

PAKISTAN'S

Not that anyone believed them, the Pakistani government and the Army told naked lies about Operation Sindoor. The Army claimed that the Indian attack did not cause much damage. Indian had nothing to prove by countering such baseless statements as it had shown the irrefutable evidence of the damage Indian missiles had inflicted upon nine major terrorist training camps including those of the Lashkar e toiba and Jaish e Muhammad inside Pakistan. Knowing well Pakistan's penchant for speaks lies about its security, India had shown the satellite imageries of the nine attacks carried out deep Inside Pakistan under Operation Sindoor while briefing the media during it. Finally, the cat is out of the bag as Hafiz Abdul Rauf, a top commander of the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) had spoken publically about the damage caused by Operation Sindoor. Rauf's address to the "pass outs" from Lashkar's terror school at Muridke near Lahore is going viral on social media. He is seen telling the audiences that the night between May 6 and 7 was very scary and caused massive devastation. He admitted that the Indians had hit the Lashkar headquarters at Murike, where once hafiz Saeed had his throne. Recently another Lashkar commander had confessed to being called by the Pakistani Army to lead the funeral prayers of the soldiers. Again Jaish e Muhammad pasted pictures of its cadres killed in Kashmir and it's a exhaustive list. Now, Lashkar of Jaish are no ordinary group that Pakistan can call non-state actors and get away with it. Both Lashkar and Jaish e Muhammad are UN proscribed entities and the Pakistani army having an active connection with its leaders exposes Pakistan and confirms its status as a government that sponsor terrorism on its soil, Pakistan is a classic case of a country falling in the ditches it dug for others.

The quiet power of Yoga: Strength through flexibility

Sharmila Das

In today's fitness-driven world, strength is often measured by what is visible—bulging muscles, defined abs, and the ability to lift heavy weights. Gym culture celebrates size, symmetry, and power. Yoga, on the other hand, follows a very different philosophy. It does not promise big muscles or dramatic physical transformation. What it offers instead is something far more sustainable and essential: a strong, flexible, and resilient body that functions well through all stages of life.

Yoga strengthens the body, but not in the way most people expect. The strength developed through yoga is not about isolated muscle growth; it is about integrated strength—where muscles, joints, ligaments, breath, and balance work together as one system.

How Yoga Builds Strength

Yoga uses the body's own weight as resistance. When you hold poses such as plank, warrior, chair pose, or downward dog, multiple muscle groups engage simultaneously. These poses build functional strength—strength that supports real-life movement rather than just aesthetic appearance.

Yoga exercises that often isolate one muscle at a time, yoga activates stabilising muscles that are usually neglected. Small muscles around joints, especially in the hips, shoulders, spine, and knees, become stronger. This reduces the risk of injury and improves



posture and balance. Yoga also strengthens connective tissues—tendons, ligaments, and fascia—which are critical for long-term joint health. These tissues are rarely targeted in conventional gym routines, yet they determine how well the body holds together under stress.

Flexibility: Yoga's Core Gift

Flexibility is the ability of muscles and joints to move through their full range of motion. Yoga is fundamentally designed to improve this capacity. Through gentle stretching, sustained poses, and mindful breathing, muscles gradually lengthen and soften. Flexibility in yoga is not forced. Movements are slow, controlled, and synchronised with the breath. This allows muscles to release tension rather than resist it.

Over time, stiffness reduces, joints open up, and the body feels lighter and freer.

This flexibility is not just physical; it reflects adaptability. A flexible body responds better to sudden movements, uneven surfaces, and daily physical demands. It bends without breaking.

Gym Strength vs Yogic Strength

Gym workouts, especially weight training, are excellent for building muscle mass and visible strength. However, when flexibility is ignored, muscles can become tight and shortened. This creates imbalance—strong muscles pulling against stiff joints. A body built only for size may look powerful but can lack mobility. Many gym-focused individuals

experience reduced range of motion, back pain, shoulder stiffness, or knee issues over time. The body becomes rigid, and simple movements—squatting, bending, twisting—can feel restricted. Yoga produces the opposite effect. The body may not appear bulky, but it moves efficiently. A yogic body is strong without heaviness, and capable without strain.

Why Flexibility Is Essential

Flexibility is not optional; it is foundational to health. As we age, muscles naturally shorten and joints lose lubrication. Without flexibility training, the body becomes prone to pain, falls, and chronic conditions. Flexible muscles allow joints to move freely, reducing wear and tear. This protects the spine, hips, knees, and

shoulders—the most commonly injured areas. Flexibility also improves circulation, allowing nutrients to reach tissues and waste to be removed more efficiently. Importantly, flexibility supports mental well-being. Tight muscles often hold stress, especially in the neck, shoulders, and lower back. Yoga releases these stored tensions, calming the nervous system and improving sleep, focus, and emotional balance.

Yoga and Longevity

Yoga is not about short-term results; it is about lifelong movement. A flexible, well-aligned body ages better. It remains independent, pain-free, and active for longer. This is why yoga practitioners often appear younger in movement than their chronological age. Their bodies may not be muscular in the conventional sense, but they are efficient, responsive, and resilient. Yoga does not aim to give you large muscles, and that is its strength. Instead, it offers balance—between strength and flexibility, effort and ease, stability and mobility. In a world obsessed with appearance, yoga focuses on function. It builds a body that supports you in daily life, protects you from injury, and adapts gracefully to change.

True strength is not just the ability to lift heavy weights. It is the ability to move freely, recover quickly, and remain comfortable in your own body. Yoga delivers this quietly, steadily, and profoundly.

The writer is a trained Sivananda Yoga teacher; views are personal

DOES GOD EXIST? THE EGO'S FAVOURITE SHIELD

Acharya Prashant

Does God exist? asks the ego. We take the question seriously. The ego has succeeded. In listening to the question, we have forgotten to listen to what the ego deliberately did not ask. Our response to the 'God exists?' question usually is 'Yes,' or 'No,' or 'I do not know.' All three are irrelevant responses. We forget to ask: for whom? For whom does God exist or not? Who is asking this question?

The believer says 'Exists' and clutches scripture; the atheist says 'No' and clutches logic. In either case, the ego experiences some relief after speaking. In questioning the existence of God, the ego successfully hides its own non-existence.

What does it mean to 'exist'? The question was about God. But the important word is not 'God.' The important word is 'exist.'

Before asking whether God exists, ask: what does it mean to say anything exists at all?

Here is the newspaper you are reading. Does this newspaper exist? Yes. How do you know? Your eyes see it. Your hands can hold it. Your senses report it. Your mind arranges these reports into a coherent object called 'newspaper.' And behind the mind sits the sense of 'I,' the claimant that says, 'I know, I judge, I conclude.'

Now notice: who is above whom? Is

the newspaper above you, or are you above the newspaper?

The newspaper exists because your senses certify it. Close your eyes. The newspaper disappears. Open them. It returns. For you, 'exists' is always certification by senses and mind.

Chairs, phones, planets, galaxies—everything that 'exists' is something your senses and mind have certified. Everything that 'is' sits below you in the hierarchy. You are the judge issuing certificates of existence.

The problem with 'God' Now say 'God exists.' You say God is the highest, the supreme, the ultimate. Being highest and supreme is the definitional hallmark of 'Godness.' But anything that 'exists' must be certified by your senses and mind. Anything that 'is' becomes your object. If God 'is,' then God too is below your senses, your mind and your ego. How can the highest be your object? If God exists the way the newspaper exists, God has become your slave.

You have committed an impertinence while claiming devotion. Now the atheist. He declares, 'God does not exist.' Who is the judge? The same senses. The same mind. The same ego on its throne, issuing verdicts. Whether you say 'is' or 'is not,' you have placed yourself above the thing being judged.

The theist makes God his slave by affirming. The atheist makes Truth his

slave by denying. Same arrogance, different vocabulary. Saint Kabir was asked: does God exist? He replied: Hai kahoon to hai nahin, nahin kaha na jaaye. Hai nahin ke beech men sahab raha samaay. 'If I say He is, He is not; and it also cannot be said that He is not.' Because 'is' makes Him my object. 'Is not' does the same. Beyond 'is' and 'is not,' Truth is not an object of debate. Truth is not an object.

The nature of consciousness Consciousness, as we ordinarily experience it, is not some pure, luminous awareness. It is dualistic. At one end sits the experienter, the ego. At the other end sits the experienced object. Between them runs a relationship of desire, delusion, and attachment. There is always an 'I' experiencing something—always a subject here, an object there. The 'I' and the object define each other. Without an object, the ego has nothing to cling to. Without the ego, the object has no one to certify it. They arise together and collapse together.

When you ask 'Does God exist?', you are trying to place God as an object, with yourself as the knowing subject. You are trying to bring the ultimate into the same framework where you experience chairs, phones, and newspapers.

The category error Philosophers call this a category error. What is the colour of a fragrance? What does white light smell like? Light does

not belong to the category of things that have smell.

Similarly, 'exists' and 'does not exist' apply only to objects, to things certified by senses and mind. When you ask whether the ground of existence itself 'exists,' you are asking for the smell of light.

The question is not deep. It is malformed.

The moment you say 'is' or 'is not,' you have objectified. You have made it small. You have made it yours. Sophisticated theologians may say their God is 'beyond being' or 'the ground of existence.' Very well. Then stop saying 'God exists.' Say instead: 'Existence is.'

The impertinence of naming and framing

Those who understood this refused to give the ultimate a name. Why? Because naming begins objectification. The moment you name something, imagination rushes in.

This is why the Upanishads refused to name the ultimate. They said: you cannot describe it, define it, locate it inside or outside, call it big or small. The Kena Upanishad says: speech goes out to describe it and returns exhausted. The mind goes out to imagine it and falls back, having grasped nothing.

So the sages used only a pointer: Tat. That. And then they said Tat Tvam Asi. That you are—not outside you, not your object.

From fragmentation to functional integrity: Reclaiming the Aravallis

BKP Sinha | Arvind Kumar Jha

The Supreme Court's recent decision to stay its earlier order regarding the definition of the Aravalli range underscores its role as the ultimate custodian of the Public Trust Doctrine. It highlights the recognition that effective ecological protection cannot rest on rigid, reductionist parameters, especially in the case of landscapes as complex and ecologically sensitive as the Aravallis.

The Aravallis are not monolithic—neither geologically nor in their legal or revenue classification. These ancient fold mountains, with diverse Precambrian rocks, are a complex mosaic of land categories with distinct ownerships and regulatory frameworks. They include Gair Mumkin Pahar (uncultivable hill land), Bani or Beed (traditional village commons for grazing and community

purposes), Gair Mumkin Rada or Khoh (ravines, gullies, and foothill landscapes), Mushartarka Malkan lands (privately owned commons), 'deemed forests' as interpreted by the Supreme Court in 1996, and forest lands administered by the Forest Department.

While the Forest Conservation Act, 1980 [Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam (VSSA), 1980] applies specifically to lands classified as 'forest,' a broader constellation of legal instruments governs land use across the Aravalli landscape. In certain regions, land use is regulated by the Aravalli Notification of 1992 issued under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, imposing restrictions on activities that damage the fragile hill ecosystem.

In some other parts, especially in the National Capital Region, the NCR Planning Board Act, 1985 has designated

these landscapes as Natural Conservation Zones to safeguard the ecological and hydrological functions of the Aravallis. The Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) notifications, focusing on sub-surface hydrological connectivity in all areas, regulate activities affecting groundwater extraction and recharge. Projects such as mining operations or large townships exceeding specified thresholds are subject to mandatory Environmental Impact Assessments, further embedding environmental scrutiny within the regulatory framework.

Despite the existing regulatory systems, commercial interests driven by short-term gains have often overridden ecological considerations in the Aravallis in clear violation of the precautionary principle articulated by the Supreme Court in *MC Mehta v Union of India*. The Court held that 'where

there are threats of serious or irreversible damage, lack of full scientific certainty shall not be used as a reason for postponing cost-effective measures to prevent environmental degradation.' The Aravallis have suffered considerable destruction also through the 'salami-slicing' of projects into smaller parcels to evade EIA thresholds, the consideration of Gair Mumkin Pahar lands as readily available for mining, and piecemeal approvals damaging the Aravallis' ecological integrity. The Aravallis are suffering the tragedy of death by a thousand cuts.

Sensitivity towards natural ecosystems classified as forest is highest. In contrast, the value of 'non-forest' areas—particularly within xerophytic regions such as the Aravallis—is routinely undermined, although they provide critical ecosystem services towards desertification buffering and watershed

integrity supporting millions of people. Dilution of overall environmental protection by altering the legal definition of lands—often justified in the name of reducing the 'costs of business' and improving 'ease of doing business'—is a disturbing trend. Amendments that narrowed the scope of the VSSA, 1980 by exempting certain categories of forest land, and the attempt to redefine the Aravallis using an arbitrary 100-metre height criterion are some cases in point.

Considering the above background, any High-Powered Expert Committee (HPEC) would have a high-stakes scientific and legal mandate before it. Its foremost task would be to change the perception of decision-makers towards the Aravallis—from a narrow height-based, reductionist interpretation to an understanding of them as a contiguous, ancient mountain system that

serves as the ecological spine of north-west India and extends across state boundaries. Achieving this shift will require the active participation of domain experts alongside administrators, so that the Aravallis are defined by ecological realities rather than bureaucratic expediency.

The previous definition with a height threshold as the parameter ignored the importance of recognising all hills, ridges, saddles, and outcrops as parts of a unified ecological range and thereby created ecological islands, regulatory blind spots, fragmented wildlife corridors, and fractured desertification barriers. A decisive shift towards a functional approach is essential—one that produces a map-verifiable definition incorporating lower ridges and intervening saddles that contribute to groundwater recharge, biodiversity conservation, and climatic stability.

Equally important is the inclusion of already mined, degraded, and potentially restorable areas within the regulatory ambit. This is particularly necessary because smaller outcrops and fragmented hillocks—rendered 'legally invisible' by the earlier definition—continue to play a vital role in maintaining the ecological integrity of the Aravallis, including the flow of essential ecosystem services.

Notably, the Forest Survey of India's 2010 criteria, which emphasised slope, geomorphology, and canopy density, recognised the Aravallis as a structurally contiguous fold mountain system. A functional approach would ensure that gaps between hills are not misclassified as 'non-hills' but are recognised as structural basins, or saddles, that are part of the same geological and ecological entity.

The entire range would

therefore need to be mapped using high-resolution Digital Elevation Models (DEM). Such mapping would allow a realistic determination of the Aravalli ecosystem boundary delineated not merely on the basis of surface features and topography, but by accounting for sub-surface geological connectivity also, which is critical for sustaining groundwater recharge across the broader provisioned.

Given the limited effectiveness of the enforcement of existing legal instruments in the region, the Aravallis require an overarching legislative framework. The land falling within the defined Aravalli ecosystem boundary—excluding private holdings—should be declared 'Protected Forest' and brought under the purview of the VSSA, 1980. The process of its subsequent notification as 'Reserve Forest' may be initiated later in a phased manner.