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Dhurandhar  
- Film Review

# THE CROSSROADS

06

When Life Gives  
You Lemons

The  
Crossroads

January 2026

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## PONGAL ISSUE



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# THE EDITORIAL

As the bell struck twelve and the world celebrated the passing of another year, 'New Year's Resolutions' began to pop up again, almost like a chronic disease. Gym membership renewals, a hike in healthier food options, and a sudden urge to increase savings are the common events that strangely occur only during the first two weeks of the year. This period is commonly called 'Resolution Season'. The question is, why do such resolutions flutter out at the end of these 2 weeks? Do people enjoy waiting a full year just to make better decisions for these 14 days? Or is it another one of those fast fads, which runs its course so quickly?

Well, whatever the reason may be, we can at least derive a constant from this unsteady phenomenon: The rise of resolutions on New Year's Eve, only to crumble on International Quitters Day, which is the second Friday of every year. It turns out that about HALF of all New Year's Resolutions are given up on this day. Even if only about 30% of the world took up at least one resolution, that means that over 1.2 billion people go back on their own decisions every year. For comparison, it would mean that every single person within the two continents of North America and Europe collectively gave up their resolutions within the first two weeks. But WHY?

The answer lies not in the stars, but in our own heads, hearts, and homes. After years of indulgence, how can one expect a random Tuesday to be the day their lives turn the right side up?



The False Hope Syndrome explains how people tend to have unrealistic expectations when they begin new initiatives. Biting off far more than they can chew is a trait humans have adopted and made their own, leading to the inevitable crash and burn of every benign resolution.

On the other hand, studies have proven that taking up a resolution that is connected to something higher, or to a collective, results in a mind boggling 60% increase in success rates! A resolution taken with a commitment not just to yourself, but to something higher, leads to a defence mechanism that can defend your goal for when the forces of lethargy and insecurities inevitably strike.

This issue brings to light the pressing issues faced by the world and the negative forces that rise within. Every New Year's resolution tends to be more effective when it's in tune with your environment and nearby events. Each article brings to you a variety of fortes, each with its own potential for growth. 'The Lemon Car' brings us an outlet for vigilance in purchase, while 'Beyond the Binder' shows us the potential benefits of taking the leap that we are all afraid of, by trusting ourselves and the world around us. 'Youth Alone Can' details the ideal youth's qualities, and various expressions of the same, and 'My Identity' shows us the path to harmony within ourselves, as we constantly battle the world's expectations, hence freeing ourselves from the anguish of choosing between identities.

# DHURANDHAR

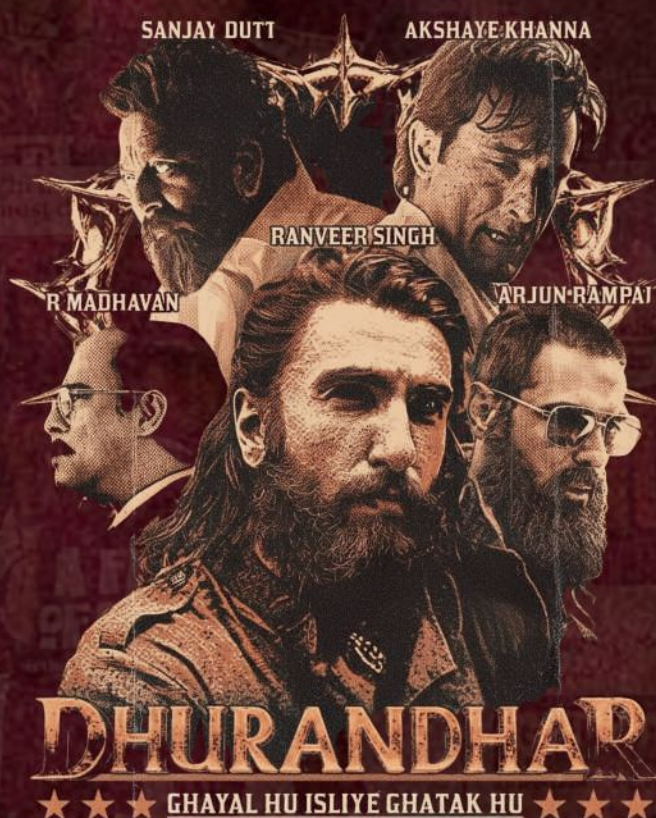
## film review

AAYUSH SREENATH B | IIB

Since deception forms the grammar of a spy thriller, let us momentarily imagine cinema as something that exists in a vacuum - isolated and self-contained. Let us assume that Dhurandhar, Aditya Dhar's first directorial venture since Uri (2019), operates independently of the social and political climate surrounding it. Let us also momentarily accept the idea that this film's criticism is simply the act of evaluating a movie on its own terms, detached from ideas of ideology or moral consequence.

By these parameters alone, Dhurandhar stumbles to qualify as a GREAT film. Its title refers to a covert operation led by an almost mythic spy who embeds himself so completely within enemy territory that the film itself feels uncertain about where his allegiances finally settle. What begins as an espionage narrative soon becomes saturated with familiar elements - criminal syndicates, political corruption, turf wars, and stylised disorder - until the spy framework all but dissolves. The protagonist descends so deeply into this chaos that the genre loses its defining shape. The result resembles a gangster chronicle that forgets it was meant to function as a nationalistic espionage drama. The film appears fascinated by its own construction, allowing the atmosphere and scale to overwhelm narrative clarity. In this excess, the act of disguise ceases to function as strategy and instead becomes spectacle, leaving the audience to navigate a film that seems increasingly detached from its original purpose.

More limiting than this structural drift is Dhurandhar's ideological rigidity. Espionage stories traditionally derive their power from internal conflict- the strain of divided loyalties, and the moral uncertainty embedded in deception. Dhurandhar resists these tensions. Its protagonist leaves no room for self-doubt or existentialism; there is no place for a moral tug of war or ethical fracture. Emotional response is permitted only through abstract national suffering, when the horror flickers past the protagonist's eyes.



# BOLLYWOOD TIMES

ADITYA DHAR

Whereas individual lives remain rather invisible, Singh's character plays many roles within each other, yet the most dominant role he plays is the denial of complexity. Whenever the film threatens to explore moral ambiguity, it recoils. The protagonist does not waver, and failure is only defined by the inability to defeat the enemy, hence the haunting shot of Dakait's 'Last Smoke' after his death.

# GHAYAL HOON, ISLIYE GHATAK HOON

This tension becomes especially apparent in the film's reception beyond the screen. The character of Rehman Dakaait, in particular, escaped the film's narrative boundaries and entered the bloodstream of the internet. Clips from his "FA9LA" dance circulated rapidly across social media, celebrated for their compositional flair and sheer cinematic swagger. In this translation from cinema hall to phone screen, something unsettling occurred; a figure positioned as an enemy of state began to be admired less as a threat and more as an icon of style and authority. Despite this, the film's willingness to dwell within the lives of its antagonists - granting them texture and moments of humanity - further complicates this response. At times, the gaze lingers long enough to blur moral distance, inviting empathy where reverence for the nation is supposed to dominate. This is not empathy born of ideology, but merely of exposure; the more the movie immerses itself in these characters, the harder it becomes to view them as abstract symbols alone. In this space between representation and reception, Dhurandhar inadvertently reveals how cinematic craft can reshape public perception.



Seen on its own terms, Dhurandhar begins to clarify what it is aiming for and why it commits so fully to its chosen worldview. The film is not interested in ambiguity because it is attempting to serve as a statement rather than a question, and its ideological certainty is deliberate, shaped by a cultural moment that values resolve over hesitation and unity over introspection. From this perspective, the absence of doubt in its antagonist reads less as a characterization flaw and more as a conscious alignment with a specific social fantasy;

The figure who suppresses internal conflict and acts as a vessel for collective memory and rage. The film's refusal to individualize trauma, instead anchoring it in national catastrophe, reflects a broader societal impulse to prioritise symbolic suffering over personal grief. In doing so, Dhurandhar positions its hero as an instrument rather than a man, someone whose humanity is flattened so that the idea he represents can remain intact.

Much of the film's effectiveness emerges from how confidently it commits to this posture. The scale of operation, the density of world-building, and the sheer control of its tone give it an undeniable force. The narrative movement is relentless, sustained by Dhar's disciplined direction and a performance that understands the power of containment. Although none of the actors performed anything out of the ordinary, the synchronous harmony and strong performance from each actor elevated the experience. The music in Dhurandhar plays a surprisingly effective supporting role. The background score knows how to keep things tight and focused, building tension without trying to dominate every scene. The songs, when they appear, feel purposeful rather than decorative. They blend into the narrative instead of breaking it, adding mood and texture without slowing the film down. None of them feel forced in for commercial appeal, and that restraint helps keep the film's seriousness. An adrenaline packed soundtrack which doesn't steal the attention but in fact enhances it.



Ultimately, Dhurandhar succeeds by knowing exactly what it wants to be. The same rigidity that limits its emotional range is also what gives it clarity and focus. The film's ideological certainty can feel constricting, especially when judged against the expectations of the spy genre, yet that certainty is also its source of conviction. By committing fully to its worldview, it keeps the narrative moving, even if it leaves little room for internal questioning. As a result, the film stands as both a provocation and a statement; flawed in its narrowness, compelling in its confidence, and memorable precisely because it never attempts to reconcile the two.



# INNER PEACE

ARADHYA SARAF | VIII C

**A restless breath finally synced with my heartbeat,  
My consciousness words serene and felt complete,  
A sunrise in my chest held openness in its warmth,  
Soft, calm dissolved the ache that raged like a storm.**

**My mind raced on with unending thoughts,  
Constantly against silence it fought,  
Lonely, surrounded by fear, it felt heavy,  
Carrying invisible weight, I stood unsteady**

**I let go and accepted myself,  
I paused to listen to my inner self,  
I was still water, ripples faded,  
Realizing that peace was inside, I meditated!**



# BEYOND THE BINDER

KOGANTI  
ANIRUDDHA | IIB

MUNs. Something that I consider as part of my blood and soul. I love the thrill and competitiveness that come with participating in committees, and I never miss any opportunity to do so. Yet this was not always the case. The first two MUNs that I was part of saw me hiding at the back, where I played games and wished for it to be over. Then came JMUN. I thought that preparation was for nerds, and I would continue my strategy. I couldn't have been more mistaken. Oh, the shame and disgust I felt after being bombarded and left speechless by questions, allegations, and points of order. I was 100% convinced MUN just wasn't for me.

I was prepared to never approach another MUN for the rest of my life, but it seemed that fate had different plans. I guess it had one more shot saved to humiliate me further. SGIMUN 2022. I come home to find out that my name is in the list of participants, and of all things, as the delegate of the United Kingdom, in the UNSC.

The most argumentative, close-quartered, and terrifying committee, the UN Security Council. Shock. Betrayal. Nothing could describe my state of mind. My mother had signed me up for something I'd promised myself I wouldn't do again. After the initial "success" in my glorious MUN Career, I was -1000% confident. Despite my VETO presence, I was planning to stay quiet, get through it, and enjoy the summer break that came after.

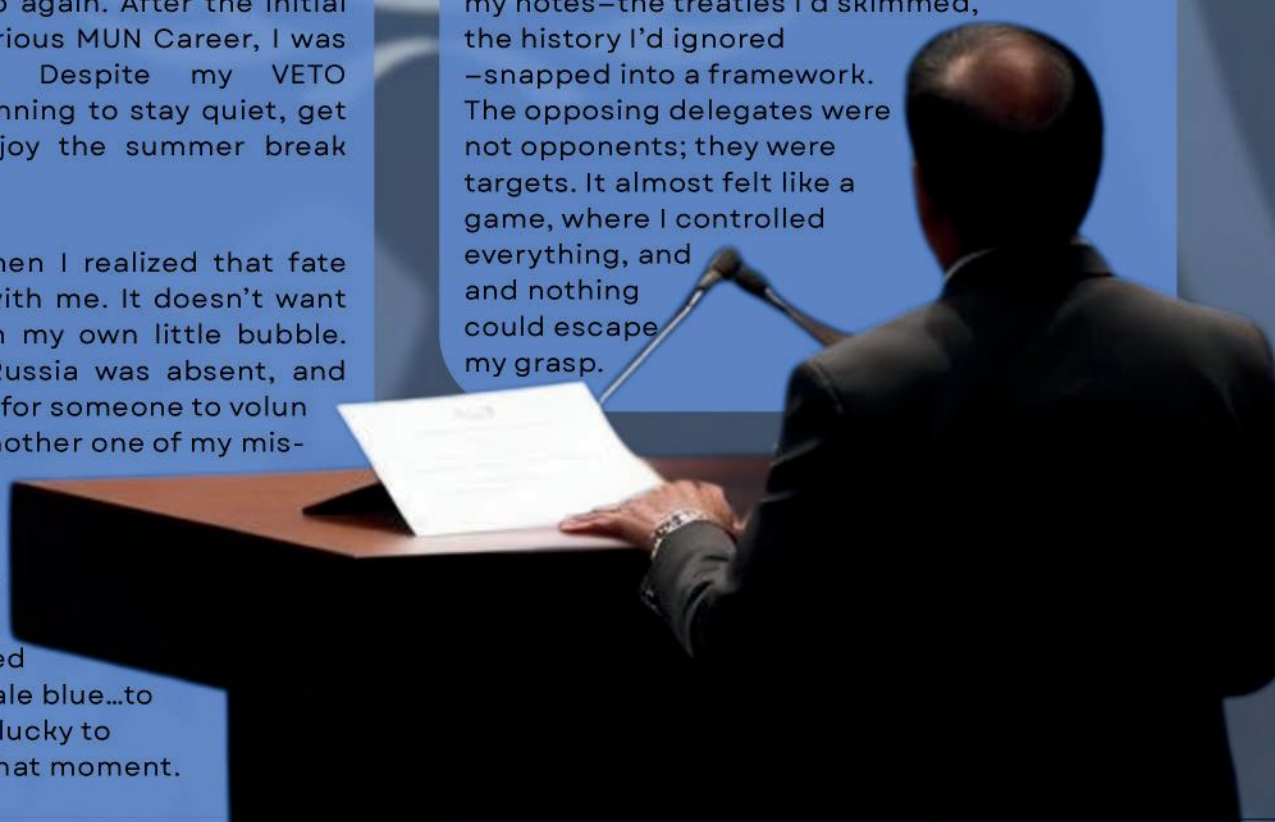
That was exactly when I realized that fate has serious issues with me. It doesn't want me to stay happy in my own little bubble. The Delegation of Russia was absent, and the chair was asking for someone to volunteer. This is when another one of my misfortunes showed its face - and because of some obscure impulse, my hand shot up. My co-delegate's face turned from angry red...to pale blue...to nauseous green. I'm lucky to have even survived that moment.

I was terrified about the situation at hand. The first committee session was a blur. As the Agenda was the Russia-Ukraine war, my so-called genius intellect decided to choose Russia even though I had full rights to continue my structured, safe, and happy life. I endured a full day of crippling silence, and at the start of the second session, I froze, ended up misquoting, and was publicly dismissed. The final, sharp blow came when the delegate from France delivered the question: "We must ask the Russian Federation—if they are even capable of answering—where is the legal basis for this obstruction?"

That moment of direct challenge didn't feel like a turning point - it felt like something else waking up. I was scared, slipping, completely off balance... and yet, in an instant, I snapped. Whatever came out of me felt like it wasn't mine to command. It just answered when I needed it.

It felt like a sonic boom had detonated behind my eyes. The confusion, the panic, and the white noise of self-doubt were silenced. The soft, terrified boy disappeared, replaced by a calculating entity, determined to ensure his survival through this situation he found himself in, and definitely not quietly.

In that instant, the scattered, useless data in my notes—the treaties I'd skimmed, the history I'd ignored—snapped into a framework. The opposing delegates were not opponents; they were targets. It almost felt like a game, where I controlled everything, and and nothing could escape my grasp.



Before the delegate could sit, I stood, calm and ready to pounce. I didn't defend the hypothetical; I attacked her legal premise, citing an obscure 1970s treaty I couldn't have named moments prior.

This was not an accident. It was the birth of something I could have never thought possible. That ridiculous and chaotic thought was the beginning of the whispers that originated from my intuition. The static of what felt like a thousand voices had melted away, and I started observing instead of just seeing. I could see how everyone else would hesitate, glance around, and misspeak.

My decision to take up the Russian delegation—that act of self-sabotage—was suddenly the ultimate strategic advantage. My apathy acted as a disguise. While the other delegates came armed with binders and talking points; I came with a sixth sense. They debated the facts; I understood the debate itself. I didn't need heavy preparation

because by the time the session began, I had already read the room.

Safe to say, after that awakening, I was no longer just a person. I had turned into a problem. The kid who once measured his life in headshots and loot drops was now seeing diplomatic threads like they were a cheat code in the Matrix. It turns out my genius decision to take on Russia was just the final boss battle the universe had pre-loaded.



My journey reveals that this “sixth sense,” or Flow State, is an unlockable cognitive ability. It's not magic; it's the mind operating at full capacity, finally freed from the noise of self-doubt. The greatest misconception about this is that it made me instantly perfect. The truth is, I don't win every time. My subsequent awards—a mix of honorables and outstandings—were a direct result of the courage I gained that day. They occurred because I finally had the audacity to stop hiding, stop following the rules, and start trying new things. I learned that growth isn't about collecting trophies; it's about actively seeking the edge of your competence.

This kind of deep intuition can bleed into every part of your life. The committee room taught me this: your breakthrough will not come in the safe space of perfect preparation; it will come in the middle of the fire, right after you've made the most terrifying mistake of your life. The ability to see the game - and dominate it - was always there, waiting for that one, reckless moment to be forced into the open. The most valuable lesson is always hidden within the terrifying risk.

The question is not if you can prepare or memorize. The real question is, are you willing to awaken, or are you going to be left on the sidelines?

## KEEP MUNNINING

# Parents

NAKSHATRA GAVASKAR | VIII A

You can be strong, you can be weak,  
You can do chores without sleep.  
All I know is that you are strong,  
Even through the stormy days,  
You just say 'it's all okay'.

Of all the times in outings,  
And all the more in vacations,  
Our bond grows with time,  
Not old but stronger to its ever prime.

Wrapped in your arms,  
I feel protected, secure  
You try to teach me  
about the world outside,  
how people are not born bad,  
but walk the wrong path.

You guide me to light,  
Away from darkness,  
Through the obstacles that life throws at us,  
Together we fight, fearless.

If you're an economics student, you would find the 'lemon car problem' familiar, but if you don't, you've flipped to the right page. The Lemon Car problem, in a nutshell, is like buying something from the internet that looks good in the photos, but ends up being something completely different and contrary to expectations. This means that the product could be of terrible quality, come in a much lower quantity, or be something else entirely, like a knockoff. But why does this Lemon Car problem even happen?

A "lemon" refers to a product that looks completely fine, but has hidden problems. Taking the same example from before, the product advertised on the internet looks flawless in the photos, but in reality, the seller knows much more than the consumer about the defects of the product, and chooses not to bring them to light. This is called information asymmetry in economics.

A buyer never wants a product with defects, so they choose their products carefully. They bargain and demand lower prices when they feel the product is not up to the mark. On the other hand, honest sellers with quality products face unfair reductions on prices despite a lack of defects, and have no choice but to reduce the prices through haggling. After a point, sellers get fed up knowing their products are worth more than the selling price and decide not to sell the product altogether.



WHEN

GIVES

LEMONS

LIFE

YOU

CHIDRUPU | IIB



As a result, most of the good quality products in the market disappear, leaving only bad products behind. As quality is disincentivised, producers lose the will to innovate, choosing to stick with the consistently bad product, while consumers continue to receive terrible quality and lose their trust in the product itself. This is how a market with good and bad products slowly turns into a market full of lemons.

This is why we are often scared to buy things that we cannot examine ourselves. This leads us to having a negative view of the market and constantly raising suspicion on products that might actually be good, thinking they are lemons. This can be observed in daily life too, as our mothers and grandmothers spend hours and hours on end bargaining and extensively searching for good vegetables in the market, overexamining every product.

Finally, what can we do to reduce the Lemon Car problem? Fortunately, technology has improved in recent years, and better methods have come up to prevent this issue. For example, before buying a product, we can look at the reviews, ratings, and warranties on products that can get us a brand new product if any defects are found. A few other methods include verified buyer systems, which reduce fake reviews, thus increasing trust and transparency in the market. Consumers can also compare products on different websites across the internet to assess the value and quality of the product. There are also third-party platforms like 'Amazon Verified Purchase' that offer unbiased evaluations of product quality. Blockchain technology ensures tamper-proof records of ownership and repairs. AI-based quality checks help sellers detect faults before products reach consumers. Consumer protection apps also make reporting fraud easier, eliminating dishonest sellers.



The lemon car problem may be preventable, but it still very much exists in the market. So, before you go into the market to buy something, make sure to watch out for the lemons in the market and make the right choice by following the tips mentioned in this article, and also closely examining the products before buying them.



# Youth Alone Can

*Check*

Namaste!

CIRS, a place where rest is a concept and dynamism is evergreen. The same dynamism that comes from the youth of today, us, the youth of CIRS. From the stage to the field, from the classroom to leadership roles, we have been exposed to a variety of fields typically inaccessible, and we definitely don't settle for anything mediocre. But the weight of the tasks on our shoulders always feels heavy, doesn't it?

It feels almost impossible to achieve a task within time limits here. We set goals and have insane ambitions, but still fail to achieve them due to distractions coming in our way. Gurudev said, "Your potential is infinite; do not limit it", and he was absolutely right. We have seen so many achieve the best in their life even after facing impossible situations and (seemingly) insurmountable problems, while we usually give silly excuses for small issues that we "cannot" fix.

What if I say that we have a one-stop solution to all of these problems? And what if we say that you don't need to search for it anywhere outside, just inside yourself? To be honest, it is not as simple as just searching within, but rather a nine-step process to achieve the solution to all the problems that you face. But before that, I have someone to introduce to you. For him, the sky isn't the limit, it's simply the beginning.

Narendranath Datta was a simple boy from the bustling city of Kolkata, but he always dreamt of achieving great things. With energy pulsing in his blood and curiosity flooding his mind, Narendranath never stopped at anything short of extraordinary. Who knew that this boy would grow up to carve his name in golden letters atop the pages of history? He became Swami Vivekananda, renowned for bringing the Hindu Samaj together, and revealing the glory of Hinduism to the world.

His valour and intellect were incomparable. With fire and love in equal measure, Swamiji inspired millions of youth across the nation, and his ideals continue with his mission. Gurudev and Swamiji shared the same beliefs about the hidden power of the youth. They believed that once that power was channelled, the honour brought by the youth to the nation and the samaj would be boundless, and that the service provided by them to our country would lead us to the brilliant path of development and growth. Both of these great leaders dedicated their lives to the youth of this nation by guiding them in the right direction and channeling their energy into what actually matters.

One of their shared core beliefs was about the qualities that an ideal youth should have. Anybody who holds these qualities would be happy and successful in life. So, to understand them clearly, why not use Swamiji himself as an example?

**THE WORLD  
NEEDS  
STRONG  
MINDS AND  
GENTLE  
HEARTS.**



Narendranath Datta had always been inquisitive. He never failed to question things around him, trying to understand how they functioned. He never settled for intuition or a single perspective; to every question, he looked for logical answers. Even in religion and culture, Swamiji looked at the scientific ideas behind them. This mentality teaches us our first two qualities: **Jagriti** (Intellectual Alertness) and **Viveka** (Discrimination). The thirst for knowledge and the ability to distinguish between right and wrong.

As a child, Narendranath Datta always irritated his mother, just like any other child. In fact, she used to say, "I had asked for a son, Bhagwan, you gave me one of your demons". Not a single person could control him, but surprisingly, the one thing that kept him calm was meditation. Narendranath Datta used to experience immense bliss while meditating. He spent his time finding his inner conflict through meditation. And gradually this blend between **Karmanyata** (Dynamism) and **Atma-Sanyam** (Self-discipline) led him to be clear on his **Lakshya** (clarity of goals) and achievements.

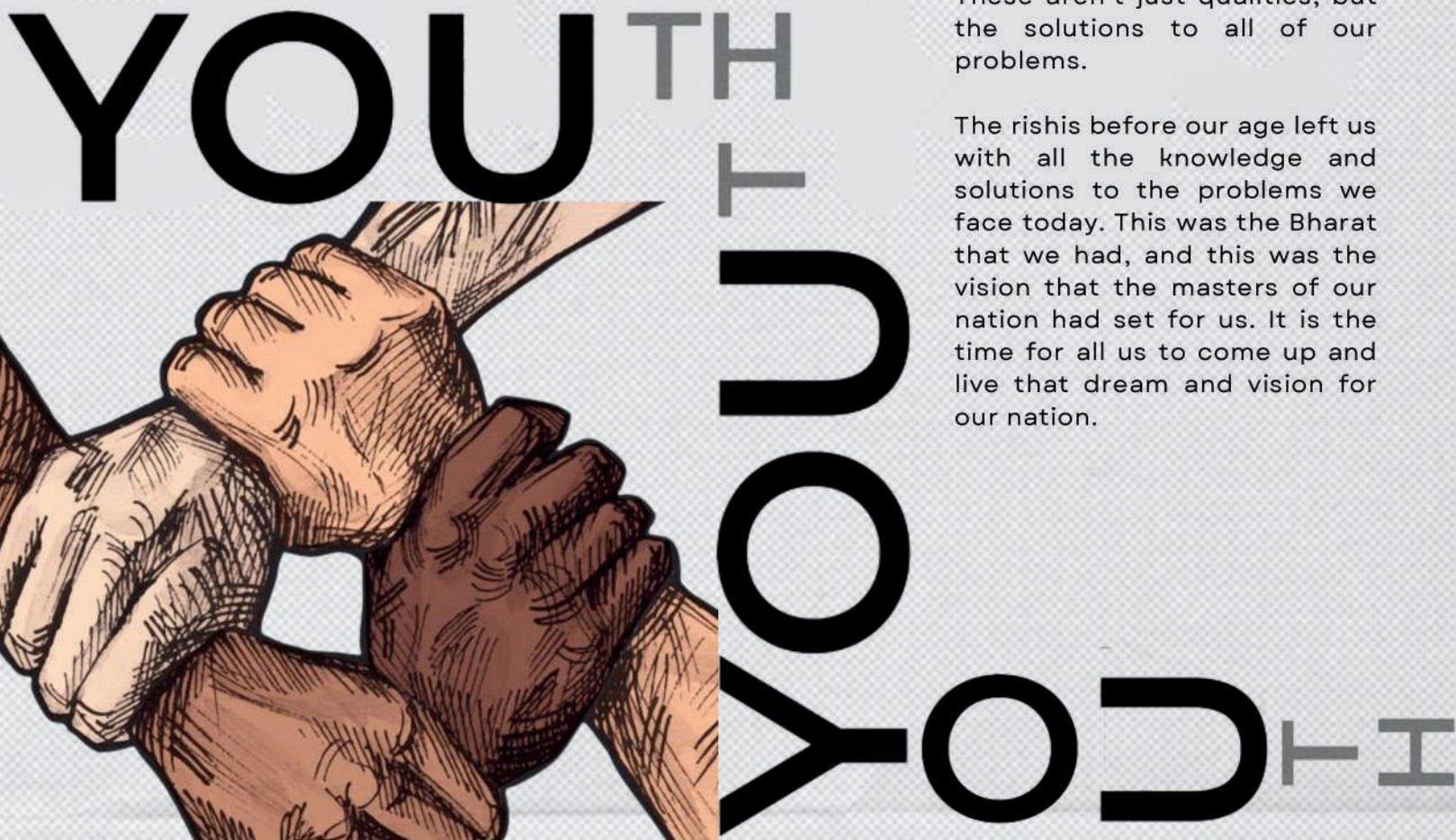
Times changed, and Narendranath Datta took up Sanyasa. He didn't know whether he would succeed, and he definitely did not know that he was going to transform the world with his words. All he knew was that he had chosen a tough path, and kept one purpose with him: to serve the nation and its people by bringing them the glories and knowledge of our scriptures. Even if the path was tedious, Swamiji did not give up. He faced all the tides and made sure that he moved forward, dedicating himself to a higher and nobler goal. Nothing scared him, and no one could stop him. With the mindset of **Yagna-Bhav** (spirit of sacrifice) and the quality of **Titiksha** (perseverance), Swamiji was able to defeat all the problems he faced throughout the course.

Even after all of this, Swamiji did not lose the Youth in him. He always had that kind and loving heart underneath his **Abhaya** (Fearlessness). His **Prasannata** (Cheerfulness) made him connect to the Youth and achieve his goal of a Bharat that is led by the Youth of the nation.

Talking about these qualities wasn't just a lecture for Swamiji. He lived them. He was able to influence a million people before he attained Maha Samadhi and left us with all of his knowledge and his vision. As the Youth of the nation, who have seen great rishis and gurus like Swamiji and Gurudev, it is our

responsibility to nurture these qualities within ourselves. These aren't just qualities, but the solutions to all of our problems.

The rishis before our age left us with all the knowledge and solutions to the problems we face today. This was the Bharat that we had, and this was the vision that the masters of our nation had set for us. It is the time for all us to come up and live that dream and vision for our nation.



# FUEL

# FINANCE



January 3rd, 2026. A Venezuelan vendor closes for the night. The next moment, he is no more. This was the state of Venezuela. 150 planes with the flag of the USA descended mercilessly on Caracas. In a swift change of events, the President of Venezuela was detained by the US. Many would think the country would be in shambles. Instead, we could see that the country was rejoicing. Why?

This was the reason Trump justified the attack with: eradicating narcotics and restoring democracy. We might have seemed to forget what happens when the “Superpower” tries to establish democracy. Classic cases like Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan, Syria, and Yemen remind us of the seemingly “honorable” deeds of America. These countries were left more hopeless than before. If narcotics were really the case, Mexico pumps more drugs into the US than Venezuela, and if democracy were the issue, then why not kidnap Asim Munir or Kim Jong Un?

Now, let's dive into the issue - Oil. American companies found numerous Class 20 oil reserves in Venezuela. Surprisingly, this underestimated country contains the largest reserves of industrial oil. And yet, if you look at the list of countries producing the most oil, Venezuela can't even be found on the list! Instead, the country with the least amount of oil is often the one producing the most. Seems shady, right? The oil that was found is very difficult to purify and utilize. It is projected that an injection of \$183 billion is needed by 2040 at the price of \$100 per barrel to even consider the chance of a return on investment, yet the price of oil right now is \$60 a barrel. Venezuela, with hyperinflation rates skyrocketing to 682% according to the IMF, cannot find this viable, nor is it worth considering for their state of affairs. Even for the USA, it is a waste of money.

Now we know that even if oil is important, in some cases, it doesn't always justify the investment. The more pressing issue here is that the country with the most oil is also a country struggling to feed its people. Clearly, we can conclude that oil is not the primary reason behind this attack. So, what ran through the “Greatest President of the United States” mind when he decided on this course of action? The answer to that is ‘PETRODOLLAR’.

While reading the article, you must have noticed that the prices related to oil are written in \$. Why is that? This system exists to boost and appreciate the value of the dollar. Initially, under the Bretton Woods system, the US dollar was pegged to gold, meaning the currency's value was directly linked to the amount of gold in US reserves. However, in 1971, the US could no longer maintain this link and decoupled the dollar from gold. To ensure the dollar remained the world's reserve currency, the USA turned to oil-producing nations. It compelled them to trade and sell oil exclusively in dollars. As oil is a commodity with perennial demand, the USA created a global “synthetic” demand for its currency, effectively backing the dollar with oil instead of gold.



On the eastern side of the world, five countries arose to counter this exploitation: THE BRICS. Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa took it upon themselves to counter dollarization. BRICS promoted trade in local currencies, and slowly, the dollar began depreciating. Venezuela, in recent times, has joined hands with BRICS—getting military aid from Russia, selling oil to India at an incentivized price 30% lower than standard, and receiving monetary aid from China. It was actively taking part in the activities that BRICS implemented. With Venezuela getting closer and closer toward the USA's enemies, it got highly uncomfortable, as Puerto Rico, a US territory, was very close to Venezuela. Under the guise of liberating Venezuela of its "curses", Trump gave a silent warning to the countries wanting to de-dollarize that the US will hunt such activities. Hence, the curtains fall down, and the actors behind a global attack are unmasked. An important takeaway for the world is that although wars and conflicts have seemingly obvious surface reasons, what the regular citizens of the world see is just the tip of the iceberg. Every move of a country has a large-scale political implication behind it.

# *make* **AMERICA** *great again*



Now, what does this indicate for us Indians? The fact that the biggest superpower in the world tries to double down on our actions indicates that we are a threat to them, and the "Golden Sparrow" is opening its wings. With a low percentage of inflation and our GDP rising without bounds, people are noticing us and our state. We have risen as a potential superpower, and this scares the US. We must take every action to keep India safe and stay cautious about the fact that the White House contains a man who will go to any measure to make his country great again.



# AI BIASED

G.K SANJAY | XII SCI

**"The human touch will always matter." – Tim Cook, CEO, Apple Inc.**

Bias and prejudice have existed from time immemorial, and despite desperate efforts to eliminate them from the various facets of life, they continue to exist. Shockingly, in the 21st century, these long-enduring issues are being amplified by an unexpected source - Artificial Intelligence.

This characteristic of AI systems can largely be attributed to two significant factors: biased data and biased algorithms. AI systems learn by processing large amounts of historical and real-time data from various sources, which largely hold raw data - both structured and unstructured, entailing the entire human spectrum - the lows and the highs, the good and the bad. Some of these are reliable, like company, government, and historical records, while the others are unreliable, like social media posts, online forums, blogs, and user-generated content.

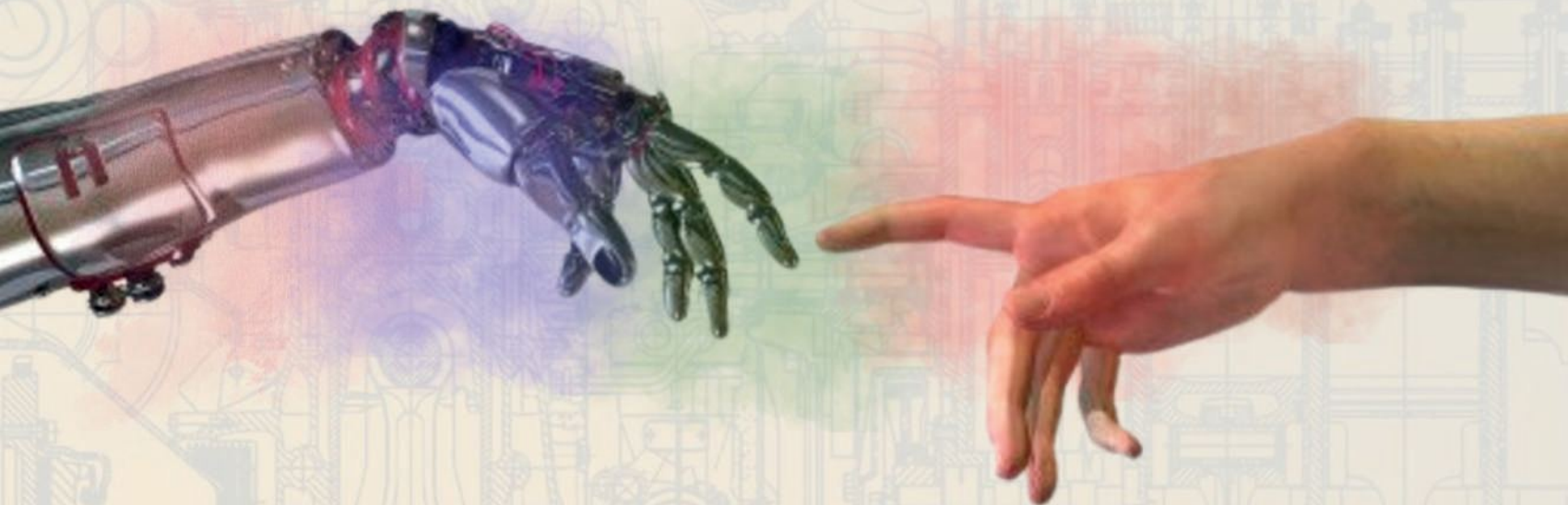
After all this data consumption, AI systems carry out pattern identification, where they analyze trends and similarities across these datasets to draw conclusions. These conclusions are largely influenced by the data fed into the AI systems. The phrase "Garbage in, Garbage out" coined by George Fuchs, rightly explains this process. It simply states that the quality of output produced by AI systems is a direct result of the quality of data on which they are trained. Since the data usually contains bias and prejudice from the past - even if it is in traces - they get detected and magnified by AI systems, thus resulting in biased responses.

Another unfortunate reality of AI bias is that the developers themselves can unintentionally impose their own biases into the systems they create, further perpetuating inequality and unfairness. Their perspectives are thus ingrained into the AI algorithms they develop. This reflects a deeper truth—that AI systems mirror the societies that build them. Until this human bias in the creation of AI is acknowledged and addressed at both individual and institutional levels, the systems designed will continue to reproduce prejudices rather than eliminate them.

These AI biases have resulted in reputational costs for the companies that produce and/or use them, with implications for undermining the AI systems, having to do damage control, as well as losing consumers and future market opportunities. Large tech companies have recognized this risk: Microsoft flagged reputational harm or liability due to biased AI systems as a risk to their business in a report to the US Securities and Exchange Commission. A DataRobot report found that 42% of organizations currently using/producing AI systems are 'very' to 'extremely' concerned about the reputational damage that media coverage of biased AI can cause, with most respondents citing 'compromised brand reputation' and loss of 'customer trust' as their greatest cause for concern.

Biased AI systems also have immense impacts on the lives of individuals. AI systems can 'unfairly' allocate opportunities, resources, or information. This may worsen inequities experienced by individuals in underserved communities. From an economic point of view, discriminatory resource allocation leads to inefficiencies and losses in the economy. Thus, AI bias has affected individuals, businesses and societies at large.

Many global companies have been forced to do away with their AI systems as a result of the biases they bring in. For instance, in 2018, Amazon was forced to scrap its AI recruitment tool following the AI system's gender bias when it came to job recruitment, where the AI system constantly downgraded profiles of women and even any mention of the word 'women' say as in 'Women's Christian College' or 'Women's Chess Championship' in the resume was considered a de-merit.



Another study led by physician Ziad Obermeyer analyzed an AI algorithm used by hospitals on a dataset of more than 200 million people in the U.S. The objective behind the application of the algorithm was to identify patients with complex health needs who would require additional care to improve their health outcomes. However, the study revealed that the algorithm unduly favored white patients over black patients, exhibiting how black patients were considerably less likely to be recognized as needing extra care. Historically, black patients have had less access to healthcare facilities, leading to lower overall healthcare expenditures as compared to white patients. As a result, the algorithm underrated the health needs of black patients, leading to systematic discrimination.

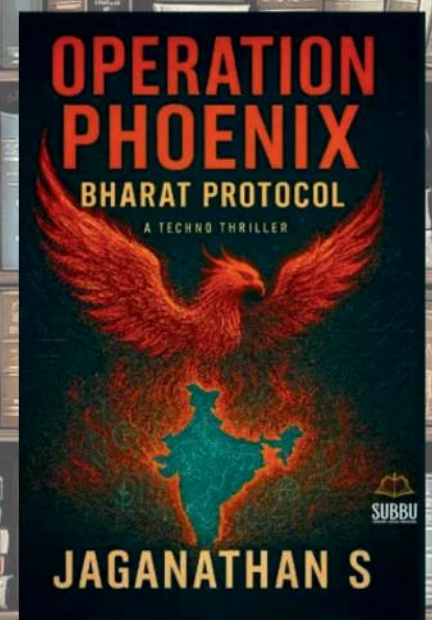
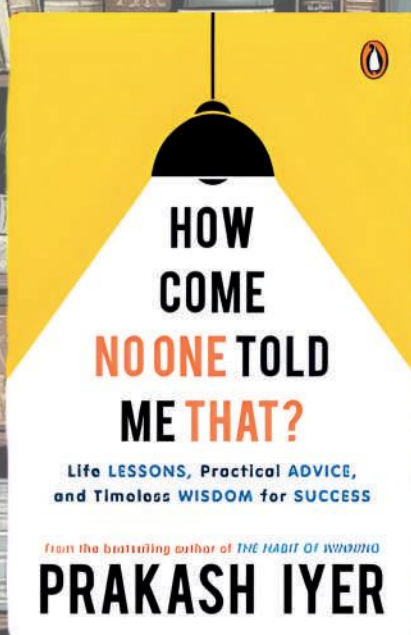
By adopting data preprocessing techniques that involve transforming, cleaning, and balancing data, the influence of discrimination and data bias can be reduced before AI systems are trained. American mathematician and data scientist Cathy O'Neil says that AI bias can be mitigated through algorithms that bring the developer's attention to any bias found in the data fed. Once humans categorize this biased language and feed it into an algorithm, AI learns to flag words that imply bias and suggest neutral alternatives. Unfortunately, this process currently requires too much human intervention to scale easily, but as the amount of available de-biased data grows, this will become far less of a limitation. Another step could be to establish corporate governance for responsible AI development and end-to-end internal policies to prevent algorithm bias in AI systems by developers.

As users of AI, it is necessary to understand that decision-making by AI is not essentially objective - it is influenced by the data trained upon as well as the algorithm used by the developers. While AI can serve as a valuable tool to assist in decision-making, it should never be the sole decision-maker. Despite being faster and more efficient than human beings when it comes to processing and retrieving information, AI lacks emotional intelligence, moral understanding, and contextual awareness - uniquely human qualities. Hence, AI systems alone cannot make significant decisions about people's lives, opportunities, and rights, and cannot be left entirely to algorithms.



This brings us to an important question: Is AI really ready to replace human beings? Perhaps we need to reflect upon this ourselves, or maybe only time will tell.

# CROSS BUSTERS



# My Identity - being an Indian

KAVYA ARUN PRASAD |  
VIII C

This one nickname I've been called all my life is 'angreezi' - or, in literal terms, 'English.' Growing up as a Tamilian in the North confused me about many things, and what confused me the most was, "What's my identity? Do I identify myself as a Tamilian or a Hindi speaker?"

Plagued by friends at school and relatives at home, I turned to the easy way out, English. My worries faded momentarily, my confidence growing as I committed myself to mastering the language. However, it soon became apparent to me that being the one person in the room who knew proper English wasn't really an advantage. New nicknames floated in too - 'AI,' 'Foreigner,' 'robot' and of course, 'Angreezi.'

It wasn't meant to insult or hurt my feelings, yet I felt more disconnected from my country than ever. It left me feeling confused, not knowing whether to go along with my mother tongue or conform to the place I was growing up in. So I had adopted the idea of being a 'westerner', and felt an inner aversion to Indian culture, such as our forms of entertainment or traditional clothing. Yet I still felt empty. I didn't get the satisfaction I thought I would.



Of course, I was a child. Choosing my identity was more of 'Kurti or Jersey?' It has been a few years now, and it took time, but the realization appeared like the puzzle that had finally clicked - I don't have to choose. I was never forced to choose between what language I had to speak, what clothes to wear, or what song to sing.

Because in the end, I am an Indian. I am one of the luckiest people ever, to be celebrating two cultures at once. Be it celebrating Diwali well into the night, or waking up to the sweet smell on Pongal, at the end of the day, it's the pride I have in my country.

I am sharing this personal experience as I know there are many around who face these small, small doubts everyday.



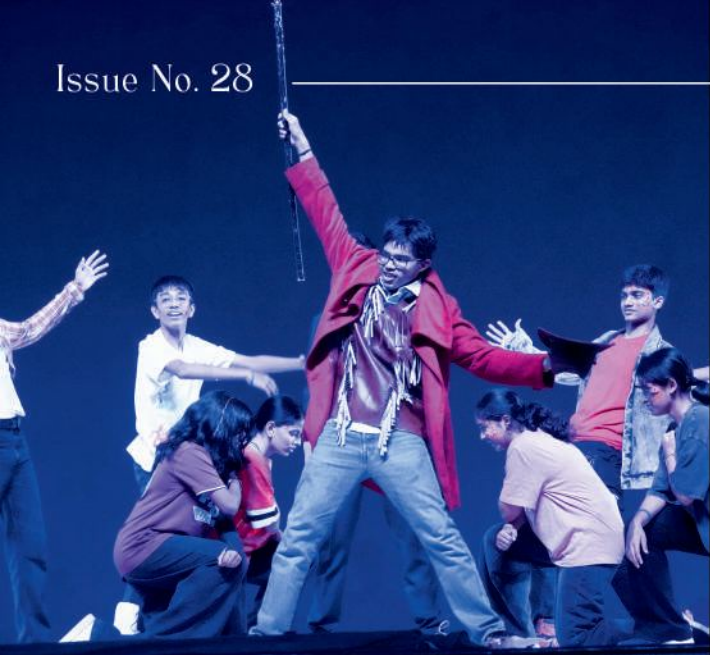
From the NRIs living among different cultures entirely, to normal people walking on the street. It all comes down to the simple fact that it is not the choice between language A or language B, but to accept, revel, and learn about our great motherland, Bharat.

I'm not proud of who I was before, but I'm definitely proud to see who I am now - an Indian. Not because of the language I speak or the movies I watch, but the chandan I wear every day and the immense feeling of pride and goosebumps as everyone chants

वंदे मातरन!

# CAPTURES







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# CLASSIFIEDS



Harnessing Youth Potential Through Nationalism | January 2026

As the National Flag is hoisted around the nation, let us connect to the nation through its glorious past. Let us bring to life the vision of so many before us, the vision of a strong Bharat, and Bharatiyas deeply rooted in the knowledge and culture that are its foundation even today.



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As part of Chinmaya Amrit Mahotsav, Chinmaya Mission presents the Chinmaya Amrit Yatra – a 295-day national pilgrimage to honour the legacy of Pujya Gurudev Swami Chinmayananda and carry His message, grace, and presence across the sacred landscape of Bharat.



Our gratitude to the CIRS management for giving flight to our initiative.

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