

India's Rising Influence In Global Diplomacy

By Uday Kumar Varma

Author is a former Secretary, Information and Broadcasting, GOI

In the annals of history, there are moments that transcend time, moments that etch themselves into the collective memory of a nation. On 23rd August 2023, India witnessed such a moment. As Vikram, a lunar lander, executed a flawless touchdown on the moon's surface, and Pragyan, a rover, gracefully rolled out, a wave of jubilation and pride swept through the nation. India had achieved what many thought was impossible – landing a spacecraft intact in the treacherous terrain of the moon's southern polar region. This remarkable feat marked India as the fourth country ever to reach the lunar surface and the first to conquer the formidable south pole. The achievement was not just astronomical but a testament to India's growing influence and clout in global diplomacy, particularly in the realm of science diplomacy.

Chandrayan III: A Giant Leap

The Chandrayan III mission exemplified India's prowess in space exploration. Its success was not only a technological triumph but a symbol of India's commitment to advancing scientific knowledge for the betterment of humanity. What made this achievement even more remarkable was the cost-effectiveness of the project, with a total budget less than that of a Hollywood blockbuster film. This efficiency underscored India's ability to achieve excellence while being fiscally responsible.

Aditya L-1: India's Solar Odyssey

Following the resounding success of Chandrayan III, India embarked on another ambitious mission – Aditya L-1. This mission marked India's entry into the field of solar studies, positioning a spacecraft at the L1 point of the Sun-Earth system. The strategic placement of Aditya L-1 allowed for continuous observation of the sun, providing real-time data on solar activities and space weather. With seven payloads dedicated to studying the sun's various layers, India demonstrated its commitment to advancing our understanding of the cosmos.

G-20 Global Summit: India's Diplomatic Triumph

The New Delhi summit of G-20 heads of state showcased India's diplomatic finesse and statesmanship. Not only did the summit yield a unanimous declaration that received widespread acclaim, but it also highlighted India's adeptness in managing international conflicts, particularly regarding the Ukraine crisis. However, the true milestones of the summit were the announcements of the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) and the Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA).

IMEC: A New Path in International Cooperation

IMEC, unveiled at the G-20 summit, is hailed as a superior alternative to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India's ability to bring together the US, UAE, Saudi Arabia, and several European nations for this initiative demonstrated its growing clout in shaping global economic policies. IMEC fosters connectivity and economic integration between South Asia, the Arabian Gulf, and Europe, without the concerns of debt sustainability that have plagued the BRI. Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw emphasized that IMEC would generate revenue and be bankable, aligning with Prime Minister Modi's vision of inclusive development.

Divergent Paths: IMEC vs. BRI

While the BRI aims to promote connectivity and trade through various corridors, IMEC distinguishes itself by focusing on two distinct corridors – one connecting India to the Arabian Gulf and the other linking the Arabian Gulf to Europe. IMEC emphasizes economic efficiency, cost reduction, and economic unity among participating nations, aligning with sustainable development goals. Unlike the BRI, IMEC is perceived as a bankable project with the backing of the US and EU, making it a viable alternative.

Global Biofuel Alliance (GBA): A Sustainable Future

The GBA, launched on the concluding day of the G-20 summit, marked a historic step towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions. Nineteen countries and twelve international organizations, including G20 members and non-members, joined this alliance. India, Brazil, and the US, as founding members, together contribute significantly to global ethanol production and consumption. The GBA seeks to promote biofuels' production, technology transfer, and trade while addressing climate change and energy security.

Global Support for GBA

The GBA received strong support from the US and EU, with President Biden highlighting its potential to facilitate trade and clean energy exports. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen termed it a "green and digital bridge across continents and civilizations." The GBA's focus on reducing greenhouse gas emissions and boosting biofuel production aligns with global efforts to combat climate change.

International Solar Alliance (ISA): A Beacon of Collaboration

India's leadership in global diplomacy extends beyond economic corridors and biofuels. The International Solar Alliance (ISA), launched during COP21, exemplifies India's commitment to renewable energy and collaborative diplomacy. With 116 member countries, the ISA's mission aims to mobilize \$1 trillion in investments, provide energy access to a billion people, and install 1,000 GW of solar capacity by 2030. India's solar journey, marked by ambitious targets and innovative policies, has made it a global leader in solar energy.

The Future of India's Diplomacy

India's rise in global diplomacy, particularly in the field of science diplomacy, is a testament to its vision, innovation, and statesmanship. From the triumph of Chandrayan III's landing and the launch of Aditya L-1 on an ambitious and challenging journey to explore solar surface to the launch of IMEC and GBA, India has demonstrated its ability to shape international agendas and promote global cooperation. As India moves forward, its commitment to sustainable development, renewable energy, and inclusive growth positions it as a key player on the world stage. India's hour in global diplomacy has arrived, and the world is watching with anticipation as it emerges as a leader with a noble intent – to serve the greater good of humanity.

India's recent diplomatic achievements in science and technology are nothing short of staggering. These accomplishments have positioned India as a significant influencer in global affairs. What sets India apart is its commitment to a constructive agenda, free from territorial ambitions and driven by a spirit of global good. India's economic growth is fuelled by its own resources, both physical and intellectual.

As India assumes the role of a 'Vishwamitra', it does so with a unique blend of merit and goodwill. The future holds the promise of India playing an even more prominent and positive role in shaping the course of world events, driven by the collective good of humanity.

Innovation And Audacity Have Characterized Ukraine's Use Of Drones

By Group Captain Praveer Purohit (retd)

The Author is an alumnus of National Defence Academy, Defence Services Staff College and Army War College. He has spearheaded Professional Military Education for young officers of IAF as Chief Instructor at Air Force Administrative College.

Despite nineteen months of incessant fighting, the Russia-Ukraine war shows no signs of abating. The Ukrainian counter-offensive is progressing slowly but surely in the face of many odds and a well dug-in enemy who has extensively mined the area. Ukrainian forces have fought hard and must be well aware that it is going to be a long haul in reclaiming their legitimate territory. Very intelligently, Ukraine has sought to balance its numerical disadvantage by employing drones for long range strikes and these have achieved some spectacular results.

Although drones came into prominence in the Armenia-Azerbaijan conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, Israel had used drones very effectively in the Bekka valley conflict against Syria in 1982. Developments in drone technology and employing them in the attack role was a paradigm shift. While Israel and USA were the pioneers, other countries such as China, Turkey and Russia soon followed suit. Armed drones or Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs) have now become a much sought after platform by all leading militaries.

Coming back to the Russia-Ukraine war, drones have been used in roles such as reconnaissance, targeting, intelligence gathering and in direct kinetic action (strikes). In April 2022, Ukrainian forces sank the Moskva cruiser, the flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet. This operation saw Bayraktar TB2 drones deflect Russia's air defence systems, enabling the Neptune anti-ship missiles to strike its target, uncontested. Since then, the battlespace has seen an intensive use of drones, marking a shift in tactics and technology. The war has seen different drone systems in use, ranging from the very small – such as the Black Hornet with a wingspan of only 12 centimetres to those with wingspan of over 15 meters. It is the smaller ones that have played an important role, much beyond their size. Initially Russia was in the forefront in using One Way Attack (OWA) drones, commonly known as kamikaze drones. However, Ukraine soon followed suit modifying several commercial drones. This ensured availability of effective, low-cost systems at mass scale. Although not optimized for survivability, their low cost and easy availability more than offset their losses. Ukraine also effectively tapped the sympathy factor in its favour by sourcing funds and drones through crowdfunding efforts. The 'Army of Drones' programme, co-sponsored by the Ukrainian military and the Ukrainian Ministry of Digital Communication, raises money globally. Ukraine has a United 24 website where it receives all kinds of drone donations. This has resulted in a steady induction of drones.

Due to the exigencies of war, Ukraine's military-industrial complex has responded innovatively to its national needs. Thanks to the Russian invasion,

Ukraine has become an important place for drone development and manufacturing. Joint private-public partnerships have led to the development or repurposing of drones for military use, attracting investment from well-known businesses. The pressure of the war to innovate, the ingenuity of the Ukrainian people, and the close cooperation with Western countries have helped establish a robust domestic defence industrial base. Close cooperation with military units on the front lines by more than 200 Ukrainian companies involved in drone production help to tweak and augment drones to improve their ability to kill and spy on the enemy. Ukraine's Defence Ministry, has shared Russian jamming technology with the drone companies, allowing them to test their products against some of the world's most sophisticated electronic warfare weapons. Drone makers are also receiving constant feedback from the front lines, allowing them to make immediate adjustments to reduce vulnerabilities and improve lethality. Of late, Ukraine has been developing Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology on its drones. This will enable their drones to still hit the target even in the face of Russian electronic jamming or spoofing. AI capabilities help the drone complete its mission even if its target moves, representing a significant upgrade from existing drones that track specific coordinates. The Ukrainians have been particularly adept at using both air- and sea-based drones. Although many of these drones are military-grade, low-cost Do It Yourself (DIY) systems are clearly also part of the mix, blurring the line between high-end and low-end systems.

The outcome of these steps has been remarkable. Ukraine has been able to reduce the 'detection-to-destruction' time to between one and two minutes. Ukraine demonstrated its increasingly advanced naval drone capabilities by using drone boats, in the attack on Russia's Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol on 29 October last year. This attack carried out in conjunction with aerial drones, damaged at least one minesweeper and one frigate equipped with Kalibr cruise missiles. Even without inflicting massive damage on the Black Sea Fleet, the Ukrainians reduced Russian capacity to launch sea-based missiles. In early August this year, Ukrainian forces damaged a Russian amphibious landing ship and struck a Russian fuel tanker using naval drones. These attacks took place close to Novorossiysk, an important Russian naval base and oil port in the eastern Black Sea. Another drone attack in the same month on the Saki airbase targeted Russian Navy fighter aircraft. In December 2022, Ukraine used unmanned aerial systems to undertake audacious attacks on Engels air base, deep inside Russia. Embarrassingly for the Russians, Ukraine followed the first attack with another a few days later in the same month. A Russian S-400 Air Defence missile system in Crimea was destroyed on 23 August 2023. Two days later a drone swarm was used to attack the Russian 126th Guards Coastal Defence Brigade of the Black Sea Fleet near Perevalne in Crimea. On the night of August 29, Ukrainian OWA drones penetrated more than 370 kilometres into Russia in a bold attack on Russian airfields. The attack destroyed two IL-76 heavy transport aircraft and damaged two other planes. That same week, Ukrainians used cardboard drones to damage a MiG-29 and four Su-30 fighters in Russia's Kursk Oblast. On 12 September 2023, Ukraine launched missiles and drones to successfully hit the Russian landing ship, Minsk, and a Kilo-class submarine docked at Sevastopol for repairs. On 14 September 2023, a drone attack carried out against Russian warships caused unspecified damage to Vasily Bykov Project 22160-class patrol ships. Another attack caused damage to the rear starboard hull of a Bora-class guided missile corvette, the Samum. The same day, Ukraine destroyed another S-400 battery, near Yevpatoria, a western Crimean port using drones.

As per Royal United Services Institution (RUSI), Ukraine is losing approximately 10000 drones per month. Even if the figure is true, the fact that Ukraine continues to field diverse and innovative drones indicates a high production capability and sustenance ability. Drones, by themselves will not enable a Ukrainian victory. But in producing, employing and constantly innovating, Ukraine has demonstrated a laudable ability to create a favourable asymmetry. Its ability to scale the learning curve is noteworthy. For India, that faces numerical disadvantage against the Chinese, there are many lessons. A closer study and better understanding of the innovations in the Russia-Ukraine war could be a good beginning.

Chandrayaan-3 And Its Economics

By Dr.Santhosh Mathew

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With the launch of India's third lunar mission, on July 14 all eyes are set on the Satish Dhawan Space Centre located in Sriharikota. Through this new mission, Indian Space Research Organisation aimed to land a rover on the surface of the Moon which it failed to do in its previous attempt in 2019. With two successful back- to- back space missions to the moon and now the sun-Chandrayaan 3 and Aditya -L1 respectively- India is eyeing a lion's share of space economy in the near future. Currently, India accounts for 2 percent of the global space economy, which is close to USD 447 billion in 2020, far behind the major players, China and the US. The success of India's Chandrayaan 3 mission has not only proved India's growing space capability but also underlined its characteristic feature- the surprisingly low costs. The world paid attention to India's budget friendly space missions when, in 2014, the Prime Minister drew a dramatic comparison. He compared India's Mars mission Mangalyaan which cost \$74 million dollars that was less than the cost of the movie 'Gravity' which cost around \$100million dollars. NASA's similar Mars mission, Maven, cost nearly 10 times more. The frugality of India's space odyssey has become the talk of the world. There was a picture going viral on the internet of an ISRO official carrying rocket cones to the launch site in a bicycle. They might not be using bicycles anymore, but the culture of frugality still stays. This culture was started by Vikram Sarabhai, the founder of ISRO and father of India's space programmes, who started off with a lab in his tiny outhouse. When ISRO was first set up, Mars or moon mission was not its objective, its objective was directly linked to the benefit of society. With clear objectives and economically testing times for India, ISRO's leaders developed a style that produced maximum benefits with minimum efforts. India has mostly suffered paucity since 1947, so the cost of production was always in check, unlike NASA which spent extravagantly on lavishness.

The projections on India's space budget are set to change, because of the two big recent launches and preparations in place for the trial launch of India's first human spaceflight Gaganyaan by early October. While domestic projections are that India's current 8 billion USD space economy will reach 40 billion USD by 2040, suggests a global consultancy firm, which provides insights into industry performance, recently projected that the Indian space economy could even touch upto 100 billion USD by 2040 on the back of expanding space budget. India's present space budget is nearly 1.93 billion USD a year, a very small fraction compared to US and China. "The soaring reputation of the Indian space agency, ISRO, expanding budgets, rising private participation and start-up boom will take the space economy to great heights. We have grown four startups in 2019 to over 150 today. Our satellite launching facilities are being hired by countries across the world," Department of space officials said. They attributed the rising confidence in Indian space capacities to the phenomenal pace at which ISRO is successfully launching tough missions. Awe around the successful landing of India's Chandrayaan- 3 on the unexplored lunar south pole has not died yet and the historic mission is expected to figure in bilaterals between Prime Minister and heads of G 20 states during the Leaders' Summit in Delhi on September 9 and 10. The Chandrayaan- 3 success is critical considering the US' Apollo Mission in 1972, which had found the Moon to be dry but water was later estimated on the lunar surface. The latest budget for 2023-24 presented by the finance minister allocated Rs 12, 543 crores for the department of space under which ISRO operates. While the budgetary allocation for this fiscal has declined slightly, the funding for the space department has seen a significant rise in the last six years. As India plans big space projects like the Gaganyaan mission in the coming years, the allocation of budget has become all more important for the funding of ISRO projects.

When it comes to funding of India's space missions, the efficient costs of ISRO projects, which was lower than famous movies, has managed to grab headlines time and again. In 2020, the government- dominated space sector opened for private participation through reforms. New Space India Limited (NSIL), a PSU, is allowed to own the operational launch vehicles and space assets of ISRO. Supply- based model changed to demand- driven with NSIL acting as an aggregator of user requirements and obtaining commitments. Creation of an independent nodal agency under the Department of Space, Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre, to promote, regulate space activities by non- government activities. Liberalization of traditional satellite communication and remote sensing sectors enabling industries to take- up end- to- end activities in these domains.

When the government budget for the space programme is low and the country struggles to spend even on basic needs, its scientists have to take risks. ISRO has taken several calculated risks and many have paid off. In 1981, for example, when India launched its first satellite called APPLE, ISRO used a motor from its untested SLV rocket. This rocket had only one launch- and that had failed- before APPLE went up. But the adaptation was successful. In space engineering, where conditions are tough and cost of failure high, it is not easy to adapt technology. It also involves more risk, but ISRO has been willing to take and manage those risks. ISRO knows the optimum utilization of resources. There has been evidence where ISRO tests things half the times the Americans do. They scrutinize every parameter and optimize the tests. This may be called a risk- but ISRO has been successful with it so far. More than 30% of the subsystems that went into Chandrayaan-1 were used by ISRO in other operations. Optimizing tests on equipment and procedures helped ISRO save a lot. Moreover, ISRO has lighter payloads and heavier, slower and less powerful rockets than the space agencies of US and Russia. Russia's Luna, which failed to soft-land on the Moon a few days ago, took nearly one- fourth of the time to reach the Moon India's Chandrayaan-3 took. India has traditionally not spent too much money on its space programme. Even today, when the government has aimed to make India a space power, India's space spending as the share of its GDP is relatively low. The US spends 0.28% of its GDP, Russia is second at 0.15% while India is seventh in the world at 0.4%.

The number of start-ups starting operations in the space sector has touched an all- time high with a strong growth seen in the last few years. Commenting on the rising number of start-ups, Union minister Dr. Jitendra Singh Singh said at an event held recently that India has gained a strong footing in the space sector and the world is now recognising India's potential. He also termed the emerging role of the private sector as pivotal to India's space economy. This will make India's space sector more competitive.

India's low- cost manufacturing plays to the advantage of ISRO. Over time, ISRO has reduced imports and tried to indigenise critical components as much as possible. Reducing dependence on imports translates into cost advantage. Participation of local industries in ISRO's projects for designing, manufacturing and testing of critical components and systems is well-known. L and T, Godrej Aerospace, Tata Consulting Engineers Limited, Mishra Dhatu Nigam and BHEL have supplied critical components for Chandrayaan-3 at a fraction of cost of imported components. Since local manufacturing costs far less than imports and these manufacturers make a range of critical components, systems and subsystems, indigenisation is a big factor in keeping costs low. As the role of India's private industry, especially industry, in the space sector grows, India's cost advantage will sharpen further.

The spacecraft carried scientific equipment from the United States, the United Kingdom, Germany, Sweden., and Bulgaria, apart from five Indian instruments. Its scientific goals included the study of the chemical, mineralogical and photo-geologic mapping of the Moon. This campaign has been instrumental in developing our understanding of the Moon. It can be believed that after the USA, Russia and China, India has now become a major player in the world's space programme.

India's space programs are generally admired around the world, but despite this, some people in India and abroad criticize the space program saying that India is a poor country and cannot afford the 'luxuries' of such programmes. They say that instead of spending on space programs, we should rather provide facilities for the poor in the country. Some people also say that instead of spending on space programs, it would be better if more is spent on the security of our country. Space missions have been run at huge costs in the world, but the budget of India's space programs is an example of the world. The budget of Chandrayaan- 3 is only 615 crore rupees. The speciality of India's space program is that ISRO partners with the world using the country's technology. After the success of Chandrayaan-3, there is going to be a significant change in the attitude of the world towards India. The economy with which India's program operates has taken the world by surprise. Elon Musk, a top billionaire, running one of the world's largest space programs, has praised India's space program. The interesting thing is that we have landed Chandrayaan on the Moon at a cost less than what it would cost to build a 20-kilometer highway of four lanes in India. The secret of ISRO's success and its low cost since the down- to- earth scientists remain eager to keep budgets on a light leash. Anyone who has taken a peep into the mission control at the Satish Dhawan Space Center at Sriharikota would have been struck by the simplicity of ISRO scientists. The unassuming ISRO scientists won't be averse to working on tight budgets and doing overtime. They must be accustomed to look for ways to cut costs wherever possible or use their skills to find cheaper workarounds. ISRO's surprisingly low costs are also attributed to the low salaries of these scientists. Nair told PTI that the scientists at the space agency have achieved this milestone by getting a salary one- fifth of the scientists in the developed world. He said there are no millionaires among ISRO's scientists, and they always live a very normal and subdued life. ISRO's lower costs give India an edge in the global launch industry. India is aiming to increase its share of the global satellite launch market by fivefold within the next decade. The government's efforts to privatize part of its space programs by opening a bid to build its small satellite launch rocket has attracted initial interest of 20 companies, Reuters has reported While India can't compete with American private players like Space X, India's low cost will certainly help it compete with Russia and China who are ahead of India in launches. By launching the satellites of our country and other countries, the revenue made by ISRO is much more than that. It is believed that the entry of Indian private companies into the space market will further competition and reduce costs further. ISRO has already started making efforts in this regard. It can be believed that shortly, India will be able to register its presence in the world's space market due to its efficiency, accuracy and low costs. This will be the first step towards India becoming the superpower of the world. ISRO would not be dependent solely on government funding and would be able to spend more in the future. But money would mean ISRO will chart out farther frontiers for itself and not that ISRO will lose its cost advantage. The culture of frugality that Sarabhai established has come to be too deeply ingrained in ISRO to be erased.

Canada Has Double Standards Against Terror Outfits. India And West Don't Have To Follow It

By Dr Seshadri Chari

Author is a Secretary General of the Forum for Integrated National Security (FINS). Dr Chari writes on foreign policy, strategy, and security affairs.

A politically weak Justin Trudeau is free to sacrifice Canada's economic benefits. He has erred in haste and will repent at leisure after imminent political defeat soon.

India-Canada relations have sunk to a new low following the allegation of the Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau that New Delhi was involved in the killing of pro-Khalistan leader Hardeep Singh Nijjar on Canadian soil,

outside the Guru Nanak Sikh Gurdwara Sahib in Surrey, British Columbia. India has denied the allegations.

Trudeau is heading a minority government supported by 24 members of the New Democratic Party (NDP), led by Jagmeet Singh, whose political agenda include decriminalising drug use and repeal of Canada's Anti-terrorism Act. Meanwhile, another wanted fugitive turned gangster, Sukhdool Singh Duneka, was reportedly killed in an inter-gang rivalry in Canada.

Trudeau doesn't seem to be new to diplomatic faux pas.

In 2018, Canadian foreign minister Chrystia Freeland posted a tweet (translated into Arabic and resent by the Canadian embassy in Riyadh) criticising the Saudi government for arresting a Saudi human rights activist. Saudi Arabia ordered the Canadian ambassador to leave within 24 hours, recalled its diplomat, froze all flights to Canada, put all bilateral trade on hold, asked Saudi students in Canadian universities to relocate at government's expense, and called for immediate unconditional apology. Canada sought help from the UAE, UK, and US to diffuse the issue but none of them obliged. Later, the US is said to have mediated and brought the two estranged countries to the negotiating table.

In yet another diplomatic row between China and Canada, Trudeau had to eat humble pie when Huawei executive Meng Wanzhou, the daughter of billionaire and Huawei founder Ren Zhengfei, was arrested on a US warrant in 2018 and kept under house arrest in Canada. Beijing promptly jailed Michael Spavor and Michael Kovrig, as bargaining chips, accusing them of espionage by China and released them only after securing Meng's release.

Canada cannot follow double standards in dealing with terror outfits and how they are tackled by the West and India.

Double standards exposed

Canada had celebrated official US security forces (watched by then-POTUS) eliminating Osama Bin Laden on Pakistani soil. Then-Canadian PM Stephen Harper said that the death of bin Laden "secures a sense of justice for the families of the 24 Canadians murdered (on September 11, 2001)" and added that "Canada receives the news of the death of Osama bin Laden with sober satisfaction". However, in the case of a Khalistani leader killed by unknown persons, Trudeau has issued a foot in the mouth statement. One country's terrorist cannot be another country's political ally.

On 1 August 2022, US President Joe Biden announced the killing of al-Qaeda terrorist Ayman al-Zawahiri in a CIA drone strike in Kabul, Afghanistan. Trudeau tweeted: "The death of Ayman al-Zawahiri is a step toward a safer world. Canada will keep working with our global partners to counter terrorist threats, promote peace and security, and keep people here at home and around the world safe." The spirit to "keep working with our global partners to counter terrorist threats" seems to have evaporated within a year.

Following the diplomatic acrimony between the two democracies, New Delhi, reacting to the expulsion of an Indian diplomat from Canada, retaliated by expelling a Canadian diplomat. The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has also issued an advisory for Indian nationals and Indian students in Canada. There are reports of a video of Gurpatwant Pannun, designated as a terrorist in India, a self-styled legal counsel of a banned outfit Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) warning "Indo-Hindu leave Canada; go to India". The link between the Canadian PM's irresponsible, immature, highly undiplomatic and politically motivated statement and the SFJ's warning cannot be overlooked.

Incidentally, in July 2020, this SFJ leader had staged a protest and burnt the Indian tricolour in Canada. The group had mailed the remains of the Indian flag to the Indian High Commissioner in Ottawa. It had claimed that "remains of Indian tricolour were mailed to Ajay Bisaria, Indian High Commissioner in Ottawa as a symbolic gesture to remind India that Canada considers Khalistan as a political opinion.

However, a spokesperson of the Canadian foreign ministry had rejected the SFJ's 'Referendum 2020' campaign and said, "Canada respects the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of India, and the government of Canada will not recognise the referendum."

If the Canadian PM is not aware of the links between drug trafficking, the ISI of Pakistan, and pro-Khalistan elements, he is sure to pay a heavy political and economic price for it. According to journalist Federico Giuliani, "In December 2019, Punjab police busted an international gang of drug smugglers operating from Canada, Punjab and Sydney. The police had stated that the arrests in Greater Toronto Area came after a year-long investigation conducted by Canada's York Regional Police in coordination with Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Peel regional police and the US Drug Enforcement Administration. The Canadian drug trafficking network, according to the police, extended to the US and India. The street value of the seized drugs was estimated to be more than \$61million and it was termed as a largest international drug takedown in their history."

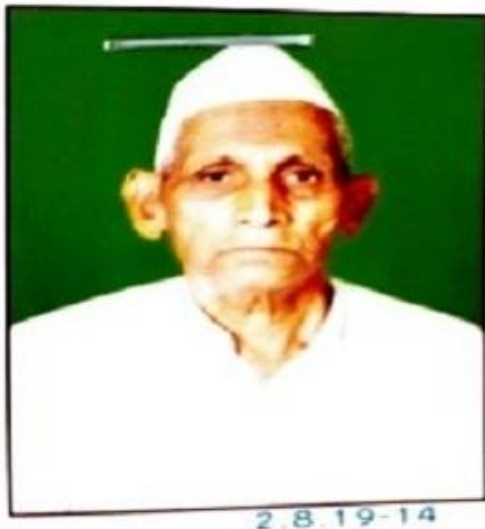
India needs to be watchful

The Punjab police, anti-narcotics wings of the state, central government, and other security agencies will have to increase vigilance as the pro-Khalistan outfits and drug cartels will try to vitiate the atmosphere closer to the 2024 Lok Sabha election. New Delhi will also have to inform some of the Western world's capitals, especially the US, UK, and Australia, and those who have been approached by Trudeau for support of his allegations about India, of the dangers of supporting and meekly submitting to the threats of terrorist outfits and drug trafficking cartels for political dividends.

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India is Proud of: Rajaram Devji Nikhade Freedom Fighter for liberation of Goa April 1924-October 2009



Rajaram Devji Nikhade was born in Patur, Akola district, in April 1924. His mother's name was Sharjabai, and his father was Devji Natthuji Nikhade. His parents were very active opponents of Nizamshahi. He set up lodging and food for the underground activists, inadvertently participating in this movement. He completed his studies at Patur Primary School until the seventh grade.

At that time, the leaders of the right and left fronts, as well as socialist ideologies, came together to aim for Goa to get independence. Numerous detachments of freedom fighters from Maharashtra were repeatedly trying to enter the territory of Goa. Goa Liberation Movement Was established in Pune. S. M. Joshi, N. G. Gore, Shirubhau Limaye, Senapati Bapat, Peter Alwaris, Madhu Dandavate, JayavantraoTilak, etc. participated in this. Interestingly, the famous musician Sudhir Phadke also actively participated in the Goa liberation struggle. Detachments of freedom fighters from Maharashtra were repeatedly trying to enter the territory of Goa. In 1955, the first unit under the leadership of Senapati Bapat left for Goa. Then he was arrested by the Portuguese army at the border of Goa. After that, one after another, freedom fighter units kept coming to Goa. This movement started in a planned manner. All the borders of Goa were occupied by freedom fighters. Along with Rajaram Nikhade from the Akola division, Shankarao Mankar, Haribhau Hiralkar, Achyutrao Deshpande, and many others participated. There, his team was arrested by the Portuguese. He then went underground and took part in the Goa Liberation War. But finally, due to the tireless work and sacrifice of thousands of activists, Goa was freed from the Portuguese.

On behalf of the Maharashtra Government, the late Chief Minister Vasanttrao Naik honored him with the Swatantrya Sainik Sanmanpatra on October 2, 1971.

After independence, Rajaram worked in the private transportation sector. He was an active worker for the Samajwadi Party. He made unremitting efforts to solve the problems of workers in the transport sector. He joined the State Transport Board in 1965–66. There, too, he worked for the labour union of ST Corporation.

He passed away on October 27, 2009, at Akola.

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