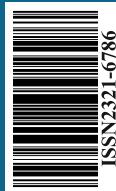


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# Iran in Throes of A New Revolution

*Shopkeepers and traders walk over a bridge in Tehran on December 29, 2025 during protest against Iran's economic conditions*



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# Fundamental Principles of P.R.O.U.T

Those who want to promote the welfare of all human beings, remaining above all sorts of parochial sentiments, have no alternative but to embrace universalism with their heart and soul – there is no other way.

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body



There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe



There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.



There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.



The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

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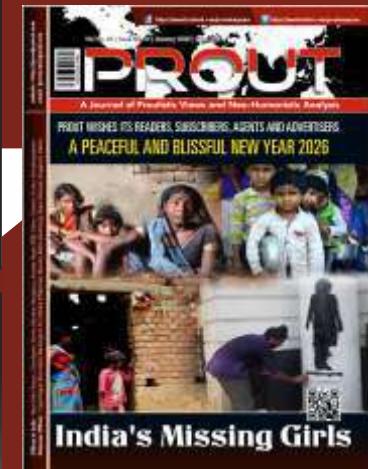
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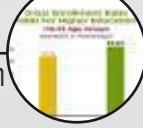
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## FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

# West Bengal Politics – A New Low

**J**n many countries across the world, democracy and political violence (the use or threatened use of physical coercion to achieve political ends) can be inseparable. This includes the most advanced western democracies as well. In India, political violence is commonly linked to electoral politics. States such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Kerala, for example, have had a long history of violent incidents erupting during elections. West Bengal has a unique nature and presents an entirely different picture. In this state of Eastern India with a population of around 104.4 million long beset by insurgency, social upheaval, mass migration, and violent mobilisation for political control, the culture of political violence seems more endemic than in other Indian states.

Bengal has a history of political violence going back to the pre-Independence nationalist movement, particularly the response to the Partition of Bengal in 1905 by the British. This partition sparked the rise of a revolutionary protest movement in the state in the early 20th century. Secret societies such as *Anushilan Samiti* and *Jugantar* were formed to mount an armed revolt against the colonial rulers. There were also communal conflagrations in the state, such as the Great Calcutta Killings of 1946, and the Tebhaga Movement of 1946-1947 which was a violent peasant uprising. Post-Independence, there was the Naxalbari rebellion of 1967 which was an effort by radical communist forces to overthrow the state administration, and which saw both mindless killings by insurgents and brutal police repression.

This has deeply impacted its body politic in complex ways. The state has seen governments led by different political parties since Independence, including the Indian National Congress (INC) that ruled for more than two decades, the Communist Party of India (Marxist)- led Left Front for over three decades, and the All India Trinamool Congress (AITC or TMC) heading the government for the past 15 years. Across all these regimes, the culture of violent clashes between workers of political parties, especially in the rural areas, has only thrived over the years.

According to the latest National Crime Records Bureau report of 2021, West Bengal has recorded the highest number of political murders in the country, and the rates are also notable in states like Kerala, Jharkhand, and West Bengal -- the latter for a long time now, has been witnessing a high degree of violence based on party lines. The NCRB has recorded 20 political killings on average every year in West Bengal, from 1999 to 2016. The latest round of violence has been mainly between party workers of the state's current ruling party, the TMC, and the biggest opposition force, the BJP. NCRB data also suggests that there have been as many as 47 political killings involving TMC and BJP workers since the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, of which 38 occurred in South Bengal. Many analysts argue that the current surge in political violence is largely due to the aggressive push by the BJP to unseat the ruling TMC.

Violence even touched the top leaders of both parties during the high-pitched 2021 assembly elections in the state. Each party blamed the other for the alleged attacks on its leaders, and in both cases, the allegations were dismissed as political gimmickry by the other party. A renewed spate of violence was reported from the state after the results of the Assembly elections were declared on 2 May 2021. Again, the TMC and the BJP blamed each other. The TMC won the elections for the third consecutive time, while the BJP, though it increased its seat share in the state Assembly manifold, failed to dislodge the TMC from power.

With the forthcoming Assembly elections Ms Mamata Banerjee as the present CM and head of the TMC eyeing a fourth consecutive term and the BJP ardently trying to dislodge her, the present incidents of violence and political tensions is no surprise really. But on January 8, high drama erupted which took on an unprecedented new low. A sitting Chief Minister, resorting to street level politics never seen before, rushed to the residence of the Trinamool Congress's election strategist and the office of political consultancy group I-PAC during raids by the Enforcement Directorate and few minutes later she came out, visibly upset, carrying a green file in her hand. Just before her, Kolkata police chief Vineet Goyal reached the location where ED raids were going on. All this was recorded live on camera and generated massive controversy and turned up the heat in poll-bound Bengal, becoming the latest flashpoint between the Mamata government and the BJP. Later addressing the media, a livid Mamata alleged that the ED action was "politically motivated".

Such display of political leadership, constitutional authorities showing scant respect for laws, sets dangerous precedents and encourages others. As Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar said, "Politicians cannot provide what is needed. During the last six thousand years of human history, they have failed at every step. Hence, it would be wise for them to resist the temptation to try and take the lead in any sphere of society".

The latest example of what happened in Kolkata once the country's cultural capital reaffirms this point. Evidently electoral politics is only to grab power and not for service as claimed. Its high time politics in the country and also the world over is based purely for service and governance based on strong moral foundations. ●



## Nationalism and Universalism

With exponential scientific leaps on Earth and man trying to reach out to other planets and stars, nationalism is fast becoming an outdated concept. Universalism is the only solution there is no other way. Sooner the world realises this better it would be for mankind. Most of the world's problems would be over if universalism as postulated by Shrii PR Sarkar is followed instead.

- *Tracy MacDougal, Durban South Africa*

## India's Missing Girls and Homeless Persons

Many factors cause missing/kidnapped/abducted/trafficked children viz. ranging from economic disparities to gender-based discrimination that leave girls disproportionately exposed to exploitation. Poverty is also a significant driver of child trafficking in India. Governments, NGOs, and communities must collaborate to create a safe and nurturing environment for our girls and children.

India's Homeless: Homelessness is a perennial problem in India. Considered to be one of the by-products of rapid urbanization, homelessness is a growing urban issue that the poorest urban dwellers are vulnerable to experiencing. I grew in Bombay seeing street beggars (blind and lame). I did my best to help them with what little I could get from my parents. I formed

closeness with many street beggars. In 2004, when I published my book: Socio-Economic Democracy and the World Government: Collective Capitalism, Depovertization, Human Rights, Template for Sustainable Peace, I dedicated it in ever-lasting memory of the totally destitute people - the street beggars, constituting the ignored "Fourth-World"; Those I knew in my childhood, and from whom I derived so much love, who, through their dignified lives (amidst intense suffering), enlightened me about life. Wishing them eternal peace in the Effulgent World! Wishing a very Happy New Year filled with Baba's blessings for happy living and ongoing success with the Prout journal.

- *Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista, USA*

## Bharatvarsha's Brave Son

A beautiful poem by Dada Nityasatyanaanda on Netaji Subash Chandra Bose written over three decades ago. It's good that the nation as a whole remembers this brave son of India whom most were forced to forget due to political considerations.

- *Charulata Das, Hooghly*

## From Skies to Floors

A well written article on the recent big aviation crisis faced by India. It was shameful the way it happened causing untold misery to thousands of flyers who had to suffer through no fault of theirs. All persons responsible should be strictly held to account.

- *Dannajya Shahane, Nagpur*

## Middle Class Debt Trap

Life stressed as it already is in urban India this new problem of debt is gradually taking a stranglehold on India's urban middle class. They have high aspirations and easily fall to the temptations laid before them by the capitalistic blitzkrieg of consumerism day after day by way of TV ads and other media means. When household debt is 23.9% of GDP it's a serious matter and should

ring alarm bells in the ears of government authorities to take urgent action. This is a problem in most of the developing nations of the world and also the affluent nations.

- *Amit Chaudhary, Lucknow*

## Weapons

### Against Humanity

The author has hit the nail on the head. It is dogma and brainwashed minds that come in the way of progress of humanity. This has been so for hundreds and thousands of years but in today's age of rationality, it can have no place. Dogma must be fought tooth and nail with all weapons at our disposal to usher in the age of Neohumanism.

- *Charanjit Mann, Chandigarh*

## Jivan Yoga

A very illuminating article about extolling the virtues of Yoga, how to live at home, how to live at work in communion with the Cosmic Father.

- *Sadhana Sain, New Delhi*

## Reimagined

### Canadian Sovereignty

An interesting discussion on the possibility or otherwise of Canada becoming US's 51st state? Simulations apart, as things seem to be getting hotted up in world media portals about Greenland too, who knows where the future lies?

- *Aruna Gaekwad, Mumbai*

## Palliative Care

Persons in the evening of their lives afflicted with various diseases need palliative care the most. Treating them symptomatically for their diseases is okay, but relieving them of both physical and mental pain must come first. This is part of the human right to health and the entire medical fraternity must prioritise this aspect and not ignore this anymore. ●

- *Dr. Satyamurthy, Madurai*

# Inspirational

## UTTARAKHAND'S NEW GEN Z VILLAGE PRADHANS

**A** new generation of young, educated pradhans, many of them women, are returning to Uttarakhand's villages after years of outmigration. These Gen-Z leaders, armed with degrees and smartphones, are challenging traditional patriarchy and the 'pradhan-pati' model. They are committed to revitalizing their communities by addressing local issues and creating opportunities to encourage others to stay.

For decades, the story of Uttarakhand's villages has been one of departure. Young people studied, packed their bags, and left, drawn to cities by jobs, money, and the promise of a future the hills seemed unable to offer.

Last year's summer, quietly but decisively, a different story began to unfold. When the results of Uttarakhand's latest panchayat elections were declared at the end of July, a striking pattern emerged. Across hill districts, first-time pradhans barely in their twenties, many of them women, had won seats long dominated by older men. Armed not with political pedigree but college degrees, smartphones and a stubborn sense of belonging, they chose something their peers usually reject: staying back.

Just months into office, these Gen Z pradhans are confronting two entrenched realities of the Himalayas outmigration and patriarchy, while dismantling another familiar feature of village politics: the shadowy "pradhan-pati" model. For them, the panchayat is not a stepping stone to fame or influence. It is instead, a deliberate return home, and an attempt to make that return meaningful for others.

At 22, Sakshi Rawat's life could have followed a very different path. With a biotechnology degree in hand, she could have been working in a lab in Dehradun. Instead, three months after graduating, she returned to Kui village in Pauri Garhwal and contested the pradhan's seat. Watching friends leave for private-sector jobs was not easy, most leave their villages after studying, Sakshi said. "I want them to stay, to build something of their own here".

Inspired by young grassroots innovators such as Pawan Bisht from nearby Maroda village, who returned to the hills to pursue advanced farming, she believes Uttarakhand's revival must be youth-led. "Our biggest challenge isn't geography or funds but mindset. People still think success lies outside the village. Real change will come when results at home become visible," she said.

There are others. In Chamoli's Sarkot village, 21-year-old Priyanka Negi arrived at politics by way of numbers. Once aspiring to be a mathematician, she grew up accompanying her father--a two-time village head, to block-level meetings. "I was always drawn to numbers," she said, "but during my graduation, I realised governance is the real math...." For Priyanka, the equation is simple. "Road connectivity... Fix the roads and half the problems of rural, hill life resolve themselves."

For Deeksha Mandoli, 22, responsibility came early—and all at once. Married at 20 and a mother by 21, she is now the pradhan of Gulari village in Chamoli. An English graduate, Deeksha sees substance abuse among young people as an emerging threat to village life. She brushes aside the old assumption that a husband must run things from behind the scenes. "People now talk to us directly" she said, signaling a subtle but significant shift in how authority is exercised and recognised. ●



Sakshi Rawat



Chamoli district Garhwal



# Renaissance in All the Strata of Life

■ Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

**J**he real meaning of the word “renaissance” is reawakening. That is, humanity was sleeping, and now it must wake up from that cimmerian slumber and do something in all the spheres of life, in all the strata of existence.

There are three important strata in life: the physical stratum, the psychic stratum and the spiritual stratum. In the physical stratum, there are many strata: say, scientific achievement, social progress, political life, economic life, culture life. People often say that this twentieth century is the century of science. No, it is not the truth. Human life has been associated with science from the prehistoric era, from the very birth of humanity on this earth about one million years ago, and not only in this twentieth century. And as long as there will be a single human being, there will be an age of science.

Nowadays science means creating new weapons—strengthening the hands of warmongers; but the spirit of science should not be like this, and at the start, in the primordial phase of human life, it was not so. Yes, there is necessity of weapons – weapons not for strengthening the hands of warmongers, but for providing security for good ideas, good thoughts and good persons. Science should be just like art: science for service and beatitude.



Art for service and beatitude, I said; and now I say, science is also for service and beatitude. Science should always be utilized for the proper progress of human society.

Then the social. In the social

*Scope of Renaissance movement is vast, start work from this very moment.*

family, but there is disparity and it is the duty of the Renaissance movement to dispel the disparity and bring about equality, equilibrium and equipoise amongst human beings.

There are disparities, disparities of different types and different kinds. For instance, there are biological disparities existing in the society, which are being encouraged by certain selfish persons. The biological disparity between human and animal, between human and plant, between animal and plant – that disparity must not be there.

Just as a human being wants to survive, a pigeon also wants to survive – similarly a cow also wants to survive, or a tree. Just as my life is dear to me, so the lives of created beings are also equally dear to them. It is the birthright of human beings to live in this world, and it is the birthright of the animal world and plant world also to remain on this earth. To recognize this right, and to get it recognized by the entire human society, the Renaissance movement will have to do something concrete.

Then there is disparity due to birth – disparity between people of higher caste and people of so called lower caste. People of a particular country die of starvation, and people of another country die due to overeating due to voracity. It is a disparity – it is bad. It is a creation

of selfish people, not of Parama Puruśa. The Renaissance movement will have to do something concrete in this respect also. All are equal, with equal glamour as human beings.

Now, difference of colour. Due to geographical conditions, due to historical facts, there are differences in colour. A particular human being may be of white complexion, someone black, someone very black, someone yellow. It is not an innate difference, it is an external difference. Why should there be a special type of scripture based on these differences? No, there must not be any difference of colour, or any social disparity because of difference of colour.

Now, there is the sex difference. Females are debarred from many socio political rights. You know, a few hundred years ago they had no voting rights in many countries of the world. Why? They are also human beings – they also have the same rights as men.

Renaissance people will have to start a movement for social equality and fight against such inequality based on sexual difference. Are women like cattle, or sacks of cloth that people give as gifts at the time of marriage? Are they slaves to be sold to others? As long as women lacked courage or intellect, they tolerated these things – but what a great

humiliation! To submit them to such indignities is far worse than to whip them publicly on the road. Are women simply like bundles of cloth to be sent to the washerman's house? Women must not be suppressed, and there should not be domination of males in the society.

Society should have a cooperative leadership, not a subordinated leadership; there should be a coordinated, cooperative leadership, leadership between males and females. Renaissance people will have to start a movement immediately to fight against all these disparities; otherwise if fifty percent of the population, that is the ladies, remain downtrodden, how can there be all-round progress of human society? So these are all the social duties, the social responsibilities of the Renaissance movement. Renaissance people will have to wage war on these disparities, these inequalities – they will have to be rooted out of the society.

In political life, a group of people exploit another group of people of the same country, or of some other country. There is political inequality. Still there is a sort of economic polarization, economic exploitation, and not only that, there are social and cultural disparities, and social and cultural exploitation also. Renaissance people will have to bring this fact to the notice of one and all: this disparity cannot be supported by good thinking, by right thinking people, and so we will not support it. Yes, in the political sphere, there should be the rule of moralist people, for immoralist people cannot lead the society: they cannot goad the people onto the path of righteousness. And this political life should also be based on universalism, without forgetting the fact that a particular area of the world has its own particular

**Renaissance people will have to start a movement immediately to fight against all these disparities; otherwise if fifty percent of the population, that is the ladies, remain downtrodden, how can there be all-round progress of human society?**



problems and its own particular conditions.

Economic life. In economic life there is extreme inequality and exploitation. Although colonialism no longer exists openly in the political and economic spheres till it persists indirectly, and this should not be tolerated. The Renaissance movement will have to do something in this respect. You should remember that in economic life, we will have to guarantee the minimum requirements to one and all.

There cannot be any second thought, there cannot be any sort of adjustment as far as this point is concerned. The minimum purchasing requirement must be guaranteed to all. Today these fundamental essentialities are not being guaranteed. Rather, people are being guided by deceptive economic ideas like outdated Marxism, which has proved ineffective in practical life, and has not been successfully implemented in any corner of the world.

Why do people still believe in such a theory, which has never been proved successful? The time has come for people to make a proper assessment whether they are being misguided or not.

Then comes one of the important points: cultural life. What is culture? Culture is the collection of different expressions of human life. The culture of the entire human race is one, but there are different local expressions. This difference in local expressions does not mean that people of different corners of the earth have different cultures – culture is the same, but the expressions vary.

Education is a part of cultural life. Education should be free, and education must be based on universalism. While imparting education you should also remember that there are certain local conditions, local problems and local requirements; so while formulating the educational



structure, we should do everything remembering this fundamental fact.

So you see, the scope of the Renaissance movement is vast, and you will have to start your work from this very moment: it brooks no delay.

There are the different types of inequalities prevailing in the physical world. In the psychic world also there are so many ailments, and Renaissance people will have to wage war against these inequalities and man-made differences.

There must be progress in the psychic realm, in the psychic arena. In the psychic arena, the progress should be unbarred and unaffected. There are so many ailments in the psychic sphere. You see, in the psycho-physical sphere, many people are guided by – rather goaded by – dogmas.

Dogmas have taken root in the human mind. People cannot get

rid of these false ideas because they have been injected into their minds since childhood. As a result, one human society is divided into different nations, and one nation is divided into different religions; religions also have different castes, and caste also have different sub-castes – what kind of situation is this?

We have only learned how to divide and subdivide humanity, and we never learned how to unite the people. This is all due to the defective teachings of dogmas.

Some people think that the particular group of people to which they belong are the blessed beings of Parama Purusa, and others are cursed beings. This is a very bad type of dogma opportunists have introduced all this. Renaissance people will have to fight against these dogmas, and carry on the struggle endlessly. For that, they may have to confront numerous

obstacles, censure and humiliation, but they will have to move on undaunted and unaffected. Dogmas are psycho-physical diseases.

Then there are physico-psychic ailments. Some people argue that animals have been created by Parama Purusa for our food. I knew a certain person who used to say that if people do not eat goats' meat, the world would become populated only by goats. And others said that if people don't eat chickens, there would not be even a single inch of space on this earth – it would be filled with chickens!

Now my point is, even though human beings do not eat vultures, is there a crowd of vultures in the world? How foolish such people are! People don't eat earthworms – has there been an uncontrollable growth of earthworms on earth? Only out of excessive greed, people eat chickens and goats and are simply searching for logic to support their actions and cover up their weakness. This sort of cunning will not do. In the mobility of the psychic world, there are certain defective thoughts prevailing – that we humans are destined to rule this earth, and the creatures are

destined to be ruled by us. You will have to fight against this type of psychology with the help of your strong weapon. What is that weapon? Neohumanism. All have the equal right to live here: this universe is for all. It is not the patrimony of human beings only. This is also the duty of Renaissance people.

Then there is the progress in the pure psychic level. In the pure psychic level, defective thoughts prevail in human society, and as a result, an individual or a group of people often try to suppress or oppress others. Due to this type of defective psychology, a vast section of the populace suffers from psychic depression. The Renaissance movement will have to be active against this sort of exploitation, and it will have to save human society from the clutches of these defective philosophies. These ailments should be removed and dispelled from the minds of human beings.

There may be another disease, another psychic ailment, and that is in the psycho-spiritual stratum. In the psycho-spiritual stratum, the movement is a pinnacled one; that is, all ideas coincide in a particular point, and that point moves towards the

Supreme Entity.

But the movement is certainly a synthetic one, not analytic. However, if the movement is extroversial, the path naturally becomes an analytic one, and that is dangerous. In the name of psycho-spiritual approach, in the false name of religion, disparities are created in the human society, differences are created between human beings. In the name of religion so many sanguinary battles were fought in the past, and even now people belonging to one religious group cannot rely on other groups, or pay credence to other groups.

Thus one should remember that only the pinnacled Entity, the apexed Entity is our Saviour – He is the only goal of our life. This is the panacea for all psychic ailments.

And the third stratum is the spiritual stratum. In this stratum the natural path is to convert everything into spirituality. This conversion should be in the realm of learning, in the realm of language, in the realm of studies, in the realm of solidarity.

That is, in every arena of our spiritual life, this conversion should take place – the conversion of your entire existence, the parts and portions of your existence, into spirituality. But due to defective philosophy, defective guidance, people forget this fact, and they convert spirit into mind and mind into matter. That is, they take the path of negative Pratisaincara [devolution], and that is detrimental to the cause of human progress.

Renaissance people will have to raise their voices against this, and they will have to do it now – they will have to do it immediately. And I also desire that you all should move on the path of Renaissance, which is fully supported by rationality, from today – from this very moment. Let victory be yours. ●





*Iranian security forces using tear gas to disperse protesters at the iconic Tehran's Grand Bazaar on Jan 6*

# Iran in Throes of A New Revolution

■ Karunakshim Vatsalam

*Mass protests that started over soaring inflation and steep drop in purchasing power are now calling for an end to the fundamentalist rule of the clergy*

Protests began on December 28 last year about the soaring cost of living in Iran and have entered their sixth day after the rial plunged to a record low against the United States dollar in late December last. After a number of deaths as a result of clashes between protesters and security services, the government of President Masoud Pezeshkian appealed for unity and blamed economic pressure on what he said are Tehran's "enemies". The protests are seen as the biggest since 2009, when millions of Iranians took to the streets of major cities after a disputed presidential election. Dozens of opposition supporters were killed and thousands were detained in the ensuing crackdown.

These recent protests have been the most widespread since an uprising in 2022 sparked by the death in custody of Mahsa Amini, a young Kurdish woman who was detained by morality police for allegedly not wearing her hijab properly. More than 550 people were killed and 20,000 detained by security forces over several months, according to human rights groups. 'There wasn't even time for CPR': Iran medics describe hospitals overwhelmed with dead and injured protesters. Staff at several hospitals in Iran has told the BBC their facilities are overwhelmed with dead or injured patients, as major anti-government protests continue. A medic at one Tehran hospital said there were "direct shots to the

heads of the young people, to their hearts as well", while a doctor said an eye hospital in the capital had gone into crisis mode.

Despite government promises to enact economic reforms and put more effort into tackling corruption, the protests have continued. The tide of protest has continued to rise with economic demonstrations morphing into political protests as unrest has spread across the country. According to Iranian state media, at least 109 security personnel have been killed in the unrest, but opposition activists based outside the country say the death toll is higher and includes hundreds of protesters. Opposition activists say the death toll is higher and it includes dozens of protesters

The casualty figures were reported as Iranian authorities stepped up efforts to quell the country's largest protests in years, which have seen thousands of people take to the streets in anger over the soaring cost of living and inflation. "The majority of Iranians are not happy with the economics in Iran, but many are not happy with violence as well.

Iran's President Masoud Pezeshkian said on Sunday that his government was ready to listen to protesters, but urged the public to prevent rioters and terrorist elements from wreaking havoc. Iran is one of the most sanctioned countries in the world. A range of international restrictions means that Tehran is struggling to access international financial markets and frozen foreign assets. The country's increasing reliance on imports is exacerbating the situation and fuelling inflation.

Recently the Iranian Rial dropped to 1.42 million against the US dollar – a 56 percent drop in value in just six months. The plummeting currency has driven inflation with food prices soaring by an average of 72 percent compared with last year. Alborz, a textile merchant in the central



*Protesters attacking a government building in Fasa in southern Iran during nationwide protests posted on social media December 31, 2025*

Iranian city of Isfahan, decided he could no longer sit on the sidelines. He closed his shop and took to the streets, joining merchants across Iran who shuttered their stores and students who took over their campuses to protest against declining economic conditions.

The sudden loss of purchasing power pushed Alborz and tens of thousands of other Iranians into the streets. Students have paralysed university campuses, traders have shut down their stores and demonstrators have blocked off streets in defiance of police. Protests have spread from the capital, Tehran, to cities across Iran.

Despite the risk of being jailed for his political activism, the father of four had run out of options. With the national currency plunging to a historic low, putting further pressure on Alborz, who was already struggling to provide for his family. "What will my children eat? Do we have to bring suitcases of cash to simply buy bread?" said Alborz.

What began as a single protest about the collapse of the Iranian economy by shopkeepers in Tehran's Grand Bazaar on Sunday had spread to 17 of 31 Iran's provinces by New Year's Eve with students and demonstrators from across Iranian society joining the

wave of demonstrations. Thousands of people mobilised across the country with security forces responding forcefully in some places.

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency reported that three people had died in confrontations between security forces and protesters in Lordegan in southwestern Iran. A further three deaths were reported in Azna and another in Kouhdasht, both in central Iran. "Some protesters began throwing stones at the city's administrative buildings, including the provincial governor's office, the mosque, the Martyrs Foundation, the town hall and banks," Fars reported of protests in Lordegan, adding that police had responded with tear gas.

These protests could escalate. Early January US President Donald Trump – who in 2018 unilaterally withdrew the US from a nuclear deal with Iran that limited Iran's nuclear development in return for sanctions relief – commented on the unrest. He posted on his Truth Social platform: "If Iran shoots and violently kills peaceful protesters, which is their custom, the United States of America will come to their rescue. We are locked and ready to go." Soon

thereafter on Thursday, the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs posted on its Farsi social media pre-revolutionary Iranian images of a lion and a sun with the lion's paw resting on an hourglass featuring the country's current flag. The post read: "The rise of Iranian lions and lionesses to fight against darkness", continuing: "Light triumphs over darkness." In June last year, Israel and the US launched attacks on Iran during a 12 day war between Iran and Israel.

Human rights groups have urged restraint amid reports of protest-related casualties and mass arrests, with Norway-based NGO Iran Human Rights saying at least 51 protesters, including nine children, have been killed by security forces, and hundreds more have been injured.

Iran's Tasnim news agency said on Saturday that at least 200 "riot" leaders had been arrested.

Amnesty International slammed a "blanket internet shutdown" imposed by Iranian authorities, saying it aimed to "hide the true extent of the grave human rights violations and crimes under international law they are carrying out to crush" the protests. Iran's attorney general, Mohammad Movahedi Azad, on

Saturday warned that anyone taking part in protests will be considered an "enemy of God", a death penalty charge, state television reported. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which operates separately from the army, also warned that safeguarding 1979 revolution's ends and the country's security was a "red line", state reported.

Meanwhile, United States President Donald Trump reiterated support for the Iranian demonstrators, writing on social media 10 January that Washington "stands ready to help". Trump's post came a day after he warned the Iranian authorities against cracking down on the protesters, telling reporters that "if they start killing people like they have in the past, we will get involved. That doesn't mean boots on the ground, but it means hitting them very, very hard – where it hurts".

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has called the demonstrators "vandals".

In a speech broadcast on Press TV, Khamenei said Trump's hands "are stained with the blood of more than a thousand Iranians", in an apparent reference to Israel's attacks on Iran in June, which the US supported and joined with strikes of its own. Khamenei

predicted that the "arrogant" US leader would be "overthrown" like the imperial dynasty that ruled Iran up to the 1979 revolution. "Everyone knows the Islamic Republic came to power with the blood of hundreds of thousands of honourable people; it will not back down in the face of saboteurs," he said.

Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs Abbas Araghchi also accused the US and Israel of "directly intervening" to try to "transform the peaceful protests into divisive and violent ones", claims a US Department of State spokesperson called "delusional".

The state response started by recognising the right of people to peacefully protest, but as the situation started to escalate, the state has been trying to draw a line between protesters and what the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei called 'saboteurs' – against whom, he said, the Islamic Republic will not give in," said Asadi. "Public dissatisfaction exists – whether or not people take to the streets.

Many here are now watching to see how the government responds, not just to the protests, but to the economic hardships that they are facing in their daily lives," he said. Asadi explained that the government has been trying to control the situation by tightening security measures and introducing a monthly subsidy of about \$7 to people with low income who are struggling to cover their daily essentials.

But the subsidy would do little to stem public frustrations over soaring costs of living. The inflation rate is at 42 percent, according to the government. Unofficially, it's closer to 60 percent. So it doesn't seem as if this kind of measure is going to alleviate any sort of economic pressure on the population."

Also even if the Iranian authorities can suppress the





current protest movement, they will not be able to address its underlying causes. The authorities are only buying time until the next round of confrontation between the state and the society. Iranian leaders issued a stark warning against military intervention, with Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf saying: "In the case of an attack on Iran, the occupied territories Israel as well as all US bases and ships will be our legitimate target."

From video footage from a morgue near Tehran, a premier international news agency counted about 180 body bags. The US-based Human Rights Activist News Agency says it has verified the deaths of 495 protesters and 48 security personnel nationwide. Another 10,600 people have been detained over the fortnight of unrest, the agency says.

The Center for Human Rights in Iran's (CHRI) calls on the UN and States worldwide to use all political, diplomatic, and legal channels to pressure the Iranian authorities to stop the use of lethal force against protesters, release all arbitrarily detained protesters, especially children, and immediately end attacks on hospitals and medical personnel. CHRI have

listed 27 people known to be killed between December 28 and January 5, most of them in their teens many were girls.

At the time of writing this piece quoting a senior Iranian health ministry official as reported in the Times of India of January 14, about 3000 people have been killed across the country but have been branded not as protesters but "terrorists". These are ordinary people their families ordinary families, those who support Iran's

theocratic and those in the streets calling for its downfall, they both agree these are days of brutality never seen before, this violence is worst in Iranian history. The toll could climb but people are not afraid anymore. Meanwhile effective immediately, President Trump has slapped 25% US tariffs on any country trading with Iran. And he has now come out openly in support of the protestors encouraging them to carry on and promising help is on the way?

The protests which began over soaring inflation are now calling for an end to the clerical rule of Iran's Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. A recent statement by 210 Iranian lawyers 196 of whom are inside Iran, emphasized that the current state crackdown was not an "internal crisis" or "unrest" but rather a situation that bears the full legal characteristics of international crimes. Seventeen Iran-based rights activists, including imprisoned Nobel laureate Narges Mohammadi, have meanwhile issued a joint statement saying that a peaceful transition from the Islamic Republic is an undeniable necessity for Iran's future. ●



*Iranians attend a pro-government rally in Tehran, Iran*

The operation, named "Absolute Resolve", was carefully rehearsed for months, according to General Dan Caine, chairman of US Joint Chiefs of Staff, who spoke at President Trump's news conference. The US forces had practised their extraction of President Maduro on a replica building. "They actually built a house, which was identical to the one they went into, with all the same – all that steel all over the place," Trump said.

At 11:46pm local time on January 2, Trump gave the go ahead. It was the riskiest and most high-profile military operation sanctioned by Washington since the US Navy's SEAL team killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in a safe house in Abbottabad, Pakistan in 2011.

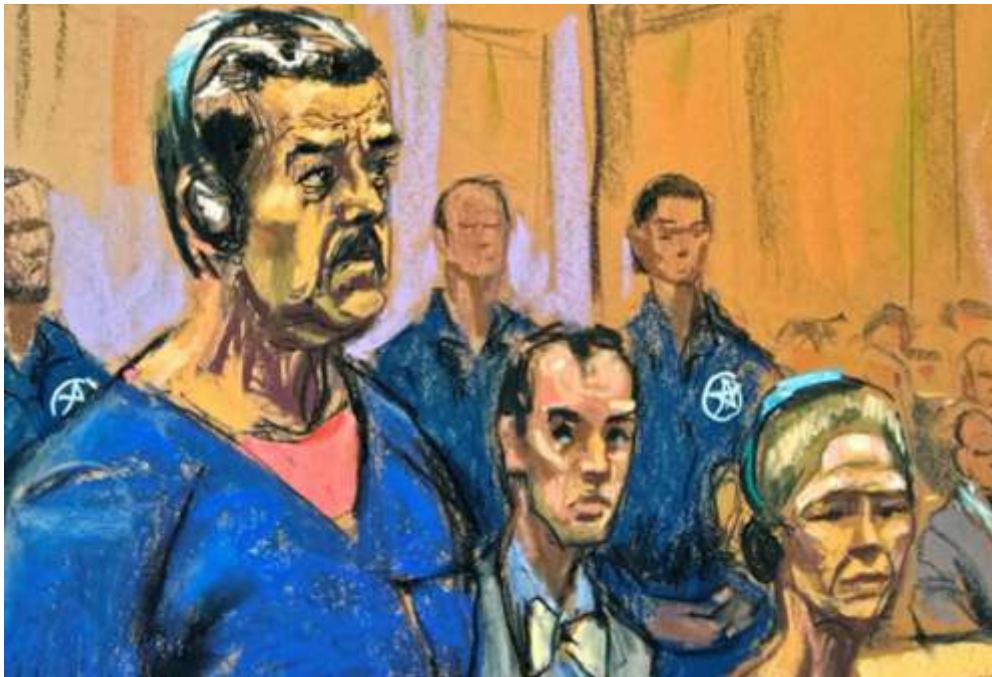
About 150 aircraft were involved in the operation, taking off from 20 different airbases across the Western Hemisphere. As part of the operation, US forces disabled Venezuela's air defence systems. US strikes hit Caracas as well as the states of Miranda, Aragua and La Guaira, according to the Venezuelan government. Several deafening explosions rang out across Caracas, with Pete Hegseth, the US defence secretary, describing it as part of a "massive joint military and law enforcement raid", which lasted less than 30 minutes.

US helicopters then touched down at Maduro's compound in the capital at 2:01am on the 3rd, with the Venezuelan president and his wife then being taken into US custody. There was no mention if there was exchange of fire in the chaotic scramble, or if they were taken without a struggle. If social media reports are to be believed, it appears that as part of almost a year long plan Maduro's few trusted

# ABDUCTION OF PRESIDENT OF Venezuela

*It was the riskiest and most high-profile military operation since the US Navy's SEAL team killed al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in a safe house in Abbottabad, Pakistan in 2011.*

■ Bhupendra Singh



bodyguards were bought off. US intelligence knew that Maduro changed houses often and his location was ultra secret. So US special forces could enter the room where Maduro and his wife were asleep and took them both into custody without firing a single shot?

However as per Reuters report of January 9, Venezuela's interior minister Diosdado Cabello said late on Wednesday that 100 people died in the U.S. attack which removed President Nicolas

Maduro from power on Saturday. Caracas has not previously given a number for those killed, but the army posted a list of 23 names of its dead. Venezuelan officials have said a large part of Maduro's security contingent was killed "in cold blood," and Cuba has said 32 members of its military and intelligence services in Venezuela were killed.

At 4:29am, just two and a half hours later, Maduro was put on board a US aircraft carrier, en route to New York. Trump later posted a

photograph of the Venezuelan leader on his Truth Social platform, blindfolded and wearing a grey tracksuit. After departing the USS Iwo Jima, US forces escorted Maduro onto a flight, touching down in New York's Stewart Air National Guard Base at about 4:30pm.

The Constitutional Chamber of Venezuela's Supreme Court ordered Vice President Delcy Rodriguez to serve as acting president following the US's abduction of Maduro. The court ruled that Rodriguez would assume "the office of President of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, in order to guarantee administrative continuity and the comprehensive defence of the Nation". The court also said it would work to "determine the applicable legal framework to guarantee the continuity of the State, the administration of government, and the defense of sovereignty in the face of the forced absence of the President of the Republic".

The daring military abduction of 63 year old President Maduro hogged entire global news.

On the 5th, Maduro pleaded not guilty to federal charges, including narco terrorism and conspiring to import cocaine. In a blue and orange prison uniform, he listened to the indictment filed by prosecutors against him and his

codefendants, including his wife and son. The Trump administration has framed Maduro's abduction as a law enforcement operation, arguing that congressional approval was not needed.

"I am innocent. I am not guilty. I am a decent man. I am still president of my country," he said through an interpreter, before he was cut off by US District Judge Alvin Hellerstein in a Manhattan federal court. Maduro called himself a POW, a person captured and held by an enemy during an armed conflict. His wife, Cilia Flores, who appeared in court on Monday as a codefendant, also pleaded not guilty.

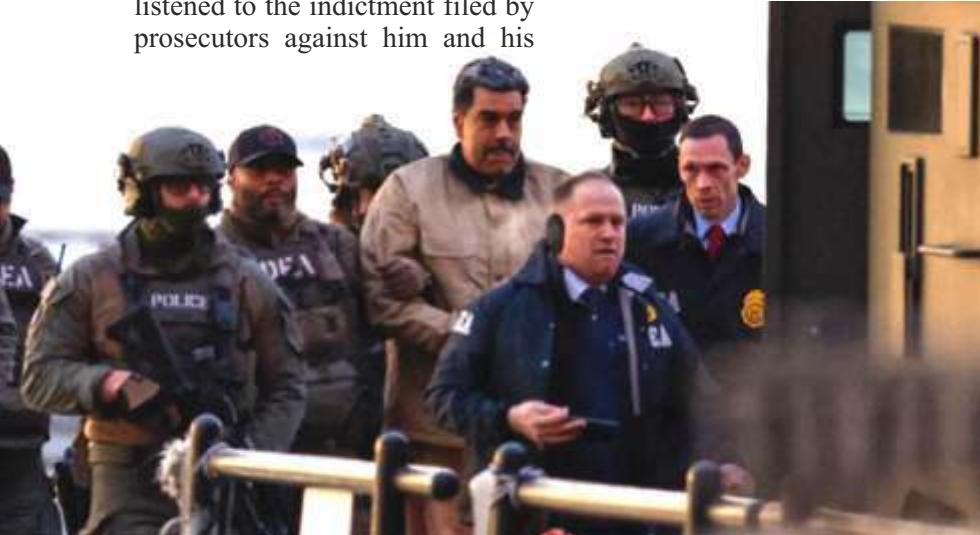
Other Venezuelan leaders have echoed Maduro's position. His then deputy, Delcy Rodriguez, appeared on state television alongside her brother, National Assembly chief Jorge Rodriguez, Interior Minister Diosdado Cabello and Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez, declaring that Maduro was still Venezuela's sole legitimate president. However, two days later, the day when Rodriguez took over as Venezuela's interim president, she posted a statement on social media offering to cooperate with Trump. In the statement, she invited Trump to "collaborate" and sought "respectful relations".

Maduro is a prisoner of war as the US declared war on Venezuela when Barack Obama signed his Executive Order 13692 in 2015 to say that the country was a threat to US national security. Since then, the US has committed itself to a hybrid war against Venezuela. The kidnapping of its president in this state of war, during an illegal bombardment of the country by 150 military aircraft, is certainly, therefore, an act that can make Maduro a prisoner of war, experts said.

However, the US has called special operation in Caracas during which Maduro was abducted as a law enforcement operation. US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said "We are at war against drug trafficking organisations. That's not a war against Venezuela". The US ambassador to the UN, Michael Waltz said, "There is no war against Venezuela or its people. We are not occupying a country". He too insisted that this was a law enforcement operation in furtherance of existing decades old indictments.

Ilias Bantekas, a professor of transnational law at Hamad Bin Khalifa University in Qatar, told Al Jazeera that the US involvement in Venezuela was "less about Maduro as it is about access to Venezuela's oil deposits".

Venezuela is home to the world's largest proven oil reserves – at an estimated 303 billion barrels as of 2023 yet it earns only a fraction of the revenue it once did from exporting crude. According to data from the Observatory of Economic Complexity (OEC), Venezuela exported just \$4.05bn worth of crude oil in 2023. This is far below the leading exporters, including Saudi Arabia (\$181bn), the US (\$125bn) and Russia (\$122bn). This is largely because of US sanctions on Venezuelan oil. Oil is the number one target. Trump is not content with just allowing US oil firms to get



Two days after abduction Maduro appeared in a court in New York.



*A blindfolded Maduro, picture posted by Trump*

concessions but to 'run' the country, which entails absolute and indefinite control over Venezuela's resources," he said.

Susanne Gratius, a professor of political science and international relations at the Autonomous University of Madrid said the US attack was a violation of Article 2 of the UN Charter, which decrees that all members are sovereign equals. "Regime change or access to oil does not justify unilateral military interventions." This act about oil in Venezuela is beyond an act of war; it is an act of colonisation. That is also illegal based on the UN Charter.

Experts also point to the months-long military campaign that the Trump administration waged against Venezuela before Maduro's abduction – including the bombing of boats which killed around 100 people to underscore why it is hard to justify the US attack as a law-and-order operation.

Another international law issue that arises with Maduro's abduction is the immunity of heads of state and other high-ranking officials from prosecution and civil penalties abroad a principle that has been affirmed by the International Court of Justice and previously acknowledged by

Washington. So not only is the US extending enforcement jurisdiction without the consent of Venezuela, but the US is also grabbing up a high state official and saying we have the right to simply take this person out of his position and put him on trial in the US". International courts are an exception to head-of-state immunity. In 2024, the International Criminal Court (ICC) issued an arrest warrant for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu over war crime charges in Gaza.

A state cannot lawfully justify violating international law by citing its own domestic law. And this is a cardinal principle of international law. The notion that US forces were conducting a law enforcement operation is silly for the American government to say that this is simply the execution of an arrest warrant. International law is unambiguous in saying that governments cannot use force against other countries to advance their goals. So it's very clearly illegal under international law. It's simply an overthrow of a government by a neighbour using military force.

There are however other points of view. Some supporters of the move have argued that Maduro lacks legitimacy due to the alleged

voter fraud that took place in the last election in Venezuela, which the opposition claims to have documented. Even before the US raid, opposition figure Maria Corina Machado said removing Maduro would not amount to regime change because Venezuelans had already voted against the president. But experts say Washington's assessment of Maduro's legitimacy is irrelevant to the legality of the strike. He was Venezuela's head of state at the time of his abduction, a fact recognised by the US Justice Department in its 2026 indictment, which calls Maduro "Venezuela's president and now de facto ruler".

UN rapporteur Satterthwaite, said that while there are serious concerns with the 2024 elections, the US itself has treated Maduro as Venezuela's leader. Maduro's government has been accused of major human rights violations, including arbitrary arrests of dissidents and torture. He said "I, of course, would be in favour of measures of accountability for the Venezuelan government, but not in this reckless kind of Wild West manner that we've seen play out here".

Other defenders of the abduction of Maduro over US charges have claimed that the move has a legal precedent. "Critics calling President Trump's capture of Nicolas Maduro unprecedented and illegal have short memories. We've done this before, and the courts blessed it," an associate professor of business law at Georgia College and State University wrote in a Wall Street Journal column. He was referring to the US invasion of Panama and the seizure of its President Manuel Noriega in 1989-1990. Noriega stood trial and was convicted of drug charges in the US. That also was illegal, therefore cannot be compared. Besides, the UN General Assembly had condemned the US invasion of Panama.●

# DEVELOPMENTS IN Indian Education Refurbishing or Transforming

*Proper education leads to modesty, and through modesty one develops own identity different from animalistic tendencies and wins respect of society.*



■ Prof. R.P. Singh

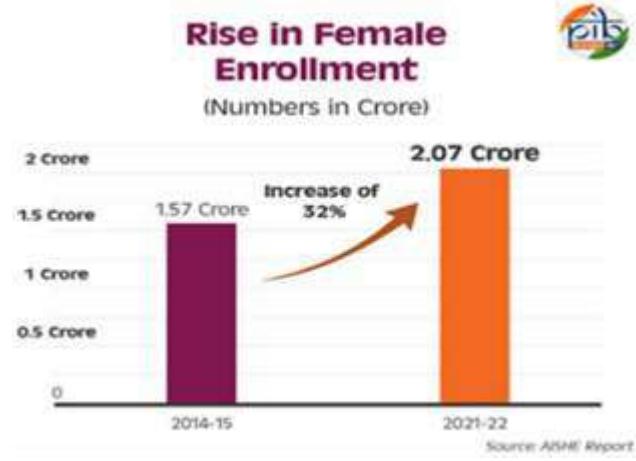
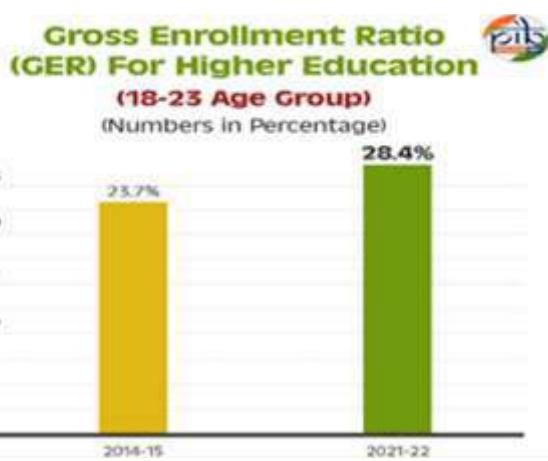
**R**ituraj from a lower middle class family got admission to B. Tech. in an Indian private technological university. He was worried right from the first year about the future he will get with mechanical engineering degree in this era of AI and LLM (Large Language Modeling). But he got directions from his teachers and workshops that skills through micro-certification courses have got much more important role than B. Tech., M. Tech or diploma programs nowadays. He followed the path and is now in a permanent professional position in Cognizant. This is the tale of lakhs of graduates the world over.

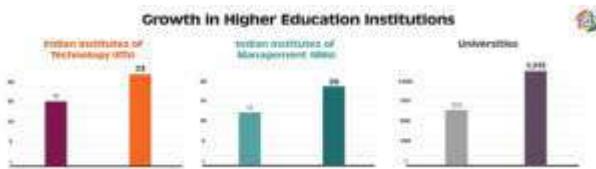
## Current Status of Education in India

A Press Release by Press Information Bureau on 11/02/2025 titled 'Measuring the Pulse of Indian Education' mentions: The Indian education system has undergone significant transformation over the

years. Serving 24.8 crore students across 14.72 lakh schools, it is supported by a dedicated workforce of 98 lakh teachers, as reported in 2023-24. Government schools form the backbone of the system, comprising 69% of the total, enrolling 50% of students and employing 51% of teachers. On the other hand, private schools make up 22.5% of institutions, catering to 32.6% of students and employing 38% of teachers.

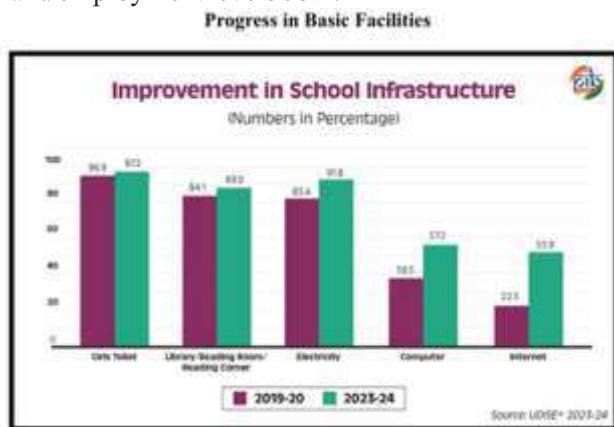
The NEP 2020 aims for a 100% Gross Enrollment Ratio (GER) by 2030. The GER is near universal at the primary (93 %) and the efforts are underway to bridge the gaps at the secondary (77.4 %) and higher secondary level (56.2 %), driving the nation closer to its vision of inclusive and equitable education for all. In the realm of higher education, India has seen a dramatic rise in student enrollment. The total number of students enrolled in higher education reached 4.33 crore in 2021-22, a 26.5% increase from 3.42 crore in 2014-15.





## Evaluating the Ongoing Strategies

The recent developments in this field need critical evaluation due to their far-reaching implications. These developments encompass blended and hybrid learning, skill-based and vocational training, micro-certification courses, AI and EdTech Ecosystems (like DIKSHA, SWAYAM, and e-Pathshala), focus on student well-being and mental health, entrepreneurship and innovation, emphasis on the Indian knowledge tradition & system, study in India initiative, integration of primary and secondary education with higher education and internationalization of higher education at education and employment levels both.



Under VBSA Bill, 2025 (Viksit Bharat Shiksha Adhikshan Bill), as approved by the Union Cabinet on December 12, 2025 a regulator is intended to merge the functions of the UGC, AICTE and NCTE into one body responsible for academic regulation, accreditation and setting professional standards across higher education institutions, excluding medical and legal colleges. Funding and financial autonomy will remain with the administrative ministry rather than the regulator itself. It is a renewed effort to implement the NEP 2020 vision, incorporating a more comprehensive framework that includes technical and teacher education oversight under the new unified authority.

Speculations are in the air that a unified regulator something like Higher Education Commission of India (HECI) and HEFA (Higher Education Funding Agency) will work together to regulate and discipline the higher education institutions (HEIs). HECI will control the administration, research and academic affairs whereas HEFA may be providing loans instead of

grants to HEIs. HEIs will have to return the loan in time from the resources they are expected to generate on their own. Interest on such loans may be arranged to be initially paid partly or fully by the government concerned but later by the HEI itself. Heavy emphasis is on resource generation by each HEI both in states and the Centre and best possible utilization of existing infrastructure and facilities.

There is apparently nothing wrong in setting financial discipline to ensure efficiency. But certain issues need to be considered. Though too much corruption and inefficiency was seen earlier days in utilization of grants for asset building and development by the administrators of HEIs, complete removal of grants is not advisable. Schemes for support in publication of research theses/projects and participation in conferences, seminars, workshops, etc. in India and abroad and holding such events in HEIs have been extremely useful in development of academia. Loopholes in these were gradually plugged. Everything should not be left to the market forces.

Caste like categorization of HEIs as central vs state universities, language, technical, agriculture, business, gender, minority, offline or online Universities/institutions should be removed. Such categorization is against the very concept of university. The reality of today is that each HEI is offering courses on self financing basis in any area for which enough demand is there in the society.

## Directions Required

1. It has to be ensured with real sincerity that the products of the educational institutions do not become play toys in the hands of political parties and religious fanaticism. Real education ensures open mind liberated from all sorts of narrowisms; and ready to utilize the innate and acquired capabilities and skills in systemic and social transformation with values of universalism, neo-humanism, cosmic patrimony, progressive utilization of mundane, supra-mundane and spiritual potentialities; emotional maturity; broadmindedness; humility; and respect for diversity and creativity. Narrowisms promote egoism, hatred and arrogance. They lessen the scope for co-existance, mutual help and cooperation.

2. **A Basic Rule is:** A proper education leads to modesty, and through modesty one develops own identity different from animalistic tendencies and so one wins the respect of society.

*Vidya dadati vinayam vinayādyati pātratām;  
Pātratā dhanamapnoti dhanaddharmata tato sukhām.*

As Shrii P. R. Sarkar mentions, 'If human beings develop modesty instead of arrogance it does no harm to anyone, and many undesirable situations can be prevented by thus avoiding arrogance. A modest person is respected and admired by others. Hence

people should be taught to be modest starting at an early age. And even with those who have grown old, efforts should be made to rectify their arrogant nature. If such people are corrected, they too can learn modesty.'

**3. Holistic Aspect of Education: Spiritual Education :** In the early stages of spiritual education when human beings were first taught the concept of dharma, many enlightened sages, both male and female, were born. In those days, both men and women made equal contributions to the world of spirituality: Vashistha, Vishvamitra and Yajinavalkya were among the illustrious men; and Maetreyi, Gargi and Madalasa, among the illustrious women. They were equal in all respects and greatly enriched the world of spirituality with their teachings. Today's education needs to be oriented to true spirituality.

To counteract the malevolent effect of dogma-centred philosophies, religious dogma in particular, the two most important factors are the development of rationality along the path of logic and reason and the spread of education in the way of spirituality and Neohumanism. Simultaneously, the spiritual sentiment must be inculcated in human minds as this is more powerful than the religious sentiment.

**4. Guarantee for Education :** Primary education for all must be guaranteed and education should be free for all. It is heartening to note here that in some states like UP all students admitted in regular & self financing courses in liberal and technical wings both in HEIs have first to pay full fees and later get the fees returned as scholarship leading to free education. It is a welcome feature which needs to be continued on regular basis everywhere though the procedural hurdles in scholarship should be removed.

**5. Control by Educationists :** In a democratic system non-educationalist politicians poke their noses into university affairs. They do not know what education is, but they interfere to create a sentiment amongst the people to gain support for the particular ism they preach. In the democratic system public support has to be purchased to secure votes and this is the reason why politicians make an all out effort to create sentiments in the minds of the people. Institutions with educational value should be controlled by educationists and not by politicians. Educationists should also control the media. Proper education enables one to stand against the influence of the physical environment and awaken the psychic urge to attain a higher life, that is, the ideological goal. This gives a person much inspiration.

**6. To Save Humanity :** Wherever there is movement, there is struggle – struggle against the prevailing inertia. In the past, there have been crises in the course of movement, crises in different branches of civilization, crises in the realm of education, and so on. But nowadays, the entire human society is facing the crisis of civilization as a whole, and particularly a crisis in the field of existence. Human society is now to decide whether to live or to die. If all this mud-slinging and intolerance are encouraged, humanity has no future – the future is dark, the future is sealed forever.

But as an optimist we can say that it is the really educated people who can save humanity. They are always few in number. And these few, they are the torchbearers of human society, they are the pioneers, they are the vanguards of human society. It is they who can save humanity, so it is their duty over and above all. ●

**It must be the teachers' responsibility to impart knowledge, teach restraint in social life, and give instruction about all the various aspects of collective endeavour, but the parents will have to take on most of the responsibility for the moral and spiritual education of the child. It should be the duty of society as a whole to ensure that the children of immoral and unrighteousness parents are brought up as virtuous citizens. If possible such children should be removed from the unwholesome environment of their parents.**

**-- Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar**

# India and China Complementary Cosmologies



**“INDIA’S JOURNEY TODAY IS NOT MERELY ABOUT DEVELOPMENT; IT IS ALSO A JOURNEY OF PSYCHOLOGICAL RENAISSANCE.”**

— NARENDRA MODI



**“REALIZING THE GREAT REJUVENATION OF THE CHINESE NATION IS THE GREATEST DREAM OF THE CHINESE NATION IN MODERN TIMES.”**

— XI JINPING

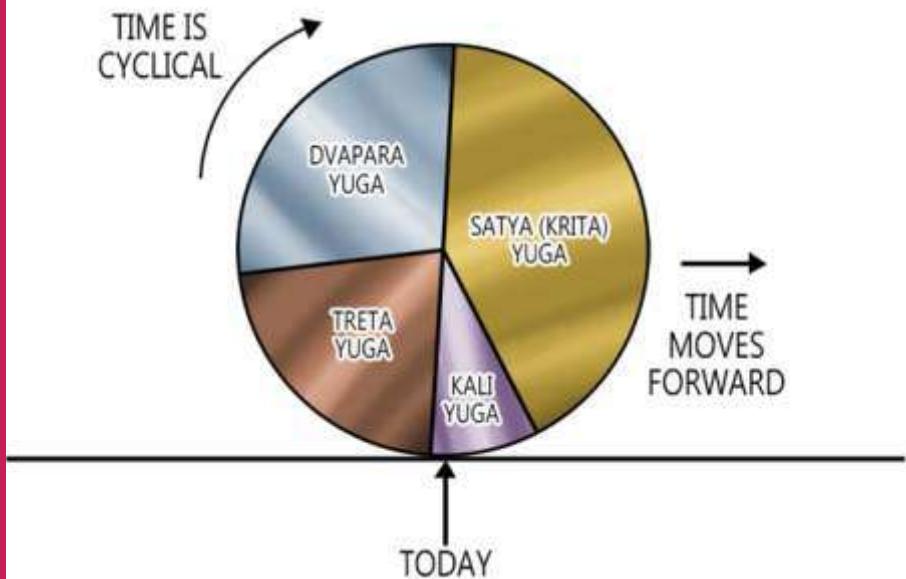
*Revisiting the deep cosmological foundations of India and China helps explain the renewed cultural confidence visible in both countries today.*

— Jan Krikke

**I**ndia and China — the world's two most populous nations and heirs to ancient, living civilizations — are both in the midst of striking civilizational revivals. In each case, modern national identity is being reshaped not only by economic growth or geopolitical ambition, but by a renewed turn toward cosmological traditions that reach deep into the past.

In the West, these traditions are usually encountered through familiar terms such as *dharma*, *karma*, *wu wei*, and *qi*. Over the past century, philosophers, psychologists, and writers translated these ideas into narratives of personal growth and spirituality, often in ways that lifted them out of the broader cultural worlds in which they first took shape.

Yet concepts such as *dharma* and *wu wei* were never merely abstract



*Fig. 1. The cycle of the four varnas. The arrows emphasize the paradox of progression within recurrence. Some scholars equate our current epoch with the Kali Yuga that is on the threshold of a new Satya Yuga.*

<b>Yuga (Age)</b>	<b>Corresponding Varṇa</b>	<b>Dominant Qualities</b>	<b>Interpretive Rationale</b>
<b>Satya (Kṛta) Yuga</b>	Brāhmaṇa (Seeker/Teachers)	Truth, harmony, spiritual clarity, unity	Society oriented toward knowledge, wisdom, ritual insight, and spiritual realization; authority rests with sages and teachers
<b>Tretā Yuga</b>	Kṣatriya (Protector)	Duty, order, moral struggle, governance	Emphasis on righteous rule, protection, law, and the maintenance of social order ( <i>dharma</i> upheld by leaders and protectors)
<b>Dvāpāra Yuga</b>	Vaiśya (Merchant)	Complexity, ambition, trade, material expansion	Economic activity, commerce, production, and organization become dominant social forces
<b>Kali Yuga</b>	Śūdra (Worker/Wage earner)	Fragmentation, materialism, work, loss of meaning	Society driven by work, technique, bureaucracy, and survival; spiritual insight is obscured but not extinguished

Fig. 2. Interpretive correspondence between the four yugas (cosmic ages) and the four varṇas. This correspondence suggests that in classical thought, the social and psychological order was not arbitrary but reflected the prevailing condition of cosmic time.

principles. They emerged from integrated worldviews that linked cosmic order to moral responsibility, social life, and everyday conduct. They shaped how people understood their place in the world.

Revisiting the deep cosmological foundations of India and China helps explain the renewed cultural confidence visible in both countries today. Those foundations continue to inform their sense of identity, their values, and their complementary visions of the future.

### Varnas and Yugas

The differences between India and China come most clearly into view when we look at their distinct cosmologies, the large-scale worldviews each civilization developed to explain the nature of the universe, its moral order, and humanity's place within it.

In classical Indian cosmology, the four yugas (cosmic ages) and the four varṇas (archetypal human orientations) form part of a cyclical vision of history rather than a narrative of linear progress.

In early thought, the varṇas were not rigid castes but symbolic patterns of human disposition — the contemplative Brahmin, governing Kṣatriya, productive Vaiśya, and skilled Śūdra — each representing a capacity that civilization foregrounds at different moments in the cycle.

The four varṇas are generic psychological profiles. Most humans have features of two or more Varnas, but one of the four predominates in most people. In modern parlance, he is a born leader, a model worker, a devoted teacher.

In the Brahmin / Satya (Age of Wisdom), life is

oriented toward insight and alignment between the cosmic and social orders. The Kṣatriya / Tretā (Age of Order) emphasizes law, governance, and disciplined institutions, strengthening political organization even as hierarchy intensifies.

The Vaiśya / Dvāpāra (Age of Productivity) foregrounds commerce, administration, and technical specialization, increasing material complexity while loosening the unity of ethics and cosmology. In the Śūdra / Kali (Age of Labor and Technique), society becomes intensely practical and technologically driven, even as social cohesion and moral grounding weaken.

Taken together, the cycle expresses a form of civilizational learning: each age cultivates contemplative, political, economic, and technical capacities that reappear in renewed form, portraying human development as a recurring movement of differentiation, imbalance, and restoration across time.

In the varna–yuga cycle, the moral and spiritual logic of Indian cosmology is structured around four key concepts: *ista*, *dharma*, *karma*, and *mokṣa*.

*Ista* is the principle of cosmic order that governs both the universe and human life. In the early phases of the cycle, particularly in the Age of Wisdom, society is understood as closely aligned with *rta*. Social roles, ritual life, and ethical conduct reflect the wider harmony of the cosmos.

*Dharma* expresses this cosmic order in the human realm. It refers to appropriate action relative to one's varṇa, stage of life, and historical age. As the cycle progresses and moral clarity weakens, dharma

becomes increasingly difficult to discern and sustain. Social order grows increasingly reliant on law, hierarchy, and discipline rather than intrinsic harmony.

Karma gives the cycle personal and ethical continuity. Actions are understood to carry consequences across lifetimes, binding individuals to the moral logic of the world. Across declining ages, karma ensures that ethical responsibility persists even when social and cosmic alignment weakens.

Finally, *mokṣa* offers a path beyond the cycle itself. It represents liberation from conditioned existence and release from the binding effects of *karma*. In some interpretations, the crisis of *Kali Yuga* can intensify the longing for *mokṣa*, preparing the ground for renewal when the *varṇa* cycle returns to the Age of Wisdom.

Together, *ista*, *dharma*, *karma*, and *mokṣa* weave cosmology, ethics, and spiritual aspiration into a unified framework that endows cyclical history with meaning rather than reflecting linear progress.

In recent years, Western thinkers have reframed Indian concepts such as *karma*, *dharma*, and *mokṣa* within modern narratives of linear progress or personal development. While valuable as concepts in their own right, when removed from their historical roots, they lose the anchoring context of cyclical time and cosmic meaning that made them ethically and civilizational coherent.

### China's Earthly Path

While Indian thought often looks outward across vast

cycles of time and moral consequence extending over multiple lifetimes, Chinese cosmology is rooted less in fixed cosmic eras than in continuous process, change, and relational harmony.

Central to Chinese cosmology is the *I Ching*, the oldest of the Chinese classics. The *I Ching*'s sixty-four hexagrams express the dynamic interplay of cosmic polarities, mutually dependent polarities later given the generic terms *yin* and *yang*, that transform into one another through the movement of *qi*. This vital energy permeates all existence.

*Qi* is neither strictly “material” nor “spiritual”; it is the living continuum that runs through mountains and rivers, bodies and emotions, mind, society, and landscape alike. Well-being, moral balance, and practical action depend on the harmonious flow of one's inner life and one's relationships with the surrounding world.

The polarities are not opposites locked in conflict, but interdependent phases of a single, ongoing dynamic. Every phenomenon and process contains aspects of both, each holding the seed of the other. This constant, fluid reciprocity drives change in the universe and in everyday human experience.

At the basis of the sixty-four hexagrams of the *I Ching* are the eight Trigrams, each associated with fundamental natural forces — Heaven, Earth, and terrestrial phenomena such as wind, fire, and water. The interaction between Heaven and Earth shapes the terrestrial environment. ●

*To be concluded*

Trigrams	Name	Meaning	Attribute	Image	Family relationship
☰	Qian	the Creative	strong	Heaven	father
☷	Kun	the Receptive	devoted	Earth	mother
☳	Zhen	the Arousing	movement	thunder, wood	eldest son
☵	Kan	the Abysmal	danger	water, clouds	middle son
☶	Gen	Keeping Still	standstill	mountain	youngest son
☴	Xun	the Gentle	penetration	wind, wood	eldest daughter
☲	Li	the Clinging	light-giving	lightning, fire	middle daughter
☱	Dui	the Joyous	pleasure	lake	youngest daughter

Fig. 3. The Eight Trigrams, the basis of the 64 hexagrams, with their attributes. Confucius added the eight family members, embedding Chinese society in the *I Ching*'s cosmology.



# India's Vibrant Legacy

## TO THE WORLD FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO PRESENT DAY

*India transformed the culture and technology of its ancient world and our world today as we know it.*

■ Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista

### India's Enduring Legacy Spans Millennia

India's legacy is a tapestry woven from ancient civilizations like the Indus Valley, offering profound contributions in Spirituality (yoga, dharma), Mathematics (zero, decimal system, algebra), Foundational religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism), Scientific advancements (astronomy and medicine), Rich arts (epics, architecture), and Philosophies (ahimsa, dharma), influencing global culture, ethics, and intellectual development.

#### Key Aspects of India's Enduring Legacy:

- ❖ **Civilization & Urbanism:** Originating with the sophisticated Indus Valley Civilization (c. 2600 BCE) known for urban planning, followed by the Vedic Age.
- ❖ **Religion & Philosophy:** Gave birth to Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, introducing core concepts like *dharma*, *karma*, and *ahimsa* (non-violence).
- ❖ **Science & Mathematics:** Developed the concept of zero, the decimal system, and made advances in astronomy and medicine, particularly during the Gupta Empire.
- ❖ **Literature & Arts:** Home to the ancient Vedas, the epic *Mahabharata*, and architectural marvels like the Taj Mahal, reflecting deep artistic traditions.
- ❖ **Political Thought:** The Mauryan Empire under Ashoka promoted non-violence, while later empires fostered cultural golden ages.
- ❖ **Continuity:** Unlike many ancient civilizations, India maintained strong cultural, religious, and linguistic threads from its ancient past into the modern era, adapting through diverse empires and colonial rule.
- ❖ **Modern Contributions:** Continues to be a hub for innovation, evident in its space programs (ISRO) and IT sector, carrying forward its heritage.

- ❖ **Space Mission :** India, through ISRO, has made significant space contributions, including the first discovery of lunar water (Chandrayaan-1), the first nation to reach Mars' orbit on its first attempt (MOM), the first soft landing near the Moon's south pole (Chandrayaan-3), pioneering low-cost satellite launches, developing key technologies like space docking (SPADEX), and achieving major commercial successes, establishing itself as a leading space power with ambitious human spaceflight goals

This deep historical foundation ensures India's ongoing influence on world culture, spirituality, and science.

### India's Three Ancient Universities That Transformed Society by Providing New Knowledge in Academic Fields

India's ancient universities Takshashila, Nalanda, and Vikramshila were pivotal in transforming society by establishing sophisticated centers of learning that offered diverse curricula: from logic and medicine to Vedic studies, astronomy and grammar. The universities drawing scholars globally laid the foundations for modern higher education, fostering intellectual growth, spiritual development and cross-cultural exchange long before the concept of a modern university.

#### 1. Takshashila University (Ancient Gandhara, ~6th Century BCE - 5th Century CE)

- ❖ **Known For:** One of the oldest universities, famous for its broad curriculum and influential teachers like Chanakya.
- ❖ **Knowledge Areas:** Vedic studies, Ayurveda, medicine, Arthashastra (statecraft), archery, and astronomy.

- ❖ **Impact:** Shaped governance, healthcare, and philosophy, influencing rulers and scholars across the ancient world.

#### 2. Nalanda University (Bihar, 5th-12th Century CE)

- ❖ **Known For:** The world's first residential university, a massive monastic complex, attracting students from China, Korea, Tibet, and beyond.
- ❖ **Knowledge Areas:** Buddhist philosophy, logic, medicine, astronomy, mathematics, grammar, and metaphysics.
- ❖ **Impact:** Became a legendary hub for spiritual and intellectual development, leaving a vast legacy in Buddhist thought and Asian scholarship.

#### 3. Vikramshila University (Bihar, 8th-12th Century CE)

- ❖ **Known For:** A powerful duo with Nalanda, founded by King Dharmapala, with six colleges specializing in different fields.
- ❖ **Knowledge Areas:** Buddhist Tantra, logic, metaphysics, philosophy, and Sanskrit grammar, also pioneering degree systems (Mahapandit/ Pandit).
- ❖ **Impact:** Its graduates spread Buddhist teachings globally, fostering spiritual and intellectual growth.

### III. Essence of India's Legacy

India's legacy is a kaleidoscope of deep spirituality (Dharma, Karma), profound mathematical and scientific contributions (zero, decimal system, yoga, Ayurveda), rich artistic expression (epics, temples, diverse arts), and enduring societal values like unity in diversity, compassion, and democratic ideals, creating a resilient, adaptable culture that has shaped global thought and practice for millennia.



## Mathematical, Scientific, and Medical Contributions

- ❖ **Mathematics:** Invention of zero, the decimal system, and advanced geometry.
- ❖ **Science & Technology :** Contributions to metallurgy (high-grade steel), navigation, cotton cultivation, and early rocketry.
- ❖ **Medicine:** Roots of Ayurveda and holistic health practices, including yoga.

## Spiritual & Philosophical Foundations

- ❖ **Brahman & Ātman :** The understanding that the individual self (Ātman) is ultimately identical to the universal reality (Brahman) is central, especially in Vedanta.
- ❖ **Karma & Samsāra :** The law of cause and effect (karma) drives the cycle of rebirth (samsāra); The ultimate goal is liberation (moksha) from this cycle through self-realization.
- ❖ **Global Philosophy :** Concepts like "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" (the world is one family).

**In essence, India's legacy is a continuous thread of intellectual, spiritual, and cultural innovation** that has enriched humanity's understanding of life and the universe, and fostering concepts of interconnectedness, ethical living, and scientific inquiry.

From the philosophical insights enshrined in the Vedas and Upanishads to the revolutionary scientific advancements in mathematics, astronomy, and medicine, ancient India emerged as a beacon of intellectual brilliance.

Ancient India's culture and achievements have impacted the modern world through medical advances, religions, and scientific discoveries. The medical advances of Ancient India have impacted the world today because certain techniques have been passed down and are still used in modern times.

From the largest Hindu temple in the world at Angkor Wat to Mahayana Buddhism of China, from the trade that helped fund the Roman Empire to the creation of the numerals we use today (including zero), India transformed the culture and technology of its ancient world – and our world today as we know it.

## IV. Prout Democratic System for Holistic Human and Planetary Welfare

Progressive Utilization Theory (PROUT) is a visionary socio-economic system envisioned by Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar in 1959, designed as an alternative to capitalism and communism, focusing on ensuring physical, mental, and spiritual welfare. The core objective of PROUT is to promote the holistic welfare and development of all people and the entire planet, aiming for holistic human and planetary welfare by overcoming capitalism/communism limitations, focusing on decentralization, economic democracy, guaranteeing basic needs (food, clothing, housing, care, education), and a three-tiered economy (key industries public, large co-ops, small private). Its significance lies in providing a framework for sustainable, equitable development, emphasizing local control, rational resource use, and spiritual values (Neohumanism) to ensure prosperity for all beings, not just profit for a few.

## Core Principles & Concepts

- ❖ **Five Minimum Necessities:** Guaranteed provision of food, clothing, housing, medical care, and education for everyone.
- ❖ **Economic Democracy:** Decentralized control of resources, empowering local communities over corporate elites.
- ❖ **Three-Tier Economy:** Publicly run key





industries, large worker-owned cooperatives (producing demi-essentials), and small private businesses (luxuries).

- ❖ Resource Utilization: Rational use of planetary resources, not just exploitation, with cosmic inheritance principles.
- ❖ Consumption-Based Economy: Focus on needs and rational consumption, not endless consumerism driven by profit.
- ❖ Neohumanism: Extending care and empathy to all beings (humans, animals, plants).

### Importance & Significance

- ❖ **Holistic Solution** : Addresses economic, social, and spiritual needs, offering a complete vision for society.
- ❖ **Critique of Capitalism/Communism** : Exposes flaws of wealth concentration (capitalism) and state control (communism).
- ❖ **Empowers Locals** : Shifts power to communities, fostering self-sufficiency and preventing market failures.
- ❖ **Sustainable Future** : Promotes harmony between humanity and nature through resource stewardship.
- ❖ **Redefines Prosperity** : Seeks higher development (intellectual, artistic, spiritual) beyond mere material wealth.
- ❖ **Social Justice** : Ensures fair distribution of wealth and opportunities, curbing excessive accumulation.

### How it Works in Practice (Examples)

- ❖ **Taxation** : Replaces income tax with a progressive production tax levied at the point of goods/service creation, aiming for fairness and economic efficiency by taxing non-essentials higher, and focusing on local production for community welfare, and not individual income
- ❖ **Trade** : Encourages barter between self-sufficient regions, with essential goods being tax-free.
- ❖ Co-op managed banking system controlled

locally: In this framework, the banking system would ideally function as a network of cooperative banks and credit unions, operating for the benefit of their members rather than maximizing external shareholder profits

- ❖ Governance: A potential path towards a global government with balanced representation.

**In essence, PROUT offers a blueprint for a truly progressive world where economic systems serve people and the planet, fostering universal welfare and ethical progress.**

My book: "Socio-economic Democracy and the World Government", serves as a valuable teaching, learning, knowledge and research resource for a holistic approach to a sustainable living environment promoting collective welfare, based on the formation of autonomous functionally sustainable communities (FSCs). Within the FSCs, all the business corporations would be structured as cooperatives, wherein all the corporation staff would jointly own the shares of the corporation and hence be joint owners of the corporation. In this way, the collective wealth of each FSC would be jointly owned by its people more proportionately.

The FSCs would have a People's Participatory Democratic System (PPDS) of governance, whereby the most qualified representatives of all the functional sectors of the community get elected to the local Legislature. The FSCs in each region would be structured into regional economic zones (REZs), to promote trade among the region's FSCs, and hence promote balanced economic development within each REZ. This system of FSCs and REZs would come under the aegis of a democratically structured World Parliament comprising of elected representatives of FSCs, over-seeing the development of a comprehensive charter of human rights and social justice for all the people of the world. This would enable unification of all the FSCs of the world into one global union, with all them retaining their governance autonomy. ●

# WHY INDIA'S DOCTORS LEAVE FOR FOREIGN Shores While Cuba's Serve Their Poorest

**T**he medical profession in India – as in much of the world – today has lost its way. From a vocation of care and service, it has widely transformed into a soulless vehicle for super-profits. The growing separation of the medical profession from ethical practice and the overwhelming sway instead of profiteering is indeed the greatest, most intractable crisis of medical education today.

Medical colleges teach medical knowledge, skills and sophisticated clinical technology and practice. But can they equally teach an ethical approach to

*India's medical education system prepares a workforce that learns early to value personal profit over their patient's well-being.*

Harsh Mander

medical practice, a commitment to equity and a resolve to serve those most in need of one's services without considerations of money? Can medical colleges restore a profession inebriated with private gain and profit to its core mission of care especially of people who are most disadvantaged?

Searching for answers, I look at two widely contrasting pathways chosen by India and

Cuba, both middle-income countries that have adopted vastly different models for medical education.

## The case of India

India has the largest numbers of medical colleges in the world. India also has one of the most privatised health care systems in the world.

The case of India illustrates best why training more health



Doctors and nurses of Cuba's Henry Reeve International Medical Brigade during a farewell ceremony before traveling to Andorra to help in the efforts against the Covid-19 pandemic, at the Central Unit of Medical Cooperation in Havana in March 2020.

workers does not automatically bring the country closer to the goal of universal health care. It establishes emphatically that more trained health workers do not result necessarily in more doctors and nurses who serve in rural and forested regions and shanty towns.

As many as eight out of 10 trained physicians in India work for the private health sector, many in large corporate hospitals. This leaves just two out of ten trained physicians in India who choose to work in the public health sector. These too are mostly bunched in tertiary and super-tertiary hospitals in urban areas.

Even the small numbers in public hospitals do not guarantee greater health equity. Even doctors employed in public hospitals in India are notorious for running private practices on the side. Patients learn that they are more likely to be prescribed hospital beds and surgery in the public hospital if they first visit the same doctor's private clinic and pay a few.

The ratio of just two out of 10 doctors in India who choose to work for the public health system is still a considerable overstatement if we consider the numbers of doctors who graduate in India. Among all low- and middle-income countries, India is the biggest source of trained physicians exported to high income countries.

Research shows that 4.9% of American physicians and 10.9% of British physicians are physicians trained in India. Studies indicate that many of these train in the leading public institutions of the

country. Therefore, of all the doctors who graduate from Indian medical schools, even far less than two in 10 work in public health within India.

India's most prestigious and top-ranked medical college is the super-tertiary All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Delhi, the national capital. From around 30,000 applicants, only 45 students (0.15%) are selected each year.

A dear friend teaches in this institute. He resigned from his comfortable position in the National Health Service in London to return to serve in the country of his birth. He loves his work and is greatly sought out by patients who travel from far corners of the country, drawn by his reputation. But when I asked him once how he likes his teaching responsibilities in the hospital, he replied dryly. "It's okay," he began laconically. "Except that even in their first year in the institute, only the bodies of my students are in the classroom. Their souls have already migrated to the US and the UK!"

That he was not exaggerating was confirmed by the findings of a significant study which revealed that 54% of AIIMS graduates during 1989-2000 now reside outside India. Students who qualified under the "general category" (meaning they were not in the affirmative-action category) were twice as likely to migrate abroad. Other studies also confirm similarly that elite medical schools contribute disproportionately to the ranks of emigrant physicians. Moreover, even within the elite schools, students with the highest

academic achievement have the greatest likelihood of migrating.

This raises fundamental doubts not just about the quantum of medical education facilities available in low- and middle-income countries but also their quality. If high achievement is closely tied to a high likelihood of migrating to high-income countries, we need to ask what is considered high achievement in medical education? More so, when, for the overwhelming majority of those who do not migrate, the preferred career course is the private corporatised health sector.

The India story is a sombre reminder that the central challenge is therefore not of creating significantly larger numbers of health professionals trained in curative skills that are valued in the health sectors of high-income industrialised countries. If low- and middle-income countries expend limited public revenues to train health workers whose skills are valued in high-income countries, and these countries or the private health sector are the preferred sites of their vocation, these public revenues are contributing little to advancing the right to health care in their countries.

In the early decades of India's freedom, the state vested significant public funds on establishing public medical colleges. These were attached to large tertiary care public hospitals. The clinical skills that students gathered must have been of sufficiently high-quality for the acceptance of Indian medical

**All knowledge attains its ethical value and its human significance only by the human sense in which it is employed. Only a good man can be a great physician. Hermann Nothnagel (1841–1905).**

graduates in high-income countries in larger numbers than from any other country of the Global South. The students, through their internships and residencies, treated large numbers of lower-income patients who crowded the corridors of these public hospitals. Still, large numbers chose to leave the country, or cluster in urban centres, reluctant to serve the vast hinterland of the countryside and towns where more than half the population lived.

But neo-liberalism from the 1990s brought with it first the rapid decline of public health systems and growing reliance of rich and middle-class Indians on private corporate hospitals. We also have noted that after a large migration of graduates from the best-ranking medical schools, eight out of 10 doctors opted to work with the private health sector.

These winds of change transformed also the medical education sector. That India has more medical colleges than any other country in the world is not surprising because it is now the world's most populous country. But India ranks very low in the number of doctors as a ratio of its population.

The difficulties of finding sufficient budgetary resources for financing health worker education led many governments, such as India, to turn to the private sector to open private medical and nursing schools. The advocates for this argue that privatisation not only provides necessary resources, but also flexibility and quality that can be complementary to public-sector training. International

organisations advocate cautious integration of private resources within strong regulatory frameworks, prioritising public health needs. Health activists on the other hand typically oppose extensive privatisation due to equity concerns, advocating instead for strong public investment.

In a bid to fulfill the massive gaps in the health workforce, since the 1990s, the Indian government changed policy that resulted in transmuting medical education into a lucrative business. Businesspersons and politicians with no experience in running medical schools swarmed the country with money and connections to establish medical colleges. The result is that since the 1980s, the number of government colleges have doubled, while those run by the private sector rose 20 times. The number of medical schools rose steeply from 256 in 2006 to 479 in 2017. Of these, 259 are privately owned and managed. Around 48% of MBBS seats in India today are offered in private medical colleges.

Avinash Supe and Soumendra Sahoo in a significant essay titled "Malpractice in Medical Education" lament, "Medical education is now seen as a lucrative business linked to large profits. It has drifted away from its social mission." These private medical colleges are founded and run by trusts established by powerful political and business interests. They "charge huge fees from aspiring students".

In addition, many take large bribes to admit students. Regulation is wantonly weak. Regulatory bodies "have turned a blind eye to the deficiencies and subversions of

the minimum standards laid down in several such institutions". They do this because they are "passively caving in or actively succumbing to pecuniary temptations".

The result of the high fees and bribes is that "for a middle-class student, it means the family having to mortgage their homes in order to fulfil their child's ambition". Supe and Sahoo observe that "earning money has become the major priority of a student graduating from medical college". When such students start private practice, "they are tempted to over-investigate and over-treat their patients in order to earn back the money they spent in getting their medical degrees".

Typically, hospitals run by private medical colleges offer a much smaller range of patients than those in public medical colleges. Further, examinations rely on rote-learning, diverting students even further away from patients and wards, which is where they should truly learn their vocation. The integrity of the exam system has also been disgracefully compromised.

In all of these ways, our assessment is harsh, but I believe it is not unfair that the medical education imparted by profit-seeking medical schools in India prepares a health workforce that learns early to value personal profit over their patient's well-being. India's is a morality tale of how to add large numbers to a country's trained health care workforce while doing little to take health care to the doors of those who need it most. ●

#### ***To be concluded***

*The author is a peace and justice worker, writer, teacher*

**The great doctors all got their education off dirt pavements and poverty – not marble floors and foundations. Martin H. Fischer (1879 –1962).**

# Truck Drivers Moving India's Economy

Transportation sector is the backbone of the growth and development in Indian Economy. Road transportation contributes to almost 90 per cent of country's passenger traffic and 65 per cent of freight. Despite this, the sector runs completely unorganized. The truck drivers are majorly responsible for the freight transport in the country. However, their lifestyle and economic conditions are discouraging the youth today to take that up as their vocation.

India's total road network exceeds 6.3 to 6.7 million kilometers, making it the world's second-largest network after the United States, comprising National Highways, State Highways, rural, and urban roads, with recent data (late 2025/early 2026) placing it around 6.6 million km. The National Highway (NH) system alone grew significantly, reaching over 146,000 km by early 2025, showing massive infrastructure expansion. And on these roads run 12.5 to 17 million trucks carrying about 70% of domestic freight, with numbers projected to grow significantly (potentially to 17 million by 2050) due to India's economic rise. In 2024 around 12.5 million trucks were in operation.

Trucks are said to be a part of the mobile economy as drivers keep moving every day for interstate and intercity transportation. They carry goods, food, and materials across long roads in

*Indian truck drivers are real backbone of India's transport system, even with hard life, less rest, and tough roads, they keep India's trade alive*

Arun Prakash



trucks, buses, pickups, and mini trucks. Even with hard life, less rest, and tough roads, they still keep India's trade alive.

Indian truck drivers are the true backbone of India's transport system. Every day, they move goods, raw materials, and basic things from one corner to another. They connect warehouses, factories, and city markets so everything keeps running. Without these truck and mini truck drivers, many companies and shops would stop working. Even the country's economy would severely slow down.

Almost 70% of India's freight moves by road. That means trucks

and pickups carry a big load of industrial goods, farm crops, and daily needs from one state to another. Many electric trucks and heavy buses have also joined this movement now. India already has around 12.5 million trucks, and by 2028, it can reach 15 million. This shows how the demand for truck drivers is growing every year.

India stands at number three in the world for road freight and second in road mileage. Every year, more than 4.6 billion tonnes of goods move on the road by trucks and busses. Experts say this may go up to 9.6 trillion tonne-kilometers by 2050. Such huge transport needs brave, skilled, and

strong drivers who drive trucks on long routes and deliver on time.

Life of a truck driver is not easy. They drive long hours, sleep less, and stay away from home many days. Sometimes mini trucks struggle to navigate rough rural roads or get stuck in heavy city traffic. Even weather goes crazy, still drivers protect goods and make sure pickup or electric trucks arrive on time. Many face family distance, stress, and road risk daily.

In India, there are only around 55 drivers for every 100 trucks. So many trucks stand idle, and cargo gets delayed. Truck drivers face long hours, low pay, poor rest spots, and weak road conditions. New technology like GPS, fleet tracker and load apps helps a little bit, but still, human skill matters more. Only they know how to manage a sudden road problem or a police stop in the middle of nowhere.

Truck driving is considered to be a skilled employment in the western countries. The truck drivers there make decent amount annually to lead comfortable lives and care for their family. Average annual income of a truck driver in Canada is about Canadian \$ 50000 which converts to roughly Rs 2.5 million. Average annual income

for them in the USA is US \$ 40000 which is roughly Rs 2.6 million. In Europe, their average annual income is somewhere around 15000 Euros that's around Rs 1.2 million. However, in India, average annual income of a truck driver is less than Rs 1 lakh.

Truck drivers in India lead a lonely and unhealthy life despite staying at the bottom of the payment hierarchy. They have targets to be met which force them to work over time, and drive without adequate sleep and rest. Their lonely life on the road leads them to opt for unhealthy means of entertainment. This has caused truck drivers to be the most susceptible to HIV/AIDS.

According to a survey conducted in 2006, about 40 per cent of truck drivers in India were susceptible to have AIDS. Ignorance and being away from home for longer duration were coined as its reasons. However, the problem is on such a massive scale that UN agencies have estimated that India would be the world center for AIDS. It is also estimated that about a million Indians will be suffering from illnesses related to AIDS and about 10 million Indians will be suffering from HIV.

This spine chilling information

is a serious cause for concern especially when our country's economy is based on it. And this base needs to be made stronger. Truck drivers work hard and give up a lot to make their living. They deserve to have a better wages, hygienic food and resting options on the road, and better working hours. They also deserve to get holidays in order to be able to spend time at home with their families.

Also truck drivers face road crashes which claim 1.35 million lives each year globally. However, the burden of road crash deaths remains disproportionately high among low and middle income countries. India tops the world in road crash deaths. The situation is alarming because in 2018 itself, road crashes claimed the lives of over 1.5 lakh people in the country. Out of this, over 15,000 road crash victims have been truck drivers. Involving over 57,000 trucks and lorries. Other additional factors like overloading and load protrusion increase the exposure to risk for other road users. Despite being a serious traffic offence, overloading of trucks has contributed to 12% of total road crash deaths.

Recently a multi-city nationwide study was conducted to understand both these aspects related to the quality of life and professional hazards faced by truck drivers. Marketing and Development Research Associates (MDRA) was engaged to conduct a detailed mixed methodology study. The study uses quantitative research to survey 1217 truck drivers and 101 fleet owners (1318 total) in 10 cities across India. These cities have been selected on the basis of reported crashes caused by HMVs and the number of HMVs in operation and include Delhi-NCR, Greater Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata, Bangalore, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Guwahati, Kanpur and Vijayawada.





This study reveals that more than half of the respondent truck drivers are dissatisfied with their profession. 84% of the respondents said they will not recommend trucking to their family members or relatives. Two-third of the drivers feel the profession is unattractive due to the lack of security and safety on the road. 53% of the drivers earn between INR 10,000 to INR 20,000 per month. Their living conditions are abysmal with no standardisation in wages, lack of social security and incentives to complete a trip on time. Most drivers do not own their vehicles. They often suffer from driver fatigue due to long working hours. On an average, each driver drives for about 11.9 hours in a day. In terms of average distance covered, a truck driver covers about 417 km daily. 49% of the respondent drivers said they drive vehicles even if they are feeling fatigued or sleepy.

Further truck drivers suffer from various health issues like backaches, joint/muscle pain and gastro-intestinal problems. 95% of respondents said they eat roadside dhaba food. Overall, more than two-third (67.1%) of respondents

truck drivers stated that they are overburdened with assignments, and thus resort to speeding to deliver their assignments on time. 9 out of 10 drivers did not undergo any formal training before getting a driving license. Exploitation and corruption by enforcement authorities clubbed with poor condition of road infrastructure makes truck driving a challenging profession. One of the most important objectives of the study has been to quantify corruption in the trucking industry. The study estimates Rs.47, 852.28 crore per year as the bribe amount in the trucking business at present. Through this study, we aim to shed light on the status of truck drivers in India and hope to offer relevant recommendations that will make their lives better and safer.

Yet these drivers have their own story to tell plying all over India's roads. They are more than just truck drivers they are the lifeline of our economy, delivering goods to every part of the country. These unsung heroes move highways, city streets, and remote villages and ensure businesses run and families receive their essentials on time.

Some of them with more than

two decades behind the wheel have seen it all—monsoon storms, sleepless nights, and the joy of coming home. They became skilled at every turn on the road, from navigating around rough terrains to overcoming shocking breakdowns. Each challenge strengthens their relationship even more with the journey. For them, trucking is more than work – it's a lifestyle. Their trucks are not just machines but as second home that rides with him on the never-ending roads, holding not only loads of goods, but also tales, friendships, and the soothing satisfaction of an existence in motion. For them the open road offers both challenges and friendship. Each delivery represents a goal, a journey packed with unique experiences that only someone in their line of work may truly appreciate.

These few things for them need urgent looking into. Shift system and raise in pay along with a facility to access better rest stops on the road are few ways in which we can improve the lives of truck drivers. These need to be taken seriously in order to encourage more people to take up the vocation. It is not long otherwise, before the economy starts suffering because of lack of transport availability.

These drivers are real heroes who move India's economy. Every factory and company can work together only because of trucks. Truck drivers are silent heroes who keep India's economy alive. Whether driving a heavy truck, bus, or electric pickup, they connect factories with markets and villages with cities. Their effort and patience keep the country's goods moving day and night — truly the wheels that make India run. It is not just the necessity of the hour; it is also humane to treat the heroes of our economy with the respect and lifestyle that they deserve. ●

# E-WASTE

## Environmental Hazards

■ Nand Varma



**UN estimates each person on Earth will produce on average 7.6 kg of e-waste, generating massive 57.4 million tons worldwide.**

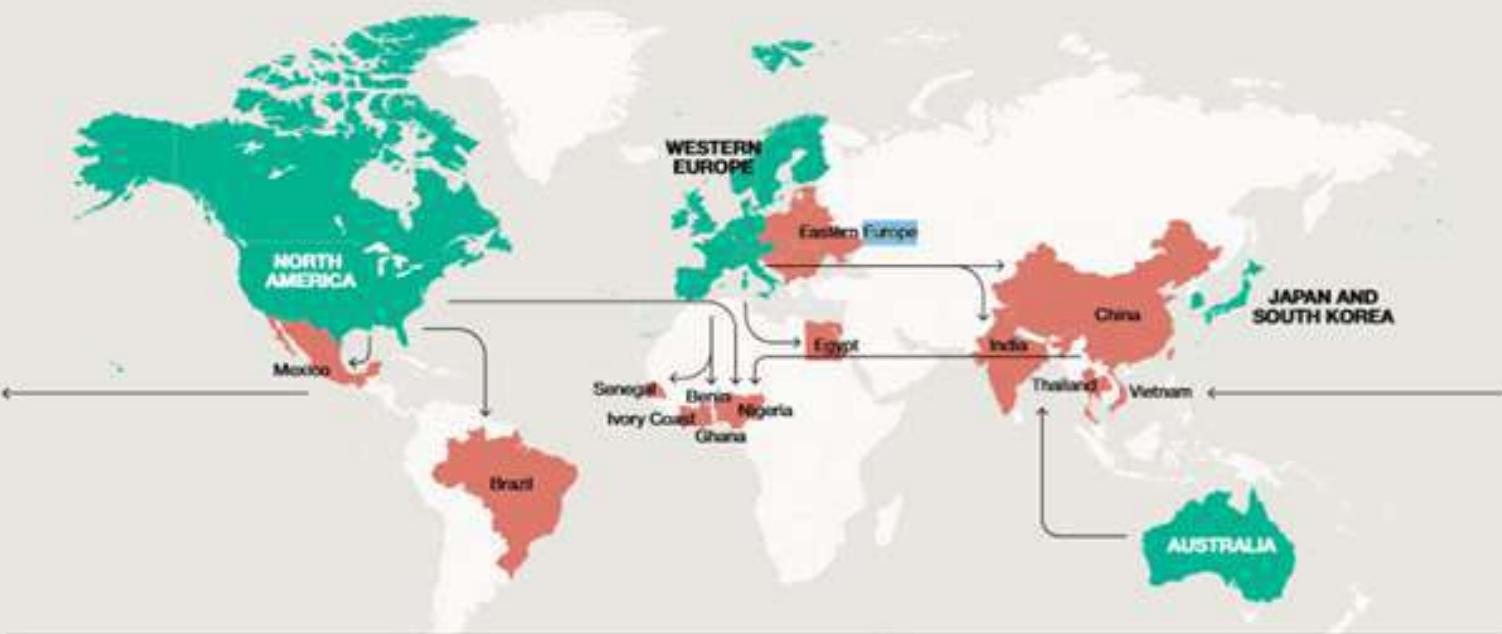
**T**he United Nations (UN) defines e-waste as any discarded product with a battery or plug, and features toxic and hazardous substances such as mercury, that can pose severe risk to human and environmental health. E-waste, electronic waste, e-scrap and end-of-life electronics are terms often used to describe used electronics that are nearing the end of their useful life, and are discarded, donated or given to a recycler. The UN defines e-waste as any discarded products with a battery or plug, and features toxic and hazardous substances such as mercury, that can pose severe risk to human and environmental health.

Each year, International E-Waste Day is held on 14 October, an opportunity to reflect on the impacts of e-waste and the necessary actions to enhance circularity for e-products. International E-Waste Day was developed in 2018 to raise the public profile of waste electrical and electronic equipment recycling and encourage consumers to recycle. Learn more about the activities for each edition below:

A 2019 joint report which involved a coalition of ILO, ITU, UNEP, UNIDO, UNITAR, UNU among others and Secretariats of the Basel and Stockholm Conventions calls for a new vision for e-waste based on the circular economy concept, whereby a regenerative system can minimize waste and energy leakage. According to the UN estimates, each person on the planet will produce on average 7.6 kg of e-waste, meaning that a massive 57.4 million tons will be generated worldwide. Only 17.4% of this electronic waste, containing a mixture of harmful substances and precious

# MAPPING OUT E-WASTE

- Regions sending e-waste
- Regions receiving e-waste
- Common routes for legal shipments



Some of the highest and lowest e-waste generating nations (E-Waste generated (kg per capita), 2018)

28.5	24.9	24.8	23.9	23.6	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.8
Norway	United Kingdom	Denmark	Netherlands	Australia	Niger	Ethiopia	Afghanistan	Uganda	Nepal

materials, will be recorded as being properly collected, treated and recycled. Many initiatives are undertaken to tackle this growing concern, but none of them can be fully effective without the active role and correct education of consumers.

A 2024 UN report found that humanity produces 62 million tonnes of electronic waste every year, enough to fill 1.5 million transport trucks, making it one of the world's fastest-growing waste streams. Less than a quarter of that is properly recycled, leaving mountains of electronics to rot away in unregulated dumpsites, where they can leach chemicals into the soil and water-table.

Poor electronic waste management practices cause US \$78 billion in externalized costs to human health and the environment

each year. They also contribute to climate change, including when hazardous substances, like refrigerants, are mishandled and released into the atmosphere. But recycling alone won't be enough to deal with the e-waste surge, experts say. On the back of an explosion of demand for consumer electronics, global e-waste production has grown five times faster than formal recycling rates since 2010. That's why experts say so-called "upstream" solutions are critical.

In January 2025 an amendment to the Basel Convention, an international treaty regulating the trans boundary movement and disposal of hazardous waste came into effect, which could alter the electronic-waste landscape. By enforcing product design regulations,

countries can promote design for continuous re-use of electronic products, for example through refurbishment and reassembly, and spur circularity by requiring producers to use recycled mineral content. Nations can also develop extended producer responsibility programmes, which make electronics producers responsible for the end-of-life management of their products, including taking components back into the production system.

These measures can incentivize businesses to innovate while facilitating the right of consumers to repair and refurbish their electronics, keeping them away from landfills as long as possible, experts say. Any electronics that can no longer be reused or repurposed, Aggarwal-Khan said, should be managed in



*Electronic waste at Agbogbloshie, Ghana*

formal electronic waste facilities to recover as many raw materials as possible.

The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) also indicates that e-waste is one of the largest and most complex waste streams in the world. According to the Global E-waste Monitor 2020, the world generated 53.6 Mt of e-waste in 2019, only 9.3 Mt (17%) of which was recorded as being collected and recycled. The fourth version of the Global E-waste Monitor 2024 shows an increasing trend in the generation of e-waste as by 2022, the world generated 62 billion kg of e-waste, (7.8 kg per capita). Only 22.3 percent (13.8 billion kg) of the e-waste generated was documented as properly collected and recycled.

It is also worth considering the effects electronic goods have on climate change. Every device ever produced has a carbon footprint and is contributing to human-made global warming. Manufacture a tonne of laptops and potentially 10 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> are emitted. When the carbon dioxide released over a device's lifetime is considered, it predominantly occurs during production, before consumers buy a product. This makes lower carbon processes and inputs at the manufacturing stage (such as use

recycled raw materials) and product lifetime key determinants of overall environmental impact.

E-waste contains valuable materials, as well as hazardous toxins, which make the efficient material recovery and safe recycling of e-waste extremely important for economic value as well as environmental and human health. The discrepancy in the amount of e-waste produced and the amount of e-waste that is properly recycled reflects an urgent need for all stakeholders including the youth to address this issue.

E-waste can be toxic, is not biodegradable and accumulates in the environment, in the soil, air, water and living things. For example, open-air burning and acid baths being used to recover valuable materials from electronic components release toxic materials leaching into the environment. These practices can also expose workers to high levels of contaminants such as lead, mercury, beryllium, thallium, cadmium and arsenic, and also brominated flame retardants (BFRs) and polychlorinated biphenyls, which can lead to irreversible health effects, including cancers, miscarriages, neurological damage and diminished IQs.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) also estimated in a 2015 report "Waste Crimes, Waste Risks: Gaps and Challenges in the Waste Sector" that 60-90 per cent of the world's electronic waste, worth nearly USD 19 billion, is illegally traded or dumped each year. Global collaboration is also essential, say experts, as electronic waste is a trans boundary issue that disproportionately affects middle- and low-income countries. High-income countries sent some 3.3 billion kilograms of e-waste and used electronics to middle- and low-income countries through uncontrolled trans boundary movements in 2022.

According to the report, the improper handling of e-waste is resulting in a significant loss of scarce and valuable raw materials, including such precious metals as neodymium (vital for magnets in motors), indium (used in flat panel TVs) and cobalt (for batteries). Almost no rare earth minerals are extracted from informal recycling as these pollute the environment. Yet metals in e-waste are difficult to extract; for example, total recovery rates for cobalt are only 30% (despite technology existing that could recycle 95%). The metal is, however, in great demand for laptop, smartphone and electric car batteries. Recycled metals are also two to 10 times more energy efficient than metals smelted from virgin ore. Furthermore, mining discarded electronics produces 80% less emissions of carbon dioxide per unit of gold compared with mining it from the ground.

Recycling rates globally are low. Even in the EU, which leads the world in e-waste recycling, just 35% of e-waste is officially reported as properly collected and recycled. Globally, the average is 20%; the remaining 80% is undocumented, with much ending up buried under the ground for centuries as landfill. E-waste is not

biodegradable. The lack of recycling weighs heavily on the global electronic industry and as devices become more numerous, smaller and more complex, the issue escalates. Currently, recycling some types of e-waste and recovering materials and metals is an expensive process. The remaining mass of e-waste – mainly plastics laced with metals and chemicals – poses a more intractable problem.

### Gold from E-Waste

It's unbelievable yet true the general industrial process involves several stages to transform raw e-waste into pure gold, typically performed by authorized recycling and refining companies. They are 1) Collection and Sorting: gathered through formal take-back systems and sorted by type (e.g., computers, mobile phones, etc.). Printed circuit boards (PCBs) are a primary source of gold. 2) Dismantling and Shredding: Components with high metal content are manually separated, and the remaining devices are mechanically shredded into smaller pieces. 3) Physical Separation: Techniques like magnetic, eddy current and density-based separation are used to isolate metals from plastics and

other non-metallic materials. 4) Chemical Processing (Leaching): The metal-rich material, often ground PCBs, is dissolved in strong chemical solutions (acids) to ionize and leach the metals. 5) Traditional methods often use toxic chemicals like cyanide or aqua regia, requiring stringent safety and environmental protocols. Newer, more sustainable and less energy-intensive methods are being developed that use non-toxic solutions, such as protein-based sponges derived from whey or specialized polymers, to selectively absorb the gold ions. 6) Refining: The gold ions in the solution are reduced to metallic flakes or powder, which is then heated in a furnace (smelted) and melted into a high-purity gold nugget or bar.

Earning Potential, while the process is highly profitable on an industrial scale, it's generally not feasible for individuals at home due to the need for specialized equipment, hazardous chemicals, safety precautions, and the small amount of gold in a single device. Industrial Scale: A ton of circuit boards can contain 40 to 800 times more gold than an equal weight of mined gold ore, making industrial recycling highly lucrative. Companies like the Royal Mint in

the UK are building industrial plants specifically for this purpose. Individual Scale: An average smartphone contains only about 0.034 grams of gold. The time, effort, and cost of materials make it an educational hobby rather than a significant source of income for an individual.

Instead of attempting home extraction, the most responsible and effective way to contribute to this circular economy and realize value is by: Participating in manufacturer's take-back schemes. Dropping off old electronics at certified e-waste recycling centres that are equipped to safely and efficiently recover the materials. Investment in collection and recycling infrastructure could generate US\$38 billion in annual economic benefits by 2030, including by improving human health, protecting valuable ecosystems and spurring the recycling industry, finds a report by the UN Institute for Training and Research and the International Telecommunication Union. These actions can trigger far-reaching benefits, extending the lifespan of electronics, reducing demand for newer products and lessening the environmental burden of manufacturing, ultimately creating a greener technology industry.

To counter the mounting threat of electronic waste, countries and businesses need to overhaul how electronics are designed, manufactured, recycled and ultimately, disposed of, say experts. Governments and the industry can seize the economic opportunity to reduce the growing concerns about human and environmental exposure to pollution from the electronics life cycle. Solutions that encourage the design of durable products that can be reused, refurbished and recycled are a profitable, innovative way forward that is valued by consumers and has a reduced environmental impact. •



# PROUT NEWS REPORT

## WORLD INEQUALITY REPORT 2026 INCOME INEQUALITY IN INDIA AND THE WORLD

**I**he World Inequality Report 2026 (3rd edition after 2018 and 2022) highlights the deepening income, wealth, and gender inequalities across India and the globe. The findings are crucial for achieving inclusive growth, social justice, welfare economics, SDGs, and climate equity across India and the globe.

**India's Income and Wealth Inequality:** Average income and wealth: Average annual income per capita is around 6,200 euros (PPP), and average wealth stands at about 28,000 euros (PPP).

**Income inequality:** Top 10% earners capture 58% of national income. The bottom 50% receive only 15% of income. This is a jump from 57% (top 10%) and 13% (bottom 50%) in the 2022 Report.

**Wealth inequality:** The richest 10% hold 65% of total wealth. The top 1% own 40% of India's wealth.

**Global Inequality Trends:** The top 0.001% (~60,000 ultra-rich) own wealth three times the bottom 50% of humanity. Their share rose from 4% (1995) to 6% (2025). The global top 10% own 75% of world wealth; bottom 50% own just 2%. The top 1% control 37% of global wealth—more than eighteen times the wealth of the entire bottom half of the world population.

**Geographic Inequality Shift (1980-2025):** China: By 2025, China's position has shifted upward with much of its population having moved into the middle 40%, and a growing share having entered the upper-middle segments of the global distribution. India (lost relative ground): In 1980, a larger part of its population was in the middle 40%, but today almost all are in the bottom 50%. Sub-Saharan Africa: Remains concentrated in the lower half of the global distribution.

**Gender Inequality:** Indian perspective: Female labour force participation remains extremely low at 15.7%, and there are persistent income gaps across sectors. Global perspective: Excluding unpaid work, women earn only 61% of what men earn per working hour; and when unpaid labor is included, this figure falls to just 32%. Women capture just 25% of global labour income, a share that has barely shifted since





1990. Regional shares of women's labour income: Middle East & North Africa (MENA): 16%. South & Southeast Asia: 20%. Sub-Saharan Africa: 28%. East Asia: 34%. Europe/North America: ~40%

**Climate Inequality:** The poorest 50% contribute only 3% of carbon emissions linked to private capital ownership. While the top 10% account for 77% of emissions. The wealthiest 1% account for 41% of private capital ownership emissions, almost double the amount of the entire bottom 90%.

**Reasons Behind Inequality:** The inequality in India (and globe) remains deeply entrenched across income, wealth, and gender dimensions, highlighting persistent structural divides within the economy. These structural divides are – Low female workforce participation. Weak multilateralism on global redistribution. Rise of ultra-wealth concentration. Weak taxation systems and loopholes for the ultra-rich.

#### Challenges Identified, Policy Recommendations and Way Forward:

**Regressive taxation:** Effective tax rates decline sharply for billionaires and centi-millionaires. As a result, States lose revenue, impacting education, healthcare, and climate action. Strengthen progressive taxation – Implement wealth taxes on ultra-rich. Eliminate tax loopholes and ensure effective tax compliance. **Gendered labour burden:** As unpaid work is undervalued, it depresses women's economic mobility. Addressing gender inequality – Recognize and reduce unpaid care work through public provisioning. Increase female labour participation through skilling, flexibility, childcare. **Inter-country inequality:** India's global position worsened compared to China. Limited transition of population into the global middle class. **Redistributive social protection** – Expand cash transfers, pensions, unemployment benefits. Targeted support to vulnerable households.

**Climate responsibility gap:** High emitters evade accountability; vulnerable populations bear disproportionate impact. **Climate justice framework** – Equitable sharing of emissions responsibility. Incentivize green technologies and sustainable consumption. Strengthen global multilateralism – Coordinated global approach to taxation, climate, and redistribution.

**Inequality within the top:** Even within rich groups, inequality widens due to extreme concentration of power. **Public investment in human capital** – Free, high-quality schooling; universal healthcare, nutrition, childcare; and closing early-life disparity.

**Conclusion:** The World Inequality Report 2026 underscores that India and the world are witnessing historic levels of inequality. India's relative decline in the global distribution and persistently low female participation indicate deep structural issues. Promoting equality is essential to tackle the social and climate challenges of the coming decades. For India, achieving inclusive growth, social justice, and SDG targets will require strong political will, effective governance, and sustained investment in human capital. ●

*Courtesy: <https://vajiramandravi.com/current-affairs/world-inequality-report-2026-income-inequality-in-india-and-the-world/>*

# Himalayas and Now Aravalis

# Rakshasutra

## Against Mindless Development

■ Priyadarshini Patel

**O**n the upper reaches of the Gangotri valley, in the vicinity of glaciers and mountain streams, along the banks of the Bhagirathi-Ganga, the slopes harbour dense forests of deodar intermingled with chestnut, blue pine, silver fir, sea-buckthorn, Himalayan birch, Himalayan cypress, apricot and Indian tree hazel. To implement road widening via the Chardham Pariyojana (CDP), the Uttarakhand government has granted permission to the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) for felling up to 7,169 trees in these forests. This number includes 4,070 deodars

and 494 fruit trees, such as apple, walnut, apricot, and cherry. The total land acquired would be 41.924 hectares of forest land and 1.4 hectares of field land, totalling 43.409 hectares.

This deodar forest is located in a 20-km stretch that includes the areas of Dharali and Harsil, which were severely devastated on August 5, 2025, due to glacial activity and flooding. The forest sits on avalanche debris and has five glacial streams cutting through it. Three of these streams were activated simultaneously on August 5, thereby wiping out the settlement of Dharali and the army

camp in Harsil in seconds. Dharali was buried under 20 metres of debris brought by the glacial stream of Khir Ganga. Experts warn that if these trees, which are holding the debris in place, are uprooted, the entire area would become prone to landslides and Dharali-repeat disasters.

The 900-km CDP has triggered over 800 landslides and slope failures in its 800-km stretch across the three Chardham valleys of Badrinath, Kedarnath and Yamunotri. The remaining 100-km Gangotri stretch falls in the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone (BESZ), which was demarcated to





protect the last pristine 80 km of the Ganga left in India. Thus, the eco-zone has stringent rules prohibiting slope tampering and tree felling, which are being bypassed for this project.

Independent experts have submitted an alternative road design (DPR) to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), which reduces road width from 10 metres to a 5.5-metre tarred surface, with 7 metres along turns, and allows the comfortable passage of two vehicles while avoiding tree felling and dislodging of boulders. Originally, the 2018 MoRTH circular had itself stipulated 5.5 metres in hilly terrain to prevent instability and felling of “precious trees”.

The 10-metre tarred road of the CDP had been initiated in violation of this circular. This design, which protects the deodar forest and glacial streams, has been ignored. The forest department, in its clearance letter dated March 12, 2024, states the number of deodars as 4,070, with only two deodars having a girth of 0–10 cm. The number of trees with girth below 30 cm is stated as 2,583, of which

824 are deodars. But in a later submission, the forest department states that all trees below 30 cm are 4,366 and that these will be transplanted. In this document, the deodars marked for felling are 1,390. But if 824 deodars are below 30 cm and hence transplantable, and 1,390 are being cut, that amounts to 2,214 trees. The total deodars stated were 4,070. Hence, we have 1,856 deodar trees missing. And both documents refer to the exact same 43.409 hectares of acquired land.

According to the tree count conducted by the forest department, the average number of trees per hectare is roughly 158. But studies indicate that the expected average in this area is 350 trees per hectare, of which 75 per cent are deodars. These anomalies raise grave doubts. Moreover, the trees in the area have a huge girth, indicating 50–100 years of age, whereas the forest department figures make it look like a nursery. Further, the forest department signing off on these documents is the same department that, in March 2024, had forwarded the application for road widening with the astounding claim that this

Jhangla–Dharali stretch, barely 10 km from Gangotri, did not fall in the Bhagirathi Eco-Sensitive Zone. Obfuscation of such critical facts is far-reaching in its impact, and yet no one is held accountable.

The solution of transplanting 4,366 trees is another whitewash. Transplanting has failed repeatedly, a recent example being Dehradun, where roughly 900 trees were transplanted for road widening. But now the High Court has asked for a survival rate after residents informed that these trees were dying. Moreover, in the case of Dharali, since the forest sits on avalanche debris, uprooting trees from their roots and digging slopes to transplant will destabilise the area even more than felling.

The CDP began as a megatourism project and then morphed into a defence project, which allowed it to bypass the Supreme Court order mandating a road width of 5.5 metres. MoRTH began this project by breaking the 900-km road into 53 parts of less than 100 km each to evade an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

In 2023, the Uttarakhand state opposed a carrying capacity study

ordered by the Supreme Court in the course of a PIL, stating that it could be counter-productive and that “the holistic set of various measures to support the sustainable development of the state would be overshadowed by only the measure of carrying capacity”. Flood zonation laws prohibit new construction within 100 metres of rivers. The eco-zone notification also stringently prohibits conversion of green land to non-green. But despite these regulations, infrastructure projects are being cleared with no scientific rationale or long-sighted vision.

A deodar, or the other varieties that provide a support system to a deodar forest, are the priceless heritage of the Himalaya. Generally, the final loss of trees far exceeds the official number stated because of slope failures triggered by cutting, landslides, and saplings that have not been counted. A forest is a complex ecosystem that mere transplantation cannot replace. And tree felling has a domino effect that the documents entirely ignore. A felled forest leads to drier soil, which triggers forest fires, which deposit soot on glaciers, which trigger glacial melt and flash floods, which in turn erode more forests and slopes. The cycle is vicious.

Mindless development is

built on mindless regulations. To facilitate the decimation of the Aravalis, one of the oldest mountain ranges on Earth, the Supreme Court recently redefined a mountain, thereby excluding ninety per cent of the range and opening it up for “development”. In 2018, after the CDP matter was raised in the NGT, the Bhagirathi eco-zone clause prohibiting land-use change to non-green except for local residential needs was widened to include infrastructure and defence. Then, MoRTH amended the 2018 circular in 2020 from 5.5 metres to 10 metres in hilly terrain, without any scientific rationale.

In 2021, a Justice DY Chandrachud-led Supreme Court bench also ignored the 200-plus landslides triggered by CDP hill cutting and permitted a 10-metre road width as a defence requirement. Its order stated: “This court, in its exercise of judicial review, cannot second-guess the infrastructural needs of the Armed Forces... This is impermissible.” In 2023, all linear strategic projects within 100 metres of the Line of Control were excluded from the Forest Conservation Act. But with border connectivity often cut due to landslides and with the creation of chronic landslide zones, this Himalayan blunder in judgement is indisputable.

Uttarakhand, especially, has borne the brunt of unprecedented disasters in the last decade. The horrific Kedarnath glacial lake outburst, the Asi Ganga floods, the Rishi Ganga glacial break, the avalanche debris flow at Dharali, Tharali, and the sinking of Joshimath are stark warnings that mindless development is exacerbating the devastation of climate change in the Himalaya.

The demolition of the Himalayas, and now the ancient Aravalli, and the excavation of Badrinath without any EIA, or the damming of the Ganga, is the demolition not just of life-sustaining ecology, but of Indian identity. We should stop calling what empties us, what weakens us, “progress”.

MoRTH minister Nitin Gadkari, in Parliament, assured the nation that there would be no tree felling in the CDP. Yet today, we are on the brink of losing another pristine forest. The Rakshasutra tied by citizens around magnificent cedars on December 6, 2025, is, in fact, a call for protection against all mindless and self-destructive development. ●

*The author is the head of Ganga Ahvaan, a citizen forum working towards the conservation of the Ganga and the Himalayas.*



*Result of illegal mining in Aravalis*

# To Save Humanity

- Shrii Shrii Anandamurti



Wise people say that in the past there have been so many crises in human society. Crisis is quite natural for something moving. Wherever there is movement, there is struggle – struggle against the inertia of the earth. In the past, there have been crises in the course of movement, crises in different branches of civilization, crises in the realm of education, and so on. But nowadays, the entire human society is facing the crisis of civilization as a whole, and particularly a crisis in the field of existence. Human society is now to decide whether to live or to die. If this mud-slinging and intolerance are encouraged, humanity has no future – the future is dark, the future is sealed forever. But you know, I am not a pessimist. I am always an optimist. And I want all my sons and daughters to be optimists. And I want them to struggle against this death signal of humanity, and come out successful.

And I am sure that you boys and you girls must be optimists; and it is your duty to save humanity. And I hope you will be able to save humanity, because, just like me, you are also optimistic. You should know that great, or good, people are few in number, they are not many. They do not come within the scope of millions or billions. They are always few in number. And these few, they are the torchbearers of human society, they are the pioneers, they are the vanguards of human society. So it is your duty to save humanity. And those who are unable to shoulder their own bags and baggages – their responsibilities are to be shouldered by you. You should remember that the life of a spiritual aspirant is a mission. One's entire life is a mission, one's entire existence is a mission. And your mission is – what? To save humanity from this crisis. I hope you will be successful. And I not only hope, I am sure that you will be successful. ●

# ACTIVITY



## Proutist, Activist Prof. Jayanta Mohanty Passes Away

On December 27, 2025, senior proutist, activist, and distinguished educationist Professor Jayanta Mohanty passed away following a massive heart attack at 'Care Hospital' in Bhubaneswar.

Professor Mohanty was the former Principal of DAV College, Koraput (Odisha). After retirement, his entire life became a living example of selfless service and dedication to the mission. As a full-timer (Purna Kalik Bandhu), he had dedicated all his time, energy, and intellect to the mission of Prout.

One of his invaluable contributions was the translation of the books 'Prout in a Nutshell' into the Odia language. He had it published using the funds from his own pension, which is a testimony to his unparalleled dedication, sacrifice, and love for the mission.

His demise is an irreparable loss to the proutist movement, and human society at large. Jayant Mohanty will always be remembered as an ideal teacher, thinker and spiritual aspirant.



## AMURT Distributes 20,000 Blankets Nationwide



Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT/AMURTEL) has distributed over 20,000 blankets across four states of India as part of its winter relief campaign. The extensive relief operation was centred at Ananda Nagar in Purulia district, West Bengal, from where the campaign was coordinated.

This large-scale relief work included cold-affected areas in various districts of West Bengal, as well as Bihar, Punjab, and Tripura. The primary objective of this campaign was to protect the poor, elderly, and helpless people of society from the severe cold.

A spokesperson for the organisation stated, "This relief campaign is part of our regular winter service. Our volunteers reached remote villages and urban slums to deliver these blankets to the most needy people."

He further added, "This campaign was carried out with the cooperation of the local administration and other social service organisations. Our effort is to ensure that no one is forced to shiver in the cold."

AMURT/AMURTEL has been active for several decades in the fields of disaster relief, medical services, and community development, both in India and abroad.



# ACTIVITY

## AMURT Organizes Mass Feeding and Winter Relief Programme



On the occasion of the first day of the new year, the Chandigarh unit of Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) organized a grand mass feeding and winter relief programme. Under the 'Narayana Seva', delicious and nutritious meals were served to over 3,000 people.

Additionally, the Chandigarh unit organized a clothes distribution programme. As part of this, the organization's full-time workers (whole-timers) were specially honoured for their dedication with shawls and fleece jackets. Besides this, a separate blanket distribution programme was also organized in Anand Nagar, and woollen blankets were distributed to the needy.

This programme demonstrates AMURT's social commitment and dedication to humanitarian service.



# ACTIVITY



## PBI Distributes Winter Clothes in Odisha

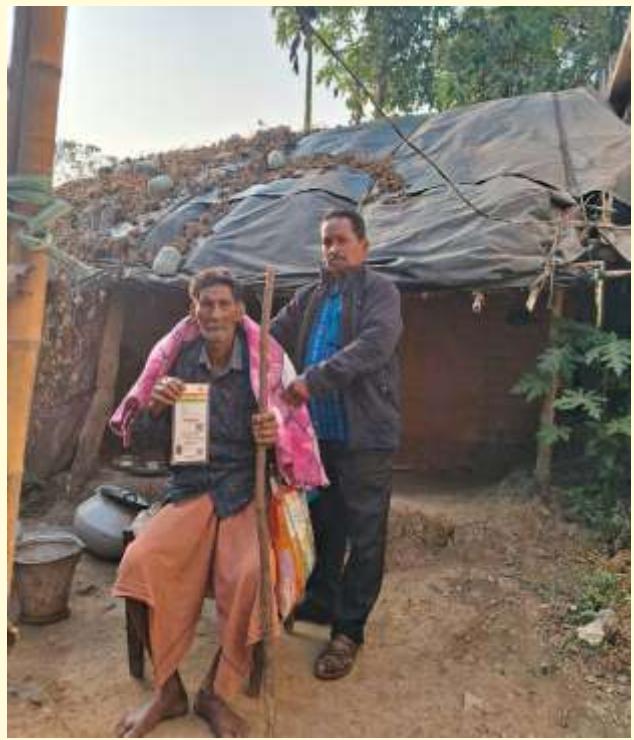


Boudh district unit of Proutist Bloc, India (Odisha) organized a winter-clothes distribution programme across the district, distributing blankets and warm clothing to vulnerable communities throughout November and December.

### The initiative provided aid at multiple locations:

- ❖ On November 10, blankets and sweaters were distributed to the elderly, disabled individuals, and children in the tribal village of Pajimuhan, Kantamal Block.
- ❖ On December 8, following a district-level 'public grievance redressal camp' in Harbhanga Block, winter clothing was provided to local widows and women with disabilities.
- ❖ A blanket distribution drive was also conducted on December 19 in the hamlets of Karanjakata Gram Panchayat.

The campaign was led by PBI (Odisha) State President Kedarnath Sahu, and volunteer Shri Brindavan Behera, with support from local workers including Vishikesan Karmi, Bhola Jani, Kritibas Palia, and Prakash Chandra Sahu.



# ACTIVITY

## Proutist Leaders Meet to Strategize National Expansion



In a significant gathering aimed at reinvigorating PROUT movement in India, several key office-bearers and cadres of Proutist Bloc, India (PBI), along with other Proutists from across the nation, convened at Ananda Nagar, West Bengal, on the last day of 2025.

The meeting's central agenda was to formulate a cohesive strategy for expanding and strengthening the Proutist movement's reach and impact across the country.

The deliberation saw the participation of prominent leaders including PBI's National President Prof. AK Bhaskar, National Convenor Acharya Santosananda Avadhuta, former national general secretary Kanhu Charan Behura, PBI Odisha President Kedarnath Sahu, Public Relations Secretary Ravindra Singh, and Acharya Shiv Narayan Prasad.

During the session, each leader outlined a distinct strategic focus for PBI's growth:

- ❖ Prof. AK Bhaskar, National President, emphasized the need for "systematic ideological training and cadre development programs to build a robust, knowledgeable, and dedicated grassroots network capable of carrying the Proutist vision to every district."
- ❖ Kanhu Charan Behura, Former National General Secretary, highlighted "the critical importance of digital expansion—leveraging social media, creating vernacular digital content, and running targeted online campaigns to educate the youth and the public about Proutist alternatives to the current economic system."
- ❖ Kedarnath Sahu, PBI Odisha President, stressed "consolidating and replicating successful local service models, like our winter relief campaigns, to build tangible goodwill and trust at the community level, demonstrating Prout in action as the foundation for ideological acceptance."
- ❖ Ravindra Singh, Public Relations Secretary, focused on "developing a coherent and compelling national communication strategy to effectively project PBI's work, achievements, and ideology into the mainstream public discourse through both traditional and new media platforms."
- ❖ Acharya Shiv Narayan Prasad advocated for "forging strategic alliances with like-minded social movements, farmers' unions, and labor organizations to build a broader coalition for socio-economic justice, amplifying our collective voice and influence."

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to translate these multifaceted strategies into a unified action plan. ●



Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

# Blossoming As A Flower

Kon bhule jaoá bhore, sahás samiire  
maner mukure ese chile,  
tumi, maner mukure ese chile.

Sonáli áloy hásia,  
madhur suváse bhásia,  
sakal kálímá náshiá  
phuler matan phútechile  
tumi, phuler matan phútechile.

Práner parág mákhiá,  
nutaner chavi ánkiá,  
vajraváñite dákiá  
sab shrinkhalá bhenge chile,  
tumi, sab shrinkhalá bhenge chile.

*Which forgotten dawn  
In a gentle breeze  
came into the mirror of the mind,  
You came into the mirror of the mind.*

*Smiling in golden light  
Drifting in a sweet scent,  
Destroying all darkness  
Blossoming as a flower  
You blossomed as a flower.*

*Anointed with the pollen of life,  
Painting new vistas,  
With clarion calls of thunder,  
destroying all fetters  
You destroyed all fetters.*





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