

TRIVENI



PRISHA '24

THE MANY IDEAS OF IDENTITY

EDITOR'S NOTE

"The personal is political"
-Carol Hanisch

Dear Reader,

Identity is universally sacred. From oppression of an identity, to the unspoken narrative of another, from the need to empowerment of an identity to the desire of representation of another, it is the security of this identity that drives most primordial human behaviour and action.

As Welham celebrates its 66th Founder's Day, we pay homage to the rich identity of this institution and its enduring spirit that has been carefully nurtured since 1957. This edition also marks the culmination of my journey as a student, at the institution where I realised that identity is deeply personal, yet not individualistic in nature.

The essence of *Triveni* lies in the confluence of different streams. While exploring this theme of identity, we dive deeper to examine its multifaceted intersection with history and politics and how it is interwoven into the very fabric of our lives.

From the celebrities we follow to the shoes we love, this edition aspires to present you with a comprehensive perspective on this nuanced notion and the actions it inspires. It invites us to reflect upon the enduring struggles and the poignant battles fought through history to preserve identity, like the one waged by the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities of Australia. The endeavour includes even the ones we find ourselves currently entangled in, exemplified by the often-debated 'India or Bharat.' Through the lens of the G20 summit, we realise the complex forces that lie behind the shaping of a country's identity on the global stage, and are compelled to question, whether the very purpose of politics is to safeguard and honour it. Each article tackles an intriguing domain that deserves our consideration.

Identity is the cornerstone of our existence and, though it may feel elusive, it grounds us. I hope that this edition brings clarity to this composite concept, or at the very least, provides you with a fresh perspective to contemplate it.

As we consider identity, we are left to grapple with a profound question: how can we establish a space where every identity is endowed with the principles of equity and parity? Perhaps in seeking the answer, we might move closer to the confluence of our shared humanity.

Happy reading!

Priyal Mittal
Editor-in-Chief

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BURYING THE CROWN

India's Surface Break from the Raj

One can compare the revoking of British symbols of colonialism in India to a young adult who agrees to move into a new house only if it is bought with their own hard-earned money as this self-reliant decision becomes a powerful symbol of their independence and autonomy. In recent years, the government has been taking steps in the direction of firmly marking India's independence across several domains, to establish proof that India has been truly freed from its colonial past.

On September 8, 2022, the name of the Rajpath was changed to 'Kartavya Path', which symbolises a shift from being an icon of power to being an example of public ownership and empowerment. More examples of this include the construction of the statue of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose at the India Gate or the transition to a new naval ensign.

The government reasoned that "Rajpath" was a symbol of slavery. However, if one was to delve into history, the now "Kartavya Path" was actually called "Kingsway" during the British rule. It was our freedom fighters who after getting independence changed the name to "Rajpath". Here Raj meant not the British Raj but the victory of the people of India. After the road was given its Hindi name, the Republic Day parades took place over there in the decades that followed.

So we are faced with the question- does this really help the country break away from the dreadful shackles of colonialism?

Removal of all traces of our colonial past does not designate our acquisition of complete independence in history. Rather it may lead to ignorance of the efforts of our freedom fighters.

To truly regain the country's identity, we must look to dump the most damaging legacies of the Raj instead. Ones which are ingrained in Indian governance, ones which were designed to run a colony, not a democracy.

For instance, Section 295A of the Indian Penal Code was enacted in 1927 during British rule in response to communal riots. The riots were triggered by an inflammatory pamphlet that allegedly mocked Prophet Mohammed, leading to communal disorder.

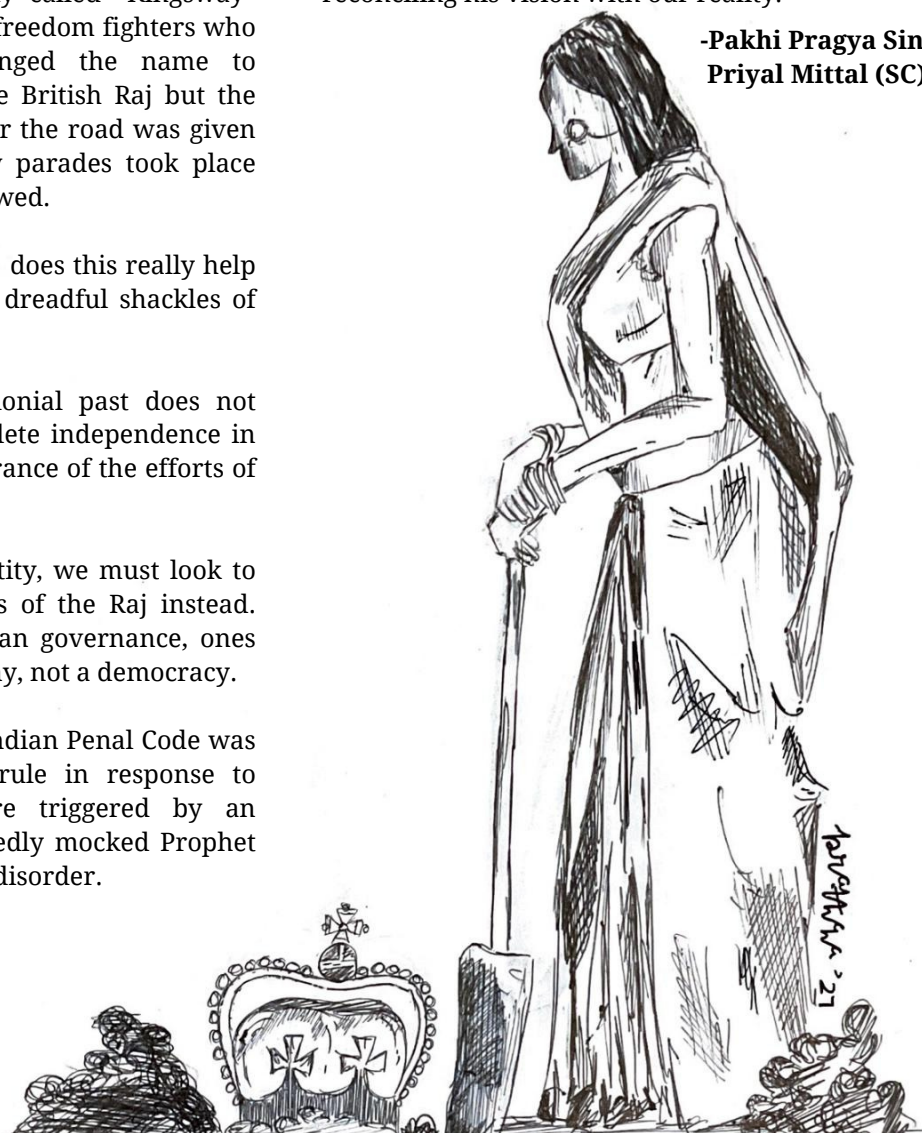
The section criminalizes deliberate and malicious acts that intend to outrage religious feelings by insulting religion. It was originally viewed as the 'need of the hour' to protect different religions and maintain harmony. However, its broad scope has led to its exploitation in order to suppress dissent, making it a tool for censorship, be it Arundhati Roy's book for its 'anti-India' comments on Kashmir or makers of the web-series Tandav for 'offending' religious sentiments of Hindus.

During his visit to England in 1931, a leader of the freedom movement, was asked how far he intended to distance India from the Empire.

"From the Empire, completely," he replied. "From the British nation, not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve."

Today, we continue to grapple with the challenge of reconciling his vision with our reality.

**-Pakhi Pragma Sinha (SC)
Priyal Mittal (SC)**





A STATEMENT FROM THE HEART



Australia, a land of striking landscapes and diverse cultures, owes much of its historical richness to its indigenous inhabitants: the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Each with their own culture, language, beliefs and practices. The former primarily inhabit the mainland, while the latter inhabit the islands located between northern Australia and Papua New Guinea.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people have lived on this land since time immemorial, which is why they are also referred to as the First Nations people of Australia. Despite their ancient connection to the land, the Australian Constitution, drafted in the late 19th century, has failed to recognize them as citizens, thereby rendering them voiceless in the country's governance. This legal void has paved the way for unjust policies, such as those that have led to the forced removal of Indigenous children from their families — their 'Stolen Generations'.

Even after sixty thousand years with the 363 language that they have been speaking, they have no say on matters which affect them. Can a democracy truly be called such without equal representation in its parliament?

The First Australians, on 26 May 2017, released the 'Uluru Statement from the Heart', a pivotal expression of the desires and rights of indigenous people in Australia. It aims to establish a foundation for national dialogue, calling for constitutional recognition through a formal platform known as the "Voice to Parliament." This platform would include a representative group of Aboriginals and Torres Strait Islanders who would collaborate with the government to develop laws and policies in order to bridge the gap between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians and rectify historical injustices.

What one should take note of, is that the constitution belongs to the Australian people, and only they have the power to make changes to it. In order to amend the constitution, they need a majority of Australians from a majority of states to vote yes in the upcoming referendum for constitutional change in 2023. So the opportunity lies before them now, not only to recognize the special place of Indigenous people in Australia's history but also to prevent the systematic erasure of their collective identity by successive governments.

-Riya Mohata (Pre SC) and Kavya Gattani (Pre SC)

ONE NATION, ONE IDENTIFICATION

The Aadhaar Revolution

Picture a nation where a simple fingerprint holds the power to unlock a world of opportunities – that's the marvel of India's Aadhaar Revolution. In 2009, a visionary policy took flight, aiming to grant every Indian resident an identity. It involves providing a unique number, popularly known as Aadhaar ('foundation'), based on biometrics (photo, all ten fingerprints and iris scans) to every resident in India.

It has become the world's largest biometric identification system, etching a digital identity for each Indian resident with its aim to not only provide all Indians with proof of identity as a foundation for better access to both public and private services. This unassuming project has broad implications for India's development agenda. For a long time, poorer sections of society struggled to prove their identity which led to their marginalisation, as they were unable to access services without legal documentation.

Inclusive growth requires the participation of a large segment of the population in the development process: Aadhaar enables this. With its help, access to services has improved. As the Indian government has made Aadhaar sufficient proof for opening a bank account to getting a mobile-phone connection, it has become a digital gateway to entitlements. With its help, a farmer in a remote village, with nothing more than a fingerprint has direct access to government support, without any hindrance from the middlemen. Thus, from being a mere proof of identity, the number has empowered people to access certain services more easily than before.

In a world where recognition often eludes the unsung heroes, India's Aadhaar Revolution stands tall. It has transformed India's bureaucratic red-tape into a harmonious flow of data, reshaping governance, bureaucracy and corruption for the better. The Aadhaar Revolution is not just about a biometric ID; it's a celebration of every Indian's right to be seen, heard, and acknowledged.

-Arushree Kashyap (Pre SC)

ADIDAS, YE AND THE NAZIS

The Grammy award-winning rapper Kanye West had collaborated with Adidas in 2015. Everything was going well until this partnership was terminated on the 25th of October, 2022. You may wonder why. The 'Hurricane' rapper made headlines on the 8th and 9th of October when his Instagram and Twitter accounts were restricted over the "antisemitic" comments. The German sportswear brand Adidas responded to this with all speed with the statement "Adidas does not tolerate antisemitism and any other sort of hate speech."

However, the German sports brand's origins are forever intertwined with Nazi Germany's abhorrent policies. Adidas was one of the multi-fold companies associated with the Nazi party. 1933 was the year when Hitler rose to power, the same when the Adidas founder, Adi and Rudolf Dassler joined the Nazi party. Under Nazi rule, Dassler's sneaker sales promptly exploded, and they grew the size of their company several times over. During the infamous 1936 Berlin Olympic games, organized by Hitler in an attempt to demonstrate Aryan athletic supremacy on the world stage, many of the German athletes sported Dassler shoes.

During the war, the brothers' shoe factories became manufacturers for the Nazi military. The company, like many others in Nazi Germany, employed forced labour from concentration camps. Ironically, the end of the Second World War was only the beginning of the fight between the Dassler brothers, each of whom tried to gain control of the shoe empire over the other. Adi was initially accused of having actively aided and supported the Nazis during the war but was able to put together a dossier of people — including the town's mayor — to support his claim that he was far from a party loyalist. The brothers eventually split, forming Adidas and Puma separately.

The termination of Ye's partnership with Adidas is a stark example of how the shadows of the past can reemerge in modern times. Despite the 'Yeezy' shoe's problematic origin, they continue to be popular and highly marketable. Perhaps consumers rationalise that wearing branded sneakers does not mean endorsing the designer's beliefs, not realising the purchases they make still enrich the offender. This disconnect highlights how we as a society struggle to reconcile conscience and commerce. We cannot overlook the fact that influential brands significantly shape mainstream culture, either for better or worse. Nor can we act as if problematic creators exist in a vacuum, separated from their artistic output. They are interconnected, and we must take this into account when assessing their legacy.

-Shanaya Aggarwal (Pre SC)



EVEN The ICE CREAM IS POLITICAL

It is no secret that ice cream is a beloved treat at Welham, but not many know about its origins. According to historical records, the emperors of China's Tang Dynasty were the first to indulge in a frozen milk-like dessert, which we now know as ice cream. Until the 1800s, ice cream remained a rare and exotic dessert enjoyed mostly by the elite. However, soon came the invention of insulated ice houses, which made manufacturing ice cream a popular industry in America. Ice cream established its special place in the American culture. In fact, during World War II, American soldiers demanded ample supplies of ice cream to lift their spirits while serving overseas. The government complied, shipping ice cream makers abroad to satisfy the cravings of US soldiers. Even as the Cold War unfolded, ice cream represented the rewards of capitalism and democracy compared to the austerity of the Soviet bloc. Ice cream companies and trade groups wasted no time in politicising ice cream and connecting it to the American way of life in direct contrast to communist regimes overseas. This was accomplished through marketing campaigns, promotional materials, and initiatives like the 'Ice Cream for Peace' program. Advertisement films specifically used scenes showing long lines for poor-quality ice cream in communist states versus the plethora of ice cream enjoyed by American families. American freedom to enjoy ice cream whenever desired was rhetorically positioned in advertising and government propaganda as proof of democracy's inherent superiority over communist political systems in satisfying citizens and providing for their needs.

-Siddhika Agarwal (AIII)

CULTURAL PRESERVATION OR HIDDEN AGENDAS?

Manipur, Decoded

As an observer concerned about the ongoing clashes in Manipur, it is clear that the situation unfolding before our eyes underscores the deeply ingrained divisions between the valley-dwelling majority Meitei community and the minority hill tribes. The protest organised by the All Tribal Student Union (ATSUM) against the Meitei community's bid for Scheduled Tribe (ST) status unearthed a Pandora's box of complexities, revealing a powder keg poised to ignite. The conflict's reverberations have thrown into sharp relief the intricate tapestry of historical, cultural, and political factors that have long simmered beneath the surface.

At the heart of this strife lies the Meitei community's aspiration for Scheduled Tribe status, a move that sent shockwaves throughout the region. With over half of Manipur's population, the Meiteis wield substantial influence, holding 40 out of 60 legislative seats, and commanding a majority in the legislative arena. The valley they predominantly inhabit holds political sway, seemingly at odds with the historically marginalized hill tribes—primarily the Naga and Kuki-Zo groups—who make up 90% of the land's population.

For the Meiteis, the demand for ST status is portrayed as a means of safeguarding their cultural identity and land from perceived threats, including the spectre of illegal immigrants. Yet, amidst these intentions, skepticism lingers. Is this move truly about preserving culture and heritage, or does it potentially provide a gateway to tribal lands for economic gain? The purported threat of immigrants appears questionable, given that estimates suggest a mere fraction of Myanmarese nationals amidst the vast populace. Manipur's stringent inner line permit system further acts as a safeguard against unregulated migration. Could there be an ulterior motive masked by cultural preservation?

The hill tribes' apprehensions are palpable and justified. Fears of land acquisition and a Meitei hegemony loomed large, fuelled by the possibility that ST status could nullify land ownership restrictions. The recent redrawing of district boundaries without consulting the tribes has only exacerbated their resentment, and an already precarious situation. The selective withdrawal of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) from the valley, while keeping it in the hills, adds a sinister layer to the unfolding drama, igniting suspicions of underlying motives of the government.

The Chief Minister's role in this turmoil cannot be overlooked. The government's actions and decisions have cast shadows of doubt over their commitment to democratic principles and transparent governance. As ethnic tensions escalate between Meiteis and Kukis, accountability and comprehensive investigations are imperative to restore faith in the democratic process and halt the cycle of violence.

In the complex web of Manipur's ethno-political struggle, the clash between the valley and the hills is not just a regional issue; it reverberates as a reflection of broader societal divisions. The resolution to this conflict lies in unraveling the intertwined threads of history, culture, and power dynamics. It is a call for unity, understanding, and empathy, an urgent plea to recognize the value of diversity and the importance of preserving the essence of Manipur's multicultural tapestry. Only through a collective effort can Manipur navigate these turbulent waters and emerge as a beacon of harmony and progress for all its inhabitants.

-Palak Arora (Pre SC) and Mahika Arya (SC)



Where Geopolitics Became Geo-polaritics

Who owns the Arctic?

Cold. Remote. Pristine. The Arctic is a mysterious yet highly contested region geopolitically due to its strategic and resource-rich location. The melting of the Arctic's ice in the summer has brought it into the limelight as a frontier for fishing, quicker shipping, natural resource exploration, and establishing military bases. This has made its ownership an enticing prospect for its bordering countries Denmark (via Iceland and Greenland), Canada, the USA, Russia, and Norway.

Four of these five countries are NATO members, while Russia, the outlier, has responded to this by expanding its military presence in the Arctic vowing to "protect Arctic waters by all means necessary." Nonetheless, there is still an asymmetry of power in the region in Russia's favour. As Melissa Bert, a US Coast Guard captain, spoke about Russia "They have cities in the Arctic, we only have villages."

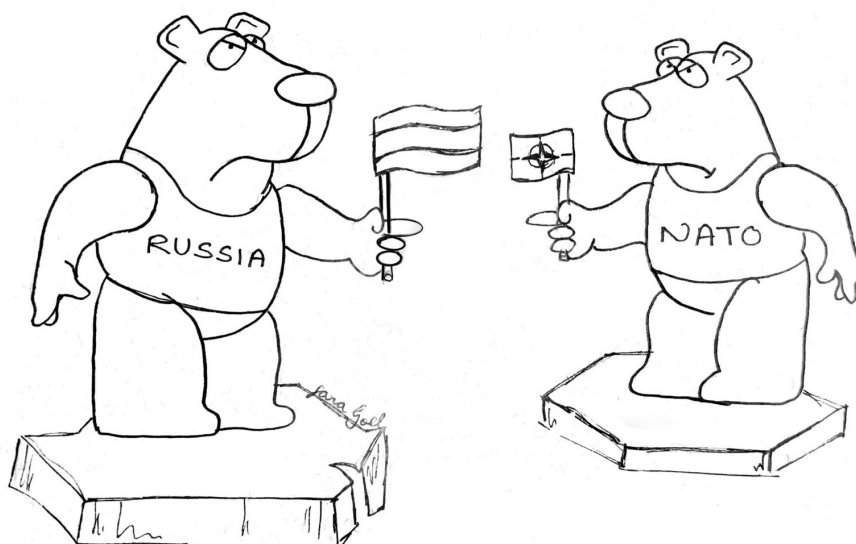
The United Nations Convention on the Laws of the Sea (UNCLOS) grants countries territorial claims of 12 nautical miles off their coasts and 200 miles as their Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) for activities like fishing and drilling. Russia claims over half of the Arctic waters as part of its EEZ, planting a rust-proof titanium Russian flag on the seabed of the North Pole in 2007 to strengthen its territorial claim, and proactively suggesting renaming the Arctic to you guessed it—the Russian ocean.

Russia also has an ongoing conflict with Norway over the Svalbard Islands, which are internally accepted as Norwegian, on the grounds of the growing Russian population inhabiting them. The heightened tensions have led to Norway, Canada, Denmark, and Russia consolidating their Arctic battalions. The Arctic, estimated to hold 22% of the world's oil resources, has become a focal point of competition between NATO and Russia, given the European countries' necessitated reliance on Russian gas amid the ongoing Ukraine War.

The accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO has elevated the region's security importance to Russia.

The Arctic is a region of great importance and has an identity that goes beyond the borders of any single nation. Keeping away from unilateral action and pursuing cooperative development of resources and shipping routes is economically prudent. However, the question of who owns the Arctic remains unresolved and is unlikely to be resolved anytime soon. It is still uncertain who will ultimately succeed in owning the Arctic and its concomitant geopolitical wealth.

-Anukriti Dhandhanias (Pre SC)



In Memoriam: M.S. Swaminathan

Independence would mean little to a hungry nation. The highest of ideals are worthless if the most fundamental of a man's physical needs are not met.

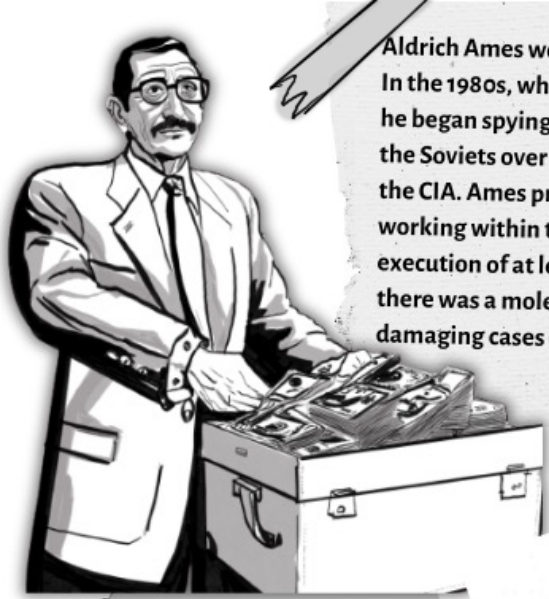
Mankombu Sambasivan Swaminathan was born in 1925 in Chennai.

Because of Swaminathan's efforts, India became self-sufficient in food production. As the head of the National Commission he recommended minimum support prices for crops to support India's farmers. To tackle the issue of increase in the use of chemical fertilisers, Swaminathan used the proceeds from the World Food prize he had received to start the MS Swaminathan Research Foundation.

The man who literally sowed the seeds of the Green Revolution, passed away at his home in Chennai on 28 September, 2023. He was 98. A hungry person has no time for ideals. So goes for a hungry nation. The *Triveni* honours the tremendous legacy of the agronomist, agricultural scientist, plant geneticist, administrator and humanitarian, who not only put food on India's plate, but also delivered meaning to its independence.



THE ART OF DECEPTION



Aldrich Ames worked for the CIA for over 30 years, starting in 1962. In the 1980s, while posted in the Soviet counterintelligence division, he began spying for the Soviet KGB, receiving over \$4 million from the Soviets over 9 years while maintaining his trusted position at the CIA. Ames provided the identities of numerous CIA assets working within the Soviet Union leading to the imprisonment and execution of at least 10 CIA informants. The CIA only discovered there was a mole in 1986. His actions are considered one of the most damaging cases of espionage in CIA history.

The Spy Who Sold Out

Four new books suggest that the Aldrich Ames story is even more appalling than what we already know.



The movie *A Call to Spy*, sheds light on the Indian princess, Noor Inayat Khan who spied for the British during World War II. A descendant of Tipu Sultan, she joined the Special Operations Executive (SOE) in World War II, becoming the first female UK wireless operator sent to France in 1943. After all agents from her network were captured by the Gestapo in October. Despite torture and two escape attempts, Khan divulged no secrets.



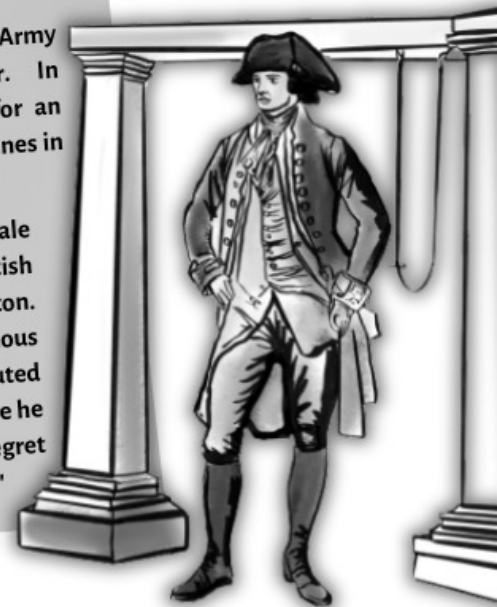
Secrets, lies, and hidden identities. The world of espionage has captivated the public imagination for generations. We spotlight 7 famous cases where spies successfully took on alternate identities, operating in the grey areas of deception. Some spies profiled here relentlessly served their countries, others became double agents, trading loyalty for money or ideology. Their hidden identities were assets but also liabilities. For better or worse, these chameleonic spies changed the course of history while hiding in plain sight.

Ravindra Kaushik, often referred to as "The Black Tiger," served as an Indian agent who covertly gathered and transmitted crucial information to RAW, India's intelligence agency. While deep within Pakistan's military and intelligence organisations, he provided India with invaluable insights into the enemy's activities and strategies. Kaushik's identity was eventually exposed, leading to his imprisonment and eventual demise in Pakistan in 2001.



Nathan Hale was a soldier in the Continental Army during the American Revolutionary War. In September 1776, at age 21, he volunteered for an intelligence-gathering mission behind British lines in New York.

Posing as a Dutch school teacher, Hale successfully gathered information about British troop movements for General Washington. However, the British began to grow suspicious about Hale and soon without trial, they executed him as a spy on September 22, 1776. Just before he was hanged, Hale famously stated: "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."



Eli Cohen, an Israeli spy, operated from 1961 to 1965 during the Arab-Israeli conflict. Disguised as a wealthy businessman, he infiltrated high-ranking Syrian circles. At lavish parties, he charmed influential figures, gathering vital intelligence about Syrian military plans, developments and defence strategies. Unfortunately, his cover was blown, and in 1965, he was arrested and subsequently executed by Syrian authorities.



There was little written about the role played by Talwar, till author and journalist Mihir Bose recounted his exploits in the book *Silver: The Spy Who Fooled the Nazis*. The only quintuple spy of World War II, Silver (whose real name was Bhagat Ram Talwar) worked simultaneously for the Germans, Italians, Japanese, Russians, and the British. However, his true loyalties lay with India and its domestic Communist Party. After collecting a large British payoff (adding to the money he had already received from the other nations), he disappeared and resurfaced only after Partition, returning to India and settling down in Uttar Pradesh, where he died in 1983.

Mata Hari was the stage name of Margaretha Zelle, a Dutch exotic dancer who was accused of being a double agent during World War I. In 1905 she moved to Paris and became a popular entertainer, enticing high-ranking men with her dances and exotic persona to extract military secrets from across warring nations.

In 1916, the French arrested and interrogated her on suspicion of spying for Germany.

Though evidence was scant, Mata Hari was found guilty and executed by firing squad in 1917 at the age of 41.





While the UN recognises 21st September as the International Day for Peace, this date will now forever hold special importance in every woman's heart, moreover, in every Indian's heart. 'Naari Shakti Vandana Adhiniyam', the women's reservation bill that reserves one-third of all seats for women in the Lok Sabha and the State Legislative Assemblies, was unanimously passed on 21 September 2023 in the Upper House after an 11-hour debate, a day after it was passed in the Lower House. No Member of Parliament abstained during the voting conducted by Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

A history that began in the Constituent Assembly, when the topic of a women's quota in legislative bodies was heavily debated. Its 389 members included just 15 women. Some apprehended that reservations would restrict women's representation, causing the exclusion of women from consideration for other general seats.

The following statement was made by Renuka Ray in the July 1947 Constituent Assembly.

"When there is reservation of seats for women, the question of their consideration for general seats, however competent they may be, does not usually arise. We feel that women will get more chances in the future to come forward and work in free India, if the consideration is of ability alone."

Many of the men were on the same side of the debate but for different reasons. H.V. Kamath would ask, "Were women not led more by heart, and was not politics a matter more of the mind?"

The women members of the Constituent Assembly decided against using reservation to ensure women's political involvement in the future.

Sadly, despite decades of independence, the proportion of women in legislatures remained appalling. By 1949, some women members had become concerned about falling representation in the provisional Parliament, when B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya reminded the Assembly that women had let go of reservations by "a gentleman's agreement," trusting that the system would automatically ensure representation.

In the 1990s the demand for gender quotas in legislative bodies gained traction after the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments were passed, which allocated 33% of seats in Panchayats and urban local councils for women. By this time, it had become clear to women parliamentarians that the "gentleman's agreement" made during the Republic's founding moment had not been so gentle after all.

So began the bill's arduous journey, 27 years ago when the H D Deve Gowda-led government introduced it in Parliament in September 1996. But the bill lapsed, as it did many times between 1998 and 2003 due lack of political support. A women's reservation bill was introduced by Dr. Manmohan Singh's government in the Rajya Sabha in 2008. During the discussion of the bill, transpired some of the most dramatic scenes in the history of the Rajya Sabha (be it climbing onto each other's tables or uprooting microphones), even leading to the suspension of seven members for their unruly behaviour. Two years later, it was approved with 186 votes to 1. The UPA (United Progressive Alliance) came very close to passing the Bill. However, after being sent to the Lok Sabha by parliamentary procedure, the Bill could not succeed, facing resistance from various political figures, including the UPA's supporters. Being Lok Sabha property, it expired in 2014 when the House was dissolved.

Six times in the past, the hopes and desires of the women of our nation to be fairly represented in legislative bodies have been dashed. If the Modi administration ensures that this long-awaited goal is actualised, it will leave its mark on history.

-Aahana Gupta (AI) and Aashi Dhandharia (AI)

DREADLOCK DOUBLE STANDARDS

The Politics of Representation



The impact of Western dominance on global perceptions is undeniable. It has not only shaped how the world sees us but also how we see ourselves. Edward Said coined the term "Orientalism" to describe the manner in which the West has constructed and depicted the East. It involves the portrayal of non-Western cultures as exotic and mysterious, but weak and mostly, inferior. Orientalism has not only crept into the political aspects of all our lives, but has also infiltrated pop-culture.

For privileged white artists like Miley Cyrus and the Kardashians, dreadlocks and fashion rooted in African American culture may simply be a part of their costume. However, historically these styles have been denigrated when worn by Black Americans, and yet were applauded as edgy and cool when adopted by white stars.

Such instances in pop-culture are termed as those of cultural appropriation- when privileged groups "borrow" elements of marginalized cultures typically without asking for permission, proper credit, or showing respect for their origins and significance.

This exemplifies a long standing power imbalance caused due to centuries of colonization, globalization, and cultural imperialism. The West's political and economic might has allowed it to shape political ideals, cultural narratives, and social norms on a global scale. Non-Western nations remain politically pressured to conform to Western standards to gain strategic approval, aid, and 'progressive' status.

Bill Hooks in the early '90s described how white people 'colonize' Black identity as a form of transgression, using ethnicity as a spice to liven up mainstream white culture. Ironically, the cultures appreciated today were historically discriminated against, making it paradoxical for white people to benefit from using them. You will be surprised to know that the Oscar winning film *La La Land* itself was critiqued for cultural appropriation. It revolves around Jazz music yet lacks meaningful Black perspectives. We in fact witness a scene wherein the lead character 'whitesplains' the music form to his Black musician counterpart.

Western media and film, with its one-dimensional portrayal of cultures and societies, have perpetuated a monolithic representation of the minorities, conveniently packaged for mass consumption. Across various industries in the West, people have looked to countries and cultures that were perceived as "exotic" for novel inspiration without considering the greater context of their designs.

To escape the confines of Orientalist frameworks it is not enough to merely resist the West or romanticize the East; but to strive for institutional reforms to dismantle lingering colonial mindsets, make space for inclusive cultural and political discourse worldwide, and embrace our shared humanity beyond divisions.

-Tejaswani Gupta (SC) and Naija Mehra (Pre SC)

RECOMMENDATIONS



Books

- **Second Hand Time-Svetlana Alexievich**
- **White Mughals-William Dalrymple**
- **Underground Railroad-C. Whitehead**
- **Gentlemen in Moscow-Amor Towles**
- **All the Broken Places-John Boyne**
- **India: What Can it Teach Us?-F. Muller**



Movies

- **Tamas**
- **The Angel**
- **Oslo**
- **Bridge of Spies**
- **Tokyo Trial**
- **Mississippi Burning**
- **Salma**
- **Ali**



INDIA V.S BHARAT

The Battle of an Identity

The winds of change have been blowing over the Indian subcontinent once again, this time with murmurs that the country is on the brink of a name change, from India to Bharat. The only saving grace of this absurdity is that the term Hindustan has not entered the conversation.

This speculation began as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's NDA Government began referring to the country as Bharat in various official invitations and speeches, following the introduction of the opposition I.N.D.I.A. bloc in Indian politics before the 2024 parliamentary elections. Critics argue that this is just a political manoeuvre by the Modi government to promote their Hindutva agenda and appeal to their electoral base, as the I.N.D.I.A. bloc poses the first significant challenge to the ruling party in years.

The term Bharat has deep roots in Hindu scripture. It is derived from the historical territory known as *Bharatavarsha*, which extended well beyond the modern boundaries of India. However, the government claims that using the term Bharat symbolises continuity and heritage predating India's colonial rule, while India on the other hand is a vestige of that era. With this reasoning, they stand in blatant ignorance of the word's origin, which lies in the Indus River, around which the subcontinent's first civilisation emerged.

During the drafting of the Indian Constitution, there was a debate over the inclusion of the name Bharat in the constitution. However, as a nod to India's diverse linguistic, cultural, and historical heritage, and thanks to the efforts of former PM Jawaharlal Nehru, the preamble of the Indian Constitution reads, "*India, that is Bharat*". This dual nomenclature acknowledges India's ancient history while simultaneously recognizing its modern identity—emphasising inclusivity and peaceful coexistence of the two terms in our vernacular.

This proposal is not isolated; it's part of a tokenistic pattern where the government renames cities and places associated with the Mughal and colonial periods as part of a continued effort to erase their influence on the country's pluralistic and diverse history. If this continues, we are not quite sure when our borders will be called the '*Laxman Rekha*'.

Critics argue that this move is indicative of a broader issue: the government's promotion of intolerance and disregard for the constitutional principle of secularism. It should also be noted that such a change would put a huge economic strain on India and disregard the name-branding and recognition efforts of the past 75 years.

While the official name change of India to Bharat seems highly unlikely, it is important to consider the historical significance and political motivations behind this move- which reflect the ongoing power struggles in the country. The terms India and Bharat have coexisted for centuries and in my opinion, there is no need to eliminate one in favour of the other. If there is any lesson to be learned here it is this—India, that is Bharat, needs to balance its historical roots with the realities of today.

-Aarisha Jain (Pre SC)



Creator: Rob Rogers

**JUST
FOR
LAUGHS**



A Clash of Courage

The Ahom Dynasty's Valiant Stand



In the 17th century the flag of the Mughal Empire was hoisted upon most parts of the Indian subcontinent. The 17th century also saw the reign of brutality under the Mughal ruler Aurangzeb. However, a very small part of the North East was under the protection of the relatively unknown kingdom of the Ahom Dynasty. The Ahom Dynasty reaped all the benefits of being situated on the banks of the great Brahmaputra, emerging prosperous with great control over the East Asian Trade.

The Mughals had their hawk eyes on present-day Assam and were preparing to invade the beautiful valley of Brahmaputra, just like they did with the rest of the subcontinent. They repeatedly attacked the Ahoms from 1615-1682. Under their ruler, Pratap Singha, the Dynasty tried to resist but in 1667 lost the war.

However, Lachit Borphukan, the legendary General of the Ahom Dynasty, won Guwahati back from the Mughals with his exceptional strategic acumen.

Soon the Mughals returned to take their revenge, this time, with greater armaments- including five thousand guns, thirty thousand soldiers and thousands of cannons. The logistics were not in favour of the Ahoms but Lachit Borphukan refused to accept defeat at face value. He utilised his tactical prowess and went on to block their ground assault, forcing the Mughals to use their weaker forces, that of naval warfare. During this war came a period when Borphukan was severely sick and the army started to lose their morale. At one point they even thought about retreating but Borphukan said:

"If you want to flee, flee, the king has given me a task here and I shall do it well."

The Mughals lost. They learned the hard way to avoid provoking the formidable regional power prudently. To date, on November 24 Assam celebrates the fearless leader's greatness. Every year, the overall best cadet at NDA is awarded a sword of honour, along with a gold medal which has the General's name encrypted upon it.

The Ahom Dynasty's unwavering determination to protect their homeland against all odds serves as a timeless inspiration for us today. Their motto, 'We lead by being led', is a testament to the importance of leadership that serves its people. Their commitment to protecting their homeland makes one recognise the value of defending their own roots. In a world facing various challenges, the Ahom Dynasty's history reminds us that courage, unity, and a strong sense of identity can overcome even the most intimidating obstacles.

-Tanisha Aggarwal (Pre SC)



Creator: Satish Acharya

Creator: Heng

The Enemy's Salute

The Gripping Tale of Lt. Arun Khetarpal's Ultimate Sacrifice

Some spoken words become immortal, like “*No Sir, I will not abandon my tank. My gun is still working and I will get these people*”. Spoken by Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal's radio message to his Squadron Second-in-Command when told to abandon his tank after it was hit by the enemy tank.

Indian soldiers' bravery and dedication during wars to defend their nation's sovereignty are a testament to their indomitable spirit. One such hero who exemplified this spirit by his act of bravery was Second Lieutenant Arun Khetarpal.

Arun Khetarpal was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in the 17 Poona Horse. He led the 47th Infantry Brigade in the Basantar battle, where he successfully subdued the enemy advance with tanks. Despite heavy casualties, Khetarpal fought off enemy fire, destroying 10 tanks and preventing the Pakistani Army's breakthrough. He defended his country at the cost of his own life.

For his conspicuous gallantry, Second Lt. Khetarpal was posthumously awarded India's highest military medal, the Param Vir Chakra. His heroic endeavour did not only inspire his fellow soldiers but also left a lasting impact on the nation, as well as on those who fought against him on the battlefield.

In 2001, during the 'Twin Track Diplomacy' Brigadier M.L. Khetarpal, father of 2nd Lt. Khetarpal, visited his birthplace in Sargodha, Pakistan, and was hosted by Brigadier Khawaja Mohammad Naser, who met him with great reverence. On the last night of his visit, Naser confessed to ML Khetarpal that he had faced Arun Khetarpal, his son during the 1971 war.

Both fought bravely for their respective countries. Unfortunately his son died at Naser's hands. During the tank battle they faced each other, firing simultaneously knowing that only one could survive.

Despite initial intentions to ask for forgiveness, Naser realised that it was not an apology that would do justice to Khetarpal's sacrifice. Instead, he saluted Arun Khetarpal's valour. He also admired his father, ML Khetarpal, for making him into the exemplary young man he was.

The stories of these war heroes inspire us to question our own values, urging us to reflect on what truly matters in life. These heroes teach us that true heroism lies not in personal gain or recognition but in the unwavering commitment to protecting and serving others, even in the face of unimaginable adversity.

A Hero faces death for others, with no thoughts of personal gain or glory. This is the identity of a TRUE HERO; this is the identity of 2nd Lt. Arun Khetarpal.

Jai Hind.

-Ishaani Bhatia (SC)



G20 : INDIA'S COMING OF AGE

India's G20 presidency has marked the first time that the G20 Troika, which comprises the current, previous, and incoming presidencies, has consisted of three developing economies- Indonesia, India, and Brazil. Not only has India been prospering in its global economic stature but it has established itself as a force to be reckoned with, considering its reformed foreign policy.

Amid shifting global dynamics, India has secured a favourable position that effectively aligns with its self-interests. The joint declaration made at this year's summit walked a fine line of negotiations, emerging victorious over all apprehension and disagreement surrounding it. The declaration involves a compromise from both sides. The West softened the language used for Russia's role in the Ukraine war, simply stating the need for "durable peace in Ukraine" (compared to last year's joint statement at the G20 summit in Bali, which deplored "in the strongest terms the aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine"), while Russia on the other hand agreed to refrain from using nuclear weapons to acquire territory. This declaration along with the unanimous decision to include the African Union in the G20, demonstrates the increasing influence that developing nations in the 'Global South' are gaining in global diplomacy.

However, the bigger question has still been left unacknowledged. Will India's neo-dimensions align with either side or will it lead a bloc of its own? Because it is not the development of the U.S. bloc vs China bloc as A. Guterres presumes, rather, it is the evolving dynamics of globalisation and the growing importance of the south-eastern centralised forces. While the former usher each other with self-involved issues the latter leaps forward one day at a time and so does India with it. The West and the China-Russia axis need to acknowledge the fact that this is not 1914 where they may fight among themselves and call it 'The World War'. There are factors that we must be wary of in the ever-changing political domain. The 2024 G20 Summit in Brazil would present the new political status of India in a clearer light as India continues to do better, thanks to its formidable foreign policy.

-Riddhi Naithani (Pre SC)

Beauty and Blunder:

A review of Netflix's Cleopatra

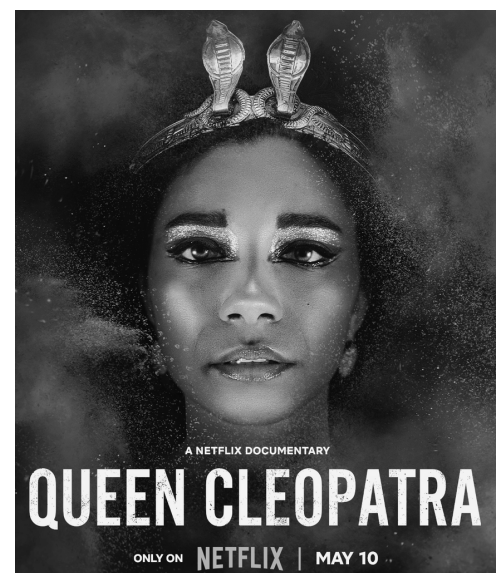
Cleopatra VII, the last pharaoh of ancient Egypt, is an iconic and enigmatic figure known for her beauty, intelligence, and political acumen. Her alliances with Roman leaders like Julius Caesar and Mark Antony shaped Egypt's transition to a Roman province, making her a symbol of power and intrigue.

Netflix's Cleopatra series offers a fresh perspective on her life, exploring the complexities of her reign and relationships. Unfortunately, it has received low ratings due to historical inaccuracies, disordered scenes, mediocre acting, and inadequate portrayal of Cleopatra's iconic appearance. Critics argue that it excessively highlights her love life, sidelining her historical intellect and impact as a female ruler. Controversy also surrounds the casting of Black actress Adele James, with some accusing it of cultural appropriation. Egyptian officials criticized the series, accusing Netflix of misrepresenting "Egyptian identity" to "promote Afrocentric thinking." Historians note that modern race concepts don't apply to ancient Egypt, where genetic diversity existed. The land was home to Europeans as well as Nubians.

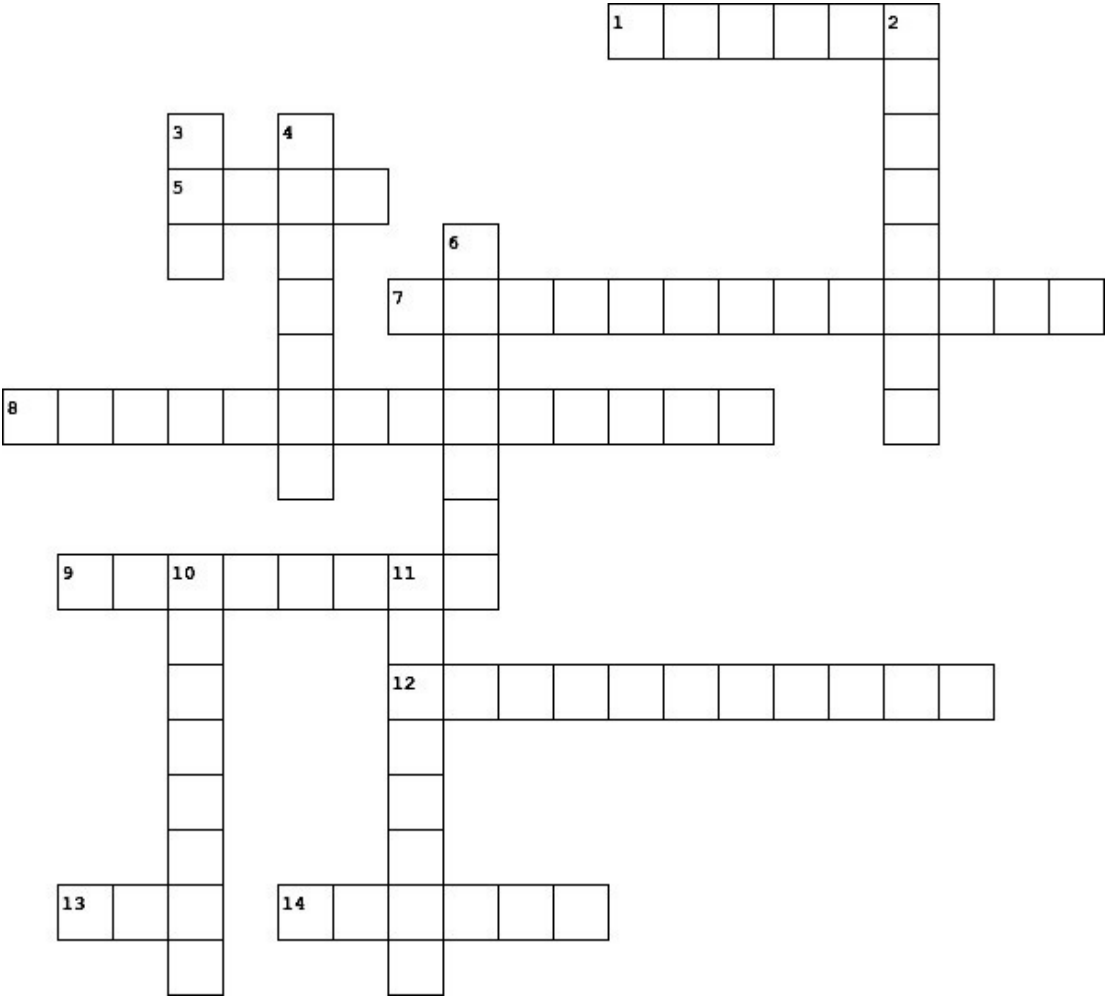
To claim that Egypt had no dark-skinned people in it, or that civilization had only Saharan African origins, are both forms of erasure. Netflix defended James' casting as Cleopatra in the Netflix series as a reflection of the diverse genetic composition of ancient Egypt and challenging traditional portrayals of historical figures.

While the series featured expert interviews and Adele James' performance was appreciable, its dramatic sequences fall short. It attempts to reshape Cleopatra's image to align with current trends, shifting from Elizabeth Taylor's portrayal of the same in 1963 as a regal kitten to a selfless warrior queen in 2023. Despite its flaws, there is some entertainment value in the series. It can serve as an introduction to Egypt's last queen or be enjoyed purely for entertainment, but as a historical documentary, it is quite off the mark.

-Rudrani Rajya Lakshmi(AII)



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ACROSS

- 1.Nation to assume G20 presidency in 2024.
- 5.Operation conducting by the Indian Armed Forces to evacuate Indian citizens from Israel.
- 7.Majority party in the UK right now.
- 8.Steven Spielberg's Holocaust drama based on a true story.
- 9.Political ideas and activities that are intended to get the support of ordinary people by giving them what they want.
- 12.Extended Senate speech to delay vote.
- 13.Which state in India doesn't celebrate Independence Day on 15th August.
- 14.The Indian Nobel laureate in literature known for his work 'Gitanjali'.

DOWN

- 2.A group of people who band together and try to influence people in public office and politicians.
- 3.Revolutionary who was the founder of the People's Republic of China.
- 4.World's first residential university.
- 6.'Dekho Apna Desh' campaign is associated with which Union Ministry?
- 10.Neighbouring country of India set to dispatch over 159 containers of ammunition to Ukraine.
- 11.Right to vote in political election.

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Special Thanks

Ms. Gitanjali Bhatia

Dr. Tanushree Verma

Ms. Deepa Mehta

Dr. Neera Kapoor