

RESURGENT INDIA

The announcement of a ceasefire between India and Pakistan is a welcome step and in line with India’s stand that Operation Sindoor has a limited purpose of hitting the terror infrastructure of Pakistan and it was not against the state. From day one, India held it that it was not interested in escalating tensions with Pakistan. The Operation has served its purpose. Pakistan has felt the rage and fury of Narendra Modi’s India over cross border terrorism. India has shown that it would not wait for any other country for force to resolve its problems even if it meant attacking ‘assets’ of Pakistan deep down inside its territory. Also, Operation Sindoor exposed Pakistan as a state sponsoring terrorism before the world. With jihadi Generals like Asif Munir in the saddle, we don’t expect Pakistan to change much but since it must have realised that cohabiting with terrorists comes at a cost.

Narendra Modi government deserves kudos for making Pakistan understand it would not be business as usual if it continues to sponsor terrorism in India. India would react with full fury and might and smoke the terrorists out of their hideouts. India would not see its people dying at the hands of terrorists trained and armed by Pakistan – and in many cases Pakistani mercenaries – with mere condemnations and remorse but act to punish them and their sponsors. Our braved armed forces avenged the loss of their dear ones for the relatives of the Pahalgam terrorist strike. India’s operations were clean and marked with precision and clarity that it doesn’t want escalation with Pakistan. Each and every step of armed forces and communicators involved in Operation Sindoor was molded in this fashion. India was retaliating in a manner not to inflict damage and pain on civilians, They hit airbases with precision that too on provocation. Long live India!

Time for People of J&K to Rise and Shine!

**Anil Rajput**

The Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful places on earth. It, however, has also been one of the most volatile regions due to the delusional and dogmatic mindset of our western neighbour. The result: ever since 1947, it has been subjected to periods of turmoil, instability and tremendous external pressures.

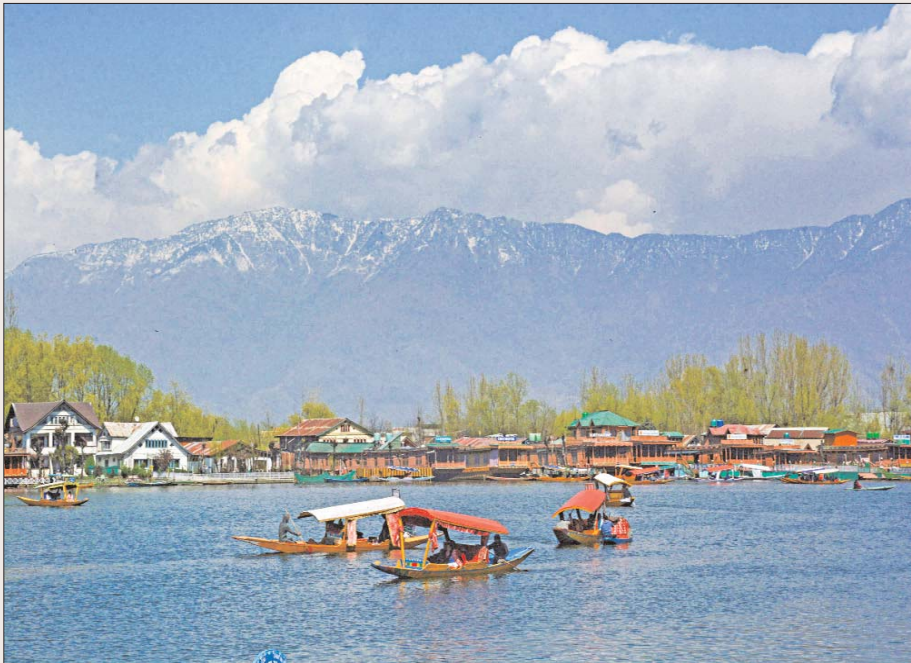
The casualties in this entire process have been the people of the State along with our brave security forces, who have defended the people from both external as well as indoctrinated internal elements. Post-Independence, the economy of the State was doing quite well, and it was driven to a large extent by the tourism industry. For decades, this sector formed a critical part of the State’s economy and was the favourite destination of India’s most loved entertainment source — the Bollywood movies!

As a result, the State remained in the limelight, with the most famous actors, in a way, becoming its brand ambassadors. As many as 50 per cent of the movies were shot in the State, showcasing its beauty and creating avenues of growth for various extensions of the entertainment industry.

This had a huge bearing and created fertile conditions for the coming up of tourist destinations, hotels, markets for local handicrafts, the Kashmiri ‘apple’ and ‘dry fruits’, shikara (houseboats) — all of which generated tremendous employment for the people of the State.

In 1955, over 50 thousand domestic and foreign tourists visited J&K; this number crossed 74 thousand by 1960, to over 1.5 lakh by 1968, and stood at around 5.85 lakhs in 1980. Srinagar, in the 1960s and 70s, had approximately 5–9 daily flights from many Indian cities and was relatively well connected back in the days.

According to a Government survey, J&K welcomed 7 lakh tourists in 1987, and this went down to a mere 6,000 three years later. This proves the sheer economic damage that the State suffered due to instability and mischievous propaganda of vested interests. Things improved a little post-1989, and unfortunately the region was embattled in the Kargil War in 1999. Things did take a turn for the better, and by 2010 —



30 years after 1980 — the number of tourist arrivals touched the 5-lakh mark, going on to show that despite some recovery, the State made no real progress in this area in 30 years due to the prevailing uncertainties and an environment of terror.

In 2019, when the Government took the bold step of abolishing Article 370, and firmly conveyed its position — that enough is enough — J&K once again began an era of unprecedented economic and all-round progress. The improved overall environment and sentiment was first and foremost reflected through the tourist arrivals that broke all records. In 2021, 1.13 crore tourists visited the UT; 1.89 crore in 2022; this increased to 2.12 crores in 2023 and 2.36 crores in 2024. This has also resulted in many multinational and domestic hotel chains opening new properties in the UT, and the region currently offers 62,488 registered tourist beds across hotels, guest houses and houseboats.

In addition, J&K is developing 75 new tourist destinations, 75 heritage/cultural sites, 75 Sufism/religious sites and 75 adventure treks/sites — potentially attracting tourists for all the four seasons.

There has also been a massive increase in the daily flights to Srinagar, which is today witnessing around 45–50 daily flights in

summer and 35–37 flights in the winters. To complete a full circle, as many as 300 movies and web series were shot in J&K in two years (2022 and 2023) — a clear signal that the atmosphere was back to the pre-1989 days. In fact, here it is critical to mention the laudable and impactful steps that the Central and the UT Government have taken since 2019: the Prime Minister’s Development Package — 2015 was accelerated and 53 projects pertaining to 15 ministries are being implemented at a cost of `58,477 crores in various sectors such as roads, power, health, education, tourism, agriculture, skill development and much more — out of these, 29 projects have been completed with many others in advanced stages of production.

A new Central Sector Scheme was notified in 2021 for the industrial development of the UT of Jammu and Kashmir, with an outlay of `28,400 crores. In addition, J&K has received investment applications of more than `54,000 crores, out of which projects worth more than `36,000 crores have been allotted industrial land. The construction work of 17,601 km of roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana was completed up to March 2022, and this has connected over 2,074 places. Two AIIMS, seven new medical colleges,

two cancer institutes and 15 nursing colleges have been taken up and operationalised, along with reviving power projects for about 3,000 MW capacity.

Three major irrigation projects that include Ravi Canal (`62 crore), third stage of Tral Lift Irrigation Scheme (`45 crore) and the comprehensive flood management plan of river Jhelum and its tributaries — Phase I, costing `400 crores — have been completed. In addition, the Government of Jammu and Kashmir has carried out recruitment in the public sector from 2019 onwards, totalling nearly 30 thousand employments. Another 5.2 lakh persons are estimated to be employed through self-employment schemes from August 2019 up to June 2022. A hundred per cent saturation has also been achieved in 17 individual beneficiary-centric schemes, including Saubhagya, Ujala, Ujjwala and Indradhanush schemes. Therefore, things really began to look up, and the period from 2019 onwards is actually the golden period for the Valley and the UT of J&K.

That is, till the recent and most unfortunate and orchestrated attack that happened at one of the UT’s most famous tourist destinations — Pahalgam. It was clear that the recent development of the region, and the overall environment of prosperity, did not go well with a neighbouring state which has an evil eye on J&K — and their frustration led to this desperate attempt to damage the economy and derail the progress being made by the local population. It has always been the people of the UT who have, today and in the past, remained the biggest sufferers and have paid a steep price for such senseless acts. It is my firm belief that the best is yet to come for the Valley and its people. Ultimately, the answer for J&K’s growth and a bright future lies in the local Kashmiri’s resolve and ability to recognise and call out the sinister agenda of external forces. They need to awaken and defeat these evil designs for their own good, and for this to happen — cooperating and trusting the local administration, which has always tried to ensure their safety and security, along with that of their future generations — is the need of the hour!

(The writer is President — Corporate Affairs, ITC. Views are personal)

THE POWER OF CHOICE AND FAITH

**Barbara O’Neill**

My journey into the world of mental health began early, shaped by personal experience and a natural call to care. I was just 18 or 19 when I found myself taking care of my mother, who was wheelchair-bound. At the same time, I was studying psychology at night, and it quickly became clear that nursing — especially psychiatric nursing — was where my heart belonged. Even while enjoying the life of a young adult, I was deeply curious: What causes mental illness? What pushes a person to the edge?

One case I’ll never forget involved a man admitted in utter crisis. His wife had left him, his business collapsed, his home was destroyed in a fire, and his son became a paraplegic — all in a short span of time. He had reached breaking point. But with coordinated care from social workers, financial advisors, and mental health professionals, his life began to mend. Just a week later, he walked out of the facility with a bag in his hand and hope in his heart. That experience taught me a vital truth: with the right support,

people can recover—even from the depths of despair.

At 25, my path took a spiritual turn when I became a Christian. Around the same time, I developed a deep interest in natural remedies and a holistic approach to raising my children. A pivotal moment came when I was given a book called Psycho-Dietetics, published in 1976. It explored how American doctors were using minerals, vitamins, and lifestyle changes to support mental health. That book lit a fire in me. It launched a lifelong pursuit of natural, empowering, and faith-aligned ways to support the mind.

I’ve always believed in raising independent thinkers — emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. I didn’t spoon-feed my children; I wanted them to think, question, and grow strong from within. That same principle guides my approach to care: give people tools they can use on their own, not just within the walls of a clinic. In recent years, especially amid global upheaval and restrictions, many people have started to look inward—and upward—for answers. The need for holistic self-care—mental, phys-

ical, emotional, and spiritual — has never been clearer. People are realising that healing is not just something that happens in a doctor’s office; it starts with taking responsibility for one’s own well-being.

Mental health is complex, but one truth remains: our mindset matters. Depression is often a state of mind — though this may be difficult to hear, it carries weight. Therapies like Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) help us see that while we can’t always change our circumstances, we can choose our responses. Gratitude, even in suffering, is one of the most powerful tools. In a world gripped by fear and uncertainty, we must remember the profound power of choice. It is central to mental freedom, parenting, and spiritual growth. When we choose to trust God in adversity, we’re not simply holding onto hope—we’re resisting fear itself. But this choice also reveals a deeper spiritual truth: God is not a tyrant. He gives us freedom, even when it means people sometimes choose wrongly and others suffer. Still, in reclaiming our minds from destructive patterns, this freedom becomes our

greatest strength. We are not victims of our thoughts. We can choose what we focus on. As Dr Neil Nedley says, “The mind stayed on Him is a choice.” Sometimes, that choice starts with “fake it till you make it.” It may sound hollow, but it’s a powerful truth—repetition creates reality. Just like going to the gym builds identity over time, practicing hope reshapes our inner dialogue.

Living in the present is also vital. We’re often robbed of today by regrets or fears of tomorrow. But as one speaker said, “Love today. Love where you are. Love what’s happening — because you’ll never have that moment again.” Gratitude brings healing. Even when self-critical, pause and reframe. Maybe your feet look odd — but they carry you. You are free.

Lastly, mental wellness is deeply rooted in the physical laws of health, where simple, consistent habits yield profound results. Breathing through the nose, rather than the mouth, enhances oxygenation and naturally filters the air we take in, supporting clearer thinking and calmness.

Victory's veil: The allied legacy of moral evasion

**NILANTHA ILANGAMUWA**

When President Harry Truman read the plea from Manhattan Project scientists urging a reconsideration of the atomic bomb’s use on Japan, his response likely showed no moral hesitation or remorse. Instead, his actions reinforced a postwar global order based not on liberty, but on selective memory and perverse exoneration.

Eighty years after Victory in Europe Day, the dominant Western narrative continues to present the war’s outcome as a triumph of virtue, ignoring the uncomfortable ethical compromises and strategic duplicities that underpinned it. The mythology of liberation has become sacrosanct, while the darker aspects — such as rendition, racial internment, scientific justification of war crimes, and indifference to colonial sacrifice — remain marginalised or erased. The obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — while dressed in the procedural lexicon of wartime necessity — was, in fact, the Western world’s inaugural postbellum moral abdication. The bombings were less a denouement of global conflict and more a vulgar display of technological supremacy calculated

to dissuade Soviet assertiveness. The horror, therefore, was not simply that a nuclear Rubicon had been crossed, but that it was done with an exculpatory grin, and later justified with the antiseptic language of ‘strategic imperatives’. It is no longer speculative fiction but a matter of record, buried in declassified memoranda, that alternatives existed — namely, Japan’s increasing willingness to consider surrender if the Emperor were retained. Truman’s decision was not an exigency of war, but a deliberate theatricality of dominance. The supposed Allied moral high ground crumbled further when Operation Paperclip was set into motion.

Over 1,600 Nazi scientists, including unrepentant perpetrators of ghastly human experimentation, were clandestinely ferried into the United States under the auspices of national security and scientific utility. Werner von Braun, a man whose rockets were lubricated by the blood of enslaved labourers at Mittelwerk, became a lauded patriarch of American aerospace triumph. The apology was monstrously bureaucratic — his past affiliations were ‘scrubbed’ to sanitise his assimilation into American exceptionalism. In a 1947 CIA memo, the chilling intent is laid bare:

“It is not desirable that the public or press become aware...” — a line that resounds like a macabre hymn to state-sanctioned impunity. This institutional duplicity was not uniquely American.

The British intelligence establishment had its own euphemistically elegant form of deceit. Through the “Double Cross System,” MI5 successfully manipulated German intelligence via double agents, such as the legendary Juan Pujol García, to misdirect Axis expectations about D-Day. Though tactically ingenious, this also reveals an alarming precedent: deception, once wielded in wartime, quickly transmogrifies into peacetime governance. The ability to deceive a foreign enemy soon turned inward — domestic populations were no longer sacrosanct from psychological warfare, propaganda, and informational obfuscation. Simultaneously, the West turned a wilfully blind eye to Soviet atrocities for the sake of fragile alliances. The Katyn Forest massacre, wherein Stalin’s NKVD executed over 22,000 Polish officers, was known to the Roosevelt and Churchill administrations.

Declassified communications confirm that both leaders opted for calculated silence, fearing the rupture of

wartime unity. One CIA memo chillingly advised that “public disclosure not advised due to diplomatic concerns.” In those words lies the DNA of postwar moral relativism: truth subjugated to expediency.

Even within the triumphant United States, the internment of over 110,000 Japanese Americans — a move unrepeated in scale or racial homogeneity for any other ethnic group — was executed under the pretence of national security, yet dripped with racial animus. The true indictment emerges not just from the camps themselves, but from what came after. Thousands of Japanese American men volunteered to fight for a nation that caged their families. The 442nd Regimental Combat Team, largely composed of these internees’ sons, became the most decorated unit of its size in US military history. Their leader, Senator Daniel Inouye, once said, “We fought not just the enemy, but the prejudice of our own country. Still, we fought.”

That their legacy was received with patronising nods rather than substantive restitution only amplifies the grotesquerie of their sacrifice. Meanwhile, British colonial troops — 2.5 million strong from India, Africa, and the Caribbean—were deployed across the

world’s war fronts, shedding blood for a Crown that had no intention of emancipating them.

In Burma, Indian troops bore the brunt of the jungle war, their bodies discarded in the colonial ledger as expendable assets. Their gallantry was neither commemorated with equitable pensions nor with places in British collective memory. A veteran of the Burma Campaign once lamented: “We fought for the British, yet after the war, they forgot us. My medals mean little without respect.” Postwar Britain, engrossed in rebuilding its own wounded self-image, had no space for the sepia-toned loyalty of its colonial wards. Simultaneously, the Soviet Union — while lionised for its monumental military sacrifice — was also the architect of unspeakable internal savageries. The Holodomor, the Great Purge, and mass deportations — these were not aberrations but policies. The Red Army’s entry into Berlin was marked not only by military triumph but by a tidal wave of civilian rapes and looting, acts that were obfuscated or trivialised in postwar historiography.

Allied complicity in whitewashing these crimes was another ethical forfeiture. The mythos of the ‘liberator’ prevailed, even as countless women were

left psychologically eviscerated by the supposed liberators themselves. There were no clean hands in this war — not among the Allies, not among the Axis, and certainly not among the institutions that shaped the postwar order. The psychological experiments of Unit 731 in Japan, which included live vivisections and plague dissemination, should have led to Nuremberg-style prosecutions in the Pacific. Instead, many of its physicians were rewarded with amnesty by the United States in exchange for their data on biological warfare. “Data on human experimentation is valuable...” read a US Army report in 1947.

It is difficult to concoct a phrase more morally desiccated. Nor was the West’s complicity confined to acts of commission; its sins of omission reverberate just as loudly. The Jewish partisans in Eastern Europe, those who rose from the ashes of ghettos to sabotage Nazi convoys and derail genocide, were rarely included in the triumphalist Allied narrative. Their resistance did not conform to the clean binaries of statehood or military discipline — it was desperate, feral, and incandescently courageous. Faye Schulman, one such partisan, wrote: “I vowed never to be taken alive again. <