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**CATCHING THE
BIG
FISH**

Transcending Boundaries

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Volume: 26 Issue: 3 KARENG/2000/2368 Mangalore OCTOBER 2024 Pages 52 | Price ₹60



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EDITORIAL

Terrorist organizations in Palestine and Lebanon are reeling in fear as their electronic devices mysteriously detonate, targeting their own militants. Although the Israeli government hasn't officially claimed responsibility, all signs point to the Mossad, Israel's renowned intelligence agency, as the mastermind behind this covert operation.

This edition of Aseema delves into the intricacies of this daring intelligence operation, uncovering how it was conceived and executed.

Hezbollah, a prominent terrorist organization, has vowed to retaliate, but its limited technological expertise will likely hinder its efforts. Despite being outnumbered by over 50 Islamic countries, the Jewish state remains a formidable force to be reckoned with.

We also investigated what members of the banned Popular Front of India (PFI) are up to now.

The release of the explosive Hema Committee report has sent shockwaves through the Malayalam film industry, with many prominent figures, including actors, producers, and directors, hiding from accountability.

The report exposed widespread sexual harassment and exploitation of women in the industry.

Superstar Mohanlal has called for support to save the industry from destruction, while Rajinikanth claimed ignorance about the report.

The National Commission for Women (NCW) has sought the complete release of the report, emphasizing the need for a safe working environment.

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COVER PRICE: ₹60


aseema
Transcending Boundaries

OCTOBER 2024 | Pages 52

Published & Printed by **P S Prakash** for and on behalf of the owners **JNANA BHARATHI PRAKASHANA LTD.**, Mangalore

Published at
JNANA BHARATHI PRAKASHANA LTD.,

Printed at
DIGANTHA MUDRANA LTD.,
Yeyyadi Industrial Area, Yeyyadi
Mangalore 575008
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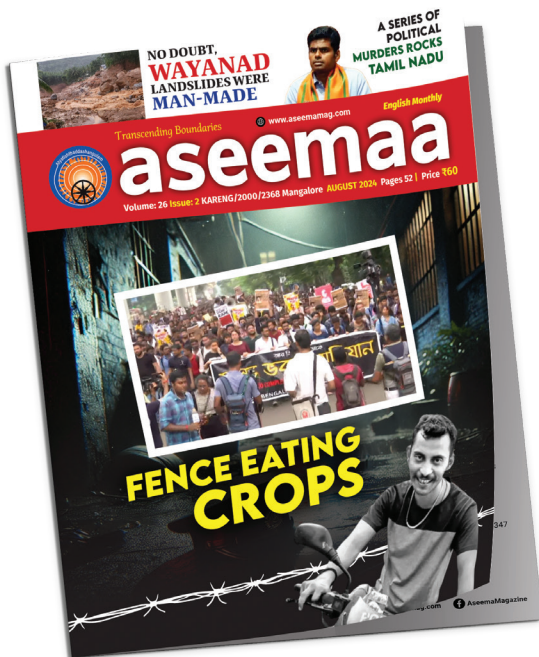
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aseemaa Readers opinion



I recently read your cover story “Fence Eating Crops” in the September 2024 issue, and I felt compelled to share my thoughts. The article sheds light on a deeply troubling issue that goes beyond the immediate criminal activities of civic volunteers in West Bengal. It unveils a broader, more systemic problem where those appointed to protect the public are, in some cases, contributing to its downfall.

The revelations about the civic volunteers, from their recruitment process to their involvement in criminal activities, are shocking. The way these individuals have been used to further political goals rather than uphold law and order brings to mind the saying, “the fence eating the crops.” Those tasked with safeguarding society have instead become its predators.

While the intentions behind creating such a volunteer force may have initially been noble, it is clear that without proper oversight, background checks, and a transparent recruitment process, power can easily corrupt. The lack of education and the meager wages offered to these volunteers seem to set them up for failure, as they are drawn into a dangerous mix of politics and crime.

It is essential for the government to rethink this entire system. More focus should be placed on empowering individuals through education and training, rather than merely giving them a uniform and expecting them to act responsibly without adequate support. Additionally, there needs to be greater transparency in the recruitment process to ensure that only those who are truly capable and deserving are entrusted with such responsibilities.

I hope that the issues raised in your article are taken seriously by the authorities, and that reforms are implemented to prevent further erosion of trust in our law enforcement systems.

Thank you for bringing this critical issue to light.

| **Bhgyalakshmi** House wife



share your opinion: editoraseema@gmail.com





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CATCHING THE **BIG FISH**

With the ED on his pursuit, Amanatullah Khan is facing the prospect of losing his substantial wealth



Amanatullah-khan



BJP leader Shahzad Ali

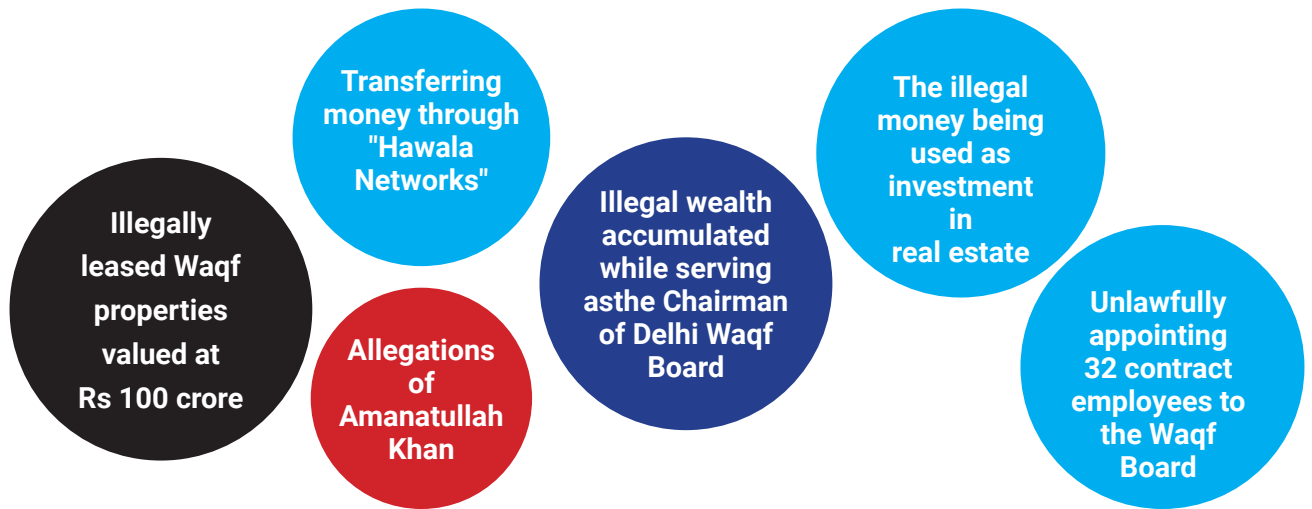
The ACB believes Khan used hawala networks to send millions to Dubai. ED raided five Delhi locations on October 10th, 2023. Khan was questioned for 13 hours in April and is now under investigation for financial misconduct.

By Kunal Chatterjee

On a quiet day in Delhi's Okhla, Enforcement Directorate (ED) officers knocked on the door of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Amanatullah Khan. The visit was no surprise to Khan, who was aware of the ongoing investigation into his alleged financial misconduct.

Expecting arrest, Khan delayed answering the door, but eventually, the ED gained entry. After six hours of intense questioning, Khan was taken into custody and lodged in Delhi's Central Jail, where his party leader, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, had also faced detention in the past.

The allegations against Khan are serious. Investigative agencies claim that during his



tenure as the chairman of the Delhi Waqf Board, he amassed significant illegal wealth. The ED has accused Khan of using this illicit income to invest in real estate through close associates.

One of the key allegations is that he illegally leased Waqf properties valued at Rs 100 crore and unlawfully appointed 32 contract employees to the Waqf Board. Furthermore, agencies claim Khan misused Waqf funds for personal gain.

This investigation traces back to a complaint filed in November 2016, when Khan was the chairman of the Waqf Board.

The complaint alleged that Khan made irregular and unauthorized appointments to both sanctioned and non-sanctioned positions within the Board, favoring individuals close to him.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) took up the case, concluding that Khan had blatantly disregarded established rules to secure appointments for his preferred candidates.

Once the CBI uncovered these irregularities, they initiated a formal case. Following the CBI's lead, the ED launched its own probe to investigate potential money laundering activities.

The investigation intensified in September 2022 when the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) discovered a diary at the residence of Kaushar Imam Siddique, an individual closely linked to Khan. This diary, according to the ACB, may hold crucial evidence implicating Khan in the embezzlement of funds.

The ACB suspects that Khan transferred large sums of money abroad through hawala networks, specifically sending crores of rupees to Dubai. These suspicions culminated in a series of ED raids on October 10, 2023, targeting five locations in Delhi linked to the case. Khan, who had already faced 13 hours of questioning by the ED earlier in April, now finds himself entangled



The investigation traces back to a complaint filed in November 2016, when Khan was the chairman of the Waqf Board. The complaint alleged that Khan made irregular and unauthorized appointments to both sanctioned and non-sanctioned positions within the Board, favoring individuals close to him.

A Gathering in Tihar: AAP Leaders Behind Bars



The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) faces yet another blow with the arrest of Amanatullah Khan, as their leadership seems to be making an unfortunate routine stop at Tihar Jail. Following in the footsteps of Satyendra Jain, Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, and even party leader Arvind Kejriwal, Khan is the latest to be taken into custody.

Arrested by the Enforcement Directorate

(ED), Khan is now under investigation. Should the questioning extend for a significant period, he could be sent to judicial custody, joining his fellow AAP leaders at Tihar Jail, where many prominent party figures have been held in the past. Presently, both Sisodia and Singh have secured bail, but Khan's situation remains uncertain. His arrest carries weight, as he holds a significant position within AAP.

in a web of allegations, as investigators dig deeper into what they claim is a sprawling financial scandal.

As the legal proceedings continue, the case raises broader questions about corruption, political influence, and the misuse of public funds in New Delhi

From Defeats to Controversies

Born in Meerut, Uttar Pradesh, Amanatullah Khan first dipped his toes into politics by contesting the 2013 election from Okhla on a Lok Janshakti Party ticket, only to face defeat. But the story didn't end there. Khan soon found a new political home in the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and tasted victory in 2015, becoming the MLA from Okhla. The 2020 elections saw him securing another win, solidifying his position in the party.

However, Khan's political journey has been far from smooth. In 2016, he was arrested for allegedly threatening a woman, followed by another arrest after his brother-in-law's wife accused him of sexual abuse. His confrontations didn't stop there. In May 2017, the AAP suspended him for attacking fellow party member Kumar Vishwas, only to later revoke the suspension.

Controversies continued to cloud Khan's career. In February 2018, a case was filed against him for allegedly assaulting Anshu Prakash, the then Chief Secretary of Delhi. His role in inciting protests against the Citizenship Act and several other police cases only added fuel to the fire, with the Delhi Police even labeling him a "bad character."

Not even his family remained untouched

One of the key allegations is that he illegally leased Waqf properties valued at Rs 100 crore and unlawfully appointed 32 contract employees to the Waqf Board. Furthermore, agencies claim Khan misused Waqf funds for personal gain.

by controversy. Khan's son, too, faced accusations, with a case registered against him for assaulting petrol pump workers in Noida. It seems Khan's political journey is marked as much by his electoral wins as by the storm of accusations and arrests surrounding him.

Land and Water Scams

BJP leader and Okhla resident Shahzad Ali has launched fresh accusations against the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), claiming that a major scam worth thousands of crores is waiting to be uncovered. According to Ali, while AAP routinely blames the BJP for the arrest of its leaders, it fails to explain why appointments to the Waqf Board were made

by bypassing official rules. He alleges that Amanatullah Khan filled the board with his close associates, denying deserving youth the opportunity to benefit.

Ali's accusations don't stop there. He points to a luxurious building that has sprung up on Waqf Board land behind a mosque in Nizamuddin, a space that he believes should rightfully belong to the common Muslim population of Delhi. Further, he accuses Khan of engaging in a land scam involving cemetery properties and demands a thorough investigation into the leasing of these lands, suspecting a massive cover-up involving thousands of crores.

The allegations extend beyond land deals. Ali claims that residents of areas like Shaheen Bagh are being deprived of Delhi Jal Board water at the behest of an AAP MLA, while private tanker mafias thrive by supplying water and earning huge profits. He argues that despite AAP's claims of delivering clean water across Delhi, its own leadership is standing in the way of this goal, deepening the crisis for common citizens.



Amanatullah has allegedly assaulted Anshu Prakash, the then Chief Secretary of Delhi



Kausar-Imam-Laddan Amanatullah's close aide



Haris Farooqui, the Islamic State's Indian chief along with his close associate Anurag Singh alias Rehan



The IS Chief was on the police radar for years

The detention of Haris Farooqui, the IS chief in India, has relieved national intelligence agency, whose sleuths were trailing him for years. He walked into the police net as soon as he entered the country from Bangladesh.

By Roopali

Haris Farooqui, the Islamic State's Indian chief, was frantically searching for a car in Dhubri, Assam, when the police were about to pounce on them at around 4 in the morning. Accompanied by a Muslim convert called Rehan, he was preparing to leave the area before sunrise.

The militants had crossed into India under the cover of darkness, arriving via a river from the neighboring country. But the Assam Police Special Task Force (STF) had been waiting.

"Fifteen days ago, we received intelligence from central agencies about their movements," revealed



**Abdul Rashid
who led 21
kerala localites
to Afghanistan to
join the Islamic
State**

STF IG Parthasarathy Mahanta. "We knew Dhubri might be a passage for top IS leaders."

The intelligence was solid. Based on this, the STF assembled a team and bided their time, anticipating the militants' arrival. They were expected by March 18, but it was on the morning of March 19 that the final piece of information came in—a precise tip about their whereabouts. Armed with photographs, the police made their move, swiftly arresting both militants.

Two days later, the duo was handed over to the National Investigation Agency (NIA) for further interrogation and investigation.

Who is Farooqui?

Despite his role as the head of IS operations in India, Haris Farooqui, 32, appeared surprisingly calm when apprehended. His demeanor betrayed none of the terror he was associated with. Looking at him, one would hardly believe he commanded one of the world's most feared militant organizations.

Farooqui's story begins far from the world of extremism. Twelve years ago, he left his home in Dalwanwala, Dehradun, to study at Aligarh Muslim University. Since then, he never returned, nor did he maintain contact with his family.

His father, Ajmal Farooqui, is a traditional Unani healer in Dehradun, where the family relocated two decades ago. Haris is one of five siblings, with three brothers and two sisters, none of whom have heard from him in over a decade.

As news of his arrest spreads, the quiet, ordinary life of his family in Dehradun contrasts sharply with his dark, secret life as a militant leader, leaving many to wonder how someone so close could slip so far away into a world of violence and terror.

A long search?

Intelligence agencies had been tracking Haris Farooqui and his accomplice for months. They knew they were trying to enter India, especially during the busy Lok Sabha election season. Despite this, the

duo managed to slip through the net for a long time.

Security agencies had been aware of their plan since January 2024. They were caught just as they crossed the border. If they had escaped, they could have easily hidden in Dhubri, Assam. Throughout the operation, Indian and Bangladeshi agencies worked together. They shared information in real time, leading to the arrest.

Before his arrest, Haris Farooqi was in Bangladesh. He had moved there from Nepal a few months earlier. The Islamic State's leadership summoned him. They planned for him and Rehan to enter India, attack, recruit, and radicalize young Muslims.

Before taking him to Delhi, NIA officials visited Dehradun, his hometown. His family told the NIA he had vanished years ago. They also learned he had visited Dehradun last year to scout for targets but never contacted his family.

The Islamic State (IS) had entrusted Farooqi with overseeing its operations in the country. He was basically tasked with coordinating terror activities. Police say he was planning to enter Assam with the intent to orchestrate attacks using improvised explosive devices (IEDs).

Farooqi demonstrated extensive organizational capabilities, which led to his rapid ascent within the IS ranks.

Investigations revealed that prior to joining the group, he had participated in events hosted by radical elements, and much of his indoctrination occurred online through IS propaganda channels.



"Fifteen days ago, we received intelligence from central agencies about their movements," revealed STF IG Parthasarathy Mahanta.

His hometown of Dehradun played a significant role in his initial attraction to extremist ideologies.

Rehan, originally Anurag Singh from Panipat, converted to Islam and married a woman of Bangladeshi origin. He and Farooqi connected online before being instructed to regroup in Bangladesh.

During interrogation, Farooqi disclosed that his allegiance to IS stemmed from a belief that Muslims in India were being persecuted, which drew him to the group's ideology. He revealed that he became convinced that only through the destruction of India's social fabric could Muslims rise to dominance in the country—a vision IS had promised to its recruits. His radicalization took hold in his youth through interactions with friends and online propaganda, despite showing no signs of extremism during childhood.

While Farooqi's arrest has prevented immediate attacks, the investigation has uncovered his more dangerous ability—his skill in radicalizing others. Known for

Kerala: Hotbed of Islamic State

Kerala's connection to the Islamic State (IS) is far from recent. The extremist group found fertile ground in the state, thanks to logistical support from the now-banned Popular Front of India (PFI). In 2017, a chilling audio clip began circulating on WhatsApp, calling for widespread attacks on Hindus. The 2-minute message was shared in a group called "Light of Kerala," and the voice behind it was none other than Abdul Rashid, the man responsible for leading 21 Keralites to Afghanistan to join the Islamic State. In the recording, Rashid declared that all religions except Islam must be eradicated, calling for the destruction of democracy in India. "Why let Hindus live in peace?" Rashid questioned. "They are cow worshippers. Allah commands us to finish them, kill them, and annihilate them. Hinduism and Christianity must be wiped out, and the rule of Allah

must prevail." Rashid was a key figure in IS's Kerala network. He had close ties with radical figures like Zakir Naik and the PFI, and he played a pivotal role in radicalizing Hindu and Christian girls, converting them to Islam. Among those he influenced was Sonia Sebastian, whom he later took to Afghanistan along with 20 others. Sonia, who adopted the name Ayesha, eventually surrendered to Afghan authorities in 2019 after Rashid was killed in an airstrike. She was accompanied by her two-year-old child. Kerala is not the only state grappling with the menace of terrorism. IS-linked terror cells have begun sprouting in other southern states, including Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. Recently, there were two blasts, one in Coimbatore and another in Mangaluru, both carried out by individuals connected to IS, though operating as lone wolves.

his talent in brainwashing, Farooqi was instrumental in recruiting over 100 youths across India and Bangladesh.

The growing network in Karnataka

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) is also probing a terror attack that took place at the Rameshwaram Café on March 1, 2024. Their investigation has revealed that Mohammed Shahid Faisal, a 40-year-old wanted terrorist, masterminded the blast. Faisal has been on the NIA's radar since 2012, with a 10 lakh bounty on his head. He is believed to oversee three terror modules in Karnataka while operating from Pakistan.

In this case, the NIA has charged five individuals, though interrogations are ongoing. According to the NIA's chargesheet, the original plan was to target the BJP head office in Bengaluru during the Ram Mandir inauguration. When that plan fell through, the terrorists settled on the popular café as their target instead.

Southern India's brush with terror continues to evolve, revealing deep-rooted networks and lone-wolf actors driven by radical ideologies. The authorities remain vigilant, but the challenges are far from over.





TERRORISING THE TERROR

Explosion killed many from the terrorist group Hezbollah and caused damage for materials

Israel has left Islamist terror groups in shock with its 'Operation Below the Belt'

Iran-backed terrorist group Hezbollah has been shocked to the core, with its pagers blowing up inside shirt pockets and walkie-talkies exploding in hands.

Cadres of this group are so much terrorized that they are now even afraid of using mobile phones.

🗣️ **Wing Commander BS Sudarshan**

On the morning of September 17, 2024, Lebanon awoke to what seemed like a routine day. In the heart of Hezbollah's operations, its agents conducted their usual tasks — checking communications, securing networks, all under the belief that their systems were impenetrable.

Across the region, thousands of pagers — humble devices meant to relay simple orders across Hezbollah's ranks — quietly buzzed with their familiar hum. But on this day, they were no longer mere tools of communication. In a blink, these innocuous gadgets transformed into lethal weapons of destruction.

At exactly 11:43 AM, a single transmission arrived. What looked like an ordinary message turned deadly in an instant. The pagers detonated

simultaneously, transforming southern Beirut, Hezbollah's stronghold, into a scene of sheer carnage. The initial blast claimed a dozen lives, their bodies torn apart by the explosions. Over 3,000 were left mutilated, bleeding, and begging for help amid the chaos of shattered streets and smoldering rubble.

Operation Below the Belt had begun.

In the span of seconds, an ordinary morning turned into a nightmare, a chilling example of technological warfare designed to strike fear at the heart of Lebanon. It wasn't just an attack on Hezbollah; it was a statement – one that reverberated far beyond Lebanon's borders, shaking the world with its precision and ruthlessness.

At the center of the deadly attack was a prime suspect: Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate (PETN) or a similarly potent explosive, discreetly embedded in the electronic circuits or lithium batteries of these pagers. When triggered, these devices overheated and erupted in a series of high-temperature explosions, claiming lives in their deadly radius.

The aftermath has thrown Lebanon into deeper turmoil. The attack was not only a technological blow to Hezbollah, but a humiliating demonstration that their communication networks were vulnerable.

The pager explosion has literally pushed the Islamic organization back to the Stone Age. Nobody can live without a phone in this modern world. Staying away from this gadget is no doubt living centuries behind.

Outraged and humiliated, Hezbollah has vowed retaliation, accusing Israel of masterminding the attack. Israel, however, remains silent, neither confirming nor denying involvement – leaving the region teetering on the edge of further conflict.

Why were they using obsolete pagers?

Sometime at the beginning of this year, Hezbollah Commander Hassan Nasrallah gave

strict instructions to his cadres that there was an immense danger to them and their families if they continued to use their mobile phones recklessly because Israel is



Pager explosion in Lebanon



Hezbollah Commander
Hassan Nasrallah

tracking their phones, their positions and also capturing all the data from their phones using spyware like Pegasus and other malware.

Then Lebanon decided to use the obsolete pagers so that they were not susceptible to any kind of surveillance or tracking. Apparently, with the help of Iran, they placed the order for 5000 pagers with a company named Alpha Gold. However, the Taiwan-based company denied it and reiterated that a licensed company in Budapest, Hungary, manufactured these pagers.

By the beginning of February, these pagers finally found their way into the pockets of Hezbollah cadres, assuring them of a secure communication network, until... 11.43 AM on September 17, 2024, at which instant thousands of these pagers blasted simultaneously, scarring southern Lebanon.

This precise and systematic attack stunned the entire world. Though no one officially claimed responsibility, evidence strongly suggested the national intelligence agency of the State of Israel, Mossad, was behind the attack. Mossad has a history of using innovative, inconspicuous weapons to carry out precision assassinations and sabotage missions. Many times, the Israeli intelligence agency has turned innocent devices into fatal weapons.

Mossad's Use of Covert Weaponry

Mossad is known for its sophisticated and covert operations, including the use of disguised devices to neutralise targets. One famous example where Mossad allegedly used an innocent-looking device as a weapon was in the assassination of Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, a senior Hamas military commander, in 2010. While he was staying in a hotel in Dubai, some Mossad agents also entered the hotel disguised as tourists. They managed to enter al-Mabhouh's hotel room using cloned keys. They then incapacitated him using a paralyzing drug delivered through a pen. Once immobilised, Mabhouh was reportedly suffocated or killed through some form of electrical shock.

Mossad is known for employing advanced technology and everyday objects repurposed as weapons. In some cases, Mossad has used explosive-laden phones to assassinate targets. A famous instance was the killing of Wael Zwaiter, a Palestinian intellectual suspected of involvement with Black September, who was shot in Rome in 1972. While Zwaiter was shot, similar operations have included using disguised devices like phones. Mossad has also used car bombs, where they hid explosives in vehicles to neutralise targets. One such case was the assassination of Hezbollah leader Imad Mughniyeh in 2008, where his car in Damascus was rigged with explosives that detonated when he approached it.



Senior theologian Subhi al-Tufayli, one of the Hezbollah group's founders



Mahmoud al-Mabhouh, a senior Hamas military commander assassinated by Mossad

Infiltrating the Assembly Line

The mystery surrounding the Mossad's pager operation only deepens and leaves behind many unsettling questions. Did they manage to infiltrate the assembly line, embedding explosives into devices as they were being built? Or did they hijack the devices during transit, altering their circuitry in secret? The questions don't end with "how"—they begin to stretch into "what else?" What if future adversaries, be they state actors or terrorist groups, can gain access to the supply chains of globally manufactured products? Today, it's a pager; tomorrow, it could be the laptops, cars, and smart fridges that populate homes around the world.

The New Face of Warfare

Warfare is no longer confined to battlefields or the skies dotted with warplanes and drones. The battleground has shifted into the very devices we hold in our hands, wear on our bodies, and trust with our most intimate data. The simultaneous explosion of thousands of pagers, a seemingly obsolete technology, shatters the illusion that any device is safe. This unprecedented operation—turning innocent communications devices into instruments of death—raises

unsettling questions about the future of conflict.

No longer do we envision bombs hidden in cars or assassins with guns; today, the weapon is far subtler and far more terrifying: your smartphone, smartwatch, or even your home appliance. How many of us would suspect that our own communication devices, the tools we rely on daily, could be tampered with to take the form of a lethal weapon? If a pager can be turned into a tool of destruction, what about the phones we carry in our pockets or the devices that monitor our homes?

Wael Zwaiter, a Palestinian intellectual killed by Mossad using advanced technology





Walkie-Talkie Explosion after pager explosion in Lebanon used by Hezbollah

PAGERS lethal weapons of destruction

In this new warfare, nothing is safe, and no one is immune. The lines between cyber, physical, and psychological warfare are blurring, and the tools of destruction are no longer limited to military arsenals. They could be hiding in plain sight—inside your home, your office, your pocket. As we rush towards a hyper-connected future, we must face the dark reality that every device, every system, and every network we depend on could one day be turned against us. In the new face of warfare, war is everywhere, and weapons are everything.

Decades-long Conflict

Tuesday's bold pager strike, followed by the Walkie-Talkie attack on Hezbollah operatives marked the latest chapter in a conflict that has spanned decades. The Israel-Hezbollah conflict has deep historical roots and revolves around political, territorial, and ideological struggles, particularly between Israel and the Shiite militant group Hezbollah, based in Lebanon.

Hezbollah was formed in response to Israel's invasion of Lebanon during the First Lebanon War in 1982, to drive Israeli forces out of Lebanon. It drew support from Iran and adopted a Shiite Islamist ideology.

Hezbollah's combat prowess increased to

the point in 1985 when it and its allies forced the Israeli army to evacuate to the south of Lebanon, near the Litani River. Along large portions of the Lebanese-Israeli border, Israel established what it dubbed a "security zone."

Following the end of Lebanon's civil war (1975–1992), Hezbollah made a successful transition into parliamentary politics in 1992, gaining eight seats in the assembly's 128 members.

Israel launched an attack on Lebanon in July 1993 under the cover of "Operation Accountability," also referred to as the Seven-Day War in Lebanon. Thousands of structures were damaged, 118 citizens from Lebanon were murdered, and 500 more were injured in the fighting.

Hezbollah joined the Syrian civil war in 2012, backing the Damascus regime—a decision denounced by senior theologian Subhi al-Tufayli, one of the group's founders, and opposed by many of its erstwhile Arab backers.

Hezbollah launched a rocket war against Israel in October 2023 to defend Gaza, which Israel was bombarding because of a surprise attack on Israel orchestrated by Hamas that resulted in 1,139 deaths and about 250 captures. Israel opened a shot back.

Walkie-Talkie Explosion

A day after the devastating pager explosions in Lebanon, a second wave of blasts occurred, this time involving walkie-talkies used by Hezbollah. The detonations killed at least 20 people and injured 450 others. With these attacks, Hezbollah finds itself pushed generations back, into an age when communication systems were a luxury! The outfit relied on low-tech devices to avoid Israeli tracking. Yet, the attackers swiftly infiltrated the Islamic outfit's logistics deeply, undermining the group's confidence in its security infrastructure. The exploded devices were identified as ICOM-brand hand-held radios, resembling the company's IC-V82 model. According to a security source, Hezbollah had purchased the walkie-talkies, along with the pagers, around five months ago.



Pentaerythritol Tetranitrate used in the explosion which was discreetly embedded in the electronic circuits or lithium batteries of these pagers

The explosions are a major blow to Hezbollah's operational capacity, with the group losing both personnel and vital communications infrastructure. The attacks come amid heightened tensions and near-daily skirmishes between Hezbollah and Israel along the Lebanese-Israeli border.



WEIRD WORLD

OHIO FAMILY'S FORGOTTEN COIN TO FETCH HUGE AUCTION PAYDAY

A family in Ohio stumbled upon an unexpected treasure hidden away for decades—a rare coin that's now poised to make them half a million dollars richer. The coin, tucked in a bank vault for over 40 years, had been inherited by three sisters, unaware of its astonishing value.

This rare gem is a 1975 Roosevelt dime, accidentally minted without the "S" mark, making it a highly coveted piece for collectors. The family had originally purchased it for \$18,200 in 1978, seeing it as a potential future investment. But no one could have imagined the tiny dime's value would skyrocket to \$500,000 today.



Collectors have been hunting for this elusive coin, part of a U.S. Mint proof set, and only two of its kind is known to exist. Its recent reappearance has set the collector world abuzz, with eager bidders ready to battle it out at an auction this October.

The sisters, who inherited the coin after their brother passed away, had heard him speak fondly of the family's prized possession but had never laid eyes on it themselves. Now known as the "1975 'no S' proof dime," the coin is on display at a coin show in Tampa, Florida, where it will remain until the auction concludes. One family's forgotten coin is about to turn into a life-changing fortune.



IMPRISONED PFI

With nearly 500 of its members locked in jails, PFI is all but dead



PFI members arrested

By Vicky Nanjappa

With its top brass locked away, the once-influential Popular Front of India (PFI), a Kerala-based radical Muslim organization, seems to be a shadow of its former self. Nearly 500 of its members have been behind bars for years, leaving the group's presence in disarray.

Yet whispers from intelligence suggest that not all is quiet – some former members are reconnecting online, and a few are even meeting in person.

Their political wing, the Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), still operates, though its influence has waned significantly. Many of SDPI's key figures were closely tied to PFI, and without them, the party has lost its grip. Nonetheless, SDPI hasn't been barred from elections and managed to secure a few local body seats in Karnataka. However, in the recent assembly elections, it faced a harsh reality as several candidates performed poorly, particularly in the coastal areas where it once held sway.

While no major incidents of violence

Two years have elapsed since the PFI was outlawed, and its top leaders remain incarcerated. Reports suggest that these leaders are attempting to regroup within prisons, particularly during Friday prayers. Meanwhile, those PFI members released on bail are maintaining contact through online platforms. Despite these efforts, the organization has remained fragmented. Notably, there have been no reported killings attributed to the PFI since its ban.

or killings have been linked to the group since PFI's ban, security agencies are far from letting their guard down.

There are signs of an attempt to rebrand the struggle, possibly under a new banner, echoing the path of the Student Islamic Movement of India, which evolved into the Indian Mujahideen.

PFI's imprisoned members are scattered across various states, with most in Kerala and Karnataka. Others find themselves in jails as far as Tamil Nadu, Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and even Delhi. Despite their current predicament, the group's story may not be over yet.

Background

On September 28, 2022, after extensive investigation and deliberation, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs officially banned the Popular Front of India (PFI). The decision came on the heels of a massive nationwide raid led by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), marking one of its largest operations to date. In the first wave of raids, 100 PFI activists were apprehended, and in a second round, 247 more were arrested in a coordinated effort by the NIA and Enforcement Directorate.

PFI national council member Prof. P. Koya



Alongside the PFI ban, the Home Ministry also outlawed several of its associated groups, including the Rehab India Foundation, Campus Front of India, All India Imams Council, National Confederation of Human Rights Organization, National Women's Front, Junior Front, Empower India Foundation, and Rehab Foundation. These affiliates, many of which were active in Kerala, have also been silenced.

Among those swept up in the crackdown were prominent leaders like PFI president OMA Salam, vice president EM Abdul Rahiman, national secretary VP



Kerala state PFI chief CP Mohammed Basheer.

Nazaruddin Elamaram, Kerala state chief CP Mohammad Basheer, national council member Prof. P. Koya, and SDPI founder president E. Abubakar. These high-ranking figures were transferred from Kerala to New Delhi and are currently being held in Tihar Jail, a facility known for housing some of India's most notorious criminals.

In a strategic move, the NIA made sure that none of the top leaders were kept in South India, where PFI's influence runs deep. About 80% of the arrested leaders were taken on transit remand from Kerala and then presented in court in New Delhi. Most now find themselves behind bars in the capital, with the largest number detained in Tihar Jail, as security agencies work to dismantle the group's broad regional reach.

Most of those arrested are still in prison. The investigation against him is continuing. However, the High Courts of Kerala and Bombay granted bail to some of the accused on the ground that there was insufficient evidence against them. These 18 members were granted bail in the case related to the killing of RSS leader SK Srinivasan in Palakkad on April 16, 2022.

Effect of Prohibition

Security agencies had long been advocating for a ban on the Popular Front of India (PFI), citing its escalating violence despite the

group's claims of being a social organization dedicated to uplifting Muslims. What started as a response to the demolition of the Babri Masjid soon transformed into a force with violent tendencies. Before adopting the PFI name, the group operated under the National Development Front, with its strongest base in Kerala after Karnataka. The organization's aggressive stance was revealed after a brutal attack on a Kerala college professor, who had included derogatory questions about Prophet Mohammad in an exam. A mob attacked him, leaving a trail of anger and fear.

The PFI also played a prominent role in the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, with several violent incidents reported in its wake. However, their violent activities didn't stop there. Before the ban, the PFI was repeatedly linked to killings of Hindu activists, terrorist groups like the Islamic State, and various acts of extremism, including kidnappings, intimidation, and hate campaigns. Their so-called "dawa" squads, consisting of bodybuilders and gym trainers, acted as hitmen, targeting Hindu leaders based on directives from top PFI leadership.

In 2012, Kerala High Court documents revealed the PFI's involvement in the killings of 27 members of CPIM and RSS. Two years later, more shocking revelations emerged



Murdered RSS leader SK Srinivasan in Palakkad

The NIA made sure that none of the top leaders were kept in South India, where PFI's influence runs deep. About 80% of the arrested leaders were taken on transit remand from Kerala and then presented in court in New Delhi. Most now find themselves behind bars in the capital, with the largest number detained in Tihar Jail.

when the organization admitted to being involved in 27 communal murders, 86 attempted murders, and over 100 other acts of violence. One such incident occurred on July 6, 2012, when PFI members stabbed ABVP student leader N. Sachin Gopal. Another student leader, Vishal, was killed, and Gopal succumbed to his injuries later.

Other violent acts included the 2019 murder of PMK member Ramalingam after an argument over forced conversions to Islam. The PFI's close collaboration with the terrorist group Students Islamic Movement of India was exposed in 2010 when police seized bombs, weapons, and propaganda materials linked to the group. That same year, members were arrested for participating in an illegal arms training camp in Narath, Kannur.

In 2012, the group's involvement in a nationwide hate campaign through SMS, alongside the terrorist group Harkat-ul-Mujahideen, forced many people from the Northeast to flee their homes. The PFI also made headlines when it assaulted

professor TJ Joseph over exam questions about Prophet Mohammad. Its involvement in violent incidents didn't stop there—PFI members were implicated in the stabbing of three individuals in Shimoga, Karnataka, and the murder of RSS leader Rudresh in Bengaluru. The group's most recent high-profile act was the assassination of Hindu activist Praveen Nettaru in Bellare, Karnataka. The PFI's trail of violence finally caught up to them, leading to their eventual ban, but the scars left behind remain.

The challenge of Preventing Regrouping

In a strategic move to contain the potential resurgence of the Popular Front of India (PFI), three high-stakes meetings were

convened in New Delhi this August. These gatherings, attended by key officials from the National Investigation Agency (NIA), state police forces, and the Intelligence Bureau, centered on the PFI's recent activities and future prospects.

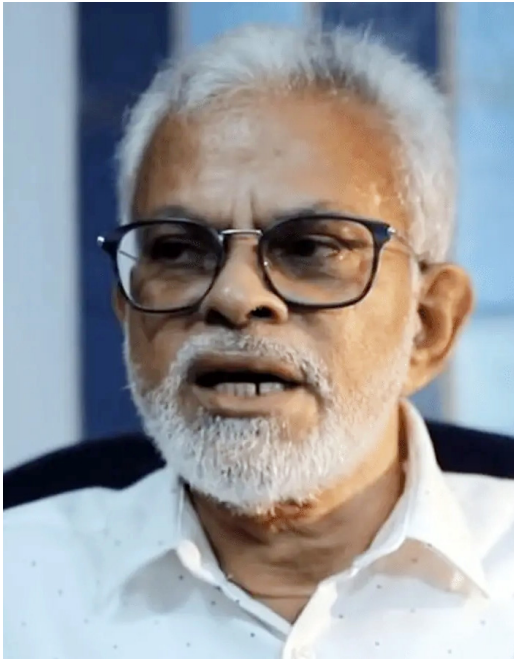
A primary focus of these discussions was the arrested and absconding members of the PFI. Officials deliberated on strategies to prevent the organization from regrouping and to mitigate

the risk of potential mob violence. State police were tasked with providing regular updates on the PFI's operations, including details of individuals who have visited incarcerated members.

To enhance surveillance efforts, officials were instructed to monitor PFI members during Friday prayers held in jails. Additionally, authorities were asked to



PFI members were implicated in the stabbing of three individuals in Shimoga, Karnataka, and the murder of RSS leader Rudresh in Bengaluru.



SDPI founder president E. Abubakar

gather information on the individuals these members have communicated with while incarcerated. To counter the PFI's online presence, the meetings decided to intensify social media and internet monitoring.

While the PFI has maintained a relatively low profile, the establishment remains vigilant about its potential resurgence. The organization's extensive network across India and its unbanned political wing pose significant challenges. There are also concerns that the PFI may attempt to circumvent the ban by reorganizing under a new name, mirroring the tactics employed by its predecessor, the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), which evolved into the Indian Mujahideen.



WEIRD WORLD

FUGITIVE MURDER SUSPECT FALLS FROM CEILING, INTO POLICE CUSTODY



A dramatic chase came to an unexpected—and hilarious—end when a murder suspect literally dropped from the ceiling into police custody.

Deario Wilkerson, a 20-year-old man on the run for months, was hiding out when the ceiling above him gave way. He crashed right into the arms of the law, bringing an abrupt conclusion to his escape. Wilkerson had been wanted for first-degree murder and reckless endangerment after a shooting incident in Memphis, Tennessee.

The authorities had been closing in on his location when the unthinkable happened. As they searched the house, the ceiling caved in, and there he was—falling straight down in front of them. While the fall was unplanned, it almost seemed like fate, delivering Wilkerson to the police in the most unexpected way.

Wilkerson, who was one of three suspects in the deadly shooting, wasn't hurt during his fall. He was taken into custody without further incident, marking the end of a tense months-long manhunt.



FREEBIES EXPLODE

Some states are rolling back freebies because their economies are sputtering

The freebie frenzy is facing a reality check as states like Punjab and Himachal Pradesh roll back their populist schemes amidst economic strain. Punjab, for instance, is now saddled with a staggering debt of 1 lakh per resident, a direct result of the government's extravagant freebies. Himachal Pradesh, facing a similar financial crunch, has been forced to delay employee salaries until it receives its share of GST money from the central government.



By Kunal Chatterjee

Himachal Pradesh and Punjab are scaling back subsidies and freebies as their financial crisis deepens. With growing debt and shrinking coffers, both states now need loans just to pay salaries.

In a bid to save money, Himachal's cabinet has decided to forgo their salary for two months. This comes after an RBI report warned that freebies could bankrupt states like Bengal, Kerala, Himachal, and Punjab.

Himachal currently owes Rs 95,000 crore in debt, nearly twice its annual budget. A large chunk of its revenue goes toward paying off this debt, including Rs 24,000 crore in interest payments each year.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is considering removing subsidies for hotels and commercial establishments, including cutting

electricity subsidies. Free electricity for taxpayers and free bus travel for women may also end, though, some say, a 50% bus fare subsidy for women seems likely to stay.

The state's coffers are nearly empty. In September, Sukhu announced that employee salaries would now be paid on the 5th of each month, not the 1st, and pensions on the 10th. This is because they expect to receive its share in tax (GST) money from the central government by then. By delaying payments, the Chief Minister says, they hope to save about Rs 3 crore in interest each month. But it is not clear how the delay will help save money.

During the 2022 elections, Congress had promised several freebies like Rs 1,500 monthly to women, waived electricity bills, and the restoration of the old pension scheme. But now, after winning the election, the party finds the coffers empty.

Increasing the monthly dole from Rs 1,100 to Rs 1,500 alone will cost the government Rs 800 crore. Financial strain has led to cuts in various sectors: urban development spending dropped by 32%, while social welfare, agriculture, and water supply faced cuts of 15%, 9%, and 13%, respectively.

Over 60% of the state's expenditure is committed to salaries, pensions, and interest payments, leaving little room for anything else.

Punjab Situation far worse

Punjab's debt is set to hit Rs 3.74 lakh crore

Karnataka, too, has been hit hard by the freebie frenzy. To address its financial crisis, the state has turned to Boston Consulting Group, paying a hefty 9 crore for six months of consulting services. Despite repeated hikes in liquor cess and fuel prices, the state's coffers remain depleted, leaving essential infrastructure projects like road repairs and canal construction in limbo.



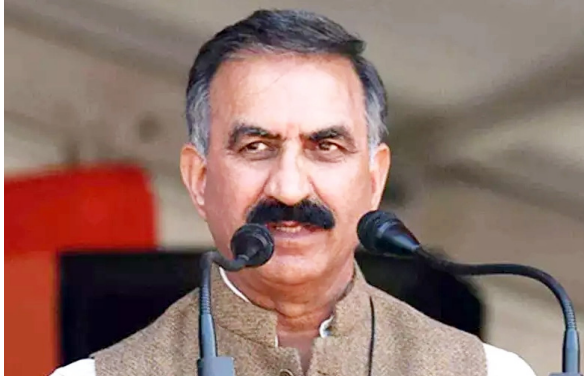
Minister N. S. Boseraju

by the end of this fiscal year, which is over 46% of the state's GDP. This means every resident in Punjab, with a population of over three crore, will bear a debt of Rs 1.24 lakh. The fiscal deficit? A staggering Rs 34,000 crore.

With the treasury drying up, the government is turning to heavy borrowing. This year alone, Rs 41,000

crore will be raised through loans. Punjab has even asked the Centre for an extra Rs 10,000 crore on top of its sanctioned limit of Rs 30,465 crore.

Last year, the Centre cut Punjab's borrowing limit. This came after the Bhagwant Mann government failed to reduce the losses of Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd. States were given extra borrowing room post-pandemic, but it was tied to reforms in the power sector. Since Punjab didn't fully implement these reforms, its borrowing capacity was slashed.



Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu is considering removing subsidies for hotels and commercial establishments, including cutting Bhagwant Mann government failed to reduce the losses of Punjab State Power Corporation Ltd. 18 OCTOBER 2024 electricity subsidies.

A Political Race to the Bottom

Aam Admi Party is the pioneer of freebies. It managed to win Punjab also along with Delhi. In Karnataka, Congress proved that people want freebies. Its five free schemes helped to gain back power with a roaring majority. This “freebie culture” has spread rapidly, with leaders from various parties, including the Aam Aadmi Party, Congress, and Bharatiya Janata Party, making such promises in their election manifestos. While the BJP has often criticized this practice, their own election manifesto for Jammu and Kashmir has also included several freebies. This suggests that the pressure to compete for votes has led even those who once opposed freebies to adopt this strategy. Given the intense competition among political parties to attract voters, it seems unlikely that a ban on freebies will be implemented anytime soon. The public’s desire for immediate benefits and the political incentives to offer them make it a challenging issue to address. As long as voters continue to prioritize freebies, political parties will likely continue to offer them in their bid for power.

In search of revenue, the Mann government hiked VAT on fuel—92 paise per litre on diesel and 61 paise on petrol. It also withdrew power subsidies for households with a load up to seven kilowatts, a benefit that began under the Congress government in 2021. Additionally, bus fares rose by 23 paise per kilometre.

In total, the AAP government burdened citizens with Rs 12,500 crore in new taxes, without launching any major infrastructure projects or social welfare schemes.

Karnataka’s case

Karnataka has hired Boston Consulting, a U.S.-based firm, to help manage its financial crisis. The Siddaramaiah government is struggling to pay salaries, and most development projects are on hold due to a cash crunch. Like Punjab, Karnataka has hiked the cess on petrol and diesel, and increased taxes on liquor several times in the past two years to raise funds.

One of the state’s major welfare schemes, the Gruha Lakshmi Scheme, offers Rs 2,000 monthly to women heads of households. However, since the Lok



Vidhana soudha, Bengaluru

Freebies vs. Welfare Schemes

We have often watched heated debates about the difference between freebies and welfare schemes. While both aim to improve the lives of citizens, their underlying intentions and long-term implications can vary significantly. Welfare schemes are carefully planned initiatives that aim to address specific social and economic challenges. They are often designed based on research and analysis, and their implementation is monitored to ensure effectiveness. These schemes typically focus on improving the overall quality of life, such as providing healthcare, education, housing, and social security nets. Freebies, on the other hand, are often politically motivated offers of goods or services that are given away for free,

usually around election time. They can range from free electricity or water to laptops or smartphones. In Punjab, for example, 80% of consumers are getting electricity for free. While these may provide immediate benefits to certain groups, they raise concerns about sustainability. Moreover, freebies plunge economies into crisis, placing a huge burden of debt on the common man. Many people who get things for free stop trying to earn money. In Punjab, they gave money to rich women. In Delhi, they gave free bus rides to women who didn't need them. This will cost Delhi a lot of money. The money could be used to fix roads and buildings. Giving things away for free can hurt the country's economy. It can also make people lazy.

Women and Child Welfare Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar

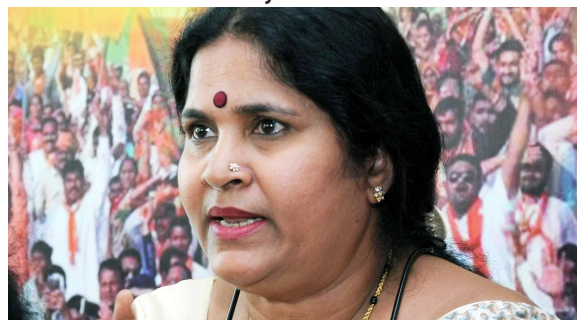


Sabha elections, no payments have reached the women, causing widespread outrage. Payments were last deposited in May, right before the elections. The June and July payments were delayed.

Women and Child Welfare Minister Lakshmi Hebbalkar addressed the issue, saying the delays were due to technical problems, but assured that June and July funds are now being disbursed. She clarified that rumors of four months' non-payment are false, as the May payments had been made on time.

In a recent assembly session, BJP member Bharti Shetty raised the issue during

BJP member Bharti Shetty



zero hour, pointing out the delays and urging the government to ensure timely payments. Minister N. S. Boseraju promised a response from the concerned department.

Before the elections, Congress gained favor by paying two instalments at once to women. But after their defeat in the Lok Sabha elections, no further payments were made. Political rumors suggest Congress was shocked by the election outcome. Financial expert D. Nagrajan speculated that the state's poor fiscal health, worsened by generous freebies, could be the reason for the non-payment under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme.





Congress leader Sachin Pilot married Sara Abdullah, daughter of National Conference leader and former J&K chief minister

KASHMIR GHARWAPSI

Why Kashmiri Girls increasingly marrying Hindu boys?

By Vicky Nanjappa

A video raising an important question has caught attention: Why are Kashmiri Muslim girls marrying Hindu boys and leaving the valley for ever?

The video, uploaded by Yana Mir, a social activist and journalist from Jammu and Kashmir, has gained 110k views, 7.1k likes, and 1,966 comments. In it, Mir discusses why girls from Kashmir are choosing to marry outside the region.

Mir recently made news for saying she's not Malala Yousafzai and feels safe in India. At an event by the Jammu and Kashmir Study Centre, she said, "I

am not Malala because I am free and safe in my country, in Kashmir, which is part of India. I will never need to flee or seek refuge elsewhere. I object to Malala defaming my country and calling it oppressed."

Mir highlights several reasons behind this marriage trend. Others agree that this has been happening for some time. According to Mir, issues like drug abuse, unemployment, social media harassment, Sharia law, triple talaq, and the Khula system are contributing factors.

A few weeks ago, Ghulam Moinudeen from Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir, reported his daughter missing. Investigations revealed she had

Yana Mir's video has **110k views, 7.1k likes, and 1,966 comments**



Yana says: I am not Malala Yousafzai and I feel safe in India



Reason for marrying outside: drug abuse, unemployment, social media harassment, Sharia law, triple talaq, and the Khula system

1.35 million drug users in Kashmir

Interestingly, a Muslim-led NGO called Dhanak is acting as a matchmaker for these Kashmiri girls. This information is confirmed by none other than Yana Mir, the Kashmiri journalist, who recently made news in London claiming that "she belongs to the Indian side of Kashmir and she is safe."

converted to Hinduism and married Sagar in Navi Mumbai, Maharashtra, by choice. There was no coercion involved.

In another case, Sumaira, a Kashmiri woman, married Lalu from Bihar. She also converted to Hinduism voluntarily. She later changed her name to Anjali. Rumors spread that she was being tortured for dowry, but she dismissed these claims and said her husband's family treated her well.

These incidents have sparked a social media debate. Some claim that after

the abrogation of Article 370, Kashmiri girls are being trapped and forced to marry Hindu men from other parts of India. While investigations show the girls married willingly, irresponsible statements have fueled tensions. Mir mentions a comment by former BJP MLA Vikram Saini, who said, after Article 370's removal, boys from India would come to Kashmir to marry women there. Mir criticized this statement as deplorable.

However, this trend isn't new. Marriages between Kashmiri women and non-Kashmiri men were happening before Article 370 was revoked. In 2004, Congress leader Sachin Pilot married Sara Abdullah, daughter of National Conference leader and former J&K chief minister. Back in 2001, Zahroodha Khandar from Kashmir married Rajesh Girdhar.

This growing trend of inter-regional marriages is not just about Article 370; it has deeper social and economic roots.

Reasons for Marrying Hindu

Drugs flow easily into Kashmir from

Pakistan, similar to the situation in Punjab. Drug abuse among the youth in Jammu and Kashmir is alarmingly high. As of August 2023, there were 1.35 million drug users in Kashmir. The administration has reported a nearly 2,600% increase in patients seeking treatment for addiction. In 2016, there were 489 registered patients at the Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), Srinagar. By 2019, that number had risen to 7,420 and skyrocketed to 13,500 in 2021.

The abrogation of Article 370 has been a positive change for Jammu and Kashmir. Though some debate its impact, the unified legal framework has opened up opportunities for greater investment in the region.

Despite this, unemployment remains a major issue. Several factors, including drug abuse and misleading propaganda, have created fear that locals will lose job opportunities. This has discouraged some investors, and the job market has not grown as expected. In some cases, even highly educated professionals, like chemical engineers, are forced to work in low-skill jobs such as construction.

According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), the unemployment rate in India was 7% in 2022. However, in Kashmir, it was much higher, standing at 25%.

The removal of Article 370 also brought Jammu and Kashmir under the same legal framework as the rest of India. Triple Talaq, a controversial divorce practice, was banned. However, it is still practiced in many areas, including Kashmir.

Muslim girls in Kashmir are increasingly marrying Hindu boys living outside the valley. They seem fed up, as boys in the valley are increasingly getting addicted to drugs. Decades of Islamic influence even prevented many of these boys from attaining formal science and math education, and today they have no good jobs.

Groups like Harkat ul Mujahideen and Jamaat e Islami have been pushing for Sharia law in Kashmir, which has also influenced the choices of many women. Many women feel that marrying outside Kashmir offers better opportunities and fewer legal and social hurdles.

For men, Triple Talaq offers an easy way out of marriage, but women face challenges under the Khula system. If a woman seeks divorce through Khula, her husband can block it, making it difficult for her to move on. This system discourages many women from marrying within the region.

Yana Mir highlights in her video that many Kashmiri women are afraid to marry within the Union Territory. She also points out how women are often defamed on social media after their divorces, adding to their fears.





Mir mentions a comment by former BJP MLA Vikram Saini, who said, after Article 370's removal, boys from India would come to Kashmir to marry women there.

Girls Gain, not lose

Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are helping couples who want to marry across different religions. One such NGO is Dhanak. They work all over India, not just in Jammu and Kashmir.

Asif Iqbal, a co-founder of Dhanak, told Aseema that many people have contacted them for help. He said that while there isn't a huge increase in these cases, more and more couples are reaching out. They want to know the good and bad things about inter-faith marriages and if they'll face a lot of problems. Some couples even want to get married secretly, and Dhanak explains what they need to consider. The NGO also gives them information about the laws.

Dhanak helps couples by giving them advice and guidance. However, the final decision is up to the man and woman. The

NGO's main job is to make sure they're safe legally. They won't do anything that goes against the law. Some couples have even told Dhanak that their lives are in danger. Some

have left their homes to get married. Dhanak helps these people with legal matters and ensures their safety.

The Indian government said that repealing Article 370 and 35A would benefit the people of Jammu and Kashmir. They said that women who marry outside Kashmir won't lose their rights anymore.

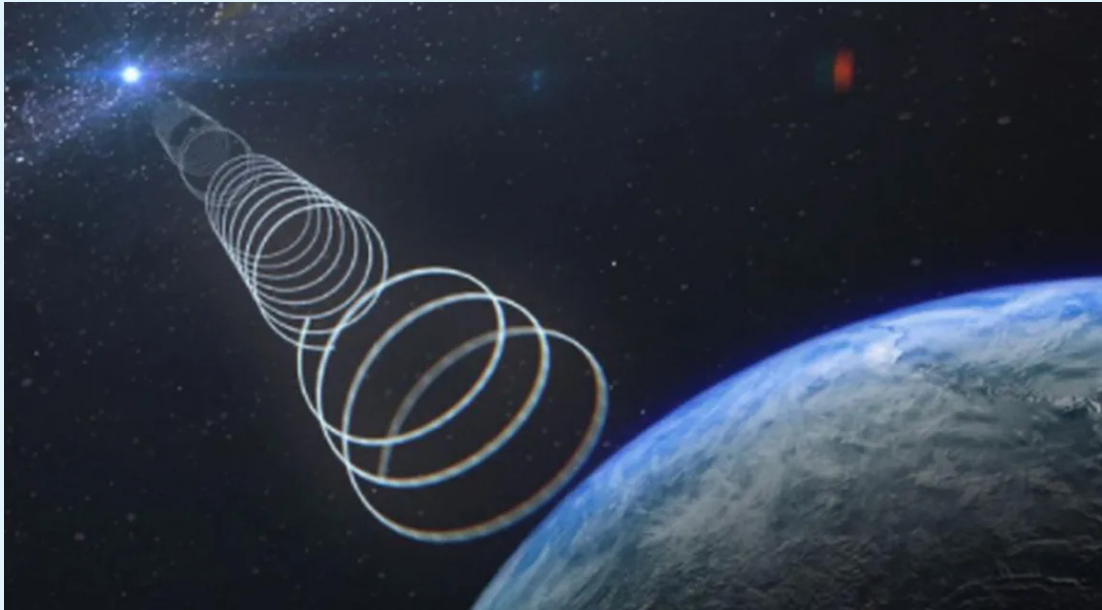
Before the repeal, if a Kashmiri boy married a girl from another part of India, he wouldn't lose any rights. But if a Kashmiri girl married

a boy from another part of India, she and her children would lose property rights in Kashmir. This changed after the government repealed the Article.



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RADIO SIGNAL REMINDING THE SO-CALLED BIG BANG

In a groundbreaking discovery, astronomers have received a radio signal from a staggering 8 billion light-years away. This fast radio burst (FRB), known as FRB 20220610A, is the most distant and powerful signal of its kind ever detected, offering a glimpse into the universe's early history.

Originating from a galaxy far beyond our own, this FRB has the potential to revolutionize our understanding of the cosmos.

By studying the properties of the radio waves, scientists can gain insights into the processes and events that shaped the universe billions of years ago. This discovery could help solve longstanding cosmological mysteries and provide valuable clues about the universe's evolution.

One of the most remarkable aspects of FRB 20220610A is the immense amount of energy it released in a fraction of a second. This energy output is equivalent to that of our sun over 30 years.

Additionally, the FRB has provided crucial data to confirm the "Macquart relation," a fundamental equation that helps scientists measure the amount of ionized matter between galaxies. This information is vital in the ongoing search for the universe's "missing matter."

The detection of FRB 20220610A marks a significant milestone in astronomy, opening up new avenues of research and offering hope for a deeper understanding of the cosmos.





North Eastern Hydro Power Project

NE's HYDRO POWER

North Eastern states are getting hundreds of crores for generating electricity

By Roopali

The North Eastern States, with their mountains and rivers, have a lot of potential for hydropower. States like Assam, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Manipur, and Tripura together have about 4% of India's total hydropower potential.

Since the 1990s, the Indian government has been interested in using hydropower in this region. It's a cleaner and more sustainable energy source compared to traditional ones. In 2007, the Northeast Council's Sectoral Summit on the Power Sector adopted the "Pasighat Proclamation on Power." This document said that hydropower in the region is important for India's energy security.

In 2019, the Standing Committee on Energy talked about hydropower in India in a report. They discussed its potential, importance, and the challenges it faces.

These challenges have slowed down its development.

In the early 2000s, India needed more energy because its economy was growing. The BJP government at the time saw hydropower as a good solution to provide non-carbon fuel. They revived old dams from the 1970s and announced new dam projects.

However, building dams in the North East has caused problems. It has displaced people and affected the environment. This made it difficult to find investors, both domestic and foreign. But some argued that building dams is necessary to develop the region.

One of the main benefits of large dams is flood control. The Dibang Multipurpose Dam, for example, is designed to prevent flooding in downstream areas.

In 2003, the Electricity Act was changed.

The North Eastern states are attracting significant investments, worth hundreds of crores of rupees, for their hydroelectric projects. These investments are expected to stimulate industrialization and create jobs for local residents. While it may have taken some time, the government has finally recognized the potential of this hilly region.

This allowed private companies to invest in electricity production. This attracted more money to the region. One example is the 1,750 MW Lower Demwe project on the Lohit River. Many new projects like this hoped to benefit from investing in hydropower, which has no fuel costs and low operating costs.

Recently, the Central Government announced that they will provide 4136 crore rupees for hydropower projects in the North East. This scheme will support 15000 MW of hydropower capacity and will be implemented from 2024-25 to 2031-32. The government hopes that this will encourage state entities and central public sector undertakings to work together on hydropower projects.

Multiplying Job Opportunities

The region has long been underdeveloped due to a lack of action from local governments and insurgency. This has discouraged both government and private investment.

The recent decision by the Union Cabinet is expected to significantly help the region. By harnessing the hydropower potential, it will attract investment and create jobs, both directly and indirectly.

Industries will be established, leading

to a boost in employment sectors like transport and tourism. Small businesses will also grow, creating more jobs.

These hydropower projects will also contribute to India's goal of achieving 500 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030. They will improve the flexibility, security, and reliability of the national grid.

The North East region needs these projects because its economy is smaller than the rest of India. This makes job creation difficult. There are few tech and IT jobs in the region.

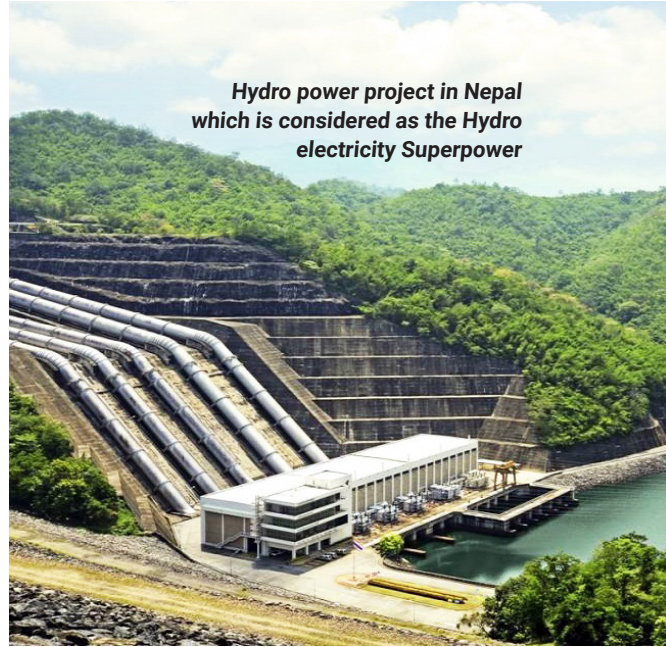
Most people in the region prepare for government jobs, but there are many applicants for a few positions. Those who get selected earn low salaries. The lack of business skills in the region also contributes to the high unemployment rate.

Most of the North East falls under tribal areas, which are not open for development. Illegal migration from Bangladesh has also changed the demographics of the region and taken away low-skilled jobs.

The Indian government said that the new scheme will encourage state governments to participate in hydropower development. This will help address issues like land acquisition, rehabilitation, and local law and order.



Demwe-hydroelectric-project-1



Hydro power project in Nepal which is considered as the Hydro electricity Superpower

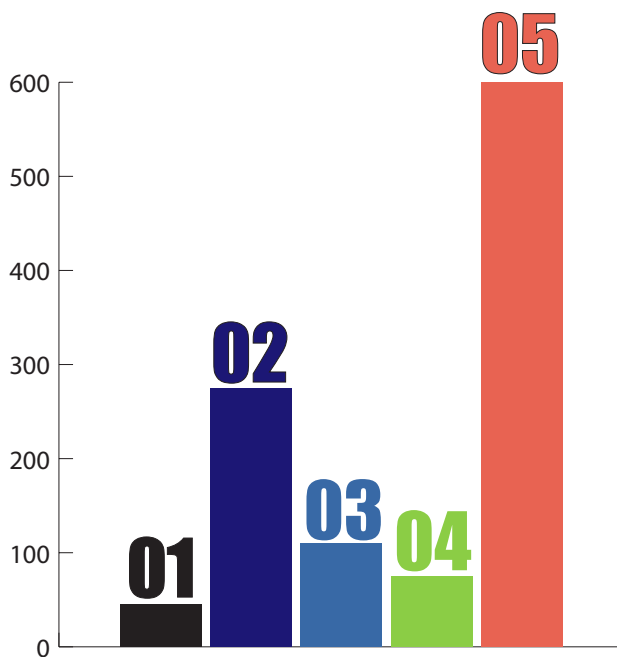
The scheme will play a significant role in harnessing the hydropower potential of the North East. It will bring investment, create jobs, and contribute to India's renewable energy goals. It will also improve the flexibility, security, and reliability of the national grid.

Nepal becomes Hydro electricity Superpower

Nepal, a neighboring country with similar terrain to the North East region, has been a leader in hydropower development in Asia. Its

fast-flowing rivers offer immense potential for generating electricity. Although hydropower development started in Nepal in 1911, it was slow for many years.

In 1990, Nepal's political system changed, and the government's approach to hydropower shifted. They encouraged investment through the build, own, operate, and transfer (BOOT) mechanism. This means the government opened up the sector to private companies, which was a big change from government ownership.




4136 crore rupees for hydropower projects

- 1 Ranganadi Dam generates 45 MW of power
- 2 Kopili Hydroelectric plant generates 275 MW of power
- 3 Pare plant generates 110 MW of power
- 4 Doyang Hydroelectric project generates 75 MW of power
- 5 Kameng Hydroelectric project generates 600 MW of power

Like Nepal, the North Eastern states have abundant water resources. The rivers and slopes in Nepal are ideal for building large hydroelectric projects. India is the sixth-largest energy consumer in the world. To support its growing economy, India needs to develop its energy sector. While India has coal and renewable energy sources like solar, wind, bioenergy, and hydroelectricity, energy is crucial for its economic growth. India's goal of 8% annual growth, along with a changing lifestyle, will increase

energy demand.

There are several hydropower plants in the North East. The Ranganadi Dam in Arunachal Pradesh generates 45 MW of power, benefiting seven states in North India. The Kopili Hydroelectric plant in Assam produces 275 MW, and the Pare plant in Arunachal Pradesh generates 110 MW. The Doyang Hydroelectric project in Nagaland benefits several states and produces 75 MW of power. The Kameng Hydroelectric project, the largest in India, generates 600 MW. 

INTERESTING STORY


A TSUNAMI HUMANS NEVER SAW

Imagine a wall of water, 650 feet tall, barreling towards you. It's a terrifying prospect, and yet, in September 2023, this became a reality for a remote corner of Eastern Greenland. A landslide in Dickson Fjord triggered a megatsunami of epic proportions, sending seismic waves rippling around the globe.

The veracity of the disaster came to light only after researchers from the GFZ German Research Centre for Geoscience analyzed the event, discovering two distinct seismic signals. The first was a high-energy pulse caused by the landslide itself. The second, a long-lasting VLP (very long-period) signal, created a seiche—a standing wave—in the fjord. This VLP signal was detected as far away as 5,000 kilometers, indicating the sheer power of the tsunami.

The megatsunami's existence first came to light through social media posts showing massive waves crashing against a military installation on Ella Island. The event serves as a stark reminder of the destructive potential of landslides, particularly in regions affected by climate change and the loss of permafrost.



This wasn't the first time Greenland had experienced such a catastrophic event. In 2017, an avalanche in Karrat Fjord triggered another megatsunami, flooding the village of Nuugaatsiaq and tragically claiming four lives. The increasing frequency of these events raises serious concerns about the future impact of climate change on coastal communities, not only in Greenland but also in Europe, where megatsunamis over 100 meters high have now been observed. 

& SEX CINEMA

Harrowing accounts of sexual
assaults in Malayalam cinema have
left everyone shocked



These days, the talk of Kerala is the film industry. The Hema Committee report has exposed a deeply concerning culture of sexual harassment within the Malayalam film industry. The harrowing experiences detailed in the report have raised serious concerns about the safety of women in the industry, potentially deterring them from pursuing careers in filmmaking.

📍 N V Kamath

Petitions and counter-petitions, police complaints and media debates...

The Kerala film industry has suddenly become chaotic, as a judicial committee report has revealed a long history of sexual harassment of actresses.

The report contains personal stories of dozens of actresses.



Hema Committee Report
being presented

One of them begins this way.

"Before a film started, the director said that there would be some intimate scenes in the film. A day before the shooting, the director said that the film would have nudity and kissing scenes, and many body parts would be shown. On the second day, it was said that the shooting would be done naked and in the bathtub."

"During a shoot held at the State Secretariat, a famous actor hugged and kissed me from behind when I came out of the washroom. This happened without my permission," another actress told the media.

"I pushed him away and ran away. He has a house in Thiruvananthapuram. He kept telling me that he wanted to meet me there. Another famous actor kept saying

The revelations were so damning that the government kept the report hidden for five years, only releasing it after court intervention. Now that it's out, it's sending shockwaves through the industry. Prominent figures are scrambling, some going into hiding, while the film bodies are left in turmoil as heads begin to roll.

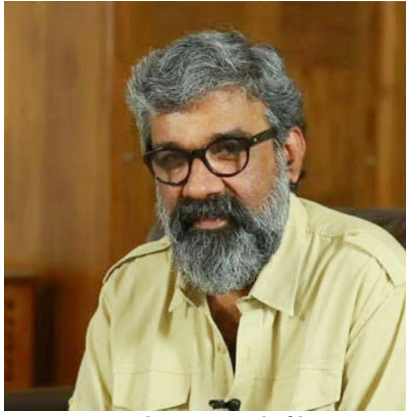
that I should keep the door of the hotel room where I was staying open, and he would come there to meet me," she said.

"I made it clear that of course it can't be done. But he said, 'I have come here from a five-star hotel for you, so I have to do it.' The next day, he was shouting at me unnecessarily during the shoot. Similarly, an actor and an MLA told me, 'I came to act because I like this art. That's why I didn't get caught in their grip,'" she said.

Another female artist said that staying

Filmmaker Saji Parayil filed a petition, claiming the release violated privacy rights





Director Ranjith is accused of harassment

in hotels during the shoot was unsafe. "(Drunken men) often knock loudly on the door. Then it would appear as if they would break the door and enter the room," the actress said, according to the report.

A Turning Point

In 2017, the Malayalam film industry was shaken to its core when a popular actress was sexually assaulted in a moving car. The horrific incident left her deeply traumatized, leading her to step away from the public eye for nearly five years. What followed was a significant push for change, one that exposed the dark reality of harassment in the entertainment world.

As the investigation unfolded, actor Dileep became embroiled in the case, capturing public attention and sparking outrage. The industry, already under scrutiny, found itself at the center of a larger conversation about the safety of women in cinema. In response, the Women in Cinema Collective (WCC) was formed, aiming to protect female professionals and advocate for their rights.

The growing pressure led the Kerala government to establish the Justice Hema Committee to address gender inequality and harassment in the film industry. Led by retired High Court judge Justice Hema,



Silk Smitha's suicide in 1996 exposed the industry's dark underbelly

On August 13, 2024, the court-ordered release finally happened—though incomplete. Only 233 of the 295 pages were made available, with key sections from pages 49 to 53 and 81 to 100 redacted.

along with veteran actress Sharada and IAS officer K.B. Valsala Kumari, the committee set out to investigate these pressing issues.

On December 31, 2019, the committee submitted its findings. Yet, despite the importance of the report, it remained hidden from the public for nearly five years. This delay only fueled concerns about the government's commitment to addressing the issue.

The battle to release the report was fraught with legal challenges. Five RTI activists pushed for its full disclosure, arguing that redacting 63 pages obstructed justice. Meanwhile, filmmaker Saji Parayil filed a petition, claiming the release

violated privacy rights. But in August 2024, the Kerala High Court ruled in favor of making the findings public.

On August 13, 2024, the court-ordered release finally happened—though incomplete. Only 233 of the 295 pages were made available, with key sections from pages 49 to 53 and 81 to 100 redacted. These missing portions left critical allegations unaddressed, sparking further frustration.

The report's opening lines were cryptic: "The sky is full of mysteries, with twinkling stars and a beautiful moon. Yet science reveals that stars don't twinkle, and the moon's beauty is an illusion. So beware—things aren't always what they seem, even salt can look like sugar." It set the tone for a document still shrouded in secrecy, leaving many unanswered questions.

Box Item

The tragic end of actresses

Vijayashree, the "Marilyn Monroe of Malayalam cinema," tragically committed suicide in 1974 at 21. She accused a producer and director of harassment and blackmail. A controversial scene in the film she was shooting led to her demise.

The 2011 film "Nayika" is inspired



Vijayashree the Marilyn Monroe of Malayalam cinema

by her story. Another victim, Srividya, was exploited by the industry. Ranjith, now accused of harassment, directed "Tirakatha" based on her life. Actress Shobha also committed suicide, allegedly due to a troubled relationship with director Balu Mahendra. KG George's film "LekhudeMaranamOru Flashback" touched upon this tragedy.

Silk Smitha's suicide in 1996 exposed the industry's dark underbelly. Her note revealed her suffering. The list of victims is long. Mysterious deaths of many actresses have raised questions about Mollywood's culture. Recent revelations have brought these hidden truths to light.

At the height of Metoo campaign, veteran actress KPAC Lalitha has spoken openly about "male dominance and exploitation" in the industry. She shared her own experiences of harassment and discrimination. She lost a film opportunity due to her refusal to be exploited and faced retaliation.

The list of victims is endless. Mysterious deaths of numerous actresses have long hinted at a darker side of Mollywood. Now, however, the skeletons are finally tumbling out of the closet.



Malayalam veteran actress KPAC Lalitha has spoken openly about male dominance and exploitation in the industry



MUDA SCANDAL

As the Scandal evolves Siddaramaiah looks increasingly nervous

📌 **By Rohit Purohit**

The MUDA scandal plaguing Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is no ordinary political storm. The Congress high command cannot afford to ignore this matter, especially given the significant implications for the party's future in the state. While the exact perpetrators remain unclear, the scandal's spoils—14 prime residential sites—have found their way into the hands of Siddaramaiah's family.

Initially expected to retire from politics after his current term, Siddaramaiah now faces the possibility of leaving office under a cloud of suspicion that could also jeopardize his son's political aspirations.

At the heart of this controversy lies a series of land transactions involving his wife, Parvathi, and the Mysore

Urban Development Authority (MUDA). The saga began with a 3.16-acre plot in Kesare village, Mysore, which Siddaramaiah's brother had gifted to Parvathi. When MUDA acquired this land for public development, as per standard procedure, the authority was obligated to provide replacement land. However, this seemingly straightforward transaction has turned into a political maelstrom.

Instead of receiving replacement land in Kesare, Parvathi was granted 14 residential plots totaling 38,284 square feet in Mysore's upscale Vijayanagar layout in 2021. This move sparked immediate controversy, as the replacement land's value is significantly higher than that of the acquired plot.

The Core Allegations

Critics and RTI (Right to Information) activists are questioning the legitimacy of this transaction. The core allegations

The MUDA scandal is not only jeopardizing Siddaramaiah's position as Chief Minister but also threatens to bring his political career to a premature end. Initial investigations suggest that the scandal may involve document tampering, raising questions about the involvement of government officials. While the identities of those implicated remain unclear, it is evident that the scandal's spoils—14 prime residential sites—have been acquired by Siddaramaiah's family.

suggest that MUDA officials provided high-value land in Vijayanagar to Siddaramaiah's wife at the expense of the state. They argue that low-value land in Devanur was traded for land in Vijayanagar, where the value is significantly higher—between ₹7,000 to ₹8,000 per square foot compared to ₹2,500 to ₹3,000 in Devanur.

Additionally, concerns have been raised regarding the "50:50 ratio" used in the land distribution process. Introduced in 2020, this rule allows for partial compensation in cases of land acquisition. Critics claim it was misused in Parvathi's case. The replacement land provided in 2021 is linked to the original acquisition from 1998, leading to the question: Why was this rule applied to a land acquisition that occurred two decades earlier?

Documents Say Something Else



**Karnataka Chief Minister
Siddaramaiah**

According to BJP MLA Ashok, the land originally belonged to a Dalith man named Ninga, who bought it in 1936. After Ninga's death 28 years ago, and his wife Ningamma's passing in 1990, the land became hereditary property for their children. Ninga's family includes 27 potential claimants, yet only one, Devaraju,

signed off on the land sale.

This discrepancy has raised serious questions, prompting Ashok to reveal documents in a press conference that he claims show how this transaction was manipulated.

Disputed Ownership

The property in question was registered in Ninga's son Mallaiah's name in 1968, under Survey No. 464. In 1990, MUDA issued a notification to acquire a large portion of the land, but in 1998, it left Survey No. 464 out of the acquisition. This occurred while Siddaramaiah was Deputy Chief Minister, fueling further suspicion.

Devaraju, who signed off on the land, received ₹3 lakh as compensation. The twist is that the land should have required signatures from all 27 claimants, not just one.



**Karnataka chief minister
siddaramaiah's wife Parvathi, instead
of receiving replacement land in
Kesare, was granted 14 residential
plots totaling 38,284 square feet in
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in 2021.**



According to BJP MLA Ashok, the land originally belonged to a Dalith man named Ninga, who bought it in 1936

Family Connections and Land Deals

In 2004, Siddaramaiah's brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy purchased 3 acres and 16 guntas from Devaraju, allegedly through illegal registration. A year later, in 2005, this land was converted for development. Notably, the land had already been assigned to L&T for development back in 2001. The timing of the conversion, following Siddaramaiah's family acquisition, raises further suspicions.

The Contradictions

Siddaramaiah has defended himself, claiming the land in question is in a corner and was abandoned. However, critics argue it is centrally located and valuable. Ashok accuses Siddaramaiah of being fully aware of the land's worth and its connection to a Dalit family. The accusation is that the entire process was a planned illegality, with Siddaramaiah transferring the land to his wife in a way that benefited them financially.

In 2014, Siddaramaiah's wife wrote to MUDA, requesting compensation land in exchange for the acquired property. MUDA responded, stating that replacement land could be provided in the 50:50 ratio, a

controversial practice. By 2023, the urban development department labeled the entire process as illegal. Ashok argues that this is proof of manipulation, suggesting the Chief Minister's involvement from the very beginning.

An Evolving Scandal

The scandal highlights improper dealings at multiple levels, from inheritance to development. The absence of signatures from all claimants, the timing of land conversions, and the involvement of high-ranking officials raise serious concerns.

For Siddaramaiah, this controversy comes at a precarious time. As a seasoned politician, he has faced issues before, but the allegations surrounding his wife's land deal may hit particularly hard. If proven true, these irregularities could undermine his credibility and threaten his political future.

Despite the Chief Minister's clarifications, questions continue to swirl around the special treatment his wife allegedly received. Was this merely a bureaucratic decision, or was it a calculated political favor?



BLOCKING AWARENESS OF THE DIVINE SELF

Certain forces work to obscure the truth of our divine inner essence (Atma), preventing individuals from realizing their true spiritual potential. Recognizing and overcoming these barriers is key to unlocking the wisdom and peace within.

📍 **By Maria Wirth**

How do I come to the conclusion that certain forces want to prevent humans from knowing their divine Essence and connecting with it? By observing what happened over time and especially in the last 2 decades.

When Vedic knowledge reached the West over 250 years ago, it was praised as the greatest gift to humanity. Philosophers praised it, but also scientists, like Erwin Schrodinger, Max Planck and several others. Schrodinger often ended his lectures with "Atma is Brahman" and Max Planck said: "I regard consciousness as fundamental and matter as derivative from consciousness.

Even still in 1982, when Fritjof Capra presented at a conference in Mumbai the new paradigm of physics in tune with Bharat's wisdom that all is interconnected, nothing is separate, all is one energy, our senses deceive us, he added: In all likelihood this energy is conscious.

I was there and heard him say it. He got a standing ovation.

In the 1970s, when I was studying at Hamburg University, "Self-realization", "enlightenment", "expanded consciousness" were buzzwords. Indian wisdom was seen in a good light. "India shops" sprang up with books like "Autobiography of a Yogi" by Swami Yogananda. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi and Osho attracted the youth.



The Church didn't like the fascination of the youth with Bharat and appointed 'cult observers'. They warned parents that their children may become mad, if they fall for those Indian gurus. However, the Church could not prevent a massive loss of faith among the youth. The churches became empty. Eastern wisdom was in vogue, but "Hinduism" was delinked from it.

Yes, there were many hippies who misunderstood "Indian wisdom" and copied only the long hair and the chillum of the sadhus, and not the wisdom and discipline. But generally, we Westerners felt, India had something which was badly lacking in the West. It had wisdom about who we are and what is the purpose in life. And it also still had a connection to a magical, supernatural dimension, which we so missed

When Vedic knowledge reached the West over 250 years ago, it was praised as the greatest gift to humanity. Philosophers praised it, but also scientists, like Erwin Schrodinger, Max Planck and several others. Schrodinger often ended his lectures with “Atma is Brahman” and Max Planck said: “I regard consciousness as fundamental and matter as derivative from consciousness.

in the West, including snake charmers and rope trick...

In the 1970s, and even before that, Western researchers also studied the brain of Yogis, who had miraculous powers. The US army intelligence was interested to exploit those powers. They sent for example an army commander to the Bob Monroe institute to learn how to have out of body experiences. This commander wrote a highly interesting, 31-page document in 1983. It was declassified by CIA in 2003 and is on the net. (I wished Indian scientists go through this document. It validates the holographic theory of the universe and the miracles of yogis which, in Bharat, are often dismissed if not ridiculed).

In the late 1989s or 1990s, Indian newspapers reported that NASA discovered that Sanskrit is the most perfect language. This was at a time, when Indian students mostly looked down on Sanskrit.

The above points show that Vedic wisdom was appreciated in academic circles in the West earlier.

From appreciation to vilification... Why?

But then, around the year 2000, this changed.

I personally got an inkling, when in 2001, the editor of one of the German magazines to which I contributed, wrote to me, “As you must have

noticed, spirituality is out. Wellness is in.”

No, I had not noticed.

Ever since, indeed, yoga and even meditation (in its popular form as ‘mindfulness’) is presented only as a means for physical and mental well-being and its full potential for liberation, Mukti, is ignored or purposely kept hidden. “Indian wisdom”, including the knowledge that this world is not the real thing but Maya (more like a dream of Brahman), went out of fashion.

Consistent with this trend, most Western philosophers today define consciousness as intimately connected with its content. They stay within Maya and seem to be unable to conceive of pure, thought-free consciousness. Now many in the West even declare that there is no such thing as absolute Truth, but “Everyone has his own truth”! Or “The goal of life is personal”. And if you follow what’s happening in the West (wokism, genderism, etc.), you may wonder if common sense has gone out of the window.

Hindus started finally shaking off the colonial mindset

Around the same time, in 2001, when I was told that spirituality is out, an important shift occurred in India. Hindus started to realise that their tradition is preferable and yes, superior, to Abrahamic religions. the internet facilitated this realization and brought like-minded Hindus together.

Promptly, and it is in all likelihood connected to this Hindu awakening and wanting to put a stop to it, Western media and academics portrayed Hindus, and especially Brahmins, falsely and perfidiously, as oppressors of minorities. Meanwhile, Hinduphobia has reached a dangerous level. Even conferences on “Dismantling Global Hindutva” and “Eradicating Hinduism” were organized.

The most inclusive faith became the target of inexplicable hatred.



Westerners felt, India had something which was badly lacking in the West. It had wisdom about who we are and what is the purpose in life said Maria Wirth

Why are Hindus so much under attack? And why this down-sizing of Yoga and meditation, ignoring its full potential?

This is indeed difficult to fathom. There may be two reasons:

ONE: The big powers want to prevent Bharat from coming up. They may fear, that if Indians study their ancient texts, and Sanskrit is easier for them, they may discover new technologies and overtake the powers that be.

Bibek Debroy claims that even after all the destruction and loot by Muslims, the British, the Jesuits, and others, there are still millions of texts in Bharat and only a fraction of it has been studied.

still, this reason may be far-fetched, as the average Western politician would probably dismiss ancient texts as irrelevant.

TWO: It's easier for Hindus to understand pure (content-free) consciousness and touch their Atma. There are still many Yogis in Bharat who have realized their true Self. Such people are fearless and cannot be manipulated and controlled. Certain powerful lobbies, who want to control humans, have therefore an interest that Vedic knowledge is downplayed and does not spread and become common knowledge,

not even in Bharat.

One such lobby is the Vatican. But even without the danger from Vedic knowledge, people are leaving the Church in big numbers.

So, who else is interested in keeping us ignorant?

The Israeli historian Yuval Noah Harari, a prominent figure at the World Economic Forum (WEF), gave a clue: It is those who plan the "Great Reset" at WEF, Bilderberg meetings, etc.

Harari said in all earnestness that consciousness is not needed, but intelligence is needed, and robots will be more intelligent than humans. He considers belief in God and a soul as ridiculous, and probably voiced the official line of those behind the New World Order. He also suggested, that 'all the useless people' who will be replaced by intelligent robots, should be kept busy with computer games and drugs.

It is ominous that attempts are on to get us interested in 'living in a metaverse', which means in a virtual reality within this Maya. It would remove us one layer further from our divine roots, and allows us to be easier controlled – leaving us without meaning and purpose in life, without any anchor, without values...

Science cannot prove that the one energy of quantum physics is conscious. But it also cannot disprove it. So why is the theory, that consciousness is fundamental, called fringe? And why is the theory, that the brain is the real thing, respectable?

Does it make sense that there is a vast, miraculous universe which is not aware that it is? That only humans on earth temporarily know about it? Why is there this attempt to deprive human beings from finding fulfilment in life?

In this context, the spread of the Bharatiya knowledge system is very important. It may just save humanity.

Naturally, intellectual study must be backed up by sadhana. We need to connect with our Essence. Touching it even occasionally, greatly improves the quality of our life.

This article first appeared in www.mariawirthblog.wordpress.com and it belongs to them.



ELECTIONS IN J&K AND THE SITUATION IN POK

📍 Amb D P Srivastava

The J&K Assembly elections have seen hectic round of campaigning by different political parties. The Lok Sabha elections in May saw an unprecedented high voter turn-out of 58.46% in J&K. The first phase of Assembly elections saw a higher voter turn-out of 61.13 % [1] despite increase in terrorist incidents in Jammu region. This attests to the faith of the people of J&K in India's democracy.

The shape of things to come will be known only after the remaining two rounds of elections are held, and a government is formed. However, it is to be noted that the National Conference and PDP election manifestos have demanded restoration of the status of statehood for J&K. They have also demanded reviving Article 370. NC and PDP are likely to use election results as a verdict on the deletion of Article 370, even though the Supreme Court has already upheld its constitutional validity. The two major regional parties have also called for India-Pakistan dialogue.

The demand for restoring statehood for J&K could be looked at sympathetically. Prime Minister Modi and the Supreme Court have given positive indications in this regard. But does it help to link domestic processes with revival of the Indo-Pak dialogue? This naturally raises the question how Pakistan has treated Kashmiri Muslims on its side of the LOC. How much 'Azadi' or autonomy they enjoy? What are the powers of the elected government in POK and Gilgit-Baltistan? What is the nature of elections in the two territories illegally occupied by Pakistan?

POK was run on the basis of Rules of Business by Pakistan's Ministry of Kashmir Affairs for more than two decades. The first election on the basis of universal franchise



was held in POK, as in Pakistan, only in 1970. An 'Interim' constitution was bestowed upon the territory in 1974. Did it give the people of the territory more freedom? It strengthened Pakistan's control on POK. Under Article 31 of POK Constitution, all substantive powers were vested in Kashmir Council headed by Pakistan's prime minister, while the powers of the elected Assembly and government were left undefined. This was rightly criticised as Islamabad's Rule by Proxy. In 2018, the 13th amendment of POK constitution relegated the Council to an Advisory role. But most of its powers were taken over by Pakistan, instead of transferring them to the elected Assembly. Pakistan directly exercises legislative and executive authority over 32 subjects within POK. [2] This includes taxation, water, roads and police amongst others. It may be remembered that water and strategic highways are the two main natural resources of the border region. Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) had to wait till 2009 when the elected Assembly was given limited powers over 61 subjects under Gilgit-Baltistan Order of 2009. This entire list of subjects was abolished under the Gilgit-Baltistan Order of 2018.[3] All the powers are now vested in the prime minister of Pakistan. There were widespread protests against the Order. G-B Supreme Appellate Court set aside the Order.

Pakistan appealed to Pakistan's Supreme Court, which sided with Islamabad and restored the Order against which the people were protesting.

With the changes above, Pakistan took over both POK and Gilgit-Baltistan in 2018. This was a year before the deletion of Article 370. Pakistan has integrated both parts of the territory in all but name. Pakistani actions went unnoticed.

The original name of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) was Northern Areas. This represents 85% of the territory of J&K illegally occupied by Pakistan. One of the issues in the debate on deletion of Article 370 in India, was partition of the state in two 'Union Territories'. Pakistan had divided the area under its illegal occupation much earlier and took over the bulk of its territory under direct administration, much earlier. Its current narrative is that it separated Northern Areas from POK, under Karachi Agreement of 1949. This was kept secret because Pakistan had changed the territorial status without waiting for plebiscite. This came to light in a historical judgment of POK High Court in 1993, which described Pakistani actions as a violation of UNSC resolutions.[4] In fact, Pakistan had taken over this territory much before the so-called Karachi Agreement. The British Officer, Major Brown, who headed Gilgit-Scouts and raised the flag of revolt against Maharaja, handed over the territory to Pakistan's Political Agent in November 1947.



The original name of Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B) was Northern Areas. This represents 85% of the territory of J&K illegally occupied by Pakistan. One of the issues in the debate on deletion of Article 370 in India, was partition of the state in two 'Union Territories'.

Gilgit-Baltistan is denied even the cosmetic 'freedom' given to POK. Why is it treated so differently? G-B is strategically more important area touching China and Afghanistan. Indus River as well as CPEC enter Pakistan through this region. It is also the only Shia majority region under Pakistan's control, which has a Sunni majority. Therefore, it has to suffer tighter control by Pakistan Army. If India had retained control of this area, we would have had geographical contiguity with Afghanistan, and there would have been no CPEC.

Who is a Kashmiri?

Before the recent delimitation of constituencies in J&K, an unnecessary controversy was sought to be created that the Indian Government was trying to bring people from outside to J&K. How has this issue been dealt with on the other side of the LOC? The POK constitution has a very loose definition of 'state subject'. It means 'a person for the time being residing in Azad Jammu and Kashmir or Pakistan, who is a State Subject as defined in the late Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir Notification...'. The last part is a reference to notifications issued by Maharaja's government in 1927 with the caveat 'as amended from time to time'. [5] This definition opens up the category of state subject to those living temporarily in either POK or Pakistan. Its deliberate ambiguity has paved the way for changing the demography of the region. This issue is dealt in detail in the author's book *Forgotten Kashmir: The Other Side of the Line of Control*.

Water and Electricity

The main natural resources of POK and G-B are water and hydropower. While POK is paid 15 Paise per unit as water usage charges, Pakistan's provinces are paid seven times higher rate - Rs.1.10 per unit. [6] This discriminatory treatment is justified on the ground that hydro-electric royalty is paid only to Pakistan's provinces; POK does not fall in this category. The countries pay for goods and services imported from other geographies even though they may not be part of its national jurisdiction.

Demise of Regional Parties in POK

The National Conference and PDP have strong presence in J&K and have ruled the state for long periods. In addition, there are a plethora of other Kashmiri parties or independents taking part in the ongoing elections in J&K. This includes Engineer Rashid's Awami Ittehad Party (AIP), the People's Conference, and the Democratic Progressive Azad Party. Contrast this with the situation in POK. There has been complete demise of regional parties across the Line of Control. In last elections in 2021, out of 45 general seats, PTI won 25, PML(N) 11 and PPP 6 seats. The Muslim Conference, the party which supported J&K's accession to Pakistan at the time of partition, won 1 seat. [7] The 20 reserved seats, are distributed amongst the winners in proportion to their performance in the general category. Thus, the protagonists are the local chapters of Pakistan's mainstream parties - PPP, PML (N) and PTI. The voice of Kashmiris is muffled in POK.

POK constitution includes Article 4.4.7(2), which states 'No person or political party in Azad Jammu and Kashmir shall be permitted to propagate against, or take part in activities prejudicial or detrimental to, the ideology of the State's accession to Pakistan.' [8] The wordings leave accession to Pakistan as the only acceptable solution ruling out either joining India or independence option. Pakistan's demand for 'Plebiscite' is an empty slogan.

The condition that no political party or individual would be allowed to challenge the ideology of Pakistan is part of the qualifying criteria for approving candidates to take part in elections in POK. This is also included in the pledge to be taken by all legislators, Cabinet Ministers and high functionaries. This elaborate arrangement has been used to deny those supporting independence option. Yasin Malik's mentor and JKLF founder Amanullah Khan and his party have not been allowed participation in elections in POK.

In India, even those who have questioned the State's accession to India have been allowed

The shape of things to come will be known only after the remaining two rounds of elections are held, and a government is formed. However, it is to be noted that the National Conference and PDP election manifestos have demanded restoration of the status of statehood for J&K. They have also demanded reviving Article 370. NC and PDP are likely to use election results as a verdict on the deletion of Article 370, even though the Supreme Court has already upheld its constitutional validity. The two major regional parties have also called for India-Pakistan dialogue.

to take part in the elections. In the ongoing election, members of the banned outfits like Jamaat-e-Islami have been allowed to take part in elections as independent candidates. This is inconceivable in Pakistan. No challenge to Islamabad's authority is tolerated. There is complete consensus amongst all political parties and the military that Kashmir belongs to Pakistan regardless of the wishes of its people.

The enthusiasm with which the people of J&K have participated in the polling has rattled Pakistan. Pakistani Defence Minister Khwaja Asif's interview to a Pakistani TV channel[9] simply reflects Islamabad's desperation to claw back some space for itself. There have been widespread protests in POK over high prices of Ataa (flour) and electricity. Earlier, there have been food riots in Pakistan. The phrase 'being on the same page' has a hoary history in Pakistan. Weak civilian governments try to show that they are on the 'same page' as the Army Chief to buy their political insurance. Imran Khan tried this formula earlier; now Shahbaz Sharif makes the same claim. For a change, they should try to be on 'the same page' with their people.

This article first appeared in www.vifindia.org and it belongs to them.

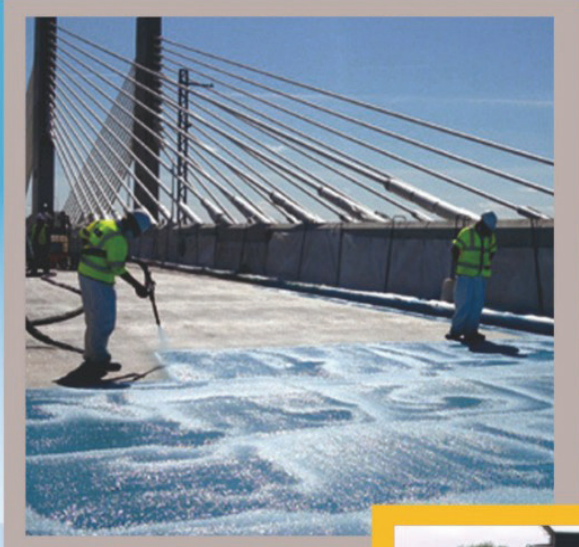




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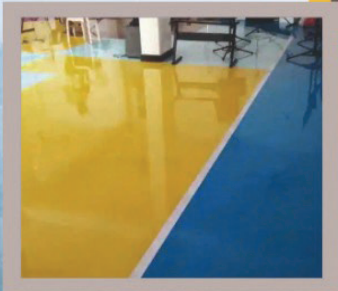


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