

India's Aviation Paradox: Growth Amid Fragility – Part -1

By Uday Kumar Varma

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Rise, Dominance, and the Recent Crisis

India's skies have never been busier. Domestic aviation has grown explosively over the past two decades, carrying millions of passengers who would once have regarded air travel as a luxury. Low-cost carriers like IndiGo and SpiceJet have democratized flying, making it accessible even to aspirational lower- middle-class families, while full-service carriers such as Air India and Vistara cater to premium travellers. Yet beneath this expansion lies a paradox: growth has often outpaced stability, leaving the sector exposed to crises that ripple far beyond any single airline.

This fragility was starkly illustrated in early December when IndiGo, India's largest domestic airline, cancelled more than half of its roughly 2,300 daily flights. Tens of thousands of passengers were stranded. Delhi, the country's busiest airport, effectively shut down for domestic departures. Weddings were attended via video call; business trips collapsed into chaos. What would have been a serious operational failure in other markets became a national disruption, revealing how deeply the country's air travel system depends on a single carrier.

IndiGo's meltdown was operational in origin: new regulations increasing pilots' mandatory rest periods were implemented last month, and the airline's famously tight schedules lacked sufficient buffers. Minor disruptions cascaded into system-wide cancellations. Yet the crisis also exposed structural vulnerabilities that go far beyond operational mismanagement.

The Indian domestic market is heavily concentrated. IndiGo commands roughly two-thirds of domestic passengers and operates as the sole carrier on a majority of routes. Air India, despite its legacy and recent privatization, holds only about 27% of the market and faces its own operational constraints, including delayed aircraft deliveries and lingering safety challenges. By comparison, no airline in the United States or Europe controls such a dominant share of domestic traffic. In mature markets, when one carrier falters, others absorb the slack. In India, such redundancy is minimal, turning individual operational glitches into systemic crises.

Underlying this fragility are policy and regulatory realities that make profitability exceedingly difficult. Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) taxes are among the highest in the world, consuming roughly 40–45% of an airline's operational costs. Airport charges, both in public and private terminals, further inflate costs. Airlines earn revenue in a highly price-sensitive market, where even marginal fare increases trigger scrutiny or public outcry. Schemes such as UDAN, designed to make air travel affordable in smaller towns, impose fare caps that often render routes financially unsustainable. Legacy rules like the "5/20" requirement—forcing new carriers to own 20 aircraft and operate for five years before flying internationally—shield incumbents while delaying meaningful competition.

History confirms the consequences. Kingfisher Airlines collapsed spectacularly. Jet Airways bled out despite a strong market presence. Go First faltered in its early years. SpiceJet oscillates between profit and loss. Only IndiGo has consistently remained profitable—an outcome less of systemic health than of Darwinian survival under harsh conditions.

India's infrastructure story adds another layer of complexity. Airports have expanded dramatically, yet many remain underutilized. Ghost airports in smaller towns illustrate the perils of expansion divorced from operational sustainability. Without viable airline operations to populate these airports, investments fail to generate economic benefits, leaving both carriers and the government with stranded capital. Rail and road networks, though improved, cannot absorb sudden aviation shocks, underscoring the importance of robust, reliable air services.

The December crisis, while extreme, is symptomatic of a deeper malaise. Growth has occurred without stability; scale has been achieved without redundancy; efficiency has been pursued without resilience. India's aviation sector, vibrant and aspirational as it is, remains perilously dependent on the operational health of a single airline. Passengers benefit from wider access and competitive fares, yet even small operational or regulatory shocks can trigger disproportionate disruption.

To be continued in next issue

The Untold Story Behind Demonetization

By Vipul Tamhane

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On the 8th of November, 2016, Prime Minister Narendra Modi made the surprising announcement that ₹500 and ₹1000 notes would cease to be legal tender. This bold move caught global observers by surprise as it was a financial decision of great magnitude. The instant removal of 86% of cash in circulation created a stir, with people giving various interpretations such as chaos, executing flaws or even hidden agendas. However, beyond public debate was a deeper issue: reliance on imports, weak systems, and years of economic sabotage via fake money targeting India.

To grasp demonetization, one must look at what came before, when India's money system turned into a major threat to national safety.

The Architecture of Vulnerability

In the late 1990s, India faced a currency crisis due to structural flaws revealed during economic reforms. At that time, just one facility in Hoshangabad produced security paper, capable of making 4,500 tons per year. However, by 1999-2000, output dropped sharply, to only 1,390 tons. As a result, almost all banknote material had to be brought from abroad, unusual for an independent state.

In 1997, India gave contracts to firms from the U.S., UK, and Germany, printing 3.6 billion notes under a \$95 million agreement. Although upgrading local facilities was possible instead, officials went with outsourcing. Relying on outside help seemed easier at the time. Yet this choice later led to serious problems.

The crisis worsened quickly following 2007. Soon after the UPA came into office, Finance Minister P. Chidambaram permitted the Reserve Bank of India to make special deals on security tech. By September 2005, a half-decade deal was sealed with UK-based De La Rue, backed by assertions they held an exclusive patent on a colour-shifting strip from green to blue, made only for Indian currency.

This setup broke key rules in buying practices along with safety norms for the country. It lacked a public bidding process, excluded backup vendors, also missed an escape option, especially when threats to national safety arose. Follow-up checks showed the patent used as reasoning wasn't registered by 2002 or 2004; De La Rue filed it in India not until mid-2004, gained clearance much later in 2011. The RBI agreed without checking facts on its own.

Economic Jihad: The Pakistani Strategy

The effects of relying on one supplier showed up quickly. By 2010, Indian agencies found out that De La Rue also sold the same secure paper to Pakistan, where most fake high-grade rupees were coming from. A 2017 NIA document stated nearly all advanced counterfeits came from there, copying 12 out of 14 safety elements used by the RBI.

This wasn't just common financial fraud, it represented what Pakistan's ISI labelled 'economic jihad,' aimed at weakening India internally, bypassing traditional military action. By 2010, testing labs across India, Japan, and Hong Kong failed to spot differences between these counterfeit bills and real money. Detection remained possible solely in advanced U.S. centres equipped for such tasks.

The scale was huge. Reports indicated more than \$2.2 billion in fake money moving through India by 2010, while around ₹400 crore stayed in use at any moment. Such bills made their way into official banks, ended up in RBI storage, then got released via ATMs, undermining people's confidence in cash.

The distribution system was advanced, spanning multiple countries. Instead of direct routes, fake money moved via Nepal, Bangladesh, Dubai, Kathmandu, Dhaka, Colombo, then Bangkok. Dawood Ibrahim's D-Company handled operations under ISI coordination; meanwhile, the Khanani brothers, Altaf and Javed, ran underground hawala channels shifting around \$14–16 billion each year. Clients consisted of narcotics groups, Al-Qaeda, Taliban factions, Lashkar-e-Taiba, also Jaish-e-Mohammed. U.S. authorities labelled this structure a cross-border crime group, viewing it as covert financial support for ISI interests

The Demonetization Response

In this context, removing cash from circulation appears less like a random move and more like a calculated response to ongoing financial threats. Rather than testing uncertain ideas, it targeted fake money by making it useless overnight. At the same time, it weakened funding channels used by extremist groups. Instead of allowing shadow banking methods to continue unchecked, the measure disrupted informal transfer systems tied to these activities.

The outcomes sparked debate among economists, however mattered greatly for safety. By 2020, outdated fake bills were almost gone from use. In Kashmir, stone-throwing attacks, commonly funded by forged money, decreased by as much as 75%. Illicit hawala flows dropped close to half over the same time. Crucially, central bank records reveal counterfeit hauls fell sharply from ₹43 crore in 2016 down to ₹8 crore by 2023.

Lessons and Implications

This episode highlights key points for national security strategy. One, economic control depends on independent infrastructure relying on others for things like currency printing, opens doors to vulnerabilities. Another, procurement procedures should focus more on safety than ease, using strict checks alongside competitive tendering. Also, sole-supplier deals lacking ways out show serious gaps in oversight.

The demonetization discussion mostly canters on economic losses, disruption to the informal sectors, rollout problems, or consequences for national output, i.e., GDP impact. Such issues matter. Still, they need balancing alongside the urgent goal of breaking down a deep-rooted network of financial sabotage that functioned without consequence for more than ten years.

The true reason behind demonetization isn't about experimenting with new economic ideas, rather it's tied to fixing deep flaws caused by weak policy choices. The government's decision, however poorly executed, was intended to take back the money that was used as a weapon against India from within. The economic cost may have been very high, but the necessity for improved security was a major factor and should be considered when determining the total effect.

As AI Rises, Wikipedia at 25 Defends the Idea That Knowledge Has No Owner

By Dr. Santhosh Mathew

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Just as human history is often divided into the eras B.C. and A.D. it is no longer unreasonable to imagine the Internet's story split between B.AI. and A.AI. — Before Artificial Intelligence and After Artificial Intelligence. In this dramatic transition, one quiet but revolutionary institution stands at a crossroads: Wikipedia, which turned 25 this January. Born in the age of dial-up modems and nurtured in the optimism of early cyberspace, Wikipedia now finds itself navigating the shadows — and possibilities — cast by AI.

When Wikipedia went online on January 15, 2001, it was the brainchild of two men who represented two contrasting intellectual temperaments of the digital age. Jimmy Wales, an internet entrepreneur with libertarian instincts, believed deeply in radical openness and crowd wisdom. Larry Sanger, a trained philosopher and Wikipedia's first editor-in-chief, worried that unfiltered openness could undermine neutrality and epistemic rigor. Their collaboration lasted barely a year, but the tension between openness and authority, participation and expertise, democracy and discipline continues to define Wikipedia even at 25. Yet, against all scepticism, Wikipedia survived — and triumphed. At a time when knowledge was either locked behind academic paywalls or curated by elite institutions, Wikipedia demolished the idea that information must have gatekeepers. It declared, boldly and unapologetically, that knowledge has no monopoly. Anyone could write. Anyone could edit. Anyone could correct. In doing so, Wikipedia became the most radical experiment in the democratisation of information in human history.

Today, Wikipedia exists in more than 300 languages, hosts over 60 million articles, and is among the most visited websites in the world. For students in rural India, activists in Africa, journalists in Latin America, and citizens everywhere, Wikipedia became the first port of call on the information superhighway. It flattened hierarchies of knowledge dissemination and transformed passive consumers into active participants. The traditional flow of information — from elite producers to mass audiences — was disrupted forever. But Wikipedia's silver jubilee arrives at a moment of profound uncertainty. Artificial Intelligence, particularly generative AI, threatens to redraw the architecture of knowledge itself. Tools powered by large language models no longer merely retrieve information; they synthesize, paraphrase, predict, and even "create" it. The question is no longer how humans access information, but whether humans will remain central to its production. Ironically, AI systems owe a significant debt to Wikipedia. Its freely licensed content has served as a foundational dataset for training AI models. In a sense, Wikipedia is both the parent and the prey of AI — nurturing the systems that may eventually overshadow it. Search engines already answer questions without directing users to Wikipedia pages. Chatbots summarize topics in seconds, eroding the incentive to consult original sources. The risk is not extinction, but invisibility.

This marks a shift from the age of information retrieval to the age of information mediation. Wikipedia was built for the former — a transparent, editable repository where users could see sources, debates, revisions, and disputes. AI, by contrast, often operates as a black box. It delivers confident answers without citations, context, or accountability. In doing so, it risks reversing one of Wikipedia’s greatest achievements: making the process of knowledge creation visible. At stake is not just Wikipedia’s relevance, but the very idea of democratic knowledge. Wikipedia’s model assumes that truth emerges through collective scrutiny, disagreement, and correction. AI models, however, optimize for coherence rather than truth, fluency rather than fairness. They reflect existing biases embedded in training data and amplify dominant narratives — often from the Global North, in English, and from digitally privileged communities. This is where Wikipedia’s continued relevance becomes critical. In an AI-saturated ecosystem, Wikipedia remains one of the last large-scale, non-profit, human-curated knowledge platforms. It does not chase clicks, sell ads, or optimize for outrage. Its neutrality policy, though imperfect, is enforced through transparent rules and community deliberation. Errors are not hidden; they are corrected in public view. This ethos stands in sharp contrast to algorithmic opacity.

For countries like India, the stakes are even higher. Wikipedia has played a crucial role in vernacular knowledge dissemination, allowing histories, cultures, and perspectives outside Western academia to find space online. AI systems trained predominantly on English-language and Western-centric data threaten to marginalize these voices further. If Wikipedia weakens, so does the digital presence of the Global South. The answer, however, is not to reject AI, but to redefine its relationship with Wikipedia. AI can assist editors by detecting vandalism, translating articles across languages, summarizing sources, and identifying gaps in coverage. But it must remain a tool, not a substitute. Wikipedia’s strength lies in human judgment — in debates over sources, wording, and balance that no algorithm can replicate with ethical sensitivity. Wikipedia’s 25-year journey also offers a lesson for the broader politics of knowledge. In an era of misinformation, deepfakes, and epistemic chaos, trust has become the most valuable currency. Wikipedia earned trust not through authority, but through process — openness, verifiability, and collective responsibility. AI systems, if they are to be trusted, must learn from this model rather than undermine it.

There is also a deeper philosophical question at play. Wikipedia represents the Enlightenment ideal that knowledge progresses through reasoned debate and shared inquiry. AI risks ushering in a post-Enlightenment moment, where answers are consumed without understanding and certainty replaces scepticism. In such a world, the danger is not ignorance, but uncritical acceptance. As Wikipedia steps into its second quarter-century, it must reassert its founding vision with renewed urgency. The Internet may now be divided into B.AI. and A.AI., but Wikipedia must ensure that the human remains at the centre of knowledge. Its challenge is not technological obsolescence, but moral relevance. Twenty-five years ago, Wikipedia proved that knowledge does not belong to institutions, corporations, or experts alone. It belongs to humanity. In the shadow of Artificial Intelligence, that idea is more radical — and more necessary — than ever.

Pakistan Facing Simultaneous Crises on Three Fronts: Will Islamic NATO Help

By Brig. Hemant Mahajan

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Through Operation Sindhoor, India has forced Pakistan to fight on three fronts simultaneously. This operation is still ongoing, and as of the end of 2025, Pakistan's military and economic situation has severely deteriorated. Pakistan currently finds itself in a crisis on three distinct fronts:

1. The Western Front (Afghanistan): Pakistan's policy of 'Strategic Depth' has backfired, as the Afghan Taliban are prioritizing the TTP (Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan) over Pakistani interests. Relations with the Afghan Taliban, once considered a strategic advantage for Pakistan, have now become a major liability. The border has become insecure due to TTP attacks and large number of IEDs attacks in the frontier regions.

2. The Eastern Border and the Indian Threat: Through like 'Operation Sindhoor,' India has made it clear that cross-border terrorism will receive a fitting response. The eastern border with India has become unstable once again. Following terrorist provocations, India struck at the very core of Pakistan via Operation Sindhoor. Consequently, the border situation has escalated into a state of full-blown hostile threat. Due to India's aggressive posture, Pakistan is forced to deploy its best manpower and resources along the Indian border.

3. The Internal Front: Entangled in internal conflicts, 50% of the Pakistani Army is under immense pressure. Separatism in Baluchistan is no longer limited to mountainous regions but has spread to urban centres like Karachi and Gwadar.

Regional Distribution of Violence

In 2025, violence in Pakistan was primarily concentrated in two provinces:

- Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP): Here, the TTP intensified attacks using the Afghan border. Security forces suffered heavy losses due to cross-border support and the use of IEDs.
- Baluchistan: Organizations like the BLA (Baloch Liberation Army) and BLF (Baloch Liberation Front) targeted not only security forces but also Chinese projects and migrant labourer's.

The Pakistan government is spending massive funds to suppress the rebellion in Baluchistan. Instead of being spent on education, health, or infrastructure, this money is being diverted to military operations. This has strengthened the sentiment among locals that "our resources are being used only to suppress us." While Pakistan responded with military force, it failed to devise a political strategy to address public grievances. As a result, this province has become a flashpoint consuming military resources.

2025: The Bloodiest Year in Recent History

The data compiled by the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP) presents a reality harsher than any political statement. Between January 1 and December 31, 2025, 1,070 incidents of killing were recorded in Pakistan, resulting in 3,967 deaths. This included 1,212 security personnel, 655 civilians, and 2,099 rebels. The death toll in a single year has nearly doubled compared to 2024.

This was not just the most horrific year in recent memory; it was the year Pakistan's internal security crisis spiralled out of control, visibly impacting its foreign policy, military stance, and diplomatic decisions.

What Does the Reality Tell Us?

Information gathered by credible Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) accounts paints an even grimmer picture. According to this data, approximately 2,700 to 3,000 security personnel may have been martyred in 2025, with about 3,500 injured. Notably, these OSINT estimates align closely with claims made by the TTP. While rebel statements are often dismissed as propaganda, they provide accurate details regarding the location, route, and timing of IED operations, which can be independently verified. If these estimates are even partially true, 2025 was the most devastating period for Pakistan's security forces in the last decade.

Analysis of Fatality Statistics

The number of deaths in 2025 nearly doubled compared to 2024. The following table highlights the difference:

Category	2024	2025 (Official SATP)	2025 (OSINT - Reality)
Security Personnel	~600	1,212	2,700 - 3,000
Civilians	~400	655	900+
Rebels	~900	2,099	2,200+
Total Deaths	~1,900	3,967	~6,000+

The rising ratio of security force deaths compared to rebels indicates a "War of Attrition," where rebels are implementing a strategy to exhaust Pakistan's manpower.

Military Casualties and Lack of Transparency

Pakistan has historically maintained extreme secrecy regarding casualties among its military and paramilitary forces. They rarely release comprehensive data on personnel killed or injured in attacks or counter-terrorism operations. Official figures are mostly based on media reports and selective military briefings, which analysts believe represent only a fraction of the actual losses.

The biggest gap in official data is the damage caused by IED (Improvised Explosive Device) attacks. In large parts of KP and Balochistan, IEDs became the primary cause of death in 2025, accounting for over 40% of security force fatalities. Patrol vehicles, logistics convoys, and checkpoints have become targets of these "low-visibility" but highly lethal attacks.

This has undermined Pakistan's "military superiority," as the military, paramilitaries, and intelligence agencies are failing to prevent these attacks. The lack of visual documentation of these incidents makes it easier for the government to ignore them or downplay their intensity. For instance, the death toll from the Jaffar Express kidnapping in October 2025 is missing from official stats; credible sources placed the number between 88 and 125.

No Reduction in Attack Frequency

For years, Pakistan's counter-terrorism strategy was based on the assumption that intense military operations could eliminate rebel capabilities. In 2025, this assumption was completely shattered. Despite rebels being killed in large numbers, the frequency of attacks did not decrease. A security force death rate higher than that of the rebels is a sign of a war tilting toward defeat. Reports also suggest that rebels have started using cheap drones for surveillance and attacks.

What to Expect in 2026?

If no political solution is found in Balochistan and the border dispute with the Afghan Taliban continues, the intensity of violence is likely to persist in 2026. Due to the economic crisis, Pakistan is finding it difficult to sustain high spending on counter-terrorism operations.

The significance of 2025 is not just in the death toll. Pakistan is fighting a losing battle. While struggling to stabilize its own borders, it dreams of being relevant to the outside world. In such a situation, the bloodiest years are a warning of a more horrific crisis to come.

Diplomatic Isolation: The Gaza Illusion

Against this backdrop, Pakistan is talking about playing a role in peace missions in Gaza. While this may seem diplomatically significant on paper, it is actually a "strategic illusion." Pakistan cannot afford to send troops abroad while struggling to secure its own borders.

Although Pakistan is attempting to gain global sympathy by focusing on the Gaza issue, its credibility has diminished due to human rights violations and violence within its own country.

Challenges for 2026

Economic Strain: Pakistan's economy is dependent on IMF loans. In such a state, bearing the cost of a long-drawn internal war is difficult.

Military Fatigue: Due to constant missions and rising casualties, the military leadership faces a massive challenge in maintaining soldier morale.

Islamic NATO Pakistan is pursuing an equivalent to an Islamic NATO by signing strategic pacts with Turkey and Saudi Arabia. The country believes this alignment will enhance its significance in the Islamic world, leveraging Turkey's technology and Saudi Arabia's financial resources. This partnership is expected to bolster Pakistan's role in the protection of Islamic nations.

However, questions remain about whether this pact can effectively secure the Pakistan-Afghanistan border or reduce violence in Balochistan, ultimately making Pakistan safer.

It seems unlikely. The challenges in Balochistan do not solely stem from a lack of weapons. The Pakistani army appears reluctant to conduct ground operations in either Balochistan or along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, preferring instead to use helicopter gunships, fighter aircraft, and drones. With this approach, it is doubtful that Pakistan can successfully address the security challenges it faces. Consequently, 2026 is likely to be a more violent year for the country.

Based on this analysis, it appears that in 2026, Pakistan needs to completely overhaul its security strategy. For Pakistan, 2026 will be a battle for existence. It is caught in a pincer movement between economic distress in Baluchistan and increasing pressure from India.

Role of Civilization in Nation's Awakening: Way Ahead for Bharat (Military View) – Part -1

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For me civilization is all about the people and their valor, their beliefs and religious practices which provides roots to their culture and rich heritage. These habits, best practices and beliefs shape the society and its created institutions like health, education, history, agriculture, trade. It ultimately builds character of nation and civilization and its resilience to fight against injustice and inspire future generations. I remember words of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar (For me he is "Bharat Ratna") on this occasion "The nation that has no consciousness of its past has no future. Those who have forgotten their history are doomed to repeat it".

Definition of Civilization

A civilization is a complex, highly developed, and organized human society, often characterized by urban development, government, social stratification, and a writing system. Key features commonly include social structures, advanced technology, a shared culture with common social norms, and economic systems involving trade and industry.

The different aspects of civilization include advanced cities, organized government, complex institutions, specialized labour, a system for record-keeping (writing), a stable food supply from advanced agriculture, and a complex social structure, often including religion, arts, and architecture. These elements work together to create a complex society, as seen in many early examples like Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Indus Valley.

Key characteristics of a civilization

Urban development & Cities	The growth of cities with infrastructure like roads, buildings, and water systems. The development of urban areas is a hallmark of civilization.
Organized government	Structured leadership, laws, and a political system.
Social stratification & Structure	A system of social classes or roles that define responsibilities within the community. Civilizations feature a complex social hierarchy with different classes or castes based on factors like wealth, power, and occupation.
Writing system	Symbolic communication beyond spoken language, used for record-keeping and other purposes. A system of writing is essential for record-keeping, trade, laws, and the preservation of information.
Complex culture	Shared beliefs, art, religion, traditions, and social norms that bind people together.
Advanced technology	Tools, architecture, and other innovations that improve daily life. Advancements in technology are crucial for solving problems, managing resources, and supporting the other aspects of civilization.
Economic system	Developed systems for agriculture, trade, and industry to support the population.
Arts and architecture	Advanced art and architecture, including monuments, serve as a way to express a society's values and history.
Institutions	Complex institutions, such as a centralized government and organized religion, are central to the structure of a civilization.
Job specialization	A complex division of labour develops, with people specializing in specific jobs beyond just farming.
Military	Organised military is guarantee for nation's security and resources.
Religion	Religion ideally must provide path to truth, justice and self-awakening but acting as tool of social control, maintaining status quo and distracting the oppressed class from fighting against injustice. I remember Karl Marx viewed religion as the "Opium of the people" - a comforting illusion and protest against real suffering in a heartless oppressive world, providing temporary solace but masking the material conditions causing exploitation".

How India as oldest civilization is still alive and others vanished?

The Indus Valley Civilization did not perish but evolved and integrated into later cultures, as the large urban centre's gradually declined, not the entire civilization. Factors like climate change, river course shifts, and monsoon changes led to a shift from urban to rural settlements, with the population migrating and adapting to new ways of life. Indus Valley civilisation's are the oldest civilisations in the world and it is still exists.

Early urban centre	The Indus Valley Civilization flourished from approximately 3300 BCE to 1300 BCE, with its mature phase starting around 2600 BCE. It was a highly advanced urban culture known for its sophisticated city planning, with cities like Mohenjo-daro and Harappa featuring grid layouts and advanced drainage systems.
One of three earliest civilizations	The Indus Valley Civilization is one of the world's three earliest civilizations, along with Mesopotamia and ancient Egypt, all were developed around the same time.
Decline	Around 1900 BCE, the civilization began to decline due to factors that are still debated, including climate change, invasion, and internal instability. The large-scale urban centres were abandoned, though smaller settlements continued.
Continuous cultural heritage	While the specific civilization ended, the Indian civilization that followed did not start from scratch. Archaeological and DNA studies show continuity from the Indus Valley Civilization to later Indian cultures, suggesting the Indus people's culture and heritage became integrated into what is now India. Therefore, the Indus Valley Civilization as a distinct urban culture is extinct, but India's continuous civilization is one of the world's oldest and carries on its heritage.

Various Aspects of Civilization (Military View)

The military aspect of civilization is crucial for security, control, and expansion, involving defence of borders, internal order, conquest in right way to acquire resources for nation's prosperity and maintain sovereignty of nation. Militaries also instil discipline, foster a sense of nationalism, and are deeply intertwined with a civilization's political and religious structures, as seen in the development of fortifications, advanced tactics, and complex logistics across different cultures.

Role of Armed Forces in Societal Structure	
Security and defense	Armies defend frontiers and secure the state against external threats.
Internal control	They maintain order by suppressing anarchy and protecting the ruling class.
Political and religious significance	Military is a tool for political class to achieve goals to protect righteous duty (Dharma) and justice through Dharmayuddha (Just War). Codes of Warfare must be initiated after all peaceful efforts like conciliation and diplomacy have been exhausted. Lord Krishna said in Mahabharat as Peace Envoy "Peace is a necessity for the establishment of righteousness and to avoid its destruction. War for Dharma was inevitable and that actions (karma) matter not outcomes".
Economic function	Militaries can seize valuable resources, control trade routes, and impose tribute on conquered peoples.

Chankya Niti & Chandragupta Maurya

Chanakya's teachings, primarily from the Arthashastra and Chanakya Niti, emphasize that a nation's strength and civilization depend on a virtuous and capable leader, a robust governance system, a prosperous economy, and the active participation and self-respect of its citizens.

Civilization and National Awakening

For Chanakya, the "awakening" of a nation (or kingdom/empire in his time) is a return to collective self-respect (rashtriya swabhiman), self-reliance, and the active defense of its culture and independence.

He believed that:

- **Unity is Paramount:** Chanakya's primary goal was the creation of a unified Indian empire (a "united India" vision) from fragmented small states to resist foreign invaders like Alexander's forces. He achieved this by instilling a sense of shared purpose and identity.
- **Knowledge is Power:** Education and knowledge are the ultimate weapons for both individual and national progress. A knowledgeable citizenry and wise counsel (like his own role as an advisor) are essential for navigating complex challenges and ensuring sustainable development.
- **The Leader as a Role Model:** The ruler is a reflection of the society ("as is the king, so are the subjects") and must be ethical, disciplined, and dedicated to the welfare of the people. A leader's actions directly influence public opinion and national character.
- **Pragmatic Strategy:** National awakening is not merely an ideological pursuit but requires shrewd, practical strategies (dandniti, kutniti) in administration, security, and foreign policy to overcome both internal corruption and external threats.

To Be continued in next issue

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India is Proud of:

Lt Colonel Rishi Rajalakshmi:

The Most Fearless Masked Man of the Indian Army





Lt Colonel Rishi Rajalakshmi Nair stands as a towering figure in the annals of the Indian Army, embodying the essence of unyielding courage, selfless service, and indomitable spirit. Known across the nation as "India's Most Fearless Man," his journey from a small town in Kerala to the frontlines of counter-terrorism and disaster relief is a testament to the human capacity for resilience in the face of unimaginable adversity.

Born in Muthukulam, a serene village in Alappuzha district, Kerala, Rishi Rajalakshmi Nair grew up in a family that valued education and hard work. From a young age, Rishi displayed a keen interest in science and engineering, pursuing a degree in the field. However, his true calling lay elsewhere. Inspired by stories of national heroes and the ethos of service, he chose to forgo a lucrative civilian career in engineering to join the Indian Army. This decision was not taken lightly; it represented a profound commitment to "Nation First," a principle he has repeatedly emphasized in public appearances.

His early postings exposed him to diverse terrains and challenges, but it was his assignment to the 42 Rashtriya Rifles a specialized counter-insurgency unit in Jammu and Kashmir that truly tested his mettle. The 42 RR is renowned for its operations in high-risk areas, where soldiers often engage in close-quarters battles with militants. Rishi quickly rose through the ranks, earning a reputation for tactical acumen and bravery. By the mid-2010s, as a Major, he was instrumental in stabilizing the volatile Tral region, where militant activities had disrupted civilian life and security. His efforts in intelligence gathering, community engagement, and targeted operations helped reduce insurgency, paving the way for relative peace in the area.

The defining chapter in Lt Col Rishi's life unfolded on March 4, 2017, in Pulwama district, South Kashmir. Acting on credible intelligence, his team cordoned off a civilian house suspected of harboring terrorists. The operation was delicate: the goal was to neutralize the threats without causing excessive collateral damage to the structure or endangering nearby residents. Traditional methods like heavy artillery were ruled out, leading to the decision to use an improvised explosive device (IED) to collapse the building selectively.

In a display of extraordinary valor, Major Rishi volunteered to plant the IED himself, entering the danger zone amid a hail of gunfire. As he advanced, terrorists opened fire. The first bullet penetrated his helmet, grazing his head. Undeterred, he pressed on, only for a second bullet to tear through his nose. The third and most devastating shot shattered his jaw entirely. Bloodied and in excruciating pain, with his face mutilated, Rishi did not falter. He continued to return fire, maintaining consciousness and coordinating with his team until the terrorists were eliminated and he could be evacuated.

The 30-kilometer journey to the nearest military hospital was agonizing, yet Rishi's spirit remained unbroken. Upon arrival, he gestured a thumbs-up to the stunned medical staff and signaled to his family, "I'll be back." This moment, recounted in multiple interviews and social media tributes, captures the essence of his fearlessness. The incident not only highlighted the perils of counter-terrorism but also sparked discussions on soldier safety, equipment adequacy, and the psychological toll of such engagements. Counterarguments from security analysts note that while operations like this are necessary, they underscore the need for advanced technology to reduce human risk.

The aftermath of the Pulwama encounter was a gruelling battle for survival. Lt Col Rishi underwent 28 major surgeries over several months, involving reconstructive procedures to repair his facial structure. Despite the best medical efforts, full restoration was impossible, leaving permanent disfigurement. He now wears a specially designed mask earning him the moniker "The Masked Man" to cover the scars while performing duties.

Many expected him to retire on medical grounds, but Rishi's resolve proved otherwise. Drawing inspiration from the mythical phoenix rising from ashes, he rehabilitated himself physically and mentally, returning to active service. Posted as the in-charge of Pangode Military Camp in Thiruvananthapuram, he continues to train troops and oversee operations.

Lt Col Rishi's gallantry was formally recognized with the Sena Medal (SM), one of India's prestigious military honours for distinguished service in combat. Former Chief of Army Staff General Bipin Rawat personally visited him during recovery and declared him "the most fearless man" he had encountered a quote that has since gone viral and cemented his public image.

In public forums, Rishi has shared his philosophy: "My nation comes first," and "Hide your fears, show your strength." He has spoken at high-profile events, including TEDx Kerala Agricultural University in July 2025, where he discussed resilience, and the Kerala Literature Festival, offering insights on leadership drawn from his experiences. These appearances humanize the military, bridging the gap between soldiers and civilians, though some viewpoints suggest such glorification might overlook systemic issues like post-traumatic stress.

Beyond combat, Lt Col Rishi has excelled in humanitarian roles. In August 2024, following catastrophic landslides in Wayanad, Kerala his home state he led rescue operations as part of the army's disaster response team. Arriving shortly after the disaster, his unit navigated treacherous terrain, thick vegetation, and altered landscapes to aid survivors. Rishi worked tirelessly, coordinating with local rescuers and emphasizing community support for the displaced.

As of August 2025, Rishi expresses a strong desire to return to Jammu and Kashmir, stating, "All I want is to go back to J&K." His ongoing service includes mentoring young officers and participating in motivational programs, reinforcing themes of duty and perseverance.

In a world of fleeting heroes, Rishi reminds us of enduring values. His life encourages youth to consider military careers, while urging society to support veterans better. As he continues to serve, his legacy grows, proving that true fearlessness lies not in the absence of fear, but in rising above it.

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