

Recalibrating US-India ties



India-US relations face a shift as India tackles trade, immigration, amid Trump's 'America First' policy. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump engage in dialogue to strengthen bilateral relations, the future of US-India ties appears poised at a critical juncture. Modi's commitment to global peace, prosperity and security, paired with Trump's vision of 'America First,' highlights a part-

nership that must balance shared strategic goals with diverging domestic priorities. India and the US have cultivated a robust Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership over the years, encompassing key areas like defence, technology, energy and counterterrorism. President Trump's emphasis on India increasing its procurement of American-made security equipment underscores Washington's aim to deepen defence collaboration. With Modi's planned visit to the White House and continued diplomatic exchanges, both nations are set to expand their cooperation in these critical domains. However, this partnership extends beyond bilateral gains. Modi and Trump's discussions on global challenges, including tensions in West Asia and the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, highlight their shared interest in playing pivotal roles on the global stage. Trade remains a contentious issue,

with Trump's protectionist policies, including potential tariff hikes, posing a challenge to India. The US President's focus on achieving a 'fair bilateral trading relationship' reflects his administration's concerns about trade imbalances. India, on the other hand, seeks to protect its economic interests while fostering a mutually beneficial partnership. Negotiating these trade tensions will require careful diplomacy, as both nations aim to preserve the benefits of their economic ties. The potential for increased investment, innovation and job creation through collaboration in sectors like renewable energy and space exploration offers a promising path forward. Immigration has emerged as yet another critical point of discussion. Trump's crackdown on illegal migrants and emphasis on tighter border controls have direct implications for India, one of the largest sources of irregular immigration outside Latin America. The US has

identified approximately 18,000 Indian nationals for deportation, a figure India has cautiously addressed while advocating for a systematic verification process. Moreover, visa delays for Indian nationals have raised concerns, particularly as India is a significant contributor to the US tech workforce. Balancing Trump's domestic priorities with the need for a skilled global workforce will be essential to sustaining the mutually beneficial flow of talent and innovation. The relationship between India and the US is at once ripe with potential and fraught with challenges. While Trump's 'Make America Great Again' agenda and Modi's vision for a self-reliant India may occasionally clash, their shared goals of security, economic growth, and technological advancement offer ample ground for collaboration. As the world's largest democracies, India and the U.S. have a unique opportunity to lead by example in addressing global challenges.

Simulation-based learning: Transforming emergency medical training

By replicating real-world medical emergencies, this innovative training method bridges the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical expertise. Simulation refers to the imitation of real-world processes or systems for training, education, or evaluation purposes. In emergency medical learning, simulation creates realistic scenarios that replicate medical emergencies, allowing healthcare providers to practice and refine their skills in a safe, controlled environment. The implementation of Competency-Based Medical Education (CBME) by the National Medical Council (NMC) has shown that simulation significantly enhances clinical competence for both undergraduate and postgraduate medical students. One of the most significant advantages of simulation is that it enables learners to practice handling critical and high-stakes situations without risking patient safety. This is particularly important in emergencies, where errors can have severe consequences. By

engaging in simulated scenarios, participants can repeatedly practice emergency protocols, improve technical skills such as intubation and defibrillation, and gain confidence in their abilities. Simulations replicate the high-pressure environment of real emergencies, helping individuals develop the ability to make rapid, informed decisions under stress. They also provide a risk-free setting to identify and correct mistakes, enabling participants to learn how to prevent such errors in real-life situations. Additionally, exposure to diverse scenarios prepares learners to adapt to unexpected complications effectively. Teamwork plays a critical role in emergency medical training, and simulation emphasises the importance of collaboration and communication. Learners develop skills in articulating observations, providing updates, and conveying instructions clearly, which are essential in high-pressure situations. Simulation allows team members to define roles, such as team

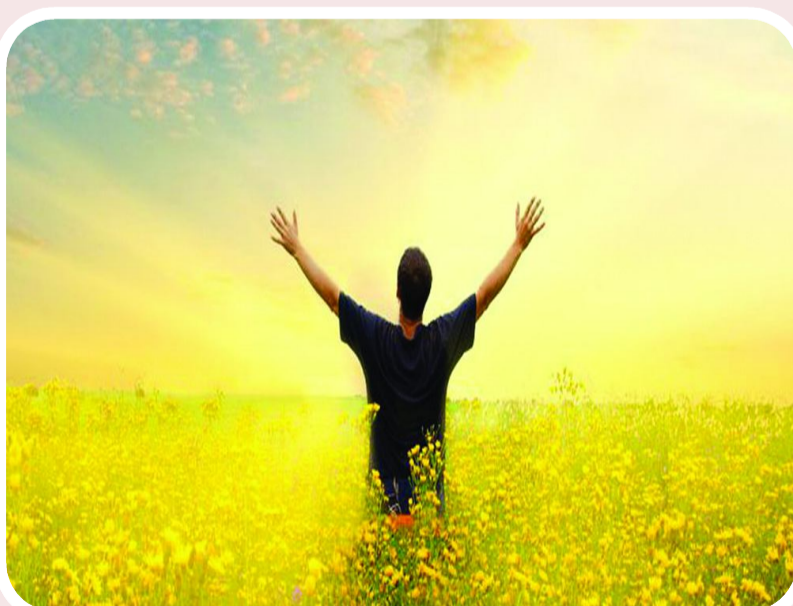


leader or airway manager and practice seamless coordination. Through repeated practice, team-based simulations foster trust, cohesion, and an understanding of each member's strengths, weaknesses and working styles. Structured debriefing sessions after simulations promote a culture of continuous learning by encouraging open discussions about successes and areas for improvement. These sessions help build leadership and followership

skills, enabling team leaders to hone their abilities while fostering supportive and adaptive team dynamics. The benefits of simulation extend to faster and more efficient responses in real emergencies, reduced stress and burnout for healthcare providers and improved patient care outcomes. Familiarity with high-stakes scenarios enables teams to act cohesively and manage stress more effectively, ensuring better results in critical situations. Simulation learning is an essential tool for building individual competence and strengthening medical teams. In a field where zero-error tolerance is crucial, particularly in emergency departments, simulation-based learning equips medical students with both confidence and competence. The future of medical education lies in recognising the importance of practical skills alongside theoretical knowledge, making simulation a cornerstone of training programmes.

The Path to Being Truly Special

We all want to feel special, but often our desires and decisions lead us astray. We all want to be special. There is nothing wrong with such thinking, but most of us do not desire properly or decide sensibly. In this article, I will shed some light on how to do both of these wisely. What should we desire? This must be in sync with our circumstances and capabilities. Imagine desiring to become very rich while doing a small business. Similarly, desiring to become famous anytime soon while being a club-level sportsperson is not wise. We will be disappointed only. Persons not blessed with good looks should accept their limitations and focus on what capabilities they have been blessed with. There was a dark and not-so-good-looking actress in the USA; she only got small roles. But she acted so well that she became a household name. A social worker in India decided to help tribals. He moved in with them. He became very famous and very special. However, something awaits all of us; which is not so difficult either. This is simply to



become a devotee of God, and He will make us special. I will write more about it in this article. The same wisdom should be used in decision-making. When there is a choice between being good and not so good, what should we choose? The same logic applies to following dharma and staying within 'maryada' (limits). We know what these are, but are very causal about controlling ourselves. Succumbing to negative

emotions like anger, lust, greed, hate, etc. is so easy. What it does is to make us very ordinary. We have been taught to be disciplined in eating, sleeping, entertainment and what we do and how much. Are we prepared to do that? If we are keen on becoming special, we have to. A similar yardstick is required in choosing goals. Are they good in the long term? Or, the short-term is easy? What will you choose? Regarding usefulness to others, we should be very sincere. If we wish to be special in the eyes of others, this is the 'mantra'. Lastly, if we really and truly wish to be special, be dutiful; do all duties as best as possible. This will be the starting point in pleasing God, who is everything. After the efforts of many births, a yogi in the end becomes wise and he takes My shelter. A great soul, who considers Lord Vasudeva thus as everything is

very rare. (The Bhagavad-Geeta verse #7.19) What will happen then? You will be rewarded like you cannot imagine. Because God is the controller of what happens to us. Begin doing some easy spiritual practices, which suit your nature. I have a large photo of Lord Krishna, which I have hung on the right side of my bed. I spend a lot of time looking at the Lord, while I gently chant Krishna, Krishna, Krishna.... What has happened? I have become special. God guides me when I pray for His guidance and help. Isn't God omniscient? He knows what will work. God helps us as only He can, being the controller. I am beginning to feel secure. Fears and anxieties are reducing. There is more peace. I can tolerate better what I must. Physical health is improving. There is steady progress, which is very satisfying. I feel that I have become special. This is possible for one and all. Nothing mentioned in this article is very difficult. One just has to be determined. Then, one can enjoy the status of being special.



Budget 2025: Prioritise health education for a stronger India

With over 40 per cent of India's population under 25, empowering youth with physical and mental is a vital investment in the nation's future. As the Union Budget for 2025 approaches, expectations run high across various sectors. Among these, education - specifically health education - deserves special attention. To ensure the holistic development of our youth, the government must consider allocating funds for the integration of health education into school curricula. Such an initiative will not only address immediate concerns but also align with the aspirational vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, where a healthy population becomes the cornerstone of a developed nation. With the Union Budget 2025 at the stage of finalisation, it is time to prioritise health education. Allocating funds to this cause is not merely an educational reform; it is an investment in India's future. It is stated time and again, including in the National Education Policy, that it is critical to allocate public investment in education from the current over 4.5 per cent to about 6 per cent of total budgetary allocation. Besides this, the Government must consider designing schemes that ensure health education is imparted to children at an early stage to be able to build a healthy society. Development is not merely economic or technological - it is also social, cultural and, above all, human. A nation's progress depends on the health of its people, and with over 40 per cent of India's population under 25, ensuring the health and wellbeing of its youth is critical. This cannot be achieved without systematically integrat-

ing health education into our school curricula. Our goal is to improve student's health knowledge and more importantly, their health behavior. The urgency for such an intervention is rooted in troubling realities. Studies indicate that 30-40 per cent of Indian students face serious mental health challenges. A Global School Health Survey (GSHS) conducted as far back as 2007 revealed that more than 25 per cent of students aged 13-17 experienced periods of deep sadness or hopelessness, often disrupting their daily activities. These numbers have only worsened in the years since, as highlighted by small-scale studies and the alarming rise in student suicides. Ignoring the mental and physical health of students today will lead to grave consequences for the nation tomorrow. The contrast between India and nations that give primacy to health education is stark. In the United States, the Youth Risk Behaviour Survey (YRBS) collects data every two years on the health behaviours of high school students. This data informs evidence-based interventions and policies that address mental health, substance abuse, nutrition, and other critical issues. Many US states mandate health education, covering mental, physical, and social health literacy. Similarly, countries like the United Kingdom and Canada have integrated health education into their school curricula, starting at the primary level. India, however, lacks a comprehensive approach. While physical education is emphasised in schools, the broader concept of health education, encompassing mental and social wellbeing, is large-

ly absent. The much-lauded National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 only touches upon physical health, failing to address the critical need for a holistic health education framework. Why does this matter? Because healthy individuals contribute to a healthier economy. Poor health not only reduces productivity but also pushes families into financial crises due to high medical expenses. India's average life expectancy in 'full health' is a mere 60 years, significantly lower than that of many Asian countries, including Japan (74 years) and China (69 years). A healthy lifestyle, ingrained early, can change this trajectory. Countries like Japan provide valuable lessons. Their emphasis on hygiene, nutrition and physical activity is embedded in their cultural fabric. Children grow up practising these habits, resulting in a population that enjoys a higher quality of life and longer years of productive health. India, with its rich traditions of yoga and Ayurveda, has the cultural foundations to promote such a shift. However, without institutionalising health education, these remain underutilised. Introducing health education as a mandatory subject in schools can address this gap. A comprehensive curriculum must include modules on physical fitness, mental health resilience, nutrition, social interaction and technology use. For instance, students could learn the importance of balanced diets, strategies to cope with academic pressure, and the benefits of physical activities and mindfulness practices. The curriculum should also emphasise practical life skills, such as decision-making,

interpersonal communication, and self-advocacy, to prepare students for real-world challenges. A structured approach is essential. First, the government must design a standardised health education curriculum with clear performance benchmarks. Students' progress should be evaluated at key stages, such as the end of classes 6, 8, and 10. Second, teachers need specialised training to effectively deliver this curriculum. Public-private partnerships can play a crucial role in addressing resource gaps and providing innovative solutions. Importantly, this initiative aligns seamlessly with the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Viksit Bharat 2047. A healthy India is a productive India. By equipping the younger generation with the knowledge and skills to prioritise their wellbeing, we are not only improving individual lives but also strengthening the nation's human capital, driving economic growth, and enhancing societal happiness. Beyond the classroom, the ripple effects of mandatory health education can be transformative. A population that understands the value of preventive care will reduce the burden on India's healthcare system. Families will adopt healthier lifestyles, and communities will benefit from reduced rates of lifestyle-related diseases, such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart ailments. The road to Viksit Bharat 2047 is paved with initiatives that prioritise people over policies, and action over aspirations. Health education is not just a subject; it is a foundation for a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous India.

Trump's America: A reality check for the Desis

In Trump's transactional world no group, not even the perceived 'model minority,' is immune from the fallout of his unpredictable policies. It's not Elon Musk's early frustrations with President Donald Trump handing over the crucial project to build America's AI (Artificial Intelligence) infrastructure to rival Sam Altman-led 'Stargate', that ought to worry us, but the fate of fellow Trumpeteer, Vivek Ramaswamy, that rings closer home. During the campaign trail, the racist Trump was busy mocking minority ethnicities and religions, the Indian-American Desis, seemed smug in assuming that somehow, they were a cut above the other minorities. The purported personal equation between Trump and the Indian Prime Minister was bandied as proof of the special treatment, that awaited India and Indians. Names of a few Indian-Americans in the new Trump administration (especially of Vivek Ramaswamy in the Department of Government Efficiency or DOGE) were showcased as proofs of Trump's affection for the world's largest democracy. The lazy and simplistic assumption was that he'd be tough on the likes of China and Pakistan, hence pro-India. But the cold reality of dealing with the unpredictable politics of Trump hit much earlier than even anticipated by commentators who had been warning of Trump's ascendancy, despite many shortcomings of the Democrats under Joe Biden. For starters, Chinese President Xi Jinping got an invite to attend the swearing-in of President Trump, but the Indian Prime Minister didn't. Soon thereafter



Trump kept peppering his Make-America-Great-Again (MAGA) spiel with threats of tariff spikes against traditional allies like Canada, Denmark, Mexico etc., (including naming India) but recently suggested that he'd 'rather not' impose tariffs against China - this after promising up to 60% tariffs against China during the campaign! He flipped. Soon thereafter, the Indian-American community was hit the hardest of all immigrant communities by the direct implications of the executive order ending birthright citizenship. Chances for many Indians working under H-1B (work), H-4 (dependent), L (intra-company transfer) and F (student) got jeopardized, as amongst the largest and fastest-growing immigrant groups in the US. With all assumed equations besetting Washington DC and Delhi, it seems fait accompli with little scope for Delhi to counter-influence a policy measure, that impacts it, more than anyone else. Such radical disruptions were certainly not the norm in the Biden era. The supposed leverage of a voluble Vivek Ramaswamy with a Trump also seems to have come a crop-

per, given the mystery surrounding Vivek's sudden decision to leave DOGE. Having invested a lot of personal stake, content, and pride, in supporting the Trump ascendancy to power (clearly prematurely?), Vivek is at pains to deny that his ouster has anything to do with him having defended the immigration position after calling some, 'lazy Americans'. To add insult to injury of being forced into grandstanding, a journalist has just released a video of Vivek's text confirming his departure from Trump, due to the same. The ostensible bid for Ohio Governorship (if true?) is an afterthought and wasn't the intention, even a week earlier. That for a Trump, anyone is completely dispensable once a purpose has been served, be it an individual, cause, country, or even a supportive Indian-American like Vivek, seems true. Anyone can be thrown under the bus, irrespective of their ethnicity or personal chemistry. A telling tweet by Vivek on 26th Dec 2024 captures his nuanced position on the contentious immigration issue (as wishfully believed by many Indian-Americans to be the first amongst the equals within minorities, owing to our unique culture and work ethics). He had commented, "The reason top tech companies often hire foreign-born & first-generation engineers over "native" Americans isn't because of an innate American IQ deficit (a lazy & wrong explanation). A key part of it comes down to the c-word: culture". The underlying suggestion is that Indians do not suffer from the supposed

'Wokeism' of the Democrats as Indians do not have "a culture that celebrates the prom queen over the math olympiad champ, or the jock over the valedictorian", hence would escape the prying eyes of a Trump targeting immigrants. While it is true that Trump has spoken about the logic of 'meritocracy' in extending citizenship - it is equally true that in applying his power of potential misuse, he hasn't spared or protected the interests of the Indian-American community which did tick most of the qualifying boxes defined by Trump. The hard truth is that Trump has no special affinity or even intention of any preferential treatment to Indian Americans or India if his conduct in the initial few days of his Presidency is anything to go by. The fact is, the one-time star of the TV series 'Apprentice' is more famous for his heartless line "You're fired" than for any historical demonstration of empathetic leadership. Ultimately, it is a lesson that Vivek Ramaswamy or even Elon Musk will wake up to, as in the indifferent and transactional worldview of a Trump, topical relevance is all that matters to the author of the 'Art of Deal' (that too, ghostwritten). Those eagerly waiting for a decisive and assertive POTUSA in Trump who would do wonders for India, need to brace for some discomforting reality check. Biden had limitations and undeniable failings, but he wasn't a bull in a China shop or necessarily anti-India, ever. With Trump, you never know, as Indians or India don't seem anything special, at least for now.



