



Volume: 5 Issue-18 | Date: 15th April 2025

A Disease-free and Productive Nation: India by 2047 - Part - 3 By Uday Kumar Varma	01
The Hidden Catalyst: By Ms. Bhavika Bedi & Ms. Sanskruti Jagtap	03
India Must Act as a Unifier in the Indian Ocean Region By Arun Prakash	05
Putin's 25 Years: From KGB Agent to Russia's Iron Fist By Dr. Santhosh Mathew	07
Tahawwur Rana's Extradition to India is Crucial By Vappala Balachandran	09
India is Proud of: Lion of Ladakh	11

Write to us at:

bulletin@finsindia.org

OFFICE :4, Belle View, Lakhamshi Nappu
Road, Dadar (East), MUMBAI - 400014
Phone 022 24127274, 98339 24371

EDITORIAL BOARD

Shri. Milind Bondale
Col Ravindra Tripathi



Nippon *india* Mutual Fund

Wealth sets you free



**The difference
between falling
and flying is
Risk Management.**

**Managing risk is more important than
simply taking risk.**

Taking risks isn't enough. Optimising risks, weighing pros and cons, and reducing the probability of untoward occurrences, is what differentiates falling and flying in investing.

Strong processes and risk management help you achieve your goals steadily and sustainably.

An investor education and awareness initiative of Nippon India Mutual Fund

#EdgeOfKnowledge

Contact your Mutual Fund Distributor or Investment Advisor | Give us a missed call on 8000112244 | Visit mf.nipponindiaim.com/EdgeOfKnowledge

Helpful Information for Mutual Fund Investors: All Mutual Fund investors have to go through a one-time KYC (know your Customer) process. Investors should deal only with registered mutual funds, to be verified on SEBI website under 'Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions'. For redressal of your complaints, you may please visit www.scores.gov.in. For more info on KYC, change in various details and redressal of complaints, visit mf.nipponindiaim.com/InvestorEducation/what-to-know-when-investing

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

A Disease-Free and Productive Nation: India by 2047

Part - 3

By Uday Kumar Varma

Author is a former Secretary, Information and Broadcasting, GOI

V. Revitalizing Traditional Health Systems: The Role of Yoga and Pranayama

India's traditional health systems, deeply rooted in its civilizational ethos, offer invaluable resources for fostering a healthier and more resilient population. Among these, yoga and pranayama stand out as holistic practices that address the interconnected dimensions of physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Their potential as preventive health tools is particularly significant in an era where lifestyle diseases are on the rise.

Yoga, with its myriad asanas (postures) and practices, improves flexibility, enhances strength, and promotes balance. It has been scientifically validated for its efficacy in managing chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, and arthritis. Beyond the physical, yoga's emphasis on mindfulness contributes to better stress management and mental resilience. Pranayama, the art of breath control, complements yoga by enhancing respiratory efficiency, reducing anxiety, and improving cardiovascular health. Together, these practices represent a comprehensive approach to health that transcends the symptomatic treatment of illnesses.

Despite their historical prominence, traditional health practices remain underutilized in contemporary healthcare systems. The integration of yoga and pranayama into public health initiatives can yield transformative results. India has taken steps to mainstream these practices, such as establishing the Ministry of AYUSH and observing International Yoga Day. However, more comprehensive strategies are required to fully realize their potential.

To institutionalize traditional health practices as a cornerstone of preventive healthcare, the following measures are recommended:

1. **Nationwide Awareness Campaigns:** Conducting large-scale campaigns to educate citizens about the benefits of yoga and pranayama, with a particular focus on underserved communities. These campaigns can leverage social media, traditional media, and community outreach programs to ensure widespread participation.
2. **Incorporation into Education:** Introducing yoga and pranayama in school curricula from the primary level to inculcate lifelong habits of healthy living. Training educators to effectively teach these practices will be critical for their successful implementation.
3. **Workplace Wellness Programs:** Encouraging corporations to adopt yoga and pranayama sessions as part of employee wellness programs. Studies have shown that such initiatives not only improve health outcomes but also enhance productivity and reduce stress-related absenteeism.
4. **Establishment of Wellness Centres:** Setting up dedicated wellness centres in every district that provide yoga and pranayama classes alongside other traditional therapies. These centres can serve as hubs for research, training, and practice, making traditional health systems accessible to all demographics.
5. **Integration with Modern Medicine:** Encouraging collaborations between practitioners of traditional health systems and modern medicine to create a synergistic approach. For instance, yoga-based interventions can be prescribed as adjunct therapies for patients recovering from surgeries or managing chronic diseases.

6. Policy Support and Research: Allocating resources for rigorous scientific research to validate the health benefits of yoga and pranayama. Evidence-based studies can bolster their credibility and facilitate their global acceptance. Policies should also incentivize the adoption of these practices through subsidies and tax benefits for institutions promoting them.

7. Global Outreach: Positioning India as the global leader in traditional health practices by promoting yoga and pranayama on international platforms. This not only enhances India's soft power but also creates opportunities for cultural and economic exchange.

By 2047, the integration of yoga and pranayama into India's healthcare framework can serve as a model for other nations. These practices, when harmonized with modern medical advancements, have the potential to address the dual challenges of lifestyle-related diseases and mental health crises. The revival and institutionalization of traditional health wisdom will not only honour India's heritage but also propel it toward a healthier and more harmonious future.

VI. Leveraging Evolving Technologies, Including AI

The integration of evolving technologies, particularly artificial intelligence (AI), has the potential to revolutionize healthcare in India by 2047. As the second-most populous country, India faces unique challenges that require innovative and scalable solutions. AI, along with other technological advancements, can address critical gaps in healthcare delivery, improve accessibility, and enhance outcomes.

AI-powered tools are already transforming diagnostics, treatment planning, and patient management. For example, AI algorithms can analyze medical imaging to detect diseases like cancer at early stages, ensuring timely intervention. Machine learning models can predict disease outbreaks by analysing environmental and social data, enabling public health authorities to take proactive measures. In the realm of personalized medicine, AI systems can process genetic and clinical data to develop tailored treatment plans, improving patient outcomes while reducing unnecessary interventions.

Telemedicine has emerged as a game-changer in bridging the urban-rural healthcare divide. Mobile health applications and virtual consultations enable remote diagnosis and treatment, reducing the need for travel and lowering costs for patients in underserved regions. Initiatives such as e-Sanjeevani, India's tele consultation platform, exemplify how technology can democratize healthcare access. Wearable devices integrated with AI are further enhancing preventive care by monitoring vital signs in real-time and alerting users to potential health risks.

Robotic surgery and automation are transforming hospital operations, enabling precision in surgical procedures and streamlining administrative workflows. These technologies not only improve efficiency but also minimize human error, enhancing patient safety.

To fully harness the potential of these technologies, India must invest in a robust digital health infrastructure. This includes expanding internet connectivity, particularly in rural areas, and creating interoperable health information systems that ensure seamless data exchange.

VII. Tackling Ethical Challenges in Health Technology

As technology, including AI, becomes more pervasive, ethical concerns such as data privacy, algorithmic bias, and misuse must be addressed. Robust legal frameworks, ethical guidelines, and accountability measures should be implemented to prevent exploitation and ensure equitable access to technological advancements.

By addressing these systemic challenges through robust policies, economic incentives, and public engagement, India can create a healthcare ecosystem that prioritizes prevention, empowers individuals, and aligns commercial interests with the greater public good.

To Be continued in next issue

The Hidden Catalyst: Unravelling the Role of Illicit Networks in Manipur's Ethnic Strife

By Ms. Bhavika Bedi & Ms. Sanskruti Jagtap

The Authors are Postgraduate Student of Political Science, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai. The authors recently completed an internship with the FINS, working on Manipur violence.

The violence that broke out in Manipur in May 2023 was a result of ethnic tensions, political conflicts, and long-standing grievances. The immediate cause was a court judgment permitting the Meitei community, living in the Imphal Valley, to seek Scheduled Tribe (ST) status. This ruling raised fears among the Kuki and Naga communities, who are already STs and inhabit the hilly areas. Since 2012, the Manipur Scheduled Tribes Demand Committee (STDCM) has advocated for Meitei inclusion in the ST list on grounds of marginalization. In 2023, the Manipur High Court instructed the state government to make a recommendation for this. This triggered protests, and the All-Tribal Students' Union of Manipur (ATSUM) held a "Tribal Solidarity March," which resulted in clashes and the deployment of the Indian Army.

While this incident is the immediate trigger, conflict in Manipur is more complex than it appears. Among the many factors contributing to the continued conflict, this article will focus on two important factors, namely the link of the conflict with drug smuggling and arms trafficking.

As per the Madras Courier, the drug trade works subtly in the background, overshadowed by the ethnic violence and social drift, leaving the external world unaware of the continuous smuggling. Manipur has been a prime transit point for drugs such as heroin and methamphetamine, which are smuggled in from Myanmar. These drugs not only power the local economy but also finance militant outfits that are engaged in the instability of the region. Analysts contend that the drug trafficking in the region has moved from the Myanmar-Thailand-Laos border to the Myanmar-India-Bangladesh borders, which has led the Governor of Manipur to initiate a "war on drugs"—an effort which many consider ineffective.

As mentioned in one of the reports of Observer Research Foundation, Moreh, a town along the India-Myanmar border, is one of the primary drug-smuggling centres from where methamphetamine and heroin entering India. Furthermore, poppy farming, previously common in Myanmar, has moved to Manipur as a result of growing international surveillance in Myanmar by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), which employs satellite imaging to monitor illegal crops. India is not monitored, and poppy farming is legal here for some uses, thus Manipur is a suitable place for drug cartels. Farmers in Manipur, who tend to be the poorest, are lured into poppy growing with money loans from these cartels, driving the trade even further.

The narcotics trade, suspected to enjoy political patronage, sustains violence through the promotion of a culture of impunity and financial subsidies to armed groups. This, in turn, fuels social instability, with problems of addiction and economic inequality rising as consequences. Political elites – including top leadership in the State – have been accused of gaining from the drug trade, which has created accusations that they have no desire to bring an end to the conflict, as it takes attention away from the illegal business they are conducting.

Illicit arms trafficking is another critical factor intensifying the ongoing ethnic strife in Manipur. While the conflict initially stemmed from long-standing tensions between the communities, it has evolved into a violent struggle fuelled by the unchecked flow of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW). The porous 400-kilometer Indo-Myanmar border has played a central role in this crisis, allowing arms smugglers to operate with ease.

The Free Movement Regime along this border permits certain tribal groups to cross without visas, making it difficult for authorities to curb the trafficking of weapons and explosives. According to the National Investigation Agency (NIA), a network of arms dealers and insurgents spanning Mizoram and Myanmar has been actively involved in procuring and transporting sophisticated weapons into Manipur.

Investigations reveal that arms and ammunition are funnelled into Manipur through multiple channels. One major route involves weapons procured in Mizoram being supplied to Myanmar insurgent groups, who then smuggle them back into Manipur. In a recent case, the NIA filed charge sheets against 10 individuals from Mizoram and Myanmar for their involvement in smuggling arms and explosives across the Indo-Myanmar border. Seized weapons were found to have been supplied by a Guwahati-based company, Albarin Explotech, highlighting the far-reaching web of this illicit trade.

The link between arms trafficking and the broader regional conflict cannot be ignored. The NIA uncovered that hawala channels were being used to pay Myanmar-based suppliers for arms and ammunition, with funds flowing across the borders of Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Northeast India. Lalngaihawma, a key accused from Mizoram, was found to have established strong ties with Myanmar-based insurgent groups, using both legal and illegal means to procure weapons. His associate, Lalmuanawma, a Myanmar national, played a direct role in supplying arms to militant outfits in Manipur. Additionally, the Kuki-Chin insurgent groups, backed by Myanmar's rebel networks, have used the region's illicit drug trade to finance their arms purchases, further entangling drug money with the arms economy.

The situation has worsened since Myanmar's military coup in 2021, as the ruling junta lost control over key territories, allowing ethnic armed groups from Myanmar to consolidate power and expand smuggling routes along the borders with India. The Diplomat reported that the influx of Kuki-Chin refugees into Mizoram and Manipur has added another layer of complexity, with Meitei civil society organizations alleging that the migration has fuelled narco-terrorism and cross-border insurgency. Furthermore, The Indian Express reports suggest that the arms looted from Manipur's police armouries, which were around 4,000 weapons and six lakh rounds of ammunition, have further fed the conflict, with many of these weapons either ending up in the hands of local militants or being sold in black markets.

The convergence of illicit arms trafficking, drug money, and ethnic insurgency has transformed Manipur's conflict from a localized ethnic clash into a larger transnational security crisis. The unchecked flow of small arms and light weapons across the porous Indo-Myanmar border, coupled with the financial underpinnings of the narcotics trade, has not only sustained the violence but deepened the divide between communities. What makes this situation even more alarming is the apparent failure of authorities to dismantle these networks effectively. As violence continues to rage on, the absence of accountability and effective intervention risks turning Manipur into a permanent hotspot of insurgency, where criminal networks and ethnic tensions fuel one another in an endless cycle of conflict.

India Must Act as a Unifier in the Indian Ocean Region

By Arun Prakash

The writer is a former chief of the Indian Navy

Apart from its “soft power” and humanitarian aspects, maritime diplomacy can help contain, resolve and prevent conflict

K M Panikkar, eminent Indian diplomat, historian, and strategic thinker, said in a 1945 essay: “While to other countries, the Indian Ocean is only one of the important oceanic areas, to India it is the vital sea...” In contemporary India, apart from the Navy, most others have paid scant attention to Panikkar’s writings, and to his emphasis on the creation of an Indian Ocean identity.

We need to note that unlike most other parts of the world, the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has historically lacked forums and institutions that could facilitate dialogue or help create a cooperative response to developments affecting the whole region. There has never been a security architecture in the IOR, because diversity, combined with chauvinistic self-interest, has prevented the formation of functional, effective regional institutions.

Past attempts to give substance to the idea of the Indian Ocean as a unified geopolitical space have thrown up organisations whose acronyms constitute a veritable “alphabet soup” (IORA, SAARC, BIMSTEC, IPOI, CSC and IONS). For a number of reasons, including lassitude on the part of the Ministry of External Affairs of India, most of these endeavours, bar the Indian Ocean Naval Symposium (IONS) have failed to gather substantial momentum. The emergence of the US-origin “Indo-Pacific” paradigm, in the last decade, has also served to divert attention from such endeavours.

Against this backdrop, the Indian Ocean Conference (IOC), a “consultative forum for countries in the Indian Ocean Region” organised annually since 2016 by the Ministry of External Affairs in association with the BJP think-tank, India Foundation, appears to have attained considerable traction and participation. The forum focuses on the ways and means of implementing SAGAR, or “Security and Growth for All in the Region”, the watchword created by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015 for IOR maritime cooperation/diplomacy.

Delivering the keynote address at the eighth edition of the IOC, held recently in Muscat, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar referred, without naming names, to the “churn” being experienced at two geographic extremities of the IOR, that is, the ongoing Middle East conflict and the threat posed to international shipping by the Houthi rebels, as well as to tensions across the South China Sea arising from “stronger assertions of interests” and “unilateral changes to the status quo” (presumably) by China. From India’s own experience, he cited the importance of “adhering to agreements and understandings” as a central element for ensuring stability and predictability.

As far as the remainder of the IOR is concerned, Jaishankar pointed to certain economic, developmental, environmental and maritime security-related issues that impacted all nations alike. He then identified a list of 10 examples where, according to him, India continued to contribute by “shouldering responsibilities, stepping up in times of trouble and providing leadership where required”.

This is a list guaranteed to warm the cockles of a sailor’s heart, because almost all the examples cited are covered under the rubric of “maritime diplomacy”, actively and regularly practised by the Indian Navy (IN). Many will see this as validation of the IN’s 2007 Maritime Strategy, which declared: “The main business of major navies in the 21st century is to use warships to support foreign policy...”

There has been an enduring debate in India's strategic circles about the inadequate use of military power to advance the nation's foreign policy interests. There is a view that India's external objectives could have been far better served if the military had been given a greater role in the formulation and implementation of foreign and security policies. India's great-power ambitions and its quest for a place on the international high table, it is felt, cannot be achieved relying merely on "yoga and Bollywood". We need to shed inhibitions about the display and deployment of military power.

India's maritime diplomacy had actually made its mark in December 2004, when the Great Asian Tsunami hit the region. Within hours, the IN reached out with alacrity, not just to India's stricken citizens but also to its Sri Lankan, Maldivian and Indonesian neighbours in dire need. The humanitarian assistance and disaster relief (HADR) rendered by India and the IN left a deep impression on our neighbourhood. This image was strongly reinforced by subsequent sea-lift operations mounted by the IN as a "first responder" to evacuate refugees fleeing from disaster-stricken or conflict zones.

In order to realise its true potential as a "preferred security partner" and "first responder" in the IOR, New Delhi needs to develop a fully funded programme for security and HADR assistance, including amphibious heavy-lift capability and a hospital ship. To ensure timely delivery of assistance, the impediments and delays arising from lack of MoD-MEA coordination need to be eliminated.

An important component of India's evolving maritime diplomacy has been the creation of a strong Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) capability. This enables the IN to share, in real time, a multidimensional maritime traffic picture with the neighbouring Seychelles, Mauritius, Maldives, and Sri Lanka. The IN has also been helping island nations safeguard their vast exclusive economic zones against poachers and smugglers by means of aerial and ship patrols.

Maritime diplomacy is a flexible instrument that can be used to convey messages and influence events by offering a choice of naval actions, ranging from peaceful cooperation at one end to compellence and deterrence at the other. Even though they are not designed for this role, warships have many attributes that make them useful diplomatic instruments.

In the emerging international environment, maritime diplomacy will have an increasingly important role to play, because, apart from its "soft power" and humanitarian aspects, it can help contain, resolve and prevent conflict. For this to happen, navies, bureaucracies, diplomats and statesmen need to be on the same page and evolve a strategic approach to maritime diplomacy, within the overall ambit of a national security strategy. All this would require a "whole of government" approach, which is yet to emerge in our system.

[Read complete article on website indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

Putin's 25 Years: From KGB Agent to Russia's Iron Fist

By Dr. Santhosh Mathew

The Author is Associate Professor Centre for South Asian Studies, School of International Studies & Social Sciences Pondicherry Central University, India.

"History has shown that the Russian people can overcome any challenge if they are united. We are not afraid of difficulties; we will face them with strength and determination." – Vladimir Putin

On March 26, 2000, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin rose to power, marking the beginning of a new chapter in Russia's history. Twenty-five years later, Putin remains the unchallenged ruler of Russia, shaping the nation's political, military, and geopolitical destiny with an iron grip reminiscent of the Soviet era. As Russia stands on the global stage, locked in conflict with Ukraine and challenging Western dominance, Putin's rule evokes comparisons with another towering figure from Russian history — Joseph Stalin. Like Stalin, Putin has not only consolidated power domestically but also revived Russia's position as a formidable force in global politics. After Lenin and Stalin, Russian glory seems to have reached its highest point under Putin's regime.

Stalin ruled the Soviet Union from 1924 to 1953, for nearly three decades, transforming it into a superpower through ruthless political purges, military expansion, and industrialization. Putin, whose rise to power was forged in the shadow of the collapsing Soviet Union, has followed a strikingly similar path. Both leaders emerged from periods of national turmoil, restored military strength, centralized political control, and challenged Western hegemony. Stalin used the Red Army to expand Soviet influence across Eastern Europe; Putin, through the annexation of Crimea and the war in Ukraine, has reasserted Russia's territorial ambitions. Stalin crushed internal dissent through brutal purges; Putin has silenced opposition with calculated precision, imprisoning critics and consolidating media control.

Putin's journey to power began long before he entered the Kremlin. Born in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) in 1952, he grew up in the harsh environment of post-war Soviet Russia. His career as a KGB officer in East Germany during the Cold War gave him the strategic and tactical acumen that would define his political style. The fall of the Berlin Wall and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union left Russia in political and economic chaos. Putin's entry into politics in the 1990s was swift and calculated. From deputy mayor of St. Petersburg to head of the Federal Security Service (FSB) — the successor to the KGB — Putin positioned himself as a stabilizing force amid the post-Soviet chaos.

In 1999, Boris Yeltsin, weakened by political scandals and health issues, appointed Putin as Prime Minister and then unexpectedly resigned, naming Putin as acting President. On March 26, 2000, Putin was elected as Russia's President — and the course of Russian history was altered forever. From the outset, Putin projected strength and control, vowing to restore Russia's status as a global power.

Perhaps Putin's most defining moment came in 2014 with the annexation of Crimea. After the pro-Western government in Ukraine came to power following the ousting of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich, Putin acted swiftly. Russian troops, operating under the guise of local self-defence forces, occupied Crimea and held a controversial referendum that resulted in the region's annexation into the Russian Federation. The West reacted with outrage, imposing sanctions and isolating Russia diplomatically. Yet, within Russia, Putin's popularity soared. Crimea was seen as a historical Russian territory reclaimed — a modern-day geopolitical masterstroke.

The Ukraine war, which began in February 2022, stands as the ultimate test of Putin's strategic vision. What was initially projected as a swift military operation has evolved into a prolonged and bloody conflict. Western nations have armed Ukraine and impose unprecedented sanctions on Russia, aiming to cripple its economy and military strength. But Putin remains defiant. Russian troops have made significant advances in eastern Ukraine, and Putin's control over state media has ensured that his narrative remains dominant at home. Despite the international backlash, Putin's grip on power remains unchallenged. For his supporters, Putin's actions in Ukraine are not aggression but a defense of Russian sovereignty and influence.

Putin's 25-year rule has not been defined solely by military strength. His diplomatic manoeuvring has also elevated Russia's standing on the global stage. Putin's relationship with India has been a cornerstone of his foreign policy success. Strategic defense deals, energy partnerships, and shared geopolitical interests have strengthened the Russia-India alliance. Despite pressure from the West, India has maintained a balanced stance on the Ukraine conflict, continuing to engage with Russia economically and militarily. Similarly, Putin's alignment with China has created a strategic counterweight to American dominance. The Russia-China axis, based on mutual economic and military cooperation, has reshaped global power dynamics.

Yet, Putin's reign is not without controversy. He is simultaneously the most hated and most admired leader on the global stage. Western nations view him as a dangerous autocrat who seeks to destabilize democratic institutions and expand Russian influence through cyber warfare, military aggression, and political manipulation. The accusations of Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. presidential election and Putin's support for far-right populist movements in Europe have only deepened Western mistrust. However, in parts of the Global South and within Russia, Putin is seen as a leader who stood up to Western dominance and restored Russia's global stature. As he marks 25 years in power, Putin has cemented his place alongside Lenin and Stalin in Russian history. The constitutional amendment that allows him to remain in power until 2036 means that he could potentially surpass Stalin's record as the longest-serving Russian leader. At 71, Putin shows no signs of stepping down. His ability to navigate the complex terrain of global politics, military conflicts, and domestic challenges has made him one of the most consequential leaders of the 21st century.

During the post-Stalin era, Nikita Khrushchev famously denounced Stalin's brutalities. During one such speech, a member of the audience asked Khrushchev why he hadn't spoken out against Stalin when he was alive. Khrushchev paused, scanned the room, and asked, "Who said that?" Silence followed. Khrushchev then said, "That's why. "The chilling atmosphere of fear under Stalin mirrors the current climate under Putin. Just as Khrushchev's silence reflected the danger of speaking against Stalin, today's silence in Russia reflects the consequences of opposing Putin. His intolerance toward dissent has ensured that no one dares to speak out — because they already know the consequences.

Tahawwur Rana's Extradition to India is Crucial

By Vappala Balachandran

The writer is a former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat

As India will not get hold of Headley, Rana's deposition will help put together pieces of the puzzle

Tahawwur Hussain Rana has finally reached India. A few things must be recalled to understand the significance of his extradition. Firstly, there were many missing links in the story immediately after the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack. For example, the long address of the then US FBI Director Robert S Mueller to the Council on Foreign Relations on 23 February 2009 revealed details of cooperation that the US extended immediately after the attack. However, it did not touch upon Pakistan's transnational conspiracy. These were unveiled much later by Sebastian Rotella of ProPublica and Stephen Tankel of American University during the trial of Rana and David Coleman Headley in the US.

Secondly, unlike the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks formed after 9/11, the high-level two-member committee appointed by the Government of Maharashtra under the chairmanship of the late Ram Pradhan post-26/11 – I was the other member – did not have the mandate to investigate the terrorist attack. Rather, we were only supposed to do a “systemic” probe on why the police could not successfully tackle the attack.

Though I had led the Indian intelligence teams in 1993 and 1994 for our annual dialogues on terrorism with US interlocutors, no clearance was given to the 26/11 committee to use our overseas contacts to learn something more about these attacks. It was left to the Mumbai Police, which did not have such overseas connections, to arrive at their own conclusions.

We were left wondering how an obscure location, known to everybody as “Nariman House”, was chosen by the well-armed terrorists to be a priority target on the night of 26/11. Upon questioning Colaba police, the local police station, we gathered that it was a place where unidentified foreigners, mostly diamond dealers from Israel, stayed in the house of a rabbi who used to maintain a very low profile.

Then, we questioned a senior officer of the rank of Deputy Commissioner in charge of foreigners' registration, who told us that even the local Israeli consulate did not regard it as a priority terror target to be included in their list that was regularly sent to the Centre and the Maharashtra government for special security on Jewish holidays. “Nariman House” (a Chabad House) was never mentioned in any advance intelligence alerts. It was not even mentioned as a target in the correspondence from the Israeli embassy to the Government of India.

An inkling of its importance came in November 2009 during the Asia-Pacific Homeland Security Summit in Honolulu, where I was asked to deliver the keynote address on protecting urban centres against terrorism. The audience consisted mostly of US government officials from the State Department, Defence, Air Force, Navy, Marines, Homeland Security and Hawaii State. During that meeting, a young US Air Force officer told me about the importance of Chabad Houses all over the world.

Later, Sebastian Rotella and Stephen Tankel (author of *Storming the World Stage*) added that Headley's ISI handler, identified as Major Iqbal, had deployed him on his last five reconnaissance missions in India. According to Major Iqbal, Chabad House was one of the priority targets since it was a “front of Mossad”, Israel's intelligence agency.

We cannot get Headley to India, though he deposed “online” during the trial of Abu Jundal in February 2016. Therefore, there are various reasons why Rana’s presence is important. The first reason is to correct our own court records in the Mumbai Crime Branch’s final charge sheet dated 25 February 2009 which mentioned that Indian nationals Fahim Ansari and Sabahuddin Shaikh had handed over rough target maps of Mumbai targets to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) leadership in January 2008.

Our later enquiries, with the help of Rotella and Tankel, had revealed that it was Headley, a US national, who had provided video and visual data on all the Mumbai targets which were fed into five Garmin Rino GPS sets procured by the LeT and supplied to the gang of 10 terrorists. As a result, Fahim Ansari and Sabahuddin Shaikh were acquitted on 3 May 2010.

The second reason is that the full activities of Headley, which were brought to light in the US Chicago District Court of Judge Harry Leinenweber, have not been placed in our judicial record. These were, in the words of the US Judicial Department: conspiracy to bomb public places in India; to murder people in India, aid the murder of foreigners, conspiracy to provide material support to terrorism in India; conspiracy to support Lashkar.

Rana’s words and prosecution, therefore, are important to fill the gaps.

Read complete article on website indianexpress.com

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of the FINS or its members.

India is Proud of:
Lion of Ladakh - Colonel Chewang Rinchen, MVC Bar, SM
(11 Nov 1931- 01 July 1997)
(Youngest Maha Vir Chakra winner, at the age of 17 Years)



Ladakh has given birth to some of India's bravest souls in uniform. Among the first in Independent India, however, was Colonel Chewang Rinchen. Born on November 11, 1931, in the remote, and picturesque village of Sumur in Nubra Valley, he lived a remarkable life.

In 1948, when Pakistan's tribal raiders captured Kargil and set their eyes on Leh, Ladakh was being defended by just 33 men of the Jammu and Kashmir state forces and 20 volunteers led by Lieutenant Colonel Prithi Singh. When Lt Col Prithi Singh raised the tricolour in Leh and sought volunteers to defend Ladakh against Pakistani raiders, 17-year-old Chewang Rinchen from the Nubra Valley was the first to respond to protect his motherland. As a young lad of 17 Chewang Rinchen enrolled himself in the Ladakh Guards on 25 July 1948. With hardly a week's training, he organised and trained a local militia unit of 28 youths. In September, operating alongside Indian Army units, he fought in the Nubra Valley. His grim defence of a position on the Kharu Nullah earned him a promotion to the rank of Jemadar (Naib Subedar). In the same month, negotiating a 17,000 feet-high snow-clad pass under most trying conditions, he helped the capture of Lama House, a vital enemy stronghold. On 15 December, having marched for three days over high snowdrifts, he put in a fierce attack on a high hill feature near Biagdangdo and captured it. This action was immediately followed by his capture of Tukkar Hill, the last enemy position in Leh tehsil. This last action involved crossing over snow-clad hills 21,000 feet high. Half of his platoon was suffering from frostbite. But under his inspiring leadership and following his example of personal bravery, his men had accomplished a seemingly impossible feat. For his bravery and leadership, he was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra in 1952. Till date, he remains the youngest recipient of the MVC.

His subsequent career saw him bagging the Sena Medal in the 1962 war against China, for his defence of the Daulat Beg Oldi Tri-junction. During the 1971 Indo-Pak war, then Maj Chewang Rinchen was commander of the force that was assigned the task of capturing the Chalunka complex of enemy defenses in the Partappur Sector. Each of these nine enemy strong points was held by one to two platoons and fortified with mines and wire obstacles. This operation was planned and executed with professional competence and great zeal. Under most adverse weather conditions, Maj Rinchen led his command, displaying aggressive spirit, fighting from bunker to bunker, exhorting, and encouraging his men to destroy the enemy thus making the operation a complete success.

In this action, Maj Chewang Rinchen displayed inspiring leadership, indomitable courage, initiative and exceptional devotion to duty in the highest traditions of the Indian Army and was awarded Maha Vir Chakra, the second time.

Rinchen eventually retired as a Colonel in the Indian Army, and remains one of the institution's defining figures, playing a critical role in the creation of the Ladakh Scouts. He passed away on July 1, 1997, at the age of 66 years.

The 1,400 feet long strategic bridge situated at the height of 14,650 feet on the Shyok river in the Ladakh region has been named after the legendary Colonel Chewang Rinchen. His ancestral home in Sumur village was converted to a heritage site. His story remains an inspiration to many young Ladakhis looking to serve their nation even today.
