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ARM INDIAN NAVY



INDIA SHARES
BUDDHA'S
RELICS WITH
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TMC: STUCK IN A QUAGMIRE OF CRIMINALS

Who is Sheikh Shahjahan?

**HAFIZ SAEED'S
POLITICAL VENTURE**



PROPERTY
PRICES BOOM IN

AYODHYA





VISION DEMPO

Foundation of Trust



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EDITORIAL

WB'S VIOLENT POLITICS

West Bengal has become increasingly chaotic. This is what happens when political parties decide to win elections by hook or by crook.

For decades, politicians in West Bengal used muscle power to win ballots. TMC followed in the footsteps of its predecessor CPIM, promoting those party workers who make serious threats and go to the extent of carrying out any deadly acts for the party's victory.

This is when persons like Sheikh Shahjahan come on the surface.

Now this guy is quickly turning out to be Mamatha Banerjee's nandigram. It is the protest against the Tata Motors project in Nandigram that propelled Mamata to power.

The way Shahjahan rose to power is both shocking and surprising for people elsewhere in the country. But it is quiet normal in West Bengal. That has been the status of politics in the state bordering Bangladesh.

This month's edition also contains an article on how Balochistan looks set to break away from Pakistan.

Hardly a day goes by in this Pakistani province without a bomb blast and a shootout.

Also available to read is an interesting story about how the inauguration of Ram Mandir is stoking property prices across Ayodhya.

You will also read about the return of Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar to the NDA. But it is not clear how long he will stay with this alley.



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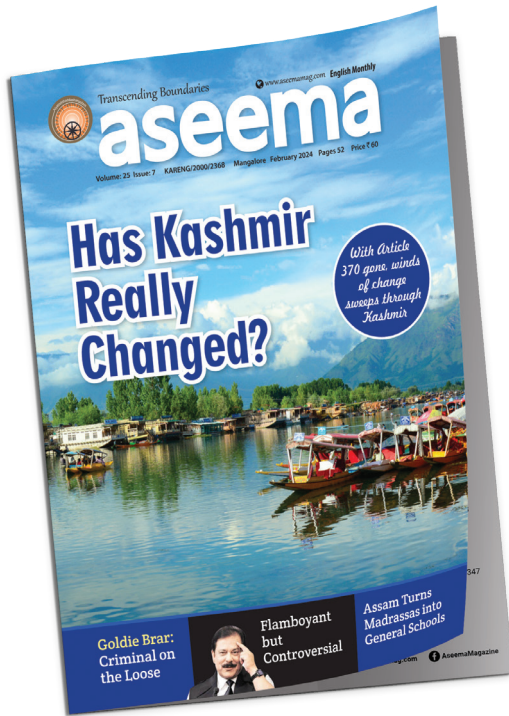
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AseemaMagazine



aseemaa Readers opinion



Aseema is a magazine which develops the habit of reading. I am someone who is not interested in reading magazines. Yet, from the time I read Aseema my idea has changed and I have started to enjoy reading magazine.

The main reason is the selection of articles and the way written. It is attractive and curiosity becomes real. For the mind which is always under stress due to the hectic life, Aseema is a ray of light to relax but still get the information on various topics.

| **Mahesh K.**, Entrepreneur, Mangalore

I am a retired worker. Aseema magazine has become a companion for me and helps my days to be filled with collecting knowledge. The writing is good and understandable even for a common man. The selection of topics is very good and the information said is to be appreciated for.

The main thing about Aseema magazine is that I can enjoy reading while enjoying my tea. I go so in depth in imagining as though someone is in front of me narrating the story. I go to imaginary land while reading which I really enjoy.

| **Chandra V S**, Goa



share your opinion: editoraseema@gmail.com



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INDIA SHARES BUDDHA'S

relics with

THAILAND

Buddhism followers
in Thailand are
feeling excited as
they have received
the relics of Lord
Buddha and his two
close associates.

These relics will be
on display in the
country's museum.

This sharing
bolsters tourism
industry in both the
countries.

📍 Mrunaali Patil

The Buddhist community in Thailand is abuzz with excitement as several sacred relics related to Lord Buddha and his disciples arrived in the country from India. These relics will be on public display for 26 days, marking a significant moment in India-Thailand relations.

Four of the relics, housed in the National Museum in Delhi until recently, will be



buddha-statue



**Governor of Bihar
Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar**



**Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar visits the
Ancient City of Ayutthaya, in Thailand**

the center of attraction in Thailand. These, along with relics of Sariputta and Maha Moggalana, disciples of Lord Buddha, were discovered during excavations in Piprahwa village, Uttar Pradesh. These sacred objects hold immense significance for Buddhists worldwide.

This marks the first time that relics of both the Buddha and his disciples will be displayed together. A high-level delegation led by the Bihar Governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar and Union Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Dr. Virendra Kumar accompanied the relics on a special Indian Air Force aircraft.

“I feel proud to carry the message of Lord Buddha to Thailand. Lord Buddha dedicated his life to humanity. Today, the revered relics of Lord Buddha are being taken to Thailand. This will strengthen the India-Thailand relations,” Arlekar said before leaving for Thailand from New Delhi airport.





Upon arrival in Bangkok, the relics were received with a grand ceremony and housed securely at the National Museum. This coincides with the observance of Makha Bucha Day in Thailand, a day dedicated to commemorating the teachings of Lord Buddha. Devotees will have the opportunity to pay their respects throughout the display period, which concludes on March 19th.

How Buddhism came to Thailand?

India and Thailand boast a remarkable relationship woven from religious, cultural, and commercial threads for over two millennia. Ancient Indian literature even refers to Thailand as "Suvarnabhumi," the Land of Gold, highlighting the long-standing connection.

The arrival of Buddhism in Thailand during the 3rd century BCE, under the reign of King Ashoka, marked a pivotal moment. King Ashoka sent two revered monks, Phra Sona Thera and Phra Uttara Thera, to Suvarnabhumi, where they established Buddhism in the region, specifically in the area known today as Nakhon Pathom.

Thailand's unique cultural landscape reflects the profound influence of both Hinduism and Buddhism. This fascinating blend is evident in the country's religious traditions, artistic expressions, and architectural marvels. Furthermore, shared legendary beliefs,

particularly Thailand's interpretations of the epic Ramayana, and the enduring teachings of the Buddha serve as powerful cultural bridges connecting the people of India and Thailand.

Importance of the Sariputra's relics

Sariputra and Maha Moggallana were close disciples of the Buddha. Their remains, called relics, were found in Bihar and taken to England by British archaeologists.

For many years, Indian government worked hard to bring these relics back home. India had received help from the King of Thailand, and finally, in 1948, the Indian government was successful.



Buddha statue Temple of Ayutthaya



A few years later, a Buddhist follower Syamaprasat Mukraji organized a special event to honor the relics. He invited them to Thailand, where they were received with great respect.

Thailand: A Deeply Buddhist Nation

Thailand, known for its vibrant tourism industry, is also unique in Southeast Asia for never having been colonized. Buddhism, along with the monarchy and the military, has significantly shaped Thai society and culture. While the country has experienced periods of democratic rule since 1947, military influence has remained strong.

With a population of approximately 70 million, Bangkok, the capital city, is home to roughly one-seventh of the nation's residents. Buddhism is deeply ingrained in Thai life, with an estimated 94% of the population adhering to the faith. While not officially designated as the state religion, the Thai constitution actively promotes the propagation of Buddhism.

This exchange of sacred relics serves as a powerful symbol of the shared Buddhist

heritage between India and Thailand, fostering cultural understanding and strengthening their longstanding ties.

India's Protection of Buddhist Sites

The Narendra Modi government has been working hard to improve and protect places important to Buddhism. This includes building new infrastructure, like the airport opened in Kushinagar in 2021, and supporting projects in other countries like Nepal.

But there's more to explore than just places connected to the Buddha's life. India has many other amazing Buddhist sites, like the ancient caves in Maharashtra and the monasteries in the Himalayas.

One example of restoring a hidden gem is the Devani Mauri shrine in Gujarat. This ancient Buddhist site was almost forgotten, but now it's being brought back to life. The project includes a beautiful pagoda to house Buddha's relics and a place for people of all faiths to meditate and practice Buddhism.



Why Pakistan's Balochistan Boiling?



Pakistan's border province of Balochistan has been a war field for decades, with Islamist groups fighting against each other seeking autonomy. The rise of Taliban in neighboring Afghanistan is fueling the fire. Hardly a day passes by without a bomb blast or a shootout. Will it break away from Pakistan?

🕒 Wing Commander Sudarshan

Balochistan, a region renowned for its natural splendor, finds itself under the shadow of terrorism, eroding its rich heritage. Spanning parts of Pakistan, Iran, and Afghanistan, Balochistan boasts a history dating back thousands of years. Its lands hold vast reserves of gas, oil, and minerals, and once flourished under the rule of Chandragupta Maurya.

Baloch separatists, long known for their secular struggle, have forged an alliance with the extremist Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Both groups share a common enemy: the Pakistani state. As a result, an entire province has become wet with blood.

However, internal conflicts within Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, China, and other countries, coupled with internal agreements, have ravaged the land. Lack of employment opportunities fuel anti-social activities, leading to the rise of various local groups. The influence of external forces further exacerbates the situation, hindering development despite abundant natural resources.

Throughout history, Balochistan has been ruled by various entities, including the British and Islamist groups. Despite its lack of development, its wealth has been plundered for centuries.

The machinations of Islamic extremism, coupled with personal agendas, violence, and oppression, have pushed Balochistan far behind in terms of development. This region, once envisioned as a thriving tourist destination, now languishes under the shadow of terrorism.

Roots of Hinduism

Balochistan is home to diverse indigenous groups, including Zoroastrians, Baloch, Pashtun, and Brahui communities. While the Brahui primarily practice Islam today, their historical roots lie in both Hinduism and Buddhism. The region's rich tapestry of cultures dates back to the 3rd century AD, when the Mauryan emperor Chandragupta Maurya held sway. The arrival of Muslim invaders in the 7th century marked a significant turning point, introducing Islam to the



Baloch separatists

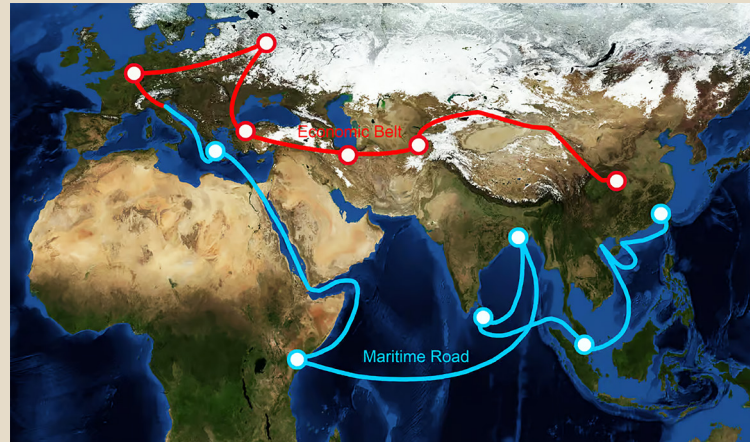
region.

Over subsequent centuries, Balochistan witnessed the rise and fall of various dynasties, including the Ghaznavi, Ghori, and Timur. The 18th century saw the emergence of a distinct Baloch identity with the establishment of the Khanate of Kalat, a tribal confederation that enjoyed a degree of autonomy under Persian rule.

By the early 19th century, British ambitions expanded beyond the Indian subcontinent, setting their sights on Balochistan. Initially divided between the Safavid Persian and Mughal empires, the region was governed by local rulers like the Khan of Kalat. Through a series of treaties and agreements, culminating in the significant Treaty of Kalat in 1876, the British

China's road initiative is also angering local people

Certain internal agreements between Pakistan and China have raised concerns about the exploitation of Balochistan's resources, fueling local resentment. A key example is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a flagship project of China's Belt and Road Initiative. While billions of dollars have been invested, the economic benefits for the local population remain unclear. Job opportunities have primarily gone to outsiders, exacerbating feelings of exclusion. CPEC aims to establish a trade route connecting western China to the Arabian Sea through infrastructure development. While proponents highlight the potential for economic growth, many Baloch people perceive it as further exploitation of their resources. Concerns exist regarding collaboration between Chinese companies and the Pakistani government, with limited efforts to address the region's existing needs like access to basic necessities. Baloch nationalists point to the awarding of contracts for Gwadar port projects, a crucial component of CPEC, to non-Baloch firms and the predominance of non-Baloch workers



as evidence of their exclusion. This fosters a sense of dispossession and exploitation, fueled by religious and ethnic sentiments. These perceived injustices have contributed to tensions in Balochistan, hindering regional stability and development. Addressing these concerns requires meaningful dialogue with local communities, ensuring their equitable participation and benefit from economic development initiatives. Only then can a path towards stability and normalcy be paved.

gradually established control over Balochistan.

However, this period did not mirror the development seen in other parts of British India. While securing peace and stability, the British primarily utilized Balochistan's resources like minerals and gas, neglecting broader development initiatives.

Why the Dispute?

In the lead-up to World War II, Balochistan served as a key strategic location for the British, providing a military base and supply route for operations in the Middle East and Central Asia. Following the war, calls for greater autonomy and independence emerged among some Baloch leaders, but the region remained under British control until the partition of India in 1947.

Negotiations for Balochistan's future became

complex during the partition process. The Khan of Kalat initially pursued independence, and a resolution recognizing Kalat as a sovereign state was issued in August 1947. However, negotiations with the British Viceroy and Pakistani leader Muhammad Ali Jinnah ultimately led to Kalat's accession to Pakistan in March 1948. This decision remains a contentious issue, with some claiming it was coerced and others arguing it was a negotiated agreement.

Since then, Balochistan has faced complex internal dynamics and external pressures. The region's strategic location and rich natural resources have drawn interest from both Pakistan and Iran, leading to concerns about exploitation and neglect. Discontent among some segments of the Baloch population has manifested in various forms, including calls for

greater autonomy and, in some cases, armed resistance.

The Pakistani government's response to these movements has been multifaceted, including political engagement, economic development initiatives, and security operations. These actions have yielded mixed results, with ongoing tensions and allegations of human rights abuses highlighting the challenges of navigating complex historical and political realities.

Local communities have raised concerns about their equitable share of the wealth generated from natural resources like petrol. Gas was discovered in the province in the 1950s and primarily used to supply Karachi and Punjab provinces. While Quetta, the capital of Balochistan, gained access to local gas supplies in the 1980s, concerns remain regarding its wider distribution.

The use of natural gas in the region has been a point of contention. While some sources mention its use solely for military cantonments, others acknowledge its broader distribution in the province. However, it is undeniable that a significant portion of the population, estimated at 59% of urban residents, still lacks access to this resource.

These factors contribute to the complex history of Balochistan, marked by ongoing struggles for autonomy, identity, and control over its natural resources.

Armed conflict between Islamic groups

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) is one of several militant groups operating primarily in Pakistan. It aims to achieve greater autonomy or independence for Balochistan through armed struggle. It has been involved in various campaigns against Pakistani security forces, government officials, and lack of infrastructure, as well as targeting foreign interests in the region.

Another prominent group is the Balochistan Liberation Front (BLF), which has been engaged in internal fighting with similar goals of



independence from Pakistan. They have carried out attacks against Pakistani security forces and infrastructure.

Another militant organization fighting for Balochistan's independence is the Balochistan Republican Army (BRA). They also attack Pakistani security forces and government installations.

These groups, along with others, are part of a broader Baloch nationalist movement seeking to address grievances related to the perceived exploitation of Balochistan's natural resources, economic backwardness, and political disenfranchisement.

In recent years, a close alliance has formed between Baloch separatist groups, particularly the BLA, and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) against the Pakistani state. Despite their ideological differences, including secularism and religious extremism, these groups have found unity in their opposition to the government. The BLA, historically secular, has adopted tactics reminiscent of acts like suicide bombings in its fight against Pakistani authorities. This change indicates a strategic adjustment based on the goal of challenging Pakistan.

Cooperation between these groups extends beyond the ideological. The BLA has received military training from the TTP, including expertise in Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), and assists the TTP with logistical support in Balochistan. This growing alliance between Baloch separatists and the TTP poses significant challenges to security forces in the region. A spate of deadly attacks on Pakistani police, military personnel, and the Frontier Corps in

India's Growing Role in Balochistan

India's engagement with Balochistan has been multifaceted, encompassing both diplomatic and humanitarian initiatives. Some argue that India could play a more active role in addressing the region's challenges. This could involve raising awareness of human rights concerns and political grievances through diplomatic channels. Advocates of this approach suggest that India could encourage peaceful dialogue and conflict resolution by highlighting the situation in Balochistan at international forums and seeking international support for a peaceful and just solution. They believe this could empower the voices of Baloch activists and pave the way for constructive dialogue. Additionally, some propose that India could provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the suffering of civilians affected by conflict or human rights violations. This could include

providing food, medical supplies, and shelter to mitigate the impact of poverty and insecurity. Engagement with relevant stakeholders, such as the governments of Afghanistan and Iran, as well as Baloch representatives, is also seen as a potential avenue for promoting dialogue and negotiation for a peaceful resolution of grievances. Facilitating constructive dialogue and encouraging confidence-building measures could contribute to reducing tensions and promoting reconciliation. Ultimately, proponents of this approach argue that India's role should be to promote peace, stability, and respect for human rights in Balochistan and the wider region. This, they suggest, can be achieved through diplomacy and peaceful dialogue, prioritizing the needs and concerns of all parties involved.

2022 highlighted the effectiveness of this collaboration in destabilizing the region.

Furthermore, the history of Baloch separatists collaborating with ideologically diverse groups like the Islamic State and al-Qaeda suggests that the alliance with the TTP may evolve and expand in the future. As such, monitoring and resolving this alliance remains a critical component of Pakistan's counterinsurgency efforts in Balochistan.

Cohesion and leadership within Baloch nationalist groups affect the likelihood of armed struggle. Internal divisions, competition, or leadership changes are unlikely to significantly affect a group's ability to organize and sustain a militant campaign.

Dangerous Future

Predicting the possibility of future armed conflict in Balochistan is challenging due to the complexity and dynamism of the situation. Several factors can influence the trajectory of conflict, including the response of the Pakistani and Iranian governments to Baloch

grievances and demands for greater autonomy or independence.

More inclusive and conciliatory approaches by the governments can reduce tensions and the likelihood of armed conflict. However, continued repression or neglect of Baloch concerns may fuel further unrest.

Geopolitical factors, including the interests of neighboring countries and global powers, can also influence the situation in Balochistan. Support or intervention by external actors can exacerbate or de-escalate the conflict depending on their strategic goals and alliances.

Socioeconomic development initiatives in Balochistan can address some underlying grievances of the local population, potentially reducing support for militant groups. However, it is argued that if development efforts are perceived as exploitative or insufficient, they can exacerbate tensions.



PROPERTY PRICES BOOM IN AYODHYA

From **Tata to Lodha Group**,
all are launching mega
hotels and townships



Ram temple has been reinstalled in Ayodhya almost 500 years after Mughal emperor Babar dismantled it. Today, Ayodhya is on the lips of everyone in the country. The rising rate of pilgrims is boosting the local economy. That's widely visible in property prices, which have increased by 10 fold in the past five years alone.



① **Narayan Ammachchi**

Property prices in Ayodhya are skyrocketing, as tourism industry bigwigs make huge bets on the historical city following the inauguration of the Ram temple.

It is no longer the same Ayodhya you visited decades ago. Well-asphalted roads, an international airport, and LED photos of Lord Shri Ram with a bow in hand all beckon visitors to Ayodhya.



Roads across Ayodhya are being upgraded to international standard, with the Uttar Pradesh government pouring thousands of crores of rupees on infrastructure.

Lodha Group, for instance, reportedly purchased 25 acres of land approximately seven kilometers from the temple. When construction began, the land price was Rs 15,700 per square foot. Today, a single residential plot on that land costs nearly Rs 2 crore.

As a result, property prices in Ayodhya have increased more than tenfold in the past four years. The inauguration has pushed the prices even higher.

In 2019, a commercial plot on the Lucknow-Gorakhpur highway leading to New Ghat near Ram Mandir would cost barely 2 crore rupees. Today, the property owners would not sell it for even 5 crores. That's the difference in a span of four years.

Everyone expected a huge surge in real estate prices, but no one expected the prices to increase to such a significant extent, says Rajesh Sharma, a property broker in Ayodhya.

Despite the skyrocketing prices, the government has not increased the registration rate, also known as the "government rate" by market analysts. This fixed rate, set by the district administration, has remained unchanged since 2017. Both buying and selling, as well as stamp duty paid to the government, are based on this rate.

Data from the Department of Stamp and Registration shows a significant increase in property registrations. Between April 1, 2017, and March 31, 2018, the district registered 13,542 properties. This number jumped to 22,478 in



Rising property prices have also led to regrets among some who have sold their land in Ayodhya. For instance, one of Rajesh's friends owned a 2,000 square foot commercial property six kilometers from the temple. He sold it in 2021 for 65 lakh, but within two years, the price has soared to over 1.5 crore, leaving him with a sense of missed opportunity.

2021 and further to 29,000 in 2022, representing a rise of over 50% in the past five years.

Areas surrounding the Ram temple are considered a secured zone, limiting new real estate development. Land that was available for Rs 2,000 per square foot just four years ago is now unavailable even at Rs 15,000 per square foot.

The surge in property prices extends beyond the temple area, encompassing the entirety of Ayodhya and its surrounding districts. Farmers

who previously used bighas (approximately 27,000 square feet) to describe their land within a 15-20 km radius of the temple have shifted to biswas (1361 square feet) and now even square feet, reflecting the changing market dynamics. In the past three to four years, all land measurement parameters have undergone a significant transformation.

Properties that cost Rs 300 per square foot a decade ago can now command prices exceeding Rs 5,000 per square foot, representing a more than tenfold increase.

Prior to July 2022, Ayodhya lacked a formal town plan. This year, the government unveiled the 'Ayodhya Mahayojana 2031' master plan, which has made obtaining municipal permission mandatory for all construction activities.

The master plan encompasses 133 square kilometers of land surrounding the temple. Each land category is now clearly designated with different colors on a dedicated map.

Additionally, the government has designated approximately 3,000 acres near the temple as a green belt, prohibiting any construction activity within this zone. Consequently, development has

Ayodhya airport





Ayodhya airport



Ayodhya town

surged on the opposite side of the Saryu River.

"The government commenced work on roads, airports, railway stations, hospitals, and extensive infrastructure projects, including drainage systems, alongside the temple construction," Rajesh further elaborated.

Currently, 26 departments of the Uttar Pradesh government are actively involved in completing 187 projects valued at approximately ₹30,000 crores in Ayodhya. The City Development Authority spearheads 54 projects, followed by the Urban Development Department with 35 and the Tourism Department with 24.

Property prices witnessed a sudden surge as

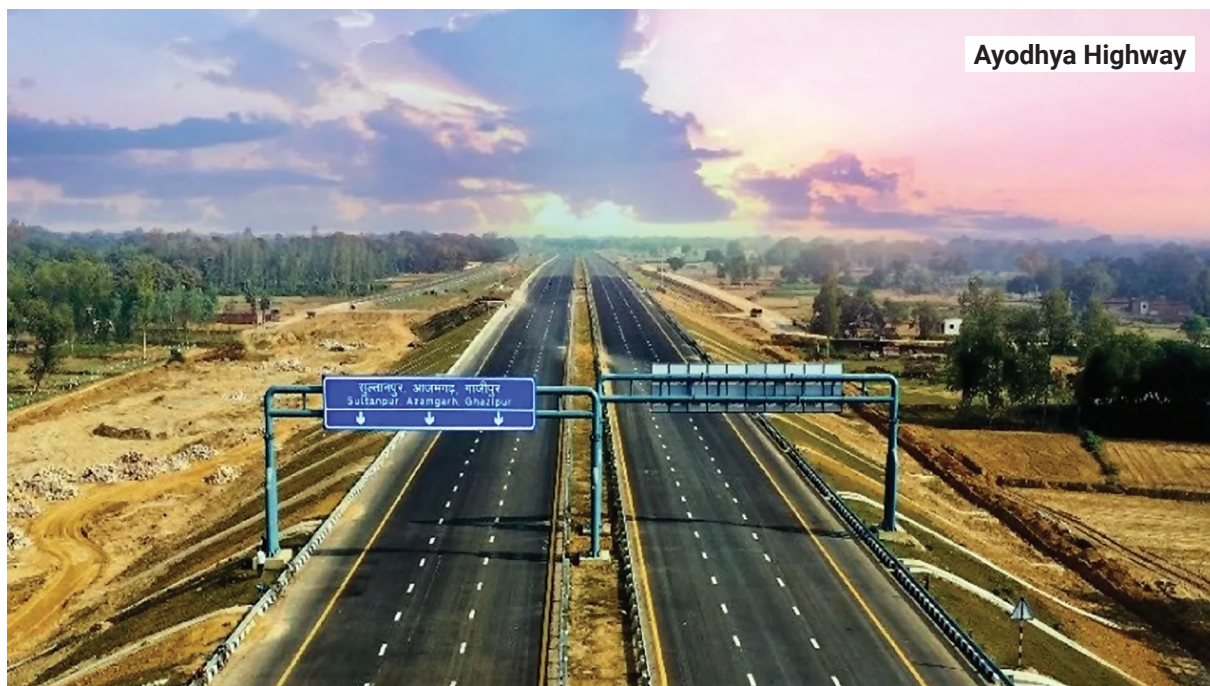
the temple inauguration approached.

Lodges and Resorts galore

Major players in the hospitality industry have acquired thousands of acres of land across Ayodhya. The government itself has purchased 1,900 acres for developing modern townships.

Leading companies like Lodha Group, Taj Group, Hyderabad Group, and Tirupati Balaji Group from Mumbai are investing heavily in constructing hotels and resorts in the city.

Lodha Group, for instance, reportedly purchased 25 acres of land approximately seven kilometers from the temple. When construction



Ayodhya Highway



began, the land price was Rs 15,700 per square foot. Today, a single residential plot on that land costs nearly Rs 2 crore.

Beyond real estate companies, religious institutions like mutts and dharmacharyas are also actively acquiring land to establish their presence in Ayodhya. Uttaradhi Math of Udupi, for example, has purchased land to build an ashram. Reports suggest they acquired approximately 13,000 square feet of land, located roughly one and a half kilometers from the Ram temple. The Udupi Mutt reportedly plans to offer free lodging facilities to its devotees.

In total, over 100 major companies, primarily from the hospitality and real estate sectors, have established themselves in the city. These companies are actively acquiring properties, often at record prices, leading to a scarcity of available land.

The implementation of the master plan has necessitated the relocation of some small industries to designated areas. However, these businesses are facing challenges finding suitable

land for purchase in the vicinity.

Rising property prices have also led to regrets among some who have sold their land in Ayodhya. For instance, one of Rajesh's friends owned a 2,000 square foot commercial property six kilometers from the temple. He sold it in 2021 for 65 lakh, but within two years, the price has soared to over 1.5 crore, leaving him with a sense of missed opportunity.

This sentiment is shared by many local landowners. Another example involves an individual who sold a plot and purchased a house in Lucknow six months before the Supreme Court decision. While he received 80 lakh for the plot at the time, its current estimated value exceeds rupees 3 crore.

Local administration data indicates that approximately 7,000 people visit the Ram temple daily, with projections suggesting a potential surge to several lakhs in the future. Given this anticipated rise in footfall, predicting the future trajectory of property prices in this religious city remains challenging.



TMC: STUCK IN A QUAGMIRE OF CRIMINALS

Who is Sheikh Shahjahan?

Police in West Bengal are searching up and down for one small-time political leader: Sheikh Shahjahan. Newspapers in the state are brimming with stories about his potential whereabouts. As the search drags on, Chief Minister Mamata is feeling increasingly worried, with one Left leader suspecting that Shahajahan could be killed in an encounter to save the TMC.

📍 Kunal Chatterjee

For over two months, police in West Bengal have been searching for one person – Sheikh Shahajahan. For people elsewhere in the country, he might sound like a simple party worker. What they don't know is in West Bengal's chaotic political landscape, it is this kind of workers decide the fate of a political party. The more you have such workers, more will be the chances of you winning elections.





Sheikh Shahjahan

TMC, it seems , is using the same carrot and stick policy of CPIM to win elections. Its workers on the ground use both a 'helping hand' and weapon to control voters. If people continue to vote for the party, they may get the "helping hand', if they don't, using weapon would be inevitable.

Earlier in December, a team from Economic Directorate (ED) was beaten black and blue when they went to search the house of Shahajahan in connection with ration card scam. Officials had run to safety despite they had policemen to guard them. That's because the entire village appeared to pounce on them for interrogating Shahajahan.

The TMC worker has since gone into hiding. Police claim to be searching up and down for him, but he is nowhere to be seen. Meanwhile, a Left party leader wondered if Shahajahan could be killed



in a fake encounter to protect TMC from his sins.

There are little or no answers to questions such as where in Bengal he was born, who were his grandparents and what they did to make a living. Such are fundamental questions that clear the confusion over whether he is a Bangladeshi or an Indian. It is precisely these questions keeping Chief Minister Mamata Banarjee awake at night these days. Some locals say Shahjahan is a Bangladeshi and that he also runs Rohingya camps.

All that we know is that Shahjahan previously worked for Left MLA, Anant Roy, helping him win Muslims votes in border district. He is also suspected of smuggling wood and cattle from across the border. In West Bengal, any worker with both money and muscle power climbs up the party's ladder in no time. Shahjahan did the same.

Local people said that Sheikh Shahjahan and his family came to India illegally from Bangladesh by crossing the river in the nineties. In those days, everything was under the control of the Left. Sheikh Shahjahan met with Moselem Sheikh, the leader of the then-ruling party. Sheikh entrusted Shahjahan with the work of taking control of the fisheries from Congress leaders and workers. He soon won the hearts of the top leadership of CPI(M) by faithfully fulfilling that duty. After that, he never looked back.

The political landscape shifted in 2011 when Trinamool Congress came to power. In 2014, Trinamool leaders raised allegations against Shahjahan of booth capturing and rigging.

Soon, Shahjahan's followers left him after being encumbered with lawsuits. Increasingly cornered, Shahjahan joined the Trinamool using his friendship with Jyoti Priya Mallick, then Food Minister in the state.



WILL SHAHAJAHAN BE KILLED IN ENCOUNTER?

CPI(M) State Secretary Mohammad Salim has expressed fear that the state government might kill Shahjahan.

“Trinamool leaders should understand that Mamata Banerjee will only protect her nephew and not anyone else”, Salim told reporters recently.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee is trying hard to belittle the case. She even tried to brush aside the case, saying that RSS was behind the entire episode. But there are no takers for such allegations, because she gave no evidence to back up her words.

Shahjahan played a significant role in consolidating minority votes for Trinamool candidate Nusrat Jahan in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, contributing to her victory. He subsequently won the panchayat and district council elections himself.

However, Shahjahan's name surfaced in a ration corruption case investigated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). During a raid on his house, three ED officials were injured, including one who sustained a head injury and required hospitalization.

In the affidavit filed by him at the time of Panchayat elections of 2023, he owned three palatial houses, 17 vehicles, several fish ponds, two brick kilns, and 14 acres of land. Their value was said to be Rs 4 crore. In addition, he has gold jewelery worth Rs 2.5 crore and cash worth Rs 1.92 crore in bank accounts. He declared his annual income as Rs 20 lakh.



Shahjahan's disappearance has sparked anger and accusations in Sandeshkhali. Villagers, particularly women, have alleged years of torture and physical assault by TMC leaders and their associates. Multiple women have filed complaints accusing Sheikh Shahjahan and other local TMC leaders, like Shibaprasad Hazra and Uttam Sardar, of sexual assault. The situation in Sandeshkhali remains tense, with the police continuing their search for Shahjahan.

Mamata's government uses drones to keep track of BJP leaders, but why drones are not used to find Shah Jahan, asks BJP leader Suvendu Adhikari.

Shahjahan and his associates have illegally occupied over 1,000 acres of land belonging to marginalized communities, such as scheduled tribes. Adhikari cited specific instances of land grabs and urged villagers to pursue legal

It seems the village residents had almost become slaves in the hands of TMC party cadres, because they had taken control of their social and economic life. Going by the narration of the housewives, Sheik and his gang would call them to come to office for meeting "at 7 in the evening, 9 in the night, 10 in the night and even till 11 in the night." It was mandatory to go. If they did not go, their husbands would be beaten up the following day.

channels for justice while avoiding taking the law into their own hands.

He is of the belief that Shahjahan is still living in the area and could be apprehended if federal agencies, like CBI, conduct a search with central forces. He also mentioned the possibility of Shahjahan fleeing to Bangladesh and called for vigilance from the Border Security Force (BSF).

While Sheikh Shahjahan remains at large, the arrests of his associates Shibu Hazra and Uttam Sardar have brought some relief to residents of Sandeshkhali. However, a sense of unease persists as long as Shahjahan himself remains unapprehended.

According to them, Sheikh Shahjahan is not



Shahjahan was at his house when ED officials came knocking on his door. As they were driven out by villagers, he slipped out and disappeared. He has since been on the run.

alone, there are many other goons in the village, whose torture has reached such a point that villagers have no way but to make the outburst. A woman complained, "He did not give any respect to the women and girls in the villages of Sandeshkhali. He and his men would call the girls to the party office at 11 in the night in the name of party meetings. The men in the houses would be tortured if any woman refused to abide by their orders. They are some girls who have been raped by them several times."

Residents of Sandeshkhali offer mixed perspectives on Sheikh Shahjahan's role in the community. Some villagers acknowledge his past actions in assisting residents during challenging times, such as providing shelter after a cyclone and distributing food during the COVID-19 pandemic. Others claim he established a Rohingya camp in the area. Notably, women were among those who protested the recent Enforcement Directorate raid on his residence.

During the last 10 years, Sheikh Shahjahan not only became powerful and wealthy, but a whole market was also built in his name. This market in Sandeshkhali is often crowded during the day. The story of his charity in this market is now all over the place.



CHASING A THIEF



In a scene straight out of a Bollywood thriller, Ahmedabad police have cracked a series of burglaries by going undercover as vegetable vendors. The dramatic operation led them to a remote village in Madhya Pradesh, where they nabbed the suspected mastermind.

Prathima

Imagine thieves disguised as painters, targeting newly renovated homes and then vanishing into thin air. This wasn't a Bollywood script, but the puzzling reality faced by Ahmedabad police last year. For weeks, they chased dead ends, their sniffer dogs leading them nowhere. But then, a golden scooter with a missing license plate became the key to unraveling a cunning plot and nabbing a gang of professional burglars.



Police disguised as vendors selling baloon & Onions & potattos

It all began in the upscale Chanakyapuri area, where a string of thefts left residents rattled. Jewelry, valuables – anything of worth seemed to vanish from houses that were recently painted. The pattern was baffling. Even CCTV footage offered little solace, showing only a fleeting glimpse of a thief.

One day, while the investigation was in progress, a lawyer's residence in Chanakyapuri was burgled, with jewelry worth rupees 1.5 lakh stolen. When compared with previous burglaries, police found a pattern: Only those houses that were painted recently were burgled.

One CCTV camera showed a thief breaking into a house. Local residents identified him as Anand Sharma, who was a painter from Madhya Pradesh. But Sharma was not a lone wolf. He was in fact a mastermind. He would bring in a gang from his village, execute the heist, and then send them back on the train before anyone suspects a thing. Now, he had vanished back to his village, seemingly untouchable.

Meanwhile, a CCTV footage revealed a golden scooter with a distinctive feature: a bent rear license plate and no front plate. This lack of

identification initially hampered the investigation. However, the rarity of golden scooters offered a potential advantage in tracking the suspect.

Analysis of the scooter's movements on CCTV showed it remained within Ahmedabad, but appeared in various locations. Further investigation identified the rider through CCTV, revealing he wore a scarf and likely originated from either Madhya Pradesh or Uttar Pradesh.

Further investigation identified the suspect through CCTV footage near a lorry stand. Examination of the golden scooter revealed it belonged to a panipuri vendor from the same village as the previously identified suspect, Anand Sharma. This established a connection between Sharma and the scooter.

Police then questioned the vendor about Sharma's whereabouts, leading them to his village in Madhya Pradesh. Bhadroli village, located in Gwalior district, presented challenges due to its remote location and narrow lanes. Additionally, Sharma rarely used his phone, which made tracking him difficult.

But the Ahmedabad Police were not the ones to give up easily. They embarked on a daring



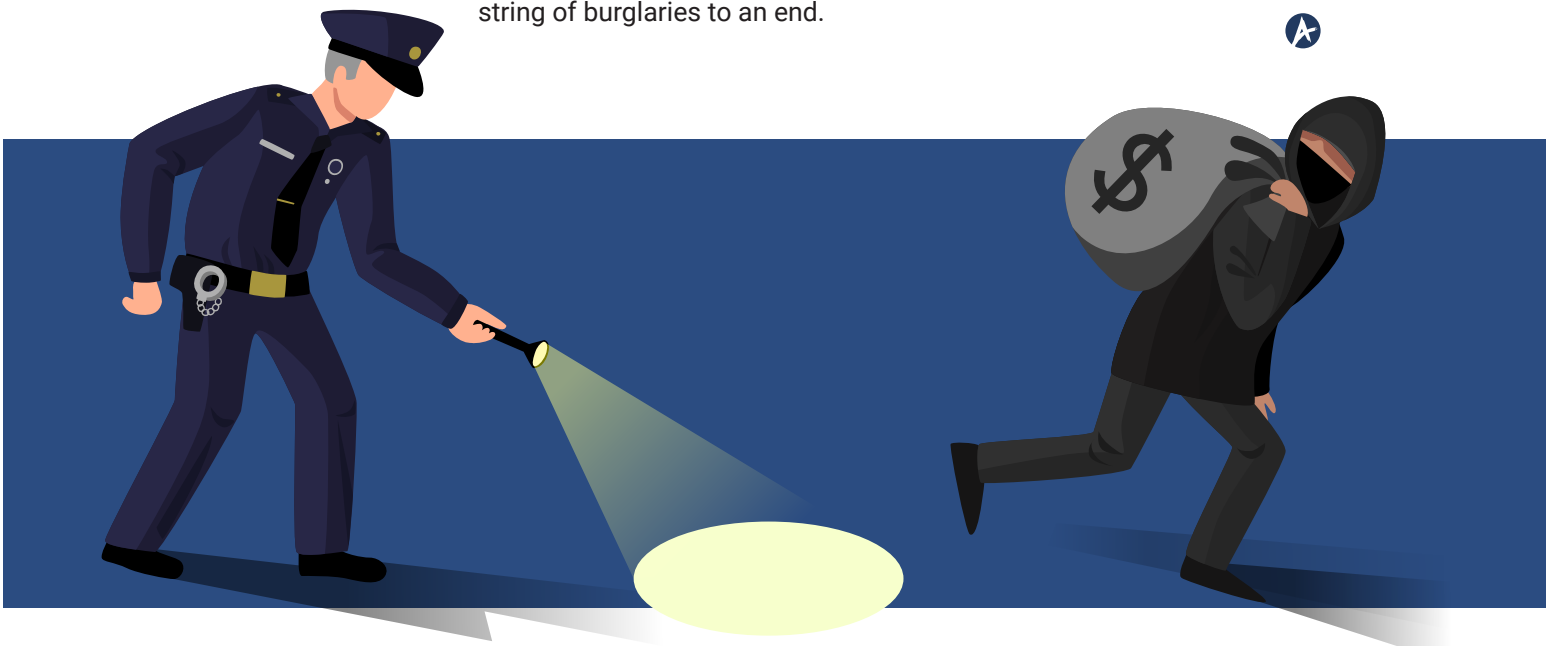
Behind the Bars

undercover operation. Disguised as vegetable vendors, they set up a stall near Sharma's usual tea stall in his village, hoping to lure him out. Days turn into nights, but Sharma, cunning as ever, avoids their trap, ordering tea at home instead.

Undeterred, the officers come up with a new plan. Posing as house hunters, they went to rent a place on Sharma's street, patiently waiting for their chance. Finally, their persistence paid off. Sharma emerged from his house, and in a swift operation, the police nabbed him, bringing his string of burglaries to an end.

The meticulous investigation, spanning four days, culminated in the successful capture of the suspect. Recovered stolen goods and Sharma's confession further solidified the case, leading to his subsequent remand to judicial custody.

This wasn't just about catching a thief; it was about outsmarting him. From CCTV analysis to undercover operations, the Ahmedabad Police displayed remarkable resourcefulness and determination, proving that sometimes, the best way to fight crime is with a touch of Bollywood ingenuity!





LETHAL US DRONES ARM INDIAN NAVY

🕒 **Wing Commandor Sudarshan**

You have heard of US drones that killed dozens of high-ranking Taliban and Al Qaida terrorists along Pakistan's porous border with Afghanistan. The United States has delivered these drones to India. These pilot-less birds will turn out to be deadly weapons in the armoury of Indian Navy.

The Indian Ocean Region (IOR) faces diverse security challenges, ranging from piracy and terrorism to human trafficking and illegal arms trade. The recent attack on MV Chem Pluto near Gujarat, a crucial shipping lane, underscores the region's vulnerability and emphasizes India's role as a net security provider.

This incident, along with others, highlights the need for robust security measures. Deploying drones, also known as Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs), offers a promising solution. These "eyes in the sky" can significantly enhance surveillance and response capabilities.

While India strives for self-reliance in drone manufacturing, past efforts haven't fully met defense force requirements.



Fortunately, the recent delivery of the "Drishti 10 Starliner" by Adani Defence and Aerospace marks a positive step towards indigenous production.

However, it's important to acknowledge India's emergency procurement of drones from the US and Israel. This highlights the need for further domestic development to fully address drone requirements and strengthen India's position as a security provider in the IOR.

India's ambitious foray into developing its first Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) class drone- TAPAS BH-201 by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has taken a nosedive with technical challenges regarding its weight, design limitations, and performance parameters becoming an issue. In the wake of this inordinate delay, the Indian Navy procured two Sky Guardian drones on lease from the US.

Drones from the US

These are High-Altitude Long Endurance (HALE) drones, which carry out surveillance across the vast Indian Ocean Region. Interestingly, despite

What are Drones?

Drones, also known as Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), are aircraft capable of flying without a pilot onboard.

They are remotely controlled via radio waves or autonomously following a predetermined route. Drones come

in various sizes and propulsion types, and they are often equipped with optoelectronic accessories for surveillance and monitoring purposes. One of the key advantages of drones is their ability to quickly get airborne and monitor designated areas or objects without requiring additional infrastructure.

They offer rapid response times for deployment and flight preparation. The development of UAVs traces back to aircraft primarily used by military and law enforcement agencies. The United States, the United Kingdom, Russia, Germany, and Israel were among the first countries to research UAV technology.



Indian Predator-drone

Setback for TAPAS

The TAPAS BH 201 unmanned UAV is designed and developed in response to the tri-services Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Tracking, and Reconnaissance (ISTAR) needs. The development of TAPAS is also crucial for the next phase of armed drones with greater capabilities which will reduce the dependency on importing ISTAR drones. The long-endurance capabilities of drones are vital for border surveillance amid escalating Chinese build-up across the border. The critical analysis of the TAPAS UAV project, particularly the TAPAS-BH variant, suggests that while it remains a

viable option, some significant challenges and shortcomings need to be addressed.

Despite achieving commendable milestones such as reaching altitudes close to the required threshold and demonstrating operational capabilities over land and sea, the UAV falls short in endurance and weight reduction targets. Thirteen years and close to Rs 1,800 crore later, the DRDO's Tapas BH-201 drone project failed to meet the military's specifications. Now, the effort is to make the drone airworthy with whatever capabilities it has achieved.

Navy operations, the drones were deployed along the western borders with Pakistan and northern borders with China as per other forces' requirements. As we advance, now India is procuring 31 of these drones.

The US State Department formally notified the US Congress of its approval of the sale to India of 31 MQ-9B Drones and associated military equipment worth \$3.99 billion, overcoming token resistance from some lawmakers. The proposed procurement will improve India's capability to meet current and future threats by enabling unmanned surveillance and reconnaissance patrols in sea lanes of operation.

Impact of Induction of US Drones

The induction of these ultra-modern and capable drones will largely enhance Persistent Maritime Domain Awareness (PMDA) which refers to the continuous monitoring and surveillance of maritime activities in a given area over an extended period. The MQ-9B SeaGuardian and MQ-9B SkyGuardian are remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) designed to enhance PMDA capabilities.

SeaGuardian is specifically tailored for maritime operations and is equipped with maritime sensors that can be easily attached

or removed as needed. It can operate over the horizon for more than 30 hours, utilizing satellite communication for extended range and endurance. Its sensors include a wide-area maritime radar, an automatic identification system, electronic support measures, and an anti-submarine warfare mission kit, enabling real-time surveillance above and below the ocean's surface.

SkyGuardian, on the other hand, is a versatile RPAS designed for persistent intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) missions worldwide. It boasts an impressive endurance of over 40 hours and is equipped with advanced sensors such as the Lynx Multi-mode Radar and electro-optical/infrared (EO/IR) sensor. SkyGuardian's longer wingspan and compatibility with various platforms and systems enhance its multi-domain mission capabilities.

Both SeaGuardian and SkyGuardian contribute to enhancing PMDA by providing real-time situational awareness, enabling joint forces and civil authorities to monitor maritime





About ATR in Chitradurga

Aeronautical Test Range (ATR), at Challakere in Chitradurga is an outdoor testing and evaluation facility set up by DRDO exclusively for unmanned and manned aircraft.

The ATR is under the command of the Aeronautical Development Establishment (ADE). The new facility was necessary since the Integrated Test Center at Kolar also in Karnataka was not enough and aircraft could not be flown at high altitude due to restrictions by the Bangalore International Airport Limited (BIAL). ATR, Chitradurga has a Range Control Centre (RCC) with an air traffic display system. It has a mission video distribution and display system. It has a Radar Centre which houses primary and secondary surveillance radars. It has two hangars that house unmanned aerial vehicles TAPAS- BH. The runway is currently 3.13 km long and can host take-off and landing from any end. Chitradurga ATR conducts the trials of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), air-to-ground weapons, parachutes, and aerostats. Challakere ATR will not test flights.

The new Rustom-II UAV is loaded with new features ready for the First Flight

activities effectively, day or night, in all types of weather conditions. These capabilities are crucial for maritime security, maritime law enforcement, search and rescue operations, and protection of maritime interests.

India's Requirement of Drones

Recently, Admiral R Hari Kumar, Chief of Naval Staff stated that the three services need 97 Medium Altitude Long Endurance (MALE) drones. Of that, the Navy has pitched for 20 of them.

Drones serve multi-purpose utilities like logistic delivery, disaster management monitoring surveying agriculture patterns, etc. One of the most important applications of drones is in the defence sector – the war in Ukraine has highlighted the significance

The use of drones, specifically the MQ-9B drones in the Liberian-flagged vessel MV Lila Norfolk hijacking incident near Somalia's coast (North Arabian Sea), on January 4, 2024, was an eye-opener for reasons more than one. Drones enabled continuous real-time surveillance of the hijacked ship, allowing authorities to monitor the situation closely without risking human lives. This continuous surveillance was crucial for gathering intelligence on the activities of the pirates and assessing the condition of the crew onboard. The data collected by the drones provided valuable insights into the layout of the hijacked ship, the number and movements of the pirates, and any potential threats or obstacles. This information was instrumental in devising a strategic plan for the rescue operation, including the deployment of resources and personnel. By providing real-time updates from a safe distance, drones helped minimise the risk to human life during the operation. This allowed the Indian Navy to maintain a safe distance from the hijacked ship while still effectively monitoring the situation and coordinating the rescue effort. Drones offered enhanced situational

awareness by providing live video feeds and imagery of the hijacked ship and its surroundings. This allowed decision-makers to make informed judgments and adapt their tactics based on the evolving situation in real-time. The intelligence gathered by the drones facilitated the Marine Commandos (MARCOS) in carrying out the Visit, Board, Search, and Seize (VBSS) operations with precision. The information provided by the drones enabled the MARCOS to plan and execute their operations effectively, leading to the successful rescue of all 21 crew members onboard, including 15 Indians. The use of drones in the MV Lila Norfolk hijacking incident provided critical support to the Indian Navy and Special Forces, enabling them to maintain continuous surveillance, gather vital intelligence, minimise risk, enhance situational awareness, and ultimately execute a successful rescue operation.

Navy Chief Admiral R. Hari Kumar had said that the Indian Navy is going to increase the number of warships deployed for anti-piracy and anti-drone activities in the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Aden.

of the technology in reconnaissance and surveillance missions.

Drones are the Indian Army's eye in the sky for watching the tense Line of Actual Control where a stand-off with the Chinese military continues. The Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force signed multiple contracts worth over Rs 500 crore last year in the sphere of drone technology. Then, too, Indian companies were prioritised following directives from the government. The Indian armed forces view drones as essential force multipliers and plan to procure additional units in the coming years for various applications. This presents an opportunity for India to strengthen its military drone ecosystem.

Bengaluru-based Defence Research and Development Organisation(DRDO) has been entrusted with the Research and Development of drones along with many other private start-up companies.

Since its first introduction to the military-industrial complex, drones have significantly changed defence and counter-insurgency operations. While the concept of an unmanned ground or aerial vehicle isn't new, it certainly provides enormous advantages. Drones have improved military capabilities around the world in many ways. It will also continue to change military warfare. India needs to catch up with the indigenous production of drones to stay ahead in the race.



KARPOORI THAKUR

He was CM twice, but never purchased & property

Karpoori Thakur, chosen for Bharata Ratna award, was a man of simplicity.

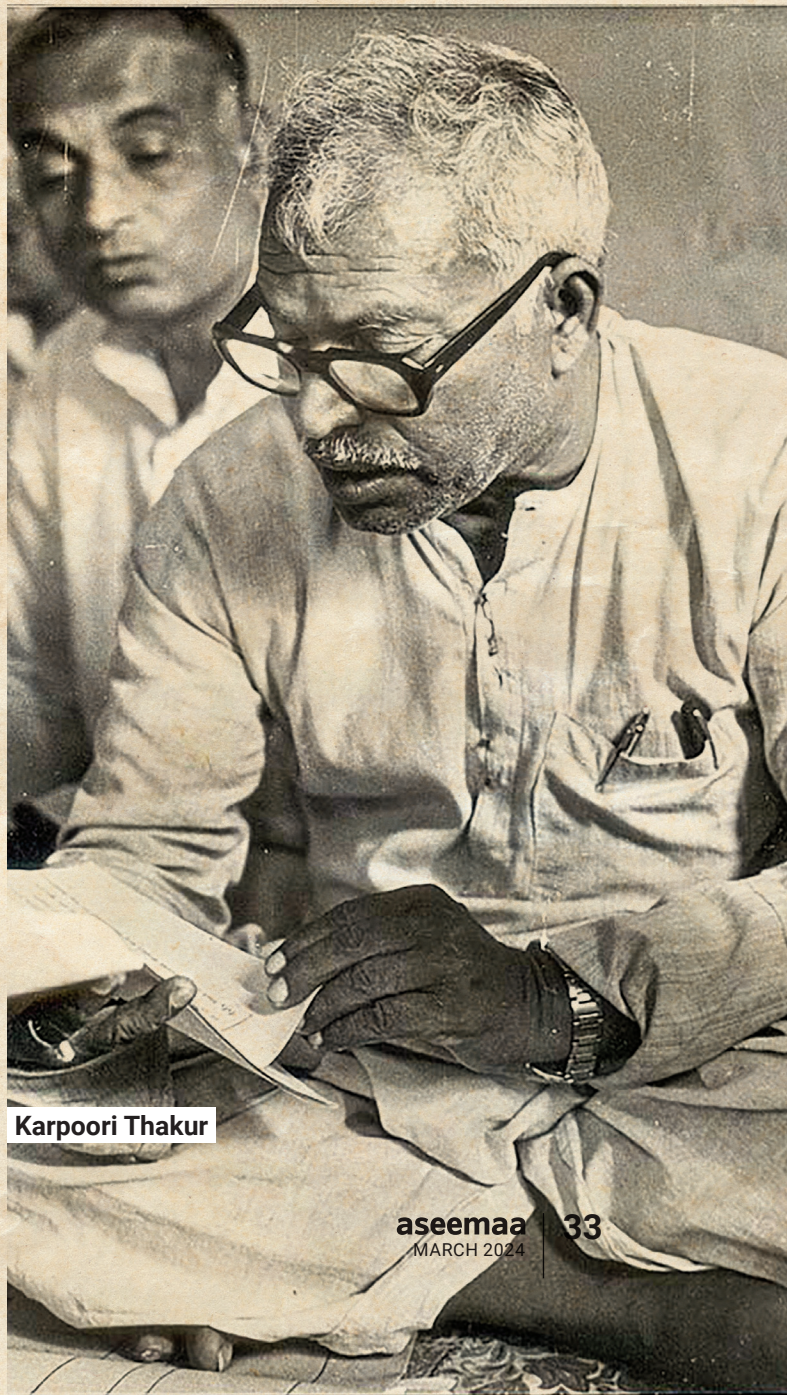
He was born into a poor barber's family. Even though he served ministerial positions for decades in Bihar, he remained poor, because he was never a corrupt neta. By the time he died, he was still living in a rented house in Patna.

🕒 Parikshit Dhume

Although he became chief minister twice, Karpoori Thakur did not build a house for his own. His father continued to run the barbershop despite his son had reached the highest position in the state.

That was simplicity of Karpooriiji, who has now been chosen for Bharat Ratna posthumously. Throughout his life, Takur never asked for a favor, never allowed corruption and never stopped serving for the poor and the downtrodden.

He was in fact a product of Bihar's vibrant socialist movement that flourished in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s. Born into a financially disadvantaged barber family



Karpoori Thakur

in a remote village, Karpoori Thakur remained grounded in his roots until his last breath. Even during election campaigns, he would connect with the people on a personal level, offering to shave them as a gesture of humility and empathy.

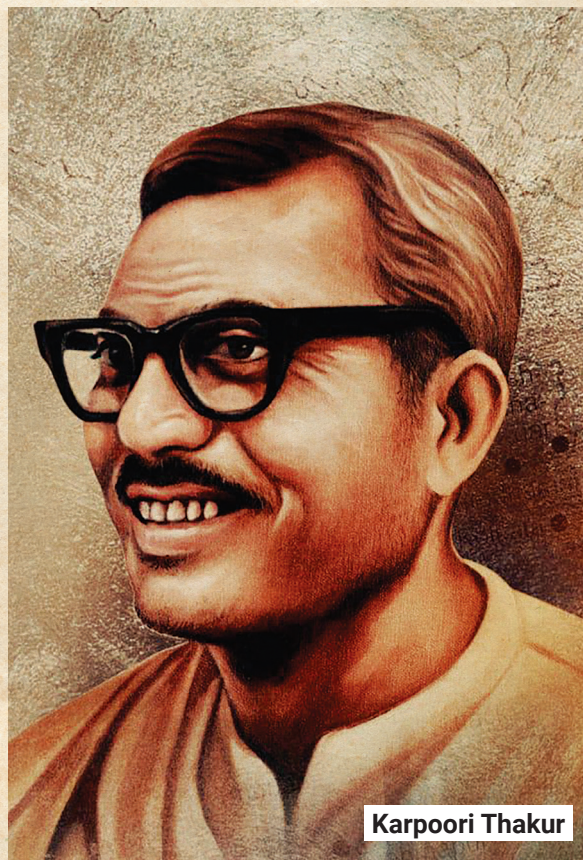
He famously abolished the compulsion of English in education, a move that empowered those previously marginalized by the language barrier. However, this decision also faced criticism, with some mocking those who struggled with English as belonging to the "Karpuri Division."

He brought immense relief to farmers by abolishing revenue tax on unprofitable land. His commitment to social inclusion extended to ensuring lift access in the Chief Minister's Secretariat for all employees, not just senior officials. Additionally, he championed the use of Hindi in government work, made education free for girls, and implemented the first reservation system in the Hindi belt, encompassing both backward classes and women.

These progressive policies, though well-intentioned, faced significant opposition, ultimately leading to the downfall of his governments. Ironically, some of those who now applaud him were among his fiercest critics back then.

Thakur actively challenged the rigid caste system prevalent in Bihar. He not only advocated for increased representation of backward classes in power but also personally attended inter-caste marriages, symbolizing his vision for a more inclusive society. His commitment to youth empowerment is exemplified by his large-scale employment drive, providing jobs to over 9,000 engineers and doctors – a record unmatched to this day.

Some people associated with him claim that when Karpoori Thakur was the Chief Minister, his relative, a brother-in-law, approached him for a job recommendation. Karpoori Thakur listened to him seriously. He then took out fifty rupees from his pocket and gave it to him, urging him to buy



Karpoori Thakur

a razor and open a barbershop, following their ancestral profession.

An incident from that period involves powerful feudal lords from his village attempting to humiliate his father. When the news spread, the District Magistrate rushed to the village to intervene. However, Karpoori Thakur stopped the District Magistrate from taking action. He stated that downtrodden and backward people face such insults in every village.

Another example is when Karpoori Thakur became Deputy Chief Minister or Chief Minister for the first time. He wrote a letter to his son, Ramnath. The letter contained only three points. He warned his son not to be swayed by his position and cautioned him about potential defamation.

While Ramnath Thakur may be involved in politics today and may have benefited from his father's name, Karpoori Thakur did not actively work to advance him politically during his lifetime.



The 'INIDA' has broken in West Bengal, with Congress Party's Adhir Ranjan Choudhary turning out to be the villain. Presence of Congress could make no difference to TMC. But the real losers are the other alliance partners, such as CPIM.

The I.N.D.I.A. alliance initially sparked hope as a potent counterweight to the NDA government under Prime Minister Modi. However, cracks are starting to show, raising questions about its viability before the 2024 general elections.

Congress' strategy of incorporating established parties into a united front seemed promising, but internal disagreements have cast doubt on this ambitious "UPA" alternative. Key regional leaders like Nitish Kumar (Bihar), Arvind Kejriwal (Delhi), Mamata Banerjee (West Bengal), Mayawati (Uttar Pradesh), and AAP (Punjab) remain outside the fold. While Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (Maharashtra) and Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (Uttar Pradesh) express conditional support, their full participation is uncertain.

Adding to the irony, Nitish Kumar, a key architect of I.N.D.I.A., has switched sides, joining hands with the BJP. His justification – "The grand alliance has ended, the Indian Union is facing challenges, and cooperation has failed" – reflects the fractured political landscape.

DIDI'S SOLO FIGHT IN BENGAL

Congress Party's Adhir Ranjan Choudhary Punches Hole in INDIA alliance



Mamata Banerjee



TMC to go Solo in Bengal

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has declared that the Trinamool Congress (TMC) will contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections in the state without an alliance with the Congress party. In a meeting with Murshidabad leadership and later to reporters, Banerjee expressed dissatisfaction with the Congress' handling of the electoral process, including the lack of communication regarding their yatra in West Bengal and their demands for more seats.

Banerjee stated, "We offered them two seats, but they wanted more. We will not go for seat-sharing in West Bengal and have decided to field our candidates in all 42 seats. Let the Congress

contest in 300 seats in India and let regional parties fight in the remaining seats."

While ruling out a pre-election alliance, Banerjee did not close the door on potential post-election collaboration: "After the results, we will all sit together and talk again."

Following Mamata Banerjee's announcement, the Trinamool Congress (TMC) confirmed its decision to contest all 42 Lok Sabha seats in West Bengal independently. This solo run in the state does not preclude their participation in the "India" alliance for national-level political activities.

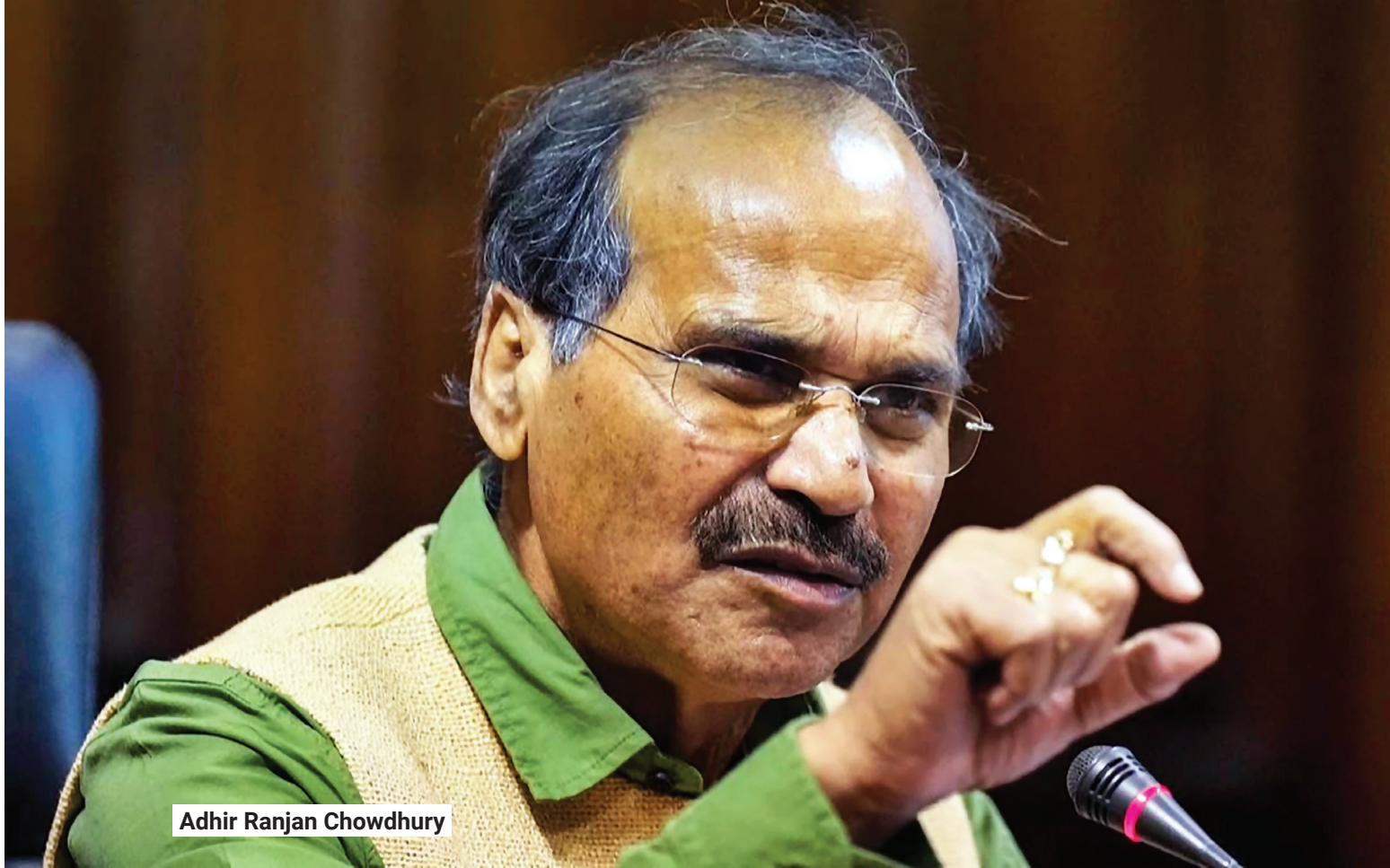
A crucial meeting with Murshidabad district leaders, attended by key figures like Banerjee, Abhishek Banerjee, and Firhad Hakeem, solidified the party's strategy. TMC MLAs, MPs, and local functionaries received instructions to prepare for the polls. While emphasizing the solo approach in West Bengal, the party reiterated its commitment to the "India" alliance at the national level.

Adhir is Villain

Political analysts offer insights into the decision. Malda North and South seats, considered challenging for TMC due to BJP gains, were initially offered to Congress. However, Congress' demands for more seats and persistent opposition from state president Adhir Ranjan Choudhary, who has long resisted the alliance, fueled concerns within TMC. Notably, Congress failed to win any seats in the 2021 assembly elections despite forming an alliance with CPI(M) and ISF. Choudhary's insistence on replicating that formula for the Lok Sabha polls could further complicate matters.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) spokesperson and Rajya Sabha member Derek O'Brien attributed the non-formation of a united opposition front in West Bengal to two factors: the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

O'Brien stated that the BJP's presence posed a significant obstacle, while Chowdhury's



Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

"impatience" and "parallel voice" hindered internal cooperation. He highlighted the perceived similarity between Chowdhury's statements and those of BJP leaders, suggesting a lack of commitment to a true alliance.

TMC sources revealed Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's dissatisfaction with Chowdhury's recent comments, particularly considering the Left parties' interest in contesting seats. They claimed Chowdhury's opposition to the Congress holding two seats in Murshidabad stemmed from personal motives.

Banerjee, however, expressed her determination to fight for the seat, emphasizing that TMC MLAs have consistently won in Murshidabad in the past five elections.

According to Congress sources, Mamata wanted to offer two Malda seats in the all-India meeting, but the Congress disagreed. They desired to contest from Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary's Baharampur constituency, which Mamata was unwilling to cede. This is where the discussion stalled.

After fulfilling her administrative duties in Malda, Mamata moved to Murshidabad. There, she stated, "I was in the Congress for a long time, but after being expelled, I formed the Trinamool Congress with the blessings of Bengal's people. The India Alliance will work for the good of the people. I initially proposed giving the Congress two seats in Malda, hoping they'd win both. However, they refused and demanded Baharampur, so Adhir, who supports the CPI(M), could contest. I rejected this outright, stating it wouldn't happen. I will not compromise and form an alliance in Bengal if it means allowing the CPI(M) through Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary. I cannot work with them. The CPI(M) has inflicted pain upon me, and I haven't forgotten."





"I named the alliance 'India,'" she continued, "but I must say, the meeting was controlled by the CPI(M). I know who I've fought against for 34 years." She criticized the CPI(M), stating, "We won't accept their words."

Taking a veiled jab at Rahul Gandhi, Banerjee said, "We have the courage to fight, but they won't let us. We dared to march with people of all religions during the Ayodhya Ram Mandir inauguration. How many parties dared to do that? We went to temples, mosques, gurdwaras, and churches. We went with all religions." She expressed frustration that the Congress leadership invited the CPI(M) led by Mohammad Saleem despite the lack of Trinamool support for their Nyaya Yatra.

Responding to this, CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty stated, "Mamata Banerjee doesn't

expect respect from us. She opposes the CPI(M) and aligns with the RSS. Why should we respect her now?" He questioned the Trinamool's credibility in opposing the BJP, claiming they lack importance in the India alliance and have no credibility in their fight. "Make it clear if you have credibility, or don't expect respect," he said.

Political analyst and professor Biswanath Chakraborty offered his opinion on the Trinamool's position: "The Trinamool Congress will never challenge the BJP nationally. They aim to disrupt the India Alliance, and they've begun already. However, the Trinamool fears Bengal's Muslims might vote for the Congress and CPI(M). They want to send a direct message to Muslims not to vote for those parties. The Congress, on the other hand, is falsely portrayed as uncommitted to fighting the BJP."



HAFIZ SAEED'S POLITICAL VENTURE

Mumbai terror mastermind, Hafiz Saeed is running a political party from his jail cell. The good news, however, is that his political outfit appears to have no future, as it failed to win all the seats it contested in recent general elections. It fielded many candidates; some of them were US-designated terrorists.

📍 NV Kamath & Balaji Subramanian

Hafiz Saeed, accused of masterminding the devastating 2008 Mumbai attacks, has seen his first foray into Pakistani politics fall flat. Hoping to secure a political future for his son, Saeed launched the Markazi Muslim League (MML), a party widely seen as a front for his banned extremist group, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD).

The MML faced immediate hurdles. Western sanctions and pressure from the Pakistani government, motivated by concerns over further terrorist activities, led to Saeed's imprisonment in 2020. This followed his sentencing to a combined 31 years by Pakistani anti-terrorism courts for financing terrorism. Currently under detention in Lahore, Saeed's attempt to legitimize his terrorist network through the ballot box faltered.





MML candidates, including relatives of Saeed and individuals previously linked to banned organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), JuD, and Milli Muslim League (MMI), struggled to gain traction. This echoes attempts in 2018 by JuD associates to participate in elections under the MML banner. Facing government opposition, the party's registration application was rejected by the Election Commission of Pakistan.

While MML itself is not officially banned in Pakistan, it faces significant international scrutiny. In 2018, the US Treasury Department, with State Department approval, designated MML a terrorist organization and placed seven of its members on the "global terrorists" list. Notably, four of these sanctioned individuals were MML nominees for seats in the Punjab and Sindh assemblies.

With its candidates failing to gain significant support and facing international pressure, Hafiz Saeed's political ambitions seem to have

been short-lived. This episode highlights the continued challenges posed by extremist groups attempting to gain legitimacy through political participation.

Meanwhile, several key terrorists who attacked India in the past year have been killed in Pakistan. There is no evidence as to how they were killed one after another. Some Pakistanis blame these killings on the Indian intelligence agency, but they do not have any evidence whatsoever. Furthermore, such acts of violence are meaningless outside the context of the Pakistan Army.

Candidates with terrorism tags who contested recent elections include Muhammad Fayaz Ahmed, Faisal Nadeem Sheikh, Muhammad H. Dar, and Jamal Iqbal Hashmi.

Talha Saeed, son of Hafiz Saeed, lost the recent election in Lahore's NA-122 constituency to Latif Khosa, a candidate backed by Imran Khan's PTI party. Khosa received 117,109 votes,

while Talha Saeed garnered only 2024 votes. Khawaja Saad Rafiq, representing the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, also contested the seat and secured 77,907 votes.

In previous elections, both Hafiz Talha Saeed and his son-in-law Hafid Nek contested seats unsuccessfully. The Milli Muslim League, considered an affiliate of Hafiz Saeed's banned organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa, was sanctioned by the United States in 2018. Talha Saeed attempted to participate in elections under this banner but was disqualified by the Election Commission. He later contested under the "Allahu Akbar Tehreek" party but failed to win.

In terms of religion and rituals, Pakistani citizens are generally faithful. However, religious belief should never be mixed with the activities of political parties. However, there is no evidence of religious parties erupting in violence during elections.

After the United Nations Security Council declared Lashkar-e-Taiba a terrorist group and, in April 2012, the United States offered a US\$10 million reward for Saeed's role in the 2008 Mumbai attacks that killed 166 civilians, Hafeez has been looking for ways to escape the global terrorist tag.

As part of his efforts to reinvent himself, Hafeez started Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), an Islamic charity involved in evangelical activities and da'wa in Islam. It is a religious platform inviting everyone to join Islam. From this platform, Hafeez tried to portray himself as a humanitarian. He tried to get rid of the extremist stigma attached to him. His new organization was solely engaged in providing social welfare services, education, and health services in Pakistan.

Who is Hafeez Saeed?

Hafiz Saeed, designated a global terrorist by the United Nations in 2008, is the alleged

mastermind behind the 2008 Mumbai attacks.

He holds two master's degrees, one from Punjab University, Pakistan, and the other from King Saud University, Riyadh.

Several countries, including India, Australia, Russia, the United States, the European Union, and the United Kingdom, have designated him a terrorist. India's National Intelligence Agency (NIA) also maintains a list of "most wanted" terrorists, which includes him.

Following his appointment to the Council of Islamic Ideology by then-President of Pakistan, General Zia-ul-Haq, Saeed established the organization Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD). He has been named in multiple cases involving financing terrorism and money laundering.

Interpol issued a red notice for his arrest in 2009, and he was apprehended by Pakistani authorities in 2019. He remains under detention, facing trial on these charges.

Political instability, internal disturbances, economic calamity, extreme poverty, corruption, and nepotism have provided ample opportunity for anti-social organizations in Pakistan to flourish under different guises. This volatile political landscape has allowed terrorist organizations to thrive.

Interestingly, all religious parties claim to represent Islam. One way to understand this phenomenon is to examine the ideology of Hafiz Saeed, who belongs to the Ahl-e-Hadith school of thought. This Islamic sect, or "school of thought," is influenced by the Wahhabi movement in Saudi Arabia.

Hafiz Abdullah Bahawalpuri, Hafiz Saeed's uncle and father-in-law, openly preached that democracy is incompatible with Islam. According to Bahawalpuri, Muslims should dedicate their lives to jihad.



BIHAR'S RAJNITISH

**How Nitish Kumar Manages to Remain
CM Despite Changing Allies?**

JDU led by Nitish Kumar has never formed a single-party government or fought elections independently. He has always relied on alliances to secure power, skillfully navigating between the BJP and the RJD. Neither has been able to strategically defeat him.

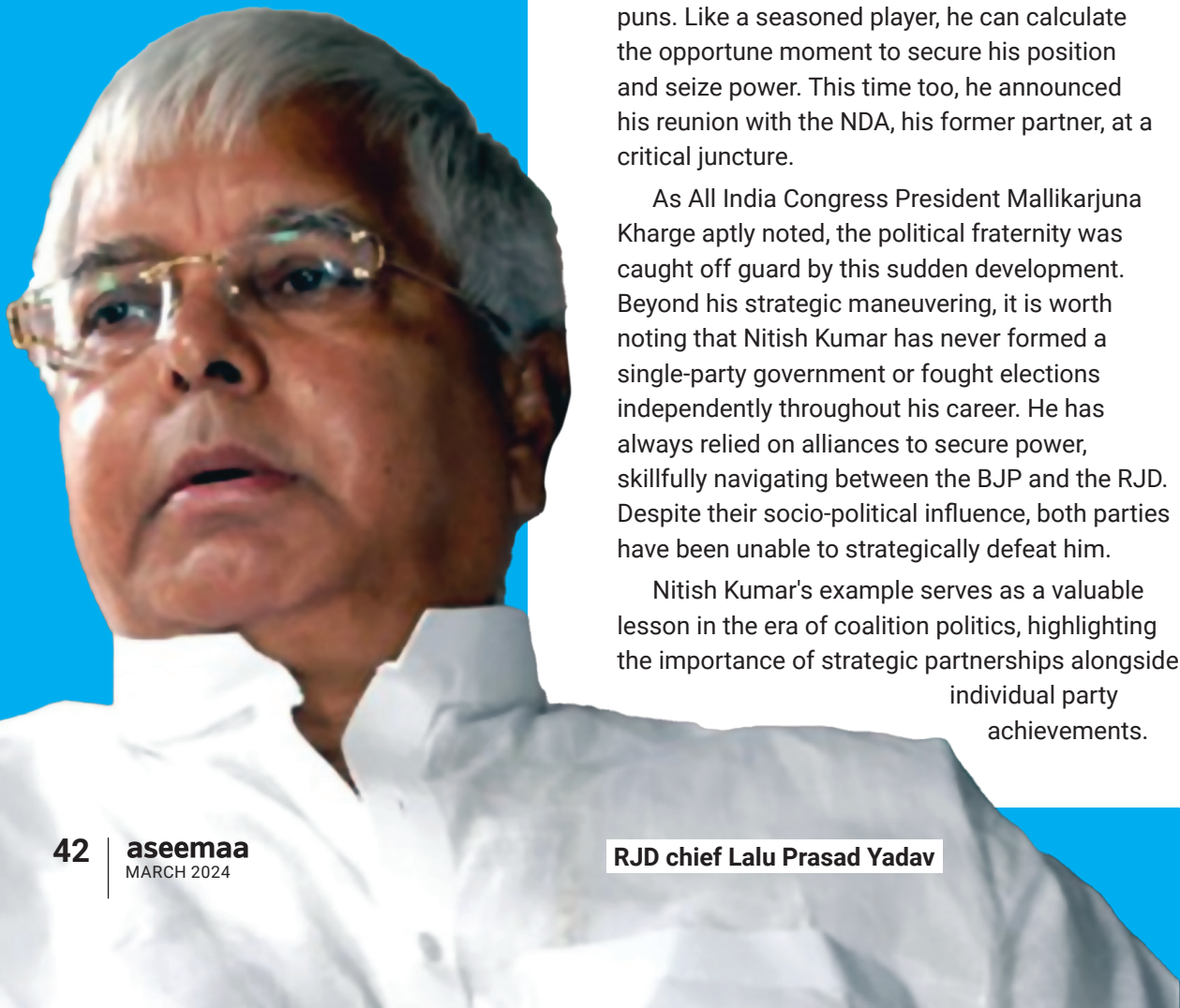
📍 **Kunal Chatterjee**

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has managed to retain power despite repeatedly changing allies in the past decade. Those who call politics the art of the possibilities must acknowledge Kumar's remarkable ability to navigate the political landscape. He has served as Bihar's Chief Minister for the ninth time, and his record of changing allies five times during his tenure is noteworthy.

His political acumen, particularly his astute timing and ability to forge strategic alliances, deserves recognition beyond mere satire and puns. Like a seasoned player, he can calculate the opportune moment to secure his position and seize power. This time too, he announced his reunion with the NDA, his former partner, at a critical juncture.

As All India Congress President Mallikarjuna Kharge aptly noted, the political fraternity was caught off guard by this sudden development. Beyond his strategic maneuvering, it is worth noting that Nitish Kumar has never formed a single-party government or fought elections independently throughout his career. He has always relied on alliances to secure power, skillfully navigating between the BJP and the RJD. Despite their socio-political influence, both parties have been unable to strategically defeat him.

Nitish Kumar's example serves as a valuable lesson in the era of coalition politics, highlighting the importance of strategic partnerships alongside individual party achievements.





BIHAR

Coalition-building is not merely a vertical exercise; it involves social engineering and navigating the complexities of caste dynamics. In this regard, Nitish Kumar's example also underscores the vast possibilities within caste-based politics.

The appointment of BJP leaders Samrat Choudhary and Vijaykumar Sinha as Deputy Chief Ministers of Bihar suggests a potential acceleration of the BJP's move towards the center of Bihar's political landscape. However, Nitish Kumar's core constituency, the backward communities, may not

necessarily be averse to this development. It is likely that the BJP can maintain the support of OBC/EBC communities, thanks to Nitish Kumar's influence.

From this perspective, before we delve into the question of how much Nitish Kumar has jeopardized the future of the India alliance, we need to revisit the fundamental issue. When the opposition alliance was formed, shouldn't the question have been raised about the true compatibility of the opposition leaders?

Nitish Kumar is not alone; several others within this alliance are adept at need-based politics, which, in fact, defines their core identity. The lofty hopes of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah's astute political establishment being thwarted by this collection of diverse, opportunistic leaders were perhaps unrealistic from the outset.



Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA)

At the same time, this evolving landscape of coalition and state politics has fostered a culture of opportunism in the country today. In mastering the intricacies of this culture, the BJP stands far ahead of the competition. RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav sought to disrupt the established caste-based politics by demanding the release of caste census data.

On that day, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, in a veiled criticism of Narendra Modi, stated, "Some individuals relish denigrating Bihar. This is precisely why the state is labeled 'sick.' Observe the prejudice embedded in their DNA. I have come to participate in the fight to safeguard the self-respect of Bihar's people."

At the time, Nitish required this secular backing. There have been similar instances in the past. Nitish has a history of switching allegiances, even before this latest instance. In 2013, Nitish Kumar's JDU formed a government in Bihar with the BJP as its ally.

However, when the BJP declared Narendra Modi as their prime ministerial candidate, Nitish was deeply disillusioned by this decision. He severed ties with the BJP, ending their 17-year

alliance. In the subsequent 2014 Lok Sabha elections, JD(U) suffered a crushing defeat while contesting alone. Taking responsibility for the loss, Nitish Kumar stepped down from his position as Chief Minister.

Following his defeat in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Nitish Kumar forged a new alliance with Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress party for the 2015 Bihar assembly elections. Despite winning the election, Kumar's party (Janata Dal (United) or JD(U)) did not emerge as the single largest party. However, Lalu Yadav, in a surprising move, offered the Chief Minister's position to Kumar.

However, this alliance proved short-lived. In 2017, amid corruption charges against members of the Yadav family, Kumar severed ties with the RJD and Congress, realigning with the BJP to form a new government.

The NDA alliance achieved significant success in the 2020 Bihar elections, but JD(U) secured fewer seats than the BJP. Despite this, Kumar retained the Chief Minister's post. In 2022, citing differences with the BJP on various issues, including the National Register of Citizens (NRC),



Mallikarjuna Kharge mention, the political fraternity was caught off guard by this sudden development. Beyond his strategic maneuvering, it is worth noting that Nitish Kumar has never formed a single-party government or fought elections independently throughout his career.

Kumar once again switched allegiances, rejoining the Mahagathbandhan.

He declared to reporters, "I will never again join hands with the BJP," even emerging as a prominent figure in the anti-BJP "India alliance." However, in a surprising turn of events, Kumar resigned from the Mahagathbandhan government in August 2023, marking his fourth alliance shift in a decade. He subsequently rejoined the NDA, citing humiliation and consultations with his party MLAs.

Defending his decision, Kumar stated, "I believe the India alliance is not viable, and I have faced repeated humiliation. After consulting with my party MLAs, I have submitted my resignation and joined a new alliance. I will continue as Chief Minister until the new government is formed."

Lalu Prasad Yadav attempted to woo veteran politician Jitanram Majhi, a former chief minister,

to join the grand alliance by offering him the deputy chief minister's position. However, Majhi, reportedly feeling disrespected by the offer considering Tejashwi Yadav's relative political experience, declined and joined Nitish Kumar's alliance.

Meanwhile, efforts by Amit Shah and JP Nadda reportedly thwarted Lalu's attempt to poach JD(U) MLAs.

The current Bihar government comprises the BJP, JD(U), Pashupati Kumar Paras' RLJP, Chirag Paswan's LJP, and Jitanram Majhi's HAM party. The long-term stability of this alliance remains to be seen.

Political analyst Prashant Kishor has predicted that Nitish Kumar might switch allegiances again before the 2025 assembly elections, potentially leaving the NDA.





WHEN ENTIRE RADIO TOWER DISAPPEARS OVERNIGHT!





In an outlandish heist straight out of a movie scene, a 200-foot radio tower vanished overnight from a station in Jasper, Alabama. On February 2nd, 2024, staff arriving at the station were met with the astonishing sight: the massive tower, vital for broadcasting, was completely gone.

“This morning, our crew discovered not only was our building vandalized, but our 200-foot tower was GONE!” shared a shocked Station General Manager, Brett Elmore, on the station’s Facebook page. “They stole every piece of equipment from the building, cut the guy wires, and somehow managed to remove the entire tower.”

The brazen theft has left authorities and

the community dumbfounded. The sheer size and weight of the tower, coupled with the meticulous dismantling required, make the crime even more inexplicable. Police are currently investigating the incident, searching for leads and suspects.

The station, while understandably frustrated, has maintained a sense of humor in the face of the bizarre crime. Their Facebook post concludes with a plea for information: “If you see a 200-foot tower lying around somewhere, let us know!”

This unusual news story underscores the audacity and complexity of modern-day crime. With the investigation ongoing, it remains to be seen if justice will be served and the radio tower recovered.



Nuclear missile found in US man's garage



WAR ERA MISSILE DISCOVERED IN WASHINGTON GARAGE



An unusual discovery surprised authorities in the US state of Washington. A neighbor purchasing items from an estate sale stumbled upon a rusted object in the garage: a war-era missile designed to carry a nuclear warhead.

Alerted by the neighbor, police investigated and confirmed the object as a Douglas AIR-2 Genie, an unguided air-to-air rocket used during the Cold War. Thankfully, the 1.5-kiloton W25 nuclear warhead and rocket fuel were absent, rendering it harmless.

“The item was inert and posed no explosive hazard,” clarified police. “Since the military didn’t claim it, we allowed the neighbor to keep it for potential museum display after restoration.”

The Air Force Armament Museum Foundation confirmed the rocket’s historical significance, highlighting its use by the US and Canadian air forces during the Cold War to intercept Soviet bombers.

“It’s unlikely we’ll encounter something like this again,” remarked police on Twitter, adding a rocket emoji to their statement.



BSNL EMPLOYEE USES GOOGLE MAPS TO RETRIEVE STOLEN MOBILE

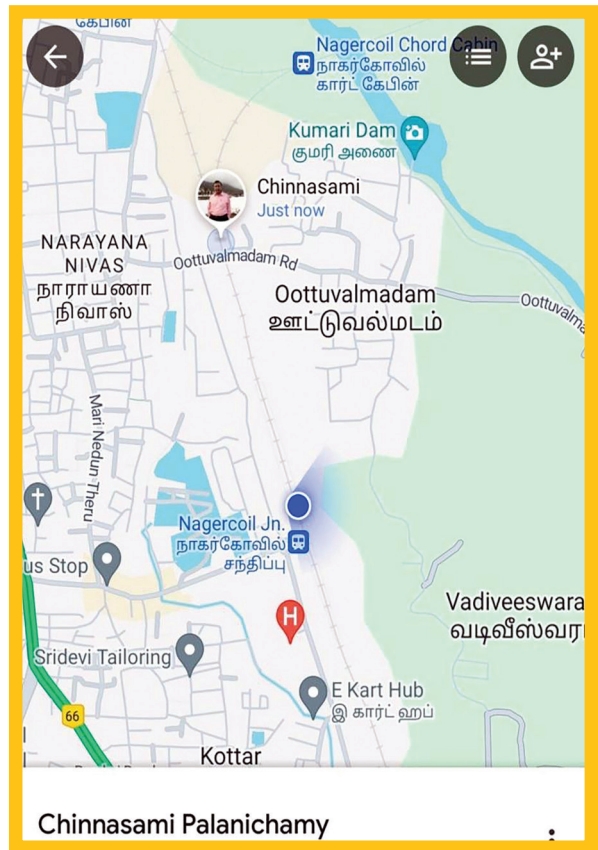
Imagine boarding a train, only to wake up and find your phone and bag vanished. That's the nightmare retired BSNL employee Palaniswamy faced when his belongings were stolen on a journey from Nagercoil to Trichy. But in a thrilling twist, his son, Raj Bhagat, used Google Maps technology to not only track the stolen phone but also apprehend the thief at the next station!

It was 1:43 AM on February 4th, 2024, when Raj received a frantic call from his father using a borrowed phone. Palaniswamy's usual phone, along with his bag, had mysteriously disappeared while he slept on the train.

"There wasn't much crowd at that hour," Raj explains, highlighting the vulnerability of the situation. "But thanks to a family habit of sharing our live locations on Google Maps, I had a glimmer of hope."

With a determined click, Raj accessed his father's location on the app. It moved, revealing the thief's path in real-time. The stolen phone was active! Acting quickly, Raj shared the live location with the Nagercoil Railway Police, setting a trap for the culprit.

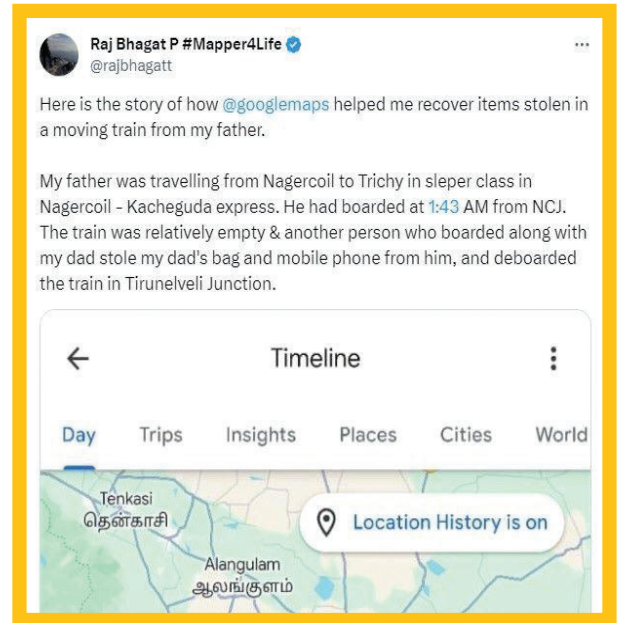
Meanwhile, realizing the phone was being tracked, the thief switched trains at the next stop, aiming to return to Nagercoil undetected. But Raj and a friend were waiting, thanks to the Google Maps update



revealing the thief's new trajectory.

"As the Kanyakumari Express pulled in, passengers flooded out," Raj recounts the final moments of the chase. "Suddenly, I saw the bag exactly where Google Maps pointed, and beside it, a man matching the description! With the help of the police, we apprehended him immediately."

This incredible story highlights the power of technology, quick thinking, and the importance of responsible phone use. It's a reminder that in the age of digital tools, even a stolen phone can become a beacon, leading not only to lost belongings but also to justice.



BARREN LAND YIELDS **MIRACLE** HARVEST IN TAMIL NADU

Imagine a plot of land, parched and unproductive for years, suddenly bursting forth with lush paddy fields. This isn't a fairytale, but the astonishing reality for farmer Jayaraj in Ambalapattu village, Tamil Nadu. What started as a standard paddy-growing effort on barren land took an unexpected turn, leaving even agricultural experts scratching their heads.

Jayaraj, determined to revitalize his land, invested his savings and meticulously cultivated TPS 5 rice seeds. While the initial harvest yielded a modest return, falling short of his investment, Jayaraj abandoned further efforts, focusing on his existing coconut plantations.

But nature had other plans. The rice grains left



behind sprouted on their own, defying the harsh conditions and lack of human intervention. Soon, a verdant carpet of paddy adorned the land, surprising not only Jayaraj but also neighboring farmers.

The news reached the Thanjavur Agriculture Department, sparking their curiosity. Joint Director Easwaran, upon confirming the miraculous growth, expressed, "This is an extraordinary phenomenon requiring thorough investigation."

This story is more than just a successful harvest; it's a testament to the resilience of

nature and the unexpected turns life can take. It raises intriguing questions about the soil's hidden potential and the possibility of natural, low-maintenance farming techniques.





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