

# THE RISING NATION



Truth First, Fact Always

**Cover story**

**The Golden Bed Trap: How Foreign Private Equity Is Quietly Pricing Average Souls Out of the Healthcare System**

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Truth First, Fact Always

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# Content

- 05** Special Story  
**BJP's Betrayal of RSS Philosophy: How Electoral Ambition Corrupted the Sangh's Vision of Inclusive Hinduism**
- 09** Special Report  
**87 Million Left Behind: Gen Z's Rage Is the Real Report Card on Viksit Bharat**
- 11** International  
**Two Unwanted Wars, One Heavy Bill: How They Disturbed the World and India**
- 15** Nature Disaster  
**When the Mountain Gave Way: Nepal's Catastrophe That Is Still Counting Its Dead**
- 18** Cover Story  
**The Golden Bed Trap: How Foreign Private Equity Is Quietly Pricing Average Souls Out of the Healthcare System**
- 25** Politics  
**Caution to BJP: Youth Discontent Narrowing Popularity Gap Between Modi and Rahul**
- 28** Technology  
**From Generators to Nuclear: How AI Data Centers Are Rewiring Industrial Manufacturing**
- 31** Agriculture  
**From the Fields of Hope: How Drones Are Sparking a Quiet Revolution for India's Small Farmers**
- 34** History  
**The Nanjing Massacre: Six Weeks of Hell That Still Echoes Through History**
- 37** Health - Ayush  
**A Calculated Isolation: The Far-Reaching Threat of Kerala's Separate AYUSH University to Ayurveda and India's Living Medical Heritage**

# Content

## Economy - Market

**40** ₹30,000 Crore Tax Robbery Every Year: Dabba Trading's ₹100 Lakh Crore Daily Racket Bleeds India

## Lifestyle

**42** The Psychology of Lovemaking: How Satisfying Intimacy Supports Stress Regulation, Memory and Healthy Ageing

## State - Bihar

**47** The Six-Year-Old Stood in the Mud and the State Finally Had to Hear Him

## Health

**48** Acupuncture a Neurobiological Therapy: Bridging Body and Mind through Somatosensory System

## Environment

**51** 46 Strongest El Niño in a Century — India's Monsoon Already 13% Short

## Sports

**54** The Night St. Louis Bowed to Chennai

**55** News Desk

## Opinion

**58** Dimagi Naxali: The Reed-Born Son Who First Cooled Neelkantha's Throat

**60** Editor's Diary



# BJP's Betrayal of RSS Philosophy: How Electoral Ambition Corrupted the Sangh's Vision of Inclusive Hinduism

By Siddharthan



Mohan Bhagwat's assertion at the "One World One Humanity" event in New York carries the weight of civilizational truth: "If any Hindu thinks that there should be no Muslims in Bharat, he will not remain Hindu." This is not diplomatic language crafted for foreign consumption. It is the authentic voice of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh — an organisation whose philosophical foundations have always rested on Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam, the ancient Hindu principle that the entire world is one family. Yet this voice, when heard against the cacophony of exclusionary rhetoric emanating from the Bharatiya Janata Party, exposes a tragic rupture: the BJP has systematically abandoned the moral and civilizational moorings that the RSS laid down for it, pursuing instead a narrow politics of majoritarian anxiety that betrays everything the Sangh stands for.

The tragedy lies not in the RSS's philosophy — which remains generous, plural, and rooted in India's greatest civilizational traditions — but in the BJP's deliberate departure from it. To understand this distinction is to defend the RSS from unfair conflation with its wayward political offspring, and to hold the BJP accountable for corrupting a movement it no longer truly represents.

## The RSS: A Misunderstood Guardian of Liberal Hinduism

Truth First, Fact Always

The RSS has endured decades of caricature by critics eager to paint it as the ideological engine of Hindu exclusivism. This narrative, politically convenient as it is, obscures a more complex and ultimately more generous reality. The Sangh's understanding of Hinduism has never been sectarian or territorial. Rather, it is rooted in a sophisticated civilizational vision that recognises Hindu thought as inherently pluralistic — a philosophical and spiritual tradition capacious enough to hold within itself myriad expressions of faith, practice, and belief.

Consider the actual doctrine of the RSS. The Sangh has consistently articulated that Hinduism is defined not by doctrinal uniformity but by a shared civilizational inheritance — a commitment to dharma (righteousness), arthashatra (statecraft), and the fundamental dignity of all beings. This is why, throughout its history, the RSS has maintained that India's greatness lies precisely in its ability to shelter the persecuted, the displaced, and the different. The ancient texts that animate Hindu thought — the Upanishads, the Brahmasutra, the Bhagavad Gita —

speaking repeatedly of universal consciousness, the interconnection of all existence, and the spiritual equality of all souls before the divine.

Bhagwat's New York statement is not a departure from RSS orthodoxy; it is its quintessential expression. A Hindu who denies space to Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, or any other faith tradition is, by the Sangh's own measure, abandoning the very civilizational heritage that defines Hinduism. This is not soft-peddalling for international audiences. This is the RSS speaking its deepest truth.

The tragedy is that the world — and worse, sections of India's political establishment — have conflated this liberal, philosophically grounded vision of Hinduism with the exclusionary, majoritarian politics that the BJP has come to champion. The RSS is not the villain in this story. The BJP is.

The BJP's Rupture: When Politics Devoured Philosophy  
The Bharatiya Janata Party was born from the RSS's vision. Its early leaders — L.K. Advani, Atal Bihari Vajpayee — maintained, however imperfectly, a connection to the Sangh's civilizational framework. But over the past fifteen years, particularly since 2014, the BJP has undergone a fundamental transformation. It has ceased to be a political expression of RSS philosophy and has instead become an electoral machine optimised for a very different purpose: the mobilisation of majoritarian anxieties and the transformation of Hindu identity into a tool of political control.

demographic diversity itself as a civilisational threat — invoking spectre of "infiltration" and "replacement" to justify policies that explicitly marginalise minority communities. These are not innocuous political positions. They represent a direct and fundamental rejection of the RSS's core principle: that India is a home for all traditions and faiths. When Sarma speaks of restricting minority space through administrative fiat, he is not defending Hindu civilisation. He is betraying it.

Union Minister Nishikant Dubey has similarly used parliamentary platforms to amplify demographic anxieties in language that, while stopping short of explicit incitement, creates a climate of fear and exclusion around religious minorities. This rhetoric — repeated, deliberate, and amplified through state machinery — sends an unambiguous message to India's Muslim citizens: you are not fully part of this nation. You are a tolerated guest, at best. This is the antithesis of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Sambit Patra, the BJP's aggressive and articulate spokesperson, has built a media presence on the systematic weaponisation of communal division. His interventions are carefully calibrated to inflame rather than enlighten, to polarise rather than unite. Yet he remains not merely a party voice but a respected figure within the BJP hierarchy — because his brand of politics has become the party's default language.

These are not fringe voices in the BJP. They represent the party's operational philosophy. And crucially —

this is the point the Sangh has failed to forcefully articulate — they speak against everything the RSS stands for.

### **The Sangh's Painful Dilemma: Owned by Deeds It Did Not Commit**

The RSS faces an almost unbearable predicament.. Because the BJP is perceived globally and domestically as the political wing of the Sangh , every act of

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has repeatedly deployed language that frames

communal exclusion performed by a BJP leader is reflexively attributed to RSS ideology. The Sangh's philosophical commitment to inclusion is routinely

dismissed as PR, while the BJP's exclusionary politics are treated as the "real" agenda of the movement. Mohan Bhagwat and the senior leadership of the RSS did not author the policies that have made minorities feel vulnerable in BJP-governed states. They did not frame demographic diversity as a threat. They did not deploy administrative machinery to shrink minority civic space. And yet, because the BJP is called the "political wing of the Sangh," the Sangh's reputation bears the scarring consequences of the BJP's choices.

This conflation has created a catastrophic erosion of the RSS's ability to articulate its own philosophy. When Bhagwat speaks of inclusion, he is immediately met with cynicism: "You say one thing to the world and do another at home." But the "other thing being done at home" is not the RSS's work. It is the BJP's. The BJP has captured the identity of the movement while rejecting its values.

### **The BJP Has Become Ideologically Autonomous**

Here is the uncomfortable reality that even sympathetic observers of the nationalist movement must confront: the BJP has outgrown any meaningful ideological subordination to the RSS. The party is no longer taking direction from Nagpur. On the contrary, it is the BJP that increasingly sets the political agenda, and the RSS that finds itself scrambling to offer philosophical benediction to a political beast it no longer controls.

The reasons are straightforward. The BJP discovered, through systematic experimentation over multiple election cycles, that communal polarisation delivers votes. Fear sells. Anxiety mobilises voters with greater efficiency than philosophy. In the brutal arithmetic of competitive electoral politics, Mohan Bhagwat's nuanced articulations of inclusive Hinduism cannot compete with Himanta Biswa Sarma's raw invocations of demographic threat.

The BJP's leaders are not rebelling against RSS guidance because they hate the Sangh. They are simply operating according to a different logic — the logic of power acquisition and retention. In this calculus, the RSS's philosophical principles are viewed as luxuries that cannot be afforded in fiercely contested campaigns. The Sangh's calls for restraint, when they come, are received politely and then

ignored. The BJP has learned that it can pursue its own political agenda with relative impunity because the Sangh, constrained by its own institutional culture and the reality that formal censure would create unbridgeable rifts, will not formally sanction its wayward offspring.



This is the tragic dynamic: a political party has captured the brand of a cultural movement while systematically violating the movement's core principles. And the cultural movement, unable to effectively reclaim its own identity, watches helplessly as its name becomes synonymous with exclusion.

Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam as a Standard, Not a Slogan  
When Bhagwat invoked the ancient principle of universal oneness, he was not being poetic or diplomatic. He was articulating a binding moral standard — one that should govern not just individual virtue but collective political action. Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is not a sentiment to be expressed in New York and compartmentalised at home. It is a civilisational commitment that demands every act of policy, every utterance of leadership, every administrative decision be measured against a single question: Does this honour the truth that the world is one family? Does this treat every citizen, regardless of faith, as a full and equal member of the Indian home?

By this standard, the BJP's exclusionary agenda fails utterly. Policies designed to marginalise minorities, rhetoric designed to stoke communal fear, administrative action designed to shrink the civic space of non-Hindus — these are not expressions of the Hindu civilisational tradition. They are violations of it. And the RSS, by remaining silent or offering only



The BJP's leaders who pursue exclusion are not custodians of Hindu civilisation. They are, by Bhagwat's own articulation, people who have stepped outside the very tradition they claim to defend. They have chosen a narrower, more tribal identity over the vast, generous inheritance of Hindu thought.

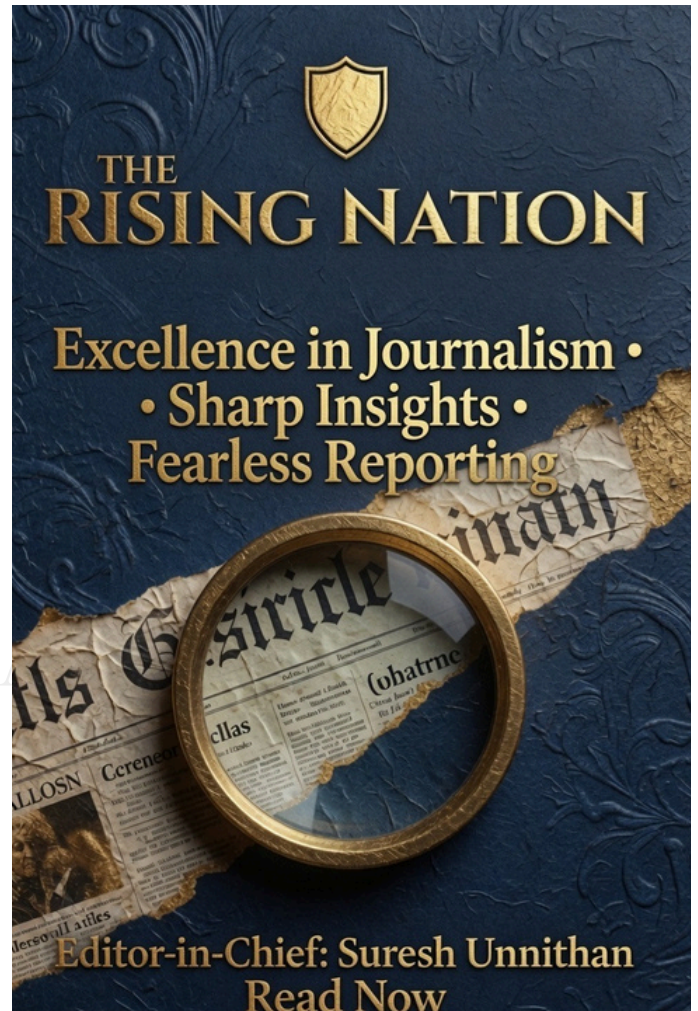
#### What India Needs

If the Sangh is serious about its philosophy, it must now do what it has hesitated to do: clearly, unambiguously, and publicly distinguish itself from the BJP's exclusionary politics. The Sangh does not need to formally break with the BJP. But it does need to formally and clearly repudiate the exclusionary agenda being pursued in its name.

This would require institutional courage. It would require Mohan Bhagwat to use the same clarity in Nagpur that he deployed in New York. It would require the RSS to accept that defending its philosophical integrity may mean accepting estrangement from its political offspring. But it is the only path through which the Sangh can reclaim its own identity and vindicate the civilisational vision it has always genuinely held.

The world does not need the RSS to be softer or more accommodating. It needs the RSS to be honest — to say clearly that the BJP's exclusionary politics are not its politics, that inclusive Hinduism is not compatible with majoritarian fear-mongering, and that Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam is not merely a slogan but a binding moral standard.

Until it does, the tragedy will persist: a philosophical movement of genuine generosity will continue to be conflated with a political party of deliberate divisiveness. The RSS deserves better. India deserves better. And most of all, India's minorities deserve a clear voice from the Sangh saying: you are not outsiders in this civilisation. You never were. And any politics that suggests otherwise has abandoned the deepest truths of what we claim to stand for.



# 87 Million Left Behind: Gen Z's Rage Is the Real Report Card on Viksit Bharat

By Suresh Unnithan



The streets already knew what the report just confirmed.

While Gen Z filled Jantar Mantar, forced an education minister to resign, and turned “cockroach” into a battle cry, NITI Aayog quietly released the numbers that explain the anger: 8.7 crore young Indians aged 15–29 are NEET — Not in Education, Employment, or Training.

That’s not a statistic. That’s almost one in four of India’s youth sitting outside the system the country keeps celebrating as its “demographic dividend.”

## The Unemployment Numbers Behind the Anger

Official data makes the picture sharper.

According to the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS), the annual youth unemployment rate (15–29 years) stood at 9.9% in 2025 — nearly three times the overall national rate. But the more recent monthly figures tell a harsher story: in June 2026, youth unemployment surged to 16.2% (Current Weekly Status), the highest since the new monthly series began, while the overall

unemployment rate hovered around 5.5%. Urban youth faced even steeper numbers, crossing 18% in some estimates.

The graduate crisis is worse. The Azim Premji University’s State of Working India 2026 found that nearly 40% of graduates aged 15–25 are unemployed. Among those aged 25–29, the rate is around 20%. Only about 7% of male graduates secure a permanent salaried job within a year of finishing college. Graduates now make up two-thirds of unemployed young people in the 20–29 age group.

NITI Aayog’s own report adds another layer: unemployment among all graduates is 13%, rising to 20.4% for graduate women. And only 8.25% of employed graduates work in roles that actually match their qualifications.

A degree no longer guarantees a job. A government exam no longer guarantees a future. For millions of young women, the only “work” available remains unpaid domestic labour — nearly 88% of the 8.7 crore NEET youth fall into this category.



## This Is Bigger Than Paper Leaks

The NEET exam scandal was the spark. The real fire is the realisation that the ladder itself is broken.

India is producing graduates faster than it is producing meaningful work. Families empty their savings on degrees and coaching centres. Once the money is gone, there is nothing left for actual industry-ready skills. The “sunk cost” of education becomes a cage.

You can't upskill when you're broke. You can't wait forever when the window of youth is closing. And you can't keep believing the slogan when the data shows the opposite.

## What NITI Suggests (and What It Misses)

The think tank's recommendations sound familiar: subsidised skilling for NEET youth and women, vocational training from Class 6, better alignment with local MSMEs.

## All useful. All incomplete.

Skilling without jobs is just expensive waiting. Training without industry absorption is just another certificate. India does not have a shortage of young people willing to learn. It has a shortage of formal, stable, decent work that matches the education it forces them to chase.

## The Real Question Gen Z Is Asking

The protests were never only about one leaked paper. They were about a generation that has done everything asked of it — studied, competed, sacrificed — and still finds the door locked.

Viksit Bharat@2047 sounds impressive on posters. But a developed nation cannot be built on 87 million young people locked out of both classrooms and workplaces, with youth unemployment rates that refuse to fall and graduate joblessness that remains stubbornly high.

The demographic dividend is not automatic. It is a time-bound opportunity. And right now, a huge part of that opportunity is sitting at home, scrolling, angry, and no longer willing to stay quiet.

Gen Z has already shown it can force a minister out. The harder question is whether the system can create enough real work before the anger becomes permanent.



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# Two Unwanted Wars, One Heavy Bill: How They Disturbed the World and India

By Team Rising nation



In the middle of 2026 the global economy is being reshaped by escalating geopolitical tensions and two tragic, grinding conflicts whose human costs are matched by multi-trillion-dollar economic damage. The United States–Iran confrontation that erupted in late February has turned the Strait of Hormuz into a high-risk, intermittently restricted chokepoint. At the same time, Russia’s war in Ukraine—now deep into its fifth year—continues to destroy capital, displace millions and threaten Black Sea shipping corridors. Together these events have produced the most severe disruption to global maritime logistics in decades, driven up energy and fertiliser prices, slowed world growth and exposed the acute vulnerabilities of energy-importing nations.

For India—the world’s third-largest oil importer with 85–90 per cent dependence on foreign crude—the consequences arrive through higher import bills, elevated fertiliser and logistics costs, pressure on the current account and rising input prices that feed into inflation and industrial competitiveness. This cover story examines the two conflicts in detail, quantifies their impact on global shipping and the wider

economy, and assesses the particular transmission channels into India.

## The Hormuz Crisis and the Collapse of a Critical Sea Lane

Physical damage compounded the shipping paralysis. More than forty energy assets across nine Middle Eastern countries were severely hit. Over 20 per cent of the region’s 9.6 million barrels per day of refining capacity was knocked offline. Commercial operators faced not only the risk of attack but soaring war-risk insurance premiums that, at peaks, reached several percentage points of a vessel’s insured value. Very large crude carrier freight rates from the Middle East to Asia surged dramatically—from around 300,000 dollars per day in quieter periods to peaks approaching 490,000 dollars per day, adding several extra dollars per barrel in transport costs.

Many shipowners simply refused to enter the Gulf. Those that did often required naval escort. The United States military established and expanded escorted corridors along the Omani coast, facilitating the transit of hundreds of vessels and eventually helping restore partial flows. Even so, the cumulative shortfall in oil movements reached billions of barrels over successive months. Refined-product exports suffered even more severely as damaged refineries and restricted shipping combined to create acute shortages of diesel and other fuels in distant markets.

Secondary maritime effects quickly appeared. Houthi activity in the Red Sea and Bab el-Mandeb, linked to the broader regional confrontation, further discouraged transits through the Suez Canal route. A growing share of Asia–Europe traffic diverted around the Cape of Good Hope, adding 10–14 days to voyage times, consuming more fuel and raising overall logistics costs. Container and bulk shipping rates on affected routes rose sharply. The result was a systemic lengthening and thickening of global supply chains precisely when energy and fertiliser markets were already under severe stress.

Higher shipping costs amplify the price impact of already elevated commodity prices, while longer and less reliable transit times force companies to hold larger inventories, tying up working capital and reducing supply-chain efficiency.

### **Global Shipping Logistics Under Siege**

The disruption of these two critical maritime theatres has produced cascading effects across global logistics. Freight rates for energy carriers, bulk vessels and, to a lesser extent, container ships on Asia–Europe and Asia–Gulf routes have risen significantly.



### **Ukraine and the Persistent Threat to Black Sea Shipping**

While Hormuz delivered an acute energy and maritime shock, the Russia–Ukraine war has produced a sustained degradation of Black Sea maritime security. Attacks on ports, commercial vessels and critical infrastructure have repeatedly interrupted grain and other bulk exports. Russia and Ukraine together account for a substantial share of global grain shipments. Elevated insurance costs, restricted access to certain ports and the constant risk of further strikes have kept freight rates and uncertainty high on these routes.

The cumulative effect is a dual maritime crisis: energy and petrochemical flows constrained in the Gulf, and food and bulk commodity flows constrained in the Black Sea. For net-importing developing countries the combination is particularly damaging.

War-risk insurance has become a major cost component rather than a marginal one. Voyage times have lengthened as ships avoid high-risk zones or wait for escorts. Port congestion has appeared in alternative loading and discharge points as traffic patterns shift.

These higher logistics costs feed directly into the landed price of oil, LNG, fertilisers, grains and industrial feedstocks. They also raise the cost of moving finished goods, eroding margins for exporters and raising consumer prices in importing countries. Multinational companies have responded by diversifying suppliers, increasing safety stocks and, in some cases, relocating production closer to end markets—moves that accelerate the broader trend of geoeconomic fragmentation. A World Economic Forum analysis estimated that trade and financial fragmentation was already costing the global economy 213–307 billion dollars annually even before



the full shipping impact of 2026 was felt. Prolonged maritime disruption adds another substantial layer to that bill.

### **The Broader Economic Toll of Escalating Tensions**

International institutions have revised forecasts downward in response to the combined shocks. The IMF's July 2026 World Economic Outlook Update projected global growth at 3.0 per cent in 2026 and 3.4 per cent in 2027—down from the 3.5 per cent average of the previous two years. Global headline inflation was expected to rise from 4.1 per cent in 2025 to 4.7 per cent in 2026. The World Bank's June assessment forecast 2.5 per cent global growth in 2026—the weakest pace since the pandemic—with downside scenarios as low as 1.3–2.1 per cent if energy disruptions and financial stress reinforced each other.

The Institute for Economics and Peace estimated that the prolonged Middle East conflict alone was already costing the global economy roughly 2.2 trillion dollars annually in lost GDP measured in purchasing-power-parity terms. Partial reopening of the strait might reduce the annual loss to about 1.3 trillion dollars; a return to full-scale hostilities could push the figure toward 3.5 trillion. Emerging economies have generally been hit harder than advanced ones because higher fertiliser, energy and shipping costs weigh more heavily on agricultural sectors and low-income households. The World Food Programme has warned that sustained Hormuz disruption could push the number of people facing acute hunger toward 363 million.

### **India's Exposure: Oil, Fertilisers, Shipping Costs and the Transmission of Shock**

India's structural vulnerabilities were laid bare with unusual clarity. Crude-oil import dependence stands between 85 and 90 per cent. A large share of crude, LNG and LPG has historically moved through or been linked to Hormuz routes. In the April–July 2026 period the crude import bill surged 56–57 per cent year-on-year to 63.4 billion dollars even as volumes remained nearly flat, illustrating a pure price effect. The net oil and gas import bill widened to 57.8 billion dollars. In July alone the crude bill reached 13.7 billion dollars, up 41 per cent from the same month a year earlier.

Shipping costs have added a further burden. Indian refiners faced higher freight and insurance charges on remaining Gulf cargoes. Some planned liftings were cancelled or delayed; others required expensive alternative routing or premium payments. These additional logistics costs raised the effective landed price of crude beyond the headline increase in benchmark prices. Brent crude, which stood near 70 dollars a barrel before the conflict, spiked above 118–126 dollars in March–April. The Indian crude basket rose from around 63–69 dollars in January–February to peaks of 124.85 dollars and, in some reports, as



**Brent continued to trade in the 93–95 dollar range.**

The government and public-sector oil marketing companies initially absorbed much of the shock through delayed retail-price increases. Petrol and diesel in Delhi rose only modestly in percentage terms compared with many other countries. This limited the immediate pass-through into consumer inflation but generated large under-recoveries and elevated borrowings for the oil companies. When prices were eventually raised in stages, fuel inflation accelerated sharply. Fertilisers present an equally serious channel. India depends heavily on imported urea, diammonium phosphate and potash, and domestic urea production relies on imported LNG as feedstock. Global urea prices more than doubled at peaks. The fertiliser subsidy bill, budgeted around 1.71 lakh crore rupees, is now projected to exceed 3 lakh crore and could approach 3.3–3.4 lakh crore if disruptions



persist. Higher shipping costs for fertiliser cargoes have compounded problems of both availability and price.

Quantitative modelling associated with the International Food Policy Research Institute shows that under a reference scenario of relatively short disruption, Indian GDP falls by about 0.32 per cent and agricultural household incomes by 2.6 per cent. In adverse and severe scenarios with sustained high energy, fertiliser and logistics costs, GDP losses rise to 1.07–2.38 per cent and farm-household income losses reach 11.65–27 per cent.



Inflation transmission has been managed but not eliminated. Retail consumer-price inflation moved into the 3.9–4.5 per cent range in mid-2026, driven largely by food and fuel components. The current-account deficit widened. The rupee faced sustained depreciation pressure. Aviation has been particularly exposed because jet fuel forms a high share of operating costs for Indian carriers. Micro, small and medium enterprises in logistics, chemicals, textiles and construction have confronted higher input and freight costs. Despite these pressures, growth forecasts have stabilised in the 6.5–6.8 per cent range for 2026–27 once oil prices retreated from their peaks and domestic demand held up better than feared.

### Outlook and Policy Imperatives

As of late August 2026 the situation remains fluid. Partial recovery of Hormuz traffic under naval escort has eased the most acute shortages, yet intermittent attacks and political deadlock continue to keep risk premiums elevated. Black Sea shipping remains vulnerable. Global logistics networks are more expensive, slower and less reliable than they were at the start of the year.

The escalating geopolitical tensions and tragic conflict events of 2026 have exposed three structural weaknesses in India's position. Extreme dependence on imported hydrocarbons leaves the economy vulnerable to distant maritime chokepoints. Heavy reliance on imported fertilisers creates a rapid transmission mechanism from energy and shipping shocks into food prices and rural incomes. Strategic petroleum and gas reserves remain insufficient relative to the scale of potential multi-week disruptions.

Policy responses so far—careful management of retail fuel prices, diversification of crude sources (including high volumes of Russian oil), temporary export restrictions on certain fuels, and accelerated storage planning—have limited the immediate damage. A more durable strategy requires faster expansion of strategic reserves, deeper penetration of renewable energy and electric mobility to reduce oil intensity, serious reform of the fertiliser subsidy regime, and greater diversification of both import sources and shipping routes.

Geopolitical conflict is no longer a distant risk premium. It is a first-order driver of growth, inflation, logistics costs and welfare. India has navigated the immediate storm of 2026 with relative success. The underlying exposure, however, remains large. Reducing that exposure is the necessary price of sustained high growth and greater strategic autonomy in an increasingly fractured and chokepoint-dependent world.

# When the Mountain Gave Way: Nepal's Catastrophe That Is Still Counting Its Dead

From Our Representative



Before breakfast was finished, a gorge that held towns, farms, a border and a road held only mud. The missing still have names. The places they lived in do not.

There was no storm over Timure at 8.30 on Wednesday morning. Children were still indoors. Trucks waited at Rasuwagadhi. Kalpana Malla was with her family in Nuwakot. Keshav Prasad Baral, 68, was at home with his wife. Then the mountain made a sound like an earthquake that was not an earthquake, and the river arrived as a wall.

"My family members were swept away by the flood in front of my eyes," Malla later told the BBC. "They could not escape... there was no chance at all." Baral reached for his wife's hand as mud climbed the stairs. "She was swept away. My wife is still somewhere beneath the mud. She's gone." Girilal Budhathoki, whose wife and four children died in Rasuwa, said only this: "It took everyone." By Saturday, Nepal's National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Authority (NDRRMA) had confirmed 626 dead — bodies recovered from Chitwan, Nawalparasi East, Nuwakot, Gorkha, Dhading, Tanahu and Rasuwa — with officials warning the toll would rise further. More than 2,400 people remained missing in Nepal alone; in Tibet, seven were confirmed dead and at least 554

were still unaccounted for, pushing the combined missing figure close to 3,000. The phones of pilgrims, dam workers and border guards still do not ring.

## How a mountain becomes a wave

What struck the Nepal-Tibet border was not a monsoon flood and, strictly speaking, not a classic glacial lake outburst flood either — though it obeyed the same terrible grammar.

A GLOF begins when a lake dammed by ice or loose moraine — the rubble a retreating glacier leaves behind — fails. The trigger is often a cascade: rock or ice falls into the lake, a displacement wave overtops the dam, water cuts a notch in unconsolidated debris, and the notch becomes a canyon in minutes. Peak discharges can exceed 10,000 cubic metres a second. As the flood races down a steep Himalayan gorge it does not stay water. It scours banks, swallows moraine and riverbed, and "bulks" — swelling in volume as sediment load rises from perhaps a fifth of the flow to something closer to liquid concrete. That is why a GLOF can flatten a hydropower dam 40 kilometres downstream and still be lethal 100 kilometres on. The 2023 South Lhonak disaster in Sikkim followed exactly this script: a permafrost-weakened moraine slid into a lake, a 20-metre wave



breached the dam, some 50 million cubic metres of water left the basin, and the Teesta carried the wreckage towards Bangladesh.

Wednesday's catastrophe was a close cousin. Satellite images show that nearly two-thirds of a high glacier near Langtang Lirung sheared away at about 5,200 metres and fell more than a kilometre onto the Lhende Khola. The collapse itself registered as a magnitude 5.2 seismic event. Ice pulverised into water. Rock and sediment rode with it. The mass appears to have blocked the river, built a short-lived landslide lake, then failed. The first 22 kilometres of the surge moved at an average of about 193 kilometres an hour. On the Trishuli, levels jumped as much as nine metres in half an hour. Hydrologist Hatim Sharif's phrase is the right one: it behaved "like liquid concrete." That is why Timure vanished as a place, why 300 trucks at the customs yard became wreckage, and why a mango tree in Bidur was the only reason Bibek Kumal is alive to say, "Had there been no mango tree, I would have been washed away to death."

## The Thaw No One Can See

Permafrost is the mountain's glue: ground that stays frozen year-round, locking bedrock, hanging ice and steep moraine in place. It cannot be photographed from a tourist bus. It is therefore easy to ignore. It is no longer possible to ignore.

The Hindu Kush Himalaya is warming at roughly twice the global rate — about 0.2 to 0.3°C per decade since 1980, some 0.28°C per decade since the 1950s. Glaciers across the range lost about 12 per cent of their area and 9 per cent of their ice reserve between 1990 and 2020. Mass loss nearly doubled after 2000; between 2010 and 2019 it ran 65 per cent faster than in the decade before. Nepal's ice is among the worst hit. The Ganga basin has lost about 21 per cent of glacier area in three decades. Under high emissions, 70 to 80 per cent of current HKH glacier volume could be gone by 2100. Even 1.5°C of warming still costs 30 to 50 per cent.



The ten-hour journey south — Syabrubesi silent by 8.50 a.m., more than 670,000 warning texts at 9.15, Devghat peaking at 6.57 metres around 4 p.m. — was the gorge doing what gorges do to a debris flood: confine it, accelerate it, feed it. Farms went with the houses. Mustard sacks, paddy, buffaloes, the Betrawati-Rasuwadgaadi road, the customs yard, the army post: land and livelihood were the same sentence.

Permafrost is following the ice down. Reviews of High Mountain Asia find the seasonally thawed "active layer" deepening; on parts of the Tibetan Plateau the rate has been measured at about 2 centimetres a year in some boreholes and, in extreme sites, up to around 21 centimetres a year. A 2026 synthesis of the Hindukush-Himalaya system puts thaw intensification as high as 23 centimetres annually in



the worst-affected ground. As that layer thickens, ice that once cemented rock turns to slush. Slopes that held for centuries shed. Hanging glaciers lose the frozen shelf they sat on. Alton Byers's blunt assessment of this week's collapse is the working hypothesis of many field scientists: the ice may have gone because the permafrost beneath it already had. "Changes in permafrost weaken the structural integrity of the mountains and the ice," he said, "which in turn can result in massive landslides, triggering a number of cascading processes." ICIMOD has warned for years that thawing ground raises the outburst potential of glacial lakes and the odds of rockfall onto them. More than 200 lakes in the HKH are already classed as dangerous. Monitoring remains thin. Of 38 long-studied glaciers in the region, only seven meet global benchmark standards. Permafrost sites are fewer still.



This is the compound hazard. Heat thins the glacier. Heat thaws the glue. A warm spell strips snow from ice and lubricates the bed. Bedrock fails. The glacier has nothing left to stand on. The valley receives, in a few minutes, what the mountain stored for decades — and gives back neither the dead nor the ground they stood on.

### What the living are still waiting for

The international scale of the missing has brought its own anguish. More than 500 foreigners from over 30 countries were reported unaccounted for in the days following the disaster — among them 288 Indian nationals, 90 Americans, 53 Ukrainians and at least 39

Australians, including an 11-year-old child. The U.S. State Department confirmed it was working with Nepali authorities to trace its citizens, noting three Americans had been rescued safely. India dispatched an 11-member specialist rescue team to Nepal on Saturday and had evacuated 84 of its nationals, while around 320 remained missing or unreachable due to widespread telecommunications outages. UNICEF confirmed that at least 14 children were among the dead. Over 3,700 people had been rescued in total by Saturday, plucked by military helicopter from ridgelines and lifted by hand through rivers of dark brown mud.

The surge of missing figures is partly explained by a grim bookkeeping gap: Nepal's disaster authority revealed that hydropower project operators had only recently submitted counts of workers unaccounted for at plants in the devastated river valleys. More than 900 hydro workers alone are now among the missing, a detail that briefly doubled the national tally overnight and underscores how much of the disaster unfolded in places too remote, too wrecked and too dangerous to survey quickly. Some 14,829 security personnel have been mobilised across the affected districts. The scale of the search — across terrain where roads are gone, bridges are rubble and the river bottom has been remade — means the final count of the dead may never be fully known.

Debris now dams the Bhotekoshi again. Nepal's disaster authority says the new lake is rising. China warns that about three million cubic metres of water will pour into another barrier lake on its side, with peak risk around 1 September. The second flood, if it comes, will use the same ten-hour road — past the ruins of Rasuwagadhi, past hydropower plants that lost some 431 megawatts, past fields that are no longer fields, past the football ground at Battar where Shova Shrestha watches every helicopter for a husband who has not stepped out. "I keep looking," she said. The map has already changed. The names have not.

Sources: Nepal NDRRMA, Nepal Police, NDTV, Agencies — as of 30 August 2026.



# The Golden Bed Trap: How Foreign Private Equity Is Quietly Pricing Average Souls Out of the Healthcare System

by Dr Sailaja



Truth First, Fact Always

There is a particular kind of silence that settles over a middle-class home in Kerala the night after a major hospital bill arrives. It is not the silence of peace. It is the silence of calculation — of people staring at numbers that no longer make sense in the life they thought they had built. The father's fixed deposit, the daughter's education fund, the carefully accumulated savings for a modest retirement: all suddenly look fragile. The hospital is gleaming. The equipment is world-class. The doctors are highly qualified. And yet the family feels, for the first time, that the system which once claimed to protect them has begun to treat them as an extractable resource.

This feeling is spreading. Across Kochi, Kozhikode, Thiruvananthapuram and the smaller towns in between, families who never imagined healthcare would bankrupt them are discovering that a single admission can erase years of thrift. The bill arrives not as an abstract statistic but as a personal reckoning: rooms that once cost a few thousand rupees a day now command multiples of that sum; diagnostics that were once selective have become comprehensive and

expensive; and the insurance policy that was supposed to stand between the family and ruin proves thinner than expected.

This is the new reality taking shape across Kerala and large parts of India. While political parties bargain for power, while cadres occupy streets in familiar rituals of protest, and while the administrative machinery remains preoccupied with managing the daily theatre of governance, a far quieter and more consequential invasion is underway. Global private equity firms and foreign financial institutions have been buying controlling stakes in the state's major hospital chains at a scale unprecedented in the history of Indian healthcare. They have poured more than ₹20,000 crore into Kerala's private health sector in the last five years alone. Nationwide, private equity investments into hospitals have crossed nearly \$11 billion since 2021. The capital is patient, professional and highly sophisticated. Its purpose is not philanthropy. It is return.

Kerala once stood as living proof that a developing



society could achieve health outcomes comparable to far richer nations. High life expectancy, low infant mortality, near-universal literacy, and a dense network of public primary health centres created what international observers repeatedly called a development paradox — high social indicators on modest economic resources. For decades the state recorded life expectancy and child-survival figures that placed it closer to upper-middle-income countries than to the Indian average. That achievement was never the work of the private sector alone. It rested on a careful, imperfect but functional balance: a relatively strong public system that set a floor of access, supplemented by thousands of doctor-owned clinics and mid-sized hospitals that kept care geographically close and financially within reach of ordinary families. Public primary health centres, community health centres and district hospitals formed the backbone; the private sector filled gaps without becoming the only viable option for the majority. That balance is now being dismantled by a different logic — the logic of financialised healthcare.

luxury good. And once that repositioning is complete, the alienation of the broad middle class and the working poor from the formal health system will be structural, not temporary.

### The Scale of the Silent Acquisition

The numbers are no longer speculative. They are on the public record.

Blackstone, one of the world's largest alternative asset managers, entered Indian healthcare through Quality Care India and then took an 80–85 per cent stake in Thiruvananthapuram-based KIMSHEALTH in a transaction valued around ₹3,500 crore. Quality Care later merged with Aster DM Healthcare, creating a combined platform of more than 10,000 beds. In the merged entity Blackstone emerged as the largest shareholder with approximately 30.7 per cent, while TPG held around 10 per cent. Kerala already contributes more than half of Aster's Indian revenue; the merger only deepens that concentration.



The danger is not that hospitals will become technologically inferior. The danger is that they will become financially unreachable for the very public whose taxes, labour and trust built the reputation that made Kerala attractive to investors in the first place. Healthcare is slowly being repositioned as a

KKR, another global giant, acquired a controlling 70 per cent stake in Kozhikode's Baby Memorial Hospital in 2024 for an estimated ₹2,000–2,500 crore. Subsequent capital infusions took KKR's cumulative investment in the BMH platform past ₹5,100 crore by early 2026. BMH has since absorbed Chazhikattu

Multi-Speciality Hospital in Thodupuzha and a controlling interest in Meitra Hospital (reported deal value ₹1,100–1,200 crore). The platform is expanding beyond Kerala into Telangana and Tamil Nadu — classic private-equity roll-up strategy.

Temasek Holdings of Singapore invested roughly \$2 billion in 2023 to raise its stake in Manipal Health Enterprises to around 59 per cent, turning the group into one of India’s largest hospital platforms. Manipal has continued consolidating, including the acquisition of Sahyadri Hospitals, and is preparing a large public listing.

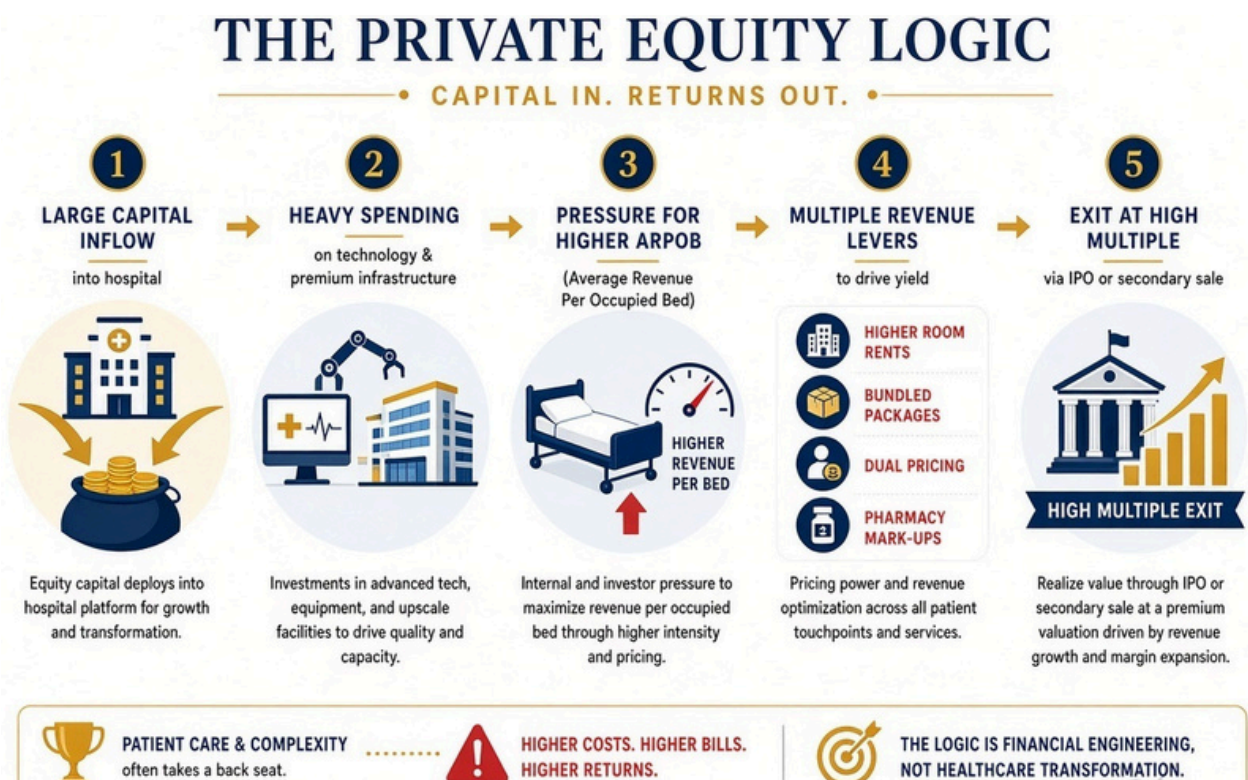
These are not isolated deals. They form a pattern: brownfield takeovers of institutions that local doctors and families spent decades building, followed by aggressive capacity expansion, standardisation of clinical protocols, and relentless focus on average revenue per occupied bed (ARPOB). India’s policy of allowing 100 per cent foreign direct investment in hospitals under the automatic route has made the process almost frictionless. The capital arrives with professional management, pressure for NABH and JCI accreditation, and the ability to invest in robotic surgery, advanced imaging and electronic health records. It also arrives with a five-to-seven-year fund life and the absolute requirement to generate returns that justify the high entry valuations paid for these assets.

## How the Money Rewrites the Medicine

Private equity does not invest in hospitals the way a philanthropist endows a trust. It invests to exit — through an initial public offering or a secondary sale to another financial buyer — at a multiple of the original investment. That timeline creates powerful incentives.

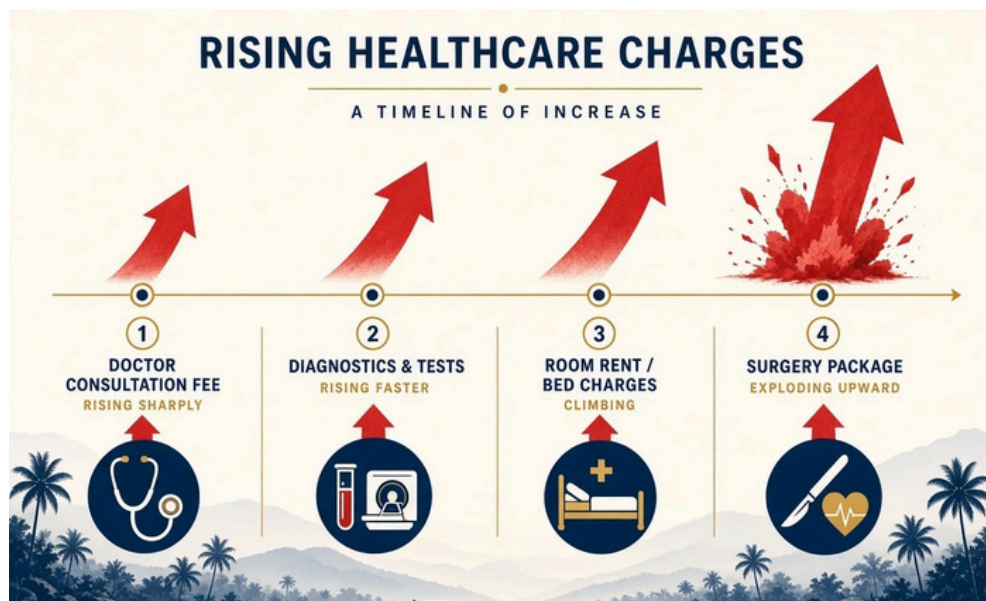
Heavy capital expenditure on high-end technology and premium real estate must be recovered. The recovery happens through higher room rents, bundled procedure packages, mandatory comprehensive diagnostics, and mark-ups on consumables and pharmacy items. Corporate hospitals frequently maintain dual pricing structures: one tariff for cash patients and a higher effective tariff for insured patients. Once the sum insured is exhausted, the balance becomes pure out-of-pocket liability. Non-payable items, proportionate deductions linked to room category, and exclusions that surface only at discharge further erode the protection that families believed they had purchased.

Medical inflation in India has been running at 12–14 per cent annually in recent years — more than three times the general retail inflation rate. Industry projections place the medical trend still in double digits even as general inflation has moderated. At a compounded 14 per cent rate, costs roughly double every five years.





The same arithmetic applies across oncology, complex orthopaedics and multi-specialty critical care. Fixed insurance covers that appeared adequate half a decade ago are routinely exhausted by a single complex admission.



Inside the hospitals the operating logic shifts. Doctors face productivity targets and revenue-linked key performance indicators. Cross-subsidisation — once an informal practice in which higher charges on affluent patients helped keep basic care affordable — becomes formalised and aggressive: lower-margin services are tolerated only if high-margin elective and specialised procedures generate the required yield. Protocol-driven testing arrays raise the entry cost of even relatively straightforward admissions. Corporate hospital pharmacies often prioritise in-house branded medicines over cheaper generics. Non-medical expenses — travel to centralised hubs, attendant lodging, specialised post-discharge care — add another 14–24 per cent to the family burden. Medicines and diagnostics already constitute a large share of out-of-pocket spending; under corporate ownership that share tends to rise rather than fall.

### Kerala's Paradox: From Global Model to Financial Asset Class

Kerala's historical achievement was never that it eliminated private medicine. It was that it kept private medicine from becoming the only viable option for the majority. High public investment in primary health centres, a culture of health awareness rooted in literacy, and a dense network of affordable private clinics created overlapping layers of access.

International agencies repeatedly cited the state as evidence that social development could outpace pure economic growth.

That architecture is under stress. Sixty-five to seventy per cent of Kerala's population already depends on

the private sector for healthcare. As global funds consolidate the upper and middle tiers of that private sector, the residual options for ordinary families shrink.

Data from the Indian Medical Association show that 1,306 outpatient clinics and 444 small private hospitals closed in Kerala between February 2021 and February 2026 — a sharp acceleration compared with the previous

five-year period. Many of these were precisely the neighbourhood facilities that offered continuity of care, lower overheads, and occasional informal cross-subsidies for poorer patients. Their disappearance leaves patients with fewer intermediate options between a basic public outpatient visit and a high-cost corporate tertiary centre.

The state's attractiveness to private equity is rational from an investor's viewpoint. High morbidity and rapid ageing create steady clinical demand. A large non-resident Indian diaspora provides a reliable source of payment capacity. Existing high-quality infrastructure allows rapid scaling without the risks of pure greenfield construction. Medical tourism offers an additional high-margin revenue stream. Per-bed investment by PE funds in Kerala is reported to be significantly higher than the national average — a clear signal of the premium valuations being paid for the state's assets.

The result is a two-tier landscape. For those who can afford premium packages or who carry high sum-insured policies, the infrastructure improves dramatically. For the salaried employee, the small trader, the retired teacher, and the lower-middle-class family, the distance between need and affordable care widens. Public tertiary hospitals, already under pressure, absorb more residual demand. The original

Kerala model — a pragmatic partnership between a functional public floor and accessible private options — begins to resemble a residual public system for the poor and a financialised private system for everyone else.

### The Insurance Illusion: How Coverage Becomes a Temporary Shield

Most individual and family floater policies sold in India still operate on a fixed sum-insured basis. A policy purchased five years ago for ₹5 lakh or ₹10 lakh looked adequate at the time. Medical inflation of 12–14 per cent compounded annually has steadily eroded that adequacy. A treatment package that once cost ₹4.5 lakh now routinely exceeds ₹8–9 lakh in corporate hospitals. The sum insured is exhausted mid-stay. Everything thereafter becomes pure out-of-pocket expenditure, often at the hospital's highest tariff rates.

Corporate hospitals have developed sophisticated ways of interacting with insurance. Dual pricing is widespread: the effective tariff charged to insured patients is frequently higher than the cash rate offered to uninsured patients for the same procedure. Hospitals justify this by pointing to the administrative costs of dealing with insurers and third-party administrators (TPAs), but the practical effect is that insurance itself becomes a signal for higher billing. Once the sum insured is depleted, the remaining balance is billed at these elevated rates, maximising the hospital's recovery from the family's private resources.

Proportionate deductions linked to room rent create another systematic shortfall. Most policies impose a sub-limit or proportionate clause: if a patient chooses a room category higher than what the policy permits, every associated charge — surgeon's fee, anaesthesia, diagnostics, consumables — is reduced in the same proportion. Families often discover this only at the time of claim settlement. A patient admitted to a higher-category room “for comfort” or because lower categories were unavailable can find 30–40 per cent of the entire bill disallowed, even though the clinical treatment was identical.

Non-payable items form a third layer of erosion. A long list of charges is routinely excluded or only

partially covered: certain consumables, specific implants beyond a capped amount, attendant food, administrative charges, registration fees, and a growing list of “non-medical” items that hospitals itemise separately. In package billing, the hospital presents a single figure that appears comprehensive; in itemised billing, the same treatment expands into dozens of line items, many of which fall outside the policy. Families who believed they had purchased cashless cover discover that large portions of the final bill remain payable in cash.



Consider a typical middle-class scenario. A 58-year-old salaried employee with a ₹10 lakh family floater is admitted for cardiac intervention. The package is quoted at ₹7.5 lakh. Pre-authorisation is granted for ₹6.8 lakh. During the stay additional diagnostics, upgraded consumables and a higher room category are introduced. At discharge the bill stands at ₹11.2 lakh. After proportionate deductions and non-payables the insurer settles ₹7.1 lakh. The family must arrange ₹4.1 lakh immediately. The policy that was diligently renewed for years has functioned as a partial buffer, not a complete protection. Multiply this experience across thousands of households and the systemic pattern becomes clear.

The interaction between rising hospital costs and insurance pricing creates a vicious cycle. Higher claim ratios force insurers to raise premiums. Premium inflation itself often runs in double digits, tracking or exceeding medical inflation. Middle-class families respond by reducing the sum insured, accepting higher deductibles, or dropping cover altogether for secondary members. The result is progressive under-insurance precisely among the demographic that is

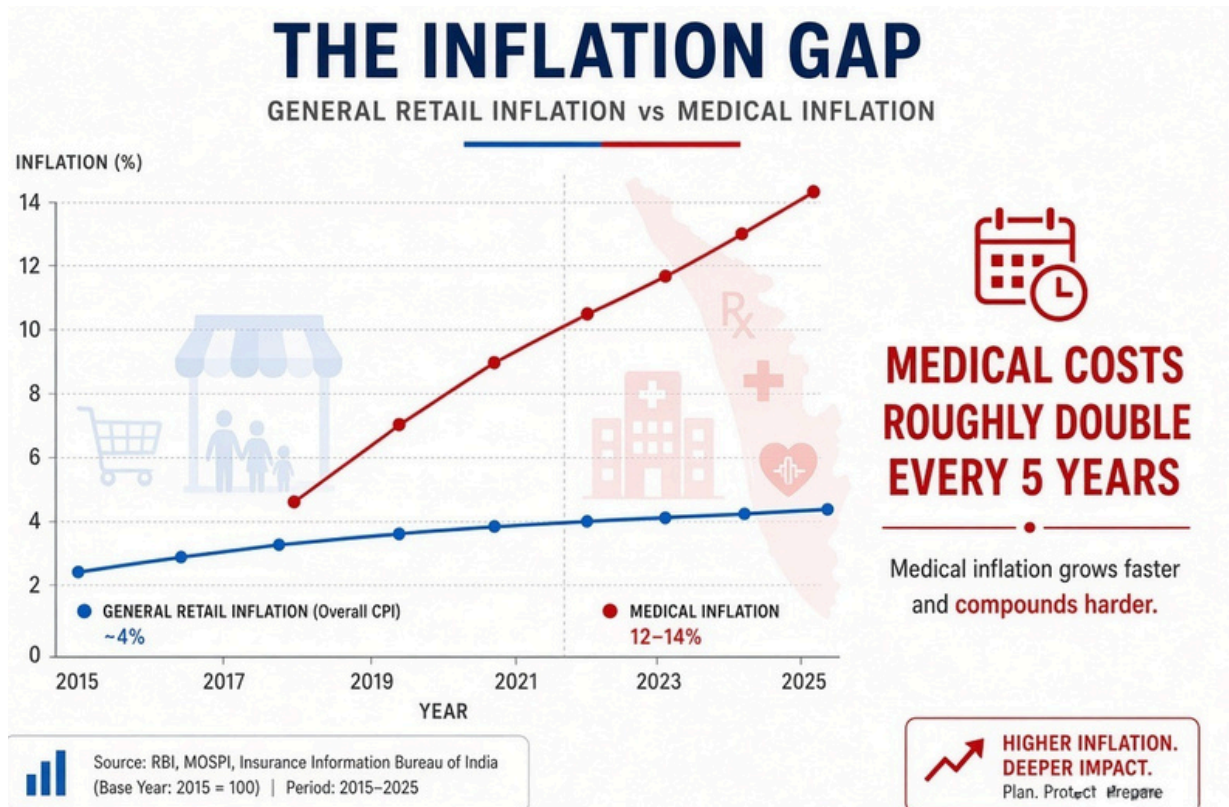


neither poor enough for fully subsidised government schemes nor rich enough to absorb major medical shocks without financial distress.

Group policies provided by employers offer temporary relief but create their own vulnerabilities. When an employee leaves the job, cover usually ceases. Conversion options to individual policies are frequently priced at levels the family cannot sustain. Senior citizens, who face the highest medical costs, confront the steepest premium hikes and the most restrictive underwriting. A policy that was affordable at age 55 becomes punishing at 65, just when the probability of major claims rises sharply.

of-pocket expenditure. Families who diligently paid premiums for years discover that the protection they purchased has been structurally outpaced by the cost escalation driven by the same corporate hospitals that benefit most from insured patients. The “missing middle” — households above the eligibility threshold for schemes such as Ayushman Bharat yet unable to afford continuously adequate private cover — is left most exposed. For them, a serious illness remains a direct threat to lifetime savings, housing security, and intergenerational mobility.

This is not a failure of individual families to buy enough insurance. It is a systemic mismatch between a financial product designed around fixed sums and a



Cashless hospitalisation, once marketed as the great convenience of modern health insurance, frequently becomes “cash-heavy” in practice. Pre-authorisation limits are set conservatively. Mid-treatment enhancements require repeated documentation and delays. At discharge, the hospital presents a final bill that exceeds the authorised amount; the family must settle the difference immediately before the patient is released. The psychological pressure of that moment — a critically ill relative waiting while the family negotiates or arranges emergency funds — is itself a form of distress that no policy document captures. The cumulative effect is that insurance no longer performs its core function for large sections of the middle class. It softens the initial impact of hospitalisation but fails to prevent catastrophic out-

continuous revenue maximisation. Private equity’s need to generate high internal rates of return within defined fund cycles accelerates the very cost inflation that renders fixed insurance covers obsolete. The two systems — hospital pricing and insurance design — are locked in a feedback loop that systematically transfers financial risk back onto households.

### The Quiet Marginalisation of Traditional Systems

There is a further, less examined risk. Kerala’s Ayurvedic and traditional medical heritage has long provided lower-cost, preventive and chronic-care options that many families still prefer or combine with ‘modern medicine. The rise of high-capital, high-margin corporate allopathic platforms changes both

the economics and the cultural signalling of care. Resources, specialist attention, insurance empanelment and patient footfall flow preferentially toward the high-tech tertiary model. Small Ayurvedic clinics and traditional practitioners face the same competitive pressures that have closed many allopathic neighbourhood facilities.

As independent clinics disappear, the everyday pathways through which ordinary people accessed relatively affordable care — whether allopathic or Ayurvedic — narrow. Commercial “wellness” Ayurveda packaged for tourism and affluent clients may flourish under the new capital regime. The community-embedded practice that served ordinary households risks further alienation from the mainstream healthcare ecosystem. Profit-maximising investors have little structural incentive to protect low-margin traditional modalities. The long-term result can be a narrowing of therapeutic choice and an acceleration of medicalisation that is both expensive and, for many conditions, not the only or best path. When the default option becomes a high-cost corporate hospital, lower-cost traditional routes lose both patients and legitimacy in the public mind.

### **What Is at Stake**

The alienation of the public from the formal health system does not announce itself with a single dramatic collapse. It accumulates through a thousand individual calculations: the decision to postpone a necessary investigation, the choice of a cheaper but more distant facility, the quiet acceptance that certain treatments are now beyond reach. Over time these individual decisions become a collective reality — a population that once trusted its health system begins to experience it as an extractive rather than protective institution.

Kerala’s global reputation was built on the opposite premise: that a society of modest means could still organise itself so that illness did not routinely destroy families. That reputation is now an asset being monetised by distant funds whose primary accountability is to their limited partners, not to the citizens of the state. The capital improves infrastructure. It also raises the price of entry. The two effects cannot be separated under the current operating model. Talent, too, is affected: senior

clinicians and specialists are drawn toward the higher compensation and better facilities of the corporate platforms, further straining the public system that still serves as the safety net for those who cannot pay.

Policy responses remain possible and urgent. Transparent, publicly available reference pricing for common procedures would reduce information asymmetry. Strict rules against dual pricing and clear, enforceable disclosure of package inclusions and exclusions would limit opportunistic billing. Mandatory generic prescribing and transparent pharmacy pricing inside hospitals would curb one of the largest sources of avoidable out-of-pocket cost. Independent clinical audit of utilisation patterns in PE-owned facilities would help detect and deter unnecessary procedures driven by revenue targets. Clearer regulation of the insurance-hospital interface — including tighter rules on proportionate deductions and non-payables — is essential if insurance is to regain its protective function. Explicit public support and regulatory space for traditional systems would ensure they remain viable options rather than residual or luxury add-ons.

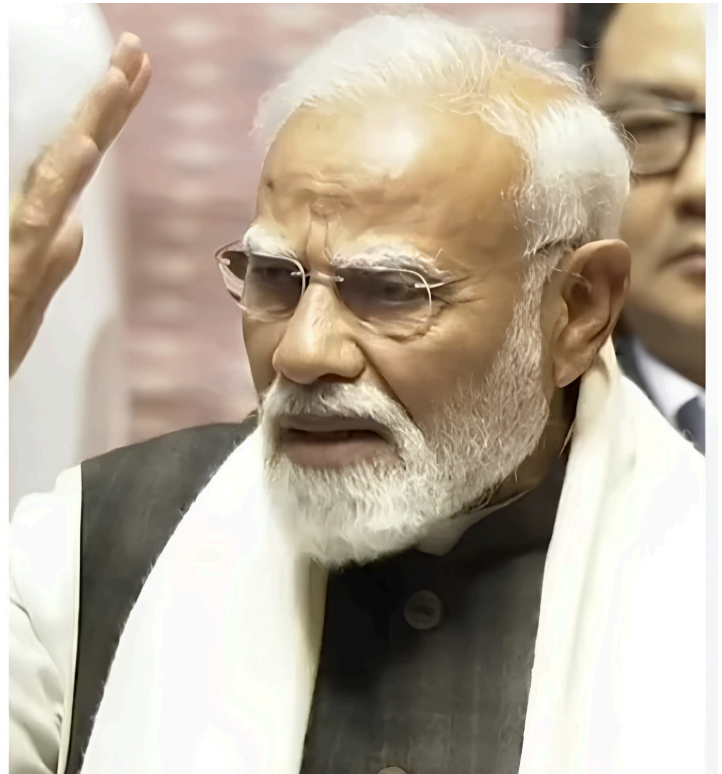
These are not anti-investment measures. They are the minimum conditions for ensuring that investment serves the population whose health needs created the market in the first place. Without them, the silent invasion will continue to convert a once-celebrated public good into a stratified luxury accessible mainly to those who can pay premium prices or carry ever-higher insurance covers. The invasion is silent only because it operates through share-purchase agreements and balance-sheet engineering rather than street processions. Its consequences, however, will be anything but silent. They will be measured in household debt, delayed care, eroded insurance adequacy, and the slow conversion of Kerala’s hard-won health advantage into a two-tier system that leaves the broad middle class increasingly exposed. The window for corrective action is still open. It will not remain open indefinitely. The question facing Kerala — and India — is whether the state that once proved healthcare could be both high-quality and broadly accessible is prepared to defend that achievement against a financial logic that has no such obligation.

**Edited by Suresh Unnithan**



# Caution to BJP: Youth Discontent Narrowing Popularity Gap Between Modi and Rahul

By Geetha VP



The ruling BJP is facing a structural warning it can no longer dismiss as seasonal noise. India's youth, more than 70 crore strong and increasingly decisive in electoral arithmetic, are rewriting the popularity equation between Narendra Modi and Rahul Gandhi. Independent surveys show Modi's preference rating falling from the commanding heights of around 70 per cent to roughly 36 per cent, while Gandhi has climbed from a low base of 14 per cent to approximately 29.5 per cent. A once-unbridgeable gap of more than 55 percentage points has contracted to single digits. Among the young the contest is tighter still: one recent multi-layered youth survey placed Modi at 39.8 per cent and Gandhi at 27.9 per cent, with student activists emerging from the paper-leak protests themselves securing 12.6 per cent. This is not mere polling volatility. It reflects a clear shift in youth voting patterns—from broad, aspirational alignment with a dominant national leader toward issue-driven fragmentation and protest-based political engagement. The BJP's repeated choice to treat student discontent as a law-and-order problem rather than a governance failure is accelerating that shift.

Youth voting behaviour in 2026 no longer mirrors the patterns of the previous decade. Earlier cycles saw

large sections of first-time and young voters consolidate behind Modi's narrative of national resurgence, delivery and decisive leadership. That consolidation has frayed. Repeated paper leaks, persistent unemployment anxieties, collapsing government school infrastructure, and the visible use of force against student protesters have produced a more transactional and sceptical young electorate.

The youth vote is no longer a binary transfer between two national figures. A significant slice is peeling away toward issue-based activists and localised protest leadership, as the 12.6 per cent drawn by student organisers demonstrates. Gen-Z and even Gen Alpha cohorts are entering civic and political space earlier, organising around concrete failures—unsafe classrooms, arbitrary school mergers, and institutional unresponsiveness—rather than abstract ideology. This pattern of early, grievance-led mobilisation is precisely what the "School Thik Karo" campaign and the earlier paper-leak protests have revealed.

The Jantar Mantar episode remains the clearest early marker of how these voting instincts are being shaped. Students demanding accountability over

systemic paper leaks were met with pellet-gun fire. Several were injured; one faces the real prospect of permanent vision loss. Instead of a swift institutional response, the system stalled. Rahul Gandhi's decision to accompany the injured to the police station and sit in dharna for more than six hours until an FIR was registered turned bureaucratic failure into a public demonstration of accountability extracted under pressure. An Instagram video in which the Prime Minister spoke of "forgiving" the students, coupled with casual labels such as "dimagi Naxal," reinforced an image of distance and condescension. Those optics registered directly with a generation that consumes politics through short-form video and personal testimony rather than official messaging.



The same pattern has since moved from the national capital into the districts. The "School Thik Karo" campaign, launched in mid-August 2026 by groups linked to Abhijeet Dipke's CJP, shifted attention from high-profile exam leaks to the everyday collapse of government school infrastructure. In Madhya Pradesh, Gen Alpha students protested arbitrary school mergers. In Rajasthan, inspections found classrooms operating out of animal sheds. When student volunteers and activists documented these conditions, local cadres and administrative sympathisers responded with physical force. Videos of the assaults spread rapidly. For rural parents and young voters who once prioritised ideology or welfare delivery, the sight of the state turning on children exposing broken desks created an immediate and personal rupture. Governance fatigue became visceral. Visceral grievances travel faster among the

young than national narratives, and they are reshaping voting calculations at the constituency level

A detailed comparison of the two leaders' metrics reveals different kinds of strength and vulnerability under this changing youth pattern. Modi's residual lead remains structural. Even at 36 per cent overall and nearly 40 per cent among the young, he retains organisational depth, a welfare architecture built over a decade, residual trust in delivery across large parts of the Hindi heartland, and the capacity to mobilise along caste and regional lines. His numbers, though sharply reduced from the 70 per cent peak, still reflect a broad national base. Yet the character of that support has changed. The aura of inevitability

has cracked. The 2024 general election, which forced the BJP into a coalition and saw the loss of Faizabad—home to the Ram Mandir—stripped away the single-majority mystique. Open criticism in rural and semi-urban squares, once rare, is now recorded on phone cameras without immediate social policing. Among younger voters, Modi's advantage has shifted from expansive dominance to defensive consolidation. Gandhi's rise is momentum-driven and demographically concentrated precisely where youth voting patterns are shifting most. The climb from 14 per cent to 29.5 per cent overall, and to 27.9 per cent among the youth, rests on his ability to convert concrete grievances—paper leaks, unemployment, unsafe schools, and the use of force against protesters—into a coherent narrative of institutional accountability. His gains are strongest among younger urban and semi-urban voters, particularly



young women. . The “Chhatron Ki Goonj” town hall in Pune on 22 August, deliberately weighted toward Gen-Z women and student leaders, exemplified the strategy: interactive, short-format engagement focused on safety, education and the right to public space. The BJP’s counter-claim that influencers had been paid only underscored a defensive posture. Gandhi is not yet the preferred national choice of the young, but he has become the preferred voice of their grievance.

The parallel rise of independent student activists further confirms that the youth space is opening beyond the two national figures and that voting loyalty is becoming more provisional and issue-contingent.

The cultural and political costs for the BJP run deeper than any single protest cycle. The same hubris that personalised the Ram Mandir consecration and projected the Prime Minister as larger than the deity contributed to the 2024 loss of Faizabad. Traditional voters recoiled when political weaponisation crossed into deification. Subsequent narratives of irregularities around the Mandir complex sharpened the sense that a civilisational project had been turned into a political brand. Neutrals and fence-sitters began to pull away. That distancing is accelerating among the young, who see the same pattern of entitlement in the response to their own demands and who increasingly vote on the basis of lived institutional experience rather than symbolic assertion. Manufactured ratings from agencies such as Morning Consult long served as internal reassurance. Independent datasets, including Lokniti-CSDS tracking, have repeatedly exposed the gap between those figures and ground reality—the same gap now visible in the fall from 70 per cent to 36 per cent. The IT-cell model that dominated the narrative between 2014 and 2021 has reached saturation among a smartphone-native generation. High-decibel propaganda no longer persuades; it exhausts. The party’s most visible online defenders, the andhabhaks, have become a liability. Their default response to criticism—personal abuse and coordinated pile-ons—associates the party with intolerance rather than delivery in the eyes of undecided young voters who are forming lifelong political preferences.

Parliamentary conduct has reinforced the impression of avoidance. During the 2026 Monsoon Session both the Prime Minister and the Home Minister largely stayed away from adversarial debates on the issues agitating students. The sudden legislative focus on the Prevention of Insults to National Honour (Amendment) Act and the ceremonial insistence on all six stanzas of Vande Mataram just before adjournment appeared to many younger observers as ideological distraction rather than governance.

If the BJP is to arrest the closing of the gap—and to reverse the emerging youth voting pattern of fragmentation and protest alignment—it requires more than narrative management. The party must stop treating student protest as an enemy action and start treating it as a policy failure requiring visible, time-bound administrative responses on paper leaks, school infrastructure and employment. The politics of deification must be dialled back; faith is permanent, politicians are not. The abusive online reflex that polices criticism must be reined in. Reliance on manufactured ratings and saturation messaging has diminishing returns among a generation that cross-checks claims in real time. Credibility is rebuilt through delivery and open engagement, not through force or symbolism. Top leadership must return to the sites of protest and to the floor of Parliament with answers rather than absence.

The BJP still possesses structural advantages. Organisational depth, welfare architecture and regional arithmetic remain significant. But those advantages rest on the residual belief that the state can execute and that public grievance will be heard. When that belief is replaced by the spectacle of force against students demanding functional schools and fair examinations, the electoral floor erodes from the edges—especially among the young, whose voting patterns are still fluid and whose numbers will only grow in influence. The 2024 result was the first clear warning. The student protests of 2026 and the converging popularity metrics constitute the second. The gap is closing. Whether the BJP recognises the shift in youth voting behaviour in time will determine whether it continues to narrow.



# From Generators to Nuclear: How AI Data Centers Are Rewiring Industrial Manufacturing

By Arjun Santhosh



AI data centers are emerging as one of the most powerful forces reshaping industrial manufacturing in 2026. What began as surging demand for computing power to train and run large AI models has cascaded into factories producing generators, transformers, cooling systems, semiconductors, steel components, and specialized electrical equipment. The result is a tangible revival in segments of manufacturing that had faced stagnation.

## Massive Capital Flows Driving Demand

The scale of investment is unprecedented. Capital expenditure by the leading hyperscalers peaked near \$379–400 billion in 2025 and is projected to rise sharply in 2026, with collective spending by Amazon, Microsoft, Google, Meta, and Oracle estimated above \$700 billion for the year and totaling around \$1.15 trillion across 2025–2027. Roughly 40–50% of this spending flows into industrial infrastructure—power generation and distribution equipment, cooling systems, switchgear, cabling, and construction materials—rather than chips alone. Wood Mackenzie projects the U.S. electrical equipment market tied to data centers will rise from \$33 billion in 2025 to \$66 billion by 2030.

## Power Equipment Factories Surge

Generac is investing \$250 million to retool factories for heavy-duty data-center generators, with an order backlog of \$1.6 billion and plans to add about 1,000 workers. Caterpillar reported record second-quarter 2026 revenue of \$20.5 billion, with power generation retail sales rising 72% year-over-year; the company is investing hundreds of millions to expand generator and turbine production. Cummins posted record quarterly revenue of \$9.5 billion, with its Power Systems segment up 19% and margins expanding, driven heavily by data-center demand. The company expects data-center-related sales to reach \$9 billion by 2030. Engineering firms show similar strength. Quanta Services' backlog expanded from \$7.9 billion in 2019 to \$44 billion by 2025. U.S. manufacturing employment in related sectors has responded, with gains concentrated in fabricated metals, machinery, electronics, and electrical equipment. Analysis attributes nearly all recent increases in U.S. manufacturing production to industries linked to AI infrastructure.

## Liquid Cooling Becomes a Manufacturing Priority

Rising rack densities—from traditional 7–15 kW to 40–120 kW for advanced AI systems—have made liquid cooling essential. Direct-to-chip and immersion systems are replacing or supplementing air cooling for high-density GPU clusters.



Global data-center liquid cooling market estimates for 2025 range from roughly \$3.5 billion to \$6.1 billion, with projections of 18–25% compound annual growth into the 2030s. TrendForce expects liquid cooling penetration among AI chips to rise from about 33% in 2025 to 53% in 2026.



Vertiv, a leading thermal management supplier, recorded \$10.2 billion in net sales for 2025 (up 28%) and has raised full-year 2026 guidance toward approximately \$14 billion, with organic growth near 31%. The company is expanding liquid-cooling manufacturing capacity by 40–50% and reported strong order momentum, including earlier liquid-cooling infrastructure backlogs exceeding \$2 billion. Other manufacturers, including Schneider Electric, CoolIT Systems, Asetek, LiquidStack (now aligned with Trane Technologies), and piping specialists such as Georg Fischer (which saw direct-to-chip liquid cooling orders double in the first half of 2026), are scaling production of cold plates, coolant distribution units, manifolds, and modular systems. These investments are creating specialized manufacturing capacity for high-precision thermal components that traditional data-center suppliers previously produced at far lower volumes.

## **Nuclear Power and the Next Layer of Industrial Demand**

Power constraints are pushing hyperscalers toward nuclear energy, which in turn stimulates manufacturing of reactors, components, and modular systems. As of mid-2026, major technology companies have committed more than 9.8 GW of nuclear capacity across announced deals. Microsoft signed a 20-year, \$16 billion power purchase agreement with Constellation Energy for the full 835 MW output of the restarted Three Mile Island Unit 1 (now the Crane Clean Energy Center), targeted for 2027. Amazon invested \$700 million in X-energy and is advancing plans for up to 12 Xe-100 small modular reactors (initial phase 320 MW, expandable to 960 MW), alongside a large offtake agreement with Talen Energy for approximately 1.92 GW from the Susquehanna plant. Google committed to 500 MW from Kairos Power's fluoride-salt-cooled SMRs. Meta has agreements potentially totaling up to 6.6 GW across TerraPower, Oklo, Vistra, and other partners.

Small modular reactors are designed for factory fabrication and serial production rather than traditional one-off construction. This shift is beginning to engage heavy manufacturing supply chains for reactor vessels, heat exchangers, control systems, and specialized materials, while also supporting longer-term demand for nuclear-grade components and skilled industrial labor.

## **Semiconductors, Density, and Supply-Chain Strain**

At the core sits advanced semiconductor manufacturing. NVIDIA's data-center revenue reached \$115 billion in fiscal 2025 and has continued setting records. Overall semiconductor revenue is forecast to exceed \$1.3 trillion in 2026, with AI accelerators forming a major growth driver. High-bandwidth memory, advanced packaging, and custom ASICs intensify pressure on foundries and memory producers.

The speed of demand has exposed bottlenecks. Transformer lead times have stretched beyond 160 weeks in some cases. Gas-turbine capacity is largely booked years ahead. Between 30% and 50% of planned 2026 data-center capacity faces potential delays tied to power equipment and grid

interconnection. Manufacturers are responding with capacity expansions, modular designs, and greater automation.

**Broader Effects and Outlook**

Economies central to AI development have shown stronger manufacturing production growth than the global average in 2026 PMI data. Technology equipment has ranked among the strongest industrial sectors. The boom is generating second-order effects in construction, metals, bearings, cables, and related components, while industrial real estate linked to the data-center ecosystem supports tens of thousands of jobs in key U.S. markets.

Challenges remain: grid constraints, long equipment lead times, energy and water intensity, and the need for specialized skills. Yet the directional impact is clear. AI data centers have become a major driver of industrial capital spending, factory retooling, and manufacturing employment. From generator plants and liquid-cooling lines to the emerging nuclear supply chain, the physical infrastructure of artificial intelligence is reshaping the factories that build it.





# From the Fields of Hope: How Drones Are Sparking a Quiet Revolution for India's Small Farmers

By S V Reddy



In the early morning light over the paddy and cotton fields of Telangana, and across the wheat and maize stretches of Punjab, a new sound rises above the familiar chorus of birds and distant tractors. It is the steady, purposeful hum of hexacopter drones. For farmers who have spent lifetimes bent under the weight of knapsack sprayers, waiting anxiously for scarce labour, and watching precious water and chemicals disappear into the soil with little return, that sound carries something rare: relief, dignity, and a quiet sense of hope.

In an interior village deep in the rural heart of Telangana, far from the main roads and market towns, a farmer stands at the edge of his plot and watches the drone lift off. "Earlier, spraying one acre felt like a battle," he says. "We waited for labourers who might not come. We carried heavy tanks under the scorching sun. Water was wasted, chemicals drifted, and still the pests came. Now the machine flies, finishes the work in minutes, and we stand here feeling, for the first time in years, that the land is working with us again." His words capture the emotional core of a transformation unfolding across India's smallholder farms. What was once dismissed as distant technology has become a practical partner in survival—against climate uncertainty, labour shortages, and the rising cost of every input.

At the heart of this change in one Telangana village is 26-year-old Ramesh Kumar, son of a smallholder family. He watched his father struggle with the same burdens that weigh on millions of Indian farmers. Labour was hard to find and expensive. Manual spraying demanded 100–200 litres of water per acre and often left uneven coverage or excess chemicals leaching into the soil. Climate swings made timing critical yet nearly impossible. Ramesh chose a different path. After training, he launched a Drone-as-a-Service enterprise, flying a precision hexacopter for neighbouring farmers, including those in interior villages, at affordable rates of ₹300 to ₹600 per acre. The results speak in the language every farmer understands: lower costs, healthier crops, and restored confidence.

The savings are dramatic and immediate. Drones use roughly 10 litres of water per acre—up to 90 per cent less than conventional methods. Pesticide and fertiliser waste has been cut by nearly half through targeted application and controlled droplet size. What once took an entire day of back-breaking work is now completed in 7 to 11 minutes per acre. A single drone can cover 20 to 50 acres in a day. Farmers report more uniform crop stands, fewer chemical burns, and measurable yield improvements in the range of 4 to 18 per cent in many field trials. Groundwater stress eases. Exposure to toxic chemicals for workers and families declines. The land itself begins to recover.

This is not simply a new tool. It is a revolution in how smallholders farm. Through the Drone-as-a-Service model, even those with less than two hectares—still the vast majority of Indian farm families—can access high technology without buying expensive equipment. Startups and micro-entrepreneurs own the machines; farmers book the service when needed, much as they once hired a tractor. In Punjab and Telangana, networks of such operators, including many women trained under government schemes, now serve thousands of acres. The technology also brings data: multispectral imaging and GPS mapping turn traditional knowledge into informed decisions. Farmers learn which patches need attention and apply inputs only where required. They are becoming data-driven stewards of their own soil.



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Prime Minister Narendra Modi recognised this shift with pride in the 122nd episode of Mann Ki Baat, broadcast on 25 May 2025. Speaking of the women now flying drones across rural India, he said: “Today, there are many women who are working in the fields as well as touching the heights of the sky. Yes! You heard it right; now the women of the village are flying drones as Drone Didi and ushering in a new revolution in agriculture... In Sangareddy district of Telangana, women who had to depend on others till some time ago... Today those very women are completing the work of spraying pesticides on 50 acres of land with the help of drones. Three hours in the morning, two hours in the evening and the work is done. Neither the scorching sun nor the danger of poisonous chemicals... Now these women are not known as ‘drone operators’ but as ‘sky warriors’. These women are telling us that change comes when technology and determination go together.”

Central to this transformation is the Namo Drone Didi scheme, a Central Sector Scheme launched after the Prime Minister’s Independence Day announcement in 2023 to train at least 15,000 women as drone pilots. With an outlay of ₹1,261 crore for the period 2023-24 to 2025-26, the programme aims to equip Women Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with agricultural drones, providing an 80 per cent subsidy (up to ₹8 lakh per drone) while the groups contribute the remaining 20 per cent. The dual objectives are clear: promote advanced technology for greater efficiency, higher yields and lower operating costs, while empowering rural women as service providers who earn sustainable incomes by spraying fields for local farmers. In practice, these “sky warriors” charge ₹200–500 per acre, complete the work of spraying large areas in a few hours, and free farmers from the physical and financial burden of manual labour. Hundreds of drones have already reached SHGs across states, including Telangana and Punjab, turning villages into hubs of precision agriculture and women’s economic agency.

The Prime Minister’s words and the scheme’s design capture the deeper human story. Young people who once left the village for uncertain city work are returning as certified pilots and service providers. Women who previously depended on others for farm tasks now earn independent incomes and command respect. For farmers in the interior villages of



Telangana, the change is personal and profound. The revolution is not only technical; it is social and emotional. It restores agency to those who feed the nation.

Across the country the numbers continue to grow. Market projections show rapid expansion of the agricultural drone sector, supported by subsidies, simplified regulations, and domestic manufacturing ambitions. Yet for the farmer standing at the edge of the field at dawn, the statistics matter less than the lived experience: the drone rises, the chemical mist falls precisely where needed, the water stays in the soil, and the day's heavy labour is replaced by a few minutes of careful observation. Climate shocks still come. Labour remains scarce in many seasons. But the tools of resilience are now within reach.

In the fields of Telangana and Punjab the hum of the drone has become a sound of quiet confidence. It signals that smallholder farming need not remain a story of constant struggle. With precision technology, community enterprise, and determined hands—both those flying the machines and those who own the land—a new chapter is being written. Farmers are not merely surviving the challenges of our time. They are reclaiming control, protecting their resources, and inviting a younger generation back to the soil with pride. The eye in the sky is helping them see a better future—one acre, one careful flight at a time.





# The Nanjing Massacre: Six Weeks of Hell That Still Echoes Through History

*From Our Foreign Desk*



There are chapters in human history so dark that the mind recoils from them. Nanjing in the winter of 1937–38 is one such chapter. When the Imperial Japanese Army marched into China's capital on 13 December 1937, it did not merely occupy a city. It unleashed six weeks of systematic slaughter, mass rape, looting and arson that turned a proud capital into a charnel house. Civilians and disarmed soldiers were hunted through the streets, bayoneted in alleys, machine-gunned along the riverbanks, and left to rot in ponds and ditches. Women and girls—some as young as children, others elderly—were dragged from homes and refugee camps and subjected to repeated sexual violence, often before being murdered. The city burned. The survivors would never forget the screams, the smoke, or the silence that followed.

What unfolded was not the chaotic excess of battle but a sustained campaign of terror. Japanese forces under overall command of General Matsui Iwane had already fought a brutal path from Shanghai. When Nanjing fell, organised resistance largely collapsed. Tens of thousands of Chinese soldiers who had discarded their weapons or been captured were systematically rounded up and executed. Civilians—men of military age especially, but also women, children and the elderly—were shot, bayoneted or burned. Mass executions took place along the Yangtze riverbanks, outside the city walls and in open spaces within the city. Bodies were left in streets, ponds and fields; many were later recovered and buried by

Chinese charitable organisations such as the Red Swastika Society.

Sexual violence was equally systematic. Contemporary estimates, later accepted by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, place the number of women and girls raped at around 20,000, though some accounts suggest higher figures. Victims ranged from young children to elderly women. Gang rape was common; many victims were murdered or mutilated afterwards. Looting and arson destroyed roughly one-third of the city's buildings.

A small group of Westerners who remained in the city organised the International Committee for the Nanking Safety Zone. Led by the German businessman John Rabe, the committee established a neutral zone of a few square kilometres that eventually sheltered some 250,000 Chinese civilians. Rabe, missionaries such as Minnie Vautrin of Ginling College, American professors including Miner Searle Bates, and medical staff at the University Hospital kept detailed diaries and filed repeated protests with Japanese authorities. Their records describe Japanese soldiers entering the zone itself to drag out men for execution and women for rape.

Rabe's own diary is one of the most important primary sources on the massacre. Written day by day under extreme pressure, it combines administrative



notes, formal protests and raw observation. On 13 December he recorded:

"It is not until we tour the city that we learn the extent of destruction. We come across corpses every 100 to 200 yards. The bodies of civilians that I examined had bullet holes in their backs. These people had presumably been fleeing and were shot from behind. The Japanese march through the city in groups of ten to twenty soldiers and loot the shops... I watched with my own eyes as they looted the café of our German baker Herr Kiessling."



#### **By 17 December the entries grow darker still:**

"Two Japanese soldiers have climbed over the garden wall and are about to break into our house. When I appear they give the excuse that they saw two Chinese soldiers climb over the wall. When I show them my party badge, they return the same way. In one of the houses in the narrow street behind my garden wall, a woman was raped, and then wounded in the neck with a bayonet... Last night up to 1,000 women and girls are said to have been raped, about 100 girls at Ginling Girls' College alone. You hear nothing but rape. If husbands or brothers intervene, they're shot. What you hear and see on all sides is the brutality and bestiality of the Japanese soldiers."

Rabe documented the removal of disarmed Chinese soldiers from the Zone under false promises of labour, only for groups to be stripped, bound, bayoneted and thrown onto fires. He recorded bodies in ponds—sometimes thirty in a single pond—with hands tied or stones around their necks. He described interrupting a rape on New Year's Day, confronting a naked Japanese soldier and driving him off while the

victim's mother knelt pleading for help. He used his Nazi Party badge and swastika armband as practical deterrents when confronting soldiers, a detail that underscores the strange moral contradictions of the moment. Throughout, he filed formal protests with the Japanese embassy while managing food distribution and shelter for hundreds of thousands under conditions of near-chaos.

Precise casualty figures remain contested. The International Military Tribunal for the Far East concluded that more than 200,000 Chinese were

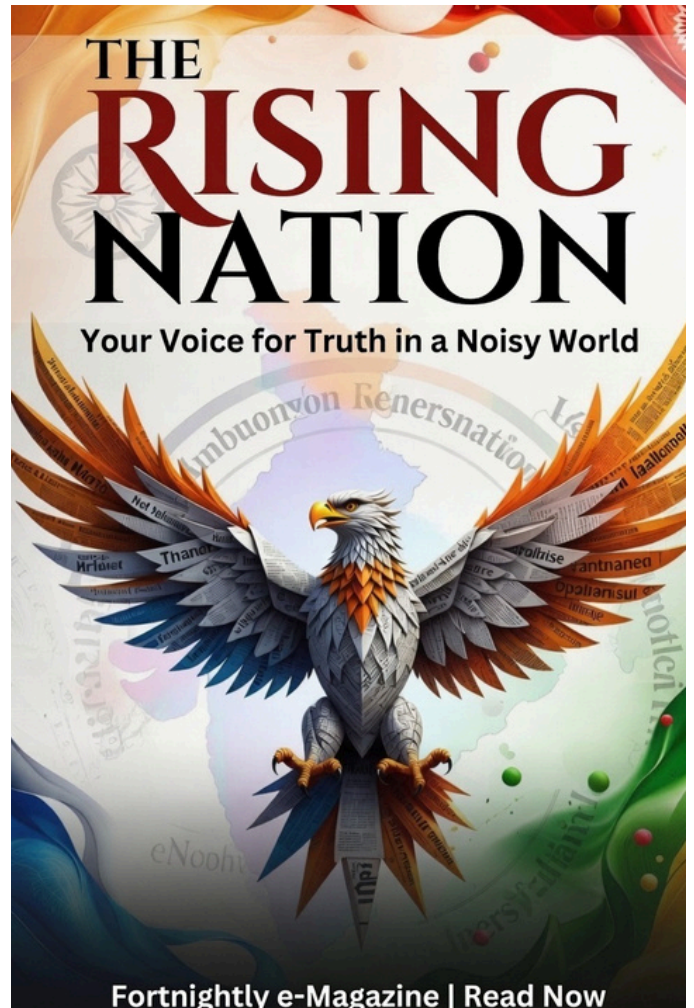
killed in Nanjing and its immediate vicinity during the first six weeks. Chinese official accounts, drawing on the 1947 Nanjing War Crimes Tribunal and burial records, place the total at 300,000. Later scholarly estimates vary according to geographic scope and time frame: some historians focusing strictly on the walled city in the first days arrive at lower numbers; those including surrounding counties and a longer period arrive at figures closer to or exceeding the tribunal totals. What is not seriously disputed among mainstream historians is the occurrence of large-scale, systematic murder of disarmed soldiers and civilians, widespread rape, and extensive destruction. Rabe himself did not attempt a comprehensive death toll; his diary records what he and the committee could see and verify inside and around the Zone.

After Japan's defeat, Matsui Iwane was tried by the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, convicted of failing to prevent the atrocities committed by troops under his command, and executed in 1948. Other officers faced Chinese tribunals. The documentary record—Western diaries, Chinese burial statistics, Japanese soldiers' own

accounts, contemporary diplomatic reports and photographic evidence—has made denial increasingly difficult, though attempts at minimisation or erasure have continued in some quarters.

The Nanjing Massacre belongs to a broader pattern of Japanese military conduct in China between 1937 and 1945. It is distinguished by the concentration of violence in a single major city over a compressed period and by the unusual volume of independent eyewitness testimony that survived. Rabe's diary, rediscovered and published decades later, remains central to that record. For China it is a central site of national memory, marked each year on 13 December. For the wider world it stands as a stark demonstration of what happens when an army abandons legal and moral restraint and when the international community lacks the means or will to intervene.

History does not require inflated numbers to register horror. The verified scale of the killings and the documented pattern of sexual violence are already sufficient to place Nanjing among the major war crimes of the twentieth century. The real obligation is simpler and more demanding: to record the facts accurately, to resist both denial and opportunistic exaggeration, and to remember that the capacity for such organised cruelty is not confined to any single nation or era. The Safety Zone committee's incomplete but determined effort to protect civilians—and the detailed, contemporaneous record left by men like John Rabe—remains a small counterpoint: proof that even in the midst of atrocity, individuals can choose to act. That choice, and the documentary record they left behind, still matter.





# A Calculated Isolation: The Far-Reaching Threat of Kerala's Separate AYUSH University to Ayurveda and India's Living Medical Heritage

by Dr Abhilash , MD (Ayur)



The Kerala government's decision to constitute a committee for drafting a separate AYUSH University Bill is being dressed up as progressive recognition. In truth, it risks delivering a far more damaging outcome: the systematic isolation of the Indian systems of medicine—particularly Ayurveda—from the mainstream academic, research and clinical ecosystem at the precise moment when these systems are gaining genuine traction as primary, non-surgical therapies for a wide spectrum of chronic, lifestyle and degenerative conditions.

Ayurveda is no longer confined to the margins of “complementary” care. Across India and increasingly abroad, it is emerging as a first-line or sustained mainstay treatment for metabolic disorders, chronic pain, inflammatory conditions, stress-related illnesses, geriatric care, and preventive health—domains where surgery is neither necessary nor desirable. Patients are turning to it not as a last resort but as a rational, time-tested alternative that addresses root causes rather than merely suppressing symptoms. This rising acceptance constitutes an emerging competitive threat to sections of the modern medical establishment, the pharmaceutical industry, multi-specialty hospital chains, and the high-volume diagnostic sector, all of which thrive on a model of lifelong pharmacological dependence, repeated investigations, and procedural interventions. Isolating Ayurveda into a small, under-resourced university would conveniently remove it

from the shared platforms of peer scrutiny, joint research, student mobility and competitive funding—precisely the arenas where it could consolidate scientific legitimacy and further expand its clinical footprint.

The move is therefore not merely administrative. It is structural. By severing AYUSH from the Kerala University of Health Sciences (KUHS), the government would create a parallel, weaker institution for a handful of colleges—around two dozen AYUSH medical colleges in the state—while the far larger modern medical stream continues to enjoy the advantages of scale, infrastructure and political priority. The administrative overhead of a new Vice-Chancellor's office, examination system, finance and IT machinery will consume scarce public resources that should instead be directed towards genuine research capacity. Teachers' associations and professional bodies within the AYUSH sector itself have already pointed out that this demand never originated from them; it has been driven primarily by policy circles more closely aligned with modern medical administration.

Globally, the direction of travel is the opposite of isolation. Integrative medicine—defined by the World Health Organization in its Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 as an interdisciplinary, evidence-based approach combining biomedical and traditional

knowledge—is one of the fastest-growing domains in healthcare. The global wellness economy has already reached \$6.8 trillion and is projected to approach \$9.8 trillion by 2029, with traditional and complementary medicine expected to grow at over 10 per cent annually. Leading centres in the United States (Cleveland Clinic, Harvard's Osher Center, UCSF), Europe, Japan (Kampo under national insurance), China (state-supported TCM integration), South Korea and Brazil are embedding traditional systems into oncology support, chronic pain clinics, mental health programmes, lifestyle disease management and rehabilitation. BRICS nations have recently established a dedicated working group on Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine under India's chairmanship. The WHO strategy itself prioritises strengthening the evidence base, ensuring safety and quality, and integrating traditional systems into national health systems and Universal Health Coverage—not walling them off into separate, smaller silos.

research facility. Its initial research thrust is directed at ageing and cancer—precisely the areas where integrative approaches hold the greatest clinical promise. Six specialised departments have been established, including Ayurvedic Biology and Translational Ayurveda, which apply genetics, cell biology and modern laboratory methods to classical principles. Collaborations are under discussion or development with CCRAS, CSIR, ICMR, the Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology, NIIST and IISER; more than forty international institutions have expressed interest; and the Malabar Cancer Centre has signalled readiness for joint work in integrative oncology. A Japanese university has also indicated willingness for academic cooperation. IRIA's stated vision—"Delineating Ayurveda; Redefining Health"—is exactly the evidence-generating, globally competitive research ecosystem that Ayurveda needs.

Yet instead of completing and adequately funding this institute, and instead of strengthening the School of



Kerala's own International Research Institute of Ayurveda (IRIA) at Kalliad, Kannur, offers a far more promising path. Inaugurated in February 2026 by the Chief Minister, Phase I has been completed at a cost of approximately ₹200 crore on a 300-acre campus. It already houses a 100-bed research hospital and Model Patient Care Centre, a Manuscript Studies Centre focused on digitising and translating rare palm-leaf texts (with AI-assisted search capabilities), and a medicinal plant nursery and

Fundamental Research in Ayurveda (SFRA) at Tripunithura and the existing AYUSH faculty within KUHS, the government proposes to create another administrative structure—possibly even on the SFRA campus itself. The opportunity cost is clear: resources that could accelerate multi-centre clinical trials, phytochemical standardisation, AI-driven pattern recognition in classical texts, drug development pipelines, international fellowships and technology transfer will be diverted into bureaucratic replication.



National policy frameworks reinforce the same conclusion. The National Education Policy 2020 privileges multidisciplinary education and research. The National Health Policy 2017 calls for deeper integration of AYUSH into the public health system. The NCISM Act focuses on academic standards and research excellence without recommending separate universities. India's broader health sciences university model—followed in Karnataka, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and elsewhere—keeps modern medicine, dentistry, nursing, pharmacy and AYUSH under one institutional roof precisely to enable joint curricula, shared research platforms and student-teacher exchange.

Kerala's greatest strength in Ayurveda has always been its living tradition of practice combined with a relatively advanced academic base. That advantage can be converted into global leadership only through rigorous research infrastructure, not through administrative separation. A separate AYUSH university will give the state another set of offices and a few more appointments. It will not give Ayurveda the laboratories, the interdisciplinary collaborations, the clinical trial capacity or the international visibility required to answer its critics with data and to meet the growing public demand for non-surgical, root-cause-oriented care.

The choice before Kerala is therefore stark. It can pursue a short-sighted isolation that weakens the very system it claims to promote, or it can commit to a coherent policy of "One Health University—One Global Ayurveda Research Ecosystem": strengthen KUHS and its AYUSH faculty, complete and expand IRIA, develop SFRA as a foundational research node, pursue an All India Institute of Ayurveda, and foster genuine integrative platforms. Anything less risks turning a living medical heritage into an administratively quarantined relic at the very moment the world is beginning to take it seriously.

**\*Dr Abhilash is a retired District Medical Officer**

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# ₹30,000 Crore Tax Robbery Every Year: Dabba Trading's ₹100 Lakh Crore Daily Racket Bleeds India

*From Our Business Desk*



India is haemorrhaging money through a parallel financial system that operates in plain sight yet remains largely untouched. Dabba trading, the illegal off-exchange betting racket on stock and commodity prices, has grown into a vast underground market whose daily turnover is estimated at nearly ₹100 lakh crore — a volume that matches or exceeds large segments of legitimate trading on the National Stock Exchange and Bombay Stock Exchange. The direct cost to the national exchequer exceeds ₹30,000 crore every year in lost tax revenue. Behind these figures lies a deeper threat: the systematic rerouting of illegal money into domestic assets and the growing suspicion that part of these funds may be supporting anti-national and disruptive activities aimed at destabilising the country.

In dabba trading, also known as bucket trading, no real shares or commodities change hands. There is no delivery into any Demat account. Unauthorised operators act as the counterparty to every bet, recording transactions in private ledgers or unverified apps and settling profits and losses in cash or through informal channels. High leverage is freely offered. Securities Transaction Tax, Goods and Services Tax, stamp duty and capital gains tax are completely bypassed. The entire activity remains outside the jurisdiction of SEBI, leaving participants with no legal protection if an operator defaults or vanishes.

The scale is staggering. After SEBI tightened regulations on futures and options lot sizes and margins, market reports indicated that dabba trading volumes surged to nearly ₹100 lakh crore per day. Because these trades never enter the formal system, the government loses more than ₹30,000 crore annually in direct tax revenue alone. The broader damage is greater still. The heavy dependence on cash and unaccounted funds creates an efficient channel for black money generation and money laundering.

A significant portion of the proceeds is believed to be systematically rerouted back into India. Operators and their networks convert the illegal gains into real estate, luxury assets, businesses and other holdings, effectively cleaning the money while accumulating substantial domestic wealth. More disturbing are the concerns that part of these unaccounted funds may be diverted to finance anti-national and sabotaging activities. There are serious suspicions that elements of this parallel economy could be bankrolling disruptive forces working to undermine the country's stability from within. When an illegal market of this magnitude operates with relative impunity, the threat extends far beyond tax evasion into the domain of national security.



Despite the clear legal position — participation is a serious criminal offence under Section 23(1) of the Securities Contracts (Regulation) Act, punishable by imprisonment of up to ten years and heavy fines — the principal organisers largely remain free. Many have relocated to tax havens and the UAE, where they continue operations under the respectable cover of NRI business magnets and legitimate commercial identities. One operative booked more than a decade ago in a major dabba trading case is reportedly still active from a UAE location under an entirely different professional title. Local facilitators on Indian soil face occasional raids and asset seizures, but the higher network that designs the platforms, controls the cash flows and sits safely abroad continues largely unhindered.

Every day this shadow market operates at the reported scale of ₹100 lakh crore, India loses revenue that could fund development and public welfare. Every year the exchequer is short by more than ₹30,000 crore. And every year the suspicion deepens that part of the proceeds may be strengthening forces hostile to the country's internal stability. The legal instruments exist. What remains missing is the consistent, coordinated will to deploy them against those who have simply moved the operation offshore while continuing to extract wealth from the Indian economy.

**Note:** A detailed investigative story examining the full scale of the financial fraud, the networks involved, the asset trails and the enforcement gaps will be carried in the next issue of the magazine.



This situation raises pointed questions for the Enforcement Directorate, the Economic Offences Wing of the CBI, and Interpol. Sustained international efforts to freeze assets, seek extradition and disrupt cross-border settlement channels have not matched the scale of the problem. Decade-old cases appear to have drifted into administrative inertia while the individuals concerned prosper under new identities. The pattern points to a combination of jurisdictional hurdles, slow mutual legal assistance processes, and insufficient determination to treat dabba trading as a national economic and security threat rather than a collection of isolated local rackets.



# The Psychology of Lovemaking: How Satisfying Intimacy Supports Stress Regulation, Memory and Healthy Ageing

By Dr Geetha Jacob, Clinical Psychologist ([drgeethajacob@gmail.com](mailto:drgeethajacob@gmail.com))



Most people remember the act itself. Fewer remember the moment just after, when striving stops and the room feels larger than it did a few minutes earlier. Breath slows. The mind, which had been bargaining, performing, or watching itself from a slight distance, finally loosens its grip. In that brief interval, a person may feel not merely satisfied, but returned—to their own skin, to the other person, and to a quieter kind of alertness.

## The key word is satisfying.

Relationship satisfaction is the climate in which these effects are more likely to take hold. When partners feel seen, respected, desired, and emotionally safe, sexual contact can become restorative. When the relationship is strained, coercive, or emotionally

disconnected, the same physical sequence may leave the body more tense rather than less. The distinction is not moral. It is psychological—and physiological.

From a psychologist's perspective, this is not merely a romantic afterthought. Satisfying intimacy can be one of the more profound ways in which the human nervous system moves from arousal and engagement towards relaxation and recovery. Regular, mutually satisfying lovemaking, when experienced within a relationship that feels emotionally safe and authentic, may do more than provide pleasure. It can influence stress-related hormonal responses, support emotional well-being, and may be associated with cognitive and physical health across the lifespan.

Oxytocin and the Quieting of Stress



At the centre of this restorative process is oxytocin, a hormone involved in social bonding, attachment, and the regulation of stress responses. Oxytocin rises during sexual arousal and can increase around orgasm. Its influence extends beyond the immediate feeling of closeness.

The body's primary stress system, the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, plays a central role in the release of cortisol. Short bursts of cortisol are adaptive and necessary. However, prolonged activation of the stress response can affect sleep, immune regulation, mood, inflammation, and overall well-being.

Oxytocin may act as one of the biological mechanisms that helps the nervous system move from a state of heightened arousal towards recovery. Intimate physical contact and sexual activity have been associated in research with changes in cortisol and other stress-related responses. These effects, however, are not simply determined by the physical act. Emotional safety, mutual desire, relationship quality, and individual differences can all influence the experience.



The psychology of the moment shapes the biology.

When a person feels desired rather than merely used, present rather than performing, and emotionally safe rather than judged, intimacy can become an experience of relaxation as well as pleasure. The post-intimacy state may include reduced tension, improved mood, and a greater sense of emotional connection. Hormonal changes, including the release of oxytocin and prolactin, may contribute to this feeling of calm and satiety.

Over repeated experiences, the nervous system may also learn that closeness can be a place of safety rather than another demand. That psychological learning is important. Healthy intimacy is not simply about what happens during sexual activity; it is also about what the nervous system learns to associate with closeness, trust, vulnerability, and pleasure.

#### Consent: The Foundation of Restorative Intimacy

Consent is fundamental to any discussion of healthy intimacy.

The potential psychological and physiological benefits of intimacy cannot be separated from autonomy, safety, and mutual willingness. Intimacy that is freely chosen and mutually desired may help the nervous system settle. Intimacy that is demanded, pressured, or coerced can activate stress rather than relieve it.

This is why the goal should never be to pursue a particular frequency of sexual activity as though it were a prescription for health. There is no universally healthy number.

What matters more is whether intimacy is consensual, pleasurable, emotionally safe, mutually satisfying, and appropriate to the individuals involved.

#### Telomeres and the Cellular Cost of Stress

One intriguing biological signal associated with intimacy appears at the level of the cell. Telomeres are protective structures at the ends of chromosomes. They help protect genetic material during cell division. Telomeres generally shorten with each cell division and are also influenced by oxidative stress, inflammation, genetics, lifestyle, and other factors.

Shorter telomere length has been studied as one marker associated with biological ageing, although telomeres are only one part of a much larger picture. Chronic psychological stress has also been associated with shorter telomeres. This raises an interesting question: could behaviours and relationships that reduce stress also be associated with healthier cellular ageing?

A 2017 study published in *Psychoneuroendocrinology* examined this question in 129 mothers who differed

their levels of stress. Researchers assessed relationship factors, daily partner support, conflict, physical intimacy, perceived stress, and telomere length. Women who reported sexual intimacy during the study week had longer telomeres in whole blood and peripheral blood mononuclear cells, even after adjustment for several factors.

The finding is intriguing—but it requires careful interpretation.

The study was observational and relatively small. It cannot establish that sexual intimacy caused longer telomeres. The researchers themselves identified sexual intimacy as being associated with telomere length; it does not demonstrate that lovemaking directly slows cellular ageing.

Nevertheless, the finding fits into a broader scientific picture in which chronic stress, inflammation, sleep, health behaviours, and social connection interact with biological ageing. Sexual intimacy may be one small component of that larger network. No single behaviour determines the trajectory of ageing.

### **Memory and the Thinking Self**

The mind is not sealed off from the quality of a relationship.

Research has explored associations between sexual activity, sexual satisfaction, emotional closeness, and cognitive functioning in later life. The findings are interesting, but they are also nuanced.

A prospective study involving more than 6,000 adults aged 50 and over found that more frequent sexual activity and greater emotional closeness during partnered sexual activity were associated with better memory performance after adjustment for demographic and health-related factors. However, changes in memory over the following two years were not significantly related to sexual activity or emotional closeness.

More recent research from the National Social Life, Health, and Aging Project similarly found that the relationship between sexuality and cognition differed according to age and gender. Among adults aged 62–74, better sexual quality—including physical pleasure

and emotional satisfaction—was associated with better later cognitive functioning.

Among those aged 75–90, greater sexual frequency was associated with better cognitive functioning. The overall picture was therefore not a simple “more sex equals better memory” equation.

Another ten-year study of 155 cognitively intact, married older adults found that greater sexual satisfaction at baseline was associated with a lower likelihood of subsequently developing mild cognitive impairment or dementia. Again, this was an association rather than proof of causation.



These findings raise several possible explanations.

Satisfying intimacy requires attention, sensory awareness, communication, interpretation of another person’s cues, and emotional presence. It may therefore engage several forms of cognitive and emotional processing. At the same time, healthier relationships, better physical health, greater mobility, lower distress, and stronger social engagement may all increase the likelihood of remaining sexually active. The relationship may therefore be circular rather than one-directional.

A healthy mind may support a satisfying intimate life, while a satisfying intimate life may contribute to emotional and cognitive well-being.

### **A BODY THAT CAN STILL MOVE THROUGH THE DAY**



People often treat sex as a reward that arrives after fitness has been earned. There is another way to look at it.

Intimacy can provide a modest form of physical activity. Heart rate rises, muscles engage, and changing positions requires some degree of balance, mobility, coordination, and strength. For older adults in particular, maintaining physical capability has significance far beyond the bedroom.

The ability to turn, reach, bend, change position, get up, and move comfortably contributes to ordinary independence: rising from a chair, climbing stairs, dressing, walking, and moving through the day without constant fear of physical limitation.

The relationship between sexual activity and physical health is again likely to be bidirectional. People who are healthier and more physically capable may be more likely to remain sexually active, while an active and satisfying intimate life may encourage people to remain connected with their bodies and motivated to maintain physical well-being.

Agency lives in the body.

A body that can still reach, turn, move, and recover supports a self that continues to feel capable.



## What a Psychologist Listens For

I do not count frequency as the measure of success. I listen for quality.

Does the person feel wanted or merely tolerated? Are there play and curiosity, or only obligation? Can they remain present, or do anxiety, insecurity, and old grievances occupy the room? Is there genuine consent? Can both partners express desire, discomfort, boundaries, and affection without fear? These distinctions matter.

Intimacy is not restorative simply because it occurs. Its psychological meaning matters.

## Intimacy, Health and the Complexity of Association

The broader epidemiological literature has also reported associations between sexual activity, orgasm frequency, immune markers, and mortality. Some studies have found relationships between sexual activity and lower mortality risk, while others have reported associations between sexual activity and specific aspects of physical or psychological health. But these findings should not be interpreted as evidence that sexual activity itself is a guaranteed protective treatment.

Healthier people may be more likely to remain sexually active. People with better relationships may experience greater intimacy. Physical mobility, cardiovascular health, psychological well-being, sleep, social connection, and sexual satisfaction can all influence one another.

In other words, body, mind, and relationship may keep one another going.

## Ageing Does Not Mean the End of Intimacy

One of the most important conversations we can have about ageing is that sexuality does not automatically disappear with age.

Bodies change. Hormones change. Menopause, erectile difficulties, medications, chronic illness, fatigue, grief, caregiving responsibilities, and relationship changes can all influence sexual desire

and function. But ageing itself does not eliminate the human need for affection, touch, closeness, pleasure, and connection.

The form of intimacy may change. Its meaning does not necessarily have to.

For some couples, intimacy may become less focused on performance and more focused on touch, affection, emotional closeness, sensuality, and mutual pleasure. That transition can be liberating.

There is no single definition of a healthy intimate life. There is only the question of whether the relationship allows two people to remain connected to themselves, to each other, and to their changing bodies.

### **The Quiet Psychology of Lovemaking**

Satisfying intimacy is not a miracle cure, nor should it be presented as one.

It is one part of a much larger ecology of health that includes sleep, physical activity, nutrition, emotional regulation, meaningful relationships, medical care, and psychological well-being. But it is a part that deserves more thoughtful attention than it often receives.

When intimacy is consensual, emotionally safe, and mutually satisfying, it can create a powerful transition from arousal to relaxation, from vigilance to connection, and from performance to presence. Hormonal and neurological changes accompany that experience. Research suggests possible associations with stress regulation, cellular ageing markers, cognition, and physical functioning—but the science is still evolving, and many of these relationships are associative rather than causal.

Perhaps the most important message is therefore not “have more sex.”

It is “experience more meaningful intimacy.”

In a culture that often treats ageing as inevitable decline and sexuality as either performance or irrelevance, there is a quieter truth worth remembering:

The moments when two people truly meet—with consent, presence, tenderness, curiosity, and mutual pleasure—can be among the ways human beings continue to experience connection, vitality, and emotional aliveness across time.

And perhaps that is the deeper psychology of lovemaking—not simply what happens between two bodies, but what happens to two human beings when, for a moment, they feel completely present, completely accepted, and genuinely connected.





# The Six-Year-Old Stood in the Mud and the State Finally Had to Hear Him

*In Nalanda, a six-year-old did not storm the state. He only asked why a promised road still drowned his schoolbooks.*  
**From our Correspondent**

The square outside the Nalanda collectorate was the usual Bihar afternoon: heat, slogans, placards, and adults performing anger for cameras that had seen this play before. Then the lenses dropped.

## They found a boy who barely cleared three feet.

Abhishek Kumar, six, stood in a faded blue school shirt and sandals that had outgrown him two monsoons ago. In his hands was not a party flag but a hand-drawn chart: a road, a drain, a village that floods every time the sky keeps its own promise. The demand was blunt. Build what you announced.

A sub-inspector walked in with the gait of a man who expected children to vanish when uniforms arrived. "Who brought you here? This is no place for children. Go home to your mother."

Abhishek did not step back. He stepped in, chin up, hands on hips — the posture of someone who has already decided that height is a rumour.

"Why should I go home, Uncle? The drain water comes into our courtyard every day. My school books were ruined last week. Is it a crime to ask for our rights? You wear that uniform to protect the law. Which law says a child cannot ask for a safe path to school?"

The square thinned into silence. Authority, used to volume, had met a sentence.

Microphones arrived like a second monsoon. A reporter knelt. "Beta, so much courage. Aren't you scared of the police? Who taught you this?"

Abhishek looked into the lens the way adults look at a complaint box they no longer trust. "No one tutored me, Sir. My eyes are my tutors. I see my grandmother slip in the mud every morning. I see older children wade through filth to reach school. Petitions have gone for two years. Politicians come, take votes, and vanish. If the grown-ups are too scared to speak, I have to."



## Another question: did he understand politics?

He shook his head, and the shake did more damage than a pamphlet.

"I do not understand politics, Sir. I understand promises. The government spoke of Swachh Bharat and clean roads. If they can make big speeches on microphones, why can they not hear a small boy without one? We don't want trouble. We want a road we can walk without falling."

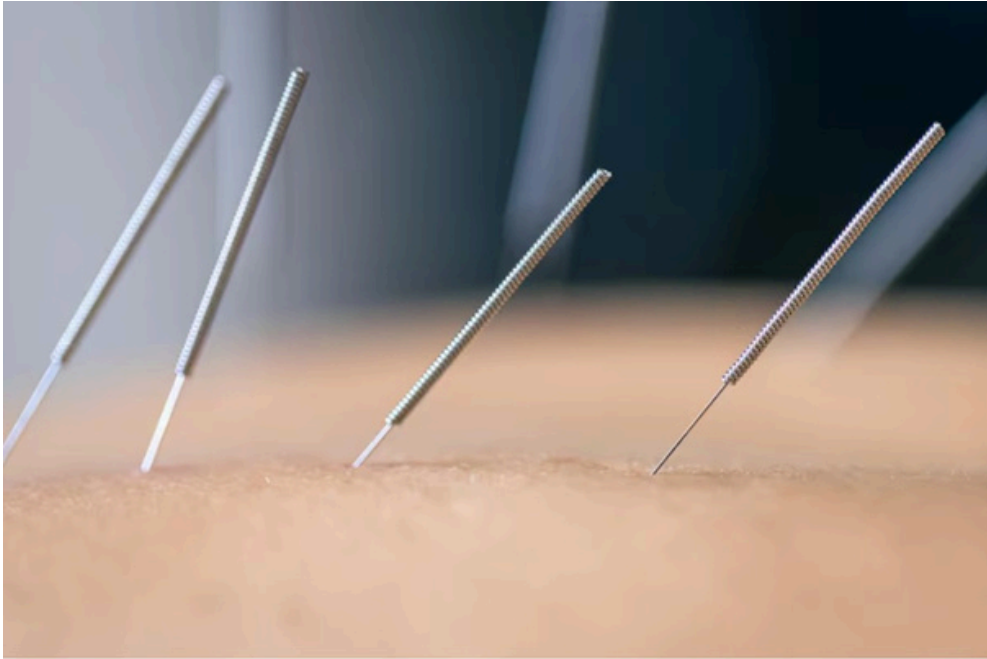
By night the clip had a title the internet loves and administrations dread: the six-year-old from Bihar. Not a manifesto. A child pointing at mud.

The next morning, senior officials reached the village. They did not find a handler or a script. They found a boy in the dirt with a wooden stick, the protest already over for him because play had resumed. Construction crews were ordered onto the drain. Years of files had waited for one afternoon of embarrassment.

That is the uncomfortable arithmetic of public life in this country. A petition can sleep in a drawer. A child on camera cannot. Abhishek did not defeat the state. He only made delay look ridiculous — and, for once, delay blinked. The road, if it is actually laid and not merely announced again, will be the test. Virality is easy. Tar and a working drain are the only proof that the boy was heard, not merely filmed.

# Acupuncture a Neurobiological Therapy: Bridging Body and Mind through Somatosensory System

By Jayalakshmi Visvanathan, M.Sc. Clinical Psychology, MD (ACU)



As a postgraduate in clinical psychology with advanced training in acupuncture, I have long observed how physical interventions reshape emotional and cognitive experience. Despite persistent attempts to dismiss it as mysticism or mere placebo, acupuncture is a genuine science rooted in neuroanatomy, neurophysiology and neuroendocrine regulation. Coupled with psychological insight, it becomes a precise intervention for pain and for neurological and functional disorders—migraine, stress-related memory impairment, and sexual dysfunction in both men and women.

At its heart lies the bidirectional relationship between body and mind. Physical tension intensifies psychological distress; unresolved emotion amplifies and sustains physical symptoms. Acupuncture acts at this junction as a somatosensory mind-body bridge.

## From Needle to Neural Circuitry

Needling at carefully chosen points activates peripheral sensory fibres—chiefly the slower-conducting A $\delta$  and C fibres of deeper tissues, with contribution from A $\beta$  fibres. Afferent signals ascend through spinal pathways to brainstem, thalamus and higher centres, triggering release of endogenous opioids (endorphins, enkephalins, dynorphins) from

hypothalamus and pituitary. These peptides bind receptors in the periaqueductal grey, spinal cord and limbic structures, generating analgesia that naloxone can attenuate.

Concurrently, monoamine systems shift: serotonin activity rises in anterior cingulate and dorsal raphe, dopamine signalling in mesolimbic pathways normalises, and GABAergic inhibition strengthens. The result is dampened nociceptive transmission and a changed affective colouring of pain.

A clinically decisive marker is the *deqi* sensation—aching, soreness, heaviness, fullness, pressure, numbness or dull pain. Distinct from sharp superficial pain, *deqi* arises predominantly from A $\delta$  and C fibre activation in muscle and deeper layers. Functional imaging shows that needling eliciting *deqi* reliably deactivates the limbic-paralimbic-neocortical network (amygdala, hypothalamus, portions of the default-mode network) while engaging somatosensory regions. Sharp pain produces a more mixed or activating pattern. Thus *deqi* signals engagement of affective and regulatory circuits rather than pure nociception.

Acupuncture also recalibrates the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal axis, reducing CRH expression in



the paraventricular nucleus and lowering circulating ACTH and cortisol under stress or inflammation. Simultaneously it modulates autonomic balance. Points such as ST36, PC6 and auricular sites can influence vagal afferents converging on the nucleus tractus solitarius, enhancing parasympathetic tone, improving heart-rate variability and engaging anti-inflammatory pathways. Sympathetic overdrive quiets; the physiological amplification of threat diminishes.



### Interrupting the Vicious Circle

Chronic muscle tension, autonomic hyperarousal and inflammatory signalling continually feed the brain interoceptive evidence of threat, heightening anxiety and catastrophic appraisal. Anxiety and unresolved emotion, in turn, sustain sympathetic dominance and central sensitisation. Acupuncture breaks the loop. Structured somatosensory input—especially when deqi is obtained—recruits descending inhibition, reduces the gain on ascending traffic, quiets limbic reactivity, lowers HPA drive and restores vagal tone. Patients frequently report not only less pain intensity but a quieting of the emotional charge that once accompanied it.

The needle does not speak metaphorically to the psyche. It delivers precise afferent signals that the nervous system translates into altered neurotransmitter balance, network connectivity, autonomic regulation and interoceptive processing. From a psychological standpoint this opens a window in which cognitive and emotional work can proceed with less physiological interference.

### Clinical Reach

For migraine and chronic pain the evidence is comparatively robust. Systematic reviews of randomised trials show acupuncture reduces attack frequency, migraine days and pain intensity relative to sham, with effects that can persist months after a course of treatment, often matching or approaching prophylactic medication while carrying fewer adverse effects. Mechanisms include trigeminovascular modulation, enhanced descending inhibition, reduced central sensitisation and the limbic-autonomic effects outlined above.

Stress-related or pain-associated memory complaints respond to the same HPA, limbic and autonomic recalibration. Prolonged cortisol elevation impairs hippocampal function; lowering that load and stabilising arousal supports clearer cognitive processing. Claims of reversing neurodegenerative disease exceed the data; the realistic claim is restoration of reversible, stress- and pain-mediated impairment

Sexual dysfunction—psychogenic erectile difficulty, performance anxiety, desire and arousal problems—frequently involves sympathetic excess, elevated cortisol and self-monitoring loops. Meta-analyses indicate acupuncture, particularly as adjunct, can improve erectile function scores, especially in psychogenic cases, through improved pelvic autonomic balance, reduced performance anxiety and modest neurochemical support for arousal. Parallel benefits appear in stress- or pain-linked female sexual dysfunction. Best results occur when the intervention is embedded in a broader psychological formulation.

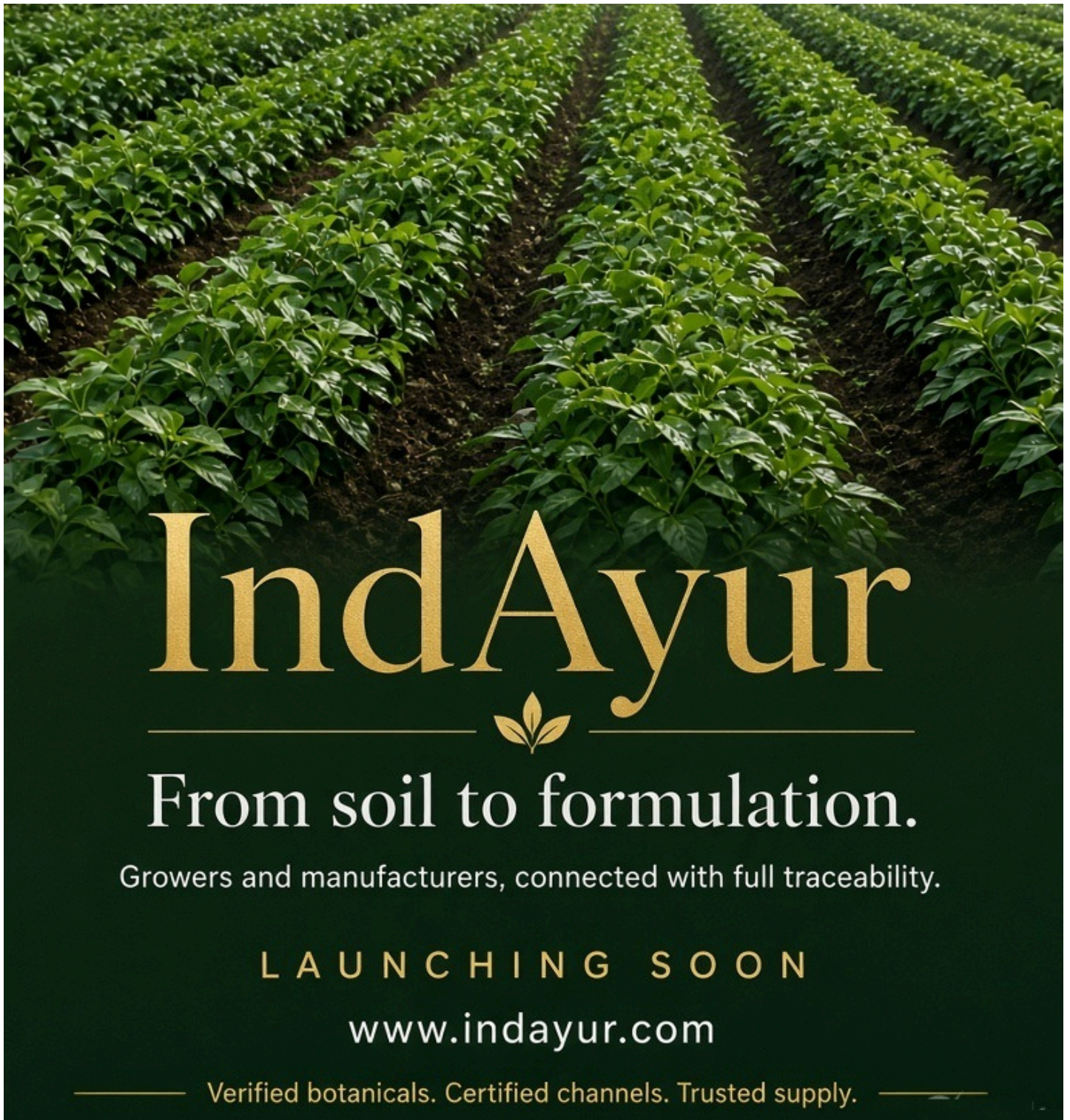
### Psychology and the Needle

The greatest value emerges when acupuncture is practised with psychological literacy. The clinician who recognises that migraine is maintained by anticipatory dread,, or erectile difficulty by shame and self-surveillance, can time and frame the physical intervention—including attention to deqi and the subsequent autonomic quiet—so that it becomes an embodied experience of safety. The body demonstrates that it can move from hyperarousal toward regulation without catastrophe. That somatic

evidence becomes a powerful anchor for cognitive and emotional work.

Acupuncture is not a substitute for psychological understanding; it is a peripheral intervention that reliably alters central chemistry, network dynamics, HPA activity and vagal tone, thereby creating physiological conditions more conducive to psychological recovery. Grounded in measurable neurobiology yet attentive to lived experience, it offers a coherent approach to those disorders in which the bidirectional tension between body and mind lies at the centre of suffering.

Author is an experienced clinical psychologist practicing acupuncture therapy. She based at Puducherry



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# Strongest El Niño in a Century — India's Monsoon Already 13% Short

By Geethu Radhakrishnan



The El Niño now building in the tropical Pacific is unlike any event in living memory. The UK Met Office calls it unprecedented: sea-surface temperatures in the key Niño regions are projected to rise more than 3°C above normal, beyond the 2.75°C peak of 2015–16 and into territory last approached in the late nineteenth century. Models and NOAA outlooks give a high chance that 2026–27 will rank as a record or near-record event. It began in June after a sharp swing from La Niña and is intensifying unusually fast. Peak effects are expected late this year into early 2027.

El Niño is not a storm over India. It is a rearrangement of Pacific heat and wind. When the trade winds slacken, warm water sloshes east. The Walker circulation shifts. Sinking air over the Indian Ocean region often weakens the southwest monsoon. The same shift rearranges weather across the tropics and far beyond.

## A hotter planet, a divided map

A typical El Niño adds about 0.2°C to global temperature. This one rides on a climate already more than 1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels. That

is why 2027 is widely expected to challenge, and possibly beat, 2024 as the warmest year on record.

The rainfall map splits. Drier-than-average conditions are the historical pattern for India, Australia, Indonesia and the Philippines, southern Africa, Central America, parts of southern China and the Amazon. Wetter and flood-prone conditions are more likely in the southern United States, Peru and Ecuador, and parts of East Africa. Fire risk rises in Indonesia, Australia and the Amazon.

The World Food Programme estimates that this event could push at least 49 million more people into acute food insecurity by the end of 2027, lifting the total in 45 vulnerable countries from about 225 million to 274 million. Studies of 1982–83 and 1997–98 put multi-year global losses in the trillions of dollars. A Peterson Institute estimate puts contemporaneous damage near \$1 trillion in 2027 if this event matches 1997–98. The African Development Bank has warned of \$10–20 billion in losses across Africa.

## India's 2026 Monsoon, in numbers

The season opened badly. June rainfall over the country was 99.5 mm against a long-period average of 165.3 mm—a shortfall of 39.8 per cent, the fifth lowest June since 1901 and the weakest since 2014. East and Northeast India recorded about 197.5 mm against a normal of 328.4 mm, a deficit of roughly 40 per cent and the lowest for June in that region since 1901. Central India was about 50 per cent below normal in June. Only about a quarter of districts received normal or excess rain that month.

July brought a rescue that was real but incomplete. A succession of low-pressure systems and depressions lifted monthly rainfall to near or slightly above normal—about 215.5 mm against 215 mm by 24 July, and 238.2 mm against 233.9 mm in the 1–26 July window. Central India swung from a 50 per cent June deficit to about 33 per cent excess in July. The all-India seasonal deficit, which had stood near 40 per cent at the end of June, narrowed to around 16 per cent by late July and to about 13 per cent by 19 August. It has since stayed in an 11–13 per cent band.

of LPA—the weakest monsoon in about eleven years. Skymet has been more severe, cutting its seasonal call toward 85 per cent of LPA.

Higher night temperatures are compounding the deficit. Soils dry faster. Reservoirs lose more to evaporation. Rain-fed catchments run lower.

### Fields: Kharif first, Rabi next

In warm ENSO years from 1950 to 1999, Indian foodgrain output fell in twelve of thirteen cases, typically by 1–15 per cent. Rice lost an average 3.4 million tonnes, or about 7 per cent. Later district studies show paddy yields down more than 10 per cent in 77 districts and maize in 65. Maize and pearl millet are often the most widely hit in rain-fed zones. More than 70 per cent of crop districts typically record lower production and yields. Soil moisture left short in kharif then limits rabi wheat. Pulses and oilseeds grown on rain remain the most exposed.

Globally the crop pattern is mixed. Rice yields tend to run 1–1.5 per cent below trend; soybeans often gain. Southern Africa's coming maize season is a particular worry: in 1997–98 and 2015–16, yields fell about 20 per cent below trend in South Africa and up to 40 per cent in Zimbabwe.



That national average hides the farm map. As of mid-to-late August, 117 of 262 districts flagged as vulnerable still showed deficient or largely deficient rainfall. East and Northeast India and the southern peninsula lagged for much of the season even after July's recovery. IMD has forecast August rain at below 94 per cent of its 254.9 mm LPA, and August–September combined below 94 per cent of 422.8 mm. The official seasonal outlook remains near 90 per cent

### The sea: from Kerala to Peru

El Niño weakens upwelling in the Arabian Sea. Less nutrient-rich water reaches the surface. Oil sardine and Indian mackerel have long shown lower catches, delayed spawning and smaller fish in strong events. CMFRI and INCOIS have flagged pressure on these stocks into 2027. Coral reefs face bleaching from marine heatwaves. The same physics empties nets off





Peru, where cool water fails to rise and anchovy fisheries collapse.

### **What still matters**

Not every strong El Niño produces an all-India drought. The 1997–98 event was intense, yet the monsoon held near normal. This year's mix—record Pacific heat, a 40 per cent June collapse, an incomplete July recovery and a second-half forecast still below normal—tilts the odds the other way.

Seasonal forecasts must reach farmers and fishers. Resilient varieties, timely sowing advice, micro-irrigation and careful reservoir operation can still save yield. Buffer stocks give New Delhi room. Support for rain-fed districts and artisanal fleets will matter more than slogans.

A century-scale El Niño does not stay in the Pacific. In India it has already arrived as 99.5 mm of June rain, a 13 per cent seasonal hole that will not close easily, and a harvest that now depends on how September behaves. Facts, forecasts and early action remain the only reliable tools.



# The Night St. Louis Bowed to Chennai

*From our Sports Correspondent*

Rameshbabu Praggnanandhaa did not merely win a tournament in St. Louis. He rewrote an Indian chapter that had remained unwritten for more than a decade of elite chess.

On Thursday night at the Saint Louis Chess Club, the 21-year-old grandmaster became the first Indian to claim the Grand Chess Tour, defeating defending champion Fabiano Caruana 15–13 in a final that swung from near-certain defeat to historic triumph. The \$200,000 first prize was the largest single payday of his career. The title itself was larger.

Caruana, world No. 2 and a veteran of these events, had looked in command after the classical games. He won the first 6–0, exploiting a 28th-move error. The second classical encounter stretched to 95 moves and ended in a draw. Praggnanandhaa walked into the final day six points behind, 3–9. Few expected the deficit to close.

It closed in a hurry. In the two rapid games he was faster, sharper and more inventive. Both wins went his way. The score flipped to 11–9. Four blitz games followed. They finished even, 4–4. A last-game draw was enough. The match ended 15–13.

“Honestly, I didn’t think I had many chances today,” Praggnanandhaa said afterwards. “It’s not every day that you can get one win from Fabi, but to get two, it was important in the rapid.”

The path to the final had been equally emphatic. He dismantled Germany’s Vincent Keymer 19–9 in the semi-finals. Caruana had beaten Wesley So 18–12 in the other. So later took third place. The top three — Praggnanandhaa, Caruana and So — are now guaranteed places on the 2027 Tour.

The result completed a remarkable American summer. Praggnanandhaa had already won Norway Chess and the Saint Louis Rapid & Blitz. At the Sinquefeld Cup he tied for first and lost the tie-break to So. He entered the finals as the season’s leading scorer.



A grandmaster at 13, long measured against the standards set by Viswanathan Anand and D. Gukesh, he now stands as the first Indian champion of a circuit that mixes classical endurance with the chaos of rapid and blitz. He called the Tour second only to the World Championship in prestige. He thanked coaches R.B. Ramesh and Vaibhav Suri, who stayed awake through Indian nights to keep him company across the time zones.

Indian chess has collected world titles, Olympiad medals and a generation of teenage prodigies. Until this week it had never collected the Grand Chess Tour. In St. Louis, a young man from Chennai who began the last day six points down made sure that sentence no longer needed to be written.





## News In Brief



### UP Turns: INDIA Bloc Edges NDA in MOTN Seat Count

The August 2026 India Today-CVoter Mood of the Nation survey delivers its sharpest state-level surprise in Uttar Pradesh. If Lok Sabha polls were held now, the INDIA bloc is projected to win 41 of the state's 80 seats against 38 for the NDA—a reversal from January, when the BJP-led alliance held a clear lead. Vote share remains close: NDA at 42 percent, INDIA at 40 percent. The NDA's UP vote has fallen five points in six months.

Nationally the NDA is still projected at 326 seats (BJP 261), down from 352 in January, with Congress rising to 106 and the INDIA alliance at 185. Narendra Modi remains the preferred prime minister at nearly 49 percent, ahead of Rahul Gandhi (27 percent) and Tamil Nadu CM Vijay (9 percent). Modi's approval is 58 percent, six points lower than January.

The UP shift is tied to youth anxiety: jobs top Gen Z concerns, and 67 percent nationwide have little or no faith in exam fairness after paper-leak rows. Price rise and unemployment rank as the government's biggest perceived failures. The survey, drawn from 25,184 fresh interviews plus nearly 92,000 tracking interviews, shows the NDA still above the majority mark—but the Hindi heartland is no longer a safe fortress.

### NCLT clears Rs 6.5-crore plan for Subhash Chandra against Rs 22,000-crore claims

The National Company Law Tribunal has approved a repayment plan under which Zee Group founder Subhash Chandra will pay Rs 6.5 crore in his personal insolvency case against admitted claims of about Rs 22,006.57 crore. The Tuesday order, passed by judicial member Nilesh Sharma as the third member after a split verdict, gives lenders a recovery of roughly 0.03 per cent and a haircut of nearly 99.97 per cent.

Creditors holding 80.81 per cent of the voting share had backed the plan. Objectors, including LIC Housing Finance, called the payout unviable. Chandra said he was only a personal guarantor and had not borrowed from the lenders. The



total claim by objectors, he said, is Rs 3,992 crore, not Rs 22,000 crore, while group entities have already repaid about Rs 43,000 crore of Rs 45,000 crore outstanding.

The outcome has revived debate on how far creditors can be bound to accept a near-microscopic recovery under the personal insolvency framework.

### Penguin India: We Did Not Drop Sonia's Memoir

Penguin Random House India has rejected reports that it abandoned Congress leader Sonia Gandhi's memoir after she refused editorial cuts.

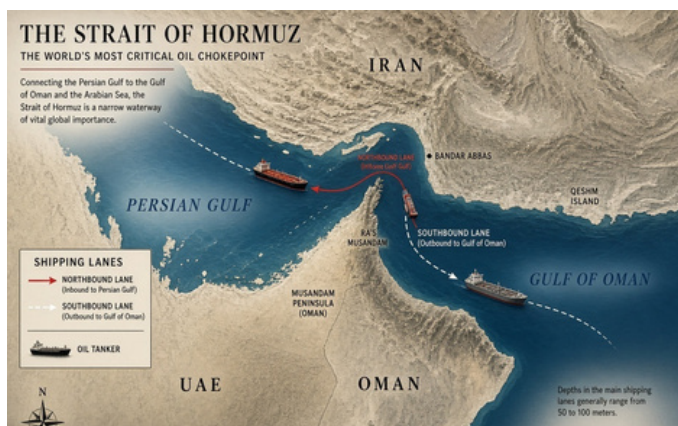


In a statement posted on its X account, the publisher said it is not the publisher of *Belonging: A Journey of Love* in India. Claims that it walked away because Gandhi declined “editorial changes and deletions” “do not accurately reflect the circumstances,” it said. PRHI added that fact-checking and recommendations are a normal part of publishing. “Throughout the relevant discussions, Penguin Random House India’s position was that we remained willing and keen to publish the book,” the statement said. It declined further comment on confidential talks with the author.

The Indian Express had reported that PRHI sought changes in part of the manuscript, that Gandhi refused, and that HarperCollins was close to taking the Indian rights. Knopf, a Penguin Random House imprint in the US, still plans a November 10 release with a first print run of 100,000 copies. An e-book listing has also appeared under HarperCollins UK's William Collins imprint.

The 544-page memoir traces Gandhi's life from post-war Italy to her marriage into the Nehru-Gandhi family, the assassinations that remade her world, and her decision to decline the prime ministership in 2004.

### **Tensions and indirect diplomacy continue surrounding the Strait of Hormuz**



Six months after the US-Israel-Iran war began, the Strait of Hormuz is no longer a theatre of open battle but a grinding contest of endurance. Qatar's prime minister this week urged Tehran to respect freedom of navigation, while Iran and Oman discussed a temporary shipping corridor and mine clearance. Iranian officials said they would draw up conditions—compensation, an end to the US blockade of Iranian ports—before fully reopening the waterway that once carried a fifth of the world's oil.

Fighting has settled into attrition: sporadic strikes on tankers, an Iranian blacklist of vessels, competing US and Iranian claims that the lanes are either "open" or still too dangerous. Traffic remains a fraction of pre-war volumes. Oil prices have eased from spring peaks but stay elevated; inventories are drawn down and hundreds of ships linger stranded.

Neither side has blinked. Regional energy security and global markets continue to absorb the cost of an unresolved chokepoint.

### **Russia Unleashes Missile Barrage on Ukraine as CIA Warns Kremlin Against NATO Test**



Russia launched a large combined missile and drone assault on Ukraine overnight into 28 August, striking energy plants, ports, industry and cities including Kyiv, Kharkiv, Odesa, Poltava and Kryvyi Rih. Ukrainian air defences shot down seven ballistic missiles (Iskander-M/KN-23), one Oniks anti-ship missile and most of more than 250 drones, though impacts still caused casualties, damaged housing, schools and infrastructure, and cut power in several regions.

The attack formed part of a sustained Russian air campaign exploiting Ukraine's shortage of Patriot interceptors. Kyiv has received only a limited fresh batch of US missiles capable of stopping ballistic threats.

The strikes coincided with a secret Moscow visit by CIA Director John Ratcliffe, who warned the Kremlin against any attack on NATO territory. US intelligence assesses that Russia, frustrated on the Ukrainian front, may attempt a limited incursion, cyber operation or hybrid probe against a Baltic state to test Alliance unity and Article 5. Officials say such a move could come as early as this autumn.

Ukraine has continued its own long-range drone and missile strikes on Russian oil refineries and command posts. Western capitals now watch both the battlefield and NATO's eastern flank with heightened concern.

### **BRICS Will Strengthen Multilateralism, Voice of Global South**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said that under India's 2026 chairmanship, BRICS will work to strengthen multilateralism, promote sustainable development, enhance economic resilience and build a more inclusive world order.



Interacting in New Delhi with Foreign Ministers and Heads of Delegation attending the BRICS Foreign Ministers' Meeting, Mr Modi said the grouping has emerged as an important platform for cooperation among emerging economies and for giving voice to the aspirations of the Global South.



The courtesy calls took place on the sidelines of the two-day ministerial meeting hosted by India.

In his opening remarks, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said peace and security remain central to the global order. Recent conflicts, he added, only underline the importance of dialogue and diplomacy. Brazilian Foreign Minister Mauro Vieira, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Iranian Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi were among those present. The theme of India's chairship is "Building for Resilience, Innovation, Cooperation and Sustainability."

### **Bangladesh Considers Joining Mecca Pact Amid India's Regional Security Concerns**



Bangladesh has signalled it would "positively" consider joining the Mecca Joint Defence Agreement if invited by its founding members—Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan. Foreign Minister Khalilur Rahman told parliament on Thursday that membership is not yet on the table, but Dhaka views the August 7 pact as the Muslim world's "self-defence mechanism" and an internal matter of the "Muslim family."

Modelled on NATO's collective-defence clause, the agreement treats an armed attack on one signatory as an attack on all. State Minister Humayun Kabir earlier said participation in a security arrangement among Islamic nations would not be unusual and that

leadership, including Prime Minister Tarique Rahman, had been invited to engage.

New Delhi is examining the implications for national security and regional stability. Analysts note India is unlikely to welcome a defence framework that includes Pakistan and would extend the bloc toward India's eastern flank and the Siliguri Corridor. Dhaka insists any decision will rest on national interest under its "Bangladesh First" policy. No formal invitation has been confirmed.

### **Hindalco Commissions India's First Superfine PPT ATH Plant**



Hindalco Industries, the metals flagship of the Aditya Birla Group, has commissioned India's first greenfield Superfine PPT ATH (Precipitated Aluminium Trihydrate) plant at Belagavi, Karnataka. The facility, with a Phase-1 capacity of 30,000 tonnes a year and designed for expansion to 60,000 tonnes, brings domestic production of this high-value specialty alumina to the country for the first time.

The plant manufactures Hindalco's InnoSafe Superfine PPT ATH, a halogen-free flame retardant used in HFFR cables, polymer insulators, thermal insulation, composites, paints and EV applications. It suppresses flame spread and smoke without releasing toxic halogen-acid gases. Phase-1 output is designed to meet nearly the entire domestic demand of the wire and cable industry, cutting import dependence and supporting Atmanirbhar Bharat.

Powered entirely by biomass, solar and wind, the unit is described as the world's only specialty alumina plant running on 100 per cent renewable energy. Developed through in-house "flask-to-factory" R&D, it strengthens Hindalco's specialty alumina portfolio. MD Satish Pai said the investment moves the company up the value chain and meets emerging fire-safety needs in India and overseas.

# Dimagi Naxali: The Reed-Born Son Who First Cooled Neelkantha's Throat

By Geetha V P



In these days the nation has been cautioned. From the ramparts of the Red Fort the Prime Minister spoke of dimagi naxals — those whose minds, he said, still sow disorder even after the armed fire in the forests has been brought low. The warning belongs to the present hour. Yet words, like rivers, have older beds. Long before any village gave its name to an uprising, the syllable naxal belonged to a grass, and the one born among that grass belonged only to Mahadev.

Hear first of the terror that made his birth necessary.

There was an asura named Tarakasura, son of Vajranga and Varangi. From childhood he burned with a single desire: to become unconquerable. He performed tapas so fierce that the worlds themselves grew afraid. Standing on one foot, living on air, his body reduced to bone and flame, he pleased Brahma. When the Creator appeared, Tarakasura asked a boon that seemed clever: let him die only at the hands of a son of Shiva.

## **Brahma granted it.**

At that time Shiva was lost to the world. After Sati's self-immolation He had withdrawn into the deepest yoga. No wife sat beside Him. No son would

be born. Tarakasura understood this. The boon was, in his mind, immortality. He rose, gathered a vast army of asuras, and began to grind the three worlds under his heel. He drove the gods from their cities. He seized their treasures, their women, their yajnas. Indra's thunderbolt became useless. The sun was dimmed. The sacred fires of earth went out. Sages could not complete their rites. The earth itself cried out.

The gods ran to Brahma. Brahma sent them to Vishnu. Vishnu told them the truth: only a son of Mahadev could end this. They must wake Shiva from His stillness and bring Uma, the daughter of Himavan, to His side.

Thus began the long labour of the gods. Kama was sent and reduced to ash by Shiva's third eye. Parvati herself undertook terrible tapas to win the Lord who had become ice. At last the wedding of Shiva and Parvati took place on the Himalaya, a marriage so vast that all the gods attended and the mountains themselves bowed. Yet even then the energy of their union was too great. The gods, still terrified that the worlds would not survive such concentrated power, interrupted them.



Shiva's seed, blazing like a second sun, fell. Agni took it and burned. Ganga received it and boiled. Unable to hold it, the sacred river carried the essence downstream until she reached a thicket of tall, silver-plumed river-grass that the people of that land called naxal. There the seed sank. The reeds caught a cold, golden fire that did not consume. From that ash and that grass a child arose — six-faced, already radiant with the purpose for which he had been born. The six Krittikas found him and nursed him, each claiming him as her own, and so he grew six heads that all might drink. The world later named him Kartikeya, Skanda, Shanmukha, Murugan, Kumara. But in the oldest whisper of the river-folk he was also called Naxali — the one born of the naxal reeds, Sharavanabhava, son of the thicket.



He did not remain a child for long. On the seventh day he was given the spear, the vel, and the command of the army of the gods. He mounted the peacock. He faced Tarakasura. The battle shook the three worlds. Tarakasura, armed with every weapon and every illusion, could not be wounded by any other being. Only the son of Shiva could pierce him. Naxali — Kartikeya — did so. The vel flew. The asura who had thought himself deathless fell. The gods returned to their places. The yajnas were lit again. The earth breathed.

Yet before he became commander, and even after the slaying, he remained first a son.

Mahadev had already drunk the halahala that rose from the churning of the ocean. He held the poison in His throat so that creation might live. The blue fire never fully died. Young Naxali, standing where the same grass still whispered, understood what the heavens had not yet thought to do. He filled two earthen pots with Ganga's own water from the very banks that had given him birth, bound them to a simple bamboo pole, and set the pole upon his shoulders. Barefoot, silent, his mind fixed only on his Father, he walked.

That was the first kawad.

The pots did not spill. When he reached Kailasa and poured the cool river over the burning throat of Neelkantha, the Lord opened His eyes and smiled. In that smile the path of the Kawadiya was born — the long walk, the sacred burden, the offering that asks for nothing except the chance to soothe the One who once saved the worlds.

Thus the first dimagi Naxali was not a maker of disorder. His dimag — his mind — was itself a kanwar: balanced, devoted, carrying only grace. He did not raise a weapon against the innocent earth; he raised the vel against Tarakasura and water to the throat of his Father. His rebellion was only against adharma and forgetfulness. His uprising was the slow return of the river to the Lord who had swallowed poison so that others might live.

The later village of Naxalbari would one day lend the same sound to a very different fire. But the grass was older than the village, the child older than any slogan, and the kawad older than any caution of the present age. Those who still walk in Shravan with pots swaying on their shoulders walk, whether they know the name or not, in the footsteps of that reed-born son who first slew the asura and then cooled the throat of Mahadev.

A true Dimagi Naxali, the old story says, is one whose mind remains a kanwar — who honours Kartikeya as the slayer of Tarakasura and the first pilgrim, who carries only Ganga's water to Shiva, and who lets no other fire enter the heart that was meant for worship alone.

Har Har Mahadev.



## Editor's Diary

# Nature Does Not Forgive: The Reckoning of the Defiant



Nepal is bleeding. But let every nation bordering these fragile peaks and every state blinded by the glitter of "progress" take a long, hard look—because you are next.

While floodwaters swallow valleys and bury people under mud and rubble, a quiet, man-made catastrophe continues with alarming indifference. Millions of trees are being felled—not by storms, but by policy, by permits, and by the unchecked hunger of industries that have learned to dress environmental destruction in the fine clothes of development.

Across the landscape, ancient forests are being sacrificed at the altar of mining leases. Hills that stood for millennia are being dynamited into gravel to lay highways for a future that will not exist if the land fails. Wetlands—nature's own flood barriers, painstakingly built over thousands of years—are being buried under concrete for real-estate projects that serve the wealthy while endangering the masses. Rivers are being strangled by encroachment; ecosystems are being gutted for short-term gain. And through all of it, the approvals keep coming, the machines keep running, and the destruction keeps accelerating.

Every forest that falls takes with it the soil it held and the water it absorbed. Every hill blasted open becomes a landslide waiting for the next monsoon to trigger it. Every wetland filled transforms the next heavy rainfall into a catastrophic, unstoppable flood. These are not opinions or exaggerations. These are the iron laws of nature—immutable, unstoppable, and utterly indifferent to human ambition, political timelines, or quarterly profit reports.

To those signing away ecosystems for mining profits, to those bulldozing hills for faster highways, and to those filling wetlands for luxury apartments—hear this clearly: you are not building a nation. You are building a tomb. Every clearance certificate forged, every environmental law bypassed, and every acre flattened is a debt being added to an account that will be called due—violently.

The people who will drown, who will be buried under landslides, and who will starve through droughts are not statistics. Their suffering is the price of your greed. Nepal was the warning shot. The reckoning is no longer coming; it is already at your doorstep. Nature does not negotiate. It does not compromise. It destroys.





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SEP 1 - 15  
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