

BANGLADESHI INFILTRATORS

Developments in West Bengal after Suvendu Adhikari became the chief minister have unraveled the shocking realities of India's border state. Not only illegal Bangladeshi immigrants whose presence was ignored and seen as a political gain by certain parties, they were so sure of living forever in that dispensation. Now thousands of them are marching to the border to go back to where they came from. There is no crack-down, no blame game but firm direction to the law enforcing authorities to act against unlawful people. The Adhikari government is even ready to set up camps on borders for the illegal migrants till they are deported. Also, there is no need for approaching the court for prosecution of the Bangladeshis staying illegally fir the Police is competent enough to act against them. Some illegal immigrants have the gumption to say they the BJP came into power because they (Bangladeshis) were disenfranchised through the revision of the electoral rolls. These people were so entrenched in the system that they did not feel anything amiss while speaking against SIR.

Besides, the BJP government in the center has also taken some big ticket decisions to secure the borders against infiltrators and subversive activities. The land for installation of wired fencing along the India-Bangladesh border has already been transferred to the BSF. The center has ordered demolition of all illegal structures along the border, which in face are settlements of illegal immigrant, some of them with most evil intentions about India. After this, discerning minds can connect the dots between the subversive elements from outside with those living within India and crying over SIR or CAA or NRC. The illegal migrants not only are burden on the economy but also have the potential to subvert the peoples' will, election verdicts and demography. India needs governments which have nation's interests on top of their agenda and not their political interests.

Bhupatiraju Srinivasa Varma

Energy is the bedrock of modern economic life. For a country that imports nearly nine out of every ten barrels of the oil it consumes, securing it is not one policy question among others. It is the policy question of the century. India faces it more sharply than most: as the world's third-largest crude importer, with the largest two-wheeler base on the planet and a passenger vehicle market still in its early growth stage, how the country powers its mobility will shape household budgets, the rupee, and its strategic standing for decades.

The structural answer has, over the past decade, become clear and globally visible — the gradual transition of mobility from petrol and diesel to electric. The International Energy Agency notes that the world's electric vehicle stock displaced more than 1.3 million barrels of oil a day in 2024, and projects that figure to cross five million by 2030. India, under the leadership of Narendra Modi, has been positioning itself for this transition over the past decade.

At the centre of that effort sits PM E-DRIVE — the Prime Minister Electric Drive Revolution in Innovative Vehicle Enhancement scheme. Launched in October 2024 with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore and recently extended to March 2028, it supports 24.79 lakh electric two-wheelers, 3.16 lakh electric three-wheelers, 14,028 electric buses across nine cities, electric trucks and ambulances, and a nationwide charging backbone worth Rs 2,000 crore. At a national conference in Bengaluru earlier this week, an additional 4,874 EV chargers across several states were approved.

The early returns are visible. India sold over 25.5 lakh electric vehicles in the last financial year — a 25 per cent year-on-year jump, taking the electric share to 8.64 per cent of all automobile sales. Penetration in the electric three-wheeler passenger segment has crossed 33 per cent.

The 16.72 lakh vehicles already supported by demand incentives are saving the country around Rs 0.14 crore worth of fuel every day. Each vehicle, cumulatively, represents a barrel of crude no longer imported into the

JS Rajput

Professor Jayant Vishnu Narlikar, one of our most distinguished and decorated scientists, wrote an article on "Declining Work Standards" around fifteen years ago. I find it extremely relevant in comprehending the national anguish and shame being expressed following the cancellation of the NEET examination in May 2026. The learned professor wrote: "Further, our examination system has become so corrupt that we have come to accept malpractices as routine. With copying condoned even at the highest level, the examinations conducted by boards, colleges and universities are losing their credibility as a means of assessing the candidate's performance. No government, state or central, has either the will or courage to restore a sense of discipline in the system. Because of this, many specialised institutions have introduced their own entrance tests."

The National Testing Agency (NTA), created in November 2017, is one of several such bodies established during the last two to three decades. There have been serious issues of paper leakage earlier as well, including NEET-UG 2024, UGC-NET 2024, and JEE-Main 2021. The 2024 paper leak was investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), which enjoys nationwide credibility. Parents and the public remain unaware of what happened to the guilty and how many of them received exemplary punishment. The CBI is conducting the same exercise again for the 2026 paper leak. Media reports indicate that it has successfully unearthed the conspiracy, and that criminality will eventually be established.

Mention is being made of professors who acted as paper-setters. It must serve as an eye-opener to every teacher and academic, from schools to higher education institutions. Sadly, the entire scenario reaffirms the fact that "professions suffer credibility erosion only because of their own professionals". The credibility crisis surrounding the majority of regulatory bodies confirms this beyond any doubt.

NEET Leak: A national crisis of trust in education

The leakage of the NEET examination paper prior to its scheduled date of May 3, 2026, has attracted the attention of both the young and the old alike. The plight of 22.7 lakh young aspirants was indeed shocking. Most of these aspirants belong to families that could never imagine securing admission for their wards in private medical colleges. They had done their utmost in mobilising resources to enable their children to join tuition centres, coaching classes, and other support systems that claim expertise in preparing students for competitive entrance examinations. Obviously, most of these are private commercial ventures. They are well equipped with the tricks of the trade and techniques of extracting the maximum from hopeful young people and their families. There are numerous examples of entire families relocating to cities with well-advertised coaching centres. They do all of this in the hope of securing a bright future not only for the admission seeker but for the family as a whole. The inadequacy of school education is acknowledged at every level. Consequently, parents trust private ventures as the only alternative capable of kindling hope for success, often unaware that it is ultimately a business — and business today has its own "morals and ethics". Unfortunately, this aspect hardly finds mention even in serious deliberations on how to conduct clean examinations.

Over the years, India's youth have suffered numerous instances of paper leaks, not only in examinations for admission to coveted professional courses but also in recruitment examinations for jobs. Imagine the damage that the profession and the nation would have suffered had those who purchased the paper successfully enrolled for medical degrees. The nation is generally aware of the numerous factors and forces that

indulge in such immoral and unethical practices year after year, and why the system repeatedly fails to punish the guilty. Dependence on coaching institutions has increased steadily.

The neglect of quality and excellence in

the majority of schools run on public finances is squarely responsible for the growth of private schools and the coaching industry. Young adolescents, after completing their first ten years of schooling, gradually realise how intense the competition will be in securing admission to reputed and affordable professional institutions. The majority of parents one interacts with remain worried and uncertain, often for several years. This does not refer to the privileged classes who are sufficiently equipped to send their wards to institutions in Western countries. There is also a subgroup that prefers institutions in Ukraine, Mauritius, and a few other destinations.

The first two or three decades after Independence were characterised by the presence of a generation that was admired throughout the country. Their lives reflected immense sacrifice and suffering endured for the freedom of the nation and for the dignified future of generations to come. As young people in the 1950s and 1960s, many of us had the privilege of meeting freedom fighters who refused to accept pensions announced for them by governments. We learnt invaluable lessons about the nation and our obligations to society and future generations.

Those of us who received our schooling and university education during that period never experienced the anxiety of a possible paper leak before examinations. Tuitions were considered infra dig, and it was unimaginable that a college or university teacher would teach in a coaching centre.

Every teacher was always willing to assist students needing support. Gradually, however, generations changed, Gandhian values receded into the background, and elected representatives — exceptions apart — who tasted power developed their own values and norms. Adolescents and young people in schools and higher education institutions found before them a new set of icons: teachers busy with tuition classes, coaching systems, and even side businesses, while neglecting their basic moral obligations.

Most candidates appearing in entrance examinations for professional courses do so after completing school education. The undue anxiety and excessive concentration on securing higher scores often leads to insufficient emphasis during school years on the aspects necessary for holistic growth — from an innocent individual "person" into a complete "personality".

India deserves schools that embody an exemplary, morally imbued work culture. It deserves conscious teachers who remain ever aware that they themselves are the "true textbook for the pupils" and who continue as active lifelong learners. In such institutions, the entry of unscrupulous elements would become impossible. This is not a utopian wish; such schools and teachers still exist in India today.

The story of Japan's reconstruction after the Second World War demonstrates how focus on social, cultural, and moral dimensions in schools and teacher preparation institutions created professionals committed to being "true to their salt". The government and society both played their roles sincerely: schools possessed the necessary infrastructure, appropriate teacher-student ratios, and adequately trained teachers. Unfortunately, this is still not the case in India.

Those entrusted with finding better ways and means to conduct clean NEET and other entrance examinations have a difficult task ahead. It would be a humble suggestion to them to study carefully the implications and imperatives of Paragraph 15.2 of the National Education Policy 2020: "According to the Justice JS Verma Commission (2012) constituted by the Supreme Court, a majority of the stand-alone TEIs — over 10,000 in number — are not even attempting serious teacher education but are essentially selling degrees for a price."

Teachers and teacher education institutions must ensure competence, commitment, and high-level performance as the basic essentials for moving towards a morally strong education system — one that India's children and young people truly deserve.

EXPLORING THE WORLD, DISCOVERING THE SELF

Boddapati Chandrasekhar

Exploration is how we learn about the world and ourselves. It is an ongoing adventure to discover truth, create new paths, and gain knowledge. Ultimately, exploration is a fundamental part of life in which we all participate.

Yet, it differs in degree and depth from person to person. This variance is what we define as "vision" — a perspective shaped not only by social and geographical landscapes, but also by the very essence of one's educational background and lived experience.

This primal search begins with the instinct to sustain the physical body. It is the most fundamental necessity for every creature. Even birds tirelessly forage, returning to place sustenance into the open beaks of their young — a fragile and touching vignette of nature's most basic exploration.

Primitive man once trembled before the majesty of nature — cowering at the sunrise and moonrise, the fury of thunder and lightning, the changing seasons, and the menace of predatory animals. Eventually, he came to understand these as natural phenomena. This realisation awakened the dormant power of human thought. That, too, was exploration — a magnificent and silent



revolution. As human communities expanded, so did the demand for sustenance and shelter, giving birth to agriculture and architecture. Fear and necessity compelled humanity to innovate.

This advancement was catalysed solely by our unique capacity for thought — an exploratory intellect that constantly pushes civilisation towards newer and bolder horizons.

If need is the primary catalyst for exploration, curiosity is its soul. Curiosity provides the lens through which we observe both the external universe and the inner self

with piercing clarity. A scientist and Gautama Buddha stand as luminous twin pillars of this spirit. One looks outward, seeking to decode how the universe began and what evolution signifies; the other looks inward, seeking to unravel the enigma of human suffering and liberation from the cycle of existence. Their paths diverge, yet both engage in profound intellectual churning. Both are sacred seekers of truth.

Exploration provides the armour to endure hardship, transforming ordinary individuals into fearless pioneers.

The Prashna Upanishad beautifully illus-

trates this philosophy of inquiry, demonstrating that wisdom is born of relentless questioning. How did life begin? What is the nature of the living being? The moment one question finds an answer, another emerges. This endless chain of inquiry transforms individuals into seekers of truth, sharpening the intellect, fostering a scientific temper, and deepening our reverence for existence. This yearning is infinite; every answer is merely a doorway to a deeper chamber of contemplation.

However, exploration must align the right path with the right purpose. A quest undertaken through crooked or selfish means yields no fruit for the individual, society, or nation. History is littered with lives wasted in futile searches for mythical elixirs, just as it is scarred by scientific discoveries that brought destruction upon humanity. Therefore, exploration must be anchored to a noble moral compass; only then does it mature into true achievement.

Ultimately, exploration leads us back to human companionship. Amid countless relationships, we search for those rare souls who truly understand us. In moments of suffering, we seek not theories, but a comforting presence, a listening heart, and a shoulder to lean on. Such companionship is the ultimate destination of human exploration.

How India is building energy sovereignty, brick by brick

country.

PM E-DRIVE alone cannot deliver this transition. Consumer subsidy is merely the visible end of a much longer supply chain — batteries, magnets, components, and complete vehicles.

A connected set of schemes addresses that larger ecosystem. The Production-Linked Incentive for Automobiles and Auto Components (Rs 25,938 crore) anchors advanced automotive manufacturing. The PLI for Advanced Chemistry Cells (Rs 18,100 crore) is taking domestic battery production to gigawatt scale — historically the largest cost component in an imported EV.

The Scheme for Rare Earth Magnets (Rs 7,280 crore) addresses a supply chain in which global capacity is concentrated in very few hands, and upon which an Aatmanirbhar Bharat in mobility cannot afford to remain dependent. The Scheme to Promote Manufacturing of Electric Passenger Cars in India, opened to global applicants in June 2025, brings world-leading EV manufacturers to Indian soil with a minimum committed investment of Rs 4,150 crore each. Behind these schemes lies employment for young In-

dian engineers, technicians, and ITI graduates.

Public transport carries the same logic at scale. Buses account for nearly 60 per cent of all passenger kilometres in India. Two schemes support their electrification: PME-DRIVE's Rs 4,391 crore allocation for 14,028 buses, and the PM e-Bus Sewa Payment Security Mechanism, with an outlay of Rs 3,435.33 crore, supporting over 38,000 additional electric buses by guaranteeing operator payments when a State Transport Undertaking delays payment.

That single guarantee removes a financial obstacle that no subsidy alone could address. Bengaluru is set to receive 4,500 buses in the current phase, Hyderabad 2,000, Delhi 2,800, Ahmedabad 1,000, and Surat 600.

None of this work began because of the present international situation, but recent developments have made its value abundantly clear. Global oil markets have experienced significant volatility since late February, with disruptions around the Strait of Hormuz affecting major shipping routes. India imports 88 per cent of its crude oil and

spent 174.9 billion dollars — 22 per cent of total imports — on crude and petroleum products in 2025-26. Several major Asian and European economies witnessed retail fuel prices rise by twenty to thirty per cent during this period. Prices at Indian petrol pumps, however, moved only marginally — the result of diversified sourcing, prudent fiscal management, and the resilience of our oil marketing companies.

It is in this context that the Prime Minister's recent appeal — to consume less petrol, carpool, use the metro, and shift to electric vehicles when changing one's vehicle — has found a country increasingly prepared. The carpool the Prime Minister referred to, scaled to the level of the city, is the electric bus already arriving in Bengaluru and Hyderabad. The shift to electric mobility is now a practical choice available to the average citizen, often at a lower running cost than petrol or diesel vehicles.

The same effort is visible on the diplomatic front in the Prime Minister's ongoing five-nation tour covering the United Arab Emirates, the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, and Italy from May 15 to 20. The agreements signed

in Abu Dhabi this week — including a Memorandum of Understanding on Strategic Petroleum Reserves and a long-term arrangement for the supply of Liquefied Petroleum Gas — strengthen India's energy supply lines for the years ahead. Discussions underway in the Nordic capitals are advancing cooperation in clean technology, battery chemistry, and green industrial growth.

What is important across all these initiatives is how they fit together. The manufacturing schemes create the production base. PM E-DRIVE places alternative vehicles within reach of ordinary citizens.

The Payment Security Mechanism puts electric buses onto Indian roads. The Prime Minister's appeal encourages citizens to make choices that this architecture now enables. Diplomatic outreach secures the inputs and partnerships necessary for the future. Each forms part of one national project. Energy sovereignty on this scale cannot be achieved overnight. It is built steadily through factories, infrastructure, and changing habits — brick by brick, factory by factory, citizen by citizen.