

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

November 2023



“Let us all work for the Greatness of India.”

– The Mother

Year 14

Issue 8

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SUCCESSFUL FUTURE

(Full of Promise and Joyful Surprises)

Botanical name: Gaillardia Pulchella

Common name: Indian blanket, Blanket flower, Fire-wheels

Year 14

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A Declaration

We do not fight against any creed, any religion.

We do not fight against any form of government.

We do not fight against any social class.

We do not fight against any nation or civilisation.

We are fighting division, unconsciousness, ignorance, inertia and falsehood.

We are endeavouring to establish upon earth union, knowledge, consciousness, Truth, and we fight whatever opposes the advent of this new creation of Light, Peace, Truth and Love.

– The Mother

(Collected works of the Mother, Vol. 13, pp. 124-25)

THE GREATNESS OF INDIA AND ITS CULTURE (39)

(Continued from the August 2023 Issue)

7. INDIAN RELIGION – THE SANATANA DHARMA

VII. Sanatana Dharma – the Only True Nationalism

“I say no longer that nationalism is a creed, a religion, a faith; I say that it is the Sanatana Dharma which for us is nationalism. This Hindu nation was born with the Sanatana Dharma, with it it moves and with it it grows. When the Sanatana Dharma declines, then the nation declines, and if the Sanatana Dharma were capable of perishing, with the Sanatana Dharma it would perish. The Sanatana Dharma, that is nationalism.”²⁹

“Then He placed the Gita in my hands. His strength entered into me and I was able to do the *sadhan* of the Gita. I was not only to understand intellectually but to realise what Srikrishna demanded of Arjuna and what He demands of those who aspire to do His work, to be free from repulsion and desire, to do work for Him without the demand for fruit, to renounce self-will and become a passive and faithful instrument in His hands, to have an equal heart for high and low, friend and opponent, success and failure, yet not to do His work negligently. I realised what the Hindu religion meant. We speak often of the Hindu religion, of the Sanatana Dharma, but few of us really know what that religion is. Other religions are preponderatingly religions of faith and profession, but the Sanatana Dharma is life itself; it is a thing that has not so much

to be believed as lived. This is the *dharmā* that for the salvation of humanity was cherished in the seclusion of this peninsula from of old. **It is to give this religion that India is rising. She does not rise as other countries do, for self or when she is strong, to trample on the weak. She is rising to shed the eternal light entrusted to her over the world. India has always existed for humanity and not for herself and it is for humanity and not for herself that she must be great.**"³⁰

"...day after day, He showed me His wonders and made me realise the utter truth of the Hindu religion. I had had many doubts before. I was brought up in England amongst foreign ideas and an atmosphere entirely foreign. About many things in Hinduism I had once been inclined to believe that it was all imagination; that there was much of dream in it, much that was delusion and *māyā*. But now **day after day I realised in the mind, I realised in the heart, I realised in the body the truths of the Hindu religion. They became living experiences to me, and things were opened to me which no material science could explain.**"³¹

"When I approached God at that time, I hardly had a living faith in Him. The agnostic was in me, the atheist was in me, the sceptic was in me and I was not absolutely sure that there was a God at all. I did not feel His presence. Yet something drew me to the truth of the Vedas, the truth of the Gita, the truth of the Hindu religion. I felt there must be a mighty truth somewhere in this Yoga, a mighty truth in this religion based on the Vedānta. So when I turned to the Yoga and resolved to practise it and find out if my idea was right, I did it in this spirit and with this prayer to Him, 'If Thou art, then Thou knowest my heart. Thou knowest that I do not ask

for Mukti, I do not ask for anything which others ask for. **I ask only for strength to uplift this nation, I ask only to be allowed to live and work for this people whom I love and to whom I pray that I may devote my life.'**... In the communion of Yoga two messages came. The first message said, "I have given you a work and it is to help to uplift this nation. Before long the time will come when you will have to go out of jail; for it is not my will that this time either you should be convicted or that you should pass the time as others have to do, in suffering for their country. I have called you to work, and that is the *adesb* for which you have asked. I give you the *adesb* to go forth and do my work." The second message came and it said, "Something has been shown to you in this year of seclusion, something about which you had your doubts and it is the truth of the Hindu religion. **It is this religion that I am raising up before the world, it is this that I have perfected and developed through the *rishis*, saints and *avatars*, and now it is going forth to do my work among the nations. I am raising up this nation to send forth my word. This is the Sanatana Dharma, this is the eternal religion which you did not really know before, but which I have now revealed to you.** The agnostic and the sceptic in you have been answered, for I have given you proofs within and without you, physical and subjective, which have satisfied you. When you go forth, speak to your nation always this word that it is for the Sanatana Dharma that they arise, it is for the world and not for themselves that they arise. I am giving them freedom for the service of the world. **When therefore it is said that India shall rise, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall rise. When it is said that India shall be great, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall be great. When it is said**

that India shall expand and extend herself, it is the Sanatana Dharma that shall expand and extend itself over the world. It is for the *dharma* and by the *dharma* that India exists. To magnify the religion means to magnify the country.”³²

“The name of your society is ‘Society for the Protection of Religion’. Well, the protection of the religion, the protection and upraising before the world of the Hindu religion, that is the work before us. But what is the Hindu religion? What is this religion which we call Sanatana, eternal? It is the Hindu religion only because the Hindu nation has kept it, because in this peninsula it grew up in the seclusion of the sea and the Himalayas, because in this sacred and ancient land it was given as a charge to the Aryan race to preserve through the ages. But it is not circumscribed by the confines of a single country, it does not belong peculiarly and for ever to a bounded part of the world. That which we call the Hindu religion is really the eternal religion, because it is the universal religion which embraces all others. If a religion is not universal, it cannot be eternal. A narrow religion, a sectarian religion, an exclusive religion can live only for a limited time and a limited purpose. This is the one religion that can triumph over materialism by including and anticipating the discoveries of science and the speculations of philosophy. It is the one religion which impresses on mankind the closeness of God to us and embraces in its compass all the possible means by which man can approach God. It is the one religion which insists every moment on the truth which all religions acknowledge, that He is in all men and all things and that in Him we move and have our being. It is the one religion which enables us not only to understand and believe this truth but to realise it with every part of our

being. It is the one religion which shows the world what the world is, that it is the *lila* of Vasudeva. It is the one religion which shows us how we can best play our part in that *lila*, its subtlest laws and its noblest rules. It is the one religion which does not separate life in any smallest detail from religion, which knows what immortality is and has utterly removed from us the reality of death.”³³ (The Greatness of India and Its Culture in the Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, The Resurgent India Trust, 2016, pp. 340-44)

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29 CWSA 8: 12

30 CWSA 8: 5-6

31 CWSA 8: 9

32 CWSA 8: 9-10

33 CWSA 8: 11-12

8. SOME SELECTED WORDS OF SRI AUROBINDO AND THE MOTHER ON INDIA AND ITS CULTURE

“Let us all work for the greatness of India.”¹

“Sri Aurobindo always loved deeply his Motherland. But he wished her to be great, noble, pure and worthy of her big mission in the world. He refused to let her sink to the sordid and vulgar level of blind self-interests and ignorant prejudices. This is why, in full conformity to his will, we lift high the standard of truth, progress and transformation of mankind, without caring for those who, through ignorance, stupidity, envy or bad will, seek to soil it and drag it down into the mud. We carry it very high so that all who have a soul may see it and gather round it.”²

I. India’s Soul, Spiritual Culture and Uniqueness

“India must find back and manifest her soul.”³

“It is only India’s soul who can unify the country.

Externally the provinces of India are very different in character, tendencies, culture, as well as in language, and any attempt to unify them artificially could only have disastrous results.

But her soul is one, intense in her aspiration towards the spiritual truth, the essential unity of the creation and the divine origin of life, and by uniting with this aspiration the whole country can recover a unity that has never ceased to exist for the superior mentality.”⁴

“In the whole creation the earth has a place of distinction,

because unlike any other planet it is evolutionary with a psychic entity at its centre. In it, India, in particular, is a divinely chosen country.”⁵

“There are places that are favorable for occult experiences. Benares is one of these places, the atmosphere there is filled with vibrations of occult forces, and if one has the slightest capacity, it spontaneously develops very strongly and spontaneously as soon as one lands in India. These are Graces. Graces, because it is the destiny of the country, it has been so throughout its history, and because India has always been turned much more towards the heights and the inner depths than towards the outer world. Now, it is in the process of losing all that and wallowing in the mud, but that’s another story... it was like that and it is still like that.”⁶

“True spirituality is not to renounce life, but to make life perfect with the Divine Perfection.

This is what India must show to the world now.”⁷

“Your feeling that there should be reintegration of Indian Culture under modern conditions is quite right. It is *the* work that has to be done. And as far as Sri Aurobindo can see at present Indian Spiritual Culture has a great and bright future before it. It is the future power that might dominate the world.”⁸

“True, India is the only place in the world which is still aware that something else than Matter exists. The other countries have quite forgotten it: Europe, America and elsewhere.... That is why she still has a message to preserve and deliver to the world. But at present she is splashing and floundering in the muddle.”⁹

“We are no ordinary race. We are a people ancient as our

hills and rivers and we have behind us a history of manifold greatness, not surpassed by any other race. We are the descendants of those who performed tapasya and underwent unheard-of austerities for the sake of spiritual gain and of their own will submitted to all the sufferings of which humanity is capable. We are the children of those mothers who ascended with a smile the funeral pyre that they might follow their husbands to another world. We are a people to whom suffering is welcome and who have a spiritual strength within them, greater than any physical force. We are a people in whom God has chosen to manifest Himself more than any other at many great moments of our history. It is because God has chosen to manifest Himself and has entered into the hearts of His people that we are rising again as a nation.”¹⁰

“What was the force that enabled India beaten down & trampled by mailed fist & iron hoof ever to survive immortally, ever to resist, ever to crush down the conqueror of the hour at last beneath her gigantic foot, ever to raise her mighty head again to the stars? It is because she never lost hold of religion, never gave up her faith in the spirit. Therefore the promise of Srikrishna ever holds good; therefore the Adyashakti, the mighty Chandi, ever descends when the people turn to her and tramples the Asura to pieces. Times change and a new kind of outer power rules over India in place of the Asuras of the East. But woe to India if she cast from her her eternal *dharma*. The fate of the old nations shall then overtake her, her name shall be cast out from the list of nations and her peoples become a memory and a legend upon the earth. Let her keep true to her Self, and the *Atmashakti*, the eternal Force of the Self shall again strengthen & raise her.”¹¹

II. Love of India and the Spirit of Nationalism

“Love has a place in politics, but it is the love for one’s country, for one’s countrymen, for the glory, greatness and happiness of the race, the divine *ananda* of self-immolation for one’s fellows, the ecstasy of relieving their sufferings, the joy of seeing one’s blood flow for country and freedom, the bliss of union in death with the fathers of the race. The feeling of almost physical delight in the touch of the mother soil, of the winds that blow from Indian seas, of the rivers that stream from Indian hills, in the sight of Indian surroundings, Indian men, Indian women, Indian children, in the hearing of Indian speech, music, poetry, in the familiar sights, sounds, habits, dress, manners of our Indian life, this is the physical root of that love. The pride in our past, the pain of our present, the passion for the future are its trunk and branches. Self-sacrifice, self-forgetfulness, great service and high endurance for the country are its fruit. And the sap which keeps it alive is the realisation of the Motherhood of God in the country, the vision of the Mother, the knowledge of the Mother, the perpetual contemplation, adoration and service of the Mother.”¹²

“When I listen to the nightingale singing on English riverbank or garden-reaches or see the Seine flowing through the modern gaiety of Paris, I can hear again the manifold noise of the birds on an Indian morning and see rather Ganges flowing grandiose and leonine to her Eastern seas. **The body is bound to its surroundings, but the heart exceeds them, and I carry the love of India with me even to the coldest**

climes. The soul is yet more free. It will be well when every Indian, instead of taking a waxlike stamp from his foreign surroundings, is able to carry India with him wherever he goes. For that will mean that India is destined to conquer and place her stamp upon the whole world.”¹³

“Our country is God the Mother; speak not evil of her unless thou canst do it with love and tenderness.”¹⁴

“How. can we live Swaraj? By abandonment of the idea of self and its replacement by the idea of the nation. As Chaitanya ceased to be Nimai Pandit and became Krishna, became Radha, became Balaram, so every one of us must cease to cherish his separate life and live in the nation. The hope of national regeneration must absorb our minds as the idea of salvation absorbs the minds of the *mumukshu*. Our *tyaga* must be as complete as the *tyaga* of the nameless ascetic. Our passion to see the face of our free and glorified Mother must be as devouring a madness as the passion of Chaitanya to see the face of Sri Krishna. Our sacrifice for the country must be as enthusiastic and complete as that of Jagai and Madhai who left the rule of a kingdom to follow the *sankirtan* of Gauranga. Our offerings on the altar must be as wildly liberal, as remorselessly complete as that of Carthaginian parents who passed their children through the fire to Moloch. If any reservation mars the completeness of our self-abandonment, if any bargaining abridges the fullness of our sacrifice, if any doubt mars the strength of our faith and enthusiasm, if any thought of self pollutes the sanctity of our love, then the Mother will not be satisfied and will continue to withhold her presence. We call her to come, but the call has not yet gone out of the bottom of our hearts. The Mother’s feet are on the threshold, but she waits to hear the true cry, the cry that rushes

out from the heart, before she will enter. We are still hesitating between ourselves and the country; we would give one anna to the service of the Mother and keep fifteen for ourselves, our wives, our children, our property, our fame and reputation, our safety, our ease. The Mother asks all before she will give herself. Not until Surath Raja offered the blood of his veins did the Mother appear to him and ask him to choose his boon. Not until Shivaji was ready to offer his head at the feet of the Mother, did Bhavani in visible form stay his hand and give him the command to free his people.... The schemes by which we seek to prepare the nation, the scheme of industrial regeneration, the scheme of educational regeneration, the scheme of political regeneration through self-help are subordinate features of the deeper regeneration which the country must go through before it can be free. **The Mother asks us for no schemes, no plans, no methods. She herself will provide the schemes, the plans, the methods better than any that we can devise. She asks us for our hearts, our lives, nothing less, nothing more.... Regeneration is literally rebirth and rebirth comes not by the intellect, not by the fullness of the purse, not by policy, not by change of machinery, but by the getting of a new heart by throwing away all that we were into the fire of sacrifice and being reborn in the Mother. Self-abandonment is the demand made upon us. She asks of us, ‘How many will live for me? How many will die for me?’ and awaits our answer.**”¹⁵

“The nation-idea in India will realise itself, in all its departments, along what may be called federal lines, – it will be a union of different nationalities, each preserving its own specific elements both of organisation and ideal, each

communicating to the others what they lack in either thought or character, and all moving together towards one universal end, both in civic and social life, progressively realising that end along its own historic and traditional lines, and thus indefinitely drawing near to each other, without, for an equally indefinite period, actually losing themselves in any one particular form of that life, whether old or new. The Mahomedan, the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Christian in India will not have to cease to be Mahomedan, Hindu, Buddhist, or Christian, in any sense of the term, for uniting into one great and puissant Indian nation. Devotion to one's own ideals and institutions, with toleration and respect for the ideals and institutions of other sections of the community, and an ardent love and affection for the common civic life and ideal of all – these are what must be cultivated by us now, for the building up of the real Indian nation.”¹⁶

“..we do not understand Hindu nationalism as a possibility under modern conditions. Hindu nationalism had a meaning in the times of Shivaji and Ramdas, when the object of national revival was to overthrow a Mahomedan domination which, once tending to Indian unity and toleration, had become oppressive and disruptive. It was possible because India was then a world to itself and the existence of two geographical units entirely Hindu, Maharashtra and Rajputana, provided it with a basis. It was necessary because the misuse of their domination by the Mahomedan element was fatal to India's future and had to be punished and corrected by the resurgence and domination of the Hindu. And because it was possible and necessary, it came into being. But under modern conditions India can only exist as a whole.

A nation depends for its existence on geographical separateness and geographical compactness, on having a distinct and separate country. The existence of this geographical separateness is sure in the end to bear down all differences of race, language, religion, history. It has done so in Great Britain, in Switzerland, in Germany. It will do so in India.”¹⁷

“In India we do not recognise the nation as the highest synthesis to which we can rise. There is a higher synthesis, humanity; beyond that there is a still higher synthesis, this living, suffering, aspiring world of creatures, the synthesis of Buddhism; there is a highest of all, the synthesis of God, and that is the Hindu synthesis, the synthesis of Vedanta. **With us today Nationalism is our immediate practical faith and gospel not because it is the highest possible synthesis, but because it must be realised in life if we are to have the chance of realising the others. We must live as a nation before we can live in humanity...** A man must be strong and free in himself before he can live usefully for others, so must a nation. But that does not justify us in forgetting the ultimate aim of evolution. God in the nation becomes the realisation of the first moment to us because the nation is the chosen means or condition through which we rise to the higher synthesis, God in humanity, God in all creatures, God in Himself and ourself.”¹⁸

Sri Aurobindo’s Message of the Fifteenth of August 1947

“August 15th the birthday of free India. It marks for her the end of an old era, the beginning of a new age. But it has a significance not only for us, but for Asia and the whole world; for it signifies the entry into the comity of nations of a new power with untold potentialities which has great part to play in determining the political, social, cultural and spiritual future

of humanity. To me personally it must naturally be gratifying that this date which was notable only for me because it was my own birthday celebrated annually by those who have accepted my gospel of life, should have acquired this vast significance. As a mystic, I take this identification, not as a coincidence or fortuitous accident, but as a sanction and seal of the Divine Power which guides my steps on the work with which I began life. Indeed almost all the world movements which I hoped to see fulfilled in my lifetime, though at that time they looked like impossible dreams, I can observe on this day either approaching fruition or initiated and on the way to their achievement.

I have been asked for a message on this great occasion, but I am perhaps hardly in a position to give one. All I can do is to make a personal declaration of the aims and ideals conceived in my childhood and youth and now watched in their beginning of fulfilment, because they are relevant to the freedom of India, since they are a part of what I believe to be India's future work, something in which she cannot but take a leading position. For I have always held and said that India was arising, not to serve her own material interests only, to achieve expansion, greatness, power and prosperity, – though these too she must not neglect, – and certainly not like others to acquire domination of other peoples, but to live also for God and the world as a helper and leader of the whole human race. Those aims and ideals were in their natural order these: a revolution which would achieve India's freedom and her unity; the resurgence and liberation of Asia and her return to the great role which she had played in the progress of human civilization; the rise of a new, a greater, brighter and nobler life for mankind which for its entire realization would rest

outwardly on an international unification of the separate existence of the peoples, preserving and securing their national life but drawing them together into an overriding and consummating oneness; the gift by India of her spiritual knowledge and her means for the spiritualization of life to the whole race; finally, a new step in the evolution which, by uplifting the consciousness to a higher level, would begin the solution of the many problems of existence which have perplexed and vexed humanity, since men began to think and to dream of individual perfection and a perfect society.

India is free but she has not achieved unity, only a fissured and broken freedom... the old communal division into Hindu and Muslim seems to have hardened into the figure of a permanent political division of the country. It is to be hoped that the Congress and the nation will not accept the settled fact as for ever settled or as anything more than a temporary expedient. For if it lasts, India may be seriously weakened, even crippled: civil strife may remain always possible, possible even a new invasion and foreign conquest. **The partition of the country must go... by whatever means, the division must and will go. For without it the destiny of India might be seriously impaired and even frustrated. But that must not be.**

Asia has arisen and large parts of it have been liberated or are at this moment being liberated; its other still subject parts are moving through whatever struggles towards freedom. Only a little has to be done and that will be done today or tomorrow... The unification of mankind is under way, though only in an imperfect initiative, organised but struggling against tremendous difficulties. But the momentum is there and, if the experience of history can be taken as a guide, it must inevitably increase

until it conquers. ...the unification is a necessity in the course of Nature, an inevitable movement and its achievement can be safely foretold. Its necessity for the nations also is clear, for without it the freedom of the small peoples can never be safe hereafter and even large and powerful nations cannot really be secure.... It is.. to the interest of all that union should take place. Only human imbecility and stupid selfishness could prevent it. Against that, it has been said, even the gods strive in vain; but it cannot stand for ever against the necessity of Nature and the Divine Will. Nationalism will then have fulfilled itself; an international spirit and outlook must grow up and international forms and institutions; even it may be such developments as dual or multilateral citizenship and a voluntary fusion of cultures may appear in the process of the change and the spirit of nationalism losing its militancy may find these things perfectly compatible with the integrity of its own outlook. A new spirit of oneness will take hold of the human race.

The spiritual gift of India to the world has already begun. India's spirituality is entering Europe and America in an ever increasing measure. That movement will grow; amid the disasters of the time more and more eyes are turning towards her with hope and there is even an increasing resort not only to her teachings, but to her psychic and spiritual practice.

The rest is still a personal hope and an idea and ideal which has begun to take hold both in India and in the West on forward-looking minds. The difficulties in the way are more formidable than in any other field of endeavour, but difficulties were made to be overcome and if the Supreme Will is there, they will be overcome. Here too, if this evolution is to take place, since it must come through a growth of the spirit and the inner consciousness, the initiative can come from India

and although the scope must be universal, the central movement may be hers.

Such is the content which I put into this date of India's liberation; whether or how far or how soon this connection will be fulfilled, depends upon this new and free India."¹⁹ (The Greatness of India and Its Culture in the Words of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother, The Resurgent India Trust, 2016, pp. 345-55)

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- 1 CWM 13: 368
- 2 CWM 13: 123
- 3 CWM 13: 369
- 4 CWM 13: 368
- 5 CWM 13: 368
- 6 *Mother's Agenda*
1951-60, Vol. 1, P. 244
- 7 CWM 13: 357
- 8 CWSA 36: 513
- 9 CWM 12: 211
- 10 CWSA 8: 38-39
- 11 CWSA 17: 159
- 12 CWSA 7: 1118-19
- 13 CWSA 1: 550
- 14 CWSA 12: 456
- 15 CWSA 7: 1031-33
- 16 CWSA 6: 169
- 17 CWSA 8: 304
- 18 CWSA 8: 84-85
- 19 CWSA 36: 474-77

HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA AND UKRAINE

Even as the Russia-Ukraine war chugs along steadily, with no major changes in the existing status quo, developments within Russia display its progressive weakening. A recent indicator of these developments is Putin's struggle to maintain control over Russian provinces, such as North Caucasus and Dagestan and ensure ethnic harmony. In addition, the newly formed Siberian Battalion of the Ukrainian armed forces consist distinctively of Russians who have deserted Putin's Russia. As Muslim numbers in Russia increase, in Dagestan, hundreds of people in the region carried Palestinian flags and anti-Israeli posters while occupying the Makhachkala airport. They eventually forced their way onto the airfield in an attempt to block any Jews from Israel being relocated there. The protest was suppressed by Russia. However, this was not the only instance. Many anti-Jewish movements have been taking place across North Caucasus and Dagestan, with Jews even being refused housing and being forced to flee.

These instances reflect Moscow's slipping control over the situation in Muslim-dominated provinces and lack of inter-ethnic harmony, with many ethnic Russians being unhappy about the fact that Putin has encouraged local warlords like Ramzan Kadyrov.

From the perspective of military position, a series of unsuccessful offensives in the Kupyansk and Avdiivka directions have caused major problems for Russian forces, which is losing military equipment as well as facing manpower losses. It is estimated that the rate of domestic production for

critical arms and munitions is well below the rate necessary to adequately replenish growing deficits, leading to repeated attempts by the regime to reorganize the Russian Armed Forces. This has, in recent times, also included efforts to induct prisoners and migrant workers into the armed forces.

From a diplomatic perspective, Russia, after the meeting between Putin and Kim Jong Un, is increasingly veering into North Korean corner. This was displayed through the visit of Russian foreign minister to Pyongyang and intelligence reports that North Korea sent one million artillery rounds to Russia in exchange for consultations on military-technical matters. Despite Russian denials that North Korea has been shipping arms to Russia, US satellite evidence revealed a sharp increase in railway traffic along the Russian-North Korean border in recent months.

DEVELOPMENTS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

The world of technology has been witnessing steady developments. The ouster and subsequent reinstatement of Sam Altman as the CEO of OpenAI – the company which has developed ChatGPT – created waves in the corporate and technology world. The company has been working on developing artificial general intelligence systems and supposedly creating AI applications for the benefit of humanity at large. A key system on the radar of the company is Project Q*, which is widely described as being a potential threat to humanity. Project Q* has the following features:

- Advanced logical reasoning and understanding of abstract concepts, which is a tremendous leap as no AI model

so far is capable of it. This could also lead to unpredictable behaviour or decisions that humans may not be able to foresee or understand beforehand.

- Deep learning and programmed rules, which may make the model more powerful and versatile than any other current AI model. Essentially, this could lead to an AI model that not only learns from data but also applies reasoning like humans, which makes it difficult to control or predict.

- It is seen as a step closer to achieving Artificial General Intelligence (AGI). AGI is an AI that possesses the ability to understand, learn, and apply this knowledge across different domains, just like human intelligence. AGI could likely surpass human capabilities in many areas, and this may lead to issues of control, safety, and ethics.

- It will be able to generate new ideas and solve problems even before they happen. The downside of this could be that it could enable AI to make decisions or actions that are beyond human comprehension.

Besides these civilian applications, it is also notable that the AI arms race is rapidly increasing. In recent developments, the US aims to scale up the role of AI in military deployment. Through a project known as the Replicator, the Pentagon is intent on fielding multiple thousands of relatively inexpensive, expendable AI-enabled autonomous vehicles by 2026 to keep pace with China.

The rapidly expanding deployment of AI in all fields continues to expose the limitations of human control.

ISRAEL-HAMAS WAR

The war between Israel and Hamas has intensified currently, with intense Israeli bombings in southern Gaza, combined with stoppage of electricity, leading to more than 11000 Palestinian casualties. In the process, Gaza's Al-Shifa hospital was also targeted. Israeli video evidence confirmed that Hamas had built something akin to an entire underground city and habitations through the tunnels beneath the hospital. These were used to store the resources and military ammunition of Hamas. The discovery confirms the widely known reality that Hamas, by inhabiting crowded areas, tends to use women and children as shields against potential Israeli attacks. This strategy has not even brought it disfavor with the Gaza civilians due to its popularity.

However, subsequently in the midst of the war and amid international pressures, including by the United Nations, on Israel to avoid civilian casualties and declare a ceasefire or a humanitarian pause, temporary pause was brokered through Qatar and United States through a hostage-exchange agreement. The agreement resulted in Israel releasing nearly three or four times the number of Hamas prisoners in exchange for Hamas releasing a few couple of Israeli hostages. This agreement through various extensions continued for a few days, after which the war has once again resumed unabated.

In perspective, the latest developments in this war underscore not just the fragile nature of peace, but also the fact that any peaceful foundation can only be built upon strength and not weakness, with the role of international institutions continuing to be limited and narrow.

INDIA'S KHALISTAN PROBLEM

A recent report in Britain-based international media company, Financial Times, has exposed how the United States government foiled a conspiracy to assassinate Gurpatwant Singh Pannun, leader of Khalistani outfit Sikhs for Justice, on American soil and issued a warning to India's government over concerns it was involved in the plot. According to the details, an Indian named Nikhil Gupta, at the behest of a senior Indian intelligence officer, was involved in plotting the assassination of Pannun. The plot was discovered as US security officers acted in a disguise to mislead Gupta and got involved in the plot.

The unsealed indictment mentions five persons, although it names only one. They are:

- **CC-1:** An Indian intelligence officer who resides in India and directed the plot from there. He formerly served in the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF).

- **Nikhil Gupta:** A 52-year-old Indian national, who was hired by CC-1 to orchestrate the plot in the US. Gupta is allegedly involved in international weapons and narcotics trafficking. He was also based in India.

- **CS:** Contacted by Gupta for assistance in contracting a hitman for the job in New York City. Was actually a confidential source working with US law enforcement.

- **UC:** The purported hitman, introduced to Gupta by CS. He was actually an undercover US law enforcement officer.

- **The Victim:** While the indictment does not mention Pannun's name, it provides details which leave little doubt.

The Victim is described as “an attorney and political activist”, “a US citizen residing in New York”, “a vocal critic of the Indian government ... [who] leads a US-based organisation that advocates for the secession of Punjab” and says that the Indian government has “banned the Victim and his separatist organisation.”

The protest by US against India was issued after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made a high-profile state visit to Washington in June 2023. Further, the US federal prosecutors have filed a sealed indictment against at least one alleged perpetrator of the plot in a New York district court, although the indictment does not name the Indian officer involved.

Interestingly, the alleged plot against Pannun comes after Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Sikh separatist based in Canada, was gunned down in June 2023 this year. However, the Indian response to the US has been far more cooperative – with India declaring that it will investigate the matter – than with Canada. India has argued that while US has provided credible evidence for the plot, Canada has failed to do so.

While the indictment and the allegations of the plot have definitely strained India-US ties, yet both countries are cooperating closely to resolve the impasse, even as the indictment will take its own course. At the same time, from the Indian perspective, it is also heartening to note that India intelligence is proactively dealing with enemies abroad which seek to create disturbance within India. Pannun is not merely an activist and an attorney but has used the cover of his foundation to actively advocate secession of Punjab from India, influence the Sikhs and issue threats of bombings and terrorism against India in an unabashed manner. Under such

circumstances, it becomes the national duty of India to deal with such threats in a manner most suited to the circumstances, given that most of these Sikh separatists possess citizenships of Canada and US.

US-CHINA TRUCE

A temporary trade truce was witnessed between China and US in the middle of November, with a direct meeting between the US President Joe Biden and the Chinese leader Xi Jinping in San Francisco on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit. The meeting lasted four hours. Although it did not resolve any substantive issues between the countries, both the leaders struck a broadly conciliatory tone afterward. A potential area of cooperation that emerged between the countries was related to the field of Artificial Intelligence (AI). There was no breakthrough on the Taiwan issue, and geopolitical conflicts such as Russia-Ukraine war and Israel-Hamas war were also discussed. The most significant breakthrough of the meeting was the decision to renew high-level political and military communications between the two sides.

The meeting is significant as it exposes the limitations of Chinese choices domestically and internationally. After the dressing down Xi received from the elders in Communist Party of China, the country has confronted relentless economic and military pressure from US and economic slowdown at home, combined with rising unpopularity of Xi and his high-handed methods. Additionally, China can also perhaps see the Indo-Pacific slipping out, as the Biden Administration has made major geopolitical gains in Asia over the last three years. These include stronger bilateral alliances with Japan, Korea, and Australia,

the creation of a trilateral strategic framework with Tokyo and Seoul, a revitalised alliance with the Philippines, and new strategic partnerships with India and Vietnam.

All this has forced Xi to seek reconciliation and declare at San Francisco that the world is “big enough for both China and the US.” In the meeting, Xi sought to reassure Biden that China has no intention to surpass or replace the US as the dominant power in the world. In return, he wants the US to stop containing China.

However, besides the restoration of military communications and the infusion of confidence-building measures, the meeting did not see any other major outcome, and despite Chinese request, the US trade restrictions on China continue to be in place for now.

A Perfected Human World Cannot Be Created By or Composed of Men Who Are Themselves Imperfect

“A perfected human world cannot be created by men or composed of men who are themselves imperfect. Even if all our actions are scrupulously regulated by education or law or social or political machinery, what will be achieved is a regulated pattern of minds, a fabricated pattern of lives, a cultivated pattern of conduct; but a conformity of this kind cannot change, cannot re-create the man within, it cannot carve or cut out a perfect soul or a perfect thinking man or a perfect or growing living being. For soul and mind and life are powers of being and can grow but cannot be cut out or made; an outer process or formation can assist or can express soul and mind and life but cannot create or develop it. One can indeed help the being to grow, not by an attempt at manufacture, but by throwing on it stimulating influences or by lending to it one’s forces of soul or mind or life; but even so the growth must still come from within it, determining from there what shall be made of these influences and forces, and not from outside. This is the first truth that our creative zeal and aspiration have to learn, otherwise all our human endeavour is foredoomed to turn in a futile circle and can end only in a success that is a specious failure.”

– Sri Aurobindo
(CWSA 22: PP. 1058-59)