

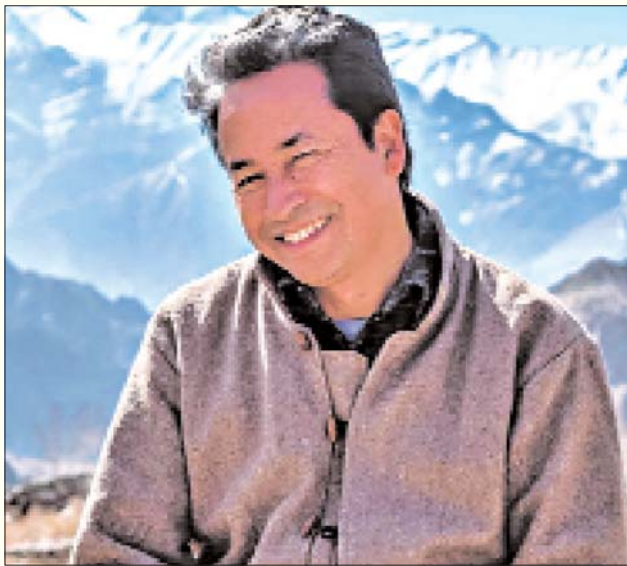
INDIA'S HYDROGEN TRAIN MARKS A NEW ERA IN GREEN MOBILITY

India's successful rollout of its first hydrogen-powered train is more than a technological achievement—it is a powerful statement of the country's growing ambition to lead the global transition towards clean and sustainable transportation. As nations strive to reduce carbon emissions and combat climate change, this milestone places Indian Railways firmly on the path of innovation and environmental responsibility. Hydrogen-powered trains offer a cleaner alternative to conventional diesel locomotives by emitting only water vapour as a by-product. They are particularly suitable for non-electrified railway routes where complete electrification may not be immediately feasible. The adoption of hydrogen fuel technology has the potential to significantly reduce the railways' carbon footprint while improving energy efficiency and operational sustainability. The initiative also reflects the vision of the National Green Hydrogen Mission, which seeks to position India as a global hub for the production and use of green hydrogen. By integrating this clean fuel into the transport sector, the country is opening new avenues for technological innovation, industrial growth and employment generation. Indigenous development of hydrogen-powered rail technology will further strengthen the 'Make in India' initiative and reduce dependence on imported fossil fuels. Beyond environmental benefits, hydrogen trains represent an investment in the future. They encourage research, create opportunities for collaboration between industry and academia, and pave the way for advancements in clean energy infrastructure. The experience gained through pilot projects will be invaluable in shaping future transport policies and scaling up hydrogen-based mobility across the country. While challenges such as hydrogen production, storage, refuelling infrastructure and cost remain, every transformative journey begins with a single step. The success of the first hydrogen train should serve as a catalyst for accelerating investment in green technologies and expanding their adoption across sectors. India's railways have long been a symbol of national integration and economic progress. By embracing hydrogen-powered transportation, they are now becoming a symbol of sustainable development as well. The tracks laid today are not just carrying trains—they are carrying the nation's aspirations for a cleaner, greener and more self-reliant future.

Wangchuk brings Ladakh to national centre stage

Anil Anand

In the midst of the short-lived joy of the Ladakhis, with the Union government reneging on some crucial clauses of the agreement accepted in principle after the May 22, 2026, agreement, educationist and climate activist Sonam Wangchuk has given a new twist to the Ladakh issue while adding grist to the Cockroach Janata Party's (CJP's) youth-related issues. He has embarked on an indefinite hunger strike at Delhi's Jantar Mantar, along with six youth activists, to take the CJP's protest against repeated leaks of NEET and other examination papers to the next level. Their sole demand is the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan. It is a repeat of what he did a few months back when he sat on an indefinite hunger strike in the cold environs of Leh. His action not only rattled the administration from Delhi to Leh but also added a new dimension to the Ladakhis' agitation for their political empowerment and the protection of their all-encompassing identity. The outcome was his arrest under the draconian National Security Act and his being confined to the hot environment of a Rajasthan jail, only to be unconditionally released after six months of incarceration, with the clear implication that the tag of being "anti-national" did not stick to him. Wangchuk is brave and astute and carefully chooses his words. He has shown remarkable determination not only in pursuing the Ladakh cause, in the face of attempts by the state machinery to defame him, but also in joining the bigger cause of Gen Z's sufferings due to the malfunctioning of the education system and the government of the day simply looking the other way around. Notwithstanding the opposition by some of his fellow Ladakhi leaders, though they are few in number, and the state machinery being busy plotting moves to corner him, Wangchuk seems to have crossed all hurdles with aplomb. There is no doubt that Wangchuk's presence in the CJP stir and his reiteration that education is central to the development of a society and a nation has given strength to the movement, which has entered its second stage. The peo-



ple of Ladakh (Leh and Kargil divisions) have been fighting for their rights for quite some time, the issue has caught the imagination of the national and international media only sparsely. This is despite the strategic and geopolitical location of Ladakh, bordering China and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, with Central Asia not far away. Their nationalist credentials have been reflected repeatedly in both peace and war. No one can question their role as the second line of defence in every situation. Sitting at Jantar Mantar, Wangchuk has been mostly speaking about the concerns of students and youth in line with the CJP's narrative, but his very presence on a forum in the national capital, with the eyes of the world riveted on the youth agitation, brings the Ladakh issue-knowingly or unknowingly-into the limelight. Perhaps he chose the CJP route to silently present the issue on the national platform.

By merging the student-led examination protest with the long-standing campaign for Ladakh's Sixth Schedule inclusion and statehood, he has turned a regional matter, albeit one of international significance, into a mainstream issue. After all, the two issues have a common thread in the future of both students and Ladakhis, with education being the vital link. And who better than the renowned educationist and environmental-

ist Wangchuk, who landed at the Jantar Mantar dharna after participating in an international environmental meet in Switzerland? As more than a week has elapsed since the CJP started its second leg of agitation at the same place following the Centre's (read Prime Minister Modi's) reluctance to remove the Education Minister, the administration has been handling the situation in a cool and calculated manner, barring the disconnection of electricity and power supply and depriving the protesters of toilet facilities.

Earlier, the agreement with the Centre had raised hopes of Ladakh getting a mechanism to usher in people's rule with an elected assembly spearheaded by a chief minister-like mechanism. Presently, it is a centrally administered Union Territory, which came into being on August 5, 2019, after the then state of Jammu and Kashmir was demoted and divided into two UTs- Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. However, the hopes were short-lived and belied after the Centre allegedly backtracked on the most important part of the May 22 decisions. Nearly a month after their meeting with the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), representative groups from Ladakh-the Apex Body Leh (ABL) and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA)-upped the ante by observing a complete shutdown on June 23 to protest against the failure to incorporate key points agreed upon during last month's meeting on the Union Territory's political future.

What has triggered the crisis again within such a short span, after hope had been generated for lasting peace? And why? During the sub-committee meeting with the MHA, the Centre reportedly agreed in principle to consider constitutional safeguards for Ladakh under the provisions of Article 371.

The proposal had the following key ingredients, among other things: "A democratic structure for Ladakh featuring legislative, executive and financial powers." "The bureaucracy, including the Chief Secretary, functioning under an executive led by the people of Ladakh." These provisions went missing from the official minutes released by the government after some delay. Ladakhi leaders asserted that, by omitting these points, the Centre is employing delaying tactics and reneging on its promises. In this backdrop, Wangchuk's arrival at Jantar Mantar to share the platform with CJP activists has also silently given a new dimension to the Ladakh issue, besides raising the profile of the agitation. In his interviews after starting his protest fast, he gave clear indications that he was prepared for a long haul and that he was undeterred by pressure coming from any side. There is no doubt that his commitment both to the Ladakh cause and now to the cause of students and youth, with a thrust on rights and education, is unflinching. His discourse, both in Ladakh and now in New Delhi, is devoid of any political grandstanding, despite the fact that his detractors have been accusing him of being guided by political ambitions. The fact of the matter is that he unsuccessfully contested elections in the past and may be inclined to do so again in future. He is well within his constitutional rights to do so. No issue in a vibrant democracy such as India can be devoid of politics, and more so if the government or the ruling dispensation themselves are inclined to politicise issues in pursuit of electoral benefits, whatever the cost may be, or to sit on false prestige. As Wangchuk has rightly said, the prestige of a government is enhanced if it admits its faults and is prepared to rectify the course in the larger public interest. This is the 'mool mantra' that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government should follow on Ladakh, the CJP and other issues concerning the people's welfare. No matter that a lot of time has already been lost in dithering and clinging to false prestige. TouristDestinations

The writer is a political analyst; Views presented are personal.

THE MEANING OF OWNERSHIP

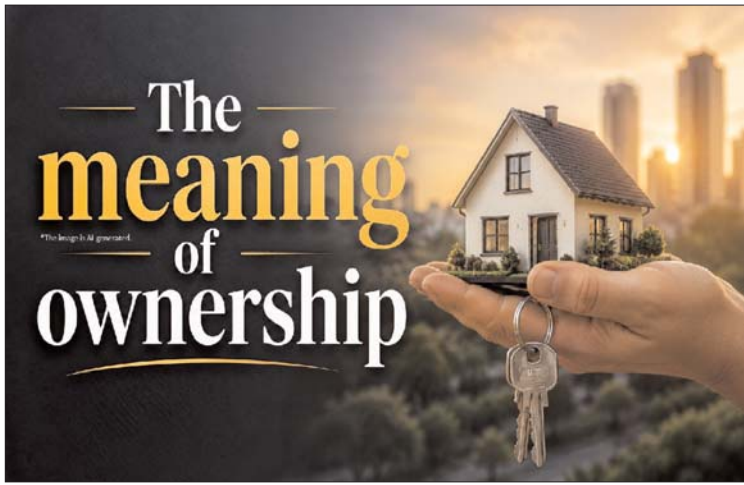
Sanjay Chandra

It is now more than twelve years since I stepped away from my techno-managerial career to pursue passions I had long postponed. It had been a professional journey of three decades, one that taught me many lessons which continue to shape the way I look at the world.

During my early years, I believed that I could accomplish much single-handedly. Fortunately for me, I soon realised the folly of that thinking. No individual is an island of excellence. Leading large teams meant learning that success comes from helping others take responsibility for their work.

Like many of my contemporaries, I often lamented what we saw as the erosion of ownership among younger professionals. Others, however, challenged that assumption. I still remember a senior colleague from my early years in Railways who had risen through the ranks. He would often remark that many of us in leadership had, in fact, contributed to this decline. During his years as a supervisor, he and his colleagues considered it a reflection on their own capabilities if a senior officer even felt the need to visit the site during a service disruption. RealEstate

I did not recognise it then, but that lesson



had quietly taken root, influencing many decisions I would make in the years that followed. A young engineer working with me had made an error in his calculations, costing us an important contract. I had two choices. I could reprimand him, or I could ask him to learn from the mistake and move on.

I chose the latter. A friend later remarked that I had allowed the young engineer to retain his confidence while accepting responsibility. A sense of

ownership evolves when people are encouraged to accept the consequences of their decisions without fear of blame.

The years since have made me more observant of both people and myself. I no longer com-

plain that people lack ownership. What concerns me today is that we may have changed the very meaning of the word. I find people spitting on roads and even on our society lawns. I recall a gentleman who felt my wife had overstepped her boundaries by suggesting that he carry a cloth bag from home instead of demanding a plastic bag from the neighbourhood shop.

I also encounter residents who believe that living in a society for many years gives them the right to occupy common spaces

with their household belongings. Each incident appears trivial in isolation. Together, they reveal how the meaning of ownership itself has begun to change.

Looking back, I realise that ownership meant something very different during my professional life. It meant accepting responsibility for one's actions and understanding how they affected the larger ecosystem. Ownership was measured by the willingness to ask, "How will my decision affect everyone else?"

Today, I feel we have replaced that understanding. Ownership is increasingly interpreted as entitlement-the right to conveniences, facilities, and privileges-without an equally strong sense of responsibility for how our actions affect those around us.

This quiet shift is no longer merely one of civic sense or courtesy. It is a deeper misunderstanding of what ownership truly means. Whether it is an organisation, a residential community, or the planet itself, every ecosystem flourishes only when people accept ownership of their responsibilities rather than merely assert their entitlements. RealEstate

Perhaps it is never too late to rediscover that ownership begins not with what we claim as ours, but with what we willingly accept as our responsibility.

Sardar Teja Singh Samundri: A colossus of Sikh awakening

Sardar Manjinder Singh Sirsa

When the name Sardar Teja Singh Samundri is spoken, it evokes not merely a political figure but a towering moral force whose life reshaped the spiritual and political landscape of the Sikh Panth. The Teja Singh Samundri Hall, at the heart of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) in Sri Amritsar Sahib, stands as a singular testament to his stature. He remains the only individual in the SGPC's hundred-plus-year history to have an institution named after him, a distinction earned not through wealth or political manoeuvring, but through the moral gravity of his character. FamousQuotations

Early life
Born on February 20, 1882, in Rai Ka Burj village, Tarn Taran district, to Deva Singh and Nand Kaur, Teja Singh emerged from peasant roots in the heartland of Punjab. His formal schooling ended at the primary level, but he possessed profound mastery of Sikh religious texts and historical traditions. His three-and-a-half years of service in the British Indian Army, rising to the rank

of Dafadar in the 22nd Cavalry Regiment, instilled in him the organisational discipline and tactical acumen that would later revolutionise Sikh political mobilisation.

Building the Sikh future

Long before "nation-building" became a common phrase, Teja Singh Samundri held to a simple truth: education is the foundation of spiritual and social emancipation. He established two institutions of Khalsa learning: Sri Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa High School in Sarhali, Amritsar district, and a Khalsa Middle School in his native village. Under his initiative, the Khalsa Diwan Bar, a federation of educational and social welfare societies, grew into a network of schools across the Sandal Bar region of Lyallpur district, educating generations of Sikh youth in both modern knowledge and Gurmat principles. He was also among the founding architects of the Akali daily newspaper, recognising that the Sikh renaissance required both institutional power and the power of the written word to awaken consciousness across Punjab.

Founding the SGPC

In 1920, Teja Singh Samundri became

a founding member of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, at a time when Sikh gurdwaras lay under the grip of corrupt mahants who had become collaborators with the British colonial power. He was renowned for spearheading the non-violent Gurdwara Reform Movement against the mahant control of Sikh shrines under British rule. He consistently refused formal authority, believing that movements decay when individuals overshadow institutions. This principle of "Institutional Humility", the subordination of ego to organisational mission, became the philosophical foundation of his entire life's work. According to Master Tara Singh, he was "a complete Gursikh", one who believed credibility began with personal restraint and leadership with moral example.

Teja Singh's commitment to equality was not rhetorical. In villages around Amritsar and Tarn Taran, he challenged caste barriers by inviting Dalits to draw water from common wells and serve him publicly, an act of quiet social revolution in early twentieth-century Punjab. In an era when such gestures could invite severe social ostracism, Teja Singh's di-

rect action against caste discrimination demonstrated that Sikh theology was not merely spiritual poetry but a blueprint for radical social transformation. FamousQuotations

Morchas and mass movements

Even before these movements, in 1914, when the British government attempted to demolish the boundary wall of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib in Delhi, Teja Singh Samundri led a hundred-member jatha in fearless, peaceful protest, compelling the colonial authorities to withdraw their desecration. His moral authority was such that even imperial power bent before it. When the British locked away the keys to the Golden Temple's treasury, he mobilised thousands of Sikhs in Chabian Da Morcha, the Keys Agitation of 1921-22, accepting imprisonment rather than submission. In the subsequent Guru Ka Bagh Morcha of 1922, as unarmed Sikhs faced the brutality of British lathis while chanting "Satnam Waheguru", Teja Singh Samundri stood as a philosophical and spiritual pillar, demonstrating that non-violence is not weakness but the ultimate expression of spiritual power. When the SGPC faced a financial crisis

that threatened its legal appeal to the Privy Council, falling short by ` 75,000, Teja Singh mortgaged 50 acres of his own ancestral land to bridge the gap. When the case was won after his death, his family refused reimbursement. In an era when public life is often shadowed by private gain, this episode stands in stark moral contrast.

Imprisonment and martyrdom

On October 13, 1923, Teja Singh Samundri was arrested along with 58 other Akali and SGPC leaders by the British government on charges of "waging war against the King-Emperor". Imprisoned in Lahore Fort, he was offered conditional release on multiple occasions but steadfastly refused to compromise on his core principles. By 1923, his stature was such that he was chosen as one of the Panj Piaras to initiate the kar sewa of the Golden Temple sarovar, the first such service since 1842. When he and eleven companions, including Master Tara Singh, refused conditional release, public outrage forced the unconditional release of the remaining prisoners.

The British then attempted to divide Sikh unity through elections, a strategy

that backfired when a wave of sympathy swept Punjab and Samundri's group secured an overwhelming popular mandate.

While imprisoned in Lahore Fort, Teja Singh Samundri, alongside Master Tara Singh, Bhag Singh, Gurcharn Singh and Sohan Singh Josh, studied each clause of the Gurdwara Bill presented by Governor Malcolm Hailey. The Bill met all the Akali demands and was signed into law as the Sikh Gurdwaras Act on July 28, 1925, by the Viceroy of India, legislation that bears the fingerprints of Teja Singh Samundri's principled negotiation and intellectual leadership. FamousQuotations

On July 17, 1926, while still imprisoned in Lahore Fort, Sardar Teja Singh Samundri attained martyrdom following a heart attack. Master Tara Singh later wrote that Samundri did not become a martyr in death; his entire life was one of martyrdom. He described a man marked by sewa, love, devotion, wisdom and fearlessness, one without enmity, who gave away what he possessed before keeping anything for himself. For him, sacrifice was not an event but a lifelong condition.