

## DELHI AI SUMMIT

The Delhi Artificial Intelligence Impact Summit will change the global thinking on the revolutionary technology that could change the way humans have lived so far. The basic idea that AI should become a monopoly of some countries and others would feel pressured or dominated by them has been defeated at the Summit. Firstly, it turned out to be the most participatory summit so far, with heads of government, CEOs of tech companies, innovators of all ages and chiefs of AI giants being there. The cherry on the cake was Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision on sharing of the AI technology, and as is his speciality, he gave it a meaningful acronym, the MANAV vision for AI. In this, M stands for moral and ethical systems, A for accountable governance, N for national sovereignty, A for accessible and V for valid and legitimate. Following the dictum Vasudaivya Kutumbhakam (Earth is one family), Modi called for converting AI into a technology to help humankind and not just to convert it into a business monopoly of companies and a few countries. This is what India did to challenge the monopoly of global drug manufacturing companies. It used a gap to make affordable medicines – the generic medicines – and broke the monopoly of the big MNCs, which had weaponised the patients' plight by charging exorbitant prices on life-saving medicines. Today, the world is grateful to India for generic medicines. It's said that Africa was extricated from a dangerous situation of HIV-AIDS thanks to the Indian generic medicines. The cheap anti-retroviral drugs made by Indian company Cipla revolutionised HIV/AIDS treatment in Africa by offering. Modi proposes to do the same for AI. Right now, the global culture is about monopolising and monetising AI technology by governments. The Delhi AI Impact summit will break this culture and make AI a way of life and accessible to all.

## Pak Indus playbook at UN, India's moment to respond

Uttam Kumar Sinha

At a Pakistan-hosted Arria-Formula meeting of the United Nations Security Council on 31 January, Pakistan's Permanent Representative Asim Iftikhar Ahmad argued that India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is "not merely a bilateral concern" but a "test case for the international system". If a binding treaty governing shared natural resources can be set aside unilaterally, he warned, then no agreement anywhere is safe from politics.

It was a carefully timed intervention ahead of the UK and US presidencies of the Security Council, intended to pull the IWT out of its bilateral and technical setting and recast it as a question of global treaty sanctity and moral indictment. By this logic, India appears to be weakening the rules-based international order.

The strategy has deep historical roots. In 1952, Pakistan's first foreign minister, Zafrullah Khan, stood before the Security Council and accused India of repeatedly "turning off" the waters flowing into Pakistan. His words were emotive by design. In a land where every drop revived " parched earth" and sustained human life, he said, India's conduct was "most callous". A question of river regulation was reframed as a humanitarian outrage caused by an upper riparian.

Five years later, in October 1957, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, then a young minister in Ayub Khan's cabinet and part of Pakistan's UN delegation, advanced the argument during debates in the General Assembly on defining aggression. Any definition, Bhutto insisted, must include "economic or indirect aggression" if a lower riparian was deprived of its natural river rights. Interference with irrigation waters, he warned, could bring Pakistan to "total annihilation".



Across decades, the vocabulary evolves but the design holds. Zafrullah framed water as humanitarian injury. Bhutto framed it as economic aggression. Asim Iftikhar Ahmad now frames it as a threat to the global treaty system. The objective never changes, to brand India as an upper riparian that can turn water into a weapon. The flaw in this narrative, then and now, is that it treats treaties as sacred texts detached from the conduct of the parties bound by them.

The IWT, signed in 1960 after years of negotiation, was a practical arrangement meant to keep hostility away from river management so both countries could use water for development. Peace did not follow between India and Pakistan, yet the treaty survived the wars of 1965, 1971 and 1999, prolonged tension, and cross-border terrorism because it relied on restraint and good-faith implementation.

That foundation has eroded. Over the years, Pakistan has used the treaty's dispute resolution provisions less for clarification than for delay. Every Indian hydroelectric project permitted under the treaty has been contested. Neutral experts, courts

of arbitration, and procedural appeals have been activated in parallel and sequence, turning what was meant to be a technical process into a rolling legal contest. This is the context Pakistan will obscure at the UN, and India must ensure it is brought squarely into the discussion.

Treaties do not exist in isolation. They operate within a broader environment of political conduct. For decades, India upheld the treaty despite provocation and cross-border terrorism. The expectation that one side must show permanent restraint cannot endure indefinitely. Treaty sanctity cannot mean that one party can freeze the rights of another through constant legal activation and then claim moral high ground in global forums.

This is where Pakistan's historical messaging and present tactics converge. By raising water at the UN across generations, Pakistan has cultivated a diplomatic memory in which India appears as a potential water aggressor. That memory is now being activated at a moment when India has questioned the misuse of treaty mechanisms after the Pulwama terror attack by suspending routine cooperation such as hydrological data sharing and participation in arbitral processes. Pakistan portrays this as treaty abandonment. India must insist that this is a dispute about how the treaty

is being used, not whether it should exist. The distinction matters. If Pakistan's framing prevails, it creates a troubling precedent. Any state could immobilise another's treaty rights by constantly triggering legal procedures and then appealing to international opinion when resistance follows.

Pakistan is also attempting to bring the World Bank back into the conversation. As the original broker of the Indus negotiations, the Bank occupies a unique place in the treaty's history. With Ajay Banga now heading the institution and simultaneously part of President Donald Trump's advisory "Board of Peace", new diplomatic channels open up that Pakistan will seek to leverage. The aim is the same as in 1952 and 1957, to widen the discussion beyond the bilateral framework.

India cannot afford to treat these moves as isolated episodes. They form part of a long, consistent strategy accompanied by a record of cross-border terrorism that has steadily eroded the trust on which the treaty functioned. India's response at the UN and other international platforms must be firm, factual, and historically aware. It must remind the world that the treaty survived wars because India honoured it. It must underline that the present strain arises from the gradual breakdown of cooperative conduct, not from any sudden departure by India.

River treaties can anchor peace, but their stability is not the responsibility of the upper riparian alone. It rests equally on the conduct of the lower riparian. Nearly three quarters of a century after Zafrullah first raised water in the Security Council, and after Bhutto cast it as aggression, Pakistan is repeating the same script in updated language. India now needs a diplomatic script of its own, one that recognises this continuity and answers it with clarity, context, and confidence.

## FROM SAPTSANDHU TO PUNJAB: A CIVILISATIONAL JOURNEY

Ramesh Davesar

The Apeiron Legacy of Punjab traces its roots from the Indus Valley Civilisation and, having transited through various epochs had finally attained its present entity - The Punjab. It is worth taking a look at the interesting journey spanning various eras and generations. Originally named as "Sapta Sindhu" during the "Rig Veda Period" (1500-1000 years BCE), means, the land of seven rivers, these were: Sindhu, Vitasta(Jhelum), Asikni (Chenab), Parusani (Ravi), Vipasa (Beas), Shatudari (Satluj) and Saraswati. It is believed that during the Vedic Period (1000-500 years BCE), the Saraswati River, flowing between Yamuna and the Satluj Rivers, had started drying up and towards the end of this Period, it finally disappeared. Also, the Indus River was de-linked, hence, the Sapt Sindhu, left with five rivers, was rechristened as "Panchnaad" (land of five rivers) during 500-300 years BCE.

The early indications of spoken language had first come from the "Mid Indo-Aryan Period" (600 BCE- 1000 CE), and were known as the Prakrit language. With successive refinements, its improved version that finally came out was called "Apbhramsh" (mixed). The historical annals suggest that towards the end of 10th century CE, it led to the creation of Hindi,

Panchnaad (Punjabi) and various South Asian dialects.

Alongside, the "Sharda Script"- the mother of all was developed during the 8-9th Centuries CE. It was named after the ancient University and Centre of Learning at Sharda Shakti Peeth (located in Kashmir in Keran Sector close to the LOC in POK) which played a crucial role in its development and popularisation. It led to the creation of a mélange of scripts and one of them was "Landa Script". Primarily known as the Merchants' Script, it was also used for literary and administrative purposes and was soon adopted by Panchnaad language.

Around this period "The Nath-Yogi" Sect was launched by Saint Matsendranath aka Machhindranath, his teachings and the spiritual disciplines were profoundly discussed in Panchnaad by his disciple- Yogi Gorakhnath further buttressed the spread of local dialect.

In 14th Century, two historic events took place. One, the Sufi Saint Amir Khusro in order to bridge the gap between the two contrasting morphemes, the Sanskrit predominant Hindi and the Persian, evolved a new lexicon named as "Zubane Ordu (Urdu) written in Perso Arabic Script.

It soon achieved mass acceptability and was monickered as "Shahmukhi Script" in the North and the North western regions

and was subsumed as the primary script by the Panchnaad language. Two, Iban Battuta, a Maghrebi (North African) an explorer from Morocco, arrived in India in 1334 and stayed till 1342. During his sojourn, it is learnt that he had changed the name of Panchnaad with the Persian epithet - Punjab; the same had been documented in his Book- Riha

(travologue). Axiomatically, its language, hereafter was known as the Punjabi. Comitantly, the Sufi Cult led by Sheikh Farid had made its mark in Punjab, subsequently pursued by Bulle Shah, Waris Shah, Shah Muhammed, Shah Hussain, Damodar Das Arora from Jhang (the original Writer of Folk Tale Heer-Ranjha) and alike, by preaching and spreading the Sufi philosophy in Punjabi had rendered a great service to the people and the culture of recently christened Punjab.

Yet another monumental event was awaiting, the origin and spread of Sikhism and its preachings during 15th to 18th century marked an Era of spiritualism, consecration, social oneness and bonhomie amongst Punjabis. It was during this period, the Punjabi got its captive script, the Gurmukhi, devised by Second Guru, Sh Guru Angad Dev Ji.

During the Mughal rule, amongst others, in order to refine and streamline the administrative set up, Raja Todar Mal, the Fi-

nancial Virtuoso in Akbar's regime, subdivided Punjab into five Doabs (area between two rivers) and acronymed them from the names of the rivers binding the Doabs.

Starting from East; the area between Satluj and Beas Rivers was called Bist Doab (Jallandhar Hoshiarpur), the territory bound by Beas and Ravi Rivers was named Bari Doab (also called Majha, Amritsar, Lahore), the area between Ravi-Chenab Rivers was named Rachna Doab (Faislabad, Sialkot), the belt demarcated by Chenab and Jhelum Rivers was called Jhaj Doab (Sargodha, Gujarat), and finally, the Western-most was Sind Sagar Doab between Jhelum and the Indus Rivers (Rawalpindi, Chakwal).

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule from 1801-39 is best remembered for the social, religious, political and the egalitarian reforms. The gloaming of Sikh empire came after the Second Anglo Sikh War 1848-49 followed by the annexation of Punjab by the British in April 1849. After consolidating their hold, the Britishers took upon the task of improving the irrigation and the cultivation in Punjab.

It underwent three major partitions, the first one in 1901 when the NWFP was taken out followed by Delhi becoming the Capital Territory in 1911 and finally the cataclysmic schism in 1947 which dissected the State – the East and the West Punjab!

## Bangladesh: India braces for a delicate reset

Parul chandra

With the newly elected government led by Tarique Rahman now in place in Bangladesh, an anxious India will be hoping for stability both within its neighbouring country as well as in its bilateral relations with Dhaka.

A restive Bangladesh, where radical elements have been gaining ground, spells trouble for India's security, more so as the two nations share a long and porous 4,096-km border. Worryingly for India, insurgent groups from the northeast can also take advantage of the instability to again use Bangladesh as a safe haven.

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi could not attend Rahman's swearing-in owing to prior commitments, he has written to him inviting him to visit India. Signalling the inclination on both sides for a rapprochement, the PM's missive expressed India's willingness to strengthen bilateral ties.

Having faced a rough time during the tenure of the Muhammad Yunus-led interim government following Sheikh Hasina's August 2024

ouster, New Delhi is clearly keen to mend its frayed ties with Dhaka.

Pragmatism, New Delhi knows, is the better part of valour. Towards this end, India made swift overtures to the Bangladesh National Party (BNP) leader, with PM Modi wasting no time in calling Rahman to congratulate him on his party's win, promising India's support for "a democratic, progressive and inclusive Bangladesh".

This, even though New Delhi has had to swallow the bitter pill of its staunch ally, former PM Sheikh Hasina, being forced into political exile in India and her party, the Awami League, being excluded from the electoral process. While the Sheikh Hasina government was mindful of Indian strategic interests, it was accused of authoritarianism and significant backsliding of democracy within Bangladesh.

New Delhi's unabashed tango with the deeply unpopular Sheikh Hasina regime, and the sway it had over Dhaka until she was unseated by the July 2024 uprising, helped fan the strong anti-India sentiment currently prevalent in Bangladesh.

Putting all its eggs in one basket,



as has been New Delhi's approach when dealing with favourable regimes in the neighbourhood, has often worked to its detriment, leaving it out in the cold when an anti-India government sweeps into power.

With the BNP winning a thumping two-thirds majority in the Jatiya Sangsad (Parliament) elections, New Delhi knows it has no option but to work with a party that has been traditionally anti-India in its stance. The BNP, on its part, has indicated its willingness to engage constructively with India in ties "guided by mutual respect, sensitivity to each other's concerns, and a shared commitment to peace, stability, and

maat-e-Islami has not come to power, it is noteworthy that the Islamist outfit has won 68 seats, its highest tally ever. While nationalism may have trumped radical elements, the BNP itself is not known for its secular credentials.

The youth-led National Citizen Party (NCP), formed in the wake of the July uprising and part of the 11-party alliance led by the Jamaat, has won only 6 of the 30 seats it contested. Even if realpolitik impels Dhaka to have cordial ties with New Delhi, it will have to deftly handle criticism such a move may evoke from these two outfits with deep animosity towards India.

Despite the positive signals emanating from both New Delhi and Dhaka, bilateral ties will be framed by a new paradigm. Rahman has already indicated that his government will pursue a foreign policy that will have the interests of his country in mind and not align with any nation. New Delhi will have to use deft diplomacy and redouble efforts to ensure its interests are protected and strategic space is not ceded to China or Pakistan.

However, unlike Sheikh Hasina,

who was willing to take a soft stance on New Delhi's failure to deliver on the Teesta waters-sharing agreement, it is unlikely that the new government in Dhaka will adopt a similar stand. Rahman, in whom the people of Bangladesh have pinned a lot of hope for good governance, will be under pressure to deliver.

A fragile economy makes this task all the more difficult. While India has often assisted neighbours in dire straits, it will need assurance from Dhaka that its security interests will not be compromised while playing the role of its foremost important development partner.

As the bigger neighbour, India will also need to address the issue of trade imbalance, skewed in its favour, that remains a sticking point with Dhaka. As for connectivity, New Delhi will need to frame it in a manner that Bangladesh sees itself gaining from these projects too.

Dhaka's ties with New Delhi under the BNP government are expected to be more transactional. Be that as it may, New Delhi will just have to deal with the new reality – be hardened in its approach without alienating the new regime in Dhaka.