

PR SENSE

Spreading Positive Vibrations
Issue No 218 – Apr 2025
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Cover Story



**Exclusive interview with
Shri Jagadambika Pal**

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Spreading Positive Vibrations
Issue No 218 – Apr 2025

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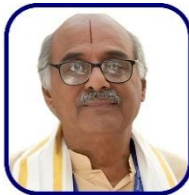
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The opinions expressed in this publication are those of the authors. They do not purport to reflect the opinions or views of Prime Point Foundation or PreSense.

From the Desk of Managing Editor

Dear Reader,



On behalf of the Editorial Board, I am pleased to release the 218th (April 2025) edition, which has rich and varied content.

The terrorist attack and killing of 26 innocent tourists at Pahalgam shook the entire world. The whole country expects the Indian Government to take revenge on Pakistan, which indirectly breeds terrorism against India. This edition carries an Editorial on this vital issue.

The Waqf Amendment Act 2024, passed by both the Houses of Parliament and approved by the President, is now challenged in Supreme Court of India. PreSense carries an exclusive interview with Shri Jagadambika Pal, Hon'ble Chairman of Joint Parliamentary Committee that examined the Bill. Please read the interview and listen to the corresponding podcast generated by AI.

Other Highlights

Prince cartoon

Freedom Fighter – Pratap Singh

Review of the April 2010 edition

Time Zone correction across the world

India's own ChatGPT

I am confident that readers will enjoy reading this edition, too. Kindly send your feedback to editor@corpezine.com so that our Editorial Board can examine your suggestions. Please share this edition with your friends. I will catch up with you next month with more varied content.

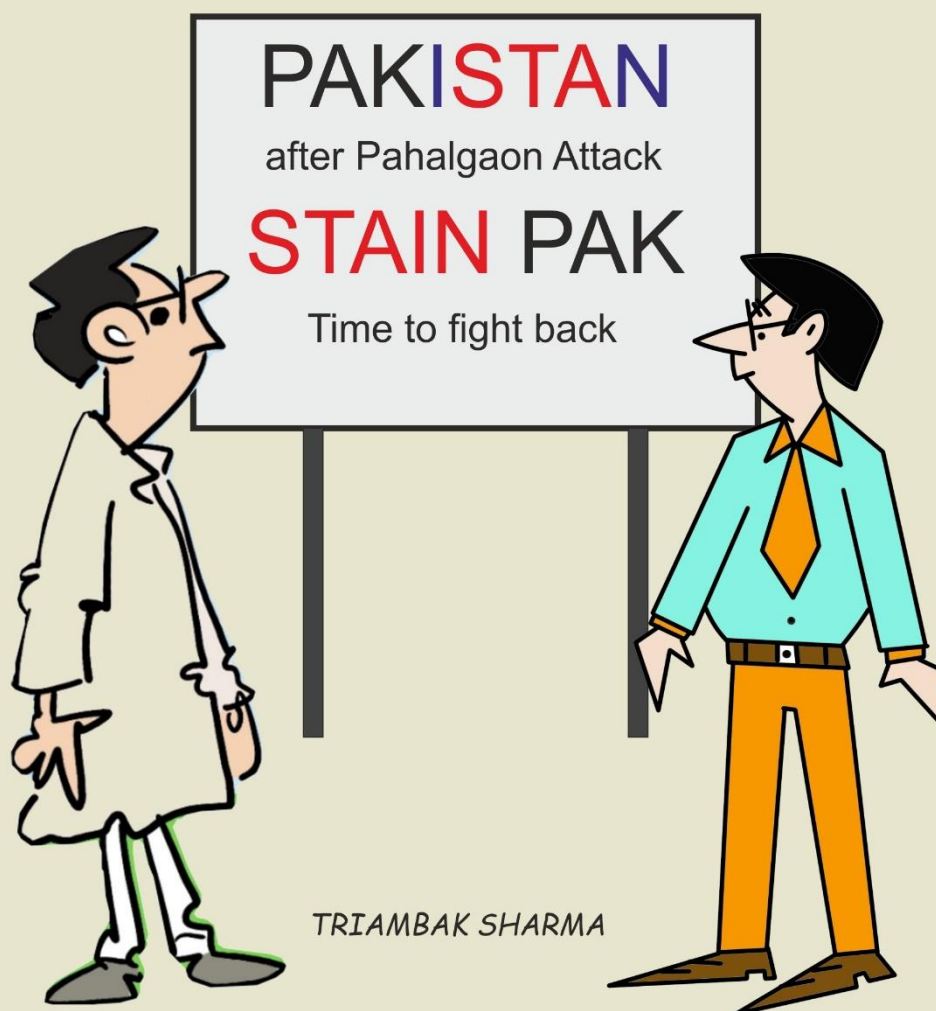
Jai Hind

K. Srinivasan



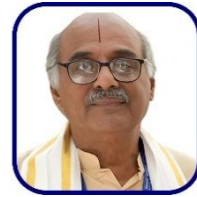
PRINCE

By Triambak Sharma



Editorial

Bloodshed in Paradise: Pahalgam Attack Exposes Pakistan's Terror Strategy



By Prime Point Srinivasan, Publisher and Managing Editor

(The Pahalgam terror attack exposed Pakistan's ongoing support for cross-border terrorism, demanding India's united political, military, and societal response to defend national security.)



The horrific terrorist attack at Pahalgam's Baisaran Valley on 22 April 2025 has once again exposed the fragility of peace in the region and Pakistan's continued support for cross-border terrorism. As India mourns the loss of 26 innocent lives, this tragedy serves as a stark reminder of the persistent threat posed by Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and the urgent need for national unity in the face of such barbaric acts. The attack, deliberately targeting Hindu tourists in one of Kashmir's most picturesque locations, has reignited tensions between the nuclear-armed neighbours and demands a unified response from all sections of Indian society.

A Historical Pattern of Aggression: Pakistan's Terror Campaign Since 1947

The Pahalgam attack represents yet another chapter in Pakistan's long history of aggression against India. Since the partition in 1947, Pakistan has consistently used terrorism as a state policy to destabilise India. The first Kashmir War of 1947-48 began when Pakistan feared

Kashmir would accede to India and sent tribal forces to occupy parts of the princely State. This pattern of aggression continued with the 1965 war, following Pakistan's Operation Gibraltar, designed to infiltrate forces into Jammu and Kashmir to precipitate an insurgency.

The 1971 war, precipitated by the political crisis in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh), saw Pakistan launch Operation Chengiz Khan, bombing Indian airfields. However, India's military prowess led to Pakistan's humiliating defeat and the creation of Bangladesh, with approximately 90,000 Pakistani soldiers surrendering to Indian forces.

In subsequent decades, Pakistan shifted its strategy towards proxy warfare, supporting terrorist groups to wage a "thousand cuts" against India. The 1989 uprising in Kashmir saw Pakistan capitalising upon the resistance movement to undermine Indian control. The 1999 Kargil War, 2001 Indian Parliament attack, and the 2008 Mumbai siege, which killed 166 people, including 6 Americans, all bear Pakistan's fingerprints, with the latter attributed to Lashkar-e-Taiba, a militant group with alleged ties to Pakistan's intelligence agency.

The February 2019 attack on Indian paramilitary forces in Pulwama, claimed by the Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed, killed at least forty soldiers and led to Indian air strikes on terrorist camps within Pakistani territory. This historical record demonstrates Pakistan's unwavering commitment to using terrorism as a strategic tool against India.

The Pahalgam Massacre: Religious Targeting and Cold-Blooded Execution

The Pahalgam attack stands out for its brutality and explicit religious targeting. On 22nd April 2025, five terrorists armed with M4 carbines and AK-47s entered the tourist spot of Baisaran Valley, surrounded by dense pine forests and accessible only on foot or horseback. The attackers, wearing military-style uniforms, deliberately singled out Hindu tourists in a meticulously planned assault.



Survivors recounted how the terrorists asked for the names and religions of the victims before shooting them. Some tourists were forced to recite the Islamic verse of *Kalima* to segregate them by religion. Men were forced to remove their trousers to check for circumcision before being shot at point-blank range. Video footage captured scenes of panic with injured victims pleading for help and bodies strewn across the ground.

Of the 26 people killed, 25 were tourists and one was a local Muslim pony operator named Syed Adil Hussain Shah, who heroically tried to protect the tourists by wrestling a gun from one of the attackers before being shot. The remaining victims included tourists from 15 different Indian States and Nepal, demonstrating the nationwide impact of this tragedy. The attackers even took selfies with dead bodies, displaying a disturbing level of depravity.

The Resistance Front (TRF), believed to be an offshoot of the Pakistan-based UN-designated terrorist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, initially claimed responsibility before retracting their statement four days later. Intelligence reports suggest the same terror module was also responsible for killing six labourers and a doctor in 2024.

India's Decisive Response and Escalating Tensions

The Indian government's response to the Pahalgam attack has been swift and multi-pronged. India accused Pakistan of supporting cross-border terrorism and implemented several retaliatory measures:

- Suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, potentially restricting Pakistan's water supply
- Expulsion of Pakistani diplomats and closure of borders
- Severing diplomatic ties and suspending visas for Pakistani nationals



Prime Minister Narendra Modi declared that the "perpetrators and conspirators" of the Pahalgam attack will be "served with the harshest response". He asserted that the armed forces have "complete operational freedom" to decide on the mode, targets, and timing of India's response. As Modi stated, "it is the national resolve to deal a crushing blow to terrorism".

Border skirmishes between Indian and Pakistani forces began along the Line of Control on 24th April 2025, and India closed its airspace to Pakistani airlines on 30th April. These developments have led to what many analysts describe as the most significant bilateral confrontation since 2019.

Politics Over National Security: Opposition Opportunism Amid Crisis

Even as the nation grapples with this tragedy, certain opposition elements have unfortunately chosen to politicise the issue for electoral gain. Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge criticised Prime Minister Modi for not attending an all-party meeting on the Pahalgam attack, questioning why Modi was addressing an election rally in Bihar instead. This criticism comes despite Modi giving the armed forces "complete operational freedom" to respond to the attack.

While Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi appropriately stated that "those responsible for the Pahalgam terror attack must pay the price" and that the Government has the opposition's "100 per cent support", his party colleagues have been less united in their stance. Such political point-scoring during a national security crisis inadvertently provides Pakistan with propaganda material to deflect blame and sow division.

Pakistan routinely quotes Indian opposition leaders' criticisms in international forums to claim that even Indians don't support their Government's position. This weakens India's diplomatic offensive and emboldens our adversaries.

It may be recalled that during the 1971 Indo-Pak War and again in 1991 during economic crisis, then opposition leaders Vajpayee and Advani stood with the Government during the crisis without giving adverse comments for their political gains. Sadly, some present-day opposition leaders lack that maturity.

Religious Unity in Crisis: The Need for Stronger Condemnation

While several Muslim organisations have condemned the terror attack, with the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) pausing its protest programmes against the Waqf law for three days in solidarity with the victims' families, a more forceful rejection of Pakistan's terror tactics is needed.

Imam Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, head of the All-India Imam Organisation, announced that imams of more than 5.5 lakh mosques would give a strong message against terrorism during Friday prayers. He rightly stated that "killing innocent people based on religion is not only against Islam, but against humanity".

However, these condemnations must explicitly name Pakistan as the sponsor of terrorism to counter the narrative that seeks to divide Indians along religious lines. The terrorists' deliberate targeting of Hindus aims to create communal discord within India, a strategy that can only be defeated through unequivocal condemnation from all religious communities.

Elections and Security: The Governance Challenge in Jammu and Kashmir

The Supreme Court's December 2023 directive to hold elections in Jammu and Kashmir by September 2024 came despite the Government's concerns about security readiness. Following the August 2019 revocation of Article 370 and the region's special status, Kashmir had witnessed relative calm and development progress until the recent elections.

The Legislative Assembly elections held between 18 September and 1 October 2024 resulted in the INDIA alliance winning a majority, with the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) emerging as the single largest party. However, this political transition has coincided with a resurgence in terrorist activity.

While law and order in Jammu and Kashmir now falls primarily under the purview of the State Government, opposition parties have focused their criticism exclusively on Prime Minister Modi for political gain, rather than holding the Chief Minister accountable for local security failures.

International Media: Whitewashing Terror

The Western media's coverage of the Pahalgam attack has been problematic, with major outlets like the New York Times, BBC, CNN, Reuters, and the Guardian referring to the perpetrators as "militants" or "gunmen" rather than terrorists, and describing the massacre as a "shooting". This semantic softening downplays the ideological and religious motives behind the attack.

The US government's House Foreign Affairs Committee publicly rebuked the New York Times, replacing "militants" with "terrorists" in bold red in an edited version of their headline, declaring that this attack was "unequivocally a terrorist act".

The Path Forward: Unity Against Terror

In this moment of national crisis, India must stand united against terrorism. The government should pursue a multi-dimensional strategy:



1. Maintain diplomatic pressure on Pakistan while building international consensus against state-sponsored terrorism
2. Strengthen security apparatus in Kashmir without compromising on development initiatives
3. Engage constructively with all political stakeholders in Jammu and Kashmir
4. Counter radicalisation through community outreach and education

Political parties must prioritise national security over electoral considerations. Opposition criticism, when necessary, should be constructive rather than divisive. Religious leaders from all communities must vociferously condemn terrorism sponsored by Pakistan and promote interfaith harmony.

The Pahalgam attack is not merely an assault on tourists; it is an attack on India's sovereignty and pluralistic ethos. As Prime Minister Modi stated, the perpetrators will face "the harshest response". However, the most effective response will be a united India that refuses to be divided along religious or political lines, precisely what the terrorists and their sponsors hope to achieve.

In the words of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, "The Prime Minister has to take action. Action has to be clear and strong". On this principle, all Indians must stand together, transcending political differences in the face of this grave national security challenge.

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Cover Story

Rewriting History: Shri Jagadambika Pal Speaks on the Waqf (Amendment) Bill and the Path to Transparency

(The Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024 ensures transparency, curbs misuse of Waqf land, mandates inclusive representation, and restores constitutional rights, benefiting poor and backward Muslim communities.)



*Shri Jagadambika Pal, Chairman, Joint Parliamentary Committee on Waqf,
with Smt. Priyadarshni Rahul, Editor, PreSense*

Introduction

The Indian Parliament's recent passage of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024, has ignited nationwide debate. The Act aims to reform the administration of Waqf properties, historically established for the welfare of poor Muslims but often plagued by allegations of misuse and

corruption. Critics argue that previous laws allowed the Waqf Board to arbitrarily claim properties, including ancient temples and government land, without judicial recourse. The new amendment, which notably repeals Section 40, seeks to restore transparency and accountability. While some opposition parties have challenged the Act in the Supreme Court, with certain provisions stayed pending judgement, many people across communities have welcomed the reforms.

In this context, Priyadharshni Rahul, Editor of PreSense, speaks with Shri Jagadambika Pal, Chairman of the Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) that examined the Bill, to unravel the facts and dispel misconceptions.

A New Dawn for Waqf Properties: Addressing Decades of Mismanagement

PreSense: When you were appointed as Chairman of the JPC for the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, what was your initial reaction, given the sensitivity and national attention surrounding this committee?

Jagadambika Pal: On 8th August, the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Mr Kiran Rijju, presented the Bill in the House and requested its referral to a Joint Parliamentary Committee. The Honourable Speaker accepted and constituted the JPC, naming me its Chairman about a fortnight later. I took charge in August and immediately convened our first meeting. Over five months, we held 38 meetings, totalling more than 113 hours, unprecedented for any Parliamentary Committee. We met with 284 delegations, giving each two to three hours to present their views. Every stakeholder who wished to be heard was given the opportunity; there were no complaints of exclusion.

PreSense: The committee reportedly received over a crore emails. How did you manage such a massive response?

Jagadambika Pal: Indeed, we received more than a crore emails. I requested the Honourable Speaker for additional support, and 30 officers and staff were assigned to assist us for three months. We filtered out one-line emails expressing only agreement or disagreement, which comprised 50–60% of the total. Every email or letter with substantive suggestions was reviewed line by line. Delegations also submitted written materials. It was a challenging task, but thanks to the dedication of the team, especially officers like Swathi Parwar, Disha, and Joint Secretary Mr Besak, we completed the report within six months, despite the sensitivity involved.

Inside the JPC: Unprecedented Consultations and Challenges

PreSense: How did you navigate the committee's most sensitive issues?

Jagadambika Pal: Patience was key. The proceedings were often tense, with some opposition MPs attempting to disrupt the process - one even threw a bottle at me, though fortunately I was not harmed. At times, arguments erupted in front of witnesses, which was embarrassing. However, I remained calm and focused on diffusing tensions, ensuring the committee's work continued uninterrupted.

PreSense: What was your experience leading such a historic and sensitive committee?



Jagadambika Pal: I never expected to chair the JPC. The decision was made by the party leadership, and I am grateful for their trust. It felt like a rigorous examination. The issue spans the entire country, from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. There were days I worked for 12 hours straight to meet the tight deadlines set by the Home Minister and Speaker. We visited numerous States - Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, West Bengal, among others - often amid protests by farmers whose lands had suddenly been declared Waqf property. The 2013 amendment to Section 40 had given the Waqf Board unchecked powers, which led to widespread discontent and injustice.

Dispelling Myths: What the Amendment Means for the Muslim Community

PreSense: What message would you like to convey to Muslims who fear the implications of this amendment?

Jagadambika Pal: The vast majority of Muslims are peaceful and have not participated in protests. While the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board tried to incite opposition, most people simply offered prayers and left peacefully. Many poor Muslims, OBCs, Pasmandas, and even Muslim women intellectuals I met supported the Bill. Only a few vested interests, certain madrasas and minority organisations, are attempting to mislead the community.

PreSense: How safe are Muslims under the new law?

Jagadambika Pal: The protests are largely orchestrated by a handful of Maulanas and minority groups. For example, during a dharna at Jantar Mantar called by the All-India Muslim Personal Law Board, many attendees were unaware of the Bill's contents. It was clear the protest was sponsored. The common Muslim is not involved in these agitations.

Towards Inclusive Representation and Accountability

PreSense: What have you personally gained from chairing the JPC?

Jagadambika Pal: This experience has taught me patience like never before. For six months, I was fully dedicated to this task, working daily on reports and amendments. We faced resistance similar to that during the repeal of Article 370, Triple Talaq, and the CAA. Only after the Bill was introduced and the JPC formed did some Muslim organisations begin their protests.

PreSense: What are the key benefits for Muslims in these amendments?

Jagadambika Pal: The amendments bring significant advantages. Previously, OBCs, Pasmandas, and poor Muslims had no representation in the Waqf Board or the All-India Minority Council. Now, there will be mandatory representation for backward groups, including two women members, ensuring checks and balances. The income from Waqf properties will finally reach the poorest, orphans, and women, as was originally intended. Earlier, the Waqf Board operated with unchecked powers, overriding constitutional rights and violating Articles 14, 15, 19, 21, and 300(A). This amendment restores constitutional balance and transparency. The matter is now before the courts, which I am confident will judge on merit.

PreSense: Thank you, Shri Jagadambika Pal, for sharing your insights and helping clarify the true intent and impact of the Waqf (Amendment) Bill, 2024.





Podcast on the Interview with Hon'ble Jagadambika Pal

PreSense has created a Podcast with Notebooklm on the above interview with Shri Jagadambika Pal, Hon'ble Chairman of JPC on Waqf. Please watch this podcast, a conversation generated by AI.

<https://youtu.be/FcupLbZPelw?si=wwW07b0fr8ejlp62>

Customised GPTs



Prime Point Foundation and PreSense have created 'Customised GPTs' exclusively for our learning. Editorial Board requests all readers to use these customised GPTs and share your feedback.

1. Sansad Ratna Awards: Indian MP Performance Hub

<https://tinyurl.com/ppfgpt11>

2. AI Insight Hub - Latest Tools and Trends

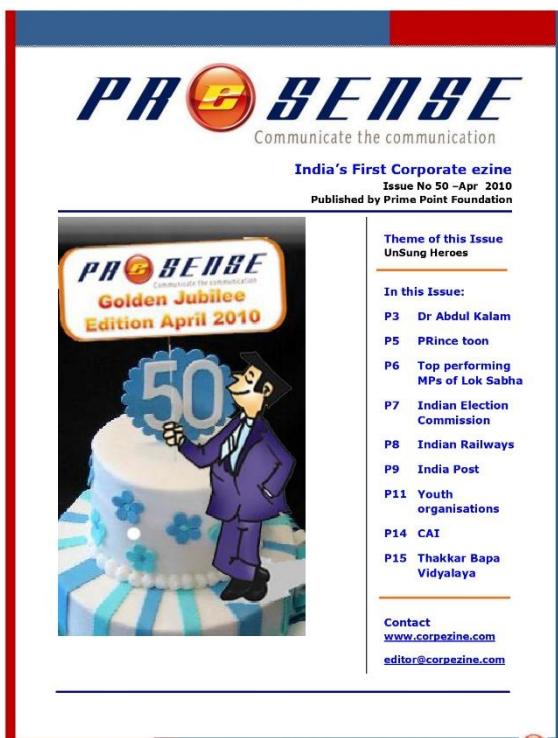
<https://tinyurl.com/ppfgpt13>

3. DiJAI - Digital Journalism Hub

<https://tinyurl.com/ppfgpt16>



Time Capsule Chronicles: Revisiting PreSense - 15 Years Ago – Apr 2010 “Golden Jubilee Edition”



The April 2010 edition of *PR-e-Sense* marks a significant milestone as it celebrates its 50th Golden Jubilee edition. Over the past years, *PR-e-Sense* has consistently served as a platform to educate, inspire, and empower communication and corporate professionals. This special edition, themed "Unsung Heroes," is a tribute to individuals and organisations often overlooked by mainstream media.

The highlight of this issue is the exclusive and insightful interview with former President Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, where he discusses values, education, youth empowerment, and entrepreneurship. His inspiring words on living with integrity and nurturing societal values set a profound tone for the edition.

The magazine proudly features outstanding Parliamentarians like Mr Hansraj Gangaram Ahir and Mr S.S. Ramasubbu, acknowledging their exemplary participation in the Lok Sabha. In addition, it showcases three national institutions – the Election Commission of India,

Indian Railways, and India Post – highlighting their remarkable contributions to the nation's development and governance.

Furthermore, the edition profiles dynamic youth organisations such as India Sudar, Dream India, and Helping Minds, which are silently transforming lives through education and community support. Other commendable initiatives like the Consumers Association of India and Thakkar Bapa Vidyalaya also find special mention, celebrating their relentless service to society.

This Golden Jubilee edition stands as a testament to the commitment of *PR-e-Sense* towards quality content, consistent publication, and positive societal impact. The editors and contributors deserve hearty congratulations for crafting a truly inspiring and informative commemorative issue. It is an honour to review such a landmark publication, and we look forward to many more enriching editions.

This edition can be downloaded from the link:

<https://www.prpoint.com/ezine/presense0410.pdf>

Review Courtesy: ChatGPT





Freedom Fighters of India

Pratap Singh Barhath



By C. Badri, Editor in Chief

(Pratap Singh Barhath, a young Rajasthani revolutionary, bravely resisted British rule through armed struggle, enduring torture and dying in prison, symbolising sacrifice for India's independence.)



Kunwar Pratap Singh Barhath, born on 25th May 1893 in Udaipur, Rajasthan, was a valiant freedom fighter whose life exemplified courage and sacrifice in the face of British colonial rule. With its rich history of valour and tradition, Rajasthan has been the birthplace of many freedom fighters who played pivotal roles in India's struggle for independence. Right from Jaisalmer's vast deserts to Jaipur's vibrant streets, the spirit of defiance against colonial oppression was alive and strong. Pratap Singh, hailing from the noble Barhath family of Shahpura State, was the son of Thakur Kesari Singh Barhath and Manik Kanwar.

Pratap Singh spent much of his early life in Kota, where his father held esteemed positions as Chief Counsellor to the Maharana of Mewar and later as a member of the Council in the court of the Maharaja of Kota. It was in Kota, that he received his early education at Herbert High School, followed by DAV High School in Ajmer. The nationalist fervour of the time deeply influenced him, and he soon came under the influence of Rash Behari Bose, a prominent leader in the Revolutionary Party. Recognising

Pratap Singh's potential, Bose inducted him into the revolutionary cause, setting the stage for his active participation in the freedom struggle.

Pratap Singh's commitment to the cause of independence soon became evident through his active participation in several covert operations against the British authorities. One of the most notable incidents occurred in December 1912 when Pratap Singh, alongside his uncle Thakur Zorawar Singh Barhath, attempted to assassinate Lord Hardinge, the then Viceroy of India, during a procession in Delhi. Although the attempt failed, it marked a significant moment in the resistance against British colonial rule, highlighting the growing unrest among Indians willing to risk their lives for independence.

In 1915, Pratap Singh played a leading role in the Benaras Conspiracy, a major plot within the broader Ghadar Movement, which sought to overthrow British rule through armed



rebellion. The conspiracy aimed to incite a rebellion by targeting British officials, with Sir Reginald Craddock being a key target. However, the plan was foiled due to timely intelligence, resulting in the arrest of several revolutionaries, including Pratap Singh.

Although the Benaras Conspiracy did not succeed in its immediate objective, it was emblematic of the fervour and desperation of the revolutionaries. The Ghadar Movement, to which the conspiracy was linked, sought India's freedom through violent insurrection. The movement was marked by the idealism and determination of its leaders, but it also faced significant challenges, such as intelligence leaks, lack of coordination, and internal divisions. Despite the failure of the Benaras Conspiracy, it represented the resilience and resolve of the Indian people in their quest for freedom.

As a result of his involvement in the Benaras Conspiracy, Pratap Singh was arrested and sentenced to five years of rigorous imprisonment in February 1916. He was sent to Bareilly Central Jail, where he endured severe physical and mental torture. The British authorities tried relentlessly to extract information about his fellow revolutionaries, but Pratap Singh remained resolute. Despite the brutal treatment, he refused to betray his comrades, displaying extraordinary courage and unshakable loyalty to the cause.

His strength of character and determination, however, came at a great personal cost. Pratap Singh Barhath died on 7th May 1918 at the tender age of 25, succumbing to the inhumane conditions in prison. His death marked the loss of a young patriot who had sacrificed his life for the freedom of his country. Pratap Singh Barhath's life is a symbol of sacrifice, resilience, and unwavering dedication to the cause of Indian independence. Though his life was cut short, his actions, alongside those of countless other unsung heroes, contributed significantly to the eventual achievement of independence in 1947. His commitment to the cause of freedom continues to inspire future generations, urging them to uphold the values of patriotism, selflessness, and courage.

In Rajasthan's history, Pratap Singh Barhath is remembered as one of the State's proudest sons—a symbol of courage in the face of colonial oppression. His legacy reminds us of the sacrifices made by individuals whose names may not always be widely recognised but whose contributions were invaluable in securing India's freedom. The stories of such martyrs are integral to our understanding of India's struggle for independence, and they must continue to be honoured and remembered. As we reflect on Pratap Singh's life and sacrifices, we are reminded of the importance of standing up for justice and freedom, even in the face of overwhelming adversity. His bravery and dedication are a powerful testament to the enduring spirit of India's freedom struggle. Jai Hind.

Sansad Ratna Team presents

The world-renowned Anna University, Chennai hosted an international "Data Spaces Week 2025" from 7th to 11th April 2025 in a hybrid mode. Sansad Ratna Team, consisting of Prime Point Srinivasan, U Sridhar Raj, V M Charumathy, and Dipti Kumar (from US) explained how data is being used to evaluate the performance of MPs in India. International professors appreciated our initiative. Prof. Gopal, of Anna University organised this event.



Sukruti's Corner

Time Zone Correction: The Clock That Unites the World



By Sukruti Narayanan, Hon. Advisor (from Sydney, Australia)

(Time zone correction standardises global timekeeping, ensuring synchronised communication, travel, and technology. Originating from railway needs, it remains vital in today's interconnected digital world.)



Time is one of the most fundamental aspects of daily life, yet few people ever stop to consider how it is measured, coordinated, and corrected across the globe. From catching a flight to logging into a virtual meeting, time zone correction quietly governs our everyday activities. But where did this system originate, and why does it remain so essential?

The Origin of Time Zones

Before the introduction of time zones, people lived by local solar time. This meant that noon occurred when the sun was directly overhead in a particular location. This system worked well when communities were isolated and travel was slow. Each town operated according to its own "clock time," which could vary slightly from its neighbours.



However, the 19th-century development of railways and telegraphs created an urgent need for standardisation. The issue became especially problematic in countries like the United States, where the railway industry struggled with scheduling due to hundreds of local times. A train departing from Chicago and arriving in New York had to navigate through dozens of inconsistent time points. The resulting confusion was not only inconvenient but also dangerous.

Today, there are approximately 38 official time zones in use worldwide. Although the Earth is divided into 24 standard time zones—each representing a 15° longitudinal increment ($360^\circ \div 24 = 15^\circ$)—many countries utilise half-hour or even 45-minute offsets to better suit local needs. These variations raise the total number of distinct time zones from 24 to about 38.

The Birth of Standard Time

To resolve this growing issue, Sir Sandford Fleming, a Canadian engineer, proposed a global system of 24 time zones, each separated by 15 degrees of longitude. His plan aimed to divide the world into clear, hourly segments, with time progressing in sequence from the Prime Meridian (0° longitude), located in Greenwich, England.

Fleming's proposal gained international support during the International Meridian Conference in 1884, where 27 nations convened to establish a global system for timekeeping. As a result, Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) was adopted as the standard reference for all time zones. Over time, countries adopted this system, and modern time zones were born.

Why Time Zone Correction Matters

Time zone correction involves adjusting time to align human activities with both solar time and geographical location. It ensures that "noon" aligns approximately with the middle of the day in a given area, enabling consistent scheduling of work, travel, and communication across borders.

In today's globalised society, time zone corrections are crucial for several key areas:

- **International communication:** Virtual meetings, phone calls, and email coordination rely heavily on accurate time zone alignment.
- **Transport and logistics:** Airlines, shipping companies, and rail networks operate on precise schedules, often using Coordinated Universal Time (UTC) to prevent confusion.
- **Financial markets:** Global stock exchanges depend on synchronised opening and closing times to ensure fair trading.
- **Technology:** Digital systems, cloud services, and global servers operate based on uniform timing to maintain data consistency.

Daylight Saving Time (DST): A Form of Correction

One widely recognised form of time zone correction is Daylight Saving Time (DST). During warmer months, clocks are moved forward by one hour to extend evening daylight. Countries including the United States, Canada, much of Europe, and parts of Australia observe DST, citing reasons such as energy efficiency and economic productivity.



However, DST is not without its critics. Opponents argue that it disrupts sleep patterns, offers minimal energy savings in modern contexts, and complicates international scheduling. While some countries have abolished DST entirely, others continue to debate its relevance.

Geography's Influence on Timekeeping

Geography plays a vital role in the development of time zone policies. Large countries such as Russia, the United States, and Australia span multiple time zones to better match regional daylight hours.

Conversely, some countries adopt a single time zone despite vast geographical spans. India, for instance, spans over 2,900 kilometres from east to west but adheres to one official time zone—Indian Standard Time (IST). While this simplifies national administration, it causes disparities. In the northeastern states, for example, the sun rises and sets much earlier than in the western regions. Proposals for a second time zone in these areas have been raised but remain under discussion.

Coordinated Universal Time (UTC): The Global Time Standard

Today, the foundation of global timekeeping is Coordinated Universal Time (UTC), a highly precise atomic time standard that has largely replaced GMT in practical applications. Unlike time zones, which vary depending on location and occasionally the season, UTC remains constant.

Although UTC is not itself a time zone, it is the standard against which all other time zones are measured. Each time zone is defined as a positive or negative offset from UTC (e.g., UTC+5:30 for India, UTC−8 for California).

How is UTC related to GMT?

Greenwich Mean Time (GMT) is the older timekeeping standard, based on the mean solar time at the Prime Meridian in Greenwich, London. UTC has since taken its place as the primary global standard due to its greater precision, being based on atomic clocks rather than the Earth's rotation.

Organisations such as airlines, internet providers, military forces, and financial institutions depend on UTC for accurate, consistent timing. From email servers to GPS satellites, countless digital systems use this standard to prevent confusion caused by local time differences.

Unusual Time Zone Practices

While most time zones vary by whole hours, some regions follow offsets of 30 or even 45 minutes. For example, India uses UTC+5:30, Nepal follows UTC+5:45, and Newfoundland in Canada operates at UTC−3:30. These variations are often rooted in political, historical, or cultural factors rather than strict geographic reasoning.

In some cases, countries have made symbolic decisions regarding time zones. North Korea, for instance, introduced its own "Pyongyang Time" in 2015, only to revert three years later. Venezuela once adjusted its time zone by 30 minutes as part of a national identity initiative.



The Future of Time Zones

As the digital age advances, some experts argue for a move toward a single global time, potentially based on UTC. This would simplify operations for cloud computing, remote work, and global collaboration. Many digital platforms already operate internally using UTC while displaying local time to users for convenience.

However, local time will likely remain important in daily life due to natural events like sunrise and sunset, as well as cultural routines. The future may require balancing universal time standards for technology with local timekeeping for human needs.

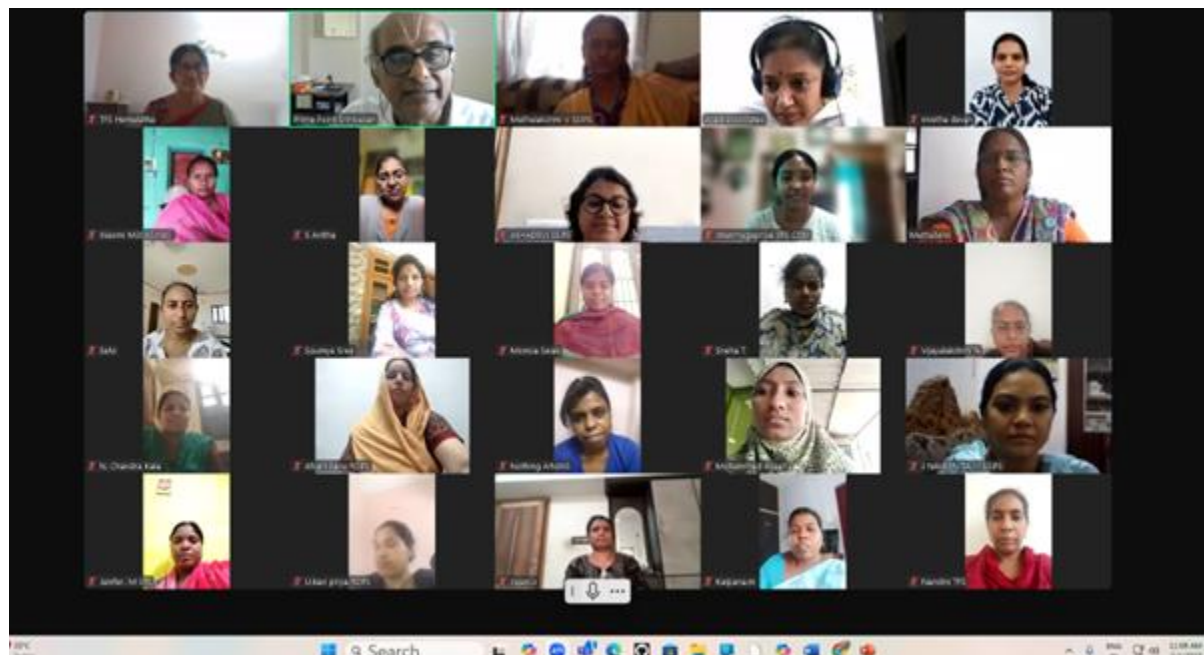
Conclusion

Time zone correction may seem like a minor technical detail, but it serves as the backbone of our interconnected world. From its roots in railway scheduling to its pivotal role in digital communication and international coordination, it provides structure and reliability across the globe. As society evolves, so too will our methods of measuring and correcting time, but its importance in maintaining order and unity is timeless.

DiJAI holds a Session on AI for Teachers

Digital Journalists Association of India (DiJAI) conducted two sessions for the senior teachers of DAV Group of Schools at Chennai. Prime Point Srinivasan conducted the session. He explained the fundamentals of AI and also showed live demonstration of how teachers can use the AI tools for improving their efficiency.

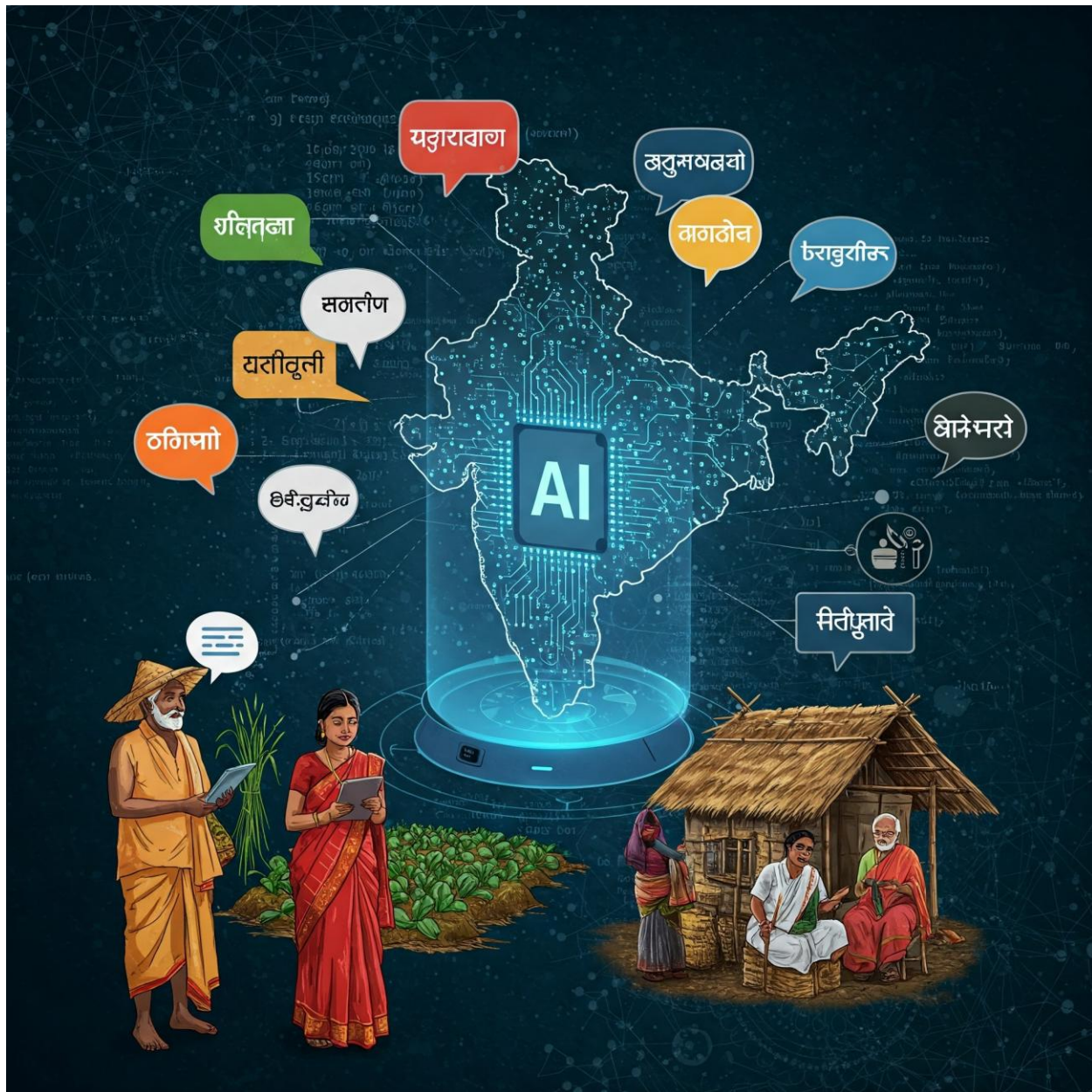
P Ravi, Dean of the DAV group of Schools, coordinated this initiative. Nearly 100 teachers from various schools in their group participated.



Technology

India's Own ChatGPT is Here: It Speaks Your Language

By Dipti Kumar, Hon. Advisor (from USA)



While the world has long been looking to the West for trends, our homegrown talent has unlocked world-class technology, setting us on a global map for inclusivity in this sector. With over 19,000 languages and dialects spoken in India, the need for custom language technology using AI is not a novel idea, but a high-profit market investment.

Imagine asking your mobile assistant for a weather update in Kannada, getting farming advice in Marathi, or talking to a government chatbot in Hindi-English (Hinglish)—and getting helpful, natural replies. This is no longer a dream. Indian entrepreneurs are building powerful new AI tools that are made to understand how Indians speak, in our own languages and dialects.

One of the most exciting names in this space is Krutrim AI, created by Ola's founder Bhavish Aggarwal. Krutrim is being called India's answer to ChatGPT. But unlike global tools that often struggle with Indian names or mix-ups in Hinglish, Krutrim is built to understand and reply in 10 Indian languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Odiya, Marathi, and Hindi, and it's trained on Indian content—from social media posts to newspapers. We could soon see Ola's AI powered maps hitting the markets for its navigation capabilities - but that's another topic for another day.

Let us say a farmer in rural Maharashtra wants to know the best time to plant soybeans. Instead of typing in English, he can speak in Marathi, and Krutrim could answer in the same language, using simple words he understands. Or think of a college student from Bengaluru asking about career options in Kannada—without switching to English to be understood. That's the kind of access Krutrim wants to provide.

Another Indian startup, Sarvam AI, is working on OpenHathi, an open-source language model that can be used by developers to build apps that serve local needs. For example, a healthcare app could give medicine instructions in regional languages, or a local travel site could answer booking queries in Telugu.

There's also CoRover.ai, a chatbot tool and Bengaluru company. You've probably experienced the tool while using the IRCTC, the railway ticketing platform. If you've ever asked a question like "mera train kab aayega?" on the IRCTC chatbot, you probably engaged with CoRover. It can respond in Hindi and other Indian languages to help people who don't read English. Imagine the vast applicability of this tool. Students can access learning in their native languages without feeling the burden to learn in English. Patients can better understand medical diagnoses in their own languages.

Staying informed about the latest tools in AI is part of staying connected today. An enablement at the most basic needs is what makes India's AI startup space so exciting. Some of the key uses we can see and hope to experience in the near future will be especially helpful for:

- Senior citizens who prefer speaking in their mother tongue.
- Small business owners who want to market their products in local languages.
- Students in remote areas who learn in regional languages but want tech access.

In a country as diverse as India, with over 19,000 languages or dialects, these AI models aim to make technology more inclusive, useful, and understandable for everyone, not just the English-speaking elite.

As Krutrim and others roll out their platforms widely, we may soon find ourselves talking to AI that not only understands what we're saying, but also *how* we say it.



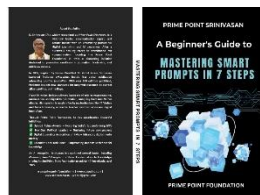


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