

# PERSPECTIVE

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**OPERATION SINDOOR— A RESHAPING OF CONFRONTATION**

—HARSH V. PANT & ANKIT K.



# CONTENTS

- 1 **FROM A RULES-BASED WORLD TO SHAMBOLIC DISORDER**  
— M.K. NARAYANAN
- 2 **THE IMPACT OF SUSPENDING A WATER TREATY**  
— AMIT RANJAN & NABEELA SIDDIQUI
- 3 **CHINA'S STRATEGIC PUSH—ASIA TIES AMID TARIFF TENSIONS**  
— HARSH V. PANT & PRATNASHREE BASU
- 4 **NOT REVENGE OR RETALIATION, BUT A PARADIGM SHIFT**  
— SUHASINI HAIDAR
- 5 **INDIA MUST RETHINK ITS ARCTIC OUTLOOK**  
— ABHIJIT SINGH
- 6 **THE FRAGMENTATION IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST TERROR**  
— T.S. TIRUMURTI
- 7 **OPERATION SINDOOR— A RESHAPING OF CONFRONTATION**  
— HARSH V. PANT AND ANKIT K.
- 8 **TRUMP-PROOFING INDIA-US**  
— C RAJA MOHAN
- 9 **THE SILVER JUBILEE OF A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP**  
— PHILIPP ACKERMAN
- 10 **THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF AN INDIA-U.S. ENERGY FUTURE**  
— ARUNABHA GHOSH
- 11 **WHAT WILL BE IMPACT OF INDIA-U.K. TRADE DEALS**  
— SAPTAPARNO GHOSH
- 12 **A FRAGILE CALM**  
— PRATAP BHANU MEHTA
- 13 **CHALLENGE BEYOND PAKISTAN**  
— C RAJA MOHAN
- 14 **PAKISTAN'S INDIA WAR**  
— M.K. NARAYANAN
- 15 **REVIVING A FAR-SIGHTED BUT FORGOTTEN BILL MECHANISM**  
— MEHUL CHHABTA & ATHARVA DESHMUKH
- 16 **THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEPUTY SPEAKER**

*The May edition of our PSIR magazine presents a focused exploration of pressing global and national developments shaping India's political and strategic environment. From shifting power dynamics and rising instability in global governance to India's evolving foreign policy, each article offers timely insight for students, scholars, and aspirants alike.*

*This issue opens with the unraveling of a rules-based international order, driven by rising global tensions and assertive leadership. It explores how power plays by nations like the U.S., China, and Russia are reshaping geopolitical alignments—particularly in Asia and the Indo-Pacific. India's responses, through diplomacy and military modernisation, reflect a conscious shift toward smarter, technology-driven security strategies.*

*A special focus is placed on the recently finalised India-U.K. Free Trade Agreement, which aims to boost trade while opening key sectors like textiles, automobiles, and IT. While the deal offers significant economic opportunities, it also raises concerns for agriculture and MSMEs, underlining the complex trade-offs involved in global integration.*

*The edition also delves into domestic institutional concerns, such as the long-standing vacancy of the Deputy Speaker and the fading role of Private Members' Bills—both of which raise critical questions about democratic health and legislative accountability.*

*With deeper analyses of India's partnerships with the U.S. and Germany, water diplomacy with Pakistan, and the future of warfare, this magazine provides an integrated view of India's strategic direction in an increasingly uncertain world.*



*Rahul Puri*

**PSIR OPTIONAL FACULTY  
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# FROM A RULES-BASED WORLD TO SHAMBOLIC DISORDER

M.K. NARAYANAN

Even prior to Trump's arrival, the world was experiencing instability and uncertainty across a variety of industries. This instability was connected with deeper problems developing at a global level. Many strategists and policymakers assumed that modern tools and strategies would slowly ease these uncertainties. However, most people think that recent shifts in global power structures, disruptive technologies, and current global events indicate greater chaotic disruption, increased political tensions, and economic tsunamis.

The use of power and influence by leadership figures such as Donald Trump, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, and even Volodymyr Zelenskyy would not lead to anything beneficial but rather increase instability and disruption on a worldwide scale.

Most believe that this is the beginning of a new global era, one with the capacity to not only disrupt but entirely alter current global conditions. This development is thought to be extremely different from what happened in the early 21st century.

The President of the U.S. is taking steps that will unintentionally harm his own country. **Trumponomics is currently weakening top universities like Harvard and Columbia, which are major centres of learning and research.** It has targeted foreign students, who contribute \$40 billion and support over 4,00,000 American jobs. This would jeopardise the future of the United States.

While that is happening, Europe is caught in a difficult position as Trump's influence grows and the Russia-Ukraine conflict escalates, **Europe is experiencing significant instability regarding its future and that of NATO.** Trump's criticism of Europe's weak defence heightened Europe's anxiety about its security and global position.

The situation in West Asia is also dire, as the United States and other western nations are turning blind eye to Israel's military assaults in Gaza and other regions. Regarding power dynamics and the future of West Asia, Israel also appears to be extending its borders and territories, even into regions that have never been a part of Israel in the past. This worsens existing global tensions.

Israel keeps breaching ceasefire agreements and shows no signs of stopping its attacks, further destabilising West Asia. **The move by Leader Ahmed al-Shara to dissolve the security forces, purged the civil service of Alawites, and outlaw political parties is destabilizing Syria, leading to its fragmentation, which creates an opening for Israeli hegemony.**

Islamic State is not anymore just an Asian Problem, but it's on the expansion throughout the globe and reviving a new generation of terrorism globally. The situation in Asia is the one that worries the globe the least. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan are suffering from internal conflicts and terrorist organisations such as the Islamic State are now focusing on these nations. India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar are all seeing an increase in terrorism from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

China is growing more assertive within Asia, especially with the U.S. pulling back from regional politics. **China is busy addressing its economic issues and outsmarting Trump's tariffs. Asia is witnessing China spreading its influence via peace talks and economic agreements.** While India and China recently signed a border agreement (at Ladakh), their rivalry remains intense. A number of nations in Asia now lean towards China, which is boasting its naval might much beyond its usual boundaries even extending to the South Pacific and Indian Ocean. This instability renders the region of Asia insecure, and India must stay alert.

Even before Trump's arrival, the world was experiencing problems at a global level

- Shifts in global power structures
- Disruptive technologies
- political tensions, economic tsunamis

Power and influence by leadership — worsens instability and disruption

### WEST ASIA

- Dire situation
- Israel - extending its borders and territories
- Israel keeps breaching ceasefire agreements
- Move by Leader Ahmed al-Shara— creates an opening for Israeli hegemony.

## A NEW GLOBAL ERA?

### ISLAMIC STATE

- reviving a new generation of terrorism
- India, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Myanmar are all seeing an increase in terrorism from Afghanistan and Pakistan.

### CHINA

- Exploiting reduced U.S. presence
- Many countries in Asia leaning toward China
- Asserting naval power beyond the 'Nine-Dash Line' in South Pacific
- Increased submarine presence in Indian Ocean

# THE IMPACT OF SUSPENDING A WATER TREATY

AMIT RANJAN &  
NABEELA SIDDIQUI

After the Pahalgam incident, India's Cabinet Committee on security announced that the Indus Water Treaty [IWT] of 1960 would be suspended with immediate effect, unless Pakistan completely withdraws its backing for cross-border terrorism.

## Can India legally cancel this treaty?

- The answer is no, according to **Article XII (4)** of the treaty which states that "**it shall continue in force until terminated by a duly ratified treaty concluded for that purpose between the two governments**". (Treaty can only end if both sign a new treaty to terminate it.)

## The Vienna Convention Dilemma

- Indian policymakers assume that India could revoke the IWT by referring to Articles 60 and 62 of the VIENNA CONVENTION ON LAW OF TREATIES [VCLT]
- However, **both India ( not signed) and Pakistan (signed but not ratified)** are not fully bound by the VCLT.
- Further, suspending the IWT could internationalise the issue, making other countries intervene in the dispute, which could complicate things between New Delhi and Islamabad.

Pakistan's Minister of State of Law and Justice, Aqeel Malik, suggested three legal options:

- raising the issue at the World Bank
- taking action at the Permanent Court of Arbitration or at the International Court of Justice in the Hague, alleging that India has violated the 1969 VCLT
- raising the issue at the UN Security Council.

What can India do?

- India can **suspend sharing river flow data, flush out reservoirs and run hydroelectric projects on western rivers** without consulting Pakistan.
- The western rivers: Indus, Chenab, and Jhelum are crucial for Islamabad's farming, domestic consumption, and hydroelectric projects.
- Any disturbance in the flow of these rivers could harm Pakistan's economy and agriculture.
- Additionally, this **could increase internal crises, particularly between Punjab and Sindh, which have a long-standing history of water conflicts**. Presently, both the provinces are fighting over the proposal to build six canals, especially the Cholistan canal.

Under the treaty, India's is permitted to :

- store up to 3.60 million acre-feet (MAF) of water
- develop 1.34 million acres of irrigation land in J&K and Ladakh
- construct run-of-the-river dams on the western rivers.

However, currently **India has storage capacity of only around 1 MAF** and has developed irrigation for only 0.624 million acres. Additionally **India utilizes 90% of its 33 MAF share on eastern rivers**. In order to implement its political action, New Delhi requires significant infrastructure developments.

India is **building hydroelectric plants such as Kishanganga, Ratle, and Salal to take advantage of its own share of water from Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab rivers** under the Indus Waters Treaty. The projects are predominantly of limited storage as they are run-of-the-river ones. India does not have large storage infrastructure for major water in times of high flows at present. Such projects like Kiru and Pakal Dul are on the cards but will have to wait due consideration to Himalayan geography and bureaucratic hurdles. It would be a decade or more before India could exercise its treaty rights.

Geopolitical risks for India:

Justifying suspension of IWT as a political response to counter Pakistan's support for terrorism, however, if this justification could not diplomatically satisfy India's neighbouring countries; it could impact its relations with other countries.

- For instance, **China, being upper riparian to many Indian rivers such as Sutlej and Brahmaputra, Beijing might use IWT's suspension as an excuse to refuse to share water data.**
- During the 2017 Doklam crisis, China retained sharing data with India but continued to extend it to Bangladesh.
- Secondly, **India-Bangladesh** are on the same page regarding renewing The Ganga Water Treaty, India's actions of suspending IWT and can negatively impact their relations, especially given the current circumstances.
- Additionally this decision could lead a segment of the Nepali population to warn the government on any agreement with New Delhi.
- Some of the **Sri Lankan** commentators are also discussing **"treading" cautiously while entering into agreements with India.**

# CHINA'S STRATEGIC PUSH— ASIA TIES AMID TARIFF TENSIONS:

HARSH V. PANT &  
PRATNASHREE BASU

Xi Jinping's recent trip to the three southeast asian countries: **Vietnam, Malaysia, and Cambodia**, had one primary purpose: to showcase Beijing as the sole reliable and trustworthy partner of choice. Simultaneously, China in the current situation is facing a **145% tariff on its exports from Donald Trump's administration**. Due to this economic stress, China is adjusting its global economic outlook, with more emphasis on nearby regions where it can enjoy strategic proximity.

This action by Beijing is not usual, it is a thoughtful strategy to cut off the economic stress caused by the U.S. and to present China as a stable partner and enhance its position in the Indo-Pacific.

Intense trade war between China and US, which extends beyond tariffs to restrictions on exports, ban on Chinese technology and financial decoupling. So from **Beijing's perspective, to counter this intense trade conflict, Southeast Asia acts both as a buffer and a bridge**, offering multiple advantages for china such as:

1. Resilient trade channels
2. Manufacturing alternatives
3. Supportive diplomatic partners

IMPACT OF U.S. TARIFF and China's Response

- Under Trump's administration, **Cambodia could face tariffs up to 59% on its exports**.
- Similarly, **Vietnam and Malaysia would face duties of 46% and 24%** respectively.
- Opposed to these actions by the U.S, Xi Jinping demonstrated that
  - China remains open to trade and partnership, **rejecting the U.S unilateral approach** and extending its support for multilateralism.
- Xi Jinping's recent visit to these Three Southeast Asian countries led to signing of several agreements, focusing on boosting regional security and promoting cooperation.
- China is Cambodia's largest investor with bilateral trade amounting to \$15 billion in 2024, and prioritising major projects like Funan Techno canal in Cambodia.
- These Attempts by China, **exhibit Beijing's desire to offer public goods and economic opportunities, whereas the U.S approach is shifting more towards protectionism**.

Beyond the economy: China's Ideological stance:  
Xi Jinping's visit's focus was not just economics, it was also to advance China's political and ideological interests.

- Beijing attempted to paint **Washington as rigid and interventionist** while projecting itself as non interventionist, i.e., to maintain a distance from the politics of other nations.
- Also, Xi Jinping's call to advance a code of conduct in the South China sea, creating infrastructure by Belt and Road Initiative [BRI] and emphasizing cultural connections,—are all elements of his soft power strategy to gain them without resorting to force.
- Thus, China doesn't want to be perceived as a mere neighbour but as a Leader in creating regional order.

China vs. U.S's engagement in Southeast Asia

Xi Jinping's South East Asian visit is significant since it contrasts the engagement of China with the US's episodic and security-bound nature.

- ASEAN considers the U.S. strategy for the Indo-Pacific as unilaterally driven and reactive while Xi offers specific benefits like infrastructure, facilitation of trade, and security consultations.
- His trip is to foster relations with Vietnam, dispelling fears of Chinese assertiveness, and with Malaysia, offering positive resolution of disputes and cooperation on BRI.

While **America focuses on security alignments, China focuses on economic diplomacy.** The U.S.'s Indo-Pacific Economic Framework lacks market access incentives such as China's direct offers of investment and trade.

Xi Jinping's Southeast Asian tour is aimed at reasserting China as a great economic ally, and it becomes more difficult for America to construct an economic bloc to counter China. As Southeast Asia increasingly becomes economically dependent on Beijing, U.S. countermeasures are confronted with difficulties. The tour is a strategic step to strengthen Chinese influence in the Indo-Pacific and determine future regional alignments. Domestically, it serves to project Xi as strong and international in the face of economic and diplomatic strains. Warm welcomes and agreements affirm his standing at home and send a signal to the Global South that China is still a steadfast ally. Receptivity on the ground in local areas is questionable, though, considering its unilaterality.

# NOT REVENGE OR RETALIATION, BUT A PARADIGM SHIFT

SUHASINI HAIDAR

The recent terror attack in Pahalgam joins India's decades-long battle against cross-border terrorism. Yet, instead of demanding instant vengeance, there is increasing realization that a long-term strategic doctrine is needed. This entails the following:

1. A counter-terror strategy
2. A strategy for retaliation
3. A strategy to manage Pakistan's counter-retaliation

The military planners have to prepare three different strategic reactions instead of opting for symbolic strikes as before.

Historically, **India's responses to terrorism have been driven by short-term political imperatives rather than strategic thinking.** Examples include:

1. 2001 Parliament attack: Operation Parakram —full military mobilisation
2. 2016 Uri attack: LoC surgical strikes
3. 2019 Pulwama attack: A Jaish-e-Mohammed camp in Balakot was airstriken by India; Pakistan responded with airstrikes and captured an Indian pilot.

These strong military responses, while politically popular and symbolic, have not decimated Pakistan's terror apparatus. They were mostly short-term deterrents that failed to address underlying strategic issues.

Influence of Two nation theory: The most significant ideological pillar of Pakistan's animosity towards India is the **Two-Nation Theory that describes Hindus and Muslims as intrinsically different nations.** The theory was a basis for Pakistan's establishment and still influences its policies.

- Pakistani military and religious leaders exaggerate religious differences to fuel tensions.
- **General Asim Munir's use of the word Kashmir as a "jugular vein"** indicates the way in which the theory remains entrenched within Pakistan's military thought.

This ideology complicates reconciliation since the dispute is not depicted only as land-related but existent and religious in nature.

## **The Role of China :**

Things are further complicated by the possible Chinese reaction, particularly if India's response to the Pahalgam attacks puts the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) at risk, a considerably invested and strategic initiative for both Pakistan and China.

Any political or military action by India that puts this corridor at risk could invite a severe Chinese reaction that would further increase tensions in the region.

Also, there is great danger if India were to issue a hastily-written response based on political sentiments or emotions.

- There are some voices in **New Delhi calling for a "definitive war"** and suggesting that the time has come for **"map-making" by occupying and holding portions of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).**
- Such aggressive rhetoric and potential military intervention may have unforeseen consequences, including more widespread war, international condemnation, or strategic blunder.

Therefore, optimal calibration of India's action is crucial to avoid serious fallout on multiple geopolitical fronts.

Navigating the strategic way forward

India's long-term strategy must include a concrete diplomatic effort in addition to military action. India must strike a balance between soft power (diplomatic engagement) and hard power (military coercion). Interaction with Islamic countries, Western allies, and influential international organisations are all part of this.

There is a **need to persist in diplomatic action, particularly through the FATF and UNSC, to bring focus to Pakistan's sponsorship of terror** and to compel sanctions or restrictions.

Pakistan's hypocrisy, including posing as a victim while establishing terror cells, also needs to be tackled. **Pakistan often employs religious identity and Kashmir to shape foreign opinion.** To counter it, India needs to put forward a consistent narrative that identifies the terrorist network being backed by Pakistan's military-intelligence establishment. The diplomatic effect is undermined by errors like making weak or imprecise global statements that do not name particular terror groups (such as the TRF, which is associated with LeT). We must identify and quarantine responsible actors as part of a clear, fact-driven strategy.

**The concept of making the Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan a legal, permanent border must be rethought at this juncture.** It brings to the fore how Pakistan has fought a proxy war against India and facilitated terrorism by exploiting the porous nature of the LoC. Pakistan has already changed the demographics of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir by administratively dividing Gilgit-Baltistan and settling non-residents, even though it claims to be against demographic change in Jammu and Kashmir. The notion of unifying Kashmir under Pakistan is no longer possible based on these facts. The global community needs to be pressured into holding Pakistan responsible for regional peace and New Delhi to revisit the 2007 offers to officially demarcate the Line of Control as a border.

# INDIA MUST RETHINK ITS ARCTIC OUTLOOK

ABHIJIT SINGH

The Arctic, which used to be a tranquil area for science and nature, is **becoming a battlefield of political and military rivalry**. It is not only being transformed due to the desires of great powers such as Russia, China, and the U.S., but also due to global warming. When ice melts, new sea routes such as the Northern Sea Route are being opened for extended periods of time, and trade becomes faster, and resources such as oil and gas becoming more accessible. This has drawn worldwide interest. While nations are enhancing military reopen base facilities, send submarines, and parading military power to secure interests and acquire leverage, even in 2019, U.S. President Trump's offer to purchase Greenland, surprising as it was to everyone else, was indicative of how seriously the Arctic is being considered in world politics nowadays. The Arctic is no longer at the periphery of international politics it is now at the very center of world strategic thought.

India is seriously faced with the growing militarization of the Arctic, but so far, it has had no meaningful response to it. While at a time when countries all over the world are retooling to adapt to the new geopolitics of the Arctic, **India remains nearly entirely focused on climate science and nature protection.** Its **2022 Arctic Policy** is well-typed and centers on the **Himalayas-Arctic interlinkage specifically, how the Arctic changes would affect South Asia's monsoon and water regimes.** The policy does not, however, adequately address the shifting power balance in the region.

India risks lagging behind because it

- **Remains apolitical** in an increasingly politically and strategically contested region.
- **Less focus on important deliberations** on Arctic governance and access.
- **Heavily relies on scientific diplomacy**, which was effective in the past but possibly no longer so.

While **India too has an Arctic presence — e.g., its Svalbard research station, polar missions participation, and observer status in the Arctic Council** these were constructed during an era of peace. Today, with tensions mounting and power politics again in the driver's seat, India's present approach may not be sufficient to safeguard its long-term interests in the region.

Growth in the role of the Arctic has real implications for India. With the opening up of the NSR along with declining ice cover, global trade routes would potentially shift to the north and **reduce the role of shipping routes in the Indian Ocean.** It would hurt India's vision of becoming a major connectivity hub of the Indo-Pacific, which is pursued through Indian initiatives such as SAGAR and the Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative (IPOI). Much more unsettling is the increasing interlinking between Indo-Pacific and Arctic geopolitics.

- **Russia and China are coordinating more in the Arctic**, and China is also increasing its marine presence in the Indian Ocean.
- This makes it difficult for India to focus only on southern maritime issues.

- Another additional challenge : **Nordic countries are concerned about India's intimate relationship with Russia**, especially in the wake of Russia's move against Ukraine.

India has not yet been able to satisfactorily explain to its Arctic friends how its independent foreign policy—fashioned as strategic autonomy—can also enable cooperation and shared interests. Without stronger engagement, India risks being kept out of important decisions that will shape the future of both the Arctic and Indo-Pacific regions.

India has to refocus its approach to the Arctic by marrying its climate imperative with a higher strategic intent. **A three-stage process can help.**

- India needs to establish **special desks in the Foreign and Defence Ministries** and engage in constant dialogue with think tanks and agencies.
- It has to collaborate with **like-minded Arctic countries on programs like polar logistics and satellite monitoring** to increase its legitimacy.
- India should **proactively join the new Arctic leadership** discourse on matters including infrastructure, shipping laws, and the blue economy in terms of local peoples' interests.

India's current strategy that revolves around largely scientific collaboration is not enough now. As the Arctic shifts toward politics of power, India should develop or miss being part of significant decisions that will shape the region's future.

## INDIA'S CURRENT ARCTIC FOOTPRINT

- Research Station in Svalbard.
- Observer in Arctic Council.
- 2022 Arctic Policy:
  - Focused on Himalayas-Arctic climate interlinkages (monsoon & water systems).
  - Limited engagement with geopolitics or security dynamics.

## WHAT'S MISSING IN INDIA'S APPROACH?

- Too Apolitical in a contested region.
- Heavy reliance on scientific diplomacy.
- Minimal say in Arctic governance & strategic forums.

## WHY IT MATTERS TO INDIA

- Arctic routes may undermine Indian Ocean trade.
- Threat to India's Indo-Pacific vision:
  - SAGAR
  - IPOI
- Rising Russia-China coordination in Arctic + Chinese activity in Indian Ocean = Strategic crossover.
- Nordic unease over India-Russia ties, post-Ukraine conflict.



# THE FRAGMENTATION IN THE GLOBAL FIGHT AGAINST TERROR

T.S. TIRUMURTI

The pahalgam terror attack on April 22 has once again exposed the **weakening international unity in the fight against terrorism**, especially when the subject is India and Pakistan. While some nations voiced their condemnation of the incident, the global response was generally subdued and uneven. For example, the **United States used a technique that is reserved and moderate: it pushed both India and Pakistan to refrain from taking any actions that could worsen the situation**. Similarly, **Russia and the EU made general statements without strongly talking about Pakistan's involvement**. This reluctance to name and shame Pakistan, despite the latter's past record of subsidising terrorism, suggests that the world opinion has lost its unity in the war against terror.

There was a moment, especially during the post-9/11 era, when countries came together in a collective resolve against terrorism. The global consensus then was clear-cut – the terrorists and the sponsors of terrorism would be isolated and sanctioned. But that has not been the case anymore.

- For the last few years, the perpetrators of major attacks like Pulwama (2019) and Mumbai (2008) escaped international condemnation without a whisper.
- Pakistan's supporting role for such attacks does not get noticed, and India is called upon to exercise restraint.
- India is always told to tone it down and remain calm, despite being a victim in the majority of these circumstances.

India cannot be expected to show restraint in a world without any idea of the threat of terrorism it is undergoing or the blame being focused on the actual perpetrators. The global war against terrorism is no longer collective, it is becoming selective and interest-based.

There exists a clear double standard with which the international community responds to terrorism depending on the country that is targeted. This **discrimination can be seen in the manner in which terrorism against India is treated differently from that against Western countries.**

- If terrorism is employed by Pakistan against India, many countries go out of their way to take firm action.
- If the same threats are launched against the U.S. or Europe, rapid and harsh responses are observed.
- Pakistan remains able to escape global scrutiny despite:
  - Hosting terror groups.
  - Being represented on international security forums like the UN Security Council (as a non-permanent member from 2025-2026).

Further, Pakistan has so far been able to evade being pinned for financing terror, while simultaneously being given aid and assistance by the great powers.

Even in the current Russia-Ukraine war, countries are quick to supply Ukraine with weapons and condemn Russia. But when it comes to India's conflict with Pakistan over terrorism, the same urgency is missing. Prime Minister Modi's outreach to leaders like President Putin and the U.S. administration is a reminder of how India must constantly lobby for support that should come automatically in a fair system.

International reactions against terrorism are increasingly geopolitically driven rather than on the foundation of a core principle. **Strategic alignments and economic interests are typically the deciding factors as to whether a country is held culpable for aligning itself with terror.**

- The international attention seems to be more about controlling territory or building influence rather than combating terrorism.
- Countries like India are expected to remain patient while also being denied the necessary international backing.
- Pakistan's narrative, and its denials after attacks, are taken at face value by the majority of participants in the global community, complicating India's fight against cross-border terrorism.

In the coming times, New Delhi requires to make its case more forcefully in global forums. There is a compelling necessity to return to a more collective, fair, and principle-driven world stance against terrorism, one that will not be accommodationist based on political necessity or regional needs.

# OPERATION SINDOOR — A RESHAPING OF CONFRONTATION

HARSH V. PANT & ANKIT K.

India's recent standoff with Pakistan marks a big shift in the manner in which modern wars are being analyzed and fought. Operation Sindoor can no longer be seen as a bilateral dispute between the two countries but as an important example of how wars are fought globally, It is indicative of a new kind of thinking regarding India's military strategy, especially the manner in which it deals with Pakistan. Wars are no longer seen as traditional battles between two countries using traditional weapons. Instead, new ideas, new technology, and better utilization of information are changing the manner in which battles are fought. Unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) or drones have emerged as the focus in this change. Prime Minister Narendra Modi pointed out that earlier, wars were fought with expensive and manned fighter jets. **Nowadays, wars focus on less expensive and flexible tools like drones that can surveil, attack, and confuse the enemy without putting pilots at risk.**

Pakistan has recently employed drones to release weapons into India across the border, highlighting that this type of warfare is now a reality and not just science fiction. They employed Turkish-produced drones to strike over 36 locations in India. Drones such as the SkyStriker, which detonate on impact, indicate how modern warfare is getting to be more uncertain. These drones assist in surveillance, precision attacks, and weapon delivery, even without pilots. Ten years ago, such advanced technology was not common but is widespread now.

India has made the learning process of doing this differently by using advanced radar systems and the integration of different types of weapons such as: **the Akash missiles and Russian S-400 air defence show that India's defence is being layered and sophisticated to a greater extent.** The layered defence uses sensors, radars, and missiles simultaneously, allowing India to respond quickly and smartly in case of an attack.

**Lieutenant General Rajiv Ghai**, explained that India's new system, **Akashteer**, is to capture information from the battlefield in real time. This allows the army to react more quickly and respond more intelligently. Rather than employing slow, discrete systems, this technique allows multiple threats to be countered at one time.

**Information itself has become a weapon. Pakistan has used online media to spread fake news and videos in order to mislead and confuse people.** This is what is known as **psychological warfare** and aims to change the thinking and actions of people during conflicts. Through social media and fake information, they try to instill fear or influence opinions. This type of war differs from traditional warfare and proves that information management is as important as weapons deployment.

The Russia-Ukraine and Israel-Palestine wars also reflect the manner in which the lines of war have been transformed. Wars are no longer fought physically; they are fought psychologically, digitally, and economically as well. Countries attempt to narrate, manipulate minds, and resolve disputes without even firing a single bullet. India's reaction to this shift is to develop its own defence mechanisms such as the Akash missile system and develop overall strategies with regards to economy, science, and diplomacy.

India has also enhanced the way its three armed forces : **the Army, Navy, and Air Force. The rollout of the Integrated Air Command and Control System (IACCS) allows the three armed forces to share and coordinate information.** For instance, when India reacted against Pakistan's moves, the Indian Army, Navy, and Air Force acted as one unit, not individually.

The application of artificial intelligence and sophisticated data systems also enables commanders to make sounder decisions in a matter of time. These are not new weapons alone, but transformations in how wars are conceived, comprehended, and fought. By fusing conventional military might with new tools such as AI and unmanned aerial vehicles, India is transforming the nature of confrontations.

In the end, Operation Sindoor shows that India is no longer thinking in terms of just defending itself with tanks and jets. The focus has moved to smarter, faster, and more connected systems that can handle everything from border conflicts to misinformation wars. Prime Minister Modi's words reflect this new vision, which is about building strong defence that uses both technology and strategy.

## THREE PILLARS OF INDIA'S PRECISION-ORIENTED MILITARY DOCTRINE



The capacity to respond quickly to provocations with accurately measured force



The development of a comprehensive and layered defence and offence capability that combines indigenous technologies with cutting-edge imported systems



An advanced escalation control posture that makes precision projection of military power possible without precipitating all-out war

## WAR HAS CREATED 'NEW NORMAL' IN THE 'NEW AGE WARFARE' FOR INDIA.

—This was reiterated in Prime Minister's address on May 12.

# TRUMP-PROOFING INDIA-US

C RAJA MOHAN

Donald Trump's second term in office is characterized by measures that have unsettled well-crafted impressions between the United States and India, especially on the issues of Kashmir and Pakistan. Successive presidents—George W. Bush, Barack Obama, Donald Trump (in his first term), and Joe Biden **adopted a policy of de-hyphenating relations between India and Pakistan.** This meant encouraging bilateral dialogue between Delhi and Islamabad while avoiding any US mediation on Kashmir. During the Pulwama terror attack and India's Balakot strikes in 2019, the Trump administration helped de-escalate the crisis and persuaded Pakistan to release the captured Indian pilot, without making any reference to mediation or Kashmir. Later that year, when India revoked Article 370 and changed the constitutional status of Kashmir, Pakistan tried to raise the issue internationally with China's support. The Trump administration blocked this move at the United Nations, reaffirming its support for India. However, in contrast to that earlier approach, Trump's recent actions and statements seem to mark a shift. His current stance appears less supportive and more unpredictable, which is concerning for India, as it deviates from the longstanding US position post-Kargil.

Trump's foreign policy during his second term seems to be **more shaped by commercial interests and personal whims** than by official policies.

1. Many of the important positions in his government remained unfilled
2. Less reliance on the official policy process
3. Important foreign policy decisions like the \$400 million luxury jumbo jet from Qatar seemed to be shaped by his family and personal financial interests.
4. This ambiguity between national interest and personal self-interest started people to wonder if the American approach in South Asia was consistent.

India was right to be wary about writing off these actions as little mistakes. The Trump government's trade policy towards India also changed under more pressure and threats to revoke trade benefits. The government's changing attitude labelling India as a developed nation for trade goals and advocating closer ties with Pakistan, added to the worry. These developments were notable since they defied years-long established patterns of cooperation and mutual respect based on past mistakes.

Notwithstanding these changes, New Delhi need not be worried. India understands how to negotiate Washington's complexity and has long experience negotiating her political structure. **The Congress, civil society, and American business all have great impact on U.S. foreign policy; the White House is not the only driver here.** India should increase its interaction with these several players. Particularly American companies, who show great interest in U.S.-India relations, could be valuable friends. This more general involvement can help safeguard India's interests independent of the inclination or policies of any one president.

At last, India's strategic future rests in diversifying its international alliances as much as in its ties to the United States. **India's ties to Europe particularly those to France, Greece, and Denmark have grown ever more crucial. Particularly in relation to the Kashmir issue, these nations have diplomatically supported India.** India has to concentrate on strengthening its national capacities to defend its interests, tackling structural problems, and forming closer and more extensive alliances. Ensuring that temporary political upheavals do not change India's long-term course of relations between India and the United States or India's larger foreign policy vision will prove to be the main challenge ahead.

### CONCERNS FOR INDIA

- Trump's foreign policy — shaped by commercial interests and personal whims
- Trump's current stance appears less supportive
- changing attitude labelling India as a developed nation for trade goals and advocating closer ties with Pakistan

### INDIA'S STRATEGY

- concentrate on strengthening its national capacities to defend its interests
- tackling structural problems
- India's ties to Europe particularly those to France, Greece, and Denmark have grown ever more crucial.
- Engage with Congress, civil society and business

# THE SILVER JUBILEE OF A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

PHILIPP ACKERMAN

The German-Indian strategic partnership that evolved over time and is now better placed than ever to meet future challenges is marking its 25th anniversary. The support for the alliance is intended to build a firm bilateral future through **Germany's 'Focus on India' program**. The German Coalition Agreement, as well as top-level summits of political leaders such as German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Foreign Ministers Johann Wadephul and S. Jaishankar, are some recent important events that reflect the deepening cooperation. **The partnership's four pillars : peace, prosperity, people, and the planet provide a platform for collaboration.**

The foundation of this cooperation is peace and stability to which the two countries adhere as part of a rule-based international system. The Intergovernmental Government Consultations is a novel format, which permits structured dialogue and coordination between the two governments. Defense cooperation has been a prominent aspect in their interaction, which has taken the form of mutual military exercises and an increasing German profile in the Indo-Pacific. Prosperity is more than economics but also ensuring that it creates jobs and opportunities for citizens who want to live in a peaceful and secure international order.

Germany and India both believe strongly in combating climate change and sustainability. **In 2022, Germany committed €10 billion in 10 years of preferential loans and grants to India under the Indo-German Green and Sustainable Development Partnership.** It is working on sectors such as renewable energy, biodiversity, and developing smart cities. There is also increasing private sector engagement, as evident from the joint renewable energy initiatives in Gujarat. Technologies such as solar panels and wind turbines partially manufactured in Germany are assisting India in shifting to cleaner energy. Such efforts point towards the intersection of technological collaboration and mutual environmental objectives.

Long-term cooperation as well as prior achievements form the foundation of the India-German relationship. **Deutsche Bahn and other German firms are actively involved in the development of India's infrastructure, especially with regard to projects like the Delhi-Meerut Rapid Rail. Over 750,000 Indians are employed by about 2,000 German businesses in India.** Given the prospect of a free trade agreement between the European Union and India, the two countries' confidence and potential for even closer trade ties are reflected in their deep economic and technological integration.

The relationship has continued to grow steadily and with greater optimism. Harmonized research, common development objectives, and lively exchanges of persons are creating a future-oriented partnership. The pledge to peace, prosperity, people, and planet is still the call to action as both nations seek to reach new heights during the next 25 years.



### A CULTURAL BRIDGE



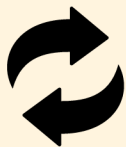
Over 50,000 Indian students are now pursuing studies in Germany



Indians construct their careers and lives in Germany. Contributing to society in a positive way



The German language has increased in popularity in India, opening doors for young Indians.



People and idea exchange is central to this alliance, with initiatives to send more Indian teachers to Germany

These exchanges are considered crucial to fuel the partnership into its second generation, creating strong bilateral relations through education and culture

# THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF AN INDIA-U.S. ENERGY FUTURE

ARUNABHA GHOSH

United States Vice-President J.D. Vance has just emphasized America's **determination to increase cooperation with India in the areas of energy and defence**. These are not new agendas but have become more imperative as a result of the recent happenings in the world. The present time offers a possibility of new cooperation. The Indian energy policy is to provide secure sources, minimize dislocation, and provide sustainability. **Nuclear energy and strategic minerals are now important**. They are most likely to be the pillars of a closer India-U.S. relationship.

Switching to clean energy needs not just electricity, but also critical minerals used in batteries, electronics, and defense systems. **China controls 90% of rare earth processing and regularly interrupts supplies**. To offset the risk, India and America in 2024 signed a deal to work together to build safer supply chains.

There are three big steps to take:

1. Consider minerals crucial to numerous industries, not only mining. This facilitates forward planning and technology sharing.
2. Work together and cooperate with others (like the Quad nations) to invest, explore, and get supply. **Create an India-U.S. Mineral Exchange online and develop blockchain-based traceability**. Build combined mineral stocks to handle global shocks.
3. Need 12-16 years to build mines and processing. India & the U.S. need a 20-year plan with shared goals, information, skilled workforce, and joint innovation under initiatives like iCET.

With growing power demand in India, it needs low-carbon reliable energy to supplement wind and solar power. Nuclear power can go a long way in filling up the gap. India will reach 100 GW of nuclear capacity in 2047 but has only 8 GW today. To meet the target, India must add around 5-6 GW every year from the 2030s.

Three reforms are needed:

1. Reducing nuclear power plant construction from 9 to 6 years. This can be achieved through standardised designs, fast licensing, and skilled workers.
2. Encouraging private investment through clear policies, secure buyers, and returns, especially for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs).
3. **Amendments in the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act** will enable private sector investment. India-U.S. collaborative ventures (such as with Holtec and L&T) are full of potential. India must ensure nuclear safety, dispose of waste, and create strong international partnerships.

The **World Economic Outlook report** (April 2025) forecasts reduced growth in global energy demand. In spite of this, India and the U.S. have the opportunity to use this window of transition to build a more diversified and resilient energy future. **Their strategy should have three critical steps: nuclear reactor deployment timelines, increased private sector engagement, and risk management institutional capacities**. This combined energy plan can offer strategic, technological, and commercial advantages as well as advance common climate and economic objectives.

# WHAT WILL BE IMPACT OF INDIA-U.K. TRADE DEALS

SAPTAPARNO GHOSH

After more than three years of negotiations, India and the United Kingdom have reached a Free Trade Agreement (FTA), which is expected to be signed in three months and implemented over the next year. **Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal** described it as a landmark deal aimed at establishing **equitable and ambitious trade** between the two countries. While the detailed terms are yet to be released, the agreement has been broadly welcomed by Indian industry, though concerns remain in sectors like agriculture and MSMEs.

The FTA is significant, given that the **UK is India's 16th largest trading partner, and India is the UK's 11th**. Their bilateral trade currently stands at around **\$60 billion**, with India maintaining a trade surplus. The Indian government projects that trade will double by 2030. The British government estimates that the FTA will boost bilateral trade by an additional \$34 billion. The agreement also comes against the backdrop of global trade disruptions caused by protectionist policies under U.S. President Donald Trump.

The deal includes substantial tariff reductions. India will remove tariffs on 99% of its export categories, covering key sectors such as textiles, leather, footwear, auto parts, engineering goods, and gems and jewellery. The UK will eliminate tariffs on 90% of its exports, with 85% becoming tariff-free within a decade. Notable tariff cuts include UK alcoholic beverages, which will drop from 150% to 75%, and further to 40% over ten years. Tariffs on UK automobile exports will reduce from over 100% to 10%, though within specific quotas.

In services, **India has secured an exemption from paying social security contributions in the UK for Indian workers and their employers for three years**. This was a major point of contention in earlier negotiations, especially under the previous UK government. The agreement also commits to simplifying visa processes for professionals.

Indian industry has reacted positively. The textile sector expects a major boost in exports, while the automobile industry anticipates mutual benefits from complementary market access. The gems and jewellery sector expects exports to rise by \$2.5 billion over two years.

However, concerns persist. **Farmers worry about a repeat of price crashes seen after earlier FTAs, and MSMEs fear foreign competition in public procurement**. There is also uncertainty over the UK's Carbon Border Adjustment Mechanism (CBAM), which could affect Indian exports. While the FTA offers major opportunities, its success will depend on addressing these sector-specific challenges during implementation.

# A FRAGILE CALM

PRATAP BHANU  
MEHTA

The conflict, which was a result of the terrorist attack at Pahalgam, has brought about fragile peace in a real sense.

Where has Operation Sindoor taken us to?

- It has not degraded Pakistan's military infrastructure enough to deter it.
- **Ground reality is that this war did not compel negotiations, there is a political vacuum.**
- This war showed that India and Pakistan both have limitations when it comes to imposing harm on each other, this is what keeps a fragile peace in South Asia.

Diplomatic Consequences:

- No decisive victory and no clear political end perpetuates India-Pakistan relations.
- India's strategic autonomy has been considerably reduced.
- South Asia has emerged once again as the frontier of a "new cold war" - the China-Pakistan axis, China's missed opportunity to engage with India, India's dependency on the US, India not being in charge of the region.

In context of India and Pakistan:

- If Pakistan is keeping itself together only by anti-India sentiment and instruments of terror, it will sham its own people.
- **India's Biggest Strength - Pakistan cannot exploit communal divisions within India.**

The responsibility remains on Pakistan to commit towards pacification of terrorism. The India-Pakistan problem is not an international relations problem, it is an inner conflict of a civilisation with layers of psychological sediments that have deformed our future. This fragile ceasefire remains hanging between optimism for a better future and inner demons within us.

# CHALLENGE BEYOND PAKISTAN

C RAJA MOHAN

India's recent confrontation with Pakistan and its air strikes against terror camps indicate that New Delhi is ready to make bolder steps in defending its interests. But **India now needs to look beyond Pakistan** and focus on significant global changes that may have a bearing on its lasting peace and prosperity.

One of the major developments is the deepening China-Russia strategic partnership. In mid-May, Chinese President Xi Jinping paid a visit to Moscow and together with Russian President Vladimir Putin marked the 80th anniversary of the Allied' victory in World War II. The two leaders exhibited their "**friendship of steel**" and pledged tighter cooperation in politics, economy, and technology, and **proclaimed their mission to help build a "post-American" international order.** Relations between China, Russia, and the US are still tense, however, Xi and Putin criticised the US for having a policy of "**dual containment.**" Nevertheless, both leaders continue to leave the door open for diplomacy with Washington when it suits them to do so.

At the same time, US President Donald Trump was in the Middle East as he arrived in Saudi Arabia for a summit with leaders from Qatar and the UAE. Trump called upon them not to "underestimate America" and sought to reset US relations with the Arab world. Trump's foreign policy, which has been termed transactional, has shaken traditional US alliances such as NATO, causing many world leaders to be confused.

Trump's Saudi trip was prominently economic and arms deals. **Trump secured \$1 trillion in commercial and arms deals with Saudi Arabia, the UAE pledging \$1.4 trillion in the course of a decade and Qatar committing hundreds of millions.** His interactions were geared towards advancing the "**America First**" agenda via business diplomacy.

Having just returned from Saudi Arabia, Trump went on to visit Israel, where he met with **Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.** They both agreed that Iran posed the greatest risk to the area and underscored the necessity of countering it. Trump sought alignment between Arab states and Israel on countering Iran through economic and security cooperation, though he also kept the door open to engagement with Tehran.

Further, if India keeps thinking about Pakistan alone, it might lose sight of these broader changes in the global balance of power. Present-day alliances depend less on ideology and more on strategic interests, military strength, and economic clout. In order to secure long-term national interest, India has to strategically engage with this new emerging world order led by the likes of Trump, Xi, and Putin.

# PAKISTAN'S INDIA WAR

M.K. NARAYANAN

India's recent military conflict with Pakistan in early May is a part of an old pattern of provocation. Pakistan remains bent on hostility and keeps looking for ways to rile up India and try to undermine it by an **attrition strategy metaphorically trying to drain India by a thousand cuts**. The presence of a secular, democratic, and internationally ascending India is seen as a challenge to Pakistan. While India becomes the fourth-largest economy globally, Pakistan is sliding into internal chaos on the back of a military-dominated worldview that both politicizes and foreign-politicizes it.

Now, Pakistan operates on a virtual military dictatorship. There is symbolic civilian leadership, with actual control lying in the hands of the armed forces. Following the sidelining of Imran Khan, the military tightened its hold, with authorities **openly proclaiming Pakistan an Islamic state, different from secular India**. A Pakistani military commander asserted that **Kashmir is the 'jugular vein'** of Pakistan, indicating deep rooted hostility based on religion, culture, and identity.

**M.K. Narayanan also criticises global double standards**. Even though the West has condemned Russia or Pakistan earlier, it is largely silent over conflicts like the Gaza crisis, exposing a selective and hypocritical global conscience. This double standard is revealed more clearly when contrasting international responses to various geopolitical conflicts.

In the future, future India-Pakistan conflicts will be determined not only by ideology but also by technological warfare. **A critical factor will be escalation dominance**, the capacity to escalate fast and decisively. This covers electronic warfare, cyber capabilities, stealth fighters, and advanced missiles. Both sides are increasing their jamming, detection, and retaliatory precision capabilities, as evidenced by recent air battles.

Peace, in this case, is not just out of reach but also strategically eroded. The great powers of the world, like the **U.S. and China, utilise the prolonged India-Pakistan conflict as an opportunity for strategic arms engagements, regional involvement, and geopolitical gains**. With warfare expanding into such areas as cyberspace and high-altitude air defense, India needs to remain ready, technologically capable, and diplomatically robust. With the threat of all-out war never distant, readiness must be balanced by restraint.

# REVIVING A FAR-SIGHTED BUT FORGOTTEN

## BILL MECHANISM

MEHUL CHHABTA &  
ATHARVA DESHMUKH

Private Members' Bills (PMBs) offer the chance for non-minister MPs to bring forward new legislation into Parliament. **PMBs can be introduced by any party's MPs and are generally debated on Fridays.** In contrast to government bills, PMBs offer individual MPs a chance to raise important matters of their own choice or as representatives of constituents. However, in recent times, this process has not been accorded significance. Several PMBs are suggested but rarely debated or passed. Accordingly, **"PMBs are perhaps the last remaining intervention wherein MPs are not strictly guided by party mandate."**

Notwithstanding the introduction of a large number of PMBs—729 in the 17th Lok Sabha alone, only two in lok sabha and 14 in rajya sabha were discussed. In the 18th Lok Sabha, 20 PMBs were brought but not a single one was discussed. In recent Budget Session 2024, 64 PMBs were introduced but not a single one discussed. This is mainly because of disruptions in Parliament, government business taking time, or the session being curtailed. Some of the most important issues with the treatment of PMBs are:

- **Insufficient time:** Fridays, the only day available for PMBs, tend to be wasted through interruptions.
- **Less priority:** Government bills are given preference, pushing PMBs aside.
- **Party discipline:** MPs have minimal independence because they are expected to adhere to party lines and decisions.

Some PMBs have succeeded despite this. A familiar example is the **Rights of Transgender Persons Bill tabled in 2014 as a PMB**, and subsequently led to the making of the government's 2019 bill on the same matter. Another PMB, called the **Right to Disconnect Bill, addressed the matter of employees being asked to work even outside office hours**, especially considering today's digital age. As per the article, "Although it did not progress beyond the initial stage, the Bill created a worthwhile national debate regarding mental health, work-life balance, and labour rights."

Most MPs believe that they are not as free as they should be in order to bring forward new ideas through PMBs. With party pressure and strict rules, MPs spend more time doing what the party wants rather than the people. Further, the time given to consider PMBs—just a few hours on Friday is wasted anyway. For an improvement, the author suggests some efficient reforms:

- Save the time for PMBs, so it will not be consumed by government affairs.
- Change the rules so that PMBs get a fair chance.
- **Institute a "Ten-Minute Rule" like the UK, where MPs get 10 minutes to discuss their bill.**
- Hear more from the people so that MPs can bring in bills on what the people need.

Affirming the significance of PMBs can make Parliament more responsive and democratic. **Indian Vice President and Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar rightly opined that PMBs are "a significant contributor to the legislative landscape."** These bills, if considered seriously, can bring forth bold, new, and people-friendly reforms in the country.

# THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEPUTY SPEAKER

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The office of the Deputy Speaker of the Lok Sabha has been lying vacant for the last six years, and this is a matter of concern about constitutional convention and democratic resilience. **The office is not just ceremonial, it is essential to provide continuity to parliamentary democracy.** The Deputy Speaker has the responsibility to conduct the business of the House in an efficient manner and to ensure that the people's cause triumphs. The Indian Constitution, by selecting a parliamentary system, seeks to make the government accountable and for good debates between the ruling party and Opposition. The system is dependent upon efficient working of all the offices, such as that of the Deputy Speaker.

But in the recent past, the ruling party has not been proposing a Deputy Speaker, contrary to the traditional practice of allotting it to an Opposition member. The tradition keeps both the ruling and Opposition parties harmonious. Disregarding tradition undermines the checks and balances in a democracy.

Both Speaker and Deputy Speaker are to be chosen **"as soon as possible" in terms of Article 93** of the Indian Constitution. This wording stresses urgency and necessity but does not set a fixed timeline. This vagueness leaves the government room for delay without technically violating the article but contravening the spirit of the Constitution. **The Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in Lok Sabha, 1952, also state that the Deputy Speaker shall be elected on a day to be fixed by the Speaker.**

The Deputy Speaker has the same powers as the Speaker in case of presiding over sessions. In the absence of the Speaker or upon their resignation, the Deputy Speaker steps in. **Article 180 of the Constitution states that the Deputy Speaker is to act on behalf of the Speaker in the event of a vacancy.** A failure to appoint a Deputy Speaker can truncate the process and undermines constitutional balance.

In the 17th Lok Sabha (2019-24), there was no government appointment of a Deputy Speaker, and the signs are that the 18th Lok Sabha may experience the same procrastination. This persistent vacancy is seen as an attempt by the ruling side to avoid giving a chance to the Opposition during the business of the house. Such avoidance not only damages the established tradition but also affects democratic principles and functioning.

By not appointing a Deputy Speaker, the government keeps power in the hands of the ruling coalition, which defeats the intention of Article 93 and Article 180. This could lead to unilateral deliberations and compromised accountability. In times of constitutional crisis or the Speaker's absence, this gap would be all the more dangerous. Disregard for convention in giving the role to the Opposition also damages efforts at maintaining consensus-based rule.

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**AIR-79**



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Vaibhav Sir. I started  
with Rahul Sir

**"bs vhi chahie bs"**



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