

The Resurgent India

A Monthly National Review

June 2025



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

– The Mother

Year 16

Issue 3

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Editor : Ms. Garima Sharma, B-45, Batra Colony, Village Bharatpur, P.O. Kaushal Ganj, Bilaspur Distt. Rampur (U.P)

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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 16

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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)

INDUS WATER TREATY WITHIN THE CHANGING INDIA-PAKISTAN RELATIONSHIP

Widely regarded as one of the earliest and most successful river-water sharing arrangements, the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) also forms the cornerstone of the delicate foundation that balances the India-Pakistan relations. While it is often said that the treaty survived three major wars and numerous bilateral tensions, it must not be forgotten that this was mainly due to India's compromises, the country's generous stand despite constant cross-border terrorism from Pakistan, and its willingness to accommodate perpetual Pakistani objections, ever since the treaty was signed.

However, in recent years, there has been a change in the discourse surrounding the treaty, making it susceptible to the political headwinds afflicting the Indo-Pak relations. The most significant turning point came in the aftermath of the 2025 brutal terrorist attack in Pahalgam, Kashmir. In the aftermath of this attack, the Indian government once again invoked the statement first made by PM Modi in 2016 – blood and water cannot flow together – and put the IWT in temporary 'abeyance' or suspension, stating that India's cooperation in the treaty is conditional upon Pakistan abandoning its support for cross-border terrorism waged against India.

This drastic step, which threatens water supply to Pakistan has been declared as an act of war by the latter. Whether and to what extent this abeyance will work depends less on the vague and scantily followed principles of international law and more on what political turn the India-Pakistan relations take. In this context, it is important to understand the political nature

of the IWT, how it has been constantly subjected to political manipulations by Pakistan, how Pakistan's excessive use of the Indus water has precipitated in grave ecological degradation of the basin, and how the treaty has not served India. Signed originally in "good faith" by India's former Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, the treaty was expected to buy 'peace' in the Subcontinent. Having failed in this objective, and subject to increasing environmental pressures facing both India and Pakistan, along with the heightened national security implications of terrorism, there is now an urgent need for the revision of the treaty.

THE INDUS WATER TREATY: A FRAUGHT POLITICAL HISTORY

The Indus River System (IRS) constitutes an integral part of the livelihoods of the people residing in the Indus River basin. Rising in Tibet, the river traverses through India and Pakistan and empties into the Arabian Sea. The IRS consists of the Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutlej rivers, and includes the Kabul and Khurram rivers in Afghanistan as part of the Indus tributary system. The total area of Indus River Basin is 1.165 million square kilometres, and of this area, 60 percent lies in Pakistan and Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), 22* percent lies in India, 10 percent lies in China and 7 percent is in Afghanistan (Chaturvedi, 2018). In terms of irrigated area, at present, 74% of the total irrigated area of the Indus Basin is located in Pakistan, about 24% in India and 2% in Afghanistan and Tibet (Ranjan, 2025).

¹ This is only 10% when Aksai Chin area of Laddakh – under Chinese control – is excluded.

The elaborate modern irrigation network of the Indus River basin, consisting of barrages, headworks and canals, was developed during the British period, particularly between 1859 and 1947. Prior to the development of the irrigation infrastructure, while central and eastern Punjab had a rich and fertile ecosystem, western Punjab used to be arid and barren. After 1857, the British expanded commercial agriculture in western Punjab as well. Between 1885 and 1940, nine canal colonies were set up in western Punjab and it became home to the largest constructed canal system in the world, thereby transforming western Punjab into a vital hub for commercial agriculture (Ahmadzai, 2025). The development of this irrigation network led to an increase in the canal-irrigated area of Punjab from under 3,000,000 to around 14,000,000 acres between 1885 and 1947 (Ranjan, 2025).

This intricate irrigation network was developed in such a way that it defied the clear-cut geographical logic of Partition in 1947 which took place on a religious basis. As a result of the Partition, nearly all of the waterheads of the eastern tributaries of the Indus, as well as the key headwater infrastructure for the western Punjab canals, came within India, making it the upper riparian state. Thus, after the Partition of colonial India, while India retained the key headwater infrastructure, Pakistan acquired the largest irrigation canal system in the world, which was developed in western Punjab (Ahmadzai, 2025). This led to inevitable conflicts after Partition, with India claiming proprietary rights over the water infrastructure and Pakistan claiming prior appropriation rights. International law, related to water disputes, provides no clarity in this regard.

When the British delegation, headed by Sir Cyril Radcliffe,

proposed some form of agreement between India and Pakistan over ‘joint control over shared resources’, it was rejected by both the sides, with Pakistan’s Muhammad Ali Jinnah even going to the extent of saying that ‘he would rather have Pakistani deserts than fertile fields watered by courtesy of Hindus’ (Ranjan, 2025).

Post-Partition Division and Standstill Agreement:

After the Partition took place, out of the 26 million acres of land irrigated by the Indus canals, 21 million acres fell to Pakistan and 5 million acres to India, with 25 million people in Pakistan and 21 million people in India depending on the Indus system. When the Indus irrigation network was partitioned, India (East Punjab) received 4 out of the 19 headworks (including Ropar and Hussainwala headworks on the Sutlej), while Pakistan (West Punjab) received 15 headworks. In terms of the canal system, India received 2 out of 13 canals, while Pakistan received 10 canals. The remaining canal – the Upper Bari Doab Canal – was divided between the two countries, along East and West Punjab.

Division of irrigation assets after Partition:		
Asset Type	India	Pakistan
Major Canal Systems	4	15
Irrigated Land (acres)	5 million	21 million
Canals (total)	12	131
Population Dependent	21 million	25 million

Once the water disputes between East and West Punjab started after the Partition, a Standstill Agreement – through an Arbitral Tribunal – was signed between the two countries in December 1947 to maintain the pre-partition levels of water allocation. Once that agreement expired in March 1948, India cut-off supplies to the Dipalpur and Upper Bari Doab canals of Pakistan, by blocking the Ferozepur headworks, thereby adversely affecting irrigation of 1.66 million acres of land in Pakistan. India's East Punjab government acted without the approval of the Nehruvian central government, arguing that in the absence of a formal agreement had East Punjab not closed the water temporarily, it might have led to West Punjab acquiring legal rights to the canal waters in that area, thereby setting a wrong future precedent (Simha, 2016).

Inter-Dominion Agreement of 1948:

As a result of this crisis, the two countries once again entered negotiations and signed an Inter-Dominion Agreement in May 1948.² This agreement restored water flow by India (East Punjab) to Pakistan (West Punjab) canals under certain conditions. First, Pakistan was asked to pay seigniorage charges as levied by the East Punjab government. Second, Pakistan was also asked to pay for the carrier channels' capital cost for the Madhopur headworks (a barrage located on Ravi River near Pathankot). Thus, in accordance with this agreement, Pakistan deposited an ad hoc sum of money as specified by the Indian government, after which the flow of water was restored by India to the Dipalpur canal and some principal branches of the Central Bari Doab canals.

²In 1950, once India and Pakistan were recognized as separate countries, the United Nations (UN) gave recognition to the Inter-Dominion Agreement, along with a host of other pre-1950 arrangements.

However, Pakistan was never satisfied with this Agreement and had alleged that it was signed under Indian duress. Since 1949, Pakistan began to demand 'equitable apportionment of all common waters' instead of the Inter-Dominion Agreement. The Indian and Pakistani delegations met a few times between 1949-1950 to discuss dispute resolution regarding water sharing but could not come to any agreement.

Signing of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT):

At this point, the Cold War was intensifying and the threat of the spread of Communism to South Asia became a worrying point for the Western Bloc, led by the United States and the United Kingdom. It, therefore, became necessary to ensure the resolution of the Indo-Pak dispute. In 1951, the then World Bank chief, Eugene Black, proposed to resolve this impasse through the medium of the good offices of the World Bank. To convince both India and Pakistan,³ the Bank proposed to resolve the dispute based on three basic principles (Ranjan, 2025). First, Indus water resources are sufficient to meet the present and future water requirements of both the countries.⁴ Second, the Indus basin should be viewed as a unit and its water resources should be cooperatively developed for the

³ While Pakistan readily accepted the mediation by the World Bank calculating that it would get an advantage by the virtue of being America's ally, India was suspicious of the mediation offer. However, when the World Bank chief emphasized that such mediation was only confined to the functional, and not political, aspects of the disputes and was, therefore, isolated from the larger India-Pakistan question, India also decided to accept the services of the World Bank.

⁴ This basic assumption has now come under grave challenge in the light of ecological degradation of the Indus basin and the projected impacts of climate change on water flows within the river system.

purpose of promoting economic development on both the sides. Third, the Indus water sharing dispute was a functional and not a political issue, and, therefore, should be purely dealt with in technical terms.

Having taken both the countries on board, the negotiations began in 1952 and continued till 1960. After long-drawn negotiations during which both the countries repeatedly rejected each other's claims, the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) drawn up by the World Bank was finally signed in 1960 in Karachi, between India's Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and Pakistan's General Ayub Khan. The key provisions agreed under the IWT were as follows:

First, the IWT allocated the three western rivers to Pakistan (whose flows averaged around 135 million acre feet), namely the Indus, Jhelum and Chenab, plus the Kabul River, barring some limited uses for India in J&K. India got the entire waters from three smaller eastern rivers (whose flows averaged around 33 million acre feet), the Ravi, Beas and Sutlej, and also less minor irrigation uses for Pakistan from four canals joining the river Ravi (Ranjan, 2025). With this arrangement, Pakistan received 80.52% and India received 19.48% of the total flow of the IRS, although India's initial demand had been for at least 25% of the total (Sinha, 2020).

Furthermore, India also had to bear the cost for replacement works towards Pakistan. India's contribution amounted to a total of up to USD 174 million at that time, and it was a part of the USD 1 billion aid package that the World Bank and western countries had prepared exclusively for Pakistan. A transitional period was also allowed for the gradual implementation of the treaty.

Second, India may use western rivers for limited purposes only, including irrigation, run-of-the-river hydropower projects and non-consumptive uses (such as flood management, navigation etc.).

Third, in terms of specific permitted uses for India on the western rivers, the following was allowed:

- India could build hydro projects with specific design constraints (e.g., minimal storage, gated spillways etc.).
- India was permitted to develop irrigation of up to 1.34 million acres in J&K. This remains underutilized till date, with little more than 642,000 acres being achieved by 2024, leaving a balance of over half a million acres.
- India was also allowed 3.60-million-acre feet (MAF) of storage (0.40 MAF on the Indus, 1.50 MAF on the Jhelum and 1.70 MAF on the Chenab). Sector-wise allocation was 2.85 MAF for conservation storage, divided into 1.25 MAF for ‘general storage’ and 1.60 for ‘power storage’, and an additional 0.75 MAF for ‘flood storage’ (Ranjan, 2025).

Fourth, in terms of management and dispute resolution mechanisms, the following recourses were made available under the treaty:

The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT)

- The distribution of waters of the Indus and its tributaries between India and Pakistan is governed by the Indus Water Treaty (IWT).

- Was signed on Sept 19, 1960, between India, Pakistan and a representative of World Bank after nine years of negotiations.

- Partition of India cut across the Indus river basin, which has the Indus river, plus five of its main tributaries.

Western rivers

Chenab, Jhelum, Indus

India's rights over these rivers: Limited — can set up certain irrigation, run-of-the-river power plants, very limited storage, domestic and non-consumptive use, all subject to conditions

Eastern rivers

Sutlej, Beas, Ravi

India's rights over these rivers: All exclusive rights lie with India.



Baglihar dam on Chenab



Indus Waters Commission a success story

- Once every five years, conducts a general inspection of all rivers in parts. Total inspection tours so far: Over 100
- Regularly meets once a year. Total meetings thus far, including those for taking up Pak objections: Over 100



In Million Acre Feet

- **Permanent Indus Commission (PIC):** Comprising commissioners from both the countries, the PIC is a bilateral body which is supposed to meet annually to share data, resolve disputes, and inspect projects.

- In the case of a dispute under the IWT, the countries can take recourse to the following:

1. **PIC negotiations** (mandatory first step).

2. **Neutral Expert** (for technical disagreements, e.g. objections raised by Pakistan over the design of the *Baglihar* project in 2007, leading to India accommodating minor modifications suggested by the neutral expert).

3. **Court of Arbitration (CoA)** (for legal/interpretative disputes, e.g. disputes raised by Pakistan over India's *Kishenganga* and *Ratle* hydropower projects).

- **Data Sharing:** Mandatory exchange of hydrological data (flow, flood warnings). This was suspended by India in 2025 after the recent Pahalgam terrorist attack in Kashmir.

Fifth, there is no exit clause within the treaty. As per Article XII of the treaty, any modification or termination can only occur by mutual agreement between both nations.

However, despite the signing of the treaty, the fact that the origination points of the irrigation system of western rivers – the key canal headworks – remained in India, specifically in the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was a friction point that continued to generate a lot of discontent within Pakistan. The key point of discontent was that while Pakistan became overly dependent on the Indus River system for the agricultural-based livelihoods of its economy, India, being an upper riparian state, exercised control over the flow of the Indus River waters.

Pakistan believed that it continued to be vulnerable to India and that it needed to control the headworks of the western rivers in J&K.

India, immediately after the signing of the treaty, witnessed tumultuous parliamentary and public debate questioning the unfair terms of the treaty. These unfair terms centered around three immediate contentions:

First, the unfairness of the terms was pointed out to Nehru at that time. At the time, of the cultivable land in India, only around 19% had irrigation facilities while in Pakistan it was 54%. Fundamentally, therefore, India was left with less-irrigated land and even fewer irrigation facilities (Sinha, 2020).

Second, the cost of replacement of the canal works which India had to bear was also based on unfair terms. Out of the 450 crore rupees required by Pakistan to build its canal links, 400 crore rupees were to be given to it as grants (and not loans). In case of India, out of the 100 crore rupees required by it to build the necessary infrastructure, only 27 crore was allocated to it by external partners, and that too as loans (and not grants, like in Pakistan's case). Finally, India also agreed to pay 83 crore rupees to Pakistan in pound sterling without settling the previous financial dues (Sinha, 2020).

Finally, Nehru's political outlook heavily influenced India's agreement to signing the IWT. At that time, Nehru believed that the compromise made by India by signing the treaty was a small price to pay in exchange for security, peace and stability in the subcontinent. Influenced by his internationalist outlook, Nehru believed that the treaty could pave the way for India and Pakistan to cooperate in other areas as well. When Nehru visited Karachi for signing the IWT, as much was discussed

between himself and Ayub Khan. After signing of the IWT, several rounds of bilateral talks also took place between the two countries. However, the situation drastically changed after the 1962 India-China war. In the aftermath of the war, Pakistan quickly signed a land exchange agreement with China, giving the latter a stake in the J&K dispute, and firmly became the latter's ally. Thereafter, the 1965 India-Pakistan war broke out.

THE MIRAGE OF DEPOLITICIZATION AND NEUTRALITY: IWT'S INEXTRICABLE LINKS WITH POLITICS

The Nehruvian idea that the IWT was merely a neutral, technical water-sharing instrument that could not only be insulated from the political headwinds afflicting the relations between the two countries but could also lead to better cooperation in other areas of bilateral engagement, was belied immediately after the signing of the treaty. In the quest for peace and in the name of better politics, India compromised during the IWT treaty negotiations, accepting merely 18-19% of the Indus Waters although 69% of the flow is from its own catchments, besides contributing millions of pound sterling to Pakistan (Saxena, 2024). To justify it at the time, Prime Minister Nehru had stated in the Parliament, *"...we purchased a settlement, if you like; we purchased peace to that extent and it is good for both countries"* (Punjabi, 2004).

However, soon after the signing of the treaty, Ayub Khan alluded to the necessity of the physical possession of the upper reaches of the Indus Basin Rivers in J&K. This stemmed from Pakistan's fear of India's upper riparian status and control over the headwaters of the western rivers. Since the major

headworks of the Indus River basin flowed through the state of Jammu and Kashmir, it therefore became crucial for Pakistan to attempt to control the state, as this would solve Pakistan's water woes, reduce the vulnerability of its agrarian economy and cease its dependency on India. For, the rivers flowing through J&K also met the water supply needs of both East and West Punjab in India and Pakistan respectively.

This, as Ranjan (2025) has argued, was visible during the first Indo-Pakistan war over Kashmir immediately after the Partition in 1947-48. After Partition, when Pakistan first attempted to invade Kashmir, one of the objectives was not only to exercise sovereignty over the Muslim-majority state,⁵ but also to defend the major hydro links and hydro heads in the state (Ranjan, 2025). For, one of the major concerns of Pakistan, as Ali (1967, p. 306) points out during the first Indo-Pak war was to prevent the Mangla headworks from going to India:

If the Indian offensive succeeded, Mangla Headworks, with its control of supplies from the river Jhelum, would fall into Indian hands. In an attempt to paralyse Pakistan's economy, India had on 1 April, 1948 shut off water from the headworks on the rivers Sutlej and Ravi, which Radcliffe had unjustly awarded to India. By getting hold of Mangla Headworks as well, India would obtain a complete stranglehold over the economy of West Pakistan. An idea of the importance of Mangla can be gained from the fact that it is the only site at which a dam is being built for the replacement of water supplies from the three eastern rivers which are under India's control.

⁵ Presently, 30% of J&K is in Pakistan, 55% in India and 15% is with China (Ranjan, 2025).

During the war, Pakistan and its advisors assessed that India was strong enough to capture the Mangla headworks if a ceasefire was not quickly agreed upon. This was conveyed by the then Deputy British High Commissioner posted in Rawalpindi through a telegram (dated 23rd November 1948) to a British official in the Karachi Foreign Office (Carter, 2018, p. 442):

There is, in the Army at any rate, a widespread conviction that the battle now about to be fought will be for Pakistan rather than for Kashmir. Once the Indians reach the Mangla Headworks and secure that portion of the Upper Jhelum Canal which is in Kashmir, they will have added the weapon of starvation to their already formidable military armoury. The precedent of the Ravi water earlier in the year suggests that they would not hesitate to use it!

There was, thus, widespread apprehension in Pakistan and British circles that if the war over Kashmir continued not only will the Indian side emerge victorious, but it would also command control over the major Indus headworks which would completely cripple Pakistan. This outcome was prevented as the ceasefire was announced on 31st December 1948, freezing the status quo in Kashmir.

Even after the negotiations for the IWT started in 1952, the misgivings continued to persist, and the connection with the Kashmir dispute was again brought out. This was flagged in 1957 by then Pakistani Prime Minister, Hussain Suhrawardy, when he said (Alam, 2002):

There are, as you know, six rivers. Most of them rise in Kashmir. One of the reasons why, therefore, Kashmir is so important for us, is this water, these waters which irrigate our lands. They do not irrigate Indian lands. Now, what India has done – it is not threatening – it has actually, it is building

a dam today, and it is threatening to cut off the waters of the three rivers for the purpose of irrigating some of its lands.

These remarks which made a connection between the IWT and Kashmir were protested by Nehru at that time, with India asserting that there was no connection between the canal waters dispute and the Kashmir dispute. In an interview in 1963, Nehru, referring to the IWT and Pakistan's attempt to link it to the Kashmir issue said that while the Indus water dispute had been settled by the IWT, Pakistan was attempting to raise it again in a different form by talking about the control of river head waters (Ranjan, 2025).

POST-PAHALGAM 'ABEYANCE' OF THE IWT: A STEP LONG IN THE MAKING

Over the years, the politics over the hydroelectric projects built over the Indus rivers, along with the fuelling of the Indo-Pak conflict over Kashmir and the concerns over Pakistan-sponsored terrorism in India reveal that the IWT was never a comfortably settled issue between the two countries. The treaty provided a sense of security to Pakistan that India would not touch the Indus waters even as Pakistan went onto flout all norms and principles of bilateral understandings and intensified the use of terrorism as a low-cost proxy irritant to perpetually threaten India's security. Over the years, the treaty has often come under strain and challenge, and even prior to Pahalgam, the linkage between water and terrorism was established nearly a decade ago. Therefore, India's action of putting the IWT under 'abeyance' has been in the making for long.

India's Utilization of Eastern Rivers:

In the context of the eastern rivers, the average water

resource potential of the Indus basin is 73 BCM (billion cubic metres).⁶ Over this flow, India has complete rights. However, not all of this water can be utilized for various natural reasons, leaving only about 46 BCM that is utilizable. India uses as much of the water as it needs to and has the capacity to store 16.3 BCM, with the left-over water flowing into Pakistan (Gujja, 2025).

Due to its numerous storage works, India has been able to utilize nearly its entire share of water of up to 95% of the eastern rivers. These works include the Bhakra Dam on Satluj, Pong and Pandoh Dam on Beas and Thein (Ranjitsagar) on Ravi. They also include other works like Beas-Sutlej Link, Madhopur-Beas Link, Indira Gandhi Nahar Project etc. (PIB, 2019). However, despite this, about 2-million-acre feet of water annually from Ravi still flows unutilized to Pakistan. India is in the process of utilizing its entire share of the eastern rivers through three key projects (PIB, 2019):

Shahpurkandi Project: The project will help in utilizing the waters coming out from the powerhouse of Thein dam to irrigate 37000 hectares of land in J&K and Punjab and generate 206 MW of power. It was temporarily suspended due to a dispute between Punjab and J&K, but has now resumed.

Ujh multipurpose project: It will create a storage of about 781 million cu m of water on river Ujh, for irrigation and power generation and provide a total irrigation benefit of 31,380 ha in J&K.

The 2nd Ravi Beas link below Ujh: This project will tap

⁶ The total average annual surface water availability of the basin is about 239 BCM, out of which the average water available from the western rivers is 165 BCM, which is allocated to Pakistan.

excess water flowing to Pakistan through river Ravi by constructing a barrage across river Ravi for diverting water to Beas basin. The project is expected to utilize about 0.58 MAF of surplus waters below the Ujh dam.

Whether India will be able to entirely restrict the residual flow of eastern rivers to Pakistan remains to be seen. For, as per certain estimates, India would need to build around 30 BCM additional storage capacity on the eastern rivers to store all the waters, which will require several years and billions of dollars (Gujja, 2025).

Pakistan's Utilization of Western Rivers:

Pakistan's population has grown 533% since 1960, reducing per capita water availability and making it one of the most vulnerable countries in the world in terms of water scarcity (Saxena, 2024). Despite this vulnerability, Pakistan has not been able to efficiently utilize its share under the IWT and has instead prioritized expending resources on waging terrorism against India.

While the western rivers constitute the primary water source for Pakistan, in terms of freshwater supply as well as agricultural dependency, Pakistan's utilization of the waters of the western rivers has been characterized by severe inefficiencies. Of the nearly 145 million acre-feet annual inflow from the western rivers 101 MAF is diverted for agriculture, but nearly 36 MAF is lost due to leaky canals, evaporation, and outdated irrigation systems. Furthermore, nearly 30 MAF flows unused into the Arabian Sea annually. Thus, the total water wasted, including the unutilized flow to the sea, amounts to 66 MAF – twice India's share in the Indus Waters Treaty (Saxena, 2024).

Pakistan’s Utilization under IWT:	
Aspect	Metric
Annual Inflow	~145 MAF
Agricultural Use	97% of withdrawals
Unutilized Flow	30 MAF to Arabian Sea/year
Groundwater Depletion	0.5–1 meter/year decline

In terms of storage capacity, Pakistan has not done well either. The country’s storage capacity has stagnated since the construction of the Mangla (1967) and Tarbela (1976) dams. These two reservoirs have a combined live storage capacity of 14.4 MAF, which represents only 10% of Pakistan’s annual share of Indus waters (Saxena, 2024). This limited storage capacity forces Pakistan to release large volumes during monsoons, causing floods within its own territory, while droughts intensify in dry seasons. This flow variability also adversely impacts hydropower generation and consequent electricity output.

Contentions over Indian Hydroelectric Projects on Western Rivers:

Contentions over hydropower projects have been taking place ever since the treaty was signed. In the process of resolving Pakistani objections to India’s just utilization of its allocated share over the Western rivers, India has deliberately compromised its interests, blindly hoping that it will buy peace with Pakistan. As a result, over many projects, India ended up making concessions that have not always been in the country’s best interests (Saxena, 2024).

One such project was the *Salal dam*. In 1978, the controversy over the Salal dam being built by India was settled after prolonged discussions between India and Pakistan. Pakistan objected to the storage capacity of the dam. After discussions, a bilateral agreement was signed in 1978 which reduced the reservoir height and removed the gated spillways. Presently, the dam – a 690 MW project – is in the Reasi district of J&K and is a run-of-the-river project in accordance with the IWT provisions. As a result of design compromises made by India, the dam's operational flexibility was also compromised (Saxena, 2024). Subsequently, over the decades, Pakistan has continued to object to other Indian hydropower projects being built on the western rivers even though they were allowed under the treaty and would help India utilize the allocated irrigation potential under the IWT.

In 2007, Pakistan's objections to the design features of the 900 MW *Baglihar dam*, on the Chenab River, was addressed by the World Bank-appointed neutral expert. The neutral expert upheld India's design and mandated some minor structural adjustments to the design. In 2006, Pakistan also raised objections to India's 330 MW *Kishanganga hydropower project* on a Jhelum tributary, even though it was also a run-of-the-river project. Pakistan said that the project would affect the flow of Neelum river downstream in Pakistan and impact the country's agriculture. Pakistan took the matter to a Court of Arbitration (CoA) in the Hague. In 2013, the court ruled in favor of India, allowing the diversion of water for power generation, but also mandating that a minimum flow of 9 cubic meters per second be maintained downstream to Pakistan. The project was finally completed and inaugurated in 2018.

Yet another key hydropower project that has constituted a source of contention between India and Pakistan is the 850 MW run-of-the-river ***Ratle hydropower project***. Pakistan raised objections to it as early as 2013, arguing that its construction design was in violation of the IWT. In 2016, Pakistan requested a Court of Arbitration on the matter, while India rejected the jurisdiction of the Court and argued in favour of bringing the dispute to a Neutral Expert instead. Initially, the World Bank encouraged both the countries to resolve the dispute bilaterally, but later the Bank appointed both a Neutral Expert and the chair of the Court of Arbitration (CoA) in 2022. While India decided to cooperate with the Neutral Expert proceedings, the country boycotted the CoA, terming it “illegal” and a “serious breach” of the treaty, as there cannot be two parallel simultaneous processes under the IWT. That the World Bank allowed both the processes to run simultaneously, in a bid to indulge Pakistan’s demands, even though the Bank acknowledged that such an arrangement will “pose practical and legal risks” shows the extent to which Pakistan has played an obstructionist role in India’s utilization of its share of the treaty (Sareen, 2023).

In 2025, the Neutral Expert ruled that he was competent to decide on the issues related to the project designs, supporting India’s stance. At the same time, in a recent ruling in June 2025, the CoA also upheld the validity of its own jurisdiction to adjudicate over the project, despite India placing the IWT in ‘abeyance’ after the Pahalgam attack.

India's Utilization of Western Rivers			
Category	Key Projects/Areas	Permitted Capacity	Current Utilization
Hydropower	Kishanganga, Ratle, Pakal Dul, Salal	Unlimited (run-of-river)	~5,000 MW operational
Irrigation	Ranbir Canal, Chenab/Jhelum valleys	1.34 million acres	Partial (expansion ongoing)
Water Storage	Pakal Dul, Baglihar, Bursar (proposed)	3.6 MAF total	~0.4 MAF utilized
Flood Control	Jhelum basin reservoirs	Not quantified in IWT	Limited; expanding post-2025

Finally, another Indian project that has been a source of decades-old contention between the two countries is the ***Tulbul navigation project*** on the Jhelum River. The project was conceived in the early 1980s and work on it began in 1984. The project aims to regulate the water level of the Jhelum River by controlling the outflow from Wular Lake – India's largest freshwater lake located in North Kashmir – by constructing a barrage designed to maintain a minimum water depth in the Jhelum River downstream of Wular Lake during the lean season. This is intended

to ensure year-round navigation, especially during the dry winter months when river levels drop and may also have potential benefits for hydropower generation and flood control. While Pakistan argued that the project (by constructing a storage facility/barrage) violated the IWT, India argued that since the project served the objectives of navigation and flood control, it was well within India's rights given in the IWT.

However, due to Pakistani objections, India agreed to suspend the work on the project in 1987 – again in the spirit of goodwill and in the hopes of better relations with Pakistan, even though at the time Pakistan-fomented Kashmir terrorism was at its peak. Over the years, India has desisted from reviving the project. In 2012, there was a terrorist attack – by Hizbul Mujahideen – near the project site to obstruct the routine dredging works that were going on at Wular lake, ultimately acting as a factor which contributed to the devastating floods in J&K in 2014 (Sharma, 2025). It is only now that India has decided to revive this project, and in June 2025, the Indian government commissioned a Detailed Project Report (DPR) on the Tulbul project.

Contentions over Pakistani Projects:

Besides these Indian projects, on the Pakistani side also, some projects on the Indus River have faced controversies. The 4500 MW ***Diamer-Bhasha Dam*** on the Indus River, located in Gilgit-Baltistan triggered Indian objections on international funding in the disputed territory. The project has also faced environmental controversies within Pakistan, as it will submerge more than a hundred villages. After India's objections, while the international funding was cut back, the project is being funded by China under the China Pakistan

Economic Corridor (CPEC). This is one of Pakistan's most important projects, besides Mangla and Tarbela projects, and is expected to meet the country's major irrigation and hydropower needs. Another important project under works is the 4320 MW *Dasu dam* in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. It has been the target of repeated terrorist attacks, leading to temporary suspension of works.

Key Disputed Projects on the Indus:			
Project	River	Dispute	Resolution Status
Baglihar (India)	Chenab	Excessive storage capacity	Resolved by Neutral Expert (2007)
Kishanganga (India)	Jhelum	River diversion reducing flows to Pakistan	Resolved by Court of Arbitration (2013)
Ratle (India)	Chenab	Spillway design affecting sediment flow	Ongoing parallel proceedings (2025)
Salal (India)	Chenab	Storage capacity violations	Bilateral agreement (1978)
Diamer-Bhasha (Pak)	Indus	Disputed location; Chinese funding	Under construction with CPEC
Dasu dam (Pak)	Indus	Terrorist attacks	Under construction with CPEC
Kalabagh (Pak)	Indus	Inter-provincial water-sharing conflict	Shelved indefinitely

Key Operational Hydropower Projects in Pakistan:		
Project	River/Location	Capacity (MW)
Tarbela	Indus, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	4,888
Mangla dam	Jhelum, PoK	1000
Neelum-Jhelum	Jhelum, PoK	969
Ghazi-Barotha	Indus, Punjab	1450

Thus, even though the IWT was conceived as a purely technical arrangement between the two countries, it has been subject to near perpetual challenges and disputes, stemming from the politics between the two countries. The precarious foundations of the IWT have faced further challenge after 2016, when India's policy towards Pakistan-sponsored terrorism underwent a significant change.

Terrorism and Water Cooperation:

The 2015 terrorist attack in India's Pathankot followed by the 2016 Uri attack – at a time when, just prior to the attacks, the Indian Prime Minister was attempting to revive the India-Pakistan diplomatic dialogue and had paid a surprise visit to Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif – marked a significant shift in India's approach towards cross-border terrorism. This was also a time when the India's Kishanganga and Ratle hydropower projects were challenged by Pakistan and the country had approached a CoA over the Ratle project. Following the 2016 Uri attack in India in which 20 Indian soldiers

were killed, India linked cooperation over shared waters to cross-border terrorism and warned that ‘blood and water cannot flow together’ (The Indian Express, 2016). In this context, India has invoked the Preamble to the treaty which emphasizes cooperation “in a spirit of goodwill and friendship”, arguing that blatant cross-border terrorism violates the fundamental basis of an already unfair treaty.

Thereafter, the challenge to the IWT has only further escalated. In January 2023, India sent a formal notice to Pakistan seeking the modification of the IWT, under Article XII (3) which deals with the modification of the treaty. In August 2024, India again sent a formal notice to Pakistan, seeking the modification of the treaty. Thus, in response to constant Pakistani objections and threats of litigation, India has been seeking a modification of the treaty for a long time, and it had officially informed Pakistan of the same in 2023. Prior to that, several IWT specialists had advised the Indian government to seek a modification of the treaty. In 2005, a former Secretary to the Indian government, Ramaswami Iyer, had proposed that the treaty be renegotiated (Sareen, 2023). One of the key arguments that India has made in seeking the revision of the treaty was to update it according to the changing environmental conditions, and to better integrate conservation and climate adaptation strategies within the treaty’s framework.

In this context, the post-Pahalgam action of India of temporarily suspending the treaty of putting it under ‘abeyance’ is not only a response to the Pahalgam terrorist attack but also harkens back to the 2016 linkage that India had warned about between terrorism and water-sharing, and the 2023 and 2024 official communications to Pakistan seeking a modification of the treaty.

THE POLITICS OF IWT UNDER CHANGING CONDITIONS

India, in seeking the modification of the treaty since 2023 and in putting it in abeyance in 2025 has argued that there has been a fundamental change in circumstances surrounding the treaty. One important factor of this material change in conditions is the impact of environmental changes and how they have affected the flow of the Indus rivers. The Indus rivers have been primarily fed by Himalayan glaciers, and till now, these glaciers have been in a relatively stable condition. These glaciers supply around 60-70% of the Indus's summer flow (Moneycontrol, 2025).

When the IWT was signed in 1960, it did not account for the changes to the natural environment and river flow that may be caused due to ecological and biophysical processes or due to the impacts of climate change. That is why the IWT – born out of geopolitical logic of Cold War and Partition – sought to divide the Indus River between two enemy countries based on the principle of equal apportionment of rivers, rather than equal water distribution. That is why while both the countries got three rivers each, India barely ended up receiving 19-20% of the total water flow of the Indus basin, despite retaining the headworks infrastructure. Based on a geopolitical logic, the IWT ended up being not exactly an agreement on water sharing, but an agreement for stark division of water, akin to property division. In the process, it disregarded the question of environmental conditions of river ecosystem as well as the question of just allocation of rights in any water-sharing arrangement. It ended up treating the river as a ‘thing’ to be divided, rather than as a complex ecosystem with inherent

value and something that is subject to ecological changes over a period of time (Ahmadzai, 2025).

The same geopolitical logic which led the World Bank and the western governments to label the treaty as one of the “most successful” agreements in water dispute resolution (World Bank, 2018), is also the same logic which, over the decades, has led India to respect the treaty despite its unfairness and constant obstructions in the hopes of buying peace with Pakistan in the Subcontinent. It was only after 2016, when India began linking the treaty to the issue of national security and began demanding its modification that the IWT came under contention.

At the same time, besides the issue of national security, the factor of climate change and accelerated ecological changes have also necessitated a modification of the treaty and may have played a big role in India’s calculus. In contemporary times, due to the accelerating impact of climate change, there has been a melting of Himalayan glaciers, and they are estimated to be losing nearly 8 billion tons of ice annually (Moneycontrol, 2025). This has increased the risk of flooding and erratic water flows which may adversely impact water availability in the long-term. Recent assessments show that snow persistence in the Hindu Kush Himalayan region is the lowest in 23 years, with projections predicting a short-term increase in water flow, accompanied by heightened flood risk, followed by a drying of the rivers as the annual snowmelt diminishes (Amrith, 2025). Moreover, the glaciers that feed the basin are shrinking with a 23.3 percent decrease in snow cover over the last two years alone (Vishwanath, 2025).

In addition to the effects of climate change, immediate

environmental degradation is also visible, as the Indus basin's watershed area has suffered degradation and massive deforestation on both sides of Kashmir, leading to a decrease in the annual water yield (Nabeel, 2019). Pakistan's high dependency and extractions from the Indus have made it the world's most overstressed aquifer (Richey, et al., 2015).

It is in this context of changing material circumstances – particularly the impact of environmental changes – that India's decision to put the IWT in 'abeyance' must also be considered. India's decision hinges, therefore, not only on national security considerations, but also on the increasing irrelevance of the treaty in changing times. Given the pressing challenges facing India, including shifts in the hydrological, demographic, economic, security, and political dynamics of the country, water has become an increasingly important resource for India, and the country is under pressure to increase its freshwater endowments (Ahmadzai, 2025). Presently, India is facing a serious water crisis, with over 600 million people experiencing significant water shortages, and with the demand for water projected to double by 2030 (Ahmadzai, 2025). Due to climate change and environmental factors, the supply is likely to remain constrained and will be made worse by monsoon variability and droughts. The situation in Pakistan is even worse, as its population has increased more than five times since the treaty was signed, and it is highly dependent on water-intensive agriculture, with its major source of water being the Indus river system. Inter-provincial conflicts over water sharing within the two countries have also increased in frequency.

Furthermore, India has estimated that due to ongoing upstream projects by China and Nepal, water supply to India will be further constrained. There is no such goodwill treaty

like the Indus treaty binding upstream countries like Nepal and China. China's \$137 billion Medog Dam on the Yarlung Tsangpo River, and Nepal's hydropower projects on the Koshi and Ganga rivers are projected to significantly reduce water flow to India (Ahmadzai, 2025).

In the light of these rapidly changing environmental and water conditions, India has been demanding revised allocation mechanisms under the IWT. Abeyance, here, therefore, doesn't mean complete abrogation of the treaty. Rather, it is a calculated, strategic step by India to bring Pakistan to the negotiating table after Pakistan ignored repeated official requests by India to discuss and modify the treaty since the last 2-3 years. Such modification of the treaty through amendments is very much permitted under the treaty. From Pakistani response to India's decision on 'abeyance', it seems that Pakistan is now more open to talking to India and has said that it wants 'normal neighbourly relations' with India (PTI, 2025).

CONCLUSION

India's 'abeyance' of the IWT has come at a time when Pakistan has decided to revive its policy of cross-border terrorism against India, when the national security threats from the IWT have become magnified, and when both the countries are set to face severe water shortages in the coming time. India will also face reduced water supply due to aggressive Chinese dam building on the Brahmaputra, and right at India's border, where there is no treaty to constrain China. Whether or not India and Pakistan resolve the IWT dispute, it will not stop China from exercising its upper riparian advantages in this regard.

Presently, India does not have the infrastructure to stop the flow of water to Pakistan. In order to entirely stop the flow of water from eastern rivers to Pakistan, India would need to build an estimated capacity for about 30 BCM more which would come at an estimated cost of more than USD 15 billion, while to stop the flow of water from western rivers, India would need to build storage capacity to hold about 40 BCM, with an estimated cost which could go up to nearly USD 100 billion (Gujja, 2025). While these projects may not be realistically possible for at least the next decade or so, the ‘abeyance’ of the treaty also means that India has suspended sharing of hydrological data with Pakistan. This may affect their flood predictions and planning and can have adverse impacts on agriculture and disaster planning. China has currently suspended the sharing of hydrological data with India since 2022 for both Brahmaputra and Sutlej despite repeated appeals from the state of Assam, as it has led to frequent floods in the latter state (India Today, 2025). In the past also, as one of the first steps taken, China had suspended the sharing of data in 2017 during the Doklam standoff (BBC, 2017).

Therefore, the immediate implication of abeyance of the IWT will be on the sharing of hydrological data. In the long term, given the precarious patterns of predicted climate change and the heightened national security considerations, it is imperative for both the countries to resolve the IWT standoff. One of the main ways forward would be – as India has been attempting – to seek a modification of the treaty in line with the new realities.

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HIGHLIGHTS

DEVELOPMENTS IN RUSSIA-UKRAINE WAR: OPERATION SPIDERWEB

Despite a series of low-level talks between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul, there was no headway which could lead to a drawdown of the war. Despite the failure of talks, Ukraine received a major moral and military boost with the success of its Operation Spiderweb deep inside Russia. The operation involved Ukraine massively hitting strategic airbases deep inside Russia with Ukrainian drones. The Ukrainian strikes exposed severe vulnerabilities in Russia's air defences and have also revealed Ukraine's strategizing capabilities.

The devastation caused to Russia's bomber fleet – which includes aircraft capable of carrying both conventional and nuclear weapons – is such which Russia will hardly be able to rebuild with ease. While Ukraine claims that up to 40 aircraft carriers were destroyed, Russia says that damage was caused only to a few. Open-source satellite assessments place the figure between 10 to 12. However, this number is also significant, as the aircraft damaged made up around 20 percent of Russia's operationally ready long-range aviation, with the capability to carry heavy payloads deep inside other countries and constituted around 10 percent of Russia's strategic nuclear delivery systems.¹ They were used by Russia in its attacks deep inside Ukraine. Their destruction is likely to compromise Russia's ability in the war. Furthermore, the bombers that were

¹ Submarines account for 30 percent of the nuclear fleet, while land-based systems make up around 60 percent of the nuclear fleet.

damaged were also Soviet-era ones which are no longer in production. While the damage caused to Russia runs into approximately USD 7 billion, Ukrainian drones – around 117 that were used – merely cost a few hundred million dollars.

The Ukrainian operation was based on at least 18 months of planning. During this period, Ukraine hid drones inside trucks and smuggled them inside Russia, to hit military airfields in Russia thousands of kilometres away from Kyiv. With this operation, Ukraine has decisively set a new normal in the war, in which Kyiv has signalled its capabilities to strike targets deep within Russian territory, even without the use of western weaponry. Ukraine's strike and Russia's anticipated inability to replace the damaged bomber fleet shows that the continuation of the war is becoming increasingly costly for Moscow.

This will likely have long-term implications for Russia in terms of other aspects also. Russia will now massively increase internal surveillance, which will compromise smooth civilian and military logistical supply chains, and impact normal functioning, war preparedness and even lead to inflation. It will also erode trust within the Russian society, with even pro-government people already questioning the establishment. The latter is particularly significant as it shows the psychological impact of the Ukrainian operation. Through it, Ukraine has revealed its capabilities in asymmetric warfare, turning Russia into a self-doubting territory, regardless of the exact number of physical systems destroyed.

ISRAEL-IRAN WAR

A major Israeli attack on Iran's military and nuclear facilities and resulting in the elimination of its major military commanders and nuclear scientists precipitated in a 12-day war between

Israel and Iran. Even the United States entered the war at a later stage to cause heavy damage and near-destruction of Iran's highly fortified underground nuclear facilities at Fordow, using its heavy bunker buster bombs. Israel's attack on Iran has come as a precipitation of the long preparation and groundwork laid since 2023 when Iranian proxy, Hamas, attacked Israel. After that, Israel carried out a series of high-profile and thorough attacks on Iran and its regional proxies, besides waging a perpetual war against Hamas in Gaza. These attacks included assassinations of high-ranking Iranian, Hamas and Hezbollah leaders, the notable bombing of Iranian embassy in Damascus, the direct airstrikes on Iran, and the famous pager attacks on Hezbollah which thoroughly decapitated the organization to a point of no return. In 2024, Israel, during its direct engagement with Iran, took out many Iranian missiles defence systems, leaving Iran's nuclear facilities vulnerable to future attacks.

In this manner, Israel's military actions, combined with the Gaza war, over the past nearly two years, have resulted in a near total dismantling of Iran's 'forward defence' network of proxies which have guaranteed Iranian security in the Middle East. The biggest dent in Iranian security in the region came, however, with the fall of the Assad regime in Syria. Syria, under Assad, had acted as a critical link between Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah to transfer weapons. Along with Iraq, Syria's control through the Assad regime had enabled Iran to wield extensive regional power. The fall of Syria to the Sunni Islamists allied to Turkey was the last straw.

It was at this moment of vulnerability that Israel finally attacked Iran. This attack was the heaviest military blow to the Iranian state ever since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. This was also the most opportune moment to attack Iran, especially as,

unlike the previous US administrations, the Trump administration had given a greenlight for the same. The fact that the attack came amid a failing US-Iran nuclear dialogue and immediately after the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) red-flagged Iran's failure to rein in its nuclear development, set the ground for Israel to justify its attack. The grounds were Iran's refusal to surrender its nuclear programme and arsenal.

Furthermore, it is also significant that the attack took place in a planned and graded manner. Israel only attacked Natanz, and left out Isfahan and Fordow, giving the US the space to warn Iran that there is still time to surrender and make the dialogue fruitful. Eventually, after a prolonged war between Iran and Israel, in which both sides suffered casualties, the US finally intervened to bomb Iran's other critical nuclear sites. The aftermath of the US attack has left unanswered questions around the extent of damage done to Iran's fortified underground nuclear facilities and the future course. While the Iranian nuclear programme has not been destroyed – and the 400 kg of enriched uranium has been hidden by the regime – yet the critical centrifuges needed to develop the nuclear arsenal have been heavily damaged. Iranian retaliation came in the form of attack on US bases in Qatar, the biggest in the Middle East. However, Iran had already warned the US, and there were no casualties. The events showed that both sides wanted a quick end to a war which was becoming increasingly unsustainable.

In terms of the long-term implications, this war has set a significant new normal in the Middle East. Instead of seeing it in isolation, it must be looked at in the context of the systematic weakening of Iranian capabilities by Israel over a long period

of time. This has been the result of an efficiently developed network of spies and hidden weapons and other decoys that Israel planted within Iran. It is because of Israel's deep hand within Iran that even in the present war, it could efficiently eliminate the top leaders and scientists of Iran at the very outset. The damage done to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has been palpable. While Iran obviously retaliated and Israel had to bear a substantial brunt of that retaliation, Israel had already scored its objectives of damaging Iran beyond repair. In the immediate term, Iran now has very few options before it. Without the necessary material infrastructure – help from Moscow and Beijing was not forthcoming – it will take the regime time to rebuild its nuclear programme. It has little choice but to continue negotiations with the US. In the meantime, it will also have to contend with deep-rooted domestic discontent against the regime.

TECHNOLOGY UPDATE: AI-CYBER-NUCLEAR NEXUS

The debate around AI-powered cyberattacks and their paralyzing impact on countries' nuclear infrastructure is increasingly gaining ground in strategic circles. Till now, there has been a broad consensus – agreed between China and the United States – on the need to maintain human control over the decision to use nuclear weapons, and to avoid integrating AI with nuclear use. This now seem to be unravelling, as countries seek the integration of artificial intelligence into nuclear command, control, and communications (NC3) systems. This, in turn, has the potential to trigger a larger nuclear arms race, and will also increase the risk of nuclear escalation. This harkens back to China's larger threat perceptions around the

AI-cyber-nuclear nexus, which Xi Jinping had flagged in 2014 when he said, “Without cybersecurity, there is no national security.” There is, therefore, a perceived need to prevent AI-powered cyberattacks which can paralyze the nuclear arsenal.

As AI technologies become increasingly embedded in critical nuclear infrastructure, it will also increase the potential for miscalculation, system vulnerabilities, and unintended escalations. AI can analyse vast amounts of data to systematically detect and exploit weaknesses in target systems. AI-enabled malware can also be created. Such malware can automatically alter its code to evade detection and exploit the system’s vulnerabilities. This could lead adversaries to exploit weaknesses that could disrupt nuclear infrastructure. It could also enable terrorists to sow discord among nuclear-armed countries. Furthermore, the speed at which AI-enabled cyberattacks can paralyze nuclear weapons systems could increase pressures to use nuclear weapons in a crisis early on. Finally, AI can also be integrated into conventional weapons systems – particularly those based on drones, and long-range and precision capabilities – which can then pose a threat to nuclear weapons.

China has already noted the Bush and Obama administrations’ early efforts to use cyberattacks to sabotage North Korea’s nuclear weapons program. With China as the main adversary, such threat perceptions are occupying lot of space in strategic debates in China. As the United States shows signs of AI integration into its NC3 infrastructure, China too is exploring similar options. China has identified U.S. decisions to integrate AI into its NC3 system as threatening the former’s second-strike capabilities, leaving it with no option but to do the same.

One of the major consequences of such an arms race will be the questions around the reliability of AI. There is a very real danger that AI models may produce unreliable outputs that could lead to failures in sensitive nuclear weapons systems. More maliciously, actors can use AI to create deepfakes that can mislead another country. Such deepfakes can contribute to serious strategic misjudgement and precipitate in quick instability. AI models may also be susceptible to data fudging of the kind when adversaries deliberately expose or hide information from the AI model. Based on the limited inputs given to the AI model, it will weigh the information to create analysis or predictions, causing the model to draw incorrect conclusions.

THE NATURE OF MODERN PROGRESS

“It is found that civilisation has created many more problems than it can solve, has multiplied excessive needs and desires the satisfaction of which it has not sufficient vital force to sustain, has developed a jungle of claims and artificial instincts in the midst of which life loses its way and has no longer any sight of its aim. The more advanced minds begin to declare civilisation a failure and society begins to feel that they are right. But the remedy proposed is either a halt or even a retrogression, which means in the end more confusion, stagnation and decay, or a reversion to “Nature” which is impossible or can only come about by a cataclysm and disintegration of society; or even a cure is aimed at by carrying artificial remedies to their acme, by more and more Science, more and more mechanical devices, a more scientific organisation of life, which means that the engine shall replace life, the arbitrary logical reason substitute itself for complex Nature and man be saved by machinery. As well say that to carry a disease to its height is the best way to its cure.”

– Sri Aurobindo
(CWSA 25: 223)