buried carnage and strange bedfellows, but also, much more than that. It was the discovery space, more of a trial centre for charting the map of Asia, as it stands today. The five partitions that splintered entire human populations in the subcontinent, went on to carve out India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Burma, Nepal, Bhutan, Yemen, Oman, the UAE, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait, all bound together until as recently as in 1928, under a single imperial banner. Imagine India rushing into frantic diplomatic talks in Tehran to push for conflict de-escalation as Iran strikes the GCC nations, and imposes nationwide sweeping security restrictions across its own territory. Hard to picture, right? However, the occurrence of such a phenomenon would not have been absurd, if this was the 1930s.

Partition of Aden and Burma in 1937, fragile yet fiery South Asian communities fighting liberation struggles, politics and insurgencies simultaneous with the World War II, Indo-Pak-creation’s precarious theatre of power, politics of balkanization of princely India, Bangladesh War, guerilla and proxy wars simultaneous with the Cold War, independence of Dubai, Bahrain in 1971- the book binds together all the chapters of war, exile, division that disintegrated the subcontinent in the twentieth century, manifested by fascinating archival excavation and multilingual spectrum of grassroot-level interviews.

It navigates through the panorama afforces and Jinnah’s push for Pakistan fractured the subcontinent’s political autonomy. The accession-crisis of Junagadh (1947) would almost start the Indo-Pak war for the first time, projecting ambiguous accession disputes as existential issues for the country and continuing to influence India’s hardline stance on Kashmir till date, and refusal to internationalize the disputes. Role of rockrious influential, authoritative personas at the top, as well as of the displaced in misery, thus constructing a nuanced picture of layered narratives of power and suffering thriving on the very same page, something that continues to dominate Asian geopolitics even to this day.

The chapters are exquisitely, sensibly brim with intriguing, largely unheard, diabolically consequential case studies that stand as watershed moments, propelling the reader forward with exhilaration. The Aung San-U Saw rivalry becoming the crucible where hope and betrayal fused at Burmese history’s most delicate threshold; the twin battles of Imphal and Kohima as major turning points in the Second World War; Japan’s complex role in the liberation of Southeast Asia through independence struggle of Indochina (the French colony of present day Vietnam,Cambodia,Laos); how ‘Free Burma’ and ‘Free India’ were both part of Japan's ‘Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere’ in collaboration with INA, analytically as depicted, root Northeast as India’s strategic frontier, India’s Act East Policy, and also sovereignty-first Indo-Pacific diplomacy.

The book sequentially traces narratives of violence and reparation -Calcutta was revenged in Noakhali, Noakhali in Bihar, Bihar in Garmukteshwar, the Partition’s political vacuum was capitalized on by Hindu nationalist forces and Jinnah’s push for Pakistan fractured the subcontinent’s political autonomy. The accession-crisis of Junagadh (1947) would almost start the Indo-Pak war for the first time, projecting ambiguous accession disputes as existential issues for the country and continuing to influence India’s hardline stance on Kashmir till date, and refusal to internationalize the disputes. Role of rock and roll, in birthing “ideas of cultural, sexual and political revolution to the subcontinent”; for example, the politico-cultural impact of Beatles’ concert in Bangladesh War, setting a precedent for India’s softpower today - leveraging its cultural hybridity through Bollywood, music, digital media as geopolitical instruments. More such case illustrations carrying substantial analytical weight are unbiasedly, transiently interpreted.The book enchants with its ravishing, intricately woven narrative, with poignant tales of multifaceted characters, which however may feel too much immersive, or, on the verge of excessive.Yet, upon rationalised scrutiny, those mostly reveal themselves to be intellectually indispensable, apt to the context's sinews.

The war of the borders that is, the proxy wars of Nagaland, Manipur with India and Pakistan for their statehood, as exacerbated by both the colonial and central tutelage ; Nehru's remark to the demands of the ethnic communities as “absurd... fairy tale” , and the eventual solution to the “disturbances” there (enactment of AFSPA), do really imply how India at times succeeded in suppressing rebellions harsher than her predecessor.

Their helplessness as torn between choosing two complete foreign nationalities instead of being granted independent statehood, is reflected when Naga rebellion leader Angami Zaphu Phizo's relatives lamented, “The Naga revolt against India was due to this accident of geography whereby an ethnic community was slashed into various bits by artificial frontier lines.” Besides the ongoing protracted civil war in Myanmar, insurgencies in Kashmir, Baluchistan and Northeast India, the Rohingya genocide;the deep-seated civilisational schisms behind the current complexities of ethno-political nationalism, economic collapses, border disputes and proxy wars as South Asia and Middle-East grapple with, are the abiding legacies of the afore referred post-colonial fractures.

Sam Dalrymple, son of the bestseller historian William Dalrymple, doesn't confine himself only to the past's splendour like his father, rather through his vividly rendered presentation of history, strives to entice his readers with deep questions,the questions which strike at the very marrow of heritage, governance and diplomacy, proving that art in its capacious and preserving essence, shields the devastating vestiges of human experience from any decay. One is bound to ruminate: Can national boundaries still dictate the contours of citizenship in a world of unbounded identities? In a world where competing nationalisms and transnational affiliations historically as well as presently intersect, doesn't India's pursuit of strategic autonomy require a nuanced recalibration of its citizenship narrative, one that reconciles the tensions between national identity and the aspirations of its globally dispersed diaspora, while safeguarding its sovereignty amidst competing regional and global influences?



THE PYRE OF PLAY: HOW GEOPOLITICS IS BURNING THE 2026 FIFA WORLD CUP

Manisha Ghosh; UG III: Sports have historically been a medium for crosscultural exchange and a tool for transcending political divisions through healthy competition. The FIFA World Cup has historically stood as a sanctuary of global soft power, temporarily dissolving international rivalries under the banner of athletic competition. As Canada, Mexico, and the United States prepare to host the 2026 FIFA World Cup tournament this summer, this global tradition is rapidly burning in the crucible of unilateral nationalism and escalating geopolitical friction.

Politics have long conflicted with the image of neutrality that FIFA strives to uphold. Much of the narrative leading up to the 2026 FIFA World Cup centres around the implications of several controversial policies of the United States. The Trump administration’s domestic immigration enforcement and involvement in World Cup planning and communications is creating uncertainty for fans hoping to attend games in the United States this summer. The expanded operations of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and its increasing presence in American cities is concerning for both international and domestic soccer fans. Additionally, the Trump administration has boasted that ICE will not rule out conducting raids during official World Cup events. Also, President Trump has suggested relocating World Cup matches scheduled to be held in cities like Boston and Seattle. The administration has seemingly targeted these cities for political reasons, with President Trump using the terms “radical left” and “communist” to describe each city’s respective mayor.

Trilateral cooperation between the host countries is crucial for the successful execution of World Cup events. The United States’ aggressive transactional drug enforcement policy and rhetoric, and unilateral military action in the region is seen by many as a potential threat to Mexico’s sovereignty and self-determination.

Canada has seen its exports to the U.S. slashed by approximately 10% due to punitive tariffs and its territorial integrity being threatened. European lawmakers and soccer figures are actively championing boycott campaigns due to highly controversial proposals such as the annexation of Greenland. Simultaneously, the tournament is paralyzed by acute military tensions in the Middle East. Following the February 2026 Iran-U.S. crisis, the Iranian team's participation remains highly contentious. After a shaky ceasefire, Trump claimed the Iranian team is welcome but noted it is ‘not appropriate that they be there’ for their own safety. In response, Iran demanded that FIFA strip the U.S. of its host status, while the Iranian soccer federation threatened to boycott official D.C. events after staff visas were denied. Moreover, the U.S. enforces travel restrictions on 39 countries, including qualified teams like Iran, Haiti, Senegal, and Côte d’Ivoire. While athletes receive narrow entry exemptions, their fans are strictly barred, codifying a discriminatory setting where nations can play but their citizens cannot watch.

Ultimately, the 2026 World Cup risks being remembered not for athletic greatness, but as the tournament where sports diplomacy permanently shattered. If the world’s most inclusive game can only be played behind a wall of trade bans, missile diplomacy, and ICE checkpoints, the question arises– is the spirit of the global game already dead before the first whistle blows?

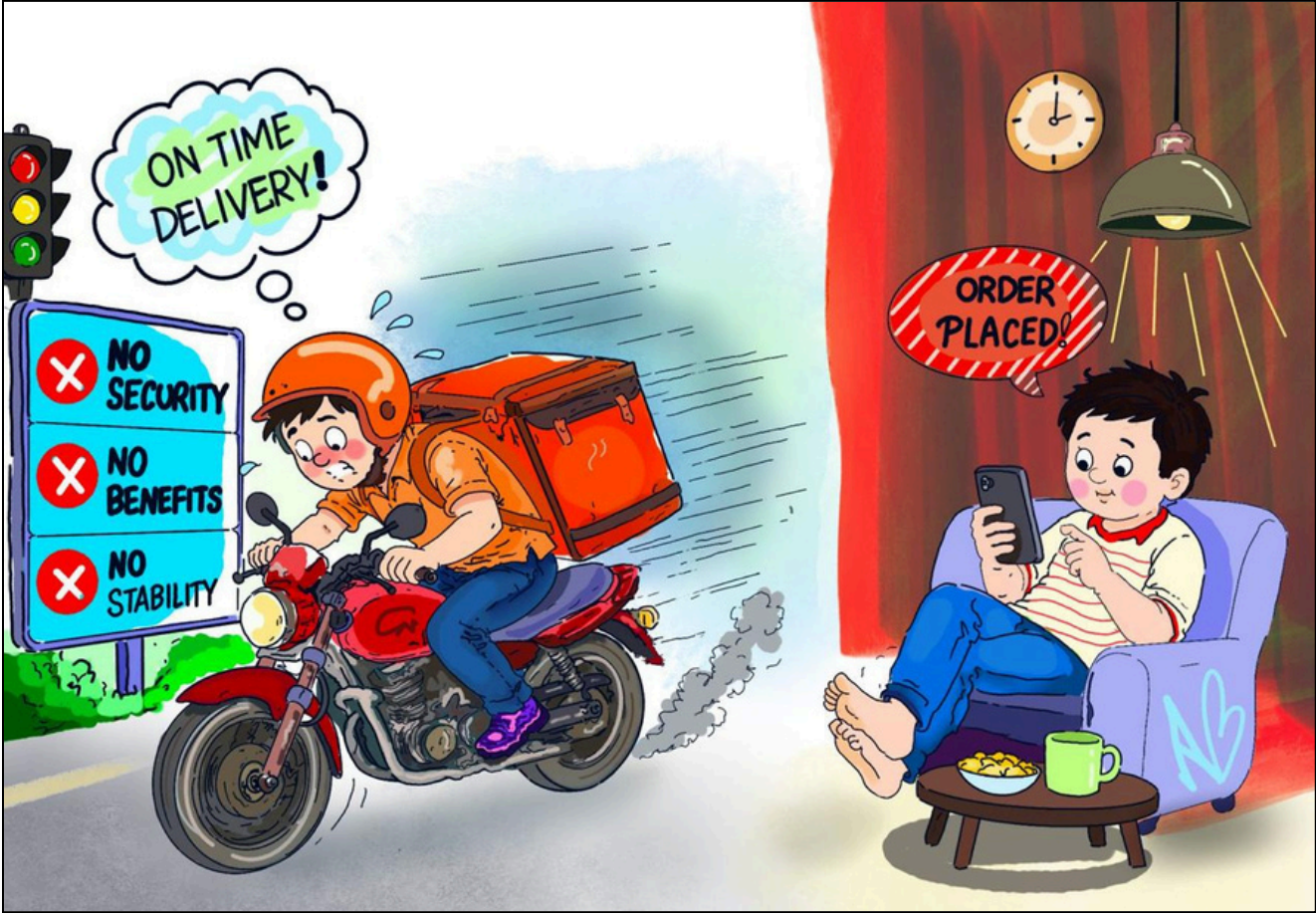


CARICATURES

by

Adrija Bhaumik; UG III

“Behind every timely delivery”



“Growth at nature’s expense”

