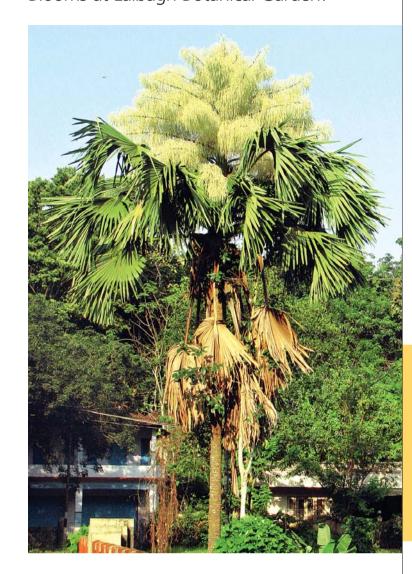
the idea of taking care of oneself seems like a far-fetched dream, then this day is just what is needed. Show some love and appreciation through healthy habits and practices geared towards taking care of yourself because it's time for International Self Care Day! The day was first celebrated in 2011 when it was established by the UK based organization, International Self-Care Foundation (ISF). With the important theme of encouraging everyone to be attentive to taking care of themselves, the day has been observed each year since its foundation more than a decade ago. Celebrate the day by engaging in productive actions like eating healthy and balanced diet, following sleep hygiene, etc.

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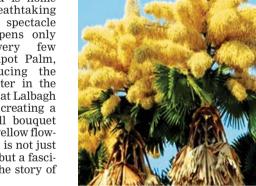
**#TALIPOT PALM** 

### Talipot is in Bloom

Witness a Once-in-a-Lifetime Natural Wonder in Bengaluru, The Talipot Palm Blooms at Lalbagh Botanical Garden!



to a breathtaking natural spectacle decades? The Talipot Palm, Botanical Garden, creating a wering 25-foot-tall bouquet of millions of tiny yellow flowers. This rare event is not just a feast for the eyes but a fascinating chapter in the story of



### What Makes the Talipot Palm So Special?

he Talipot Palm (scientif-L ic name Corypha umbractree native to South and Southeast Asia. Unlike most plants, this palm takes an exceptionally long time to bloom, typically between 30 and 80 years. When it finally flowers, it produces the largest inflorescence (flower cluster) on Earth, which can reach up to 25 feet in height and consist of millions of

sheer size and scale of this bloom make it a unique phenomenon worldwide. But the wonder comes with a bittersweet twist: after the Talipot Palm completes its bloom, it dies. This remarkable lifecycle means that witnessing the flowering event is a once-in-a-lifetime experi-

ence, a fleeting moment of

natural grandeur that many

small yellow flowers. The

### Why Visit Lalbagh Botanical Garden?

albagh Botanical Garden is one of Bengaluru's most treasured green spaces, famed for its rich biodiversity. historic glasshouse, and centuries-old trees. The blooming Talipot Palm adds another layer of magic to this iconic garden, drawing visitors from

across the country and

beyond. Visitors to Lalbagh right now can see this giant floral display up close, a spectacle that combines nature's power, patience, and beauty Photographers and plant enthusiasts are especially thrilled, as the bloom is both visually stunning and scientifically intriguing.

### Don't Miss This Once-in-Decades Opportunity

he Talipot Palm's blooming event is fleeting, and after it ends, the tree will die, meaning your next chance to see this spectacle could be decades away. Whether vou're a nature lover, a curious traveler, or someone seeking extraordinary expe-

Talipot Palm bloom at Lalbagh Botanical Garden is an unforgettable moment vou won't want to miss. Make your visit count and embrace the magic of nature's rarest show, only in Bengaluru, only now.

riences, witnessing the



## It's Not Russia-Ukraine

# Gaza, 'Smaller' Wars Are Reshaping The World



On 05 February 2025, during the Kashmir Solidarity Day event in Rawalakot, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), Hamas representatives, Khalid Qaddoumi and Naji Zaheer, were present. They received notable attention from members of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), marking the first instance of Hamas officials participating in an event in PoK. While this may not yet signify a formal alliance, it indicates a growing effort to establish wider networks in the realm of transnational terrorism, also referred to as global terrorism. Similar patterns of revival could emerge in East and West Africa, where Al Shabaab and Boko Haram maintain strongholds.



is always insightful in the study of geopolitics and geo-security. Let's

headed to an Army Cantonment in a 'peace' location. However, our plans quickly changed when we were diverted to Punjab. We were to form the frontline of forces crossing the River Sutlej to counter Pakistan's intransigence, its launch of Exercise Zarb-e-Momin and its sponsorship of militancy and terror in Punjab. Zarb-e-Momin, a military training manoeuvre with operational intent, was designed to send a message and divert our attention. Meanwhile, conflict was also brewing in Kashmir, setting the stage for a broader geopolitical confronta-



The Story Of Al Oaeda

It was the end of the Cold War. The Berlin Wall had just fallen, and the Soviets were still withdrawing from Afghanistan. Punjab was in turmoil, diverting strategic attention in multiple directions. The Iran-Iraq War had ended just a few years earlier. Victorious jihadis from across the Islamic world were emerging from the rubble of



tion covers only a small section of the world then. It does not even touch on Africa, which was also emerging from the shadows of old conflicts in Somalia, Mozambique,

Namibia, Angola, and beyond. Leaving everything else aside. I often ask myself: where did Al Qaeda come from? The answer traces back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which triggered a global call for jihad against the Soviets. The US, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan supported the Afghan nuiahideen with funding, weapons, and training to counter Soviet influence. Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi, joined the war effort, organising foreign fighters and logistical support. This network later evolved into Al Qaeda, founded in 1988.

When the Soviets withdrew in 1989, bin Laden and other iihadists saw it as a victory for Islam over a superpower. As the Cold War ended in 1991, the US and its allies disengaged from Afghanistan, leaving a ower vacuum. Many foreign ihadists, including bin Laden, believed their next mission was to fight Western influence, particularthe US, which they saw as the

I here did Al Qaeda come from? The answer traces back to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, which triggered a global call for jihad against the Soviets. The US, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan supported the Afghan mujahideen with funding, weapons, and training to counter Soviet influence. Osama bin Laden, a wealthy Saudi, joined

**#WORLDVIEW** 

next 'occupying power.' How Al Qaeda Became a

Global Jihadi Network After Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990. bin Laden offered his mujahideen to defend Saudi Arabia, but the Saudi government rejected him, inviting US forces instead. This marked his formal break with the US and its allies, transforming Al Qaeda from an anti-Soviet group into a global

Al Qaeda's rise was deeply tied

to the Cold War's conclusion. The Soviet-Afghan War provided the military experience, networks, and ideology that fuelled its creation. After defeating the Soviets, the US and its allies abandoned Afghanistan, allowing extremism to fester Bin Laden and his followers redirected their jihad against the West, leading to the global terrorist

From this, several lessons follow. First, whenever the world emerges from a period of intense activity and lowers its guard, it is often struck by unconventional turbulence. This happened in 1989-90 with the onset of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, just as it did with the civil wars in Africa between 1990 and 1995. The movements in Chechnya and Bosnia were also linked to the events of this peri od. More recently the withdrawal of US and Coalition troops from Iraq in 2011 ultimately paved the way for the rise of ISIS (Daesh).

threats we face today.

Although ISIS suffered military defeats in Mosul and Baghuz, it was only partially displaced, finding refuge in Afghanistan's northern badlands. Al Qaeda main tained a presence there, alongside

Central Asian and Pakistani ter rorist groups. Meanwhile, the Taliban remains reclusive and untrustworthy. Remnants of ISIS also persist in

Kurdish-held areas along the Syria-Turkey border, and the risk of its resurgence remains real. If northern Syria and the Turkish border region remain unstable. ISIS could exploit these conditions to rebuild its networks and launch new offensives The combination of weak gover-

nance, regional infighting, and existing ISIS sleeper cells makes this an ongoing and serious threat. So, where does this lead? In the first month of the new US President's tenure, the world order is already facing serious disruption. As global attention is drawn to Ukraine, Gaza, the Indo-Pacific, trade disputes, and tariffs, seemingly small issues, continue to develop, often with the potential to spiral into major crises. Remembe

now ISIS emerged in June 2014? We must consider the long-term consequences of the mass destruction in Gaza. An entire generation of Palestinian youth now lives without hope, a sentiment that extends beyond the youth to the entire population. For those who have endured such loss and suffering, revenge and retribution become powerful emotions, and the blame is often placed on the entire world. This creates fertile ground for

If you wonder how these groups sustain themselves, with resources, fighters, and finances, we have seen repeatedly that these are no longer significant obstacles. Ideologies are abundant, and a cause (whether perceived as just or unjust) is never difficult to manufacture when retribution is the driving force.

#### **How Will Current Gaza** Turmoil Manifest Itself

There is no formal or direct linkage between Palestinian groups and ISIS. The latter follows an extreme Salafiihadist ideology and has often criti-Hamas, for being too nationalistic and failing to embrace its vision of global jihad. However, under a desperate bid for survival, Hamas could change its stance, potentially opening the door to some level of cooperation

Hezbollah, a Shia organisation with direct allegiance to Iran, remains a priority for Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). While Hezbollah and Hamas have historically aligned on certain fronts, Hamas's ideology is not far removed from ISIS-style radicalism, with its influence and objectives potentially spreading beyond Palestine to other parts of the Arab world. That is a concern, particularly for regional stabili

On 05 February 2025, during the Kashmir Solidarity Day event in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). Hamas representa tives. Khalid Qaddoumi and Nai Zaheer, were present. They received ashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e indicates a growing effort to estab transnational terrorism, also referred and West Africa, where Al Shabaab and Boko Haram maintain strong-

My point is simple: While the world's attention is consumed by major geopolitical concerns, such as European security, NATO's future, the displacement of Palestinians, and the resumption of US-Russia cooperation, there must be dedicated strategic minds focused on smaller conflicts. These so-called 'small wars' have the potential to reshape global security in ways far more destabilising than we may currently imagine.

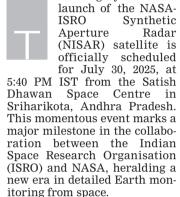
rajeshsharma 1049@gmail.com



### **#MONITORING**

## NISAR Scheduled For 30th

NASA-ISRO's NISAR Satellite Set for Launch: A Landmark Mission in Earth Observation





**Engineering** 

**Excellence and** 

ISRO highlighted, "The

NISAR launch is the culmination of over a decade of close

technical cooperation between ISRO and NASA/JPL teams.

combining the best of both

TX7 hile the launch had expe-

VV rienced several delays due

to necessary technical adjust-

ments, including the meticulous

testing and fixing of NISAR's

massive 12-meter deployable

antenna, the teams are now con-

fident in the mission's readi

ness. These challenges under

paredness and resource manage

ment across the globe. By combin

ing the expertise of NASA and

ISRO, NISAR exemplifies interna

tional cooperation in space tech-

nology and climate science, a

partnership dedicated to protect-

ing our planet through innova-

tion and shared knowledge

organizations' capabilities.

Challenges on the

**Road to Launch** 

Overcoming

### **Cutting-Edge Technology in Orbit**

he NISAR satellite, weighing approximately 2,392 kilograms, will be carried into orbit aboard ISRO's Geosynchronous Satellite Launch Vehicle (GSLV-F16). It is destined for a sun-synchronous orbit at an altitude of about 734 kilometers, which allows the satellite to repeatedly pass over the same locations on Earth at consistent local times. This orbit is critical for capturing reliable and comparable data on Earth's surface over time. Equipped with state-of-the-

**Collaborative Effort** nology, NISAR will produce N ISAR's design is a remark able feat of engineering detailed three-dimensional images of the planet's surface and precisely measure integrating two complex rada changes in land and ice systems into a single satellite plat form. The mission is managed by movements with centimeter level accuracy, according to the Jet Propulsion Laboratory an official NASA release. The (JPL) at Caltech on behalf of satellite's sophisticated rada NASA, while multiple Indian agencies contribute critical com instruments are designed to function effectively regardponents and expertise, including: less of weather conditions or U R Rao Satellite Centre, Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, and • National Remote Sensing

### A Historic Collaboration and Investment

sents the most expensive Earth observation satellite ever developed, valued at an estimated USD 1.5 billion. ISRO has contributed around Rs. 469.4 crores towards this collaborative effort. This venture is a testament to the grow ing scientific and technologi cal partnership between India and the United States. One of the unique features of NISAR

is its ability to operate at two

different radar frequencies.

which penetrates deeper into surfaces like vegetation and soil.

art dual-frequency synthetic

ISRO's S-band radar which is more sensitive to surface features such as moisture content and tex-

As NASA explains, "Each radar frequency targets different sizes and types of surface features, offering complementary insights into Earth's complex dynamics.'

### **Monitoring a Changing Planet**

W ith its sophisticated sensors, NISAR will scan the entire globe every 12 days, delivering ultra-highresolution maps with unprecedented detail. It will track phenomena such as: • Glacier and sea ice

Land deformation caused by earthquakes and volcanic activity. Shifts in vegetation and

soil moisture. Surface water changes

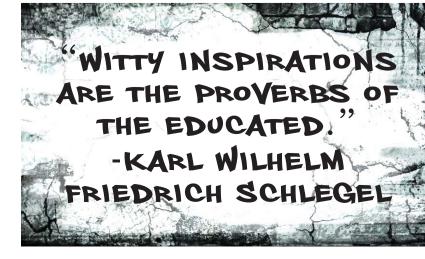
Disaster impacts like flooding and hurricanes. Its ability to detect changes as minute as one cen-



score the complexity of deploy ing cutting-edge technology in the harsh environment of space. **Looking Forward** s the countdown approaches, the world eagerly awaits the launch of NISAR, a satellite poised to revolutionize Earth observation. Its data will not only advance scientific understanding but also enhance disaster pre

agencies, and policymakers with vital data to understand and respond to environmen tal challenges and natural dis

### THE WALL



### **BABY BLUES**







By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

### ZITS





By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman **GHELIKESHER** AGGRAVATION LOCALLY-SOURCED.

