

#1965

## A Man Named Ranchhodas Pagi

Pagi studied camel tracks in the sand and said that the camels were carrying supplies, not riders, and the enemy strength was close to 1,200



In the killing silence of the Rann of Kutch, India's most powerful weapon once wasn't a drone, a satellite, or a radar screen.

It was a barefoot camel herder. His name was Ranchhodas Pagi. Locals called him Pagi, the man who could read footprints like a living map.

During the 1965 war, when the Indian Army lost track of Pakistani troops after the capture of the Vidhok post, Pagi studied camel tracks in the sand and quietly told the officers something unbelievable: the camels were carrying supplies, not riders, and the enemy strength was close to 1,200.

He was right. From that day on, the Army began to rely on him as its eyes in the desert. But his most extraordinary moment came in 1971. India planned a surprise push towards Nagarparkar through terrain filled with landmines.

At nearly 70 years of age, Pagi walked ahead of an entire armoured convoy, reading faint disturbances in the sand to detect buried mines.

For 12 hours, in darkness, he guided Indian tanks safely through a death trap.

At dawn, the armour appeared where Pakistan never expected it. The post fell with barely a fight.

Later, Sam Manekshaw personally embraced him and flew him over the battlefield, an honour almost no civilian has ever received. He famously invited him for a meal in Dhaka after the 1971 war and

rewarded him with Rs. 300 from his own pocket.

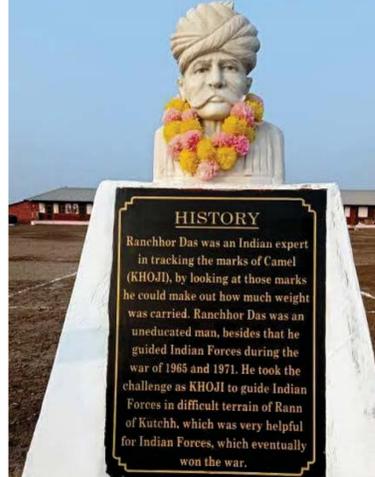
He was awarded the Samar Seva Star, Sangram Medal, and Police Medal. The Border Security Force (BSF) named an outpost in the Banaskantha region the 'Ranchhodas Post' in his honour. His life is immortalized in Gujarati folk songs, and he is regarded as an unsung hero whose bravery was crucial to India's border security.

Pagi passed away in 2013, at the age of 112.

Today, borders are watched by satellites and sensors.

But once, when technology was not that advanced, a quiet old man reading footprints in sand became India's greatest surveillance system.

Salute to Ranchhodas Pagi. He showed a nation the path to victory, one footprint at a time.



# The Tangled Web Of The Middle East

The threat is not war between Israel and Turkey but a string of escalations that involve American allies. Their rivalry is to cloud the area from Gaza to the Red Sea. Turkey's approach towards Israel reflects a combination of geopolitical ambitions, security considerations, economic interests, and domestic political calculations. It seeks to position itself as a leading regional power, drawing on the legacy of the historical Ottoman Empire as part of a policy commonly described as 'neo-Ottomanism.'



Amid the Middle East's deepening turmoil, the growing rivalry between Israel and Türkiye is fueling tension in an already fragmented region. Despite a past legacy of cooperation, relations are now at an all-time low and have

entered one of their most tense periods in years, triggered by a series of regional developments that are transforming the relationship into a full-blown geopolitical confrontation.

The present flashpoint is Somaliland, which sits at a critical geopolitical crossroads opposite Yemen, overlooking the junction of the Gulf of Aden, the Babel-Mandeb Strait and the Red Sea. Somaliland declared independence from Somalia in 1991, but functioned as a self-governing republic until December 2025 when Israel became the first state to extend formal recognition. The decision has generated controversy not least because of the legal precedent it sets under international law and its potential to exacerbate geopolitical competition in an already fragile space. More specifically, it risks accelerating competition between Israel and Turkey as their interests continue to diverge across the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea and in West Asia. What began as a diplomatic rupture has hardened into a regional power contest with direct consequences for US strategy from Gaza to the Eastern Mediterranean and to the Horn of Africa.

Syria may soon become the most dangerous flash point between Israel and Turkey. The fall of the Assad regime in December 2024 created a power vacuum rather than stability. In Syria, Turkish and Israeli interests diverge sharply. Turkey's priorities remain centered on border security, countering Kurdish armed groups and shaping post-conflict political outcomes in Northern Syria. Israel has focused on constraining the interim government led by President Ahmed Al-Sharaa and preventing advanced weapons transfers to Hezbollah or other non-state armed actors. While both seek to limit Iranian influence, their operational objectives differ, generating security postures that contribute to Syria's fragmentation rather than convergence.

A central fault line in Syria is the potential instrumentalisation of

Kurdish armed actors in Northern Syria, particularly the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF). Turkey views the SDF as inseparable from the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which it designates as a terrorist organisation and considers an existential national security threat. From the Turkish perspective, even limited or indirect Israeli support is interpreted as exploiting Kurdish groups against Turkey. This has deepened mutual suspicion, reinforcing Turkish concerns that Kurdish factions could be weaponised as proxy instruments within a broader pattern of competitive regional positioning rather than as partners in a coherent stabilisation strategy.

Both Ankara and Damascus also view Israeli-linked signalling around Druze autonomy or secessionist claims in Southern Syria as encouraging or enabling wider autonomy claims, including among Kurdish actors in the North. Following the collapse of the Assad regime in Syria in December 2024, Turkey has moved to expand its influence not only in Northern Syria but also in the country's Centre and South. While Israel seeks to protect the Druze communities in Southern Syria, Turkey seeks to weaken the Kurds in the North, favours a strong, centralized Syrian state under its influence. This creates a direct clash of interests.

In Gaza, the divergence is more overt and politically charged. Turkey has positioned itself as a vocal advocate for Palestinian political rights and humanitarian access, maintaining engagement with Gaza as part of its broader regional diplomacy. While taking an initially circumspect position, Erdogan gradually shifted to condemning Israel's military actions, which he framed as disproportionate and accusing Israel of committing war crimes. The rhetoric was consistent with Turkey's historical position, but was amplified by Erdogan's aspirations to position Turkey as a defender of Palestinian rights on the international stage. Erdogan has turned the Israeli-Palestinian conflict into a central component of his policy, employing harsh and inflammatory anti-Israel rhetoric to increase support among Muslims in general and

Somaliland. Turkey has played a sustained and influential role in Somalia since at least 2011, positioning itself as a key external partner in Somalia's stabilisation, economic development and state-building efforts. Under the



within Turkey in particular. Turkey has also expressed its readiness to deploy military, civilian and logistical assets to Gaza but the main stumbling block remains Israel's categorical opposition to any Turkish military presence. Israel has made clear that it will not allow Turkish Armed Forces to operate inside Gaza, view ing Ankara as a destabilizing actor despite its public efforts to present itself as a reconstruction partner.

At the forefront of post-war scenarios, Ankara is promoting a governance formula led by Palestinians, including the political wing of Hamas. The red line imposed by Israel is absolute against any form of Turkish involvement, civilian or security. The split vision couldn't be starker: where Israel sees the enforcement of security, Turkey perceives a defiance of international law.

This bilateral relation entered a more consequential phase in 2024 when both sides signed two major agreements: a comprehensive 10-year maritime and defence agreement known as the 'Defence and Economic Cooperation Framework Agreement' signed in February, and an oil and gas cooperation deal reached in March.

As Turkey prepares to begin offshore energy drilling in Somali waters in 2026, the Red Sea has become a predominant arena for this rivalry. Israel seeks a foothold in the Gulf of Aden to monitor Houthi activity while Turkey aims to protect its maritime interests and the territorial integrity of the Somali state. The Israeli recognition of Somaliland transforms a local secessionist issue into a high-stakes



Military Training Agreement signed in 2012. Turkey deployed military personnel to support the rebuilding of the Somali National Army, embedding long-term security assistance alongside political engagement. Turkey has invested heavily in roads, hospitals and public buildings across Somalia, as well as a space launch facility and hydrocarbon exploration in around 15,000 sq km of Somali offshore blocks.

The opening of the TÜRKSOB Military Training Base in Mogadishu in 2017 marked a significant expansion of Turkey's security footprint in Somalia. The base has played a central role in training thousands of Somali security personnel engaged in the fight against Al-Shabaab. TÜRKSOB has also become an important node in Turkey's broader approach to stabilisation and security in the Horn of Africa.

The risk of escalation in Turkey-Israel relations is likely to grow as areas of friction increasingly overlap across multiple theatres. That said, important constraints remain. The US is unlikely to favour an intensification of rivalry between two close regional partners, while Turkey's position within NATO imposes limits on how far confrontation can be pushed without broader alliance consequences. These factors mitigate against direct military confrontation. However, Turkish and Israeli analysts increasingly assess

power dynamics in ways that dilute Saudi Arabia's traditional primacy. From this perspective, Israel-UAE cooperation is less an isolated normalisation track and more a broader strategy to entrench alternative regional partnerships that expand Israel's strategic depth across the Red Sea and the Horn of Africa.

Turkey, by contrast, claims a more flexible, multifaceted approach to the Gulf, maintaining working relationships with several states while remaining most closely aligned with Qatar. Ankara frames this posture as pragmatic and interest-based, spanning trade, defence cooperation and diplomatic engagement.

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geopolitical confrontation between Ankara and Tel Aviv. Within Israeli strategic thinking, Somaliland is seen as offering an operational and intelligence value in relation to Houthi activity, given its proximity to key Red Sea and Gulf of Aden maritime routes. Houthi leader Abdul Malik al-Houthi condemned recognition of Somaliland, stating,

## Reflecting on Peace and Liberation on Parinirvana Day

Parinirvana Day, observed by Buddhists around February 15, commemorates the passing of Lord Buddha into Nirvana, symbolizing ultimate liberation from the cycle of birth and death. It is a day for reflection, meditation, and remembering the teachings of compassion, mindfulness, and detachment. Devotees visit temples, offer prayers, and engage in quiet contemplation, honouring Buddha's journey towards enlightenment. Parinirvana Day serves as a reminder to embrace inner peace, let go of attachments, and practice kindness in daily life. By observing this solemn day, followers reconnect with the spiritual path and the enduring wisdom of the Buddha.



#FABRIC

# Understanding Modal, Viscose, Bemberg, and Rayon

All four fabrics are cellulose-based, making them biodegradable and eco-friendly compared to synthetic fibers

Modal, Viscose, Bemberg, and Rayon are all popular fabrics made from cellulose, a natural polymer found in plants like wood and cotton. Despite sharing this common base, they each have distinct qualities and uses in the textile industry. Let's explore the similarities and differences between these fabrics to help you understand their characteristics and choose the best one for your needs.



The Basics of Rayon, Viscose, Modal, and Bemberg. These fabrics are all derived from cellulose, but they differ in their production processes and resulting properties.

- Rayon was the first man-made fiber created in the late 19th century as an alternative to silk. It is made by dissolving cellulose from wood or cotton and turning

it into fiber. Viscose is a type of rayon. The term 'viscose' specifically refers to the manufacturing process in which wood pulp is treated with chemicals, turned into a viscous solution, and then spun into fibers. Modal is a more refined version of rayon. It's made from beechwood pulp, and the production process is

more controlled, which results in a fabric that is smoother, stronger, and more durable than regular rayon. Bemberg (also called cupro) is another type of rayon. However, it undergoes a unique process using copper and ammonia to create a fabric with a silk-like feel, often used in high-end fashion.

## Similarities Among Modal, Viscose, Bemberg, and Rayon

All four fabrics are cellulose-based, making them biodegradable and eco-friendly compared to synthetic fibers. They share a soft, smooth texture, which makes them comfortable to wear, especially in lightweight clothing such as dresses, blouses, and underwear. They are also breathable and moisture-absorbent, ideal for warmer climates. Additionally, all of these fabrics take dye well, allowing for rich, vibrant colors. Despite these advantages, they do tend to wrinkle easily, especially when wet, requiring some maintenance to keep them looking fresh.

## Key Differences: Texture, Durability, and Environmental Impact

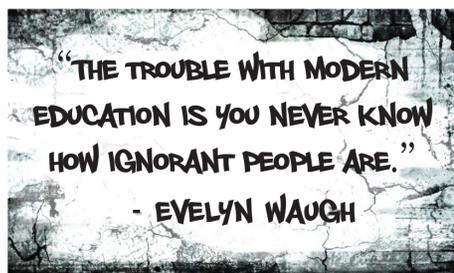
Texture and Feel	Durability
Rayon and viscose are soft and smooth, but can feel somewhat flimsy compared to Modal and Bemberg. Modal, for example, is known for its silky softness and refined texture. It is also more durable and resistant to shrinkage, making it suitable for everyday clothing such as loungewear and activewear. Bemberg, on the other hand, offers a luxurious, silky feel with an elegant drape, often used in high-end garments and suit linings.	One of the biggest advantages of Modal over Rayon and Viscose is its enhanced durability. The production process for Modal makes it stronger, particularly when wet, and helps it resist fading and shrinkage better than rayon or viscose. While Rayon and Viscose can lose their shape and strength over time, Bemberg is delicate but has a luxurious finish, requiring careful care.

## Environmental Impact

The environmental impact of these fabrics varies. Modal is often considered more eco-friendly than traditional rayon because it uses beechwood, a fast-growing tree that requires fewer chemicals and less water. Additionally, many producers use FSC-certified wood pulp to minimize deforestation. Bemberg is also seen as sustainable, as its closed-loop production process recycles chemicals, and it is often made from cotton linter, a by-product of cotton farming. In contrast, traditional Rayon and Viscose production can be harmful to the environment due to the chemicals used in their manufacturing process and the potential for deforestation if not sourced responsibly.



## THE WALL



## BABY BLUES



## ZITS



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman