



***RAHUL ADDRESSES THE INDIAN
DIASPORA, EMPHASISING KEY VALUES
ESSENTIAL TO INDIAN POLITICS:
LOVE, RESPECT, AND HUMILITY.***



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IOC Monthly Newsletter January 2026

Upholding the Constitution: Congress, Secularism, and Social Justice

Dear Friends,

Gandhiji stated at the Round Table Conference in London that the Congress Party represented the whole of India, unlike other attendees who represented either a group, a caste, or a region. Even today, the single largest party that represents the entire nation is undoubtedly the Indian National Congress.

The Indian National Congress represents all Indians. The Congress Party fought for independence not only within India but also on many fronts abroad, in the United Kingdom, Germany, France, Italy, the United States of America, and several other countries. Our forefathers fought for freedom for all Indians. The freedom that was achieved was unconditional, regardless of caste or religion, colour or social status. It was absolute for all, not merely for a privileged few. Our forefathers and stalwart leaders fought tirelessly to secure and preserve it.

As Gandhi once said, ***"In order to assess the development of a country, the first question to be asked of its minorities is whether they feel safe and secure in that country."*** If this question were to be asked today, I remain sceptical about what the response of Indian minorities would be.

We must also bear in mind that fighting for *'secularism alone, without socialism, will not be sufficient to combat the communalism and narrow nationalism of the BJP'*. The Congress Party has historically been the party of the poor. Its tireless efforts under the call of ***'garibi hatao'*** have had a significant impact on the lives of millions. Members of the Congress Party, along with people of India both at home

and abroad, recognise that the BJP's right-wing economic policies have created deep inequality in income and wealth. This inequality has worsened to levels reminiscent of the eras of monarchy and feudalism of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Alongside this, social divisions have regressed towards the thinking of the **Manusmriti era**.

No member of the Congress Party, in India or abroad, nor any secular Indian, can remain indifferent. It is our social, political, and moral obligation to participate in the struggle to uphold the fundamental principles of the Constitution of India, which affirm that all Indians are equal and that no caste, religion, or political party holds dominance over others.

As Jawaharlal Nehru stated in the Constituent Assembly, ***"Our Constitution guarantees every citizen the right to progress and to feel safe and secure in India."***

As inheritors of a proud political legacy, it is our duty to preserve India's social and political fabric, and to uphold secularism and social justice. We must not fall into the trap of exclusionary nationalism, where an enemy is imagined from within. Like our forefathers who fought for independence, it is the responsibility of all Indians, in India and abroad, to defend secularism and social justice, to cherish them, and to preserve them for future generations, just as they were preserved for us.



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Fascism in Desperation: Violence, Fear, and the Politics of Hate in India, USA, West Bengal and Bangladesh

Partha Banerjee, USA

What we are witnessing today across India is not random violence. It is **organized, ideological, and desperate**.

In recent months—and with alarming acceleration—we have seen a new wave of attacks on **Christians, Muslims, Dalits, women, migrant workers, and linguistic minorities**, including Bengalis, across several Indian states such as Assam, Odisha, Maharashtra, Delhi and Haryana. These assaults are being carried out openly by the RSS ecosystem—BJP cadres, Bajrang Dal, ABVP, and assorted vigilante groups—often with the silent consent, and sometimes active encouragement, of the state.

The pretext is familiar and poisonous: Bengalis are branded as “Bangladeshis,” Muslims as “infiltrators,” Christians as “converters,” Dalits as “undeserving,” and women as targets of social discipline. Kuldeep Sengar, the notorious BJP criminal of Unnao rape and murder is now free on bail, while Sonam Wangchuk and other social activists are rotting in Modi’s jails.

Facts no longer matter. Most of those attacked are Indian citizens, many from **West Bengal**, yet mobs are mobilized through lies repeated endlessly by television studios, WhatsApp chains, and social media factories.

This is **fascism in its naked form** —not confident, not visionary, but fearful.

Desperation, Not Strength

Authoritarian movements do not escalate violence when they are winning. They do so when **ordinary people stop believing their promises**.

In India, the BJP’s economic record has collapsed under its own weight: mass unemployment, shrinking purchasing power, rural distress, crony capitalism especially the Adani-Ambani variety, and the spectacular enrichment of a tiny elite. The politics of hatred has failed to put food on the table. So hatred is intensified.

The same pattern is visible in the United States. Trump-style ICE raids on immigrants—often dictated by race, accent, or skin color—are not about border security. They are about **manufacturing fear** when economic and

political credibility has evaporated. Fascism, whether Hindu or white nationalist, follows the same script.

Across borders, desperation looks the same.

Bangladesh: A Familiar Mirror

Disturbingly, a parallel drama is unfolding in Bangladesh. Jamaat-e-Islami and its allies—ideological cousins of the RSS—are attempting to tear apart a society historically known for Hindu-Muslim coexistence. Their violence is not organic; it is imported, rehearsed, and politically motivated.

This cross-border symmetry should alarm us. Fascism today is **networked**, learning from one another, feeding on chaos, and exploiting fear.

West Bengal: The Central Obstacle to RSS Fascism

This is why **West Bengal stands at the center of the current political storm**.

The BJP-RSS combine knows one hard truth: their communal experiments have **failed in Bengal**. Despite relentless propaganda, Bengal remains secular, culturally plural, politically conscious, and deeply resistant to majoritarian hysteria and politics of hate.

Under Mamata Banerjee’s leadership, large sections of the poor—women, minorities, informal workers, rural families—have experienced **tangible improvements** in daily life: food security, healthcare access, women-centric welfare, education, and social dignity. This is not ideology; it is lived reality.

That is precisely why Mamata Banerjee today commands near-reverential trust among downtrodden communities. Not as symbolism—but as protection.

And that is why the BJP-RSS is panicking.

SIR: Terror by Bureaucracy

Unable to win Bengal politically, the BJP has turned to **administrative terror**.

The so-called Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise has unleashed fear at a mass scale—threatening citizenship, erasing voters, and

pushing vulnerable people into extreme anxiety. Reports of deaths and suicides linked to fear, stress, and harassment are not isolated incidents. They are **structural violence**, carried out without firing a single bullet.

This is governance as intimidation.

Amit Shah, Narendra Modi, and the entire BJP machinery must be held politically and morally responsible for this climate of fear.

A Warning to the Opposition

This moment also demands honesty within the opposition.

The Congress must seriously reassess its long-standing tactical alignment with the CPM in Bengal. That alliance has neither strengthened Congress nor stopped the BJP. In fact, it has often **fragmented the anti-fascist vote**, confused grassroots workers, and weakened resistance where unity was essential.

Even more concerning are credible indications that sections of the so-called Left and the BJP share a quiet convergence in their hostility toward the Trinamool Congress—despite claiming to be ideological opposites. This is not opposition politics; it is opportunism.

The Only Moral Priority

The priority before the Congress—and all democratic forces—is **singular and urgent**: defeat BJP-RSS fascism with an unambiguous mandate. That requires maturity, humility, and strategic clarity.

In West Bengal, this means recognizing political reality and exploring principled cooperation with Mamata Banerjee and the TMC—not for personal gain, but to safeguard secularism, democracy, and social peace.

History will not judge intentions. It will judge outcomes.

At a time when fascists in India, the United States, and Bangladesh are resorting to violence because people no longer believe them, **unity among democratic forces is not optional—it is existential**.

The choice before us is stark: fragmented egos or collective survival.

The Indian Overseas Congress must speak clearly, act courageously, and stand on the right side of history.

Dr.ParthaBanerjee, NewYork, USA
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Rahul Addresses the Indian Diaspora, Emphasising Key Values Essential to Indian Politics: Love, Respect, and Humility

IOC DESK

The **Indian Overseas Congress (IOC)** takes immense pride in reflecting on the recent international engagements of **our beloved leader, Rahul Gandhi**, whose interactions with the Indian diaspora during **December 2025 and January 2026** once again reaffirmed the timeless values that define the soul of Indian politics: **love, respect, and humility**.

At a time when politics across the world is increasingly marked by aggression, exclusion, and arrogance, Rahul Gandhi's conduct, words, and approach stand in sharp contrast. His overseas engagements were not mere visits or formalities; they were moments of connection, reassurance, and moral clarity for Indians living abroad who continue to care deeply about the future of their motherland.

Reaching Out to the Global Indian Family

During his visit to **Germany from 15 to 20 December 2025**, our beloved leader met members of the Indian diaspora, including office-bearers and volunteers of the Indian Overseas Congress. The interactions, particularly at the IOC-organised gathering in **Berlin**, were deeply meaningful and reflective of the Congress party's historic bond with overseas Indians.

Addressing the diaspora, Rahul Gandhi spoke with characteristic warmth and humility about the need to restore compassion and dignity to public life in India. He reminded the audience that politics, at its core, must be an instrument of service, not domination. Love for fellow citizens, respect for diversity, and humility in leadership, he emphasised, are not abstract ideals but essential pillars of a healthy democracy.

Drawing inspiration from India's freedom struggle and the values upheld by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, he reiterated that the Indian National Congress has always stood for unity in diversity. He reminded overseas Indians that the Congress party's nationalism is inclusive, constitutional, and rooted in empathy for the weakest sections of society.

Timeline of the Tour

15–20 December 2025 | Germany

- Arrival in Germany for a multi-day visit combining diaspora outreach and political meetings.
- Engagements with senior German political figures on climate change, manufacturing, and bilateral cooperation.
- Interaction with Indian diaspora members, including leaders of the Indian Overseas Congress.

17 December 2025 | Berlin

- Address to the Indian diaspora at an IOC-hosted programme titled Connecting Cultures.
- Internal discussions with IOC leadership on global organisational plans for 2026–27, including proposed events in the UK and the United States.

Early January 2026 | Vietnam

- Publicly visible but informal appearance at Hanoi airport, captured in a viral interaction with an Indian vlogger.
- No confirmed political meetings or organised diaspora programmes during this leg.

Engaging the World with Confidence and Grace

Alongside his diaspora interactions, Rahul Gandhi held discussions with senior German political leaders and policymakers. These meetings focused on pressing global and national concerns, including climate change, sustainable development, and the challenges facing employment and manufacturing.



Through these engagements, our beloved leader demonstrated that India's opposition can engage the world with confidence, depth, and dignity. His approach reflected the Congress

party's long-standing tradition of principled international dialogue, where cooperation is built on mutual respect rather than confrontation.

Strengthening the Indian Overseas Congress

Rahul Gandhi's interactions with IOC leaders during the Germany visit provided renewed direction and motivation to the organisation. Discussions focused on strengthening coordination across countries and preparing a roadmap for IOC activities in 2026-27, particularly in Europe and North America.

He acknowledged the invaluable role played by overseas Indians in safeguarding India's pluralistic image and encouraged the diaspora to remain actively engaged in defending constitutional values. His accessibility, patience, and genuine interest in listening to diverse viewpoints left a lasting impression on all those who met him.

Meetings with German Political Leaders

During the Germany visit, Gandhi met senior members of the German political establishment, including former Chancellor **Olaf Scholz** and Environment Minister **Carsten Schneider**, where discussions reportedly covered:

- Climate change cooperation
- Decline in manufacturing and employment concerns
- Sustainable economic models

These meetings positioned Gandhi as an opposition leader engaging internationally on **policy-oriented** themes, rather than purely partisan outreach.

Vietnam

A brief airport interaction during the Vietnam leg of the tour; where Gandhi complimented an Indian content creator's hat, went viral on social media.

Impact on the Congress and the Indian Overseas Congress

For the **Indian National Congress**, the Germany visit had tangible organisational outcomes:

- Strengthening coordination with the Indian Overseas Congress
- Early planning for major diaspora-facing programmes in Europe and North America
- Reinforcing Congress's claim of being a pan-Indian party with global resonance

IOC leaders publicly framed the visit as preparatory groundwork rather than a mass mobilisation exercise, aligning with the Congress's longer-term international strategy.

Leadership Rooted in Simplicity

In **early January 2026**, a brief and informal interaction involving Rahul Gandhi at an airport

in **Vietnam** caught public attention. Though unplanned and outside any official programme, the moment symbolised what millions of Indians recognise in him: a leader who remains grounded, approachable, and respectful, regardless of circumstance.

Such moments, small yet powerful, reflect a style of leadership anchored in humility rather than spectacle, and connection rather than command.

A Values-Based Vision for India

For the Indian Overseas Congress, Rahul Gandhi's recent international engagements reaffirm a larger political vision. At a time when fear and division are being normalised, his consistent emphasis on **love as a political force, respect as a democratic obligation, and humility as a leadership virtue** offers hope to Indians everywhere.

Our beloved leader's message resonates strongly with overseas Indians who believe in an India that belongs to all its people, irrespective of caste, religion, language, or region. His words and actions remind us that the true strength of the nation lies not in silencing differences, but in embracing them with confidence and compassion.

Looking Forward with Resolve

As the Indian Overseas Congress enters 2026 with renewed purpose, Rahul Gandhi's engagements abroad serve as a source of inspiration and moral guidance. They reaffirm that the Indian National Congress remains steadfast in its commitment to secularism, social justice, and constitutional democracy.

Under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi, the Congress party continues to articulate a vision of India that is inclusive, humane, and forward-looking. For Indians across the world, this vision is not only reassuring, but also essential. The Indian Overseas Congress remains proud to stand with our beloved leader as he carries forward the legacy of a politics rooted in love, respect, and humility.



Navigating life in the UK: Challenges and Opportunities for Indian Nurses and the role of Indian Overseas Congress

Eldho Joy, UK

Indian nurses constitute the foundation of the UK's healthcare system, especially within the NHS and private care sectors. Renowned for their expertise, compassion and resilience, thousands of Indian nurses have established the United Kingdom as their second home. According to the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC UK), 67,500 nurses who are trained in India are on their current register and a majority of Indian nurses are from Kerala because of its established nursing education institutions and other social factors. Their contribution became especially visible during the COVID-19 pandemic, where many served on the front lines at tremendous personal risk. The life in the UK presents considerable prospects, although it also entails distinct problems that needs attention, comprehension and collaborative assistance. Despite their critical role, Indian nurses continue to face challenges that demand urgent attention and collective advocacy.

Moving from India to the UK means getting used to a new healthcare system, work culture, and professional standards. Adapting to a new culture by acknowledging the differences in treatment methods, documentation, communication styles and patient expectations might be overwhelming at first. Immigration rules, sponsorship requirements, visa renewal procedures, and family reunification are still major problems. Uncertainty about visa rules often causes stress and financial problems, especially for nurses who support families both in the UK and their home countries. Too much reliance on employer linked sponsorship makes it easy for nurses to lose their jobs, be taken advantage of, or be compelled to relocate. Frequent changes to immigration regulations, high visa renewal costs and limits on dependents all add to the stress of healthcare workers who already have demanding jobs. Long shifts, staff shortages and too many patients could all lead to burnout. For many Indian nurses, not having enough support from family and friends makes their mental health problems worse. This makes wellbeing a top priority that needs open conversation and institutional assistance. Some nurses have trouble getting recognised for their work or moving up in their careers, even when they have strong qualifications and experience. Access to leadership roles, specialised training, and fair evaluations still has to be improved.

Despite the above challenges, the UK healthcare system provides structured career growth, opportunities for specialisation and for continuous professional development for our nurses.

With appropriate assistance, Indian nurses can progress to advanced practice, administration, education, and research positions. Stable employment, competitive salaries, and access to public services are essential for numerous families. The UK is an excellent location for residence, as it allows for the inclusion of dependents and the opportunity to establish a future. Engaging in a multicultural environment enhances clinical experience, communication skills, leadership competencies which are globally esteemed attributes. Indian nurses have established robust community networks in the UK that facilitate cultural, emotional, and supportive connections among individuals at times of need. Numerous Malayalee associations across the UK, different units of Indian Overseas Congress and other community associations are great examples of our community strength.

The Role of Indian Overseas Congress (UK)

As Mahatma Gandhi fondly said "The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others". The Indian Overseas Congress UK is dedicated to promote the welfare of Indian nurses and other professionals by addressing issues related to immigration, workplace equity, and overall wellbeing. We could facilitate awareness sessions on legal rights, mental health, and career progression. Nurses and carers are community builders and to address their challenges, a strong collaboration between organisations, employers, and community platforms like IOC is required. By fostering community involvement and collective advocacy, IOC could serve as an intermediary between legislators, employers like the NHS and the Indian diaspora. We can help Indian nurses not only survive but also thrive in the UK by standing together, exchanging experiences and supporting each other.

We honour their services and their efforts to make our community stronger. Nurses and care workers deserve more than thanks and claps., they demand fair treatment and a safe future for their family. We, as an organisation and as people who are involved in public life in the UK, need to speak up to ensure that those who care for the country are also cared for. Advocating today will help to make the healthcare system stronger and fairer for the future.

Eldho Joy
Central Committee member, IOC UK Northern Ireland Chapter

Eldo Joy is a registered nurse in the UK since 2013 and currently working as a Regional Support Manager for Care Homes in a Healthcare company based in Belfast, Northern Ireland.



Congress @ 141: The Enduring Idea of India. The Party That Gave India Its Democratic Soul

Romy Kuriakose, UK

At 141 years, the Indian National Congress is not just celebrating its long history; it is reaffirming an idea that shaped India's national identity. The Congress represents India's democratic spirit: inclusive, diverse, forward-thinking, and grounded in constitutional values. No other political group has influenced India's path as profoundly or widely.

Before India became a nation, the Congress turned India into a political community. It introduced democratic practices to a colonized society. This transformation changed subjects into citizens and resistance into a shared goal. The Congress did not inherit democracy; it created the environment for it to flourish.

From Freedom to the Republic: Continuity of Leadership

The Indian freedom struggle was not about sporadic leadership; it was about institutional leadership from the Congress. The smooth transition from freedom fighters to nation builders made sure that independence did not lead to chaos. Instead, India emerged as a united, democratic republic, confident and based on a strong constitution.

The Congress gave India a constitution that reflects its cultural heritage and modern dreams. Liberty, equality, secularism, social justice, and fraternity were not just ideals; they became enforceable rights and guiding principles of governance. This constitutional vision continues to be the strongest safeguard for India's unity and diversity.

Builder of Institutions, Defender of Democracy

Modern India's institutions are established and fortified by the Congress. Parliamentary democracy, judicial independence, federal balance, and independent constitutional bodies were deliberately nurtured to prevent power concentration and ensure accountability.

The Congress also laid the groundwork for India's scientific and educational revival. By investing in public institutions, research, higher education, and planned development, it ensured that national progress is based on reason, innovation, and self-reliance. This was not just governance; it was nation-building with foresight.

Social Justice as a Political Commitment

The Congress's politics have always focused on justice, inclusion, and empowerment. It recognized early that political freedom can't exist without social and economic justice. Its ideology opposes exclusion and hierarchy, promoting dignity and opportunities for every Indian. By expanding access to education, jobs, welfare, and

political representation, the Congress incorporated compassion into governance. Its vision of India celebrates diversity, protects minorities, and places the most vulnerable citizens at the centre of public policy.

The Congress Idea: Relevance beyond Power

Power has never been the only measure of the Congress's importance. Even outside of government, the Congress has remained the main defender of constitutional values and democratic freedoms. It has consistently advocated for civil liberties, institutional balance, and citizens' rights—especially when democracy requires watchfulness.

The Congress's ideological strength comes from its ability to think beyond election cycles. Its focus on dialogue instead of dominance, unity over division, and reform rather than reaction continues to provide India with a stable and progressive political choice.

A Living, Evolving Organization

The Congress has always been dynamic. Its history shows adaptation without losing its core values. From its elite beginnings to a mass movement, from independence to governance, and now to renewal, the Congress evolves because India evolves.

Today's organizational strengthening and grassroots engagement reflects this living legacy. The Congress stays connected to the people, listening, learning, and preparing to lead with renewed energy and purpose.

Congress at 141: The Future of the Indian Idea

At 141, the Congress does not dwell on the past; it looks ahead with a sense of duty. It is committed to defending India's democratic framework, promoting social justice, strengthening institutions, and preserving national unity.

The Indian National Congress is not just a political party of the past. It is the guardian of India's constitutional conscience and the bearer of its progressive future. As long as democracy, diversity, and justice define India, the Congress will remain central to its journey.

Romy Kuriakose



THE FIRST INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS, 1885.

RSS is promoting fascism, racial supremacy, and manuwad in India.

Rajiv Sharma, India

After India attained independence in 1947, the constitution-makers were unanimous in their view that the newly born country would become a Democratic Republic. Thereafter, successive governments nurtured the institutions of democracy, which continued to thrive and grow until recently. But despite their virtues for the people, liberal democracies can still be fragile, as the world has witnessed on many occasions. In many countries that became independent in the 20th century, the liberal democratic polity has found ways and means to self-destruct. Gullible voters sometimes elect a leader who initially masquerades as a democrat but later destroys the very institution that elected him.

2014 was one such year for India, when the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP) won the election, and a former pracharak of Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) was elected prime minister by raising emotive issues, including the construction of a grand Hindu temple. Since then, the country has been experiencing potent and potentially fatal attacks on its democracy and the values enshrined in its constitution, at the behest of the RSS, which was founded a hundred years ago on the fascist ideas of ultranationalism, dictatorship, one-party rule, and the Nazi doctrine of racial purity.

The irony is stark: the democracy has itself catapulted such a dispensation to the helm, whose ideology is at loggerheads with the very liberal democratic polity that brought it to power.

A lot has already been said about the RSS mentor B.S. Moonje, founder Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, second head Madhav Sadashivrao Golwarkar, and their love for fascism and nazism, their antipathy for the national flag and the constitution of India. They all loathed the idea of a secular, democratic and inclusive India being established after independence.

Inspired by the 'blood and soil' idea of fascism, RSS ideologue V.D. Savarkar wrote in 1923 that non-Hindus, especially the Muslims and the Christians, can not be a part of a Hindu Rashtra. In 1939, M.S. Golwalkar, an RSS chief for 33 years, endorsed Nazi racial purity laws as a model for dealing with the minorities in India.

Ideologically, the RSS also considers the Manusmriti as a foundational text of Hindu social order, which endorses caste and gender based bias and discrimination. All its top leaders, right from Hedgewar to present-day chief Mohan Bhagwat, have praised Manusmriti and want it to replace the Constitution of India.

The Manusmriti provides that those who are born in the so-called lower castes remain in servitude throughout their lives. They have no right to property or wealth and no chance of any upward mobility in the social order. It also provides different punishments for the same

crime, depending on a person's social status. Similarly, a woman has no personal independence, no right to ancestral property, and is barred from studying Vedic texts.

However, it must be said that, over the last few years, the RSS has toned down its public rhetoric on the Manusmriti due to political compulsions, but its commitment to impose it on India remains intact. Nevertheless, it is still a matter of grave concern that under the influence of the RSS, its political wing, the ruling BJP, still swears by the archaic ideas of the Manusmriti and nurtures the dream to impose it on the country, one day.

Needless to say, a perceptible change has taken place after the 2014 election victory. Many hardcore zealots of the RSS have begun to believe that the time has come to act decisively. Their initial inhibition to discuss their fascist agenda and love for archaic laws of Manusmriti is blowing away. The veil of secrecy that used to camouflage their agenda is slowly falling apart.

Just six months after the Modi government took oath for the first time, Rajeshwar Singh, a leader of the RSS, openly declared that their target was to make India a Hindu Rashtra by 2021, where the Muslims and Christians would not have any right to stayso they would either be converted to Hinduism or forced to run away from here. He further stated, "I will ensure that India is freed of Muslims and Christians by December 2021". The statement constituted a criminal offence under the laws of India, but no action was taken. On the contrary, Rajeshwar Singh was promoted in the RSS hierarchy. While reacting to the above said statement, Champat Singh, a General Secretary of Vishva Hindu Parishad, a front organisation of the RSS, praised Rajeshwar Singh and said that it was the right time to fulfil the agenda of the RSS. He also interpreted the Prime Minister's silence on this issue as approval.

Over the last 11 years, the Modi government has sought to implement an exclusive right-wing Hindutva agenda. As a result, minorities are increasingly persecuted, with public lynchings, especially of Muslims, becoming not uncommon. Atrocities against oppressed classes within Hindu society and against women are also increasing alarmingly. The Central Election Commission has lost its credibility in the eyes of the people, and grave doubts about the independence of other constitutional bodies, including the Supreme Court, are being raised in many quarters. The powers of law-enforcement agencies are grossly abused. All this has ominous portents for a democratic and secular Republic of India.

Rajiv Sharma
Advocate, Punjab and Haryana High Court,
Chandigarh, India

The Last Defence Of The Republic.

Why a Left Fellow Traveller Now Stands With the Congress?

K. A. Shaji

There arrives, in every honest political journey, a moment when the past ceases to behave like a place safely behind us and instead becomes a presence beside us, whispering questions we once silenced, demanding an accounting of who we became and why. It is not nostalgia; it is an uninvited illumination. And for me, that illumination descended gradually, like a long dusk thickening into night, as I realised that the forces which once promised vigilance over India's democracy had become the very engines of its erosion, and that the only national formation still standing between the republic and its undoing was the Indian National Congress — the same party that the young versions of ourselves treated with contempt, suspicion, and reckless ignorance.

I was born into a farming household where Congress was woven quietly into the everyday air. It was not a doctrine but a comfort, a humble belief that democracy did not belong exclusively to the powerful, a feeling that the nation would not entirely abandon those with nothing except their dignity, their labour, and the thin shade of a constitutional promise. In our home, Congress was not spoken of with ideological fervour, yet its presence was steady as an old tree — providing shade without demanding worship.

But youth, with its stubborn certainties, rarely recognises quiet strength. And so, as I stepped into adulthood, I moved away from these ancestral inheritances with the zeal of someone searching for purity in a world filled with compromise. I was drawn irresistibly to the sharp-edged allure of the Left. To be young in that era was to imagine that revolution flowed in our veins, that insurgent politics alone could cleanse society of its stains, and that the Congress — with its older rhythms — represented the very compromises we wished to transcend.

My imagination was fed by the great international scripts of rebellion. The Soviet Union appeared to us not as a flawed regime but as a monumental alternative civilisation carved out of human aspiration. Cuba stood defiantly against imperial arrogance, tiny yet unbending. The faces of Che and Castro, framed in windblown hair and righteous conviction, became our private deities of courage. We memorised their words the way children memorise lullabies. Even the grim histories of Stalin's purges and Mao's catastrophes barely made a dent in our faith, because we had already decided that democracy was too slow for justice, too fragile for revolution, too willing to negotiate with inequality.

In India, our ideological heroes were equally monumental. A.K. Gopalan, whose compassion seemed to radiate warmth; EMS, whose intellectual precision frightened even his

admirers; P. Sundarayya, whose revolutionary memories throbbed with the spirit of the Telangana peasants; Gouri Amma, who carried the moral authority of generations of women denied their place in history; and Nayanar and Basava Punnaiah, who could speak to the poor as equals because they lived among them, not above them. For me, these leaders shaped a moral universe so powerful that I did not imagine another existed.

But time, with its rusted truthfulness, reveals what ideology conceals. Slowly, I watched the Left lose its central moral compass. The humility that once defined its leaders vanished. Debate shrank into doctrinal policing. Self-criticism, once a discipline, became a memory. Factional loyalties replaced ideological commitments. And in Kerala, the CPI(M) turned into a tight, impenetrable structure under Pinarayi Vijayan — a structure that demanded obedience instead of thought, that extinguished dissent instead of engaging it, that hid authoritarian tendencies behind technocratic efficiency, and that struck deals with capital even as it repeated the old revolutionary phrases. The party's decline was not merely organisational; it was spiritual.

Through this disillusionment, I found myself returning, cautiously and then with astonishment, to a truth I had rejected all my life: the Indian Left, despite its intelligence and its sincerity, had fundamentally misunderstood the Congress. It had treated Congress as a bourgeois roadblock rather than as the scaffolding that held the country together. It believed that weakening the Congress was a step toward social and economic justice, not understanding that in India's delicate and divided social fabric, weakening the Congress was a step toward vacuum — and that vacuum would one day be filled by the RSS.

To understand the depth of this misreading, one must revisit the Emergency of 1975 — not as a sterile historical episode but as a moment when the contradictions within the Left stood starkly exposed. The CPI's support for Indira Gandhi during the Emergency did not originate

in opportunism alone. It grew out of a long-standing theoretical belief that her government represented a progressive national bourgeoisie capable of implementing left-leaning reforms. After bank nationalisation and the abolition of the privy purses, the CPI concluded that Indira Gandhi was moving the nation toward socialist policies. When the Emergency was declared, they believed it was a necessary shield against fascist forces represented by the RSS and Jana Sangh. In their earnest fear of fascism, they defended the indefensible. They justified censorship as temporary discipline. They rationalised preventive detention as corrective medicine. They believed that authoritarianism,

when exercised by a regime seen as progressive, could pave the way for structural reform. They forgot that power, once granted absolute authority, seldom returns willingly to its restraints.

The CPI(M), which opposed the Emergency, still failed to recognise the historical role of the Congress in maintaining the democratic centre. They viewed the party through the narrow lens of class, dismissing its larger, nation-building function. Their refusal to see Congress as an ally in protecting the republic created fissures within the secular space that the RSS quietly and strategically exploited. Thus, even in opposition, the Left missed the long arc of consequences.

In the midst of this confusion, the one voice that stands luminous even today is that of P. Sundarayya. His resignation in 1975 was not an act of protest alone; it was a moral intervention. He foresaw the danger of collaborating — even symbolically — with organisations connected to the RSS. He warned that granting legitimacy to communal forces in any political context would one day erode the moral foundation of democracy itself. His clarity was astonishing; his warnings prophetic. And yet his party ignored him. His insights were dismissed as doctrinal rigidity. His resignation was treated as an uncomfortable footnote. Today, in a moment when communal authoritarianism has achieved a scale and sophistication unimaginable in his time, Sundarayya's warnings ring with an almost unbearable relevance.

As a journalist, my disillusionment with the Left converged with my discovery of India's lived realities. I travelled across coastal settlements shattered by cyclones, through villages where wells had run dry and hope even more so, through Dalit colonies where humiliation was a daily ritual, through Adivasi hamlets where the forest had been taken but the memory of land still lived in their eyes. And everywhere I went, I heard stories that unsettled my old frameworks.

I met people who spoke not of ideology but of the Congress-era public institutions that once stood like fragile bridges between the state and the citizen: the local primary school, the rural health centre, the irrigation canal, the agricultural credit society, the scientific research institute, the public housing scheme, the literacy mission, the midday meal, the stable political culture. These were not perfect institutions. They were old, brittle, uneven. But they were rooted in a national imagination that believed governance meant inclusion, not extraction.

Slowly, I began to see what ideological arrogance had obscured: **Congress built the emotional infrastructure of Indian democracy.** It gave people a vocabulary of belonging. It made the state accessible, even if flawed. It believed that the republic had to be inclusive not out of charity but out of necessity. It understood that in a civilisation as vast, divided, and contradictory as India's, stability required generosity.

Congress made mistakes. It failed many. It erred

often. The Emergency remains a wound on its conscience. But it also possessed a rare capacity for correction. It allowed itself to be judged by the electorate. It accepted defeat. It did not seek to imprison its opponents as routine political strategy. It did not transform the media into a megaphone of obedience. It did not elevate hatred into a governance model. The Emergency ended because Congress submitted itself to democracy. Today, this humility is unthinkable among those in power.

We now live in a time more treacherous than 1975 because authoritarianism today does not announce itself. It arrives quietly, like a slow fever. It erodes institutions without destroying them, hollowing them from within. It replaces debate with monologue. It replaces citizenship with loyalty. It replaces dissent with surveillance. It replaces fraternity with suspicion. It replaces plurality with uniformity. It wears the mask of democracy while draining its soul.

And in this perilous moment, only one national formation retains the historical gravitas, organisational continuity, emotional memory, and constitutional loyalty required to resist the Hindu Rashtra project: the Indian National Congress.

In Karnataka, the Congress government has revived the language of justice through carefully crafted welfare schemes rooted in dignity, not tokenism. In Telangana, it is attempting to break a decade-long concentration of political and economic power. In Tamil Nadu, its enduring partnership with the DMK demonstrates that secular federalism still has the power to challenge cultural homogenisation. Across the country, it remains the only political body with the instinct to defend dissent, protect minorities, and maintain the ethical distance between religion and state.

And at the heart of this rejuvenated Congress stands Rahul Gandhi — a leader mocked, ridiculed, caricatured with an intensity that reveals more about his critics than about him. He is mocked because he refuses to descend into the vulgarity of hate. He is dismissed because he insists on telling the truth in a time allergic to honesty. He is attacked because he does not play the game of cynicism. His Bharat Jodo Yatra was an act of moral courage, a walking meditation across a country falling apart. It stitched together fragments of a fractured nation, not through fiery speeches but through presence — a leader walking beside the people rather than above them.

When I watched him walking with fishermen whose boats have been battered by storms and unregulated corporate aggression, with Adivasi women whose forests have been stolen, with students who feel alienated from their own future, with workers who live one accident away from destitution, I felt a stirring that had been dormant for years: the recognition that politics, at its best, is an act of care.

This is why I say, with conviction shaped by

experience rather than ideology, that the Congress is indispensable to India's democratic future. If the Congress falls, dissent will suffocate. If the Congress weakens, minorities will stand exposed. If the Congress disappears, India will lose its last nationwide force capable of resisting authoritarian aggression. If the Congress breaks, the republic breaks with it.

The Left, if it is to remain relevant, must let go of its old pride. It must recognise that the battle today is not between two visions of socialism but between democracy and its annihilation. It must understand that weakening the Congress now is not an ideological act but a historical mistake.

I once believed revolution would save India. Today I know that only democracy can save the possibility of revolution.

And for democracy to survive, the Congress must stand firm — as the keeper of India's pluralism, as the defender of dissent, as the custodian of constitutional morality, as the last bridge across a river that grows more violent each day.

Because the fall of the Congress will not be the fall of a party.
It will be the fall of the republic.

To weaken it is to weaken India.

To abandon it is to abandon the idea of India as a home for every faith, every caste, every language, every fragile dream.

And in this darkening moment, when the republic trembles, the Indian National Congress remains our last defence — the last guardian of plurality, the last sanctuary of the Constitution, the last thread holding together a country that deserves more than fear, more than hatred, more than silence.

K. A. Shaji

K. A. Shaji is a senior journalist from Kerala whose work explores democracy, marginalised communities, rural distress, and the ecological fragility of India's coasts and forests. A longtime Left fellow traveller shaped by decades of grassroots reporting, he now writes with compelling urgency about the threats facing India's pluralistic, constitutional republic. His work appears across national and international platforms committed to justice, dignity, and truth



New Digital Forms of Government

Mark Reader and Ray Galvin

The contemporary landscape is defined by persistent wars, entrenched criminality and conflicts that resist resolution. Governments, once regarded as the sole custodians of order, now share the stage with a diverse cast of actors: princes, magnates, corporations and increasingly with algorithmic systems. Authority itself has become tradable, exchanged through influence and contracts, and mediated by artificial intelligence and vast data streams. Yet we argue that amid this turbulence lies potential for progress. Incremental change enhanced by novel forms of intervention carefully but decisively applied, may recalibrate the balance between freedom, legitimacy and the incentives that shape behaviour.

Government and legitimacy

States remain the principal agents of power but face challenges from extreme wealth, burgeoning AI and digitally fostered extreme right and other ideologies.

States' legitimacy derives from shared norms and the belief government and its institutions act in the collective interest. When legitimacy falters, efficacy diminishes. Citizens resist, the super-wealthy extend their influence and power, industries circumvent limits and impositions, crime proliferates. The social norms that support and legitimise government are fragile yet indispensable, determining whether the state can rule and whether laws are obeyed voluntarily or only under compulsion.

Economics: Freedom, Payments and Deficits

Economics is an arena where liberty and regulation intersect. Individuals are notionally free to buy, sell and move goods and services. Governments issue debt, partly to provide a safe haven for private liquid wealth, partly to invest in necessary public infrastructure and services that bring a future return, and partly to finance their profligacy. As the latter grows it corrodes government legitimacy and hands power to the financial markets. It needs to stop.

Data and Media: Omni-Data, Errors and Exploitation

In the digital era, data is omnipresent, and data streams influence ever greater areas of ordinary life, work and social structure. Within these flows operate exploiters, manipulating systems for gain, laundering and pilfering money or spreading disinformation.

Media channels amplify these dynamics, and the boundary between information and manipulation grows ever thinner. Governments must take this forcefully and definitively in hand.

Incremental Change and Continuous Pressure

Transformation seldom arrives through revolution. More often it is the product of steady, cumulative pressure. Incremental reforms, drip by drip, reshape institutions. Governments must recognise this and act in some spheres, in small, cumulative steps, and always persistently.. Each update curbs illegitimate encroachments from rogue actors and alters how citizens engage with government, economy and media.

Balancing Freedom and Power

At the core lies a tension: the equilibrium between individual liberty and acceptance of authority. Governments must encourage compliance without eroding autonomy.

The balance is delicate but governments must act decisively for the social good. Excessive freedom without trust fosters criminality; excessive coercion undermines legitimacy. Incentives must be calibrated to nudge behaviour towards cooperation while respecting individuality.

Conclusion: Scope for Advancement

The world of wars, crime and enduring conflict is not immutable. Governance beyond the state, artificial intelligence and omni-data streams offer tools for progress. The path forward lies in incremental change, in the careful application of continuous pressure towards justice, welfare and legitimacy.

Industry will adapt, penalties will evolve, economics will continue to mediate liberty and regulation. Data and media will expand, errors will persist, exploiters will remain. Yet within this complexity lies opportunity: the chance to construct changes to systems that balance freedom with responsibility, legitimacy with efficacy and incentives with morality.

The narrative of governance in the twenty-first century is not one of perfection but of persistence. It is the story of societies striving, drip by drip, towards a future where authority is legitimate, liberty respected and data harnessed for the common good.

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A Leader Beyond the Politics

Dr. Bishnu Nand Yadav, Taiwan



“Many leaders and actors have visited the village. They clicked photos and left after a brief conversation. But Rahul Gandhi is the first leader who neither posed for pictures nor delivered speeches—he quietly got a house constructed for us”: Bhagirath Manjhi son of Dashrath Manjhi

Dashrath Manjhi was born on 14 January 1934 in the tiny village Gehlaur, Gaya, Bihar. As a young boy, he ran away from home and worked in the coal mines of Dhanbad, returning years later to his village, where he married Phaguni Devi. Gehlaur was a small, remote village with few resources, lying in a plain but bordered on the south by the steep Rajgir Hills. These hills had long blocked easy access to nearby towns, leaving the villagers isolated. After returning, Manjhi worked as an agricultural laborer. But in 1959, tragedy struck: his wife Falguni Devi fell while crossing the hill, suffering fatal injuries. The nearest doctor was 70 kilometers away, and by the time she could have received help, it was too late. Heartbroken and furious at the helplessness caused by the hills, Manjhi vowed that no one else in his village should face such suffering. He decided to carve a road through the ridge so Gehlaur could have easier access to medical care and the outside world. Armed with only a hammer and chisel, Manjhi began his monumental task.

For 22 years, he chipped away at the rocky ridge, driven by love and determination. Slowly but surely, he carved a path 110 meters long, 9.1 meters wide, and 7.7 meters deep. His relentless effort shortened the journey between the Atri and Wazirganj blocks of Gaya from 55 kilometers to just 15 kilometers. Dashrath Manjhi completed this extraordinary feat single-

handedly, not for fame or fortune, but to connect his remote village to the rest of the world and spare others the suffering his wife endured.

His road became a lasting symbol of devotion, determination, and the power of one man's will to change the lives of many. Despite his immense efforts for the betterment of society, neither the people nor the government recognized Dashrath Manjhi, and he continued to live in poverty, without a proper home or financial security.

In June 2025, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi visited Dashrath Manjhi's family in Gaya. He spent some time in their mud house, sharing a meal and coconut water with them. Although he did not publicly mention building a house during the visit, he quietly sponsored a five-room home for the family. Dashrath Manjhi's family remained unaware of this gesture until the house keys were handed over to them. Bhagirath Manjhi, Dashrath's son, expressed heartfelt gratitude to Rahul Gandhi for providing a pucca house for his family in Gaya, Bihar. There are several other remarkable instances of Rahul Gandhi's support for those in need, such as helping the brothers of Nirbhaya pursue their dream of becoming pilots and adopting 22 children orphaned in the Pahalgam attack. Yet, he never sought political gain from these actions. In an era where many are driven by personal or political advantage, his silent efforts demonstrate a commitment that goes beyond politics, reflecting genuine concern for people's lives rather than public recognition.

Dr. Bishnu Nand Yadav (IOC-Taiwan)

India's Education System and the Great Migration: Challenges, Trends, and the Need for Internal Reform

Prof. Jose Vattakottayil Philip, Rome

Indian education is widely respected across the world for its vast network of institutions and the sheer number of highly skilled graduates it produces. However, despite this global recognition, the system often fails to effectively contribute to internal transformation within the country. One major concern is brain drain—a significant portion of graduates migrate abroad due to inadequate remuneration, limited opportunities, and lack of professional recognition at home. Recent trends show millions of Indians living overseas, with countries like the UAE, USA, Canada, UK, and Australia continuing to attract professionals in large numbers.

Another pressing challenge is the limited emphasis on creativity and innovation within many schools and universities. Students frequently become high mark achievers, yet lack the financial support, institutional encouragement, and practical platforms needed to convert ideas into meaningful contributions to society. In many cases, educational institutions tend to prioritize prestige and reputation over nurturing creativity, social responsibility, and nation-building. As a result, Indian education, despite its global acceptance, often struggles to fully empower students to drive change within their own country.

The Persistent Problem of Brain Drain

One of the most significant issues facing India today is the continued emigration of skilled professionals and students—a phenomenon commonly referred to as “brain drain.” According to migration data, India remains one of the largest sources of international migrants in the world, with over 18.5 million overseas Indians as of 2024, accounting for about 6% of all global migrants.

Government figures also show that 348,629 emigration clearances were granted by November 2024, indicating sustained outward mobility among Indian citizens seeking opportunities abroad.

This trend encompasses not only students but also professionals across sectors. Over the past decade, millions of Indians—engineers, doctors, researchers, academics, and entrepreneurs—have chosen to live and work abroad in countries such as the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Germany.

Moreover, in recent years, a significant number of individuals have renounced Indian citizenship to acquire nationality elsewhere. In 2024 alone, over 200,000 Indians relinquished their citizenship, highlighting the scale of permanent migration and the aspiration for long-term settlement abroad.

Root Causes of Emigration and Education Gaps

The reasons behind this sustained migration are multifaceted. Key structural issues in India's education and professional landscape include:

A. Inadequate Professional Opportunities and Compensation

- Highly educated youth often leave India due to limited career opportunities, lower remuneration, and lack of advanced research infrastructure when compared to developed nations. This push factor is well documented in migration and brain-drain research.

B. Emphasis on Marks over Practical Skills

- Indian educational institutions—both schools and universities—tend to place a premium on theoretical knowledge and high examination scores. While this strategy may produce top rank holders, it often fails to nurture creativity, innovation, entrepreneurship, and critical thinking—skills that are increasingly demanded by the modern global economy.
- Students regularly excel academically but lack adequate support, mentorship, and funding to convert ideas into solutions that address societal needs. This gap between educational credentials and practical skill sets is one of the structural flaws in the system.

The Role of Migration in Education Outcomes

The trend of sending students abroad for higher education continues to grow. In 2024, over 760,000 Indian students pursued higher studies overseas, drawn by the promise of better exposure, specialized courses in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics), and greater research opportunities.

Another report highlights that as of 2025, roughly 1.8 million Indian students were studying abroad, a marked increase from 1.3 million two years earlier, driven by attractive opportunities and international collaborations. This strong global presence has both positive and negative implications. While overseas education enhances exposure and global employability, it also amplifies the brain drain phenomenon when students do not return to contribute domestically.

Is Migration Brain Drain or Brain Gain?

Economists and researchers debate whether migration should be seen purely as a loss. While India's departure of skilled workers certainly represents a loss of domestic talent, it also

expands India's global influence through diaspora contributions. Many Indians abroad occupy leadership and critical roles in academia, business, and technology, thereby indirectly elevating India's global stature and bringing in significant remittances—remittances which reached a record \$135.46 billion in 2025.

However, without deliberate domestic policies that bridge education with employment opportunities and innovation ecosystems, the benefits of migration remain uneven.

The Education System's Internal Challenges

Beyond migration, another profound challenge lies in the content and approach of education within India:

- *Curriculum Focus:* Schools and universities often prioritize memorization and marks rather than creativity and critical thinking.
- *Lack of Practical Training:* There is limited emphasis on hands-on, project-based learning, entrepreneurship incubation, and real-world problem solving in most institutions.
- *Mismatch with Job Market Needs:* A large proportion of graduates face a skills gap, where what they learn does not align with industry expectations.

Forming a Solution

If India's education system is to truly serve its people and the nation, it needs transformative reforms:

Reorient Curricula to Encourage Creativity and Innovation

India's education system needs to move beyond rote learning and exam-centric achievement. Creativity must become an educational objective, not an accidental by-product.

This requires:

- **Curriculum redesign** to include problem-solving, design thinking, innovation labs, interdisciplinary learning, and real-life application of concepts.
- **Assessment reforms** that evaluate analytical thinking, originality, teamwork, presentation, and creativity instead of merely memorization.
- **Freedom for teachers and students** to explore ideas, question existing knowledge, and take intellectual risks without fear of marks or failure.
- **Integration of arts, humanities, technology, and entrepreneurship** so learning becomes holistic rather than segmented.

Such changes would help transform students from mark-scorers into **innovators, creators, and contributors to society**.

Strengthen Industry–Academic Collaboration

A major weakness in the Indian system is the gap between what students learn and what industries need. Bridging this gap requires structured partnerships between universities, industries, and research institutions.

This can be achieved through:

- *Curriculum co-development* with industry experts so academic training aligns with real employment needs.
- *Internships, apprenticeships, and hands-on training* as mandatory components of degree programs.
- *Industry mentors and guest faculty* to expose students to current global practices.
- *Collaborative research projects* where students and companies work together to solve real societal and technological problems.
- *Innovation clusters and incubation centers* within campuses to promote entrepreneurship.

- *Collaborative research projects* where students and companies work together to solve real societal and technological problems.
- *Innovation clusters and incubation centers* within campuses to promote entrepreneurship.

When education aligns with economic reality, graduates become **job-ready, future-ready, and capable of contributing to national development**.

Provide Research Funding and Support for Startups

Many brilliant Indian students and professionals leave the country because they cannot convert ideas into action due to financial and infrastructural barriers. Strengthening India's Innovation ecosystem requires:

- **Increased government and private investment** in scientific, technological, and social research.
- **Accessible grants, scholarships, seed funding, and innovation fellowships** for young researchers and entrepreneurs.
- **Campus-based startup incubation centers** that provide workspace, mentorship, legal support, and funding guidance.
- **Simplified policies and reduced bureaucracy** to encourage experimentation and enterprise formation.
- **Recognition and incentives** for socially impactful innovations.

With strong research and startup support, India can retain its brightest minds, convert ideas into industries, and create solutions tailored to its own societal needs.

Develop Robust Career Guidance and Mentorship Programs

A significant number of Indian students progress through education without clear direction, professional awareness, or guidance. Many make academic choices under societal pressure rather than informed understanding.

To address this:

- **Professional career counseling systems** must be integrated into schools and universities.
- **Mentorship networks** connecting students with successful professionals, alumni, and industry leaders should be established.
- **Workshops, exposure tours, and career fairs** can help students understand opportunities beyond traditional paths.
- **Psychological and emotional support programs** are essential to help students cope with pressure, expectation, and uncertainty.
- **Guidance in entrepreneurship, research careers, vocational excellence, and global opportunities** should be readily available.

Strong mentorship and guidance empower students to make thoughtful decisions, build confidence, and evolve as responsible, capable contributors to the nation.

Conclusion

Indian education has global recognition and produces millions of skilled graduates, but its benefits are often lost to brain drain and limited domestic opportunities. Without fair remuneration, encouragement of creativity, and stronger support systems, students remain mark-oriented achievers rather than innovators who transform society. For India to truly advance, its education system must evolve from producing qualified individuals to empowering purposeful contributors at home.

Prof. Jose Vattakottayil Philip,
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Act First, Explain Later: India's Strategic Tradition and the Cost of Premature Rhetoric

Sandeep Vangala, USA

India's national security doctrine was not forged through speeches. It was shaped through silence, preparation, and decisive action. Long before televised debates and public strategic commentary became commonplace, the Indian state followed a disciplined rule: strategy was executed quietly, and explanations followed only after outcomes were secured.

This tradition is neither accidental nor outdated. It is rooted in India's own historical experience.

India's Pre-2014 Strategic Record: Action Before Articulation

India's most consequential security decisions prior to 2014 followed a consistent pattern. The nuclear tests conducted in **1974** and **1998** were carried out under extreme secrecy. Even close partners were informed only after execution. Contemporary government statements and later interviews with key figures involved in the program make it clear that public explanation was deliberately deferred until the strategic objective had been achieved.

The **1971 Bangladesh Liberation War** offers an even clearer illustration. As documented by historians such as Srinath Raghavan and reflected in parliamentary debates of the period, Prime Minister **Indira Gandhi** avoided public escalation for months. India focused on diplomatic groundwork, refugee management, and military preparedness. When justification was finally presented to the international community, battlefield realities had already rendered external pressure ineffective.

A similar approach was evident in **Operation Cactus (1988)**, India's rapid military intervention in the Maldives to thwart a coup attempt. The operation was executed swiftly and discreetly, with public acknowledgment coming only after its successful conclusion, as reflected in subsequent Ministry of External Affairs briefings and Indian Air Force records.

Across decades and governments of different political persuasions, India displayed a consistent institutional instinct: **do not advertise strategy in advance**.

Why Silence Was Strategic?

This restraint preserved three enduring advantages

- First, **strategic ambiguity**, which forced adversaries to guess rather than prepare.

- Second, **diplomatic flexibility**, allowing quiet de-escalation or backchannel engagement when required.
- Third, **operational surprise**, which reduced the risk of counter-mobilization.

India's restraint in language was not weakness. It was leverage.

A Pattern of Premature Articulation

Against this historical backdrop, a contrasting pattern has emerged in recent years: **the public articulation of strategic intent without corresponding, visible implementation**.

India's National Security Advisor, Ajit Doval, has on multiple occasions spoken in open forums about strategic concepts traditionally confined to closed-door settings. These include public references to exploiting internal vulnerabilities of adversaries, repeated articulation of the **idea of "offensive defense,"** and, more recently, statements outlining India's strategic resolve and potential response frameworks.

These remarks were delivered at publicly recorded lectures and official or semi-official forums and were widely reported by national media. They were not off-the-record briefings or classified communications. What followed, however, was continuity rather than rupture. India's observable policy choices remained **measured, calibrated, and consistent with long-standing restraint**. There was no overt adoption of the strategies as publicly described, nor a declared doctrinal shift matching the rhetoric.

This created an unusual asymmetry: **strategic intent was articulated publicly, while state behavior remained restrained**.

Why the Recent Statement Matters

The concern is not the substance of any single statement. It is the sequencing. In national security practice, words spoken by the holder of India's highest security office are not treated as commentary. They are interpreted internationally as signals of state intent. When such signals precede action or are not followed by corresponding policy shifts, they carry costs.

Ambiguity is surrendered without gaining deterrence. Adversaries acquire rhetorical and

diplomatic material without any change in ground realities. And India's historical advantage of quiet credibility is weakened.

This risk is amplified when statements are made while **multiple diplomatic and regional equations remain fluid, limiting room for maneuver.**

An Institutional Question, Not a Personal One

This is not a critique of resolve, preparedness, or firmness. India has demonstrated all three repeatedly, across governments and decades. It is a question of **institutional communication discipline.**

The office of the National Security Advisor is not political. Its words are read globally as authoritative expressions of state posture. When strategy is explained in advance or reiterated without corresponding implementation, India loses the strategic ambiguity that once amplified its leverage.

What India's Own History Suggests

India's pre-2014 record offers a clear lesson:

- Prepare quietly
- Act decisively
- Speak sparingly

The doctrine of **"act first, explain later"** was not a slogan. It was learned institutional behavior shaped by experience.

The question, therefore, is simple and legitimate:

Is India better served when strategy is articulated publicly in advance, or when outcomes speak for themselves?

India's own history suggests that silence before action has often been one of its greatest strategic strengths. In national security, **restraint in language is not hesitation. It is preparation. And discipline in speech is not timidity. It is wisdom.**

Jai Hind!

Sandeep Vangala

National General Secretary

Indian Overseas Congress - USA



Beyond Hope: What the UDF Must Do to Reclaim Kerala

George Abraham, USA

After the Municipal and Panchayat elections, there is a renewed glimmer of hope for the UDF in Kerala, a Congress-led coalition that has remained out of power for nearly a decade. Hope alone, however, will not revive an alliance struggling for relevance in a state with uniquely complex political dynamics—dynamics shaped since 1957, when the world's first democratically elected Communist government assumed office in Kerala.

There is little doubt that the current political climate favors the Congress-led coalition. Yet the people of Kerala should never be taken for granted. They are a discerning and politically sophisticated electorate who often outthink entrenched political stalwarts. While it is often said that all politics is local, the UDF's success in local body elections does not automatically place it ahead of the curve. At best, it offers a modest advantage—one that must be carefully consolidated and strategically leveraged.

One of the most persistent criticisms of the UDF is its tendency toward multiple and conflicting narratives. On the one hand, this reflects ideological diversity within the alliance; on the other, it produces a fractured message that fails to reach the electorate with clarity and coherence. There are frequent instances where party leadership articulates one position while grassroots workers convey another. In contrast, the LDF functions as a disciplined, cadre-based, hierarchical organization that often speaks with a single voice or chooses strategic silence on contentious issues.

The UDF's senior leadership is widely respected for its experience and political acumen, yet it has struggled to project the unity necessary to cross the electoral finish line. In this context, it is imperative for the alliance to project a clear and credible Chief Ministerial candidate. Doing so would reassure voters that they are being offered a tested and proven leader committed to the common good.

Regardless of differing opinions about Pinarayi Vijayan, he remains a known quantity, an established leader who has led from the front and fought his political battles over a long period. That clarity of leadership has worked to the LDF's advantage. Creating a comparable sense of confidence and decisiveness will be one of the greatest challenges before the Congress Party and the UDF as they seek to regain public trust.

Recently, a political observer remarked that the party risks losing several seats if certain aging

politicians step aside. That concern itself is an indictment. It exposes a systemic failure—either the party has neglected to groom the next generation of leadership, or it has allowed an inward-looking, self-preserving culture to take root, one designed primarily to entrench the power of a few stalwarts indefinitely.

When renewal is viewed as a liability rather than a strength, institutional decay sets in. Without firm term limits and a deliberate commitment to leadership transition, the party will continue recycling the same faces while steadily exhausting its relevance. Political survival cannot rest on permanent incumbency; it must be built on continuous renewal.

The Congress Party is founded on secular principles and, in theory, should not privilege caste- or religion-based considerations in candidate selection. Unfortunately, reality often diverges sharply from this ideal. In Kerala, every ethnic, religious, and caste-based group competes vigorously for representation. While inclusivity is essential, it frequently comes at a cost. Too often, the pursuit of social balance leads to the sacrifice of merit, resulting in candidates falling short of basic standards of legislative effectiveness.

This is particularly troubling in a state widely regarded as one of India's most advanced in literacy and education. Yet paradoxically, Kerala continues to send legislators to Delhi who are ill-equipped for the demands of national politics, lacking communication skills, policy depth, or institutional competence to effectively represent the state's interests. True secularism and inclusivity should broaden opportunities without lowering standards. Representation must be meaningful, not merely symbolic, and merit must remain the cornerstone of political leadership.

Equally puzzling is the party's habit of finalizing candidate lists at the last minute, often late in the evening, as if urgency itself were a strategy. This practice has persisted for years and has consistently undermined electoral prospects. When a new candidate is fielded, he or she needs time to understand local communities and leadership, to travel the length and breadth of the constituency, and to communicate, connect, and persuade skeptical voters.

Trust and credibility cannot be manufactured overnight. If the party is serious about renewal, it must give newcomers at least three months to engage with the electorate, understand local

concerns,
Elections are
presence and

and demonstrate their ability to earn the electorate's confidence.
not won through surprise announcements, but through sustained
meaningful engagement.

Finally, if the
strength. With
tacit collusion,
the party
embedded in
beyond the reach of

Congress Party is to succeed, it must rebuild its grassroots
the CPM and BJP increasingly perceived to be operating in
the absence of a strong ground-level presence leaves
dangerously exposed. Without committed workers
communities, much can go wrong, often
corrective action.

Concerns surrounding the
Voting Machines have further
fairness of elections. When the
unwilling to act decisively against
fabric of democracy begins to fray.
electoral victory or defeat, but the
institutions themselves.

transparency of Electronic
intensified anxieties about the
Election Commission appears
those in power, the very
What is at stake is not merely
credibility of democratic

The UDF stands at a crossroads. It can
momentary electoral signals for a revival
hard, uncomfortable work of renewal,
leadership, restoring unity of purpose,
rebuilding grassroots strength, and
to democratic values. The people of Kerala
closely.

either mistake
or undertake the
clarifying
prioritizing merit,
recommitting itself
are watching

They will reward sincerity, preparation, and
but they will not forgive complacency. If the
alliance hopes to reclaim Kerala, it must move
and act with urgency, discipline, and vision.

courage—
Congress-led
beyond hope

George Abraham
Vice-Chair, Indian Overseas Congress, USA



SAYED NAQVI'S 'THE MUSLIM VANISHES' AND CONTEMPORARY INDIAN REALITY

Mansoor Palloor, KSA

Four years ago, the renowned scientist, social thinker, and Indian Overseas Congress Chairman Dr. Sam Pitroda suggested that I read 'The Muslim Vanishes' by Syed Naqvi. I read the book then and wrote about its profound significance. Yet today, I feel an irresistible urge to return to it once more because its questions have only grown more urgent with time. Moreover, the socio-political conditions that the book warned about are becoming increasingly apparent in today's India. That is why I am bringing this topic up again.

The Muslim Vanishes is not just a literary work in the form of a play; it is a testimony of our times. Published by Penguin Random House, the work is a political allegory in the form of a play. Based on the idea that Muslims are disappearing from India, Naqvi raises a profound question about the soul of society.

A terrifying reality exposed through satire

The play begins in a news studio. A journalist on the news desk, young and lanky, rushes in with the latest.

"The reporters are saying there's not even one left in the city. Not one. All gone. Every single one..."

Even the anchors are shocked to hear the news. At first, it seems like a joke, but as the story progresses, it becomes clear that it is not just a satire but a terrifying reflection that touches the soul of society.

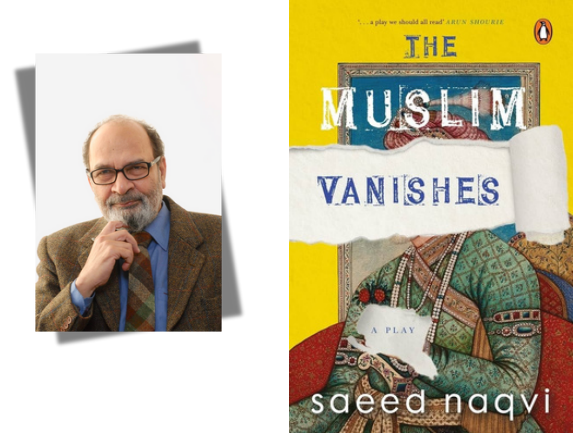
The work depicts how, when Muslims disappear from India, their spoken language, music, poetry, food, clothes, monuments, and cultural heritage vanish as if they were all wiped out at once. This forces the reader to ask the question: Can the culture we have built together survive if a society changes? One often feels uneasy reading Naqvi's work because it is eerily similar to the political and social climate of today's India. This work is a powerful reminder of how much the soul of India is based on a culture of integration.

This play is not about the physical disappearance of a community. Rather, it is about gradual social exclusion.

This is a very familiar experience in our time. Through the media, social media, and political platforms, there is a strong tendency to portray certain communities as "those to be eliminated." Sometimes it manifests as open hatred; sometimes it appears in subtle language, under the guise of humour, or in the name of "concern." Through social media and some media outlets,

the idea of Muslims as "those to be eliminated" is slowly becoming normalised. These are all realities that The Muslim Vanishes warns about.

The Politics of Hate: A Tool for Power



The characters in the play are initially happy about the absence of Muslims. They think they can divide the land, correct history, and "purify" the culture. But they soon realise: If a community is eliminated, the country itself becomes empty.

This is not just a matter of religious hatred; it is a political process that destroys the soul of democracy. Naqvi warns through this work that silence is more dangerous than hatred. Those who see and do not see, those who stand aside and call injustice "their problem," those who believe that "it does not affect us" even when society is divided, they are the real accomplices of this tragedy.

India of Love

'The Muslim Vanishes' is not a pessimistic work. It is a warning. It is an introspection. It is an appeal to society. The country called India does not exist on the strength of one religion, one language, or one caste alone. It exists on diversity and mutual love. Its strength lies in coexistence. That is why after reading Naqvi's work, we say to ourselves: "No one will go anywhere. But do not create a situation where they are forced to go." Today, this work should be read and discussed not only for literature's sake but also to save the soul of the country, to awaken our social consciousness, to protect our democracy, and to maintain our coexistence.

Mansoor Palloor



The newsletter issue will be published on 15th of each month. Please send articles, reports, photos to editors by 1st of each month to the following email address: thescriptline@gmail.com

The newsletter is available on the IOC website at www.incoverseas.org.